

PART 4: Eight Challenges for School Leaders

Challenge 1: Sharing the leadership

The international trend is toward the devolution of school management, which makes decisions at school level progressively more important to the success of the system.

(OECD, PISA 2006; 2007 cited in McKinsey & Co, 2010: 5)



Challenge 2: Establishing priorities

High performing leaders spend more time working with people in their school. They:

- Walk the halls more
- Spend more time coaching teachers
- Interact more often with parents and external administrators
- Spend more time with students

Challenge 3: Identifying and spreading the best classroom practices

Having poor teachers can be devastating (...) the least effective teachers elicited average students gains of roughly 14 percentile points a year, whereas the most effective teachers elicited an average gain of 52 percentile points a year.

(Hattie, 2009: 17)

Challenge 4: Leading teaching and learning

Without an understanding of the knowledge necessary for teachers to teach well-content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, content-specific pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge and knowledge of learners-school leaders will be unable to perform essential school improvement functions such as monitoring instruction and supporting teacher development (Spillane and Louis, 2002)

THIS IS ESPECIALLY THE CASE IN TECHNOLOGY RICH CLASSROOMS

Challenge 5: Building Capacity: The Importance of Middle Leadership

The role of the middle leader is pivotal in securing a focus on learning and teaching and through their leadership, in constantly improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools...to improve outcomes for all pupils...

(NCSL, 2011)

Challenge 6: Changing Cultures

Cultures do not change by mandate; they change by the specific displacement of norms, structures and processes by others; the process of cultural change depends fundamentally on modelling the new values and behaviour that you expect to displace to existing ones.

(Elmore, 2004:11)

Challenge 7: Leading with Positive Emotions

When positive emotions are in short supply, people get stuck. They lose their degrees of behavioral freedom and become painfully predictable. But when positive emotions are in ample supply, people take off. They become generative, creative, resilient...’.

(Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1375)

Teacher Emotions with Significant Effects on Student Learning

Emotional Path Power Index

- ▶ **Teacher trust in others** (school culture, principal) $P1=0.65$ (of this, student correlation = 0.28)
- ▶ **Teacher commitment** (caring, belief in organisation, value of learning, identification with student) $P1=0.92$ (of this, student achievement correlation = 0.30)
- ▶ **Organisational citizenship behaviour** (altruism, conscientiousness, civic virtues, teachers treated as professional, autonomy, protection from administrative trivia, high levels of academic success) $P=0.89$ (of this, student achievement correlation = 0.41)

(Sun & Leithwood, 2015).)

Challenge 8: Looking After Your Health

- ▶ Successful principals, like successful teachers, need to be resilient
- ▶ Because resilience itself fluctuates, policy makers and principals need to ensure that they build individual and organisational capacities for resilience