

The Staff Developer's Tool Box

The Power of Vision

by
Jim Roussin

Peter Senge, Margaret Wheatley, and Stephen Covey are among the many voices that have emphasized the importance of vision in the organization. The real downfall of vision, however, is that many times only a few people work to clarify and establish the vision for the whole organization. It is then expected that everyone will buy into and be energized by the group's vision. The end result more often than not is frustration and lack of support. If organizations are to have shared visions, there must first be opportunities for staff to develop their own personal vision. It is only when leadership listens to and honors the individual visions of their staff that a shared vision for the organization can have an impact. It is also by knowing the visions of each staff member that leadership can better support and channel the energies of everyone in the organization.

In the Big Lake School District we have used a "personal vision" form to identify the vision of each staff member. We have then used this form to accomplish the following initiatives in staff development:

District Resource Specialists

The "personal vision" forms have helped us in staff development to identify staff members who could serve as resource specialists for the district. For example, last year two staff members declared a strong vision for multicultural/gender equity issues. We offered them the opportunity to attend SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) training in the cities. This year they are teaching a SEED class for others in the district and creating collegial awareness for equity issues. These two teachers are having a significant impact in all of our schools, and they are being energized

to do this out of their own vision for equity.

District Network

Staff development also used this form to cluster the visions into focus areas for the district. Some of the areas we were able to group staff into were at-risk issues, enrichment, instructional strategies, violence prevention, grad rule, etc. This initiative has allowed us to identify a natural network in the district that we can utilize when there is a specific need. It also has helped us to understand the kind of learning our staff members would like to be involved in for their own professional growth. Each building principal received a copy of the "district network" to sup-

port his/her own efforts and vision as well as to channel information (workshops, articles, grants) to those who might best take advantage of it.

It is only when the leadership has honored and listened to the personal visions of each staff member that they will be able to create shared visions in the organization.

If you have a staff development idea that is successful in your school, we would like to hear about it. You can send a brief description and a copy of the tool or form to Jim Roussin, Big Lake H.S., 501 Minnesota Ave, Big Lake, MN 55309

What Is The Vision You Hold For Your Professional Work Life?

Name _____ School _____

The Missing Piece: What do you think is **one** important piece that is missing from education today, and if put in place, it would have a significant impact in student achievement?

Filling the Empty Space: What are your strengths, insights, or skills that have helped you to address that **one** missing piece in education?

The Vision: In what way would **you** like to impact your students, staff, or school community by the end of your career?

The Journey: What will **you** need to learn or do in order to have this impact?