

Consequential Leadership is exactly the resource leaders like me need. It affirms bold, sometimes disruptive work that truly transforms schools for kids. With its visual clarity and practical insights, it validates our efforts and equips us to reflect, refine, and lead with greater impact and confidence.

—**Alyse Zeffiro**, *Principal, Kerrydale Elementary,
A Visible Learning Certified School*

This text brings together a way of thinking about leadership with actionable practices, centered on influencing student outcomes. A reflective read for all leaders.

—**Cecilia Wilken**, *Ed.D., Assistant Director,
Professional Learning Educational Service Unit #3*

Consequential Leadership is such an empowering book, especially if you are embarking on a new adventure in leadership. I have often felt overwhelmed as a leader and have found myself asking, “Where do I even begin?” This publication helps you identify areas that make an impact and provides ACTIONS. At times, as a leader, you can find yourself frozen because you are unsure of a process to help you sort out how to prioritize the wave of responsibilities this role requires of you. Reading this helped me to take the swirling responsibilities, categorize them, prioritize them, and create areas of focus and actions—setting up processes and structures that help synergize the work and support teams in building their collective efficacy to support students. Reading and reflecting helps you process and prioritize so you can go from a sense of feeling overwhelmed to a sense of hope and clarity.

—**Allyson Burns**, *Principal, Sequoia Middle School, CA*

As a K–8 principal, I found **Consequential Leadership** to be a powerful guide that captures the heart of leading with purpose, clarity, and impact. The practical insights are both relatable and actionable. This book inspires reflection while offering concrete strategies to drive meaningful change in schools. It is essential for daily leadership decisions.

—**Susan Summers**, *Principal, K–8 International Baccalaureate School*

CONSEQUENTIAL LEADERSHIP



CONSEQUENTIAL LEADERSHIP

AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE ON
LEADING FOR IMPACT

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-0719-9864-9

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

26 27 28 29 30 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Visit the companion website at
https://companion.corwin.com/courses/Consequential_Leadership
for downloadable resources.

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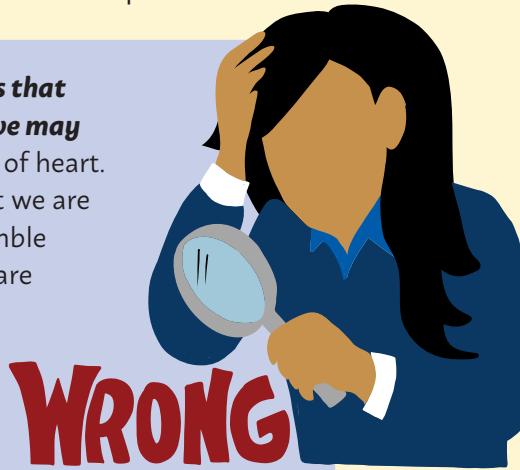
What kind of leaders do our schools need? We should ask ourselves, “*Is my school better because I lead it?*”¹ It’s an important question and one that should give us all pause. As leaders, we should be able to demonstrate our impact on teachers, staff, and students. And that impact should make the school a better place to work, teach, and learn. If this is the case, we can answer the question with a resounding **Yes!** *This school is better because of our leadership.*

But what kinds of leadership ensure that the school is really better? There are so many professional books on leadership available. They often take an adjective and place it in front of the word *leader* or *leadership*: distributed leadership, instructional leader, transformational leadership, servant leaders, and so on. What they all have in common is the idea that the leader must have an impact on the environment and the people in that environment. Thus, we argue that an appropriate modifier for leadership is *consequential*. To have an impact, leaders must make decisions and take action that has *positive consequences* and mitigate against undesirable and unintended consequences. ***Our actions must lead to something better for our students.***

Here is how we view consequential leadership:

1 *Consequential leadership requires that we regularly seek evidence that we may be wrong.*

This is not for the faint of heart. In doing so, we will likely find that we are often right. But, when we are humble enough to seek evidence that we are wrong, and then accept that evidence and act on it, we are likely to increase our impact. When we seek evidence that we may be wrong, we no longer have to engage in ineffective practices; we make changes that improve the quality of the educational experiences provided in our schools. Often we can then stop or de-implement those things we do that have little to no negative impact on those we lead; and this is a major consequence.



2 *Consequential leadership involves focusing on improvements you want to the learning lives of students and then deciding on optimal programs and actions to enact across the school.*

So often, leaders identify a program and proclaim its value because it is evidence-based, it was used successfully in similar schools, it is mandated by the state, it is promoted by influential education networks, or it simply reflects prevailing trends in education reform. We love programs, but consequential leaders start with great diagnosis about what is working and what is not working about the learning of students, collect evidence about the current status, and then seek to build consensus across staff to make a major improvement to these student-related initiatives.





3 **Consequential leadership requires that we make hard decisions and have hard conversations.** We did not say that consequential leaders are the only decision makers or that they treat people harshly. But rather, that we are brave enough to make decisions when the time comes, dive deep to understand what is actually happening, lead to ensure the right problems are on the table, and then take responsibility for those decisions. Consequential leaders must be honest and direct in their communication, even when the topic is uncomfortable. And yes, there are times when we must tell people what they need to do and there are times when we guide them to make decisions.

4 **Consequential leadership has a relentless focus on impact. This requires that changes are made when the impact is insufficient.** This impact is most effective when it is impact on students, but to do this leaders need to have impact on the educators in the school. And this means a robust discussion of the forms and levels of impact we desire in our school and making this transparent to all. Impact is more than achievement; it can include well-being, making the school inviting and ensuring students gain a sense of belonging, valuing high impact teachers and building collaborative teams, engaging and informing parents, and much more. Consequential leaders are not satisfied with compliance and instead seek commitment. Leaders set high expectations, knowing that there are many right ways to meet those expectations and often some wrong ways of doing so. Regardless, the expectations are clear and aspirational, and support is provided for people to meet those expectations.



5 **Consequential leaders have visionary clarity.** They can articulate a clear, compelling vision that connects the current status and climate of the school with shorter- and longer-term goals. They can align people in the school around this shared sense of purpose and enable them to see how their contributions matter for the whole school. They can turn the vision into manageable and memorable ideas and actions and can be specific about the outcomes or improvements they want; that is, they have high expectations but are grounded. And they have courageous integrity, in that they can take bold, sometimes unpopular decisions when necessary to maximize impact on student learning across the school.



There are costs to being a consequential leader. We may face backlash from people who are resistant to change. We may realize that our communication skills need to develop. We may come to understand that our expectations are not clear or that the support we provide is insufficient. We may need greater levels of resilience, adaptability, and actively seek a “second opinion.” But consequential leaders are driven by a moral imperative: to create the best learning environments to ensure that all students gain at least one year of learning for every year of schooling. By learning, we not only mean improvements to academics but also to a sense of belonging, learning to respect self and others, knowing how to learn alone and collectively, and most important developing our teachers and students to become self-driving learners.

And “all” means EVERY student.

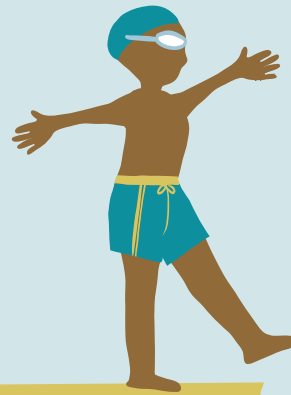
One of the tools that consequential leaders use is the **power of narrative**. They tell the right stories and shape the way people think about the organization. As philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre wrote, “A man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his life as if he were recounting it.”² There are three questions that are useful as we think about the stories we tell that shape our thinking³:

- ✓ ***What future do we face?***
- ✓ ***What future do we want?***
- ✓ ***What must we do to get there?***



Stories shape our perceptions, which in turn form our realities, which impact the choices we make. Change begins with a bit of imagination. What *might* be and what *could* be begin as a story, a narrative, that is told, and people try it out. To harness the power of storytelling in support of a change, leaders must understand their story, honor the past, articulate a mandate for change, and lay out a rigorous and optimistic path forward.⁴

However, a specific kind of story, called a **springboard story**, seems to work best to motivate and combat the confirmation bias that can happen when people listen to stories for the parts that confirm what they already believe.⁵ The characteristics of a springboard story follow:



- The story is about **an individual with whom the listener can identify**, so that the listener not only listens, but **lives** the story.
- The story is about **the very problem** for which the leader hopes to inspire different action.
- The story is about someone who solved the problem and is thus **positive in tone**; although negative stories are useful for getting attention, stories must be positive in tone if we want to inspire action.
- The story is not a story about the future; it is about something that actually happened and is **authentically true**; when listeners go and check it out—as they will do—they will find that the story happened and hence is credible.

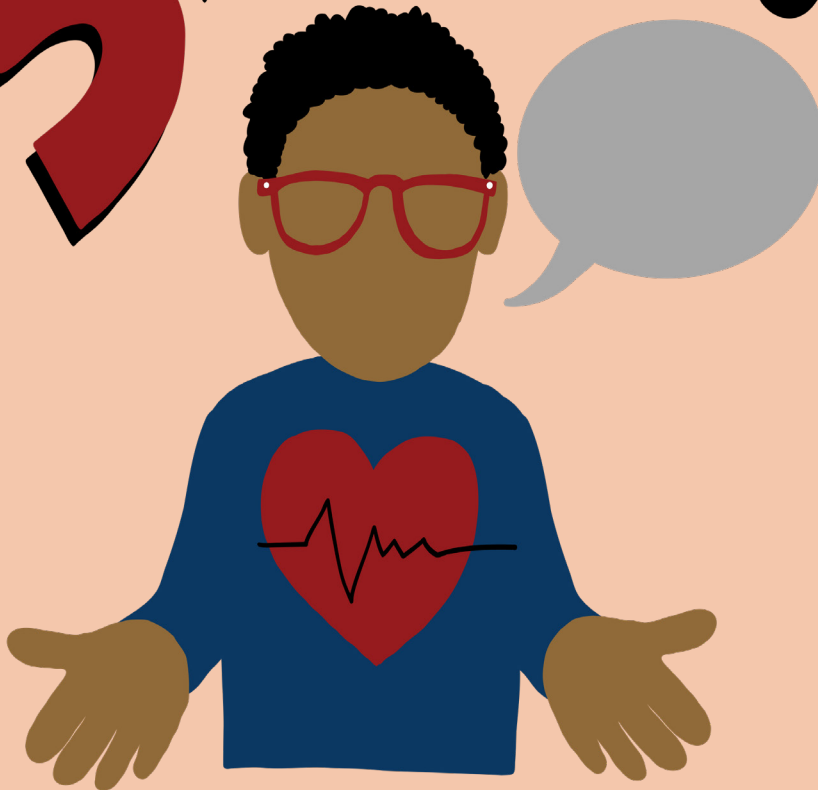
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“The most powerful stories are not those that confirm what we already know, but those that help us imagine what could be different.”

—Stephen Denning

- Unlike an entertainment story, the leadership story is told briefly in a **minimalist form**, with only those details that are necessary to understand the story, so that there is plenty of space for “the little voice” in the listener’s mind to imagine a future story in which the listener is now the protagonist, that is, “**What if I were to . . . ?**” The trick is that it is not the leader who creates the future story, it is the listener; as a result, the future imagined story is perfectly adapted to the listener’s own setting.
- The story in a few words contrasts the situation **before** the change idea and the situation **after** the change idea is implemented.
- The story is told with **conviction**, even **passion**, as though this is the most important thing in the world; it is the leader’s intensity that is doing much of the work of persuasion.
- The story should be told by **someone whom the listener trusts**, or at least someone who is not actively distrusted; if the storyteller is personally distrusted, the leader may need to find someone else to tell the story.

5 IMPERATIVES



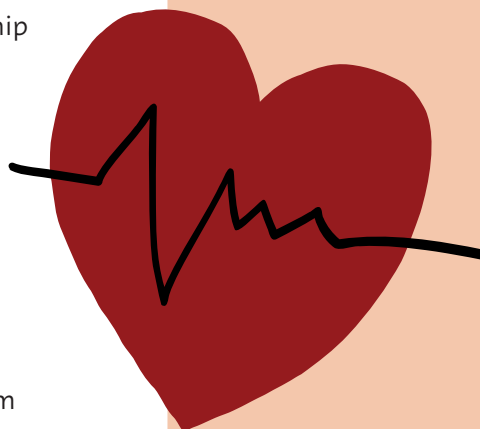
We focus on the power of the narrative in the introduction because we hope that you will use the information in this book to construct your own narrative and to create improvement within your school. We note that great story tellers need great listeners; listening is also a core skill of great leaders. We trust that you have chosen this book because you want to have an impact on the experiences of teachers, students, and their caregivers; that you believe your actions and decisions are consequential.

Our model of consequential leadership consists of the following **five imperatives**, which we will explore one by one in this book:



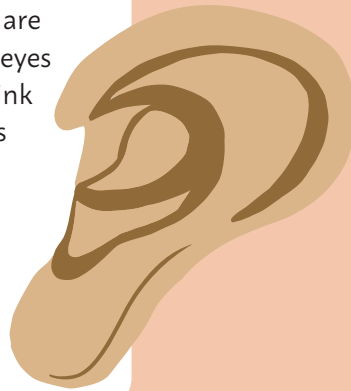
1 **Courage, empathy, and accountability** require that we balance authority with empathy and foster collective accountability on our teams. This is the heart of consequential leadership—having sufficient courage to act. There are several types of courage and building both individual and collective accountability, especially internal accountability, is important if schools are to become places that focus on learning and the impact that educators have, both on students and their colleagues.

2 **Motivation, purpose, and the collective** require that we recognize the various ways that educators are, and can be, motivated. This is the pulse of consequential leadership as it beats through the organization, sometimes in a relaxed state and sometimes in an excited state. When educators have a clear purpose, and that purpose is shared with their colleagues, teachers and teams develop collective responsibility for students' learning, collective efficacy for their impact, and the collective effervescence and joy that comes from working with others.

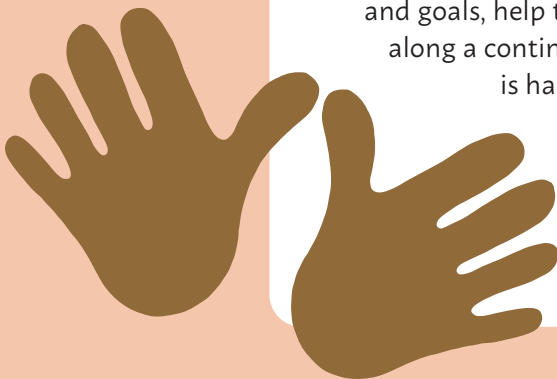


3 Collect, analyze, and action evidence

require that we value evidence, and specifically and intentionally use evidence to make decisions. Consequential leaders are always using their senses, especially their eyes and ears, to collect evidence. And they think about what the evidence means as well as what they can do about it. Consequential leaders look for evidence that confirms the direction they are taking the school as well as evidence about what needs to be addressed to increase the impact of the educators in the building.

**4 Promote, nurture, and lead teacher expertise.**

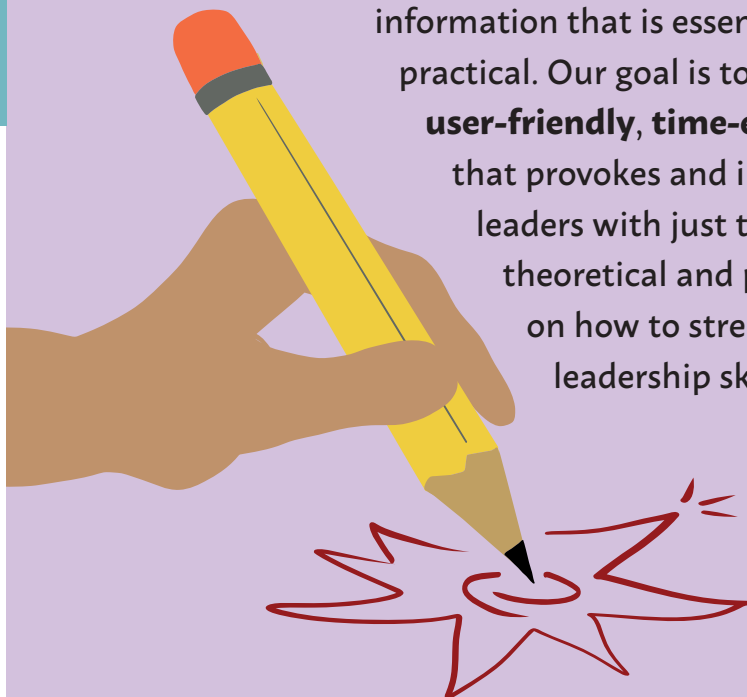
This aspect of consequential leadership focuses on the ways in which leaders can foster teacher learning. As lead learners themselves, leaders must design professional learning experiences that build the confidence and competence of the teaching workforce. Quality professional learning experiences, aligned with the evidence and goals, help teachers grow and develop along a continuum of expertise. This work is hands-on, and effective leaders participate in learning with teachers and monitor the impact of those learning experiences.



- 5 Nudge, coach, and correct performance** provides leaders with tools to support teachers' expertise and growth. Identifying opportunities to nudge people forward in their practice is an important skill for leaders. At a more systematic level, leaders coach and correct based on what they have observed. Coaching is focused on helping educators refine their practices and continue to develop. Corrective action is sometimes required when what has been observed or reported violates the laws, ethics, agreements/expectations, or evidence and needs to be addressed. This is the voice of consequential leadership, the ways in which conversations convey the strengths of educators and their next steps.



Finally, this text is an **illustrated guide** for leaders wanting to have an impact. As such, the leadership imperatives, content, and concepts therein are presented to readers visually, emphasizing information that is essential, relevant, and practical. Our goal is to provide a **readable, user-friendly, time-efficient resource** that provokes and informs busy leaders with just the right balance of theoretical and practical information on how to strengthen their leadership skills.



Readers will not encounter extensive scenarios, case studies, and examples, as one might with a playbook format. This is by design.



We predict that school leaders will both **enjoy** and **enrich** their professional learning as they engage with this guide.



Leadership Imperative #1:

COURAGE, EMPATHY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

THE HEART OF CONSEQUENTIAL LEADERSHIP

School leadership is not for the meek or the weak. It requires leaders who are **bold, determined, confident, resilient,** and **courageous**. Keeping our heads down and flying under the radar, hoping not to be noticed, is the opposite of consequential leadership. The job is complex, demanding, and frustrating. However, for those with the courage to act, it can be exciting, fulfilling, and energizing!

THE COURAGE TO ACT

The courage to act requires the following:¹

MORAL COURAGE

When leaders stand up and speak out in ways that align with their core values and vision, they demonstrate moral courage. It's having the strength to do the right thing for all students, especially those in historically underserved groups, even when doing the right thing is the hardest thing.



I USED TO
THINK... NOW I...
BECAUSE
OF...

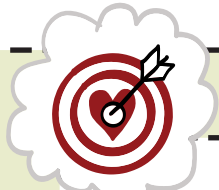
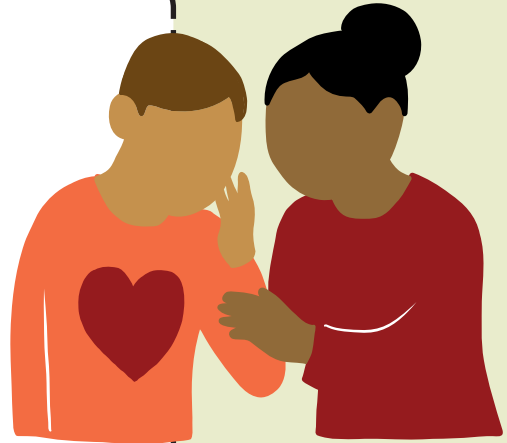


INTELLECTUAL COURAGE

When leaders seek to understand and use contemporary research to guide their decision making, even if that means changing course or challenging the status quo, they demonstrate intellectual courage. These leaders are willing to say to staff and colleagues, "I used to think, and now I think, because of . . ."

EMPATHETIC COURAGE

When school leaders strive to vicariously experience the trials and triumphs of others and muster the courage to show care and concern, they demonstrate empathetic courage. These leaders can hold people to high expectations while also understanding their personal experiences with the challenge, and then provide support and care based on their needs.



DISCIPLINED COURAGE

When school leaders manage distractions and interruptions and maintain their focus on the work that matters most, they demonstrate disciplined courage. These leaders have great clarity on the vision and the impact they wish to have, and they have the discipline to act in accordance with that end.



CREATIVE COURAGE

When school leaders must express new ideas, make tough and high-stakes decisions under uncertainty, using their voice and influence for equity and justice, and staying committed despite setbacks and resistance, and thus seeking alternative ways to attain the vision for the school.



The courage to act . . .

- **Indicates a rigorous commitment to accept reality.**

Pretending all is well or that obstacles do not exist is the opposite of courageous, consequential leadership.



- **Signifies a realization that hesitation and resistance to action are far more damaging than acting,** even if things do not turn out as planned.

This requires personal accountability for results.

- **Demonstrates a deep understanding that action drives results.** A plan doesn't

drive results, willpower does not drive results, and not even goals drive results. Action drives results. Period. And it takes courage to act.

COURAGEOUS QUESTIONS TO ASK²

- ✓ **What are we trying to accomplish?**
- ✓ **What is the best path to take?**
- ✓ **What support will people need?**
- ✓ **What obstacles can we anticipate?**
- ✓ **What actions will help overcome them?**

BALANCING AUTHORITY WITH EMPATHY

Authority, in the traditional sense, is leadership from a command-and-control stance. It is characterized by an individual with positional power issuing directives, monitoring compliance, and evaluating the performance of direct reports. Authority is typically distributed through a chain of command network, and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.



Consequential leadership does not rely on an authoritarian style of organizational leadership. Yes, organizations continue to entrust qualified individuals with authority to lead and manage a workforce; however, the emphasis is on building trust and mutual respect, rather than threats and consequences.³



Successful leaders recognize that building high-performance teams and meeting shared goals is based in a large part on their credibility with all employees. Leaders who maintain their credibility with staff achieve more.



Credibility is built when leaders intentionally:⁴

- Convey trustworthiness by being honest, clear, and transparent
- Demonstrate competence both as leaders of people and as operational managers
- Display dynamism or passion for the people and the work of maximizing impact on student learning
- Activate immediacy behaviors by building authentic relationships and showing genuine enjoyment of time spent with people
- Focus on the future and communicate forward-focused thinking to motivate and inspire a team

Empathy occurs when we can put ourselves in the shoes of another person and genuinely care for their well-being and appreciate how they are feeling. (It does not mean we then have to agree with them, but at minimum respect their understandings and viewpoints.) Leaders need to understand three types of empathy: cognitive empathy, emotional empathy, and compassionate empathy.⁵

1 Cognitive empathy: The ability to see the world through another person's eyes. It helps us connect with another person's thinking and a sense for how they see things.

2 Emotional empathy: Enables leaders to read a person's facial, vocal, and other nonverbal signs that illustrate how they are feeling in real time.

3 Empathetic concern: Enables leaders to demonstrate concern for the feelings of the people they work with. This makes it possible to relate and connect with employees on a deeper level, as they feel known and valued by the leader. Empathetic concern also messages that staff can take risks and will be supported in their growth.



When leaders express clear expectations for employee performance and hold them accountable for these expectations while also striving to practice the three levels of empathy, they are on the path to balancing authority with empathy.

Leaders who effectively strike this balance are not afraid to have hard conversations with staff about important performance issues, but they also deeply believe that they must act with care and concern for how such a conversation impacts the individual's feelings, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.

Leaders schedule the proper amount of time to engage in dialogue and actively listen to the individual. They respond clearly and calmly with interpretations, facts, and concerns, but they also convey that they value and respect the individual as a member of the team. Remember, demonstrating you have listened does not imply you also necessarily agree.

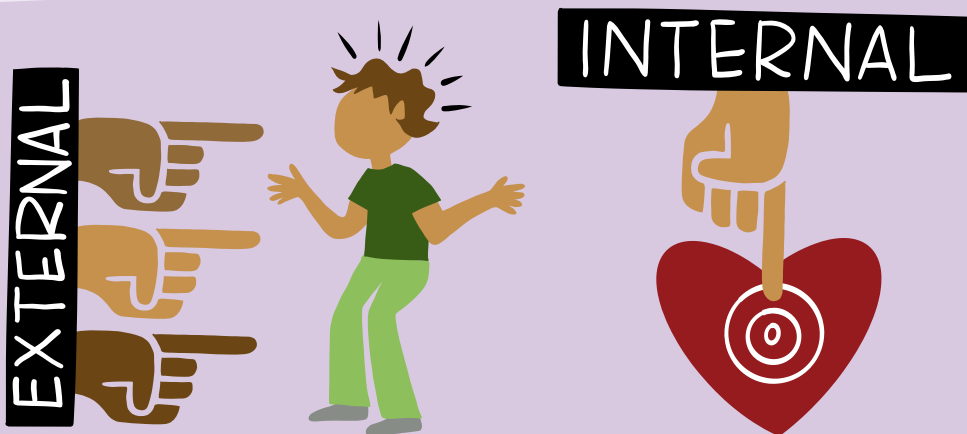


Leaders who strike the essential balance communicate high expectations to all staff members such that they have no doubt of what is expected from them. At the same time, effective leaders recognize all employees' feelings and thoughts, and they embrace a supportive stance to foster growth and overall school improvement.

MODELING AND BUILDING PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is a good thing in education, although many may think otherwise. This is because we immediately go to our experiences with **external accountability** systems that fail to recognize the wide gap in challenges among and between schools and the shame, punishment, and sanctions our schools and districts may have received because of the failure of authorities to recognize these circumstances. That is not the kind of accountability that works for school improvement.

Accountability that works is *internal accountability*. Internal accountability exists when all staff members in a school embrace a shared vision for improvement and develop a sense of collective responsibility for hitting improvement targets. Internal accountability works because there is clarity on where the team is going and what each member can contribute to get there. There is a culture of interdependence for results. People feel beholden to each other, as opposed to an outside entity. Consequential leaders recognize the power of internal accountability and work to foster and build personal and collective accountability in their schools.



FOSTERING PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

A primary job of all leaders is influencing team members to take personal responsibility for their work and the overall work of the team. They emphasize that personal accountability is built in five key areas:⁶

-  **Responsibility for choices, decisions, and consequences.**
-  **Responsibility for attitudes and mindsets. Seek solutions, not excuses.**
-  **Responsibility for performance. Do what you say you'll do—reliably and consistently.**
-  **Responsibility for improvement and high expectations. Engage in self-correction and growth while aiming high.**
-  **Responsibility for ethical and professional standards. Act with integrity.**





Of course, effective leaders understand if they want an organization where members embrace personal accountability, then they must model personal accountability in these five key areas. In addition, we should explicitly model the following:

1 Decision making that considers how the benefits of a decision align with goals, while also considering possible consequences of the choices made. Great leaders do this out loud, with staff, often and explicitly—and encourage team members to do the same.

2 Attitudes and mindsets. Model those that are most beneficial to the organization in every interaction with staff and in every presentation delivered.

3 Personal accountability. Openly discuss having an accountability partner, and how having a partner helps you grow; encourage staff members to try it.

4 Seeking feedback and setting goals to improve work performance. This includes how to adopt a new behavior, how to eliminate an undesirable behavior, and how to change an existing behavior.

5 Relentless respectful and supportive interactions with all staff. At the same time, avoid blaming people, places, and events. We should not make excuses for the stalling or failure of forward movement.



MOVING FROM THEY TO I OR WE

Individuals and teams need to recognize that there are things that they can control and influence (and things that they cannot). But referring to a vague group of others—they—as controlling the narrative and decision-making challenges the belief that individuals have about their locus of control. An internal locus of control suggests that individuals believe they are in control of their own actions and outcomes, while an external locus of control suggests that they believe external forces are responsible for what happens to them. The reality in schools is that both internal and external forces are at work. However, when personal accountability permeates the culture, team members' mindsets move from asking questions such as:

- ⊗ “Why are **they** making these changes?”
- ⊗ “How do **they** expect me to do more?”
- ⊗ “**They** said that we need to do this.”



HOW CAN
I...?



Instead, staff members ask questions that reflect personal accountability such as

- ✓ “What can **I** do to help my team meet our goals?”
- ✓ “How can **I** contribute to meeting the school’s mission and vision?”
- ✓ “How can **I** help my team improve our results?”

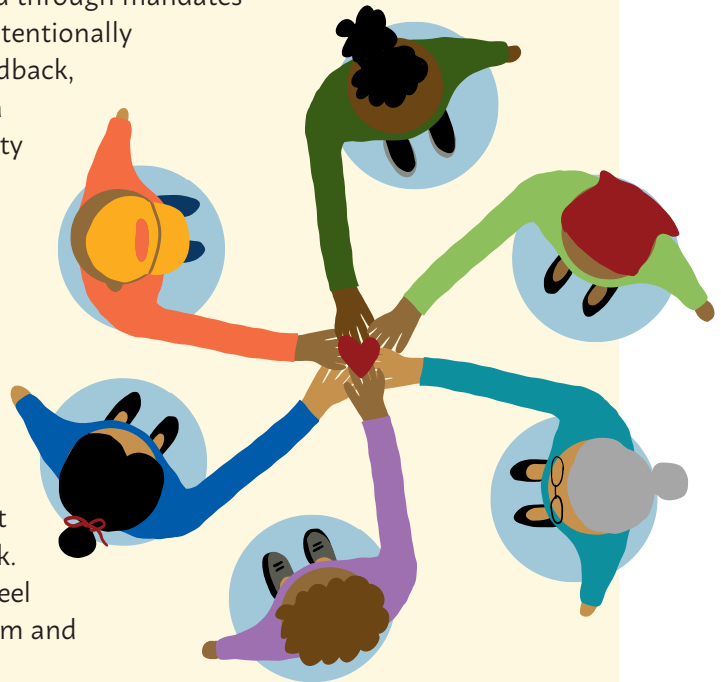
And leaders need to enculturate the notion of “We” across the school:

- ✓ “What can **WE** do to help each other meet our goals?”
- ✓ “How can **WE** contribute to meeting the school’s mission and vision?”
- ✓ “How can **WE** help our team improve our results?”

THE TAKE-AWAY:
More We, some I
(to care), and leave
“they” at the door.

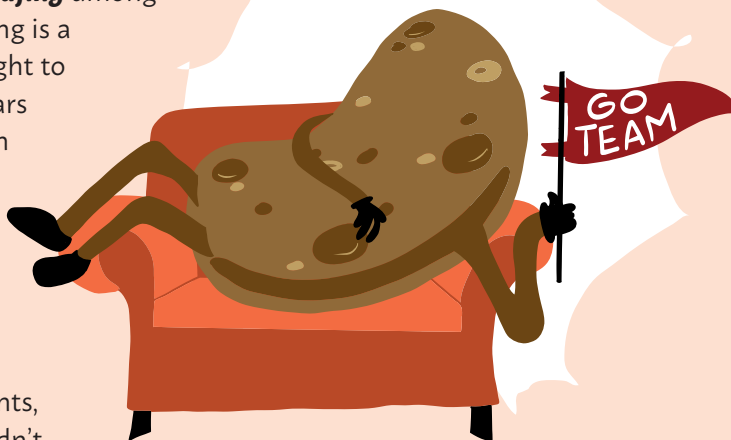
BUILDING COLLECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

When collective accountability is high, the school culture moves from one where the work of the organization is the sum of the individuals to one where the work of individuals is shaped by the collective values, commitments, and goals made with one another.⁷ Building collective accountability is not accomplished through mandates and directives. Rather, it is built intentionally through discussion, modeling, feedback, and persistently communicating a vision where internal accountability defines the culture of the school. When collective accountability exists, team members have strong connections with one another, and they collaborate to leverage the strengths of each team member to meet their goals. They understand that they have not been fully successful until the team is successful. They share best practices and are open to feedback. Most importantly, however, they feel a sense of responsibility to the team and to the organization as a whole.



ADDRESSING SOCIAL LOAFING

Leaders who delay or fail to build collective accountability run a risk of experiencing the ill effects of **social loafing** among their teams. Social loafing is a phenomenon first brought to light over a hundred years ago by Max Ringelmann in his famous rope pulling experiments. Although the comparison of individual and group effort was a secondary interest in his experiments, he noted that people didn't work as hard on rope pulling when they were in groups.⁸



Today, when people in an organization display decreased effort in a group as opposed to the effort they normally exhibit individually, they are known to be socially loafing. It tends to happen when members of a group understand that their work will be reviewed as a group, and not individually. They slack off, have a diminished sense of urgency, and put forth less effort than they would if they were being judged individually. This has been proven repeatedly in numerous studies by different researchers in the decades since the original rope-pulling experiments in 1913.⁹ This is why building an organizational culture



of personal and collective accountability matters. This is a major focus of consequential leadership—the consequence is a more vibrant team of educators supporting each other to improve their impact on what matters to them.

More than likely, you have experienced being a member of a team where there are one or more social loafers holding the team back and causing frustration and dissent among the other members. Examples of social loafing behaviors are described below.

- 1 Slacking off because the slacker knows other team members will pick up the slack
- 2 Blending into the background by remaining silent and not contributing ideas or offering solutions
- 3 Freeriding by waiting for the work to be completed and reaping the benefits of the team's work.
- 4 Bystanding by not offering help to a team member because another teammate will do it



Although social loafing is a complex phenomenon, social loafing can be rendered down to a few powerful causes that can be addressed by leaders. The top causes and suggested leadership solutions follow below:

CAUSE: LACK OF PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY



Social loafing happens when the end result is judged as a group effort, and thus people think they will not be held accountable for their actions.

LEADERSHIP SOLUTION



Provide specific criteria for success on the work and be clear about expectations for both individual contributions and group outcomes. People resort to social loafing when they lack clarity about the criteria for success, how their performance will be judged, or what their role in the work entails.

CAUSE: DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY



Shared responsibility, or collective accountability, is a key element of effective team collaboration, but in larger teams the responsibilities are distributed so widely that people can easily hide or pretend to be contributors to the work.

LEADERSHIP SOLUTION



Provide assistance and support as needed to teams for the division of responsibilities and make the document public to all team members. Create clear public structures and processes that expose the individual work of each member. These may include shared documents, electronic reporting mechanisms for each member, or shared work logs.

CAUSE: SIZE OF THE GROUP



Social loafing occurs when individuals are able to escape personal accountability. The larger the group, the easier and more likely it is for people to slack off and blend into the background.

LEADERSHIP SOLUTION



Avoid creating large groups, even though we want to give everyone the ability to weigh in on an issue, or collect many great ideas, or hear multiple perspectives on a change initiative, all of which are excellent practices. Instead, do it in smaller groups with 5–7 members, if possible, with tight structures.

CAUSE: PERCEPTIONS OF INEQUITY



Social loafing can develop when people perceive that their contributions, thoughts, and ideas are not as valid or helpful as other members of the team. The feeling of being undervalued or disrespected leads to disengagement and disempowerment.

LEADERSHIP SOLUTION



Model and communicate that all voices have value, and all perspectives make the team stronger. Encourage team leads to seek, respect, and respond to the contributions of every team member to avoid social loafing and diminished productivity.

THE HEART OF CONSEQUENTIAL LEADERSHIP



A leader's courage to have a bold vision about improving the learning lives of the students in the school combined with the courage to act is foundational to consequential leadership. At its core, having the courage to act reveals a leader's understanding that actions drive results. Of course, leaders cannot bulldoze over people and be successful, so balancing authority with empathy is critical for improvement. After all, education is a people business. And all people desire to work with authentic leaders who are earnest in considering how their decisions impact the thoughts and feelings of every team member. Through this lens leaders build trust, empower teams with autonomy, and anchor the work to a clear, well-communicated, purpose-driven vision.

Courageous leaders model what it means to have personal accountability, and they build a culture where all staff are expected to do the same. These leaders understand that blaming others, making excuses, and deflecting responsibility have no place in an accountable culture.

Finally, leaders who activate moral, intellectual, disciplined, and empathetic, creative courage build teams who want to engage in meaningful work. They negotiate effectively. They motivate, invigorate, and empower people, deliberately. They are not always perfect or effective, but they know that nothing changes if nothing changes. Consequential leadership and the courage to act go hand in hand, as nothing of consequence can be achieved from leaders lacking the courage to act.

SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR LEADERSHIP IMPERATIVE 1

The self-assessment below is designed to help readers assess their current strengths and opportunities for growth in the key leadership practices, actions, or approaches related to courage, empathy, and accountability. Reflect on your leadership over the last 3 months and assess the extent to which you demonstrate the leadership actions described in survey items 1–7 using the 0–3 rating scale at the top. Record the number of items rated a 3, 2, 1, or 0 at the bottom.

Leadership Imperative 1 Courage, Empathy, Accountability: The Heart of Consequential Leadership					
Item #	Survey Item	0 Not Yet	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Always
1	I demonstrate moral courage by standing up and speaking out in ways that align with my core values.				
2	I use contemporary research to guide or inform my decision making, even if it means changing course or challenging the status quo.				
3	I hold myself and others to high expectations while also showing care and concern for the challenges they may face.				

Leadership Imperative 1 Courage, Empathy, Accountability: The Heart of Consequential Leadership					
Item #	Survey Item	0 Not Yet	1 Rarely	2 Sometimes	3 Always
4	I effectively manage distractions and interruptions to maintain a focus on the work that matters most.				
5	I have an awareness of balancing authority with empathy and recognize that a command-and-control stance will not yield the results I'm seeking.				
6	I explicitly model personal accountability in alignment with the goals.				
7	I intentionally build collective accountability through discussion, modeling, and feedback aligned to the school's vision.				
Totals	Of the 7 items, how many did you rate a 0, 1, 2, 3?				



Visit the companion website at
https://companion.corwin.com/courses/Consequential_Leadership
 for downloadable resources.

NOTES

COURAGE



for the heart

