

Leading With Focus: Following Your North Star

In a world where educational leaders are constantly bombarded with challenges and demands, maintaining a clear and focused leadership approach is crucial. "Leading With Focus" calls for a steadfast commitment to guiding principles, much like sailors using the North Star to navigate uncharted waters. My North Star consists of a focus on the relationships we cultivate each day with our students, staff, and other stakeholders. I strive to do this by having a positive attitude, developing skills in myself and others, and striving to achieve great processes in my school. These three attributes are my compass as I take on the challenging role of the principalship.

The North Star, known for its reliability and constancy, has historically served as a navigational guide. Similarly, leaders can adopt a "North Star" – a set of guiding principles or core values – to steer their schools toward success. This approach requires leaders to have a clear vision and unwavering commitment to their educational mission.

Leading With Focus: A Few Practical Steps

1. Define Your North Star

Begin by identifying the core values and vision that will serve as your North Star. This involves being reflective, defining what you want to be known for, and collaboration with stakeholders to ensure the vision is inclusive and reflective of the school's needs.

- **Vision Statement:** Craft a concise statement that encapsulates your core leadership values and goals.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve teachers, students, and parents in defining the North Star to ensure it resonates with the broader community.

2. Align Strategies with Your North Star

Once the North Star is defined, ensure that all strategies, initiatives, and decisions align with this guiding principle.

- **Strategic Planning:** Develop action plans that directly support the vision.
- **Resource Allocation:** Prioritize resources, time, and efforts on initiatives that advance the North Star.

3. Communicate Consistently

Effective leadership relies on clear and consistent communication. Regularly articulate the vision and its relevance to ongoing initiatives.

- **Celebrate Successes:** Provide updates on progress and how current efforts align with the North Star.

4. Foster a Culture of PLC Work and Accountability

Encourage a culture where all members of the school community hold each other accountable to the shared vision.

- **Reflective Practices:** Implement regular reflection sessions to assess alignment with the North Star.
- **Recognition and Support:** Acknowledge efforts that contribute towards the vision and provide support where needed.

Leading with focus, guided by a North Star, empowers educational leaders to navigate the complexities of their roles with integrity and clarity. By defining a clear vision, aligning strategies, communicating effectively, and fostering a culture of accountability, leaders can create an environment that is both fun and effective, ensuring sustained progress and success for ALL stakeholders involved. At School, adopting such a focused approach can lead to transformative results, benefiting students, staff, and the broader community alike.

As the president of the UASSP this year I am humbled at the opportunity to continue to learn, serve, and strive to help our association be the best it can be.