

Guiding Beliefs for Learning Leaders

The Guiding Beliefs for Learning Leaders identifies the core principles that underlie the critical work of New Jersey's school leaders, including school principals, assistant principals, directors, and supervisors. This document was developed by the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association and the Foundation for Educational Administration in order to promote a greater awareness and understanding of the complex work of school leaders, inform the development of educational policy, and serve as a focus for the delivery of professional development for current and future school leaders.

The term "Learning Leader" is used rather than "Instructional Leader" in order to emphasize that student learning is the central focus for the work of all school leaders.

NJPSA and FEA recognize that each school and district faces its own unique challenges and circumstances, and that the specific roles of various school leaders will vary somewhat from district to district. However, in every school and district it is critical that all school leaders work together in a collaborative and collegial manner to address the guiding beliefs.

1. The learning leader fosters the creation of a common vision of clearly defined and measurable outcomes that is reflective of the core standards that all students should achieve. The vision must set high standards for the academic, social, emotional, and physical development of all students while acknowledging the unique talents and abilities of each individual learner.
2. The learning leader makes the improvement of teaching and learning the school's and district's top priority, while ensuring that essential operational and administrative tasks are effectively addressed. The learning leader ensures that all teachers are provided with the necessary tools as well as the time to work collaboratively in a professional learning community in order to deliver quality instruction and to develop, administer, analyze, and use quality formative and summative assessments of student learning.
3. The learning leader models a commitment to shared leadership and shared accountability by actively seeking out and channeling the unique talents and abilities of each staff member in order to support a common vision of educational excellence and continuous improvement.
4. The learning leader creates an environment that is conducive to learning by fostering a culture of trust, mutual respect, and ethical behavior among all stakeholders in the school and district community and by ensuring that all stakeholders are able to function in a safe and supportive setting.
5. The learning leader promotes continuous school improvement by engaging all stakeholders in the identification of areas of strength and areas representing growth opportunities, ensuring the appropriate use of data in decision making and encouraging collaboration, innovation, and risk-taking.
6. The learning leader fosters the highest levels of performance from all staff members by providing meaningful and ongoing feedback regarding staff performance, supporting targeted and sustained professional growth for all staff members, and regularly recognizing and celebrating key achievements.
7. The learning leader ensures that all initiatives are part of a coherent effort to achieve a clearly defined vision, that all initiatives are given the appropriate priority and allocation of resources, and that all stakeholders understand the relationship between each initiative and the visions of the school and district.
8. The learning leader recognizes and embraces the need to continuously engage the broader school and district community, including parents and community leaders, as critical partners in achieving the school's vision.