

Positive School Leadership: Implications for Effectiveness and Inclusion

Karen Seashore Louis
MASE Fall Conference
October 26, 2019

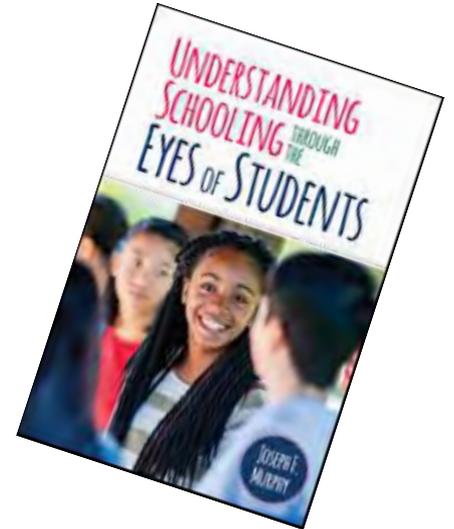
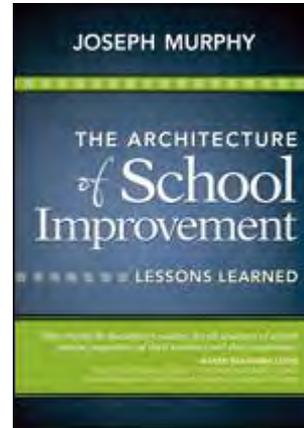
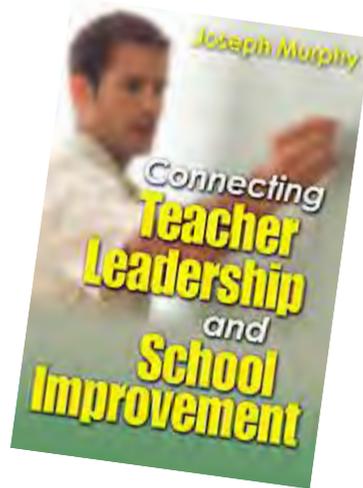
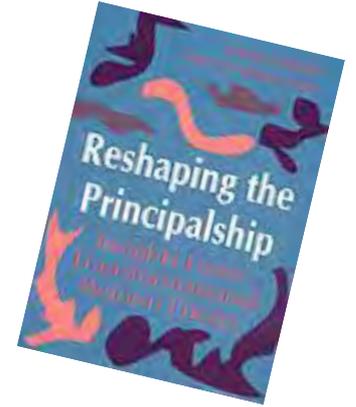
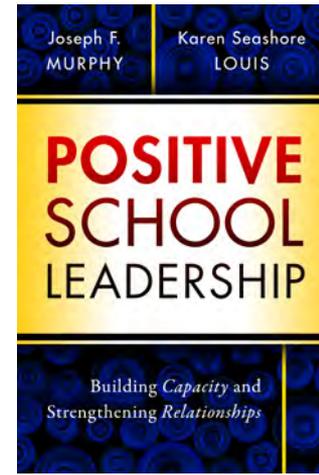
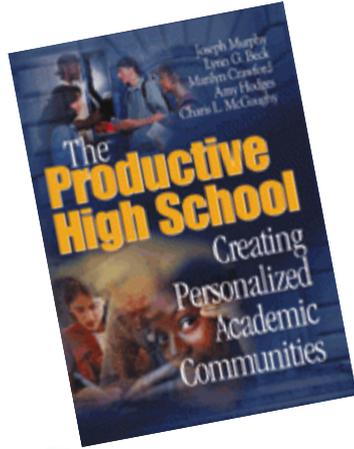
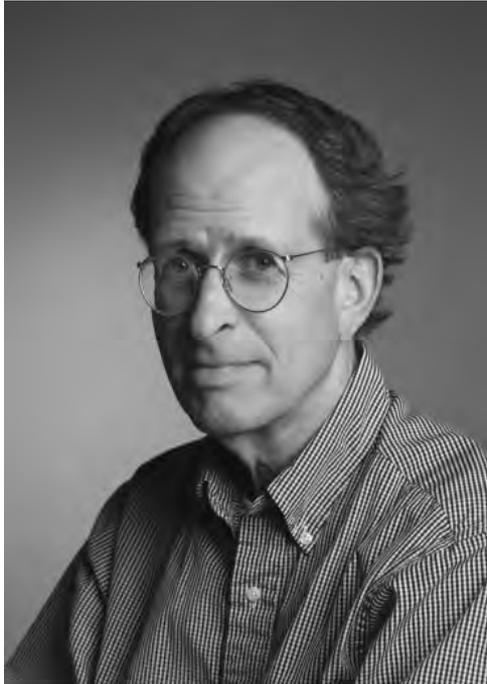


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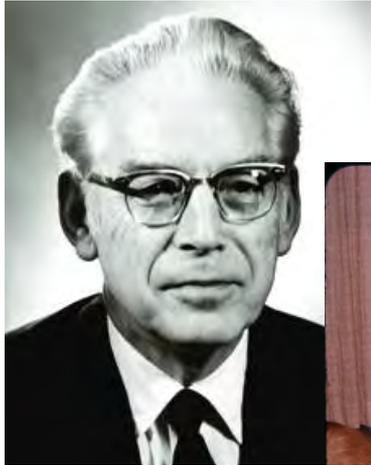
Driven to DiscoverSM

We Never Walk Alone: Joe Murphy...

Colleague and friend....



My other influences in this talk...



- Dr. Stanley E. Seashore (1915-1999), whose career focused on a single problem of research and practice: creating effective work environments
- Christine Sigrid Seashore (1952-), life long educator: licensed in math, special education, and ESL.
- My students, most of whom are practicing educators dedicated to improving the lives of all students.

POSITIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:

**A RESEARCH-BASED STORY
IN 6 CHAPTERS....**

Chapter 1: Empirically Grounded Assumptions

WHERE DO I START?

ASSUMPTION #1

Some magic takes place
in the crucible of
leadership.

Gardner & Schermerhorn, 2004, p. 277)

ASSUMPTION #2

Behind the “magic” are
routines that build and
sustain positive
relationships.

Karen Seashore, 2019

Assessing Inclusive Effectiveness

Assumption #3

Schools should develop students' academic and intellectual capacities and predispositions

Assumption #4

Schools should develop students capacities to contribute to social and civic life



“FLOURISHING”

ASSUMPTION #5

Leaders who focus on instruction and tests create a narrow perspective on teachers' work at the expense of broader agency and learning

(most recently, Rigby, Andrews-Larsen & Chen, 2019)



Chapter 2:
**WHAT ARE THE
FOUNDATIONS OF
POSITIVE LEADERSHIP?**

Positive ≠ Optimism....

“It’s a shift from wish-based optimism to reality-based hope”

K. Tippett, *Becoming Wise*, p. 250



Half Empty: A “Problem Solving” Approach
Half Full: What Assets Should We Build On

SITUATE YOURSELF

- 1. As a special education leader, how often in the last week have others approached you with “half empty” issues? (problems) or “half full issues” (we can make this even better).**
- 2. In what ways has your leadership work during the last week focused on “half empty” versus “half full”?**
- 3. How characteristic is that of your work setting?**

Both Necessary -- What is the Balance?

Popular Theories

data-driven, outcome focused, leader-centric

Today's leaders are poorly served by conventional management theories and practices. Instead of helping [to] manage...complexity...the supposed solutions only seem to make things worse.

- Marioux & Tollman, 2014

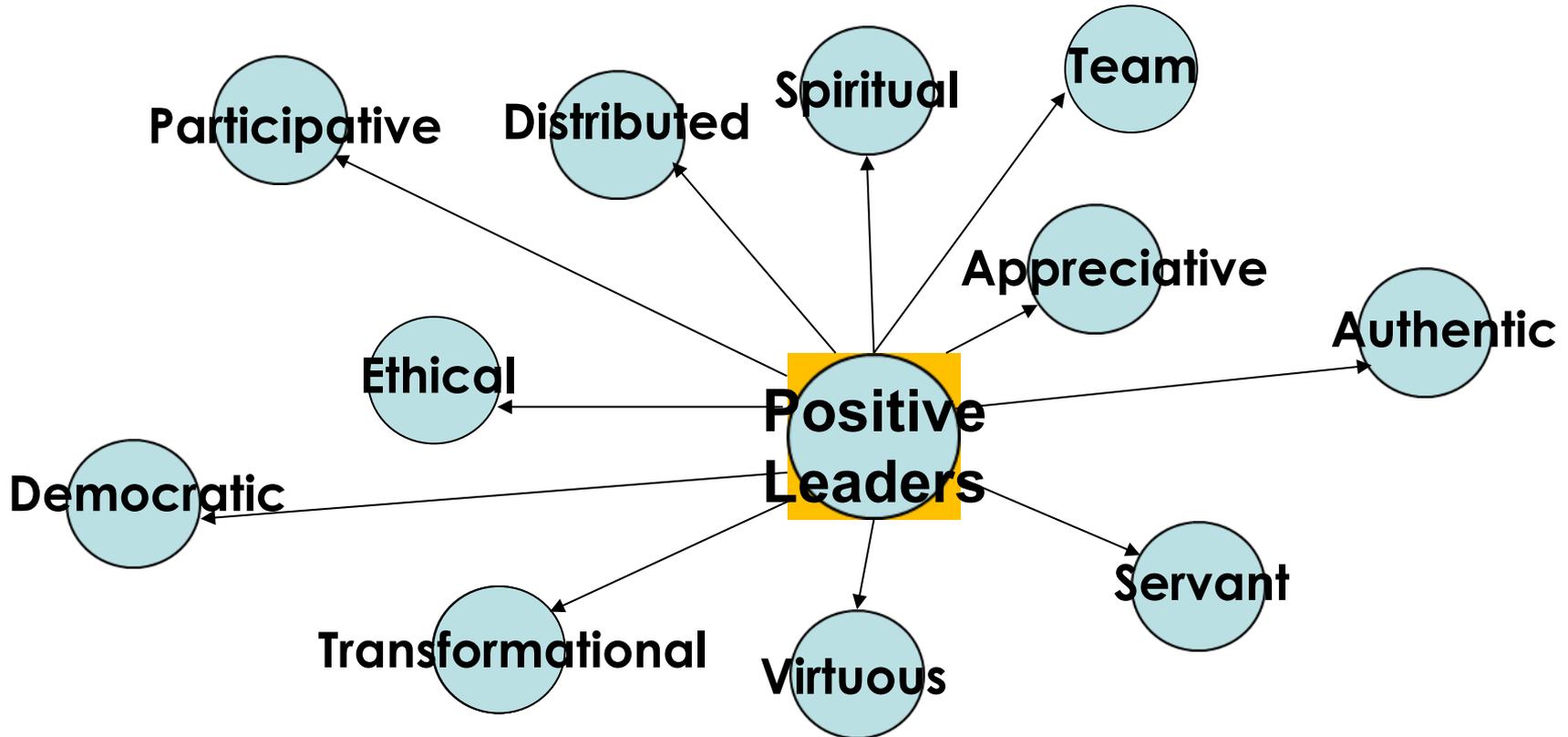
Positive Alternative

asset and growth-based

Legitimate leadership creates a positive cycle through which employee well-being affects positive business outcomes that feed back into sustaining employee well-being and the legitimation of leaders.

- Keyes, Hysom & Lupo, 2000





The “Character” of Positive Leadership (PSL)

- *Asset-Based*: **Positive Orientation**
- *Value-Based/Transcendent*: **Moral Orientation**
- *Care and Growth-Based*: **Relationship Orientation**
- *Anchored in Service*: **Stewardship Orientation**

[For more, read our blog:

<https://www.tcpress.com/blog/principles-positive-school-leadership/>]

Building on Virtues....

- PSL is *ONLY* in play when others ***EXPERIENCE*** it as such;
- PSL focuses on principles for ***ACTION*** rather than the ***STRUCTURES*** within which action may occur;
- PSL is ***COMMUNITARIAN***, balancing individual and collective needs.

Chapter 3:
**POSTIVE LEADERSHIP AND
ASSET-BUILDING
BEHAVIORS**

SUPPORTING BEHAVIORS: *ESSENTIAL* TO PSL

- **Modeling** (observable)
- **Acting Authentically** (consistent)
- **Establishing Values** (explicit/implicit)
- **Developing Relationships** (with all members)



CARING: PSL BEHAVIOR IN ACTION

- **Positive Leadership Caring** behavior is...
 - **Attentive to others**; Understanding of others; For the benefit of others
 - **Dynamic**: behavior is situated, mutual, reciprocal
 - **Authentic**: when consistent and perceived by others
 - **Ethically based**

Our Contribution

(Smylie, Murphy & Louis, 2017; Louis, Murphy & Smylie, 2016; Louis & Murphy, 2017; Smylie, Murphy & Louis, in press)

- Focus on caring **leaders** (rare in ed)
- Focus on the **organizational** outcomes as well as the **individual** and **interpersonal** (from organizational sciences)
- Focus on the **impact of caring on others** (nursing/social work)

Survey Items Related to Principal Caring (Alpha = .916)	Dimension
My school administrator develops and atmosphere of caring and trust. (TRUST)	.764
My school administrator is supportive of my decisions a)nt discipline problems. (SITUATIONALITY)	.641
My school administrator ensures wide participation in decisions about school improvement. (AUTHENTICITY)	.645
When teachers are struggling, our principal provides support for them. (SITUATIONALITY)	.644
In general, I believe my principal's motives and intentions are good. (AUTHENTICITY)	.715
I feel free to discuss work problems with my principal without fear of having it used against me later. (MOTIVATIONAL DISPLACEMENT)	.712
If my principal promised to do something, s/he would follow through. (TRUST)	.714
Our principal is responsive to the needs and concerns expressed by community members. (ATTENTIVENESS)	.506
Cronbach's Alpha	.926

In Schools with Caring Leaders....



Teachers are:

- **More accountable:** likely to say that they have collective responsibility for students (as contrasted with personal responsibility in their classroom)
- **More focused on supporting students:** likely to say that the school's resources are equitably distributed to support the students who need them most



Students are:

- **More likely to do well academically**

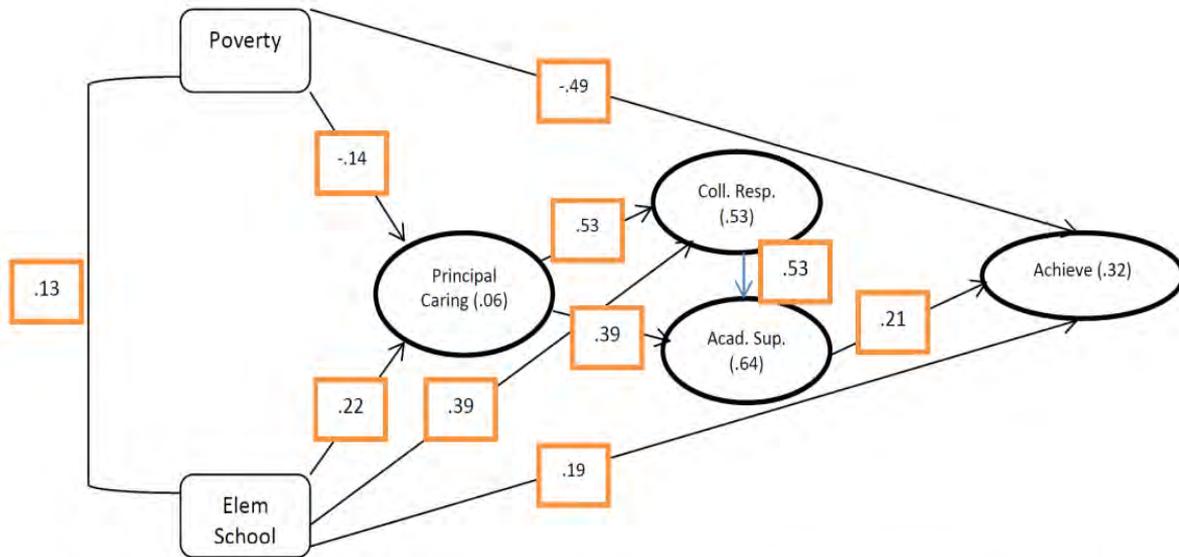


Figure 2: Path Model with Principal Caring, Student Academic Support, Collective Responsibility and Achievement (paths sig .10 or better; R2 shown in parentheses)

Where Principals Say They Trust Teachers' Professional Competence...

Teachers are....

- More likely to say that they have a caring principal
- More likely to say that resources are equitably distributed
- More likely to be places where teachers report a capacity for organizational learning

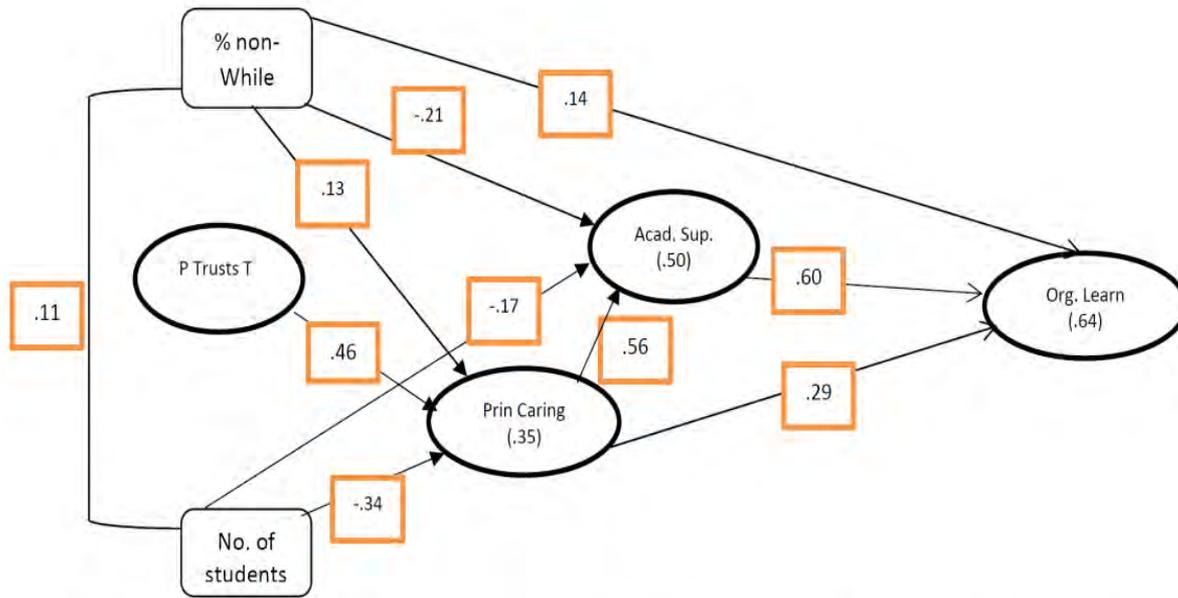


Figure 1: Path Model with Principal Trust in Teachers, Principal Caring, Student Academic Support, and Organizational Learning (paths sig .10 or better; R2 in parentheses)

THE BIG CONCLUSION



**LEADER CARING
BEHAVIORS
LEAD TO MORE
EFFECTIVE
SCHOOLS**

Situate Yourself

- Where in the last week or so have you experienced caring interactions among adults in schools?
- Between adults and students?
- Where is the last week or so have you experienced adult interactions that are uncaring?
- Between adults and students?

Chapter 4:
**WHY IS PSL BASED ON
SOCIAL EXCHANGE?**

Social Exchange Theory (in brief)

1. Every relationship is based on giving and receiving desired rewards
2. Rewards can be both extrinsic (visible approval or valued goods) or intrinsic (emotional investments)
3. The exchange of rewards creates “diffuse future obligations”
4. When repeated over time, ***exchanges create trusting and mutually committed relationships***

It's Empirical: Trust....

-is associated with a wide variety of school improvement outcomes.
-creates feedback cycles in which mutual obligations create ***increasingly positive associations and even greater interpersonal commitment.***

It's Empirical: Commitment...

- Exchanges between leaders and others create valued *reciprocal outcomes*,
- Which leads to *member satisfaction with the leader and*
- ***Commitment to their shared vision and rewards,***
- ***Which reinforces and deepens a connection with and trust in the leader***

WHAT KIND OF EXCHANGE??



Exchange and Leader Influence

Extrinsic:
Weaker in
Schools

Positional Power

-  Legitimate Power
"The Boss"
-  Reward Power
"Bribery"
-  Coercive Power
"Protection Racket"
-  Resource Power
"Controlling Access"

Personal Power

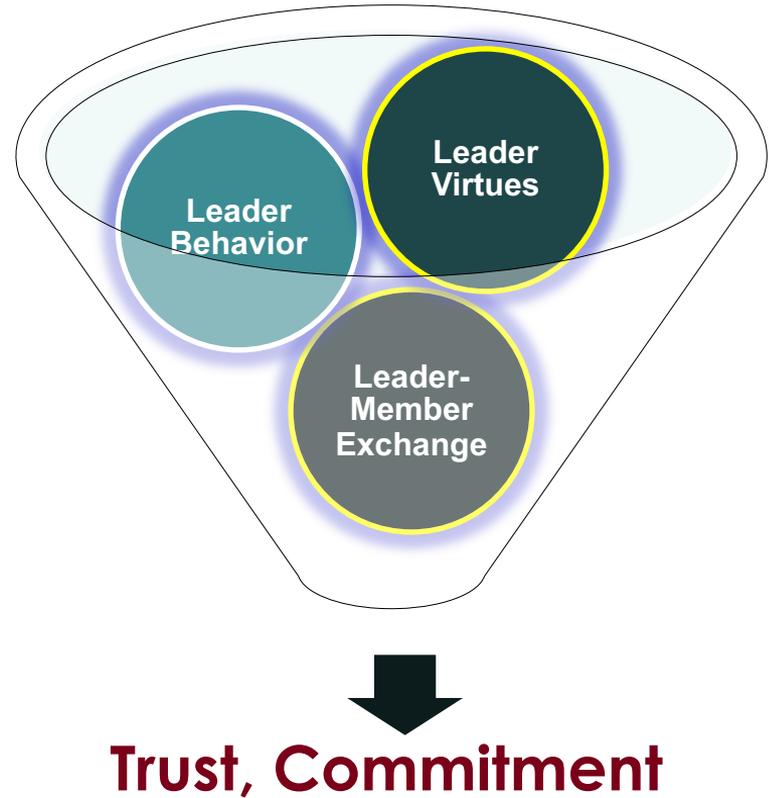
-  Referent Power
"I like you"
-  Expert Power
"Special abilities"
-  Information Power
"It's what you know"
-  Connection Power
"... and who you know"

Intrinsic:
Stronger
in Schools

Relationships and Exchange: Situating Yourself

- What relationship experiences have increased (or undermined) your trust in how well your school/district will meet the needs of teachers and students?
- What relationship experiences have increased your commitment to your school or district?

**THE
BIG
CONCLUSION:
PSL develops
the power of
purpose**



Chapter 5:
**HOW POSITIVE
RELATIONSHIPS HARNESS
PURPOSE AND BUILD
IMPROVEMENT CULTURES**

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS = FLOURISHING STAFF

High quality leader-staff relationships are associated with:

- Individual Self-efficacy
- Resilience
- Individual empowerment
- Retention

Positive Relationships = Motivated Staff

High quality leader-staff relationships are associated with:

- Meaningfulness
- “Organizational citizenship behavior” (OCB)
- “Job Crafting”

Positive Leaders Change Teams

- Psychological safety
- Team vision
- Task orientation
- Support for Innovation
- Ownership

**WHY IS THIS CRITICAL IN
SPED LEADERSHIP?**



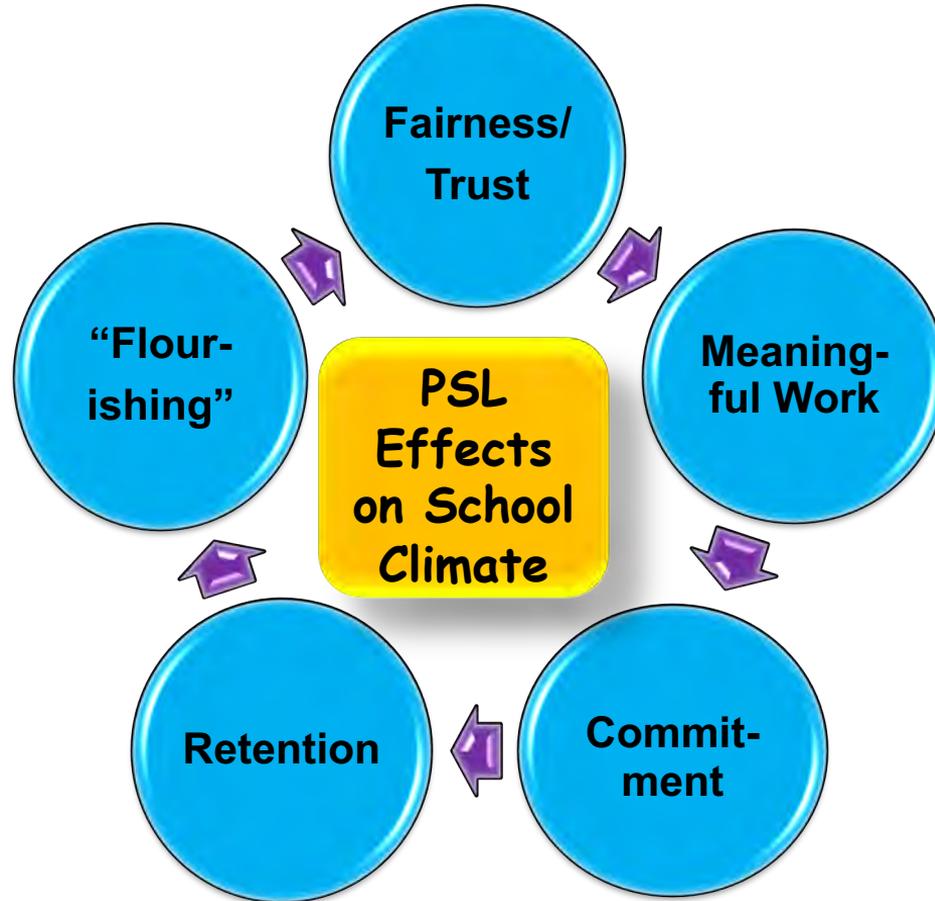
**Positive
School
Leadership**



**Meaningful
Work**



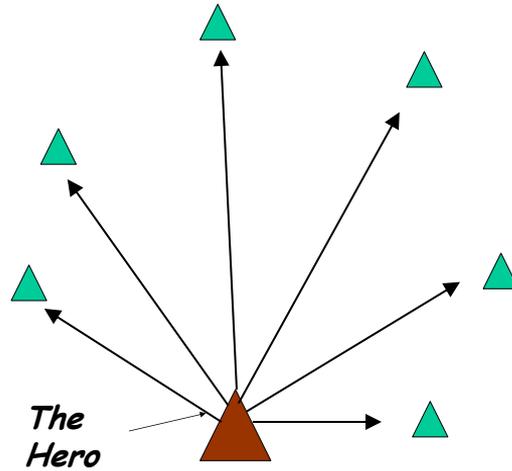
**Team Self-
Concept/Mental
Models**



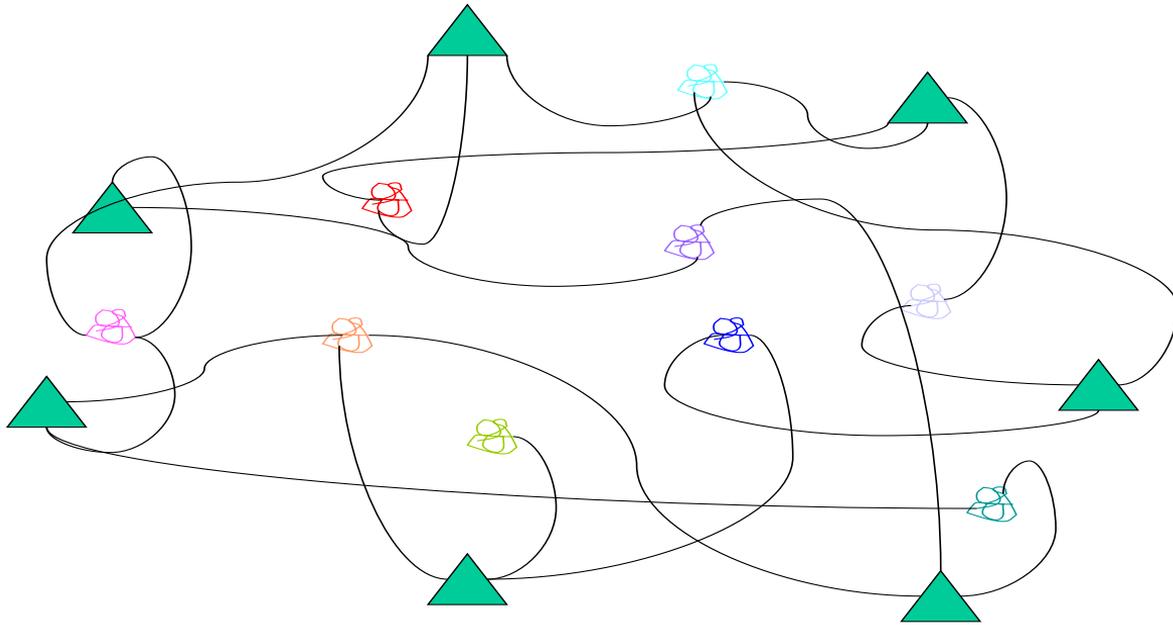
POSITIVE CLIMATE IS NOT ENOUGH

1. Without deeper organizational identity, individuals and teams will pursue their own ends....
2. Teams can become a source of friction and conflict when they vie for position and their own interest....

Conventional Management Assumptions



The Alternative Picture....An Interdependent Culture



PSL Combines “Leadership” and “Management” to Shape Culture



THE BIG CONCLUSIONS

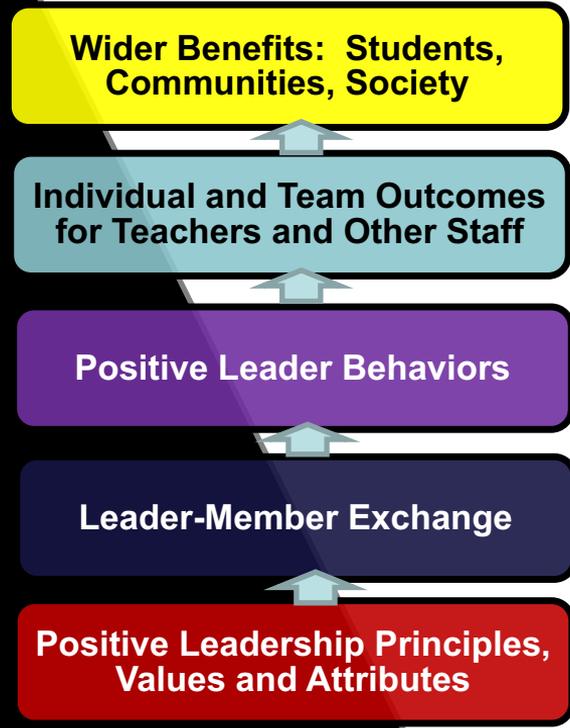
1. What Positive School Leaders do is based on ***authentic knowledge and understanding*** of others;
2. PSL understanding is based on ***attentiveness to well-being***;
3. PSL behavior is motivated by ***supporting and developing others***;
4. PSL behavior toward individuals has a ***broad impact on the work environment*** of schools,
5. Which subsequently increases **desired outcomes** of the collective work

Chapter 6:
**PSL, SCHOOL
EFFECTIVENESS AND
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

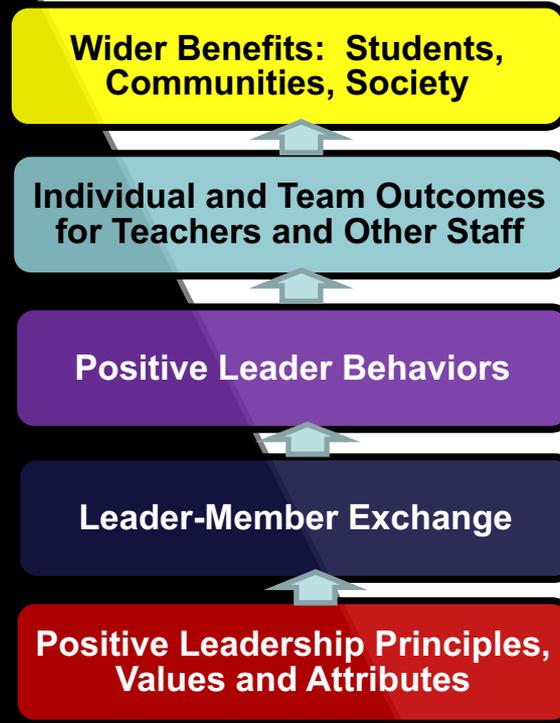
**POSTIVE SCHOOL
LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR IS
ASSOCIATED WITH
“HARD” AND “SOFT”
RESULTS**

Positive School Leadership

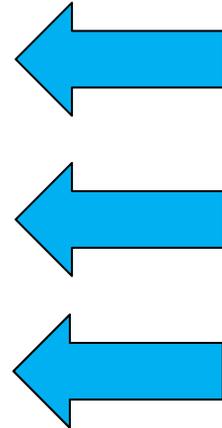
A Strength of
Ed. Research



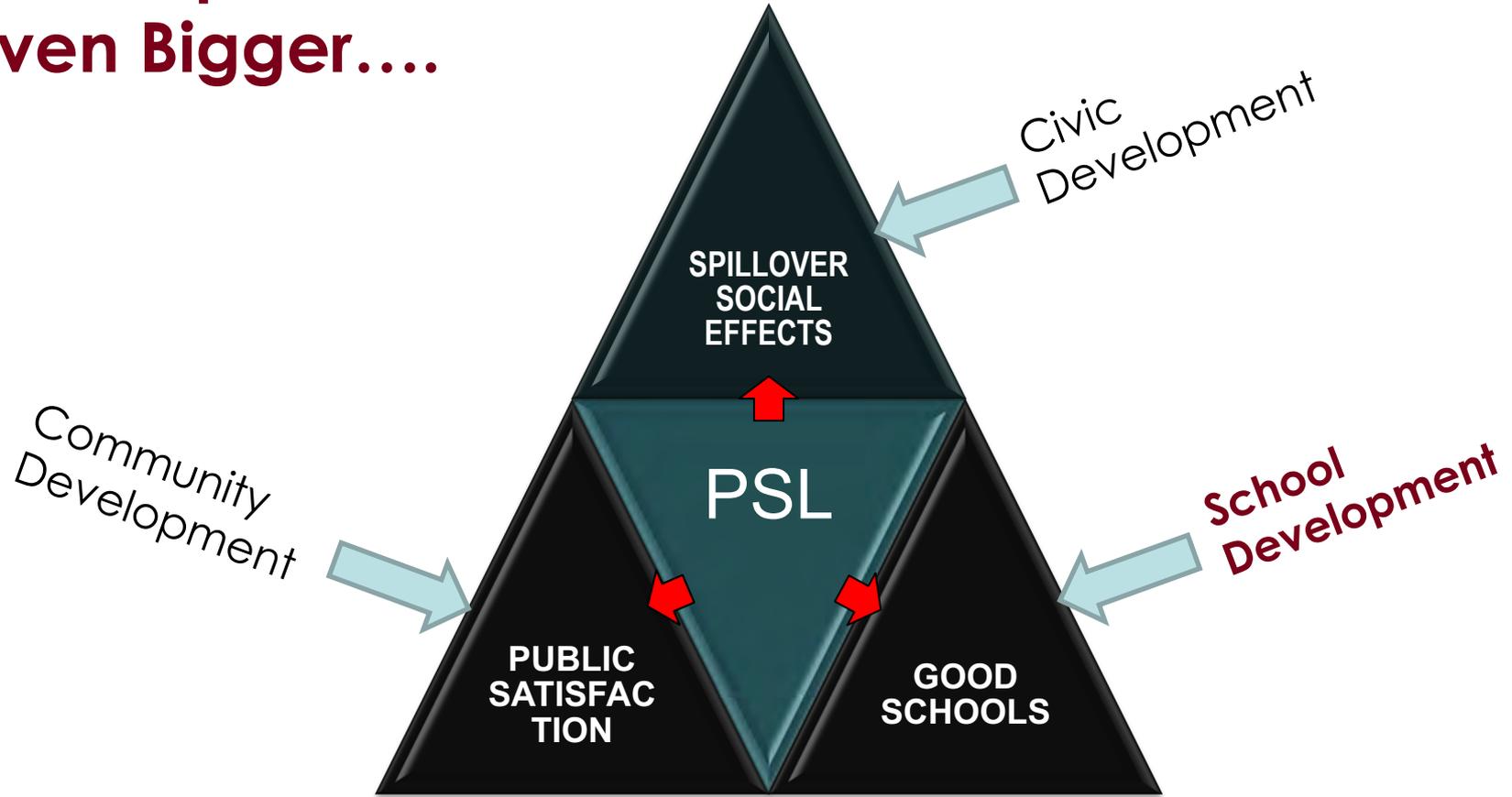
Positive School Leadership



Weaker Areas in Ed. Research



The Empirical End Is Even Bigger....



**WHERE DOES
SPED WANT TO
GO.....**

Connecting PSL
to leadership
standards.....



Modeling: Illuminating the Behavioral Path



- (1) SPED Leaders become examples of someone who can be relied upon and admired
- (2) SPED Leaders project positive emotions—hope and resiliency
- (3) SPED Leaders influence culture by setting expectations for behavior.

Acting Authentically: Being Consistent and True

Behavioral integrity...is the perceived degree of congruence between the values expressed by words and those expressed through action. It is the perceived level of match or mismatch between the espoused and the enacted. (Simons, 1999, p. 91)

Every inauthentic action has an impact on others....



Establishing Values: Action Is Required



SPED Leaders “bring values to life through daily action rather than mission statements. Routine behaviors...allow all members to experience values as the blueprints or foundations for action”
(Murphy & Louis, 2017)

Developing Relationships: Behavioral Strategies



People will forget what you
said, people will forget what
you did, but people will never
forget how you made them feel.

MAYA ANGELOU

- Minimize control routines and emphasize trust. (Quinn et al., 2000, p. 153)
- Are good at reading opportunities for people...to get to know one another. (Harter et al., 2003, p. 219)
- Develop a 'web of inclusion' (Kaczmarski & Cooperrider, 1997, p. 255), and reach out to disenfranchised or discontented members. (Bass, 2012, p. 84)

SO WHAT?

Culture in Less Inclusive Schools

- SPED teachers are less likely to experience strong teams in their school
- SPED teachers are more likely to report stressful working conditions
- Most other school-based professionals are relatively inexperienced in SPED
- Negative effects of a “testing regime” are most powerful in SPED
- Colleague/other’s perceptions of SPED students are often negative
- School-wide reforms/innovations in instruction focus on non-SPED students

POSITIVE SPED LEADERSHIP CONTRIBUTES TO REALISTIC AND INCLUSIVE HOPE

- Optimism = the belief that things will stay the same or get a bit better
- Reality = failure is intrinsic, healthy, normal and necessary
- Hope = resilience in the face of reality that include struggle.

Conventional Leadership



Vision

The way we say we get things done

Strategy

Shared values Goals

Policies

Structures

Procedures

Beliefs

Shared assumptions

Perceptions

Tradition

Perceptions

Norms

Values

The way we really get things done

Unwritten rules

Stories

Feelings

Positive School Leadership

Next Steps Could Benefit from University-School Collaboration

1. **Practical understanding** of the relational building blocks of SPED leadership in inclusive schools
2. Richer, thicker reports of **what positive SPED leaders do**
3. Expanded understanding of **the impact of SPED PSL** on individuals and teams – beyond instruction
4. Sensitivity to **context** and cultural differences



**Thank You For
Listening....**

klouis@umn.edu



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