Nine Characteristics of Effective Systems Leaders

Incentives and Payoffs
- Newsletter
- Use of social media
- Success stories
- Working toward a meaningful goal
- Data- local data contextualized in regional, state and national- Consistent benchmarking is helpful
- Remember to celebrate goals that have been achieved
- Be transparent- share what you can to share ownership
- Equitable opportunities
- Rewards/ credit
- Stories are so important
- 10 to 30 second success videos for social media and more
- Hire for attitude, train for skill- “We want the hungry ones!”

Empowerment
- Listen and acknowledge idea generation- give credit to show value of contribution
- Celebrate the successes (even small) in the process
- Identify who needs to be at the table & invite to participate
- Success is the team, failure is the individual
- Share the power of the collective across the co electorate
- Communicate is important in establishing opportunities to listen. Use more technology i.e. zoom conferences
- Being open to new ideas and ways that don’t fit the “norm”
- Volunteer to be of lots of sub committees
- Is this also distributive leadership?
- Team meetings and correspondence- Allow team members to rise as leaders so systems don’t live or die by 1 individual
- Understand the role of power dynamics and try to create idea equity
- Assure all voices are heard- So important! This way everyone owns the outcomes and actions
- All voices are heard, but ensure emphasis is on the collective goal
- Set team goals rather than just individual ones

Co-Creation of Structure to Support the Work
- Work groups with “deliverables” list services
- I would like to see our definition/ belief or value of the term “partner with stakeholders.” In order to achieve the outcomes, we must define our beliefs and values of how & what it looks like when we partner.
- Develop interconnected systems
• Need to create appropriate systems to maintain the energy once systems are designed. Typically, our execution (full-complete) sucks.
• This allows us to achieve the maximum impact
• Understand diversity of backgrounds and goals to ensure progress
• Ask how you can help before asking for what you want
• As you work collaboratively with stakeholders there needs to be check-in’s to ensure all assess the collaborative observation. Don’t assume all are experiencing the same thing.
• Build facilitation capacities to assure all heard and work reflects the whole
• Collaboration vs. cooperation

A Focus on Results
• Data inputs tied to outcomes
• SMART implementation strategies
• Reminding ourselves and one another of the end goal
• Focus on the solutions not the problems
• Meetings- talk goals, results, new ideas
• How or what do you contribute to provide current data to guide the conversation?
  o Capture it as you move through process and continue to reflect it back
• Be incremental to get to the big goal
• Who helps others stay focused?
• Accountability
• Targeted progress goal updates
• Begin with the end in mind- “What’s your why?”

Effective Communication
• Broaden the table to make sure diverse perspectives are well represented.
• Active listening for diverse input!
• Listen to understand not respond
• Invite conflicting opinions to fully understand challenges!
• Agree to disagree and the disagreement may push the organization to grow.
• Keep expanding the circle- seek out naysayers and create a culture of civility, in which all viewpoints can be heard!
• Listen to learn new points of view
• Include students beyond committees and let them know their concerns are heard (acknowledgement)
• Culture of respect
• Provide multi-model input format and for all types of contributors to your team
• What kind of forums/vehicles can we develop to share the narratives
• Become fluent in all points of view
• Diversity
• Effective communication can include developing new shared definitions
Relationship and Trust
- Peer to peer mentoring! Establish open door policies between facility, staff and students and commit to it.
- Relationship support- “Move to Action”
- Ensure voice for all stakeholders (i.e. education, business, students) without assumptions or judgement
- Five Dysfunctions of a Team- Patrick Lencioni
- Everyone at the table has a contribution or they wouldn’t be there
- Five facets of trust- 1) Openness 2) Benevolence 3) Competence 4) Reliability 5) Honesty
  - Hard to build, easy to lose
- Ice breakers and ownership of decision making
- Celebrate success and contributions of all
- Promote transparency; be willing to support innovation; trust that failure is part of the learning process.
- Assign staff across systems to complete projects- invest money
- Support mutually beneficial incentives for stakeholders

Unwavering Attention to DEI
- Share the data on our DEI- frequently and stop data censorship
- Authentic student voice to understand DEI elements
- Easier said than done... we constantly have to check ourselves on this
- Acknowledge historic, solo cultural systems of privilege and oppression and the colonial lenses our systems of success have been developed within
- Embrace the diverse populations and what they can uniquely bring to the table
  - How do we really, in practice, operationalize this systematically?
- Does DEI impact the bigger vision or does the bigger vision impact DEI?
- Being intentional with hiring efforts to ensure campus faculty, staff and administration reflect the campus diversity
- Who am I? Challenge helps identify gaps
- Be intentional in a focus on equity and inclusion
  - And include community learning approach as a way to practice inclusion
- Culture- what you allow!
- Examining
  - What we do and need to continue
  - What we should stop doing
  - What we start doing
- Probably need diversity and cultural proficiency exercises within the group meetings

Open Mindset
- This is essential to building strong teams and partnerships- looking for new ways of seeing and acting together
- Essential to changing mindsets and systems
- Embracing includes acceptance and clear definitions
• Open and growth mindset
• Allow various approaches and support innovative mindsets
• Ambiguity is one of the greatest challenges to overcome in early stages of this work
• How do we celebrate failure? - Failure is a step to success
• Trust is foundational need to mindfully, deliberately, faithfully nurture strategic relationships
• Do our K-12 systems foster this?
• Questions should be embraced
• Really try to listen even to those who may have a different opinion or end goal
• Find ways to learn from perspectives you don’t regularly connect with
• Also, embrace how “learning” looks like in diverse cultures
• This is essential- learning works both ways- we have a lot to learn from our students. They may have ideas on how to improve our institutions

System Thinking
• Maintain focus on vision
• Especially nuance of the context for education being different from that of employers, non-profits and public realm
• Short term and long-term goals allow an understanding that at times you must remain focused to the end
• Forests have trees, but they also have birds, mammals, insects and the other parts of the ecosystem. You need to constantly look for all parts of the ecosystem you are working in to continue to uncover what needs to be done to move forward.
• Re-visit strategies when they are not working
• Every system is perfectly designed to produce the outcomes it achieves
• Difficult to focus the lens in and out but imperative
• Look for the points of intersect
• How do we achieve this with consensus?
• Start with end game goal. Go bigger. Work backwards.
• Celebrate multiple ways to support the “big picture”
• Flexibility is key. Need to be willing to shift/ change as things change
• Involving the right people to expand the vision and keep “all the balls in the air”
• Important to recognize the timeliness of when systems are created. Inherent dynamics need to be moderated by external context