

School leaders will tell you that time is the most precious resource of all. School leadership is often a battle between what needs to be done on any given day versus what should be done to ensure the school embraces its mission, vision and values.

Exceptional leaders take the time to create a community of teachers that embraces the challenges of growth and change. They create communities that share a vision. Leaders establish school cultures that inspire a community of learners that will learn and collaborate with one another. This all requires extraordinary energy and time from all, but especially the leader. There is a deep commitment to the *time* required to create a culture where employees feel valued, trusted and respected. School leaders must protect the time required to encourage and guide teachers to explore and to become the best that they can become. This means they provide opportunities for growth, meaningful guidance, achievable goals and authentic recognition and celebration.

Leaders must know how to balance and organize their work if they are going to be able to become successful decision makers. They must be able to continuously feel the pulse of the school and take the time to evaluate the needs of the school and the school community's members—students, faculty, staff and parents. They must have the time and the ability to listen respectfully to the professional teaching staff and others, even (especially) if they do not agree.

One of the most important characteristics of a successful school leader is the ability to take time for self-reflection. And, they must dedicate time to their own growth just as much as they must commit to the growth of those around them. With the constant changes in education, leaders must make time to keep up with current research.

Most of all, the exceptional school leader is one who can budget and invest the time required to build the personal relationships needed to create trust, a shared vision and, ultimately, a community where everyone celebrates the joy of learning.