HOW TO START TRANSFORMING YOUR SCHOOL

by:
Mary Ann S. Aclado
Master Teacher I, Mariveles National High School – Poblacion

In the country, we have been hearing this rhetoric that change is coming, and this makes people excited of the changes that will happen that could improve their lives. It is not just a senseless rhetoric, but people see it as a promise that gives a sense of hope.

But how can we really achieve a meaningful change? What are the things we need to prioritize?

One area that we can start is the school. School is a place where great minds are shaped, and great and noble ideas are shared and implemented. Through the power of education, we can start building our future by building the minds of the future generations.

Building future generations means that these young minds must be guided by capable and transformative teachers who also believes in their own capacity in the idea that things can change, and students can help make that happen.

Creating teacher with this sense of purpose means they need to feel supported by a person (or institution) who can set an example on how to be transformative. A school wants
change to happen among their students should be guided or lead by a transformational leader.

How can we describe a transformational leader?

According to an article written by Cashin, et al. (2000) they cited the definition given by Leithwood (1992) that transformational leadership exhibits significance in the aspects of collaboration activities and creates a harmonious interaction with teacher with the purpose of creating and achieving goals for developing the school and the instruction. They further added that a transformational leader in school must set example for being honest, loyal, fair and believes in justice, equality and human rights.

Here in this definition, a transformational leader is not just someone who leads and creates achievement but it involves a few pivotal characteristics.

In another article by Denmark (2018), she cited these seven discrete characteristics formulated by Leithwood (1994). The qualities are as follows:

1. Builds vision for the schools and implements goals

When we want change, the first thing that should be clear is the vision that we want to achieve. The leader must be the one to believe that this is achievable by making sure that realistic goals are set and followed.
2. Creates a school culture of productivity

Once the leader has set the goals to achieve the vision, the leader must start developing a culture towards the achievement of goals. The leader must learn to persuade, support and build and lead a community that believes and acts to achieve what is needed for them to accomplish. Results must always be seen as a tool not a burden.

3. Provides stimulation for intellectual engagement

A transformational leader is not a mere commandant. He or she is not elected or appointed to be a command-giver and just let and sometimes force his or her colleagues to follow them. Instead, the leader must learn how to listen and provide challenging opportunities to stimulate the internal motivation and engage the colleagues intellectually to work actively and collaboratively with the school community in creating valuable results.

4. Offers support for every individual

A leader has set a culture and engaged colleagues to work positively towards the vision, but it is inevitable to face some hurdles along the process. The leader must be ready to give support tailored to the need of the individual needing it. The leader must learn to assess and evaluate through proper monitoring in a collaborative manner. Support should be given generously so that colleagues and the community will not feel alone in the process.

5. Models the significant practices and values of the organization

This could be one of the most important characteristics of a good transformational leader. Leaders must be true leaders by setting example of the values and practices of the organization. The leader should lead actively, efficiently and effectively.

6. Demonstrates expectation for high performance
An example of values must not be for compliance but instead it is an imbibed attitude. Mediocrity must not be a standard. Leader should be a leader in performing the best at all times.

7. Develops systems to build open communication for decision-making

A leader must not feel special or must be put on a pedestal. The leader must mingle, listen and share. Collaboration and designation are keys to make sure that there is no monopoly of ideas. No person has the ultimate answer to everything. Every person needs someone and sometimes a community to provide solutions or innovations along the process of achieving the goals and realizing the vision.

These are just seven characteristics to mold a transformational leader. A leader is not a special person. The leader is a person who knows how to influence positively the community he or she is in. The leader is a person who works effectively with the highest standards in realizing the vision.

Change can always come and can always happen. It takes time. It takes a lot of preparation and learnings. A future of students can always be improved if we just start creating a school community for children with teachers, leaders and other stakeholders working together in realizing the vision set by everyone.

References:


https://www.advanc-ed.org/source/transformational-leadership-matter-perspective