

# Tips for Stepping into Leadership

The role of a leader is one of great responsibility. These tips can help us fully step in with intention, dedication and courage.

**PRACTICE APPRECIATION.** Appreciation and recognition are key to us feeling motivated in the workplace. Practice appreciation for your staff, colleagues, boss, school, organization and those you serve.

**UNITE** behind your common purpose. Whether it is values, your mission statement, or a team mantra, people thrive when grounded by a common purpose.

**ESTABLISH A CULTURE** of giving and receiving feedback, both constructive and corrective. This can foster a culture of learning, growth and development for all. And the feedback is for leaders, too—how can we solicit feedback from our staff?

**COMMUNICATE WITH CARE.** Especially in our increasingly digital world, our ability to communicate carefully and effectively is critical. Pay attention to greetings, and tone, in both written and verbal messages, in addition to the messages we send nonverbally.

**BALANCE YOUR TEAM TIME.** Although there is always a lot of information to distribute when we meet with our staff, resist the urge to spend most of your time talking at them. Create a healthy balance and ensure there is also time spent on sharing successes, addressing challenges and partaking in activities that support teambuilding and group dynamics.

**LEAD BY EXAMPLE.** Be the change you wish to see. Enter each day with the same intention, dedication and hustle you want to see exemplified from your staff.

**STUDY UP.** An empathetic, effective leader knows his or her team. We know what's going on with them, what they need, how they may respond to something or the best way for them to receive information. Make one-on-one time to get to know their motivations and professional goals—create conditions where they can thrive.

**HOLD THE BAR HIGH.** Having high expectations can be relatively easy for leaders. The harder part is threefold: ensuring you have clearly communicated the expectations, then providing what is needed for success, then being at the ready to help if obstacles get in the way.

**GET OUT OF THE WAY.** Communicate clear expectations and strong measurable goals and empower staff with the tools they need to achieve. Then, get out of their way. It is important people feel they have a voice, a contribution and a sense of autonomy. This supports confidence building, morale and employee effectiveness. Where can we stop talking and just listen? Where can we ask more questions?

**BE OF SERVICE.** Stepping into your leadership comes with a variety of daily challenges, difficult conversations, and tasks that make our heads hurt. When times feel tough, it can be helpful to ask yourself, “who am i in service to?” It may be to an employee, to your team, to the students, families or schools we serve, or to your organization’s reputation. Anchor yourself in service!

