Creating a High-Performance Learning Culture

What can you expect to get from this module?

In high-performance learning cultures, all members of the school community share beliefs about ability and achievement, efficacy and effort, and power and control, and these beliefs are visible in structures in the physical environment, group relationships, and policies and procedures. Concepts such as distributed accountability have real meaning. This module helps participants explore each of these concepts and apply them to their schools, as they learn how to work as a team of leaders to build a high-performance learning culture.

Who should take this training?

This module is for school leaders and potential school leaders. The audience may include school teams of principals, aspiring leaders, teacher leaders and others who are members or potential members of the school's instructional leadership team. **NOTE:** In order for this training to have significant impact, the principal **MUST** be part of the school team being trained.

Other SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules that support this module:

There are no formal prerequisites for this module. It is considered one of the foundational modules for the SREB leadership series.

What will you have to do to get the most from this module?

Participants must commit to attending as a team, completing the prework, attending three initial days, completing homework assignments and attending one follow-up day. It is important for teams to have time to reflect and apply what they have learned between the initial training and the follow-up session.

Big Ideas in This Module

- Definition: a high-performance learning culture is one in which each individual member is expected to perform to high standards.

- An organizational culture is composed of different elements. Each can be held up, examined and shaped.

- The foundation of the culture is a specific set of core beliefs in the areas of ability and achievement, efficacy and effort, and power and control.

- In building a culture, you can use the same "backward design" approach as in planning assessment and instruction. If achievement is to increase for each student in a school, how will individuals within the school community relate to one another regarding issues of student learning? What beliefs would support these actions? What structures can you put in place to explore your actions and beliefs?

- As discovered in the classic Rosenthal study, students do better when we believe they can.

- Not only do students do better when you believe they can, they also do better when they believe they can. They try harder, and effort is also correlated with student achievement.

- You may not be able to "see" beliefs, but you can see the structures that embody them.

- New structures can create new experiences from which individuals will gather new information. From this, new meanings will develop. This can lead to changes in assumptions and hence, a new belief. The new belief will be based on an internal shift — a new commitment. Structures can facilitate change.

- It won't be quick, and it won't be easy, but as a leader you can build a high-performance learning culture by having a deep understanding of culture and following the six leadership strategies.

Module Design. *Creating a High-Performance Learning Culture* **is a four-day workshop (3+1). It also includes homework assignments. Each section is described below.**

Creating a High-Performance Learning Culture: Begin With the End in Mind (five hours). In this section, participants learn about some of the concepts and language of school culture. This is done primarily through a series of group exercises and short lectures. The activities are tools participants can reuse in their schools to facilitate a rich understanding of the relationship among these concepts. Activities include a culture inventory, a case study, culture metaphors and a review of research.

Cultivating Beliefs That Produce High-Performance Learning (eight to nine hours). In this section, individual and group activities and short lectures will help participants learn about the beliefs that support high-performance learning cultures. Participants will get a chance to see how their own beliefs match up with what research says about belief systems in high-performing schools. This is a very powerful guided learning sequence that challenges participants to identify, question and clarify their own beliefs related to all aspects of student achievement and school practice. Participants also explore topics of shared leadership and personal efficacy. Participants learn activities and facilitation techniques that they can repeat in their schools.

Using Strategic Structures to Support High-Performance Learning (two hours, 30 minutes). Participants will participate in discussions and activities as they examine how strategic structures (relationships, policies and procedures, and the physical environment) can be used to change a school's culture to focus on high performance. They explore the connection between beliefs and strategic structures and explore ways to evaluate and shape their own school structures. They look at each of the three areas of strategic structures separately and then put together a plan that encompasses all three. This section also continues the use of the case study to illustrate key points and provide participants with practice.

Homework. School teams are asked to apply everything they've learned by completing an analysis of their own school culture.

The Roles of School Leaders in Nurturing a High-Performance Learning Culture (three hours, 35 minutes). Participants learn about specific roles leaders can play to shape culture in their schools. Discussion, lectures, case studies and activities help participants learn how to use the concepts about leadership roles to improve their schools. Day Four also devotes time to sharing and providing feedback on the work done between Days Three and Four.

Summary and Portfolio Assignments (one hour). Participants, working as a team, must lead the effort to facilitate the creation of an action plan that helps them work with the entire school community to explore and develop a high-performance learning culture. Participants submit a portfolio that contains team products as well as individual reflections and narratives.