INSPIRATIONAL
LEADERSHIP
SELF-ASSESSMENT

for Chief State School Officers

INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

You can use the Inspirational Leadership Self-Assessment regardless of tenure and at any point in time. It does not measure your competency, but rather is meant to identify specific leadership behaviors that can be areas of focus for development. These areas of focus will, and should, naturally shift over time. The self-assessment represents a snapshot in time and there is no "right" answer. It aims to be a mirror, raising your awareness about how you're spending your time and energy and how you're approaching situations and challenges – as well as where you're not. Equipped with this insight, you can be cognizant of specific leadership behavior capacities that may need to be developed or emphasized as you continue to grow in the role.

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree, nor Disagree		Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I proactively admit mistakes to my staff.	○	○	○	○	○
2. I regularly remind stakeholders of their interdependence, how our successes and setbacks are inextricably linked.	○	○	○	○	○
3. In the face of opposition I make it a priority to build and maintain a sense of shared purpose.	○	○	○	○	○
4. I take time to cultivate deeper relationships with the people I need to work with.	○	○	○	○	○
5. I create processes, structures and transparently document policies that reflect and advance a clearly articulated vision.	○	○	○	○	○
6. I extend trust to others from the start.	○	○	○	○	○
7. I measure progress towards the vision and share it transparently.	○	○	○	○	○
8. I explain decisions and initiatives in relation to how they help the organization achieve the vision.	○	○	○	○	○
9. I take time to listen to others' perspectives, paying attention to their point of view before responding.	○	○	○	○	○
10. I make it a point to publicly recognize the performance and hard work of stakeholders.	○	○	○	○	○
11. I acknowledge and build from the experiences and actions of those that came before - both the good and bad.	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree, nor Disagree		Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
12. I engage in feedback loops with stakeholders about how and when stakeholder feedback will be considered and included.	○	○	○	○	○
13. I work to fully appreciate the multi-dimensional identities and interests of stakeholder groups in order to more fully understand their positions.	○	○	○	○	○
14. I dedicate time to anticipate the second and third order impacts of my team's and my own actions and decisions.	○	○	○	○	○
15. I actively use our SEA's vision as a filter to help me prioritize my time and energy.	○	○	○	○	○
16. I encourage thoughtful, bold ideas and actions from staff and help coach staff to use missteps as learning opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○
17. I only make promises I can keep and take responsibility for when my team can't deliver on our promises.	○	○	○	○	○
18. I keep my composure in the face of attacks or crisis.	○	○	○	○	○
19. I create space for others to give feedback and participate in decision making in our team.	○	○	○	○	○
20. I speak up when I see actions from my team that don't align with our values, even when it's hard.	○	○	○	○	○
21. I allow and encourage stakeholders to take the lead on initiatives and drive our vision forward.	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree, nor Disagree		Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
22. I promote and hire people who are aligned with our values.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
23. I embrace and build rituals that strengthen connection and inclusion of all the staff.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
24. I take time to pause and reflect on my performance as a leader.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
25. I know and regularly review where and with whom I spend my time and adjust accordingly.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
26. I cultivate the efforts of stakeholders through counsel, positive reinforcement and reminders of the long-term vision.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
27. I help individual staff to connect their role to our overall vision.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
28. I recognize gaps in my leadership and take action to close them.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
29. When crafting or refining our vision I ground the conversation in the need for the vision to be focused on the needs and improved learning outcomes of all students.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
30. I check my biases and acknowledge that I have blind spots.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
31. I seek out resources that can help me develop my technical and leadership skills.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
32. I deliberately cultivate relationships with groups I don't know well, especially with those that have been historically disenfranchised, misinformed or antagonistic.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
33. I create opportunities for staff to work together on shared projects and goals.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

	Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree, nor Disagree		Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
34. I ensure we train SEA staff on how to have constructive conversations and provide meaningful feedback.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
35. I deliberately seek feedback for personal improvement from all levels of staff and various stakeholders.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
36. I create or sponsor projects that bring diverse groups with complementary resources or knowledge together.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

RUBRIC

Your total score for the Self-Assessment indicates the degree to which you are embodying the behaviors of inspirational leadership as defined in the Leadership Playbook. While you can retake this self-assessment periodically as a way to track your progress in developing as an inspirational leader, it is in comparing the relative scores under each imperative that gives you a snapshot of your current areas of greater and lesser focus. Looking at these numbers, you can identify not only your strengths but also potential areas for renewed attention.

BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER - Add up the total scores of lines a, b and c below

a   Forge Relationships Built On Trust - Add up items 3, 4, and 12

b   Engage Beyond Your Core Network - Add up items 13, 14, and 32

c   Support Stakeholders As They Lead - Add up items 21, 26, and 36

CRAFT AND SHARE A VISION - Add up the total scores of lines d, e and f below

d   Co-Create The Vision - Add up items 9, 11, and 29

e   Embed The Vision Into Operations - Add up items 5, 7, and 27

f   Maintain Focus And Aligment Around The Vision - Add up items 2, 8, and 10

UNLOCK POTENTIAL ACROSS THE SEA - Add up the total scores of lines g, h and i below

g   Set an Example - Add up items 6, 17, and 20

h   Foster Freedom So All Can Lead - Add up items 16, 19, and 33

i   Support And Develop Your People - Add up items 22, 23, and 34

GROW AS A LEADER - Add up the total scores of lines j, k and l below

j   Develop Self-Awareness - Add up items 24, 28, and 30

k   Ask For Help - Add up items 1, 31, and 35

l   Focus Your Energy For Impact - Add up items 15, 18, and 25

Using this information, identify one or two areas of leadership or key behaviors that you want to develop, and set specific plans as to how you will make sure you do this. You can use the Leadership Playbook as a guide to help specify exactly what the key behaviors are, and the case studies can highlight what they look like in action.

TOTAL SCORE

Add each of the four imperative scores together for your overall leadership snapshot at the moment (max score is 180)

LEADERSHIP TABLE

Leadership comes in many forms, but not all are equally effective or sustainable. The Leadership Playbook for Chief State School Officers argues for the inspirational power of one form in particular: values-based leadership. On your journey as an inspirational leader, it's helpful to keep in mind what you are striving towards as well as what values-based leadership is not. We have therefore provided a graphic below that compares and contrasts the dimensions of values-based leadership with three other popular approaches to leadership: strong willed command-and-control-based leadership, charismatic and magnetic persona-based leadership, and calculating carrots-and-sticks-based leadership. In general, we find leaders tend to best develop by consistently demonstrating behaviors progressively from the left to the right side of the graphic. Leaders with little formal or informal influence mistakenly fear that brute strength is required to command authority. Those who can garner new found influence often try to leverage their own popularity. And leaders who have already gained large systems and networks of influence are often tempted to calculate and maximize their impact. The graphic is intended to reflect leadership more broadly and is not tailored for leadership in education or the role of chiefs in particular, however we have intentionally used phrases to describe values-based leadership that map back to the imperatives of the Leadership Playbook for your reference. We hope this graphic, self-assessment and leadership playbook serve as valuable resources on your journey as an inspirational leader.

	Command-and-Control-Based	Persona-Based	Carrots-and-Sticks-Based	Values-Based
Structure and Information	Creates silos by hoarding information, afraid it might get into the wrong hands	Develops cliques and groupies by spinning information for a desired effect	Relies on loci of expertise and shares information on a need-to-know basis so as to use it as a bargaining chip	Forges relationships built on trust by pro-actively sharing information and context before it is requested
Enlistment	Forces participation through coercive-like actions Focuses on extracting value from stakeholders	Entrances others through a cult-like or celebrity following	Recruits others by focusing on overlapping self-interests	Engages beyond a core network by enlisting others in the greater good
Stakeholder Relationship	Focuses on extracting value from stakeholders	Exaggerates the value add, perceives support as a privilege for stakeholders	Supports stakeholders based on a calculation of a fair cost for time and energy	Supports stakeholders as they lead and looks to add value beyond expectations
Purpose and Mission	Doesn't maintain a mission to guide employees but rather gives directives as appropriate	Projects him or herself as the vision based on the popular ethos of the moment	Crafts a vision based on input from stakeholders focused on success and achievement	Co-creates the vision with stakeholders focused on long-term significance
Operations	Provides rules to employees as they appear needed, as mission is unstable at best and nonexistent at worst	Hopes to singlehandedly operationalize the vision by being micro-interested in all organizational activities	Sets up the vision as running parallel to the strategic plan of the organization, which is recalibrated on a regular basis for alignment	Embeds the vision into operations so every team and employee understands their role in it
Momentum	Threatens demotions and fires or disengages with those that can't cut it	Gives compelling speeches to rally the troops in the moment	Incentivizes stakeholders to achieve the bottom line by strengthening and weakening carrots-and-sticks as needed	Maintains focus and alignment around the vision, pausing to proactively reconnect decisions and actions to the vision
Modeling Behavior	Models behavior that conveys personal strength often unconscious of affect	Behaves in a way to convey organization strength, self-conscious of what the state of the organization says about him/her	Acts in alignment with what is expected of him or her, looking to be rewarded by fulfilling expectations	Sets an example by seeking out opportunities to model values through decisions, actions and stories
Roles and Responsibilities	Believes that distributed leadership only adds risks for an organization, and expects employees to only do exactly what they are told	Perceives staff as a group of followers who should be working towards enhancing the leader's reputation	Sees staff as layers of management, establishing a system of checks and balances that encourages leadership but provides unequal resources, trust, or opportunity	Fosters freedom so all can lead by trusting employees to pursue bold, thoughtful ideas and actions and then evaluates results
Employee Development	Development of employees occurs, if at all, by their own trial and error experiences	Assumes employees will develop by proximity to the leader and watching him or her in action	Provides professional training for employees to do their formal roles and responsibilities more effectively	Supports and develops employees by providing organization led education and fostering employee-lead experiences that develop individuals based on what they have done, who they are and who they can become
Self-Awareness	Unware of strengths or weaknesses, focused only on the future	Is keenly aware of strengths and relies on them to maintain persona	Learns about oneself by reflecting on past experiences and tries to incorporate learnings in the future	Develops self-awareness by intentionally taking time to pause, to identify weaknesses/blindspots, develop growth goals, evaluate progress, and refine a personal growth strategy
Personal Development	Unconsciously develops over time through practice leading, not necessarily in a productive direction	Quickly learns what is effective in the short-term, hones those skills and seeks out an audience for them	Pursues professional development opportunities as they are presented, prioritizing what would strengthen current leadership responsibilities	Asks for help and intentionally seeks out the advice and knowledge of others, looking to develop oneself as a person capable of leading in multiple environments and different people
Prioritization	Creates priorities and lets others figure out how to manage how to prioritize accomplishing them	Triages challenges, dedicating the most resources to those with the highest visibility	Pays closest attention to delivering on set short-term goals and objectives	Focuses energy for impact, using organizational values as a guide for what matters most in the long-term