

Instructional Leadership Project

**Joel Besancon
Kent State University**

Gund School: Marilyn Mauck

How did the school leader understand what was meant by instructional leadership? What was learned?

Marilyn and her staff worked collectively to transform instruction toward a workshop model (guided reading and guided math). It is also important for the instruction to align with what other area schools are doing so that if students return to their home school district, they've been exposed to these instructional models and technology resources. Marilyn's passion and drive to support the learning of her students was very evident. Her determination to know her teachers and develop professional relationship with them was also very powerful.

What is your vision as an instructional leader?

Marilyn stated that the resources and materials used were primarily workbooks. She noticed a very urgent need for students to gain writing skills and the ability for them to use technology. Marilyn stated multiple times the the education she and her staff provide to the students meets the demands of 21st century learning. She has provided professional development so that her staff is trained and well-prepared as they transition into Orange City Schools.

What challenges are presented?

Challenges include funding for professional development and instructional resources for students and staff , as well as student transiency.

The Lawrence School: Cheryl Cook and Jason Culp

How did the school leader understand what was meant by instructional leadership? What was learned?

Both Jason and Cheryl stated their attempt to get into classrooms daily to support their teachers and know what their students are learning. They also provide a very structured and supportive role to their teachers that includes the ability for them to provide constructive feedback to teachers. Cheryl stated that her transition from teaching students to teaching teachers was very important.

What is your vision as an instructional leader?

Both Jason and Cheryl were focused on providing differentiated instruction to students based on their unique learning differences. They aim to provide the best education to the students daily. Cheryl stated that when she enters a classroom, she is viewed as a coach to help her teachers. She only is viewed as a disciplinarian when it's necessary to hold teachers accountable.

What challenges are presented?

Challenges include staff licensure and mobility. Staff needs to have dedication to the school model, vision and mission.

Spring Garden Waldorf: Amy Hecky

How did the school leader understand what was meant by instructional leadership? What was learned?

Instructional leadership is very broad in that teachers establish a community of learners that they instruct from grades 1-8. Learning and instruction is very collaborative among teacher leaders. Decisions made that affect student learning are made by the entire college of teachers. Parents and families are also valued strongly by the staff leaders.

What is your vision as an instructional leader?

The vision was very child centered and meeting each student where they are at and educating them based on the stages of child development. Teachers have the ability to connect with students over several years to get to know their students. This provides teachers with the ability to tailor each child's education to their specific needs.

What challenges are presented?

Challenges may be student enrollment and having Waldorf trained teachers who will dedicate themselves to a group of students for an extended period of time.

Firestone High School: Judy Harrison

How did the school leader understand what was meant by instructional leadership? What was learned?

Judy views instructional leadership as a way to motivate students and support them through the rigorous IB curriculum. She sees the potential in all students as students who are eligible for the program don't have to have a 4.0 GPA or may have some form of learning difference. Her dedication to student success within the IB program is very evident.

What is your vision as an instructional leader?

Judy is very dedicated to the students and staff of the IB Program. She credited high quality teachers that promote a high level of student achievement and accountability. Teachers must have high expectations for their students to be effective instructors or the rigorous curriculum.

What challenges are presented?

Challenges include the recruitment of potential students. Students will need to meet the high expectations and demands of the program. Continued staff development and expectations will need to be sustained.

Akron Public School-Digital Learning: Macy Ebright

How did the school leader understand what was meant by instructional leadership? What was learned?

Macy views her role as the Program Coordinator to build a program that allows students to remain in Akron Public Schools instead of enrolling into a private or other online school due to negative experiences in the physical buildings of the district. She has the support of various coaches for students enrolled in the program and works closely with the coaches, students and families who participate in this program.

What is your vision as an instructional leader?

Macy is very passionate about making curriculum available to all students. She is also devoted to making sure her staff and students have the tools, support, and resources to be successful.

What challenges are presented?

With this being a new program, the challenge is to communicate this option to all students and families in the school district and convincing them of the benefit of this program. Data collection and testimonials of current students and families may be beneficial.

Personal Vision

To design experiences within a safe and collaborative environment for children to learn as individuals as part of a larger community, while using aligned standards to ensure the educational development of the next generation.

CCSSO Standards

The following Standards were chosen as they directly support my vision as an instructional leader.

Standard 2. Ethics and Professional Norm

- c) Place children at the center of education and accept responsibility for each student's academic success and Well-being.

Standard 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

- f) Promote the preparation of students to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts of a global society.

Standard 5. Community of Care and Support for Students

- a) Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets that the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.

Standard 6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel

- f) Empower and motivate teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement.

Standard 7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

- b) Empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the school.

Personal Challenges

To promote a collaborative community to unify all staff to increase student achievement.

To be able to convey common expectations to all school community stakeholders.

Supporting Research

High-performing organizations deliberately build capacity and understand the need to develop the internal resources and secure and sustain high performance (Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2013).

According to Jucovy (2000), once you get initial support from your school's key groups and individuals, you should form an advisory committee that can plan the initial goals, structure, and implementation of the program.

Comparing Visions of Instructional Leadership

Each school had a very unique vision that can be integrated to support my vision as an instructional leader.

Gund School: Students at the Gund School feel safe within their school community and Marilyn sets a climate for the school community including students, teachers, and other staff to be supportive of one another.

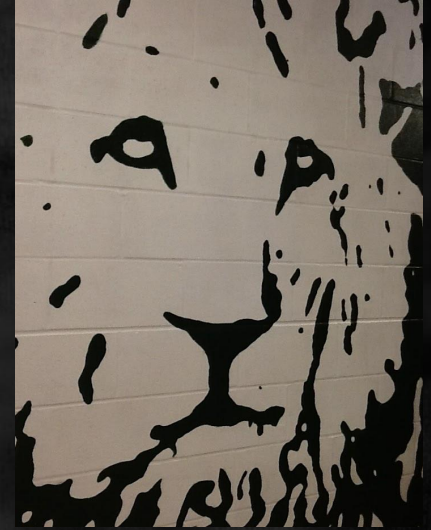
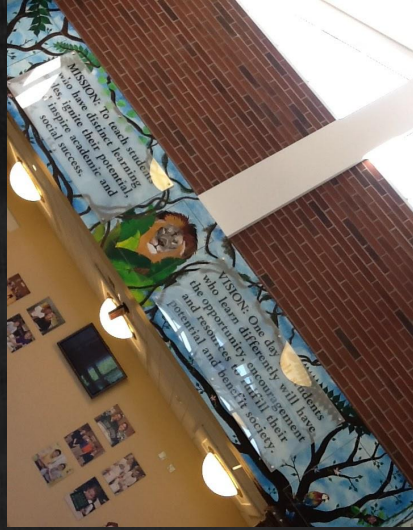
Lawrence Upper School: Student learning and staff professional development were differentiated to make each person successful.

Spring Garden Waldorf School: Learning was focused on what makes each individual student successful and gave students skills and experiences that will make them integral parts of our society.

Firestone High School: The rigorous standards of the IB Program promote an expectation of excellence for the students.

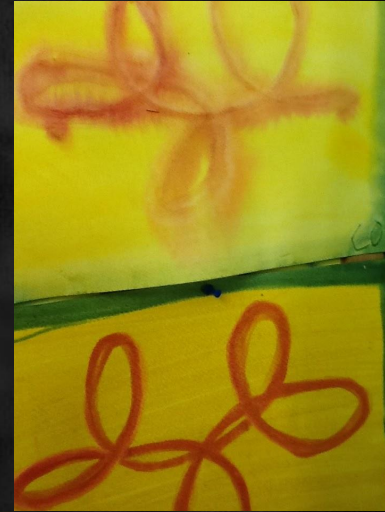
Akron Public School -Digital Learning: This program provides students access to a high quality education that meets the needs of the students and their families.

Photographs of The Lawrence School



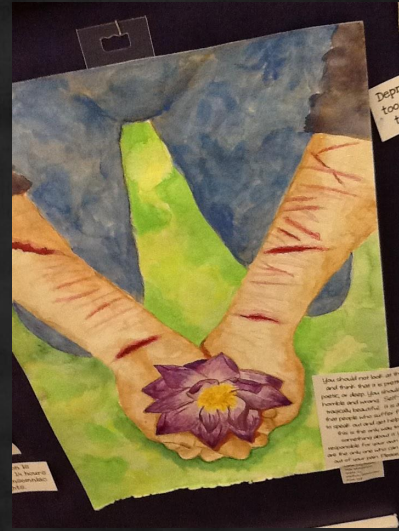
The entrance to the school was very inviting. It included a monogram that allows students to identify themselves and realize that they are not alone; they are part of their school community. The mission and vision are very decorative and inviting to remind everyone that enters the school of their purpose. The school also promotes the idea that they are there for student success and the lion mascot shows the determination and ability of the members of the school community.

Photographs of Spring Garden Waldorf School



The Waldorf School was very natural in its appearance, both literally and figuratively. The natural elements of the classroom and the authentic education that the students are provided are very refreshing. The last photograph shows a woven design that could represent the interconnectedness of the students, staff, and families of the school, as well as how the real-world connects to the lessons learned. The progression of the students as they grow is also very natural.

Photographs of Firestone High School



Two distinct sets of objects caught my attention when entering Firestone High School. The artwork displayed was very refreshing and reminded me of how students can excel in school in many different ways. The way students demonstrate learning and success can be interpreted very differently. The pennants told a story of how the destination of learning can be very different for many different students.

Self-Reflection Photographs

I pledge...

my **head** to clearer thinking,
my **heart** to greater loyalty,
my **hands** to larger service, and
my **health** to better living for
my **club**, my **community**,
my **country**, and my **world**.



I've related the extra-curricular activities that allowed me to be a successful student and continue to be a successful teacher. I believe in allowing students the opportunity to impact their community and contribute their skills to better our world.

Poem

Teachers provide a safe, welcoming environment
Children learn to make a statement.

To make a difference, no matter how small
Whether you're a teacher teaching or just learning to crawl.

There are standards set to make our educations the same
Although important, some feel it's just a game.

To know what I've learned, you don't need to see my brain
For what we do is for everyone's gain.

Works Cited

Jucovy, L. (2000). *The ABCs of school-based mentoring*. Portland, OR: National Mentoring Center, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A. & Strauss, T. (2013). How to reach high performance. In M. Grogan (Ed.), *The Jossey-Bass reader on educational leadership* (5th ed.) (pp. 255-273). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.