|  |
| --- |
| LSA 5030-Dr. B. Howard |
| Reflection on Mission and Vision in My School |
| Is your school’s mission impossible? What is your school’s vision and how will it help you get where you want to be? |

|  |
| --- |
| Deborah T. Arrington  9/9/2013 |

According to research, a leading factor of more effective schools from less effective schools is their commitment to a shared mission statement (Stemler, 2011). The first standard articulated by the nation’s largest secondary school accreditation requires that schools establishes and communicate a shared purpose and direction for improving the performance of students and the effectiveness of the school. In fulfillment of the standard, the school: (i) establishes a vision for the school in collaboration with its key stakeholders, (ii) communicates the vision and purpose to build stakeholder understanding and support, (iii) identifies goals to advance the vision, (iv) ensures that the school’s vision and purpose guide the learning process, and (v) reviews its vision and purpose systematically and revises them when appropriate (AdvanceED, 2010, p. 1). In 2011, the first standard was modified. The standard requires school to maintain and communicate a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning (AdvanceED, 2011, p. 1). Great schools are not the ones with the biggest endowment or the best college placements; they are the ones that constantly look for better ways to live their respective missions (Oliver).

The vision and mission statement at East Forsyth High School were rewritten by the School Improvement Team in 2011. The belief statements were developed by the faculty. The S.I.T. ask the staff to write down their beliefs about educating students at EFHS.

The Vision at East Forsyth High School is “to form collaborative partnership between students, faculty, and parents of East Forsyth High with the community to facilitate the goal of providing a quality education for every student.” In my opinion, this statement does not provide the school with a dream of how to collaborate or define quality. When I ask the stakeholders to recite the vision, no one knew the vision. Also, the stakeholders did not know the location or where to find the vision statement. The stakeholders I interviewed agreed that a common vision statement is important to guide their actions. As I walked around my school, I did not come across this statement until I entered our media center. It was posted on an 8.5 by 11 laminated sheet of paper alongside the mission and belief statements of our school. As I looked online at EFHS web page, I did not see our mission or vision statement on our school web page. At EFHS it has become the forgotten vision and mission statement. My school vision statement reminds me that, as a leader, collaboration with students, parents, faculty, and community members about my goals will gauge students’ success. The mission statement has influenced me to work with my students to create the classroom expectations. On my web page parents will find mathematical resources to help increase their child’s academic success. I am encouraged to continue to serve as a leader in our professional learning community.

The mission statement at my school states, “At East Forsyth High School, we focus on the whole student, harnessing the energy of youth to develop well-rounded, responsible achievers.” Again like the vision statement, the people I interviewed could not recite the mission statement or knew the location of the mission statement. Mission statements should be held accountable by their schools (Allen, 2001). It will be difficult to hold the stakeholders accountable to a mission statement, when they do not know the mission of the school. The wording of the mission does not inspire its stakeholders to new and greater heights. Our mission statement does not tell us how we are going to harness this energy of our students to develop well-rounded responsible achievers, therefore it is impossible to obtain. This mission statement is not measureable.

After showing the vision, mission, and belief statements to the stakeholders at my school, most recalled the statements. Most felt that the statements were too broad or could not give more than two examples of how they used the vision or mission statements in improving student achievement. I think the goals should clearly define what we want our students to know and be able to do. The goals should also describe how we are going to bring about the desired results and how we will know if our goals are being met. Our students, faculty, and community are committed to improving and holding ourselves accountable for the results. My school is preparing for accreditation; therefore we will be revisiting our vision, mission and belief statements. The schools improvement team, faculty and stakeholders in our community will work on our new vision and mission statements. The faculty has completed a survey and the results have been shared. Our students and parents are in the progress of completing surveys. The results will be instrumental in designing our new vision, mission and belief statements. It will be important that all stakeholders participate in the statements, take ownership, and be accountable for the statements. It will be important for stakeholders to dream about the vision of our school as we design our vision statement. It will also be important that we put the vision into concrete terms. Our mission statement should include what we are going to do, why we are going to do it and how we are going to measure our mission statement. These statements will affect the culture of our school and the community that we serve. Our statements, once adopted, need to be visible. Our stakeholders, faculty, and students should know our schools vision and mission statements as we have a shared responsibility in student achievement and the effectiveness of our school. The S.I.T. leader did not realize that the vision, mission and belief statements were not on our web page. The S.I.T. leader explained that our measurable goals are not part of our mission statements, but our S.I.T. goals. These goals are 1) to build relationships, 2) increase staff awareness on literacy and 3) increase student achievement.

References:

Allen, L. (2001). From Plaques to Practice: How Schools Can Breathe Life Into Their Guiding Beliefs. Phi Delta Kappan, 83(4), 289.

John, G., & Farmer, P. Developing a Vision and a Mission. *How to Help Your School Thrive Without Breaking the Bank*. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/107042/chapters/developing-a-vision-and-a-mission.aspx

Hartzell, G. (2002, November 1). Controlling Your Own Destiny. Library Journal â€” Library News, Reviews, and Views. Retrieved August 28, 2013, from <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2002/11/ljarchives/controlling-your-own-destiny/>

Olverson, T. and Vives, C. (2012). Consider the Virtuous Cycle. Independent School, 71(3), 100-108

Standards for Quality. AdvancED. Retrieved from

http://www.advanc-ed.org/new-standards-quality

Stemler, S. (2011). Using School Mission Statements for Reflection and Research. Educational Administration Quarterly, 47(2), 383-420.