AN EDUCATIONAL BOOK REVIEW
BY: HEATHER BURLESON

Leading Change In Your School
How to Conquer Myths, Build commitment, and Get Results

By: Douglas Reeves
This book was about how to start the process of leading change within your school. There were 4 parts to the book that go through the process of implementing change and what to expect.

**Part 1: Creating Conditions for Change**
- Identifying what we need our colleagues to stop doing before tackling a new change initiative.
- Are you ready for change? Take the Change Readiness Assessment to find out.
- Culture that surrounds change.

**Part 2: Planning Change**
- Discusses the greatest influence on student achievement.
- How to get the right people in the right positions to help you implement change.
- Learning how to coach others.
- Goals and Objectives: A little goes a long ways
- Strategic planning: One page plans
SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS CONTINUE

- **Part 3: Implementing Change**
  - The “buy in” of your staff- How to do it though improvements in grading, teaching and leadership practices.

- **Part 4: Sustaining Change**
  - Short term vs. long term success
  - Global change
  - Teacher leadership
INFLUENCE ON MY PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP

- I want to use the right people for the right job.
- I want to be a collaborative leader.
- I don’t want my colleagues to be treated as outsiders I want them to be involved in every step of the change process.
- I want to make sure that I am committed not only to my staff, but to my students and to my community.
WORKING WITH ADMINISTRATORS

What I learned:

- **As a leader I should fine tune our collaboration time**
  - Each meeting should have a defined results with specific and measurable actions.

- **As a leader I should use and promote best practices that are used for interviews**
  - **Classroom Observations**
    - Having candidates (principals, teachers or superintendents) spend time in the school and classrooms.
    - Asking simple questions instead of direct questions to evoke good conversations and get a real feel for what they observed.
  - **Data Analysis**
    - Have candidates review sets of data to evoke conversation about not just student achievement or demographics but about instructional practices, curriculum, and assessments.
  - **Reviews of student work**
    - According to Reeves (2009), “If you want to find teachers and principals who not only love and care about children, but also love them enough to tell them the truth, give them feedback, and expect them to improve their performance regardless of their predispositions.” (p. 70)
WORKING WITH PARENTS

What I learned:

- As a leader I should involve my parents in the process.
  - Invite them to collaborate with you on change initiatives you would like to implement. Parents have valuable insight, concerns, and ideas on student achievement and growth.

- As a leader I should communicate with my parents.
  - Keep parents apprised of their student’s achievements and the achievements of the school as a whole. Communicate not just bad things but positive things as well. This will help them to positively encourage their students to do good.
SUPERVISING SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF

What I learned:

As a leader I should be creative in offering nonfinancial incentives
- Be considerate about more planning time
- More professional development opportunities
- Greater levels of self-direction

As a leader I should attend to every teacher’s basic needs
- Safety
- Respect

As a leader I should prioritize meetings
- Offer announcements in an e-mail ahead of time leaving more time for:
  - Reeves (2009) suggested these learning activities- would focus on student learning, creative teaching strategies, and collaborative scoring, and develop assessments and individualized instruction. (p. 66)
How to Create Successful Programs for Students

What I learned:

- **As a leader when creating programs I should use the implementation strategies**
  - Create short-term wins
    - Effective leaders should design plans that will produce short-term wins within the first few weeks of school.
  - Make a bigger emphasis on formative assessments
    - Formative assessments should be an activity that is designed to give meaningful feedback to students and teachers to improve professional practices and student achievement. (Reeves, 2009, p. 91)
  - Create objectives that are meaningful, attainable, and provide immediate feedback
    - To reinforce effective practice and modify ineffective practice. (Reeves, 2009, p. 92)
  - Recognize effective practices simply and clearly throughout the year
    - Display achievement scores on formative assessments but also display the professional practices associated with the scores. (Reeves, 2009, p. 92)
  - Emphasize effectiveness, not popularity
    - Be prepared to challenge the culture and stand up for effective practice even if changes are initially unpopular. (Reeves, 2009, p. 92)
  - Make the case of moral imperatives rather than the compliance with external authority
    - Instead of citing administrative requirements, inspire staff members with a call for their best: “Student literacy is a civil right. Faculty collaboration is the foundation of fairness. Learning communities are the essence of respect.” (Reeves, 2009, p. 93)
IN CONCLUSION

- Great book I would recommend it for all interested in promoting and learning how to effectively integrate change within a building or program.

- What I took away from the book
  - Creating one page plans instead of creating binders full of information. (Reeves, 2009, p. 82-83)
  - They provide clear and simple plans that everyone involved in the process knows and understands their role in executing the plan.
  - Doesn’t consume as much time and resources that lead to no improved results.
  - Focuses on not just on test scores but on measurable adult actions and on student performance throughout the year.
  - Effective strategies are executed by teachers and leaders who begin the change process with confidence that their professional practices influence student achievement. (Reeves, 2009, p. 84)
  - Effective interview techniques for finding the right person for the job.
  - How to reduce failure rate
  - School’s don’t need a new curriculum, new principal, new teachers or technology. They just need a better grading system! (Reeves, 2009, p. 99)