

# ***Unity of Effort Leadership for Educators***

**Abstract, Expected Outcomes and Talking Points**

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**Unifying toward  
a shared vision**



**Positioning relationships in a  
*Consistent Positive Direction***



**Sustaining a climate of  
interaction for  
student-focused success**



***Smooth Operating System*  
of support**



**Accelerating  
progress**



**Leadership  
Consistency**



**Exercising  
complete respect in a  
positive direction**



**Continuous  
Improvement**

***Unity of Effort* in a Positive Direction**  
**“Synchronizing the Direction of Excellence”**  
by T.A.L.K. Associates

***Unity of Effort* Leadership for Educators**  
Abstract

**A leader, leadership or school improvement team that consistently exercises the core skills, practices and approaches of a ‘Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction’ framework will:**

- Improve meeting or exceeding grade level performance and standards
  - Improve internal partnering for student success
  - Improve organizational communication within and across levels
  - Improve organizational cost effectiveness
  - Improve organizational unity of effort
  - Improve growth, development and retention of highly effective educators
- at the inclusion of everyone, rather than at the expense of anyone.**

**The ‘Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction’ (Unity of Effort) Framework is designed to make it easier** for organizational structures, programs and processes to function successfully for the delivery of products and services. It also makes it easier for relationships, performance and morale to work together for accurate and successful delivery. Rather than being an organizational structure, it is a framework in which organizational structures operate successfully. It is designed to facilitate organizational unity of effort, change, functioning, communication, readiness, transition and sustainability so that: 1) students meet/exceed grade level requirements and expectations 2) students exceed qualifications for college and career readiness.

**Unity of Effort Leadership actively involves leaders** in the ‘Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction’ framework. For leaders, learning the framework is essential.

*When everyone knows how to expand the capacity for excellence in delivery, a unique organizational phenomenon is taking place: Organizational **Unity of Effort**.* Accelerate student achievement through Relationships, Performance and Morale that are:

Concentrated on student-focused performance and delivery

Unified toward a shared vision

Positioned in a Consistent Positive Direction

Sustaining a Climate of Interaction for student-focused success

**Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction is a ‘high-performance delivery’ framework** which includes the entire organization. It is designed to focus the school on bringing its vision to reality, following a series of development sessions, personal assessments and progress visits. It provides a framework that concentrates organizational efforts on supporting front line performance and delivery for classroom teachers to be the very best performers so that students can have the very best education and success. The framework is designed to unify the organization in as little as three months (including support staff); to increase leadership consistency; to create a ‘positive direction environment’; and to advance Relationships, Performance and Morale for student-focused success. In this framework, support organizations, programs and processes are parts of what is called the Smooth Operating System or Smooth OpS. The Smooth Operating System expands the capacity of the front line to concentrate every day on successfully serving students. The Smooth Operating System *concentrates* on supporting the performance and delivery of the front line educators. The processes, techniques and skills are ready for immediate use. Titular leaders are also a part of the Smooth Operating System.

By concentrating their efforts on front line performance and delivery, the Smooth OpS employees are more deliberately connected to ‘service to the student’. By learning the needs of front line performance and delivery in greater depth, they increase their understanding about how to increase the effectiveness of the services they deliver through a more focused use of resources. For example, possibilities include:

- Establish ways to be more immediately responsive to front line needs – routine and emergency, innovation and maintenance.
- Help the organization to consistently arrange priorities based on service delivery to students.
- Assist the school/district in arriving at cost effective strategies that concentrate on supporting frontline performance and delivery.

Examples such as these require enhanced skills of your employees in ways that will make for the most effective use of organizational resources, while staying well within the boundaries of compliance and cost discipline. They require expanded know-how for actively engaging in support of organizational front line performance and delivery. This requires an operating framework that makes it easy for such skills and approaches to be used.

The Unity of Effort framework enables all of your Smooth OpS employees to concentrate on supporting front line performance excellence while sustaining the fitness of the organization. The Unity of Effort framework and training is also a continuously improving, teambuilding effort in which leadership support for Smooth OpS employees is inherent. Therefore, *establishing Leadership Consistency is the first step.*

### **Successful outcomes of Unity of Effort learning and development are based on:**

1. Establishing and Synchronizing a Direction of Excellence
2. Using Three Core Questions and Positive Direction Communication Skills
3. Sustainability Factors which perpetuate a Climate of Interaction for student-focused success:
  - a. **Communication and Information** – Talking to each other; sharing knowledge
  - b. **Creativity and Innovation** – Allowing new/old ideas to build toward the required reality
  - c. **Collaborative Involvement** – Participating by combining work and ideas; Everyone partnering for success, including collaboration with parents and involving students in their own success
  - d. **Continuous Improvement** – Building on the progress that has already occurred; being as good as we are and better than we were, listening to the data and using data for decision-making.
  - e. **Classroom Inclusion** – Classroom teachers gaining clear understanding of every student’s experience with their delivery, to improve/accelerate achievement
  - f. **Critical Inputs** – In addition to *learning* the skills and approaches, using the skills, approaches and practices increases your capability to accelerate progress. Growth creates more growth; possibilities create more possibilities. It works because you use it.
  - g. **Concentrated Interventions** – Improvement actions, processes or programs that are used to specifically correct or adjust organizational, system or individual behaviors, *in the direction of the student.* They are conducted in alignment with the skills, approaches and practices of the “Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction” framework. This factor focuses strongly on assurance of accuracy, success and efficiency rather than prevention (‘moving toward’ rather than ‘getting away from’).
3. Leadership Consistency and the use of Unity of Effort leadership practices
4. The frequency of including the following considerations in program and process initiatives:
  - a. Impact on front line performance and delivery
  - b. Support required for front line educators to be successful
  - c. Support required for Smooth OpS employees to best support front line performance and delivery
  - d. Team Excellence – Effectiveness, efficiency and execution of tasks in the direction of student success – students meeting or exceeding grade level requirements and expectations; students increasing qualifications for college and career readiness.
  - e. Support required for individual, group and team success, progress and growth
  - f. Multilevel leadership consistency and Unity of Effort Leadership Practices

## ***Unity of Effort* in a Positive Direction**

### **Expected Outcomes**

#### ***Unity of Effort* skills, practices and frameworks are used immediately:**

- To accelerate forward movement and continuous improvement for high performance delivery of services for student success
- To increase the percentages of meeting or exceeding grade level performance and standards among the lowest achieving students along with all other students
- To accurately establish data-driven goals and objectives in a positive direction
- To accurately and successfully address the realities of human interaction
- To sustain multilevel open lines of human communication
- To fit or accommodate all new and existing programs and projects with zero extra time, zero extra people and zero extra money

#### **These are ingredients that accelerate the progress of your school/district to increase the frequency of students meeting or exceeding grade level requirements and expectations:**

1. Define success as: 1) Students meeting or exceeding grade level requirements and expectations and 2) students exceeding qualifications college and career readiness. **ISLLC Standard 2**
2. Everyone and everything **concentrate** on supporting the excellence and delivery of the front line educators in a way that they can have the very best performance so that students can have the very best education and experiences. **ISLLC Standard 1**
3. Set up the entire organization, including leadership consistency and administrative, custodial, maintenance, food service, medical, IT and transportation support, for the convenience of the front line educators to expand their capabilities for accurate and successful delivery to their students. **ISLLC Standard 2**
4. Unify everyone toward a shared vision that says your organization is the best or among the best for meeting or exceeding grade level requirements and expectations. **ISLLC Standard 1**
5. Accurately establish data-driven goals, objectives and decision-making at every level. **ISLLC Standard 3**
6. Evaluate outcomes for continuous improvement. **ISLLC Standard 3**
7. The most important interactions that take place at your organization are interactions with students. Everyone yields to those interactions. **ISLLC Standard 3**
8. Speak of each and every student with respect (Cultural Respect, Social Respect and Professional Respect), whatever his/her conduct. **ISLLC Standard 3**
9. Use **CONSISTENT POSITIVE DIRECTION™** to ensure reaching every employee and to accelerate your progress even more – communication and relationship readiness in the direction of the successes, results or outcomes that you desire/require. **Student Growth and Success is the Organizational Positive Direction. ISLLC Standard 3**
10. Make the school becomes so attractive that parents want to participate.

#### **When someone asks, “How are you going to accomplish such success?” You say:**

“We are concentrating our entire organization on supporting the performance and delivery of our front line educators in a way that they can have the very best performance so that our students can have the very best education and experiences.

“Everyone in our organization is engaged to make this work. All of our internal support organizations and teams understand their roles to increase the capabilities of front line educators for high performance delivery.

“Everyone is working in the direction of the student – everyone’s excellence focused in one direction.”

# ***Unity of Effort™* in a Positive Direction**

## **Talking Points**

1. The “Unity of Effort in a Positive Direction” Framework performs as follows:
  - a. It unifies the organization around a shared vision.
  - b. It provides the relationships and the concentration to bring the vision to reality. The vision compared to a mission is like the super bowl compared to an every week football game.
  - c. It focuses the entire organization on: 1) students meeting/exceeding grade level requirements and expectations; 2) Students exceeding qualifications for college and career readiness.
  - d. It speeds up the progress of existing programs that effect increased academic achievement.
  - e. Unity of Effort school communities focus on increasing the qualifications of every student for college and career readiness.
  - f. It evolves into *Empowered Learning Communities* focused on “Student Responsibility for Learning”.
2. The Unity of Effort Framework CONCENTRATES the entire organization on supporting front line performance and delivery, in a way that our front line educators can have the very best performance, so that students can have the very best education and success.
3. The Unity of Effort Framework can unify the Organization in as little as three months. The key is that everyone will know where to concentrate (front line performance and delivery).
4. Rather than rearrange assignments, Unity of Effort is a framework in which assignments can more easily operate in the direction of the student. By putting the Framework in place, we will more easily identify necessary changes and we will accelerate the progress of existing programs.
5. The Unity of Effort Framework recognizes all employees as the experts at what they do.
6. The Unity of Effort Framework facilitates Internal Partnering for student success. It makes it easier for each employee to often ask "How does what I am doing support the performance and delivery of our front line educators."
7. Think of Unity of Effort as having 2 major parts: 1) The front line and 2) everybody else. Everybody else, including the leadership, is called the Smooth Operating System, abbreviated as Smooth OpS. The role of Smooth OpS is to concentrate on supporting the performance and delivery of the front line in a way that front line educators can have the very best performance so that students can have the very best education, success and experiences.
8. THE INITIAL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS:
  - a. Conduct leadership orientation.
  - b. Prepare leadership to function within the Unity of Effort Framework.
  - c. Develop unity toward a shared vision.

- d. Share the Unity of Effort Framework with all employees.
  - e. Set up a resource team to function as internal consultants for understanding and operating within the Unity of Effort Framework (optional).
  - f. Determine the depth of empowerment in the organization, with the understanding that ‘empowerment’ means bringing the decision-making closer to the student. Increased empowerment is conducive to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education standards, tools and practices.
9. Leadership and employees pull everyone in the direction of the student, instead of dividing the direction between the hierarchy and the student. The leadership initiates that environment and the comfort for that to be an *everyday reality*.
  10. Core skills, approaches and practices expand the organization’s capacity for excellence in delivery, immediately and often. For example, when a significant organizational decision or change is made, two ‘Core Questions’ are asked:
    - a. What is the impact on the performance and delivery of the front line educators?
    - b. What support does the front line need for successful performance and delivery?
  11. Leadership practices in a Unity of Effort framework are designed to accelerate progress.
  12. The Unity of Effort framework can be initiated as a pilot anywhere in the organization.
  13. Schools become so attractive that parents want to participate. Everyone is an ambassador for every student’s success.
  14. Unity of Effort II: “Empowered Learning Communities” involves everyone in “Student Responsibility for Learning”.
  15. Connection to Performance Excellence and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education: Unity of Effort is a ‘high performance delivery’ framework within which Performance Excellence, decisions based on data and balanced scorecard development can be consistent and highly accurate, especially since it will be easier for everyone to know where to concentrate. The Unity of Effort Framework builds Leadership Consistency in the direction of the student, at every level. It facilitates the execution of strategic plans. It establishes and recognizes employees of the internal support organizations (e.g. HR, IT, Maintenance, Fiscal, Food Service) as essential for building the capacity for excellence in front line performance and delivery. Collaboration among front line educators becomes increasingly inherent for continuous improvement in front line performance and delivery.
  16. Connection to organizational priorities (examples)
    - a. Emphasizes student-focused delivery as everyone's responsibility.
    - b. Leadership Consistency in the Unity of Effort framework involves enabling everyone's best performance. The leader’s primary role is to support the performance and delivery, growth and development of his/her direct reports so that they can best concentrate on supporting front line performance and delivery.
    - c. Aligns cost and fiscal priorities with front line performance and delivery.
    - d. Inherently keeps lines of communication open and productive within levels and across levels.

## ***Unity of Effort II: Empowered Learning Communities***

Learning Forward addresses *Learning Communities* directly. Below is the Learning Forward introductory statement followed by a Unity of Effort ***Empowered Learning Communities*** approach.

According to the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning, the Learning Communities Standard is stated as: **Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment (Professional Learning Standards, Learning Forward 2011).**

The ***Empowered Learning Community*** in a Unity of Effort framework is ongoing. It is designed for administrators, school Improvement teams, grade-level and content teams, teachers, students and parents to interact in ways that they learn, plan and find solutions together. They develop skills that help them to be adept at concentrating the support of the entire school on successful student-focused delivery and teacher-parent collaboration. For example, administrators learn to facilitate dialogue within their teams that helps them to more easily resolve classroom management issues of student discipline and student learning time. The entire school building is directly involved in establishing its environment for ***student responsibility for learning***.

Grade level teams and content teams learn skills of decision-making dialogue that help them to efficiently share information that will result in improved learning strategies in a sustainable high performance learning environment. Grade level teams and content teams learn to make their own data projections to unify around what is necessary for their students to meet or exceed grade level performance. The framework is designed so that the teams are interdependent as well as individual empowered teams. Empowered teams learn how to effectively keep the decision-making as close to the student and parent as possible. They learn multiple positive direction approaches to successfully engage students and to interact and collaborate with parents, whatever their background.

Administrators learn to put a support system in place that assures shared accountability and convenience for front line educators to function and feel the hierarchical support they need for successful student achievement. As they grow in these relationships it becomes easier to put solutions into place for success. They build strong alliances with each other and they will have skills to build allies and to be stronger allies to students and their caregivers. The roles of the Principals and other administrators and the School Board increasingly become that of facilitators, support systems, coaches and ambassadors.

### **THE CORE ELEMENTS of the Empowered Learning Community in a Unity of Effort framework are:**

- *An entire school organization that is built around supporting the performance and delivery of its front line educators and supporting teacher-parent collaboration for 'student responsibility for learning' in a way that the front line educators can have the very best performance so that students can have the very best education, experiences and successes and parents can have the very best influence on student achievement. Telling this to the organization, face to face, is one of the essentials for success.*
- *A staff that is progressively empowered at every level and has high expectations for itself and its students*
- *Students that are progressively empowered to be responsible for and to have high expectations for their own learning, collectively and individually, inside and outside of the school building*
- *Parents and parent organizations developing collaborative efforts with teachers for continuous improvement in **student responsibility for learning**.*
- *Parents, in collaboration with school efforts, as ambassadors for helping the community to become co-advocates for continuous improvement in **student responsibility for learning**.*

# ***Unity of Effort* in a Positive Direction**

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