Public Education Forward

Leading with Intention

A practical perspective on success, purpose, progress, and the habits that sustain meaningful leadership.

Leadership is not defined solely by the outcomes we achieve. It is shaped by the purpose we choose, the way we develop people, and the consistent practices that translate intention into progress.

Four ideas for intentional leadership

01 **Define success on your own terms**

External expectations can offer direction, but meaningful leadership begins by deciding what success should look like for you and for the people you serve.

02 **Connect vision to commitment**

Vision names a future worth pursuing. Purpose clarifies why it matters. Leadership requires turning that vision into promises and choices we are prepared to honor.

03 **Value the process, not just the outcome**

Outcomes are important, but recognition of effort, learning, collaboration, and sound judgment can reinforce the behaviors that produce lasting results.

04 **Reframe shortfalls as a resource for growth**

Reflection on what did not go as planned can become a source of perspective and hope, informing better decisions about what comes next.

Making our Goals Inevitable

Goals establish a destination; systems establish what happens repeatedly to move us toward it. Ambition and motivation may initiate change, but reliable routines help sustain it when priorities compete and circumstances shift.

A goal identifies the outcome

“Strengthen collaboration across the team.”

A system specifies the practice

A brief weekly check-in with shared priorities, ownership, and follow-through.

For leaders in any profession: A clear destination matters. So do the behaviors we model, the commitments we keep, and the structures we build to make good work repeatable.

Ideas informing this brief: Ryan Leak (defining success); Jon Acuff (leadership commitments and dreams); Todd Henry (valuing process); Erwin Raphael McManus (reframing regret). The systems over goals section is adapted from foundational work from Guarav Jain with related ideas coming from James Clear’s popular book, “Atomic Habits”.