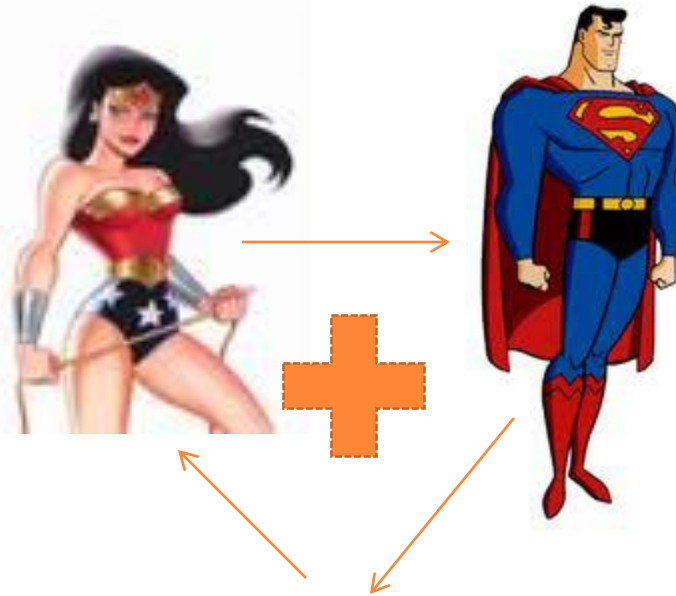# THE PERFECT SCHOOL LEADER: REALITY BEHIND THE MYTH
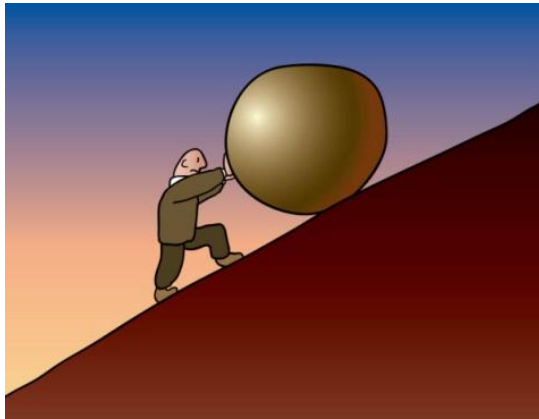
JOHN TARVIN

SESSION6 – THU, JUNE 21, 2012
3:45 – 5:15

All Schools Look for Perfection

But They Don't Always Find It

Hard worker, steep learning curve

Talented, but not a great fit culturally

Immediately deny any involvement in the hiring process

Recruiting

Why Is It So Hard
to Recruit A
~~Perfect~~

~~Great~~
School Leader?

Recruiting Challenge #1:
Charters are a New Sector

- **15 YEARS**
  - Hundreds for traditional education

- **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**
  - Not designed to create charter leaders

- **INSULAR INDUSTRY**
  - Networks still developing

- **DEARTH OF RECRUITERS**
  - Scale and sourcing

Recruiting Challenge #2:
Founders & "Perfect" Leaders

- **IT'S HER/HIS SCHOOL**
  - No one else can embody the mission

- **DON'T ACTUALLY STEP AWAY**
  - Turn off qualified applicants

- **PASSIVE BOARD**
  - Defer to founder/perfect leader
  - Don't lead recruitment

- **SEARCH IS ON FOR A CLONE**

Recruiting Challenge #3:
Poor Execution by Boards

- **WHAT DO WE NEED?**
  - No current job description
  - No perspective on performance
  - No understanding of transition & school's life cycle
  - No committee responsible

- **SUCCESSION PLANNING**
  - Turnover never discussed
  - Bench not developed

The Recruiting Process
Evaluate Before Recruiting

- **ORGANIZATION ASSESSMENT**
  - Life Cycle
  - Strategic Plan
  - Strengths and challenges of program and staff

- **POSITION ASSESSMENT**
  - Job Description
  - Strengths and challenges of previous leader

The Recruiting Process
Align Organizational Capacity

- **COMMITTEE OR TASK FORCE**
    - Membership
        - Board Chair & Subsequent Board Chair
        - Staff members
        - Parents
        - Others
    - Role of Founder/Leader

- **TIMELINE- COST**

- **ASSISTANCE**
    - Search firm
    - Consultant
    - Interim Leader

Communication Skills

Leadership Qualities

Governance Experience

What's Needed in a Great School Leader?

Personnel Management

Educational Acumen

School Culture

Teambuilding

Self-management

Where Are Charter Leaders Found?

- **PRINCIPALS – DISTRICTS**

- **SUPERINTENDENTS – DISTRICTS**

- **NONPROFIT LEADERS**
  - Social Entrepreneurs

- **PRIVATE SCHOOL LEADERS**
  - Heads or Deans

- **PROFESSIONALS**
  - Lawyers, MBAs, Social Workers

- **INTERNAL CANDIDATES**

Qualifications & Skills

What strengths and challenges will
each type of candidate
typically bring to your
school?

Principals

"Can't I just stay in the school and work with the kids?"

Strengths	Challenges
Curriculum	Community Relations
Educational Acumen	Governance Experience
Respect	Financial Management
Student Achievement	Fundraising
Teaching and Learning	Multi-tasking

Superintendents

"I have to do that – where's my assistant?"

Strengths	Challenges
Curriculum	Fundraising
Educational Acumen	Job Expectations
Policies and Procedures	Multi-tasking
Student Achievement	Pay and Benefits
Teaching and Learning	Urgency

Nonprofit Leaders

"That's great about the kids, but when are we opening the next school?"

Strengths	Challenges
Community Relations	Curriculum
Fundraising	Educational Acumen
Governance Experience	Respect
Multi-tasking	Teaching and Learning
Personnel Management	Urgency

Private School Leaders

"Didn't' we just take a slew of standardized tests?"

Strengths	Challenges
Educational Acumen	Bureaucracy/Compliance
Facility Management	Culture
Fundraising	Pay and Benefits
Governance Experience	Standardized Testing
Personnel Management	Work Hours

Professionals

"What's so hard about teaching or running a school?"

Strengths	Challenges
Discreet Expertise	Curriculum
Multi-tasking	Educational Acumen
Personal Commitment	Governance Experience
Urgency	School Culture
	Teaching and Learning

Internal Candidates

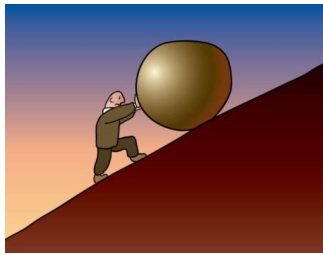*"Why change, we've always done it this way?"*

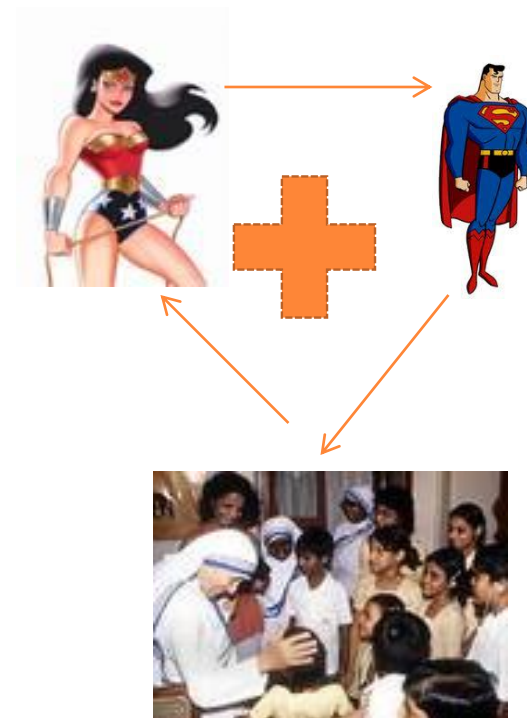| Strengths	Challenges
Curriculum	Fundraising
Educational Acumen	Governance Experience
School Culture	Multi-tasking
Teaching and Learning	Personnel Management
Urgency	Respect

Great Planning & Recruitment

Eliminates the potential for these choices

But Doesn't Guarantee This

Developing Your Leader
Know What Matters

- COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- EDUCATIONAL ACUMEN
- EXTERNAL RELATIONS
- FUNDRAISING
- GOVERNANCE EXPERTISE
- LEADERSHIP ABILITIES
- PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
- SCHOOL CULTURE
- SELF-MANAGEMENT
- TEAMBUILDING

Develop around what matters most to your school at this point in its life cycle

Sample Competency Assessment

Category	Competency	Rating
Self-Management	• Develops timelines and uses effective tools to track work progress	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
	• Establishes priorities and deadlines to organize work and accomplish goals	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
	• Follows through on commitments	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
	• Handles challenging situations with calm assurance	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
	• Has a sense of ownership, pride, continuous improvement and urgency about tasks	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
	• Manages personal time effectively; is highly efficient	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
	• Modifies plans as needed to meet established objectives	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
	• Obtains clarifying information to generate valid solutions or recommendations for action	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
	• Pursues continuous learning and looks for and seizes opportunities to do more or to do things better	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
	• Sees obstacles as challenges and enjoys overcoming them	5 4 3 2 1 N/A
	• Welcomes feedback and adopts recommendations to enhance job performance	5 4 3 2 1 N/A

Frequency of Demonstrating Behavior:

5 – Always   4 – Consistently   3 – Usually   2 – Occasionally   1 – Rarely
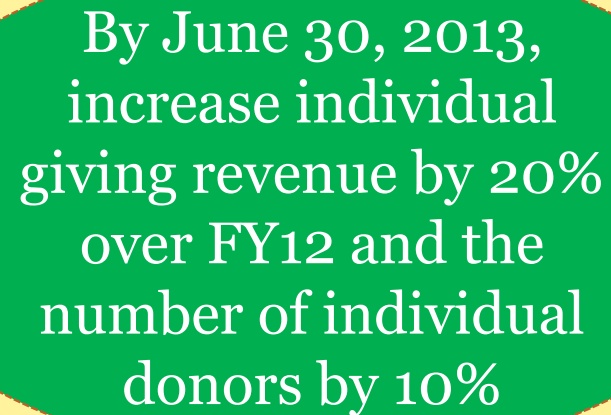
Develop/Evaluate Annual SMART Goals

- **LESS IS MORE – 5 TO 7 GREAT GOALS**
  - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-specific

Increase Individual Giving Next Year

By June 30, 2013, increase individual giving revenue by 20% over FY12 and the number of individual donors by 10%

Supports for Your Leader

- **EDUCATION**
    - Workshops/Trainings
    - Certificate Programs
    - Degree Programs

- **HELPING PROFESSIONS**
    - Coaching
    - Consulting
    - Mentoring

Education Programs

Competency	Certificate	Degree	Workshop Training
Community Relations	X		X
Curriculum		X	
Fundraising	X		X
Governance			X
Leadership Skills	X		X
Personnel Management	X		X
School Culture			X
Self-management			X
Student Achievement			X
Teaching and Learning		X	
Teambuilding	X		X

Helping Professions

Competency	Coaching	Consulting	Mentoring
Community Relations	X	X	X
Curriculum		X	
Fundraising	X	X	
Governance	X	X	X
Leadership Skills	X		X
Personnel Management	X	X	
School Culture	X	X	X
Self-management	X		
Student Achievement		X	X
Teaching and Learning		X	
Teambuilding	X		

The Perfect School Leader
Takeaways

- **#1 – DEVELOP YOUR GOOD LEADER INTO A GREAT LEADER**

- **#2 – A LEADER'S BACKGROUND TYPICALLY INFORMS CORE COMPETENCIES AND SUPPORTS NEEDED**

- **#3 – RECRUIT ONLY AFTER THOUGHTFUL PLANNING AND CRITICAL SELF-EVALUATION**

- **#4 – DIFFERENT LEADERS ARE NEEDED AT DIFFERENT POINTS IN A SCHOOL'S LIFE CYCLE**

Q & A

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