

## MISSOURI LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

### Unpacking the MLDS

#### Visionary Leadership

Leadership is... Broad statements about leadership often fall short of accurately describing the whitewater that accompanies acceptance of the principal's role in today's schools. It is with this reality in mind that the Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS) was designed and is implemented.

Before unpacking what the MLDS is, it might be worth a minute to clarify what it is not. The MLDS is not a "Principal 101- How To" kind of professional development. It is a comprehensive and sequential series of professional learning, intentionally designed to develop and support the dispositions, knowledge, and skill necessary to effectively navigate the leadership landscape. Rather than life-long learning, think career long "Learn it today. Use it tomorrow."

Previously, the *Messenger* spoke to leadership domains and the importance of Critical Firsts. The domains listed included:

- Visionary
- Instructional
- Managerial
- Relational
- Innovative

None of these designations are particularly new, however, getting a handle on what they look like in practice is essential.

As defined in the MLDS, a visionary leader develops and implements a vision. Not exactly a career changing epiphany, but consider the implications for you as the individual charged with rallying your faculty and staff behind a common vision.

- What motivations, talents, weaknesses, preferences, personality, values, temperaments, and tendencies do you bring to the table?
- How do the complementary elements of mission, vision, and core values create clarity of purpose for you and your school?

- What unique and valuable skills and abilities does your faculty/staff possess that will make success possible?
- How will you build and sustain the relationships necessary to remain focused on the vision when things do not go as planned?

Does your daily routine allow you the time to ponder these questions and the other 317 things you have to think about to pull this off? Creating the space to learn from leadership development specialists and collaborate with peers is critical for the long term effectiveness and sustainability of your tenure as a leader. How will you develop the foundation necessary to support the success of the adults and children you serve?

The MLDS is the best thinking of those who have stood where you stand, felt the urgency of meeting diverse student needs, and accepted the challenge of not just being competent, but excellent. Seth Godin notes, “Leadership is the art of giving people a platform for spreading ideas that work.” The success of those you serve depends on the degree to which you cultivate your capacity as a leader. Trial and error can be an effective learning model, but there are less painful ways to move forward. For more information contact the leadership development specialist in your [Regional Professional Development Center](#).