Educator Empowerment: Moving from Theory to Action

A Leader’s Role--Secure it & Inspire it!

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NEA Strategy
COMPETENCY: Governance & Leadership

Levels 1, 2, & 3

Primary Themes Addressed:

– Develops self and others as leaders
  • Builds a diverse group of leaders to take on greater roles and responsibilities in the association

– Effectively executes governance & leadership responsibilities

– Advances the organization by internalizing its mission, vision, and core values

– Sets strategic objectives to guide long-term goals
Session Overview

EDUCATOR EMPOWERMENT

• Why Do We Want It?
• What Is It?
• How Do We Secure and Inspire It?
EDUCATOR EMPOWERMENT: Why Do We Want It?
Long-Time Theory of Success

- Elect & Influence Pro-Public Education Politicians
- Public Support for Public Education
- Focus on Federal and State Policy
- Appropriate Public Policy & Investment
- Practice & Strategies for Students
- Student Achievement

Unite, Inspire, Lead
Empowering Educators for Success
Our Environment...
Has Led to...
The Race
to REFLECT the Voices, Hearts & Minds!
A New Theory Emerged
Why Do Educators Go Into Education?

To Make a Difference in the Lives of Their Students and Help Them Learn!
2.9 million ESPs work in the nation’s public school systems

9 out of 10 say they are in it for the kids

69% of NEA ESPs have volunteered in the past 2 years to assist children and benefit the community.

AND, THEY TEND TO LIVE IN THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THEY WORK.
What Do Educators Need and Want?

- **Greater Involvement in Decision-Making for Teaching & Learning**

- **Greater Collaboration With Each Other & Education Stakeholders (Administrators, Parents, Community)**
Need & Want Increased Educator Participation in Decision-Making

What would strengthen teaching as a profession?

- Greater participation in school decision-making: 97% (2005), 98% (2011)
- Greater participation in district decision-making: 96% (2005), 97% (2011)
- Autonomy on what & how is taught: 72% (2005), 78% (2011)
“When employees are allowed to contribute meaningfully to solving problems and making decisions, better solutions are found, and those solutions are implemented more effectively because people are committed to solutions they have a hand in developing.”

Professor Saul Rubenstein, Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations
Greater Collaboration: Educators w/ Parents & Community

“When there is NO SPACE between our members, parents, and community, we can’t lose.”
EMPOWERMENT: What Is It?
BUSINESS:

Empowered employees = enhanced productivity and efficiency

INTERNATIONAL/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

Empowered communities = capacity to make effective choices and transform them into actions is key to long term solutions and self sufficiency
NURSING

Empowered professionals = practitioners guide practice & improve patient outcomes.

- Certified hospitals based on:
- Self-governing councils
- Quality Improvement Teams
- Professional Development
- Cross-Department Collaboration & Communication
- Involvement in Site Decision-Making
“Empowered leaders are required now more than ever and will continue to prove the decisive cornerstone of the Army’s success.”

EMPOWERMENT as it applies to Army leaders, is:

Relinquishing power by sharing authority with subordinates with respect to influencing outcomes while simultaneously retaining the inherent responsibility for the well being and welfare of a unit.
EDUCATOR EMPOWERMENT is...

...the process by which educators individually and collectively activate their power to achieve their goals.
EDUCATOR EMPOWERMENT: How Do We Get It?
Empowerment: Two Key Elements

Structural:
- Processes
- Laws/Agreements
- Partnerships/Coalitions

Psychological:
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Ability
- Disposition
Stories & Lessons Learned

Natrona County, WY

Federal Way, WA
Federal Way, WA: Grassroots Empowerment

1) Focus on Building Reps
2) School Board Watch
3) Let members show you where the talent lies, and honor it
Natrona County, WY:
A rose by another name...

1) Not a CONTRACT, but a COMPACT!

2) Not BARGAINING, but INTEREST-BASED AGREEMENT PROCESS (IBAP)
Writing Your Story

• What are your greatest opportunities for:
  – Securing structural processes to create educator empowerment?
  – Readying educators to play empowered roles?
• What are the easy first steps you can do right when you get back home?
• In next six months?
• Year? Two years?
Session Outcomes

• The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:
  – Increase and secure processes for increased decision-making around teaching and learning for educators in your local or state
  – Ready members to play empowerment roles in their worksites
Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session!