

# EARLY NOVEMBER LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT\*

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About the Instructional Module, Course, and the College of Brockport, State University of New York.<sup>2</sup>

## 1 Background

The superintendent of the Blissful Valley Central School District (BVCS D), a small rural district in this state, just concluded an unscheduled meeting with Reverend Heart, pastor of the Valley Community Church. Reverend Heart came to share information she received yesterday, the first Tuesday in November, from her regional church headquarters. As part of their world missionary outreach, the church headquarters is financing the relocation of five non-English speaking families who have been displaced as a result of civil war in their home country. The families will be moving into the school district sometime during the last week of December. Reverend Heart provided a list of the names and birthdates of the eight children among the five families. Although she had no other information about the children at this time, she said she would provide any updates as she receives them. Based on their ages, it appears all of the children will be in the intermediate school: three are of fourth grade age, two of fifth grade age, and three of sixth grade age. According to the school system student enrollment report completed last month, the Blissful Valley Intermediate School is nearly at maximum enrollment.

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<sup>1</sup><http://ijelp.expressacademic.org>

<sup>2</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m24672/latest/additional.pdf>>

The superintendent has been presented with a unique and challenging leadership opportunity. There are many issues to identify, problems to solve, decisions to make, and plans to develop and implement before the new students arrive. After reviewing the school system information, the school system enrollment information, and the intermediate school information, follow the directions as shown below.

## 2 School System Information

- Superintendent of schools: second year in position; was the high school principal in another school system in the region for five years
- School business manager: second year in position; shared civil service position with another school system, 40% in the BVCSD; was full-time in the other school system before the position became shared
- Director of special education/primary school assistant principal: was appointed as a teacher on special assignment to this newly created position last January; his time is split equally between the two areas of responsibility (also completing his administrative internship during the fall semester); he was the special education teacher in the middle school for three years before being appointed as the teacher on special assignment
- The offices of the superintendent, the business manager, the director of special education/primary school assistant principal, and six clerical staff are located in four rooms on the second floor of the intermediate school building above the classrooms (there are no rooms above other areas of the building); the director of special education/primary school assistant principal also has office space in the primary school
- Middle school-high school principal: three years as high school principal, became principal of both schools two years ago when the middle school principal retired and the position was not replaced; the middle school and the high school are now in one building; the former middle school building, which was in need of extensive repairs, was sold to the county 18 months ago and is now used as a warehouse
- Primary school principal: reassigned to current position two years ago when the previous principal left for a position in another school system; the reassigned principal had been the primary school assistant principal for one year
- The full-time primary school assistant principal position was eliminated when the current primary school principal was reassigned; the shared position of director of special education/primary school assistant principal was created last December
- Due to budget reductions for the current school year, no funds are allocated to hire any additional staff or to rent space
- The BVCSD has experienced a 35% decline in total student enrollment over the past five years; merger discussions initiated with a neighboring school system last winter are continuing
- All schools in the BVCSD are closed on the following dates: November 11 and Wednesday through Friday during the week of Thanksgiving; December 23 through 31; January 1 and on the third Monday

## 3 School System Enrollment Information

- Primary School: Grades PreK-3. Number of students per classroom = 22. Maximum number of students per classroom per the contract with the Blissful Valley Teachers' Association (BVTA) = 22. Number of classrooms per grade level = 3.
- Intermediate School: Grades 4-6. Number of students per classroom: 4th = 3 @ 25; 5th = 3 @ 25; 6th = 1 @ 24 and 2 @ 25. Maximum number of students per classroom per the contract with the BVTA = 25. Number of classrooms per grade level = 3.
- Middle School: Grades 7-8. Number of students = 200. Maximum number of students per classroom per the contract with the BVTA = 25.
- High School: Grades 9-12. Number of students = 350. Maximum number of students per classroom per the contract with the BVTA = 28.

## 4 Intermediate School Information

- In addition to the principal, a half-time clerical assistant and a half-time school nurse share the intermediate school office (one from 8:00 - 12:00, the other from 12:00 - 4:00)
- The teacher work day is 8:30 - 3:45 each day per the contract with the BVTA
- The student day is 8:50 - 3:15 each day
- Each 4th - 6th classroom has a full-time teacher
- There are no teacher aides or teaching assistants in the school system this year
- Each teacher has a daily 40-minute preparation period and a 30-minute duty-free lunch time per the contract with the BVTA
- All classroom and instructional spaces are located on the first floor of the building: a classroom-sized space = 770 square feet; there are three 4th grade classrooms, three 5th grade classrooms, and three 6th grade classrooms; a classroom-sized space is shared by the library and special education resource room programs; a classroom-sized space is shared by the art and music programs; a one and one-half classroom-sized space is used as the office; a one-half classroom-sized space contains the student bathrooms; a one-third classroom-sized space is used as the faculty room; a one-half classroom-sized space is used as the custodial work and storage area; a classroom-sized space contains the kitchen and food serving area; a triple-sized classroom space contains the gymnasium/cafeteria
- The library and the resource room programs share a classroom; the room is used daily by a part-time special education teacher from 9:00 - 11:30 and by a part-time library/media specialist daily from 12:15 - 3:00
- The shared art/music room is used throughout each day with art from 9:00 - 11:00 and music from 1:00 - 3:00
- The gymnasium/cafeteria is used throughout each day. The physical education teacher, who is shared with the middle school, has classes in the intermediate school gymnasium/cafeteria each from 9:00 - 10:45 and from 1:30 - 3:00
- The faculty room is available all day for use by teachers per the contract with the BVTA
- While the amounts of time for preparation and lunch are contractual, when they occur is not
- All breakfast and lunch foods served from the kitchen are prepared in the middle school-high school kitchen

**5 Directions for Part 1 (in class): Divide our class into three groups of approximately equal size. Each group shall independently use the background information, school system information, school system enrollment information, and intermediate school information provided above to address each of the following items:**

1. For each of the following four topics, develop a list of at least five clearly stated specific leadership questions that your group believes the superintendent will need to answer before the new students arrive at school: Instruction (teaching and learning), Managing School Operations, Legal, and Community Relations.
2. Be prepared to present verbally and in writing your group's lists with the rest of the class.
3. After all of the lists from the three groups are presented, as a class, identify, develop, and agree upon a clearly written composite list of the four most important leadership questions the class believes the superintendent will have to answer for each of the four topics.
4. The time allotted for Part 1 is 45 minutes.

**6 Directions for Part 2 (in class): Divide our class into four groups of approximately equal size. Each group shall independently use the information from Part 1 above and the information provided above to address each of the following items:**

1. Each group shall select and identify one of the four topics and its corresponding list of the four clearly written questions from item number 3 in Part 1 above (i.e., no two groups shall have the same topic).
2. Using the list of questions for your group's selected topic, and any of the information above, develop and then clearly state in writing the major leadership problem your group believes the superintendent will need to solve with respect to that topic.
3. Review the six ISLLC standards and their respective knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators ([www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/isllcstd.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/isllcstd.pdf)). Then: a. decide and state in writing which of the standards provide the overarching structure for what your group believes the superintendent should do to successfully address the address the major leadership problem your group identified in step number 2 above. Develop and provide in writing the rationale for your group's choices. b. decide and state in writing which of the knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators your group believes would be the most applicable for the superintendent to focus upon under each of the standards your group identified. Develop and provide in writing the rationale for your group's choices.
4. Identify in writing a specific decision-making model your group believes the superintendent should use to address your group's stated major leadership problem. Also, identify and list in order the specific steps your group believes the superintendent should take to implement that model.
5. In addition to the information your group has from that provided above, develop and make a written list of any other specific information and its source(s) your group believes the superintendent may need to have to successfully implement the decision-making model your group selected.
6. Present and explain to the class your group's responses to items 1-5 above. Provide each class member and the instructor with a written copy of all of your group's written responses for items 1-5 above.
7. The time allotted for Part 2 is 90 minutes.

**7 Directions for Part 3 (written assignment): Using the same groups from Part 2 above, prepare a paper not to exceed five pages in which your group:**

1. Provides the responses generated for each of items 1 - 5 in the directions for Part 2. Based on our class discussions and your reflections from your work for Part 2, your group may choose to revise any of your responses for items 2 - 5 in the directions for Part 2. If so, clearly indicate your original responses for Part 2 and the revisions made. [See rubric criteria 1 - 8 and 10]
2. Uses each of the steps your group identified in item number 4 from Part 2 above and any of the additional information your group identified in item number 5 from Part 2 above to implement the specific decision-making model your group selected in item number 4 from Part 2 above and clearly state the decision reached. If your group chooses to revise anything pertaining to the specific decision-making model, the steps in the model, or the additional information, clearly indicate your original responses for Part 2 and the revisions made. [See rubric criteria 9 - 10]
3. Develops a timeline showing each of the steps in the specific decision-making model your group selected including the length of time your group believes would be required for the superintendent to implement each of them. [See rubric criterion 11]
4. Identifies and describes at least three (3) specific leadership actions your group believes the superintendent would need to take to successfully implement that decision. [See rubric criterion 12]
5. Identifies and describes at least three possible positive consequences your group believes could result from implementing the decision your group reached. [See rubric criterion 13]
6. Identifies and describes at least three possible negative consequences your group believes could result from implementing the decision your group reached. [See rubric criterion 14]

7. In addition to addressing each of the items 1 - 6 listed above in the directions for Part 3, your group's paper is expected to be a professional document free from all errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, inappropriate phrasing, and informal language. [See rubric criterion 16]
8. Time allotted for submittal of Part 3 is three weeks.

Scoring Rubric Used in Instructional Module<sup>3</sup>

## 8 References

Council of Chief State School Officers. (1996). *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: Standards for school leaders*. Washington, DC. [www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/isllcstd.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/isllcstd.pdf).

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Lunenburg, F. C. and Ornstein, A. C. (2008). *Educational administration: Concepts and practices*. (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson.

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<sup>3</sup>See the file at <<http://cnx.org/content/m24672/latest/rubric.pdf>>