

Ten steps for the future of school leadership

John Dunford, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) used his time in a talk2learn hotseat to set out the ASCL's '10 steps for the Future of School Leadership'.

talk2learn members were invited by John to comment on the steps. A very lively debate ensued with some members continuing to make contributions despite the discussion being declared 'closed'!

"These steps clearly have much value"

Dunford was taken to task by school bursars who felt that their leadership potential had been overlooked by the association's recommendations as well as by their own schools. "These steps clearly have much value," said one bursar. "However, I feel that they are directed at senior management teachers and not bursars/school business managers. Can someone explain how bursars can be included and therefore feel a part of the overall teaching and learning and progress of schools?" Dunford responded that the 10 steps referred as much to bursars as to teaching staff. Dunford also offered advice to several bursars who were struggling to break into the school leadership team: "try putting a paper to the head on a broad development theme and ask him/her if you can come to a leadership team meeting to discuss it. That might open the door for you when the others realise how much you have to contribute."

One school leader agreed with the step *build and sustain a learning community*, commenting that it was at odds with her own experience of a school in challenging circumstances being 'turned round' by a new head and six staff from his previous school – "what happens to the school they left behind" asked another contributor? Dunford

commented that, "to be effective, change has to be sustainable and that means leaders that are there for the long haul, building and sustaining a learning community of all pupils and staff".

Another theme of the discussion was managing the relentless pace of change. Dunford advocated prioritising changes, maybe putting things on hold and certainly putting some things in the bin whilst "trying to hold onto the school's own priorities as well as implementing the government policies that seem most important".

"to be effective, change has to be sustainable"

An NPQH candidate strongly agreed with step 4, *share and foster leadership*, causing Dunford to reflect on his own practice as a head of delegating new developments in school to middle managers, rather than "the usual suspects on the leadership team". Dunford also commented that "lack of delegation is the key to a nervous breakdown!"

The 10 steps state that sustainable school leaders:

1. **believe in the power and purpose of learning**
2. **want the best for all the young people in their area**
3. **command authority, but use that authority wisely**
4. **share and foster leadership**
5. **build and sustain a learning community**
6. **practise intelligent accountability**
7. **balance short and long term goals**
8. **renew themselves**
9. **work closely with governors**
10. **communicate clearly and consistently**

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