



Essential School Leadership with Keith Nix

Lesson 3: Strategy

Outline:

Leading the school strategically

- Strategy is how we get to the picture that the Head of School paints as the vision for the school.
- The Head and the board come together to decide how to move forward.

Crafting a strategic plan

- Boards and Heads should dream and take risks.
- God wants to do more than we tend to think we can get done.
- Strategic means a project, initiative, or program that we will move the ball forward toward one of two goals - **optimal mission delivery** and **long term sustainability**.
- What we list tends to be about growing or guarding (rather than operational items).
- Draft a plan that is 4-6 years long.
- Ways to draft a plan:
 - Get away with a board
 - Task a sub-committee of a board, and come back together 2-3 times at certain intervals.
- Who are you inviting to participate in your strategic plan?
 - A young start-up needs more broad participation to have broader ownership.
 - A stable school can have a board carry a lot of it.
- What are possible outcomes? What are the things we could do?
 - There is a link to professional development and school sustainability.
 - A strategic plan contains list items, source of funding, and how much it costs.
 - Identify a broad list of “could do” items (5-10 things).
 - Determine who will do each item.

Working from a strategic plan (priorities)

- The strategic plan becomes the key document to ensure that the board is doing what it ought to be doing in being a visionary, strategic, and disciplined board.
- Craft the annual agenda.
 - The board pulls what it will do that year. Who on the board does it belong to?



- What does the Head need to do? The Head sits down with Head support and evaluation committee. Determine 3-5 strategic items for the year.
- One item should have to do with the Head's own professional development.
- The Head then meets with the team to create objectives for a culture of strategic alignment and accountability.
- This is one of best guards against a board encroaching on the operational or the Head getting caught up in the minutiae.

The distinction between strategic tasks and tactical tasks

- Strategy is the “how do we get there”.
- Once you make the strategic decision, then you get into tactics (operations).

How do organizational clarity and trust (Lencioni) relate to strategic planning?

- The team working from the strategic plan creates organizational clarity.
- Part of organizational clarity is having trust that someone is doing their part.
- A simple Excel spreadsheet is used to communicate meaningfully.
 - Spreadsheet is a table includes an item, who, how much, start, finish, etc.