



10 MISTAKES TO AVOID

Who's in Charge of That?

Creating Clear Roles and Responsibilities

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Who's in Charge of That? Creating Clear Roles and Responsibilities

As school district budgets become tighter, district leaders continue to look for ways to strengthen performance despite reduced resources. Thoughtfully clarifying and reinforcing roles and responsibilities among central office staff and principals can help raise student achievement at no cost.

1 Don't forget the value of clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities may require a lot of work, but it is a powerful and no-cost approach to improving operations and strengthening student achievement.

2 Don't think that staff's roles are clear just because they are clear to you.

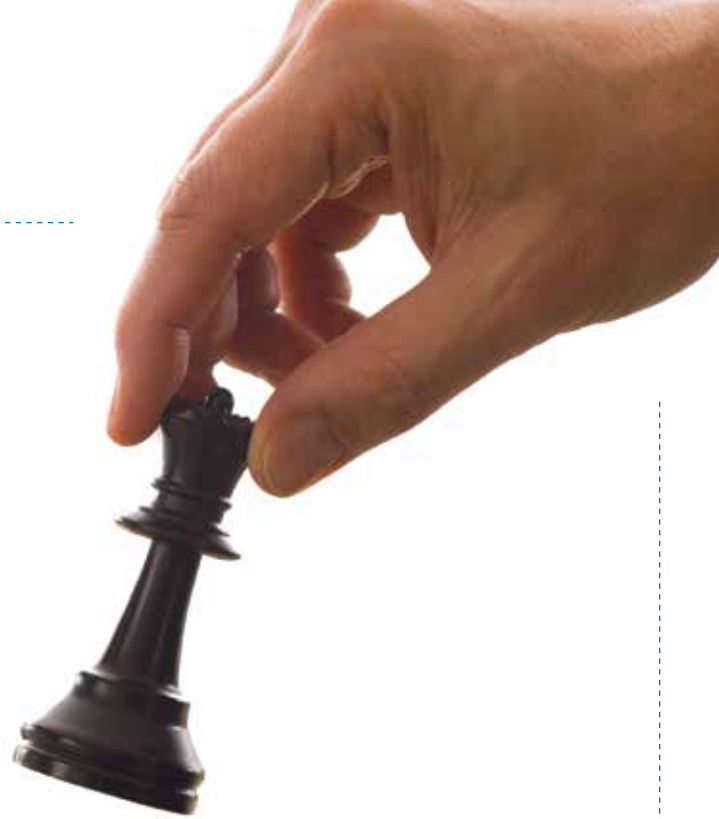
You may think that your staff understand their roles and responsibilities, but roles are clear only if team members understand them. To find out whether the roles and responsibilities are well-defined in your district, just ask.

3 If it is not written down, it may not be clear.

Formal, documented roles and decision-making authority lead to clarity. If your staff do not have written descriptions of the types of decisions they can make and when they have input into other decisions, then their roles may not be sufficiently well-defined.

4 Don't think two is better than one.

Having multiple people in charge of the same or similar initiatives often increases ambiguity about roles and responsibilities. Having one point-person increases clarity.



5 Don't think collaboration can't coexist with clarity of roles.

Staff can collaborate with each other; they just need to know what their roles are on a team and how to interact with each other.

6 Don't assume formal roles match informal roles.

People's official and unofficial responsibilities often differ. That is why making responsibilities and decision-making authority absolutely clear is so important.

7 Don't forget that every promotion signals the district's values.

Promotions and rewards are more powerful than official job descriptions. Aligning them with your district's values can reinforce those values and strengthen performance.

8 Don't forget that each staff member needs a clear understanding of who his or her supervisor is.

Staff members are often uncertain about whom they report to. In order to reinforce well-defined roles and responsibilities, each staff member should know whom they oversee and who is responsible for overseeing them.

9 Don't confuse good conflict with bad conflict.

Without clear roles and decision-making rights, power struggles often emerge. Power struggles are not productive, but battling over ideas can be a positive experience. Clarifying decision-making authority can shift the debate to allow the best ideas to prevail.

10 Leaders shouldn't have to guess how well they are doing their job.

By creating job descriptions that focus on results rather than activities, you can help your staff to have a better sense of how they are performing before they are handed a formal evaluation.