

Why Should We Describe the School or District We Are Trying To Create?

“A vision is a picture of the future you seek to create described in the present tense, as if it were happening now. Vision statement shows where we want to go and what we will be like when we get there. Vision gives shape and direction to the organization’s future. It helps people set goals to take the organization closer to its desired future.” (Senge et al., 1994, p. 302)

“In a change process, vision serves three important purposes. First, by clarifying general direction for change it simplifies hundreds of more detailed decisions. People can figure out for themselves what to do without constantly checking with bosses. Second, it motivates people to take action in the right direction. Third, it helps coordinate the actions of different people in an efficient way. One question—‘is this in line with the vision’—can help eliminate hours of torturous discussion.” (Kotter, 1996, pp. 68–69)

“A vision builds trust, collaboration, interdependence, motivation, and mutual responsibility for success. Vision helps people make smart choices, because their decisions are made with the end result in mind. . . . Vision allows us to act from a proactive stance, moving toward what we want. . . . Vision empowers and excites us to reach for what we truly desire.” (Blanchard, 2007, p. 22)

An effective school system and its leaders build a shared sense of purpose and a shared vision of what schools and the school system would look like if that shared purpose was acted on, and develop a bias toward action relevant to the vision (Schlechty, 2005).

Shared vision and shared covenants make up the leadership dimension of purposing, which is “key to helping schools become communities of collective responsibility” (Sergiovanni, 2005, p. 8).

“At both school and district levels, administrative tasks essential to teachers’ learning and learning communities include building a shared vision and common language about practice.” (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006, p. 80)