

Preface

This book is about passionate leadership. At its core, it is a leadership book for people who want to learn more about leading schools, school culture, and igniting a system for passionate people to lead better for the sake of our students. This book offers a formula for bringing passion to the forefront of our work in schools. Herein you will find mantras to live by, inspirational stories from real leaders in the field, reflection questions, visuals and models, takeaways and how-to guidance, along with much more to shape and reshape your thinking, planning, and action regarding your personal passion and the passion that you can fuel for others. Our true desire is that this book is a spark that inspires you to take immediate action.

We wrote this book because we've seen firsthand how the system can beat people down, creating despair and defeat. We've heard from countless people that their morale is low, draining the energy and enthusiasm that they once had and that kids need and deserve. The truth is, it doesn't have to be that way and it doesn't have to be your reality. We've heard from educators who are at the top of their game, making a real difference and inspiring those around them to do the same. We've heard from passionate leaders around the world who can't wait to get up every morning because of their intense drive and the team of people they have with them to achieve success. We gathered their stories, curated the themes that we heard over and over, and synthesized them for our readers. We know that there are educators out there who need a nudge, a simple recharge, people who can lead us into the future but need some support to get there. There are others who have the formula, or parts of it, in place right now, ready to be replicated across the system. This book brings all of the moving parts of passionate leadership together as an

understandable and actionable blueprint for every school. We hope you enjoy it.

FEATURES TO GUIDE YOU

Passionate Leadership is designed to guide your thinking, your planning, and your actions. In the Introduction, you will find our first feature called **Trip Traps**. These are the common causes for missing or declining passion. Trip Traps are the reasons why passion is often stifled in schools and why leaders feel that they can't move forward. The good news is that these traps are not insurmountable, and we're going to show you how to avoid falling into them. Additionally within the Introduction, you'll find our **Mantras To Live By**. These are three clear statements that leaders use as self-talk for a *passionate start* to every single day and a *passion pause* for whenever things seem to be going the wrong way. The most passionate leaders who we listened to for the creation of this book had clear and discerning ways that they spoke to themselves and others about growth, core values, work ethic, and positivity. These mantras are meant to be used as an internal self-guiding force and shared with others as regular reminders.

This book is divided into three parts whereby each one uncovers a unique aspect of passionate leadership. All three parts focus on culture and precisely what drives passion in schools from the inside out. Each part opens with an **inspirational story** about a real scenario with real people who made a difference in the lives of young people. This book is written by practitioners for practitioners with examples from the field.

Chapters 1, 3, and 5 provide a framework to get you thinking about specific ideas and inspire you to take action. Each chapter includes a chart to compare a passionate culture to one lacking in passion. The charts compare a learning culture with a teaching culture, a communal culture with an isolated culture, and a celebrated team versus an ignored and admonished one. These three chapters (1, 3, and 5) also demonstrate how a passionate culture is created *by design* with key elements within the environment: (1) commitment and desire, (2) networking and storytelling, and (3) recognition and

understanding. You'll see exactly what each of these looks like, why they're important, and how you can bring them alive in your school.

Chapters 2, 4, and 6 demonstrate the power of passion by using real stories from the field. Each of these chapters includes two **stories with Key Takeaways**. You'll hear from leaders who are doing the work as you read the words on this page. Each of these chapters (2, 4, and 6) also comes with two **Technical Tips**. The first of the two tips incorporates *How-Tos* that reveal the practical next steps for leaders, and the second of the two technical tips is about hiring practices and strategies so that your passionate leadership efforts are sustainable for the future. We cover topics including professional learning experiences, systems of teacher feedback, unique contributions that will amaze you, authentic teacher leadership examples, ways to celebrate using teacher-reported grades, and how extracurriculars might be the answer to student achievement. We provide a fun visual in Chapters 2, 4, and 6 as well because we believe that models, as visual representation of any content, augment the focus.

Every chapter ends with **Reflection Questions** so that you can take inventory and take action right away. We want you to think, plan, and then do something new and different for the people you lead.

The Conclusion is an action-oriented reflection activity and self-assessment, something you can use on your own or with your team. There's no better way to think into the future than to assess the present. You have to know yourself, know your current culture, and respond accordingly.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK?

Anyone with passion for student success, teaching and learning, and leadership should read this book. Most specifically, school principals, assistant principals, and district leaders should read this book and consider using it for a book study. Our hope is that this book reaches the hands of people who are current leaders but especially all the people preparing future leaders through leadership pipeline programs, colleges, and universities. Lastly, we believe that this work should permeate the community beyond the school walls. Our goal

is to reach business leaders and public officials, including CEOs and elected civil servants. We contend that our message regarding passionate leadership can be the fuel for the future of our economy, our productivity as a nation, and our position on what it means to make a contribution to the world.

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