

THE DESIRED STATE



“I know I’m supposed to be leading, but I’m unsure how I’m supposed to lead in this time of uncertainty. Are there questions I might be asking of students, staff and stakeholders to assist in processing this uncertain time and change?”

-District Leader, Public School in Kansas

Recently a district leader reached out asking the question listed above. We recognize others may be seeking this information as well. The leader is clearly conscious around the thoughts, feelings and emotions of stakeholders during this time and wishes to honor the experts who are living it alongside one another.

We turned to *The Adaptive School: A Sourcebook for Developing Collaborative Groups* by Robert J. Garmston & Bruce M. Wellman. It states, “...Because adaptive change is disruptive, leaders support people in navigating change.” We have found these questions useful when individuals and groups are experiencing adaptive change.

Some questions for leadership to consider posing to others while processing change and uncertainty:

- **What is over for us? What is not?**
 - **When we have faced challenges in the past, what was effective?**
 - **Of the elements we can influence, what might have the greatest effect?**
 - **What do we value and want to continue?**
 - **How are we navigating our bias and assumptions around students and families?**
 - **As individuals and as a group, what can we do to support ourselves through change?**
 - **What are some areas in which we might need to manage the chaos of transition?**
 - **What long-range effects might this have?**
 - **What thoughts, feelings and beliefs might all stakeholder groups be experiencing?**
- How do we know?**

Reframing the leader’s job from that of a problem-solver to problem framers and developer of problem solvers is essential. Knowing how to help people learn, not by telling, but by understanding the perceptions, beliefs, and values that drive their action, and then to plug into alternate, more agile ways of thinking is the leader’s role. (The Adaptive School, pg. 19)

“Leadership is a function, not a role and is a shared function in meetings, staff development, activities, action research, and classrooms.” (The Adaptive School, pg. 33)