



## ***A Message from Jerry Klenke***

***Executive Director, Buckeye Association of School Administrators***

It is a privilege to speak with you about the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council and BASA's role in developing OLAC.

The role of superintendents has changed significantly over what it was in years past. The day of the superintendent being in charge of managing the district and serving as the emperor, the autocratic leader is over. It is no longer about management. Rather, the primary focus is about leading instruction and improving student achievement.

Successful learning organizations do not exist without highly effective leadership. To have all parts of an organization individually and collaboratively achieving at the highest level, the leadership must create the vision, the urgency, and the direction for the system. Highly effective school systems have leaders that exhibit passion, focus, persistence, support, pressure, and ongoing commitment to their organization, their community, their employees, and their students.

Researchers at McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Research) found a statistically significant relationship between superintendent leadership and student achievement. Similarly, Robert Marzano states that "getting serious about school reform means making critical commitments that require certain actions in every classroom and in every building...Historically, individual schools within a school district and individual teachers within a building have operated in total autonomy and isolation." He goes on to say that, "until districts and schools become tightly coupled organizations in which student achievement is the superordinate goal supported by uniform yet flexible behaviors in the classroom we are not really serious about school reform."

Superintendents must use collaborative leadership and effective leadership team structures at the district, school and teacher level to achieve significant improvement in performance.

Organizations that are committed to this and successful are like orchestras; each individual has a strategic part and a leadership role in producing beautiful music. The conductor works with the musicians to align and focus the work around the score of music as written. Likewise, the superintendent must work with the rest of the educational staff to align and focus the work around the district goals for achievement and instruction. But just as an orchestra has 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> chairs, in our school systems, we need to have our central office, the building principals and the teachers all working together to make the beautiful music of high student achievement.

The OLAC work was developed through the efforts of the Ohio Department of Education and BASA. BASA is honored that the Department chose to have BASA co-lead the development of OLAC. However, just as the OLAC process engages all levels of individuals within the school

system, the development of the OLAC work also engaged representatives of all areas within the educational community. Individuals from all of the following groups contributed to the final product:

- Ohio Education Association
- Ohio Federation of Teachers
- Ohio School Boards Association
- Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators
- Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators
- Ohio Association of School Business Officials
- Ohio Educational Service Center Association
- Ohio Council of Professors of Educational Administration
- Practicing Superintendents, Central Office Personnel, Principals, and Teachers from Ohio School Districts

OLAC's work began by using the work of Richard Elmore as a foundation, establishing that the purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role. That theme was maintained throughout the development of the OLAC work and districts that have utilized the work have found that they have established continuity across their district, the buildings within their district, and the classrooms within each building that never before had been achieved, and that student achievement had indeed become the primary focus of the entire school system.

Ohio's Leadership Development Framework outlines the essential practices for:

- Superintendents
- District Leadership Teams (DLTs)
- Building Leadership Teams (BLTs)

It describes the value you believe each leadership team has. It clarifies leadership roles and responsibilities at the district and school levels. And, it validates the leadership team structures needed to:

- Break down programmatic silos and encourage open conversations around a district's critical needs;
- Create focus around a limited number of meaningful goals and strategies;
- Allow implementation of those goals and strategies systematically across all levels of the school system;
- Monitor the degree of implementation for improvement (versus compliance);
- Monitor effects of change on adult practice and student performance; and
- Help adults hold each other accountable for following through on commitments to each other and to students.

As with all well developed programs, additional needs became apparent within our educational setting. When looking at the work for OLAC it became obvious that we had standards for curriculum and professional development, standards for teachers, and standards for principals, but we were missing standards for superintendents. Hence, with the assistance of the Ohio

Department of Education, BASA co-led the development of superintendent standards. Ohio is one of only two states in the nation to have developed such standards. As a result of this work, we now have consistent, high quality standards that can be used by:

- New superintendents to inform them of the scope of their work;
- Boards of education to drive the employment and development of their superintendent; and
- Higher education in the development/refinement of preparation programs for superintendents.

Over the last ten years or so, student achievement has come front and center in education. Today's economic plights have only magnified the need for Ohio school districts to ensure that every student achieve at his or her peak performance level. In order for that to happen, effective leadership and a statewide response for effectively addressing that need must begin.

To that end, OLAC is available to you. It has already proven itself in numerous districts throughout the state. However, until all school systems across Ohio are effectively using the model, some students will not be receiving the quality of instruction necessary in today's world. There are teachers, principals, central office personnel, superintendents, and community partners all committed to this end and you will see some of them in the on-line OLAC modules available to you.

We certainly recognize and commend those individuals for their outstanding practice and performance. We also know that these practices need to be in place in every classroom, in every building, and in every school district in our state.

OLAC has been designed to assist in that effort. I encourage you to utilize this framework. It will ensure that you are focused on the right things at every level of your organization and, in turn, every student in your school system will be in receipt of the high quality education he/she deserves.