



5 Minute Activity

High Standards

Read the following excerpt from *Leadership Philosophies of the Clovis Unified School District* (p. 4) and then discuss one of the prompts below.

Floyd “Doc” Buchanan, Ed.D., served as the first superintendent of Clovis Unified School District from 1960 to 1991. Doc’s simple, homespun philosophies about how education should work, how to build a successful team, and how to set and achieve high standards became the ingredients of Clovis Unified’s transformation from “a little country school district,” to one of the finest in the state and arguably, the nation. The school district Doc was chosen to lead in 1960 did not have destination schools. Its students underperformed in reading and math. Its sports teams (if they existed) won the fight after the game rather than the game itself. Few people outside of town could place the district on a map. But Doc was a visionary. He knew how to **hire the right people**, he knew how to **inspire them to become better**, and he knew the importance of **setting high expectations** and how to **motivate a team to achieve** them. Times have changed since Doc was superintendent, but the philosophies of leadership he used to inspire the original Clovis Unified team are, at their core, timeless. Clovis Unified’s success does not rest solely on Doc’s leadership, but also on the work of countless others who shared similar goals and who caught a common vision to serve students and serve each other. In their own way, each of these leaders applied the same tightly held beliefs when navigating the challenges faced in their own day and time, proving along the way that leading from a common set of quality core values is still relevant today.

Discussion Prompts:

Emerging Leaders (101): Reread the bolded phrases from the excerpt above. Each of these skills are critical to the success of any organization. Thinking about your own skill set, which one is your greatest strength? Provide examples. Which is your greatest weakness? What steps can you take to overcome this weakness?

Established Leaders (201): As a leader, think about all aspects of your responsibilities for the message you send to your employees about your belief in high standards. Choose one event appropriate to your staff and describe what high standards look like for this event/activity? How do you know the high standards you expect have been achieved. (Possible choices groundbreaking, department celebration, graduation, community event, bond measure, students’ achievement scores, athletic competitions).

Tenured Leaders (301): Read this quote from Jim Collins “When [what you are deeply passionate about, what you can be best in the world at and what drives your economic engine] come together, not only does your work move toward greatness, but so does your life. For, in the end, it is impossible to have a great life unless it is a meaningful life. And it is very difficult to have a meaningful life



without meaningful work. Perhaps, then, you might gain that *rare tranquility that comes from knowing that you've had a hand in creating something of intrinsic excellence that makes a contribution*. Indeed, you might even gain that deepest of all satisfactions: knowing that your short time here on this earth has been well spent, and that it mattered.” Doc was indeed a visionary leader, and he had the great satisfaction of knowing that he had a hand in creating something of excellence, the Clovis Unified School District. As you reflect on your career in CUSD identify what you have contributed, thus far, to the success of this district. How do you know it mattered? What do you hope to contribute before you retire.