

Introductory remarks of Hayes Mizell on July 14, 2008 before moderating Session B01 at the National Staff Development Council's Summer Conference, held at the Marriott World Center Resort in Orlando, FL. The session was "Leadership Empowerment from Classroom to Boardroom" and included panel members Carolyn Crowder, National Education Association; Steve Helgeson, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; Rosalind LaRocque, American Federation of Teachers; and Stephanie Hirsh, National Staff Development Council. Approximately 20 people attended the session. Mizell is the Distinguished Senior Fellow of the National Staff Development Council.

Perhaps at some time in your life, you encountered a leader who influenced your vision of leadership. You may have only seen this person on a stage or at a meeting. You may have been impressed by the leader's knowledge, or personality, or appearance, or maybe you just noticed how other people deferred to the leader. No matter which characteristic of the leader had an impact on you, perhaps you thought, "I would like to be in a leadership position like that someday." You may not have become aware of the person's influence on your leadership aspirations until many years after the event. Nevertheless, that leader shaped your understanding of leadership and sparked your early conscious or unconscious interest in aspiring to a leadership role.

In one way or another, all of us look to leaders. Our regard for leaders may be based on our narrow self-interest. We are only too glad for another person to take initiative and responsibility, or relieve us of making difficult decisions and assuming accountability for results. Sometimes we are interested in leaders because of their celebrity, or because of the benefits that come with their leadership role—their salary, their authority, or their staff support. But in the final analysis, all of us want better leaders.

When an organization fails to acknowledge or respond effectively to significant challenges, we complain about the lack of leadership. When leaders betray our trust—

whether they are Enron executives, or a President of the United States, or a minister who commits child abuse—we are deeply offended. At all levels of human activity, leaders matter.

This is no more true than in public education. People in leadership roles are ubiquitous, but leaders are in short supply. From the classroom to the board room, there has never been a greater need for leaders with the commitment, knowledge, and skills to mobilize, organize, and inspire others to educate all children more effectively. There are too few of these leaders. Many organizations are seeking to address this problem, including associations of educators such as the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the National Staff Development Council. Leadership development is a major agenda item for each of these organizations, as well as others.

Ironically, leadership *within* these education organizations is essential for them to execute successfully their efforts to support and improve public schools. If these organizations fall short in fulfilling their missions, public schools will be the weaker for it.

Even education organizations, then, depend on leaders. Yet, how do such leaders emerge? Do they obtain degrees in association management? Do they toil away in classrooms or local school system bureaucracies hoping to be discovered? Do they network to ingratiate themselves with the education associations' top executives?

This morning, we will learn first hand how such leaders prepared for their current positions and what they have learned as a result of their journeys. Don't be surprised, however, if they report that their current leadership roles did not result from a bolt of

lightening. Opportunities for leadership exist at all levels, and people who are leaders at upper levels of organizations usually attain such positions because they consistently demonstrated leadership at the lower levels of organizations. People who do not embrace the risks and burdens of leadership at these lower levels usually do not gain the experience or recognition required to ascend to the upper levels. Of course, some organizations, including those focused on public education, sometimes choose people for leadership positions who they know will play it safe, exercising so much caution that they are leaders in name only. These are not the leaders who are appearing here today.

As you listen to and interact with our panelists, keep in mind that there are at least five broad categories of leadership that characterize how people attained their positions.

This is my construct, and you may or may not agree:

- 1) Credentialed Leadership – People become leaders because they attain credentials or otherwise meet formal criteria that persons in authority over them associate with leadership or require as prerequisites for leadership.
- 2) Earned Leadership – People become leaders primarily because they have “paid their dues” through faithful participation and competent performance over time.
- 3) Seized Leadership – People become leaders by “taking” the role through campaigning for it, being “political,” or otherwise maneuvering—positively or negatively—into the position.
- 4) Recognized Leadership – People become leaders because they have unique personal or professional qualities their superiors and/or

constituents recognize as valuable and compelling, appropriate for meeting an organization's needs at a particular time.

- 5) Default Leadership – People become leaders because others are not willing to accept the position or responsibility.

Each of these categories are not “good” or “bad.” Leaders can perform at high levels and make valuable contributions to their organizations, regardless of the factors responsible for their selection or designation as leaders. Also, the categories are not mutually exclusive; obviously, there is overlap. Indeed, this morning you will learn that in the case of each of our panelists there were multiple routes that took them to their current leadership positions.

Stephanie Hirsh will now introduce members of the panel....