

THE QUIET FORCE: HOW GREAT SCHOOL LEADERS INFLUENCE THEIR COLLEAGUES

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The strength of a school lies not in its infrastructure or curricula but in its people, who are united by a common purpose and guided by a strong leader. In influencing others, a school leader must embody a powerful yet subtle force that shapes how effectively colleagues perform their duties and engage with their shared mission.

First and foremost, leading begins with being an inspirational role model—one whose actions and demeanor encourage others to strive for the same standard. This takes root when a leader listens fully to their team, welcoming ideas, proposals, and perspectives without bias. Every teacher should feel they matter, that their voice carries weight, and that their contributions help shape the school's direction. When staff face concerns or challenges, they cannot resolve alone, the leader does not reprimand them for falling short or dismiss their thoughts. Instead, they step in with guidance, practical advice, and steady support, walking through solutions together and helping the team learn how to move forward with confidence. In turn, this approach inspires colleagues to give their best effort, knowing their leader stands beside them rather than above them as a judge. Equally vital is recognizing both big milestones and quiet daily efforts—acknowledging achievements lifts self-esteem, boosts morale, and fosters a culture where every member feels seen and valued. When a leader inspires rather than dictates, they build a cohesive team of dedicated professionals ready to collaborate and lift one another up.

Furthermore, true influence grows when a leader leads by example, showing rather than telling what commitment and dedication look like. A compassionate, understanding leader naturally motivates their colleagues to grow not just as educators, but as people. They make time for their team—organizing gatherings that build connection, stepping in to help when personal or professional struggles arise, and treating every staff member with fairness and respect. This consistent kindness and integrity set a standard that ripples outward: colleagues mirror this care toward one another, toward students, and toward their work. What follows is a supportive, nurturing environment where interactions are positive, where people feel safe to take thoughtful risks, and where pride in the profession becomes a shared value.

Ultimately, an effective leader is the heart of a well-functioning school—one who unites people and cultivates a workplace rooted in trust and mutual support. A truly great leader understands they are not superior to their colleagues, but a partner walking the same path. By leading with humility, empathy, and action, they build lasting bonds, help others rise above challenges, and create a community where everyone thrives together.

References:

<https://www.european-agency.org/resources/glossary/school-leadership>