

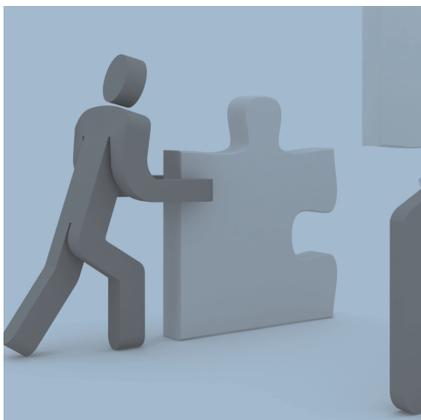
10 MISTAKES *to* AVOID



Succession Planning

To The District Management Council (DMC), succession planning is not about filling open boxes on an org chart. Instead, it is about proactive leadership development to build the “bench strength” of your organization – an effort that will help districts navigate through times of economic uncertainty while realizing improved results. To help school districts cultivate more and better leaders, DMC has introduced an eight-step process that takes school districts from design through implementation of systemic succession planning. For additional succession planning resources, please visit our website at www.dmcouncil.org/succession-planning

These 10 common mistakes can be avoided through careful planning and implementation of a systemic succession planning process.



Mistake #1:

Waiting until a leadership position is open to begin planning for the successor

Succession planning is about being proactive in anticipation of possible turnover in all key leadership positions. Many organizations deal reactively with succession and lose organizational productivity in the process. In these uncertain financial times, districts cannot afford to use a reactive approach.

Mistake #2:

Postponing succession planning because it is too hard or time consuming

School districts cannot afford to delay succession planning because of decreased resources. While a comprehensive succession planning process requires pulling together various activities - including evaluation, professional development, and transition planning among others - and managing them together as a system, school districts can break the pursuit into manageable pieces.

Mistake #3:

Assuming that transition planning is the same as succession planning

Transition planning is the process of exiting a leader and onboarding a new one (for instance, using written entry plans). While important, transition planning does not address the key structural or developmental aspects of leadership success. For DMC, succession planning is nearly synonymous for leadership development.

Mistake #4:

Not being transparent with regards to leadership succession decisions

The best succession planning programs are clear about what leadership characteristics are valued and why. This transparency needs to be embedded in all communications, evaluations, and development pursuits with individual leaders: Why are these leaders where they are? How can they improve within their roles? Questions like these are crucial for organizing your talent to cope with fewer resources and increasing school district demands.

Mistake #5:

Not having top management participation and support of the program

While many of the activities traditionally associated with succession planning fall within the realm of the human resources department, DMC believes strongly that leadership development is every leader's responsibility. Top executives need to be visible and active in supporting improved succession planning.

Mistake #6:

Not using formal mentoring or apprenticeship to develop leaders

Each executive or leader should be obligated to develop successors. This should be a formal part of each leader's job responsibilities and included as part of their evaluation.

Mistake #7:

Not emphasizing long-term career progression

Planning just for migrating employees from one box on the organization chart to the next will not result in coordinated and prioritized leadership development activities that will improve the overall structure of the district. Districts should create and manage discrete career pathways in all areas of the organization.

Mistake #8:

Not designing the succession plan to reflect an evolving organization and district strategy

In these uncertain economic times, school districts should be thinking about tomorrow's organization, not today's. A district's strategy should signal an evolution of priorities and challenges according to the overall strategy and available resources. The leadership required to attain these goals should be reflected in the district's succession plan.

Mistake #9:

Not having dedicated responsibility and clear accountability for succession plan results

A comprehensive succession plan has many components. To ensure the best possible use of resources, clear responsibility and accountability for outcomes and activities is necessary to drive implementation and overall progress.

Mistake #10:

Not managing the succession planning system on an ongoing basis with key performance indicators

Tracking and managing key metrics can help the organization manage leadership bench strength, talent development and retention on an ongoing basis. The plan design itself should also be tracked using key metrics, a necessary tactic to ensure that succession planning becomes a continuous improvement process.



to learn more about d MC's approach to s uccession Planning, and to access our vast library of articles, tools and other resources, please visit www.DMCouncil.org/succession-planning.