

1 Defining Effective Curriculum Leadership

Curriculum leadership in schools is pretty much what the individual leader makes it. There are many tasks associated with the curriculum development process and the leader is professionally responsible for sorting out and prioritizing this work. I strongly believe that curriculum leadership must be more than the management of existing programs. A curriculum manager would focus on reviewing materials, control issues, daily problem-solving, and encouraging a predictable routine from year to year. Such an orientation to the job is static. Effective curriculum leadership does all of those things plus establish new direction, align people and resources, motivate participants, and produce meaningful change for school improvement. In short, effective curriculum leadership is more than maintenance, it is dynamic in nature.

This distinction between just “running smoothly” and “responding to change” is very important on the job and reflects the general orientation (or philosophy) of the curriculum leader. The reader must ask, “Are we operating in a static world where schools are unchanging, or are we living in a dynamic world in which significant change is ever present?” The worldview of the school curriculum leader, static or dynamic, will determine what is considered a priority on a daily basis.