

THE “STUFF” OF LEADERSHIP
by Paul Fox, but stolen from every source imaginable

Every year at the Upper St. Clair High School and most schools across the country, student leadership orientation takes place. Whether it is the preparation of marching band captains, class officers or student staff of choirs or musical productions, we “charge our troops” with their responsibilities and try to teach the essence of leadership. Here are a few of the concepts I have robbed from PMEA Summer Leadership Workshops and keynote speeches at State Conferences that have proven meaningful to my student officers. Special credit goes to several “giants” in the field of educational leadership: music teachers **William Galvin, Michael Kumer, Tim Lautzenheiser** and my school administrator **Tom Harshman**.

♪ There are three types of leadership: the visionary (creative), coach (inspirational), and manager (organizer).

♪ *Nothing is ever set in stone.* We should always be willing to “change our paradigms” and embrace new ideas or challenges.

♪ *There is no such thing as “failure” — just course corrections.* Babe Ruth is a perfect example of this concept (a home run record holder who had the most strike outs!). *Failure is not trying!*

♪ *Change is good; leaders are catalysts for change.*

♪ *Leaders model the term **commitment**, not **convenience**!*

♪ *Leadership is problem solving and innovation.* If you have a seemingly unsolvable problem, conceive of and solve a totally different challenge that lessens or eliminates the primary concern.

♪ *Respect is contagious.* Participate in leadership by example!

♪ *I knew a man who drew a small circle around himself to shut everyone out. So we drew a bigger circle and included him in our group!* Encourage others to join the group.

♪ *Who do you represent?* (the student electorate, school authorities and, most importantly, yourself).

♪ *Fun is a state of mind...* so let's make our group fun!

♪ *Leadership is self-esteem.* Leaders never use put-downs or criticism to build their own images or feed their egos. ♪

THE TASKS OF LEADERSHIP

reprinted from the National Association of Secondary School Principals
(NASSP) pamphlet *On Leadership* by John W. Gardner.

Examination of the tasks performed by leaders gets to the heart of some of the most interesting questions concerning leadership. I shall deal with nine tasks that seem to be the most significant functions of leadership, but I encourage readers to add to the list. Leadership activities that are implicit in all tasks (e.g., communicating, relating effectively with people) are not dealt with separately.

1. *Envisioning Goals.* Leaders perform the function of goal setting in diverse ways. Some assert a vision of what the group can be at its best. Other leaders point us toward solutions to our problems. Still others, presiding over internally divided groups, are able to define overarching goals that unify constituencies and focus energies.

2. *Affirming Values.* Not only leaders of the society at large but leaders of organizations and groups must concern themselves with the affirmation of values. They do so not only in verbal pronouncements but in policy decisions they make, the kinds of people they surround themselves with and the way they conduct themselves.

3. *Motivating.* Leaders do not normally create motivation out of thin air. They unlock or channel existing motives. They create a climate in which there is pride in making significant contributions to shared goals.

4. *Managing.* Those aspects of leadership that one might describe as managing are planning and priority setting, organizing and institution-building, keeping the system functioning, agenda setting and decision making, and exercising political judgment.

5. *Achieving Workable Unity.* Leaders must deal with external and internal conflict. Today they live in a world of interacting, colliding systems. Under the circumstances, all our leaders must spend part of their time building community, dealing with polarization, creating loyalty to the larger venture.

6. *Explaining.* Leaders teach. Teaching and leading are distinguishable occupations, but every great leader is clearly teaching - and every great teacher is leading.

7. *Serving as a Symbol.* The leader is inevitably a symbol... of management.

8. *Representing the Group.* A distinctive characteristic of the best leaders is that they do not shrink from external representation. They see the long-term needs and goals of their constituency in the broadest context, and they act accordingly.

9. *Renewing.* We are buffeted by events over which we have no control, and change will occur. The question is, will it be the kind of change that will preserve our deepest values, enhance the vitality of the systems and ensure its future?

So much for the tasks of leadership. Any attempt to describe a social process as complex as leadership inevitably makes it seem more orderly than it is. Leadership is not tidy. Decisions are made and then revised or reversed. Misunderstandings are frequent, inconsistency inevitable. Achieving a goal may simply make the next goal more urgent: Inside every solution are the seeds of new problems. ♪