

2017 AASE National Conference  
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*Improving Leadership Response  
to Staff Resistance*

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- Part 1 -

*The Many Faces of  
Special Education Leadership*

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Jurisdictional Leadership

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Jurisdictional Leadership  
Site Leadership

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Jurisdictional Leadership  
Site Leadership  
Classroom Leadership

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Jurisdictional Leadership  
Site Leadership  
Classroom Leadership  
Specialist Leadership

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Leadership and implementation  
are not the same.

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Implementation creates  
the end result,  
but leadership guides the process.

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- Part 2 -  
*Three Cornerstone Concepts  
for Leadership to Advance*

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1. Moving beyond issues related to Effectiveness - vs - Fairness

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*Do what's effective for the student...*

*Not what you perceive to be fair.*

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2. Developing a Big Picture Perspective

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*Our goal is to teach each student to be as independent and likeable as possible.*

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3. Focusing on teaching what you want, rather than complaining about the problem's impact.

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*If you don't know how you want the correct behaviour to look...  
The student never will.*

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- Part 3 -  
*How Resistance Evolves*

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1. Previous initiatives promising desirable change and related benefits went unfulfilled.

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2. Emphasis on implementation of programs, versus development of frameworks.

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3. Change Agendas with heavy emphasis on purpose, process, and promotion...

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but light emphasis on teaching staff functional, evidence-based skills.

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- Part 4 -  
Change Requires Motivation

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Healthy change by staff is typically motivated by:

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Learning a more effective option,  
or

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Learning a more effective option,  
or  
viewing the change as the “right thing” to do.

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Unhealthy change by staff is typically motivated by:

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Resignation to authority,  
or

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Resignation to authority,  
or  
viewing the change as requiring less effort.

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- Part 5 -  
*Leadership Practices that Promote Motivation*

1. Increasing staff capacity in the use of effective teaching and classroom management practices.

2. Development and utilisation of usable school-wide expectations.

3. Developing data collection & analysis skills that promote smart decision making.

4. Utilising crisis management practices that evoke confidence.

- Part 6 -  
*Engaging the Resistant*

1. Model what you want.

2. View resistance from the staff person's perspective...

because they probably view themselves as working at capacity.

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3. Validate any expressed or implied concerns...

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but remained committed to the big picture.

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4. Consider if this is primarily a “can’t do” or a “won’t do” situation.

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Can't do =  
Teach the Person

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Won't do =  
Motivate the Person

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*Learning to teach well  
is motivating  
for everyone involved.*

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5. Teach staff beneficial skills based upon their capacity.

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6. Then assign staff related tasks based upon their capacity.

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7. Initially give the tasks short deadlines.

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8. Immediately reinforce desirable outcomes, including approximations.

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9. Immediately respond to errors and missed deadlines.

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- Argument -

*“Why should I make all this effort to get people to do their job?”*

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Because that’s what leaders do and it will benefit our students!

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- Part 7 -

*Examples of Initial Tasks to Increase Staff Capacity and Reduce Resistance*

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Was this a good session?  
Take ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ data.

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Stop talking after X minutes, then give students a brief, related task.

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Target X student(s) for praise X times per session.

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Spend 3 minutes per day with your hardest student doing something he or she likes.

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Plan and teach a 60 second  
social skills lesson  
based on a school-wide expectation.

Questions