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Shifting Mindsets

FROM EMERGENCY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

TO

Leading for TALE



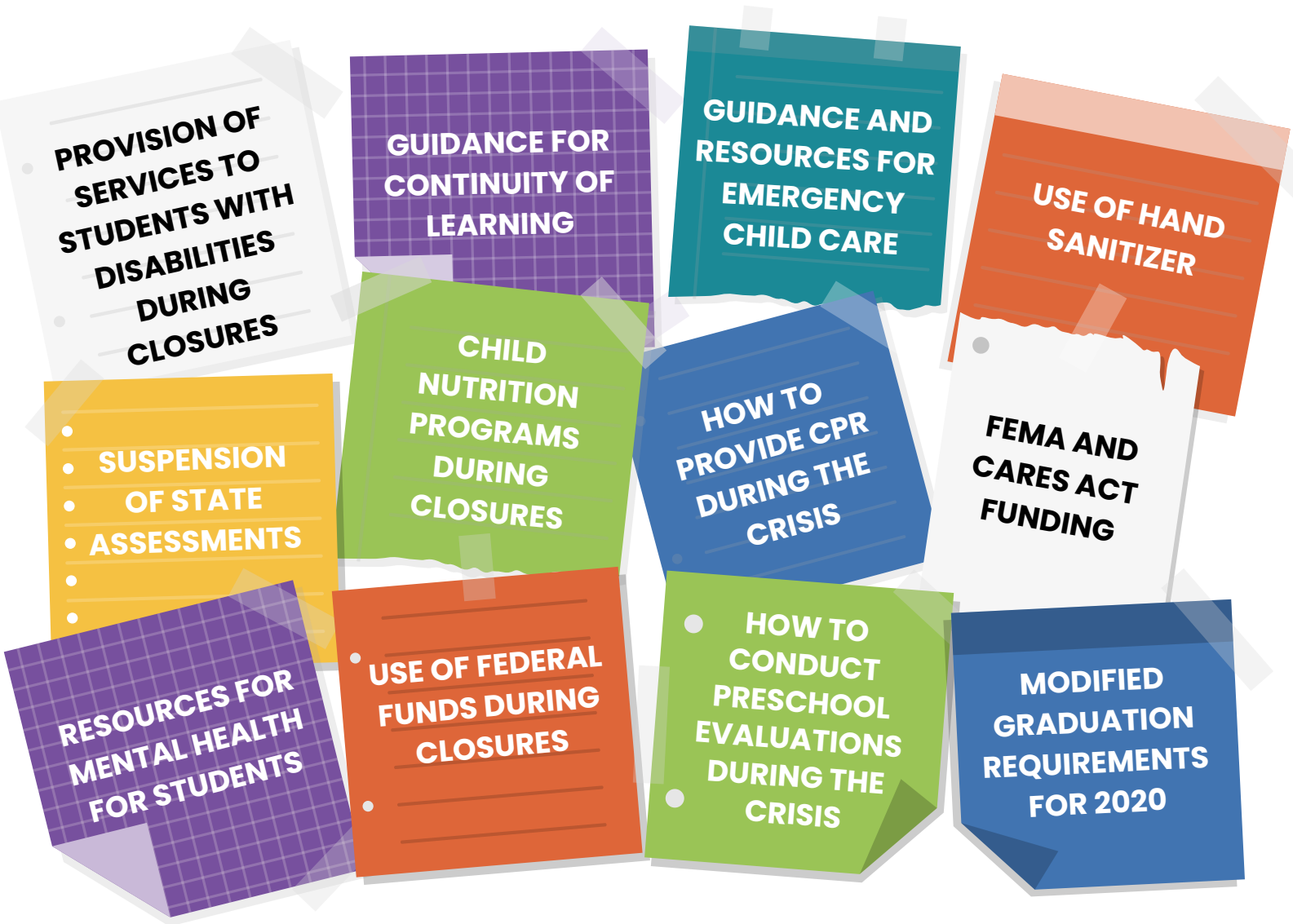
MODULE 7 – SESSION 1

TALE Academy



EMERGENCY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

From February through June 2020, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) issued more than 60 memos to school and district leaders about the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the many topics that were covered included the following:



And then came the 2020–2021 school year. School reopening plans, masking in schools, managing transportation crises, COVID testing, revised assessments, educational services for homeless students, and so much more. Beginning March 15, 2020, we were scrambling to create a rocket while it had already taken off to a destination unknown.

Being a school leader during the pandemic felt more like being head of a fire station, community health center, food pantry, mental health provider, and educational technology start-up all at once! Oh, and continue to provide instructional leadership, support staff, and maintain family engagement. School and district leaders had to form emergency response teams and transform education overnight.



“From my kitchen table, I’m running a school with 1,700 students, some of whom we’re having trouble finding. I’m also attempting to stay connected to 150 faculty and staff, some of whom have gotten sick and others who are not adjusting well to remote learning. At the same time, I’m attempting to communicate with thousands of frustrated family members who speak dozens of different languages.”

One school leader’s response to a May 2020 survey conducted by the [Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#).

The survey, which was conducted in collaboration with the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA) in New York City, included responses from more than 1,000 principals, assistant principals, and district-level supervisors from New York.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT (CONT)

It should come as no surprise, then, that one year into the pandemic, principals were reporting high levels of job-related stress.

A report issued by the [RAND Corporation](#) that analyzed nationally representative data from the 2021 Learn Together Surveys of secondary school principals (leading grades 6–12) found the following:

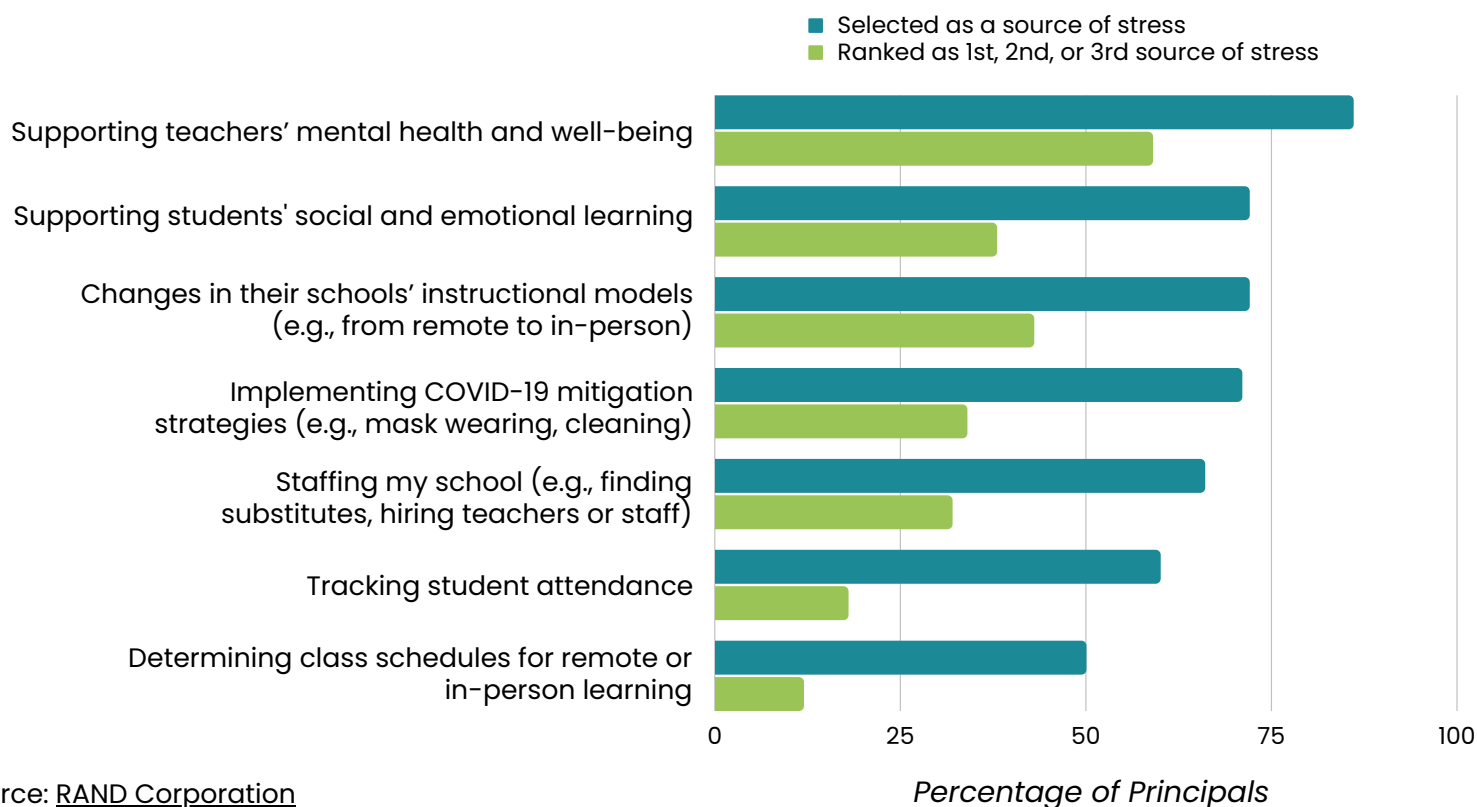
- **Four out of five** secondary school principals experienced frequent job-related stress during the 2020–2021 school year.
- **Secondary school principals of color, female principals, principals serving high-poverty schools, and principals serving schools with high enrollments of students of color** were especially likely to experience constant job-related stress.
- **Secondary school principals whose schools provided fully remote instruction** were more likely to experience constant job-related stress than principals whose schools provided hybrid or in-person instruction; sources of job-related stress varied by mode of instruction.



The top three stressors?

- Supporting teachers' mental health and well-being
- Supporting students' social and emotional learning
- Changes in their schools' instruction models (e.g., from remote to in-person)

Secondary Principals' Top Sources of Job-Related Stress



FROM EMERGENCY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT



TO CHANGE LEADERSHIP

The phrase that researchers, journalists, and educators alike now use to describe teaching during the pandemic is emergency remote teaching (ERT). In Module 1, we looked at ERT from the classroom teacher's perspective, and in Modules 2-6, we introduced shifts in teaching practice that can help teachers move from ERT to a new future of teaching across learning environments (TALE). In this module, we are focusing on the role of the school leader in this shift.

We need to begin, however, with establishing some common language for distinguishing between the extraordinary work of leadership during the pandemic to what leadership looks like as we integrate lessons learned into the future design of education.

“Emergency School Management” is one way that we can think about the stressful and exhausting work during the pandemic. We suggest using the term “management” to emphasize how much of the labor during ERT was related to addressing and resolving short-term issues.

We had no time for strategic or collaborative planning and implementation of changes. It was purely management.



During emergency school management, school leaders had to manage crises. Researchers in crisis management identify three elements that are common to most crises:



A THREAT TO THE ORGANIZATION



THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE



A SHORT DECISION-MAKING TIME

Clearly, all three of these elements defined the period of emergency school management. Moreover, the period was characterized by multiple and ongoing crises as we went through multiple surges in COVID, as well as other major social, cultural, and economic crises.



Coming out of emergency school management, we are recognizing what researchers describe as the fourth element of crisis management.

As we deal with a crisis, we discover that “crisis is a process of transformation where the old system can no longer be maintained.”

What makes a crisis distinct is that if long-term change is not required following the crisis, then the event is better described as an “incident.”

It is this fourth aspect of crisis management - **long-term change** - that we focus on in this module. What happened during the crisis of ERT transformed teaching and learning forever. What we, as leaders, do next will define the future of education.



CHANGE LEADERSHIP IN A VUCA WORLD

According to [Futurist Andrea Saveri](#) in [EdSurge](#), August 19, 2020,

The U.S. education system was designed 100 years ago to support the Industrial Revolution. A shock like the pandemic shows just how rigid the institution really is. The future will only be more “VUCA” – volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous – because of pressures like globalization, greater connectivity and climate change. How schools reorganize now, in response to the pandemic, may only be a dry run for what will be increasingly needed in the future.

While we certainly don't need more acronyms in our educational vocabulary, VUCA is a useful frame for thinking through the “new normal” of education. The acronym was first coined in 1987 by academics and then adopted by the military to describe the multilateral world following the Cold War. It gained momentum in the early 2000s as the global economy became pervasive across sectors. In the past several years, VUCA has been adopted in the business community to describe the conditions for decision-making and leadership.

What is

V

VOLATILITY

The speed of change in an industry, market, or the world in general. The faster things change, the higher the volatility.

U

UNCERTAINTY

The extent to which we can confidently predict the future

C

COMPLEXITY

The number of factors that we need to take into account, their variety, and the relationships between them

A

AMBIGUITY

Lack of clarity about how to understand or interpret something

CHANGE LEADERSHIP IN A VUCA WORLD

In the world of education, VUCA hasn't been a particularly important concept...until now. The pandemic brought home to all of us how deeply interconnected our individual communities are across the world, as well as how this interconnectedness can lead to volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. And as we also discovered, VUCA can manifest in insecurity, trauma, and lack of equity.

In Module 7, Session 2, we will explore VUCA and how educational leaders can address it at the school level. For now, it is valuable to consider how the "VUCA world" requires new approaches to leadership. [The Change Leadership](#), an organization that helps businesses become nimble in a VUCA world, suggests this shift:

What is Change Leadership?

Traditional Definition

"Change leadership is the ability to influence and enthuse others through personal advocacy, vision and drive, and to access resources to build a solid platform for change."

Definition for a VUCA World

"Change leadership is the ability to influence and inspire action in others, and respond with vision and agility during periods of growth, disruption or uncertainty to bring about the needed change."

In [Leaders Make the Future: Ten New Leadership Skills for an Uncertain World](#), the author uses the VUCA acronym to parallel four skills that are the hallmark of effective leadership in the contemporary world. Key shifts include the following:

Volatility

Vision

Leaders establish a "compass" for teams to navigate volatility.

Uncertainty

Understanding

Leaders understand interconnections and make them transparent.

Complexity

Community

Leaders keep things simple and build trust among their team.

Ambiguity

Agility

Leaders foster resilience and flexibility among their team.

LEADING THE CHANGE TO TALE

In Module 1, we defined the changes in education that are now taking place as comprising shifts from emergency remote teaching (ERT) to teaching across learning environments (TALE).

Whereas ERT was exclusively remote, TALE includes multiple learning environments and formats. Whereas ERT required rapid adaptation of in-person instruction to remote formats, TALE is based on intentional learning design that builds upon the opportunities that different learning environments and formats can provide. Whereas during ERT, teachers responded to an emergency, in TALE, teachers are empowered to plan and design learning experiences with intention, choice, and voice.

TALE invites educators to think beyond online education to a broader perspective on teaching and learning that encompasses teaching across multiple environments (in-person, remote, and hybrid).

In the prior six modules, we focused on the shifts that teachers can make in their classrooms to achieve the vision of TALE. In this module, we will look at those shifts from the school leader's perspective. How can you, as a school leader, guide, support, and advance TALE? The sessions will reference learning from the prior modules, and we suggest that you complete at least Module 1 prior to engaging in the following sessions.



LEADING THE CHANGE TO TALE (CONTINUED)

*Below are the topics for each of the Module 7 sessions.
For each session, we will ask the following guiding questions:*

- What shifts do we need to make, schoolwide, to establish and maintain the practices outlined in this session?
- What can I, as the school leader, do to support this work?



Session 2

Resilient Design for Leading

We will revisit resilient design for learning, which we introduced in Module 1 as a strategy to help teachers shift from “pandemic pedagogy” to sustainable and intentional teaching across learning environments. We will then explore what we will call a resilient design for leading that can help school leaders shift from crisis management to change leadership. These two resilient design strategies can come together to establish equity-centered, trauma-informed learning environments for students.

Session 3

Leading to Support Excellent Teaching for Everyone

We will revisit concepts of learner variability addressed in Modules 3 and 4 and the use of universal design for learning (UDL) as a core practice to establish equitable and inclusive learning environments.

Session 4

Leading to Support Excellent Teaching Everywhere

We will explore the concept of portability or transforming existing effective practices into formats that can be portable across learning environments (in-person, remote, hybrid). Portable practices are referenced throughout the first six modules as a consistent way of thinking about how to shift practices for TALE. In session four, we will examine how professional learning communities can serve as processes for adapting existing practices into portable practices.

LEADING THE CHANGE TO TALE (CONTINUED)

Session

5

Leading for Student Engagement Across Learning Environments

In Module 1, we reset our understanding of student engagement toward a more inclusive and collaborative approach. We will revisit those approaches with specific attention to the role of the school leader in empowering teachers to be designers of learning environments and student engagement.

Session

6

Leading for Family Engagement Across Learning Environments

School leaders are the linchpins in successful family engagement, as it is school policy, practices, professional development, programming, and support that shape the possibilities for successful family-school partnerships. In this session, we will examine the difference between outreach and engagement across learning environments and unpack the *Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships* as a roadmap for school leaders to fulfill their role.

Session

7

Leading for Schoolwide Social Emotional Learning

In this session, we look at how school leaders can address barriers to social emotional learning (SEL) implementation by engaging the whole school community in creating caring and equitable learning environments that promote social, emotional, and academic growth. We examine CASEL's ten indicators of schoolwide SEL as well as the "prosocial school leader" model.

Session

8

Technology for TALE

In this session, we will review research-based approaches to integrating technology into the classroom (Module 1, Session 7). We will also look at what to prioritize when making leadership decisions related to technology by focusing on the four constants of TALE - predictability, flexibility, connection, and empowerment.

Your Turn!



Shifting Your Leadership Mindset

Before we jump into these sessions, let's examine our own mindsets about change and leadership. As you explore the resources and engage in the activities in this session, ask yourself, "What shifts in mindset and practices do I need to make in order to lead change?" This is the first step to being an effective educational leader for TALE.

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About Us

The TALE Academy

The TALE Academy is a series of virtual learning experiences available to all New York State educators and offers a rich array of resources on topics related to teaching across learning environments (TALE). The TALE Academy is built upon the work New York State educators carried out during emergency remote teaching (ERT) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and extends it toward the future. TALE invites educators to think beyond online learning to consider a broader perspective on teaching and learning that encompasses teaching across multiple environments (in-person, remote, and hybrid).

The Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE) Project

The TALE Academy is part of a broader New York State Education Department (NYSED) initiative known as Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE). In July 2020, NYSED was awarded funding through the United States Department of Education's Education Stabilization Fund-Rethink K-12 Education Models Grant to implement TRLE – a three-year project to build the capacity of teachers and educational leaders to effectively implement remote/hybrid learning for all students. Launched in the depths of the pandemic, the first phase of the TRLE project focused on getting resources to the field through partnerships with Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and school districts across the state. The second phase, which began in February 2022, focused on aggregating lessons learned and emerging teaching and learning strategies to address a broader field of practice: teaching across learning environments.

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