



## 1 VISIT GOOD SCHOOLS.

Current and future school and system leaders should **visit a lot of schools** to build context, increase exposure to new models and gain an appreciation of options. Visiting schools in different systems or networks provides a healthy base of comparison. Consider volunteering, joining a board of a local school or attending school exhibitions or events.



## 2 GAIN WORK EXPOSURE.

EdLeaders should also visit a dozen organizations in the private and public sectors and serve in several job shadows or internships. Participating in community leadership organizations is a great way to connect with a community, build a network and engage in work-based projects. Observe a variety of project processes across industries such as healthcare, financial services, IT, construction management or more.



## 3 SEEK CHALLENGING ASSIGNMENTS & PROJECTS.

Spearheading projects may be one of the very best ways for leaders to prepare for a **project-based world**. The possibilities for aligned and valuable work assignments and projects are endless. Some should be full time posts and others temporary; some inside a district or network and others external in nature. Leaders should seek out projects such as facilitating an improvement plan, leading an innovation pilot, or managing an outreach campaign.

### PROJECT STARTER LIST

#### Project plans should include:

- ★ Clear goals and well-defined deliverables
- ★ Timeline with major milestones, team meetings and scheduled sponsor reviews
- ★ Staffing estimates for internal and external resources
- ★ Budget including discretionary budget and allocated time
- ★ Dependencies with other projects or policies

#### Project roles include:

- ★ Executive sponsor: owns outcomes and approves changes in budget or timeline
- ★ Project manager: responsible for team effectiveness and final deliverable
- ★ Team member: contributes to team goal, makes requested contributions
- ★ Advisor: internal or external resource providing project-related advice
- ★ Contractor: paid advisor with specific deliverables

#### Sample school projects:

- ★ A school committee to review and select a grade span blended learning model
- ★ A faculty conversation about [extended reach strategies](#)
- ★ A community conversation about social emotional learning
- ★ A district conversation about competency-based progressions
- ★ A chamber of commerce partnership to secure student internships
- ★ A grant writing team to secure digital conversion funding



## PRACTICE COMMUNITY BUILDING.

Leading—or even participating in—an engagement that results in a **community agreement** is a great experience for every prospective school head. Improvement plans require facilitation of internal agreements while plans for innovation often require broader community agreement. Other examples include leading campaigns, uniting others for service projects and forging partnerships. Regardless of the context, all EdLeaders must be empathetic listeners, skilled communicators and capable facilitators.



## KEEP GOOD COMPANY.

Whether formal programs or informal relationships that serve to promote growth, keeping good company is critical not only for leadership development, but also for navigating projects and learning opportunities. Examples include seeking out conferences, mentorships, institutes, residencies, grant programs and even temporary commitments to judge grant or conference applications.



## GAIN CERTIFICATION.

Most states require formal certification for school and system leadership. Most traditional programs that meet these requirements offer an assortment of courses that provide broad exposure to historical concepts in education and human development, but many are only weakly linked to current practice. Seek certification and degrees in programs that maximize aligned work and project experiences.



## SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW.

Document professional experiences and credentials in a variety of ways—including but not limited to a portfolio, a public profile ([LinkedIn](#)), a resume and a personalized learning plan. A key feature in any profile will be articulation of microcredentials—a practice that is gaining **momentum**. Examples of leader credentials include:

### Team Leadership

- » Performance coaching
- » Personalized learning
- » Project management
- » Continuous improvement
- » Advising youth
- » Communications

### School Leadership

- » Human development
- » Learner experience
- » Competency-based learning
- » Teacher development
- » Facilitating community agreements

### System Leadership

- » Servant leadership
- » Information systems
- » Responsive support services
- » Community partnerships
- » Effective advocacy campaigns
- » Public finance
- » System improvement

Join in the conversation at  
**#PROJECTBASED**



For more, see  
*Preparing to Lead in  
a Project-Based  
World*