Success in the 21st Century will demand skills far beyond the “Three R’s.” In his book *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman states that what we have considered high intelligence may be an indicator of potential success in school, but not of success in life. “The brightest among us can flounder on the shoals of unbridled passions and unruly impulses; people with high IQ’s can be stunningly poor pilots of their private lives.” Goleman explains that emotional aptitudes such as the ability to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize, and to hope are *meta-abilities* that will determine how well a person can use whatever other skills he or she may possess, including raw intellect.

In addition to being the foundation of an emotionally healthy personal life, these *meta-abilities* are basic to sound leadership. As the next generation faces problems at all levels ranging from personal and family to national and global, we will face an increasing need for leaders who possess these skills and are adept at using them as difficult problem-solving and decision-making situations arise.

Most teachers understand that the best way to learn a concept is to teach it. As the “one-room school house” gave way to the “factory model classroom” in the first half of the 20th Century, education came to be thought of as something “done to” students rather than something *belonging* to the student. Teachers became pedagogues rather than facilitators, and many students rebelled. As we look toward a new century, educators across the country are beginning to re-think the factory model for schools and are seeing classrooms as dynamic natural systems.

Students now leaving elementary school will be assuming positions of leadership in communities, business, and government in less than twenty short years. In order to prepare them to meet the challenges of the coming years, it is imperative for educators to look at priorities and immediately consider measures that empower students in leadership roles.

*Leadership 2020* offers an avenue for change in the attitudes of adults who work with children. It is a way of thinking about school organization that truly respects the integrity of both adults and children. While they will not give up authority, adults will create a structure within which children have the *perception* of authentic leadership. Students will develop a high sense of ownership of their own education and become true partners with the adults in the organization.

In order to be effective, any approach to education must have as its foundation a strong set of beliefs. Only after beliefs are clearly defined can an organization begin to move toward its vision. When members of the organization are clearly focused on a common vision, the mission of that organization then becomes apparent. Since *beliefs* are the bottom line in any worldview, it is worth taking the time to define the term. Rather than being a statement of objective reality, a belief in our context will refer to a “condition of willingness to act as *though*.” It is a statement of hope and aspiration, . . . and the *basis* for dreams and visions. Keeping that definition in mind, following are the beliefs, vision, mission and goals of *Leadership 2020*. 

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We BELIEVE that . . .

- All students need the leadership skills of active listening, conflict mediation, group dynamics, assertiveness, and self-awareness to be successful citizens of the 21st Century.
- These skills can be learned by children using age appropriate strategies.
- By using these skills to help others, students will become more successful in school, in life, and later in careers of their own.
- Developing cooperative rather than competitive leadership skills will result in students becoming adults with strong character and solid value systems.
- Modeling behavior is the most powerful teaching method. In order to be effective, all adults in the system must understand and model partnership leadership.

We see a VISION of. . .

- A school where problems and conflicts are addressed openly and looked upon as opportunities to learn.
- A school where children and adults interact in a culture of mutual dignity and respect.
- A non-violent school where students appreciate diversity and treat each other with dignity and respect.
- A school where adults understand that students can be effective teachers and partners in learning.
- An enhanced learning climate as all students become better able to deal with emotional issues in healthy and constructive ways.
- A world in which leaders at all levels, (family, community, global), function in ways conducive to healthy relationships between individuals and with the environment.
- A world in which leaders strive to understand the nature of the “self,” and the influence that understanding has upon their own decision-making capabilities.

It is our MISSION. . .

- To build an on-going program of positive leadership skill training for students.
- To educate teachers, parents, and other adults in the value of modeling partnership leadership skills.
- To create mutually beneficial partnerships between the school and the local community.
- To empower students to develop a sense of ownership for their own learning.

Our initial GOALS are to. . .

- Train students as conflict managers to work with other students when they are involved in playground disagreements.
- Work with teams of cross-grade level teachers interested in pairing students to develop higher level thinking skills as they approach literature.
- Train interested parents to serve as ongoing mentors so the program can work without increasing teacher workload.
- Schedule regular optional “support group” meetings for parents and teachers working in the program in order to help them manage their own stress as they work with children.

3. These goals are to be considered samples or suggestions. Since Leadership 2020 must be customized to fit the needs of an individual school, the local school team must develop goals and specific actions depending upon the needs of their own community. All goals will be considered “working goals” and will be reviewed and revised regularly.

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