Research shows effective School Leaders develop their successors and their teachers’ instruction through these 8 actions:

1. Set ambitious school-wide vision and goals that lead students on a path to and through college
   - Do: Identify and communicate the school’s annual goals and priorities
   - Do: Articulate a vision for high-quality instruction
   - Don’t: Place school culture goals above instructional vision and goals

2. Relentlessly plan and prioritize to achieve goals
   - Do: Develop a strategic plan to close the gap between the school’s current performance and annual goals
   - Do: Intentionally prioritize own time to focus on instructional leadership and teacher development
   - Don’t: Directly manage too many non-instructional priorities

3. Develop a pipeline of future leaders and teach and insist that leadership team members are true owners of the work
   - Do: Develop leaders and cultivate a leadership pipeline (teacher, teacher leader, assistant principal)
   - Do: Empower Leadership Team to make decisions and hold them accountable for their areas of ownership
   - Don’t: Make every decision
   - Don’t: Directly manage too many non-instructional priorities

4. Model strong school culture and avoid spending too much time on reactive student discipline
   - Do: Outline and model expectations for leaders, teachers and students on school-wide practices for a positive learning culture
   - Do: Evaluate school culture through proactive, scheduled monitoring
   - Don’t: Spend more than 10-15% of time on reactive student discipline

5. Hire and retain the best of the best
   - Do: Hire and retain diverse, highly-effective school staff
   - Don’t: Allow ineffective teachers to continue teaching without a strategic development plan

6. Build knowledge and expertise in effective instructional design and academic standards
   - Do: Unpack standards to develop staff’s conceptual understanding of what students must know and be able to do
   - Do: Develop own and school staff’s knowledge of how standards map to curriculum and assessment of student mastery
   - Don’t: Create an instructional design that’s not clearly aligned with regional plan or annual goals
   - Don’t: Make instructional design decisions (on methods, curriculum, time, etc.) that are not supported by research

7. Develop teachers to provide rigorous and high quality instruction through the enabling systems of the Academic Strategies Pyramid
   - Do: Ensure all teachers receive targeted, weekly instructional coaching that deploys a variety of coaching techniques: observation and feedback, data-driven instruction, lesson study or looking at student work
   - Do: Regularly observe instructional coaches to ensure they are providing high-impact, actionable and bite-sized feedback
   - Do: Work with teachers and Leadership Team to analyze student data and identify strategies that will move students towards mastery
   - Do: Ensure content teams and school-wide workshops drive highest-impact improvements in teacher practice
   - Don’t: Expect results without accountability and follow up
   - Don’t: Act as instructional coach for ALL teachers
   - Don’t: Allow content team meetings to be deprioritized and meet less than once per week
   - Don’t: Invest in school PD that is not aligned to school’s instructional priorities or is not focused on specific improvements grounded in data

8. And...Foster sustainability by engaging lifelines and renewing to get stronger
   - Do: Set ambitious school-wide vision and goals that lead students on a path to and through college
An effective School Leader:

- Accounts for 25% of a school’s total impact on student achievement
- Keeps great teachers - 96% of teachers believe supportive leadership is absolutely essential to retaining highly effective teachers

So, what drives School Leader effectiveness?

**Myth:** The more hours a School Leader works, the better the results

**FACT:** In a study of 1,850 School Leaders, researchers found the highest performing leaders did not work more, but instead spent their time differently than less effective leaders.

**Effective School Leaders:**
- Spent 75% of their time focused on instruction and work that directly improves teaching and learning
- More likely to improve achievement in mathematics and 4x more likely to improve achievement in reading

**Myth:** A School Leader must “do it all” since being accountable for the school means making all of the decisions

**FACT:** The most successful leaders distribute the work; they prioritize their time less on “doing it all” and more on a handful of actions that improve instruction like observing and coaching teachers.

Highly effective School Leaders delegate all tasks that don’t directly drive instruction, such as: school operations, compliance, food services and transportation to focus on instructional leadership.

Sources: