

People First: The Rest Can Wait

A NASS Leadership Lens

Quote:

“People are not an interruption to the work—they are the work.” — Unknown

Narrative Reflection:

Leadership calendars fill quickly with urgent tasks, deadlines, and competing demands. In these moments, superintendents make countless decisions about where to focus attention. Choosing people first—especially during periods of stress—strengthens trust and resilience.

When leaders slow down to listen, check in, and respond with care, they send a clear message about what matters. Not every task requires immediate action; relationships often do. Systems function best when people feel supported, valued, and seen.

Putting people first does not lower expectations—it creates the conditions for others to meet them.

Leadership Toolkit: Leading with People First


- Pause to listen before acting
- Prioritize connection during high-stress periods
- Respond with clarity and care

Reflection Prompt:

Where might putting people first strengthen your leadership impact right now?

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