

Grade Level and Department Chairs as Instructional Leaders

***Transforming Teaching and Learning
Through Reframed Leadership***

**Tony Lamair Burks II, Ed.D.
Superintendent-in-Residence
National Center for Urban School Transformation**

Learning Goals

- Reflect on current role and practices
- Examine role and connections to student learning
- Explore ways to align leadership structures and role to support improvement efforts
- Reframe role to encompass instructional leadership
- Experience collaborative, cooperative, and interactive learning to identify promising practices

Learning Goals (continued)

- Leverage distributed leadership to shape, implement, and refine promising practices
- Acquire tools, templates, protocols, and resources for use during Grade Level and Department meetings and professional development opportunities
- Examine questions, ideas, and perspectives
- Enjoy the moment

The Department Chair

The Role...

- **Communication Liaison**
- **Department Manager**
- **Teacher Improver**
- **Program Improver**
- **Relationship Builder**

Hord and Murphy 1985

The Department Chair

The Challenges...

- **Navigation of two roles: manager and teacher**
- **Limited amount of training and professional development for new role**
- **Distance from colleagues and “the dark side”**

Gmelch 2002; Hecht 2004

The Department Chair

The Surprises...

- **Amount of paperwork**
- **Time spent on administrative duties**
- **Becoming a public figure with constant interruptions**

Smith and Stewart 1999

Chair: Traditional VS Instructional

Task	Traditional Chair Role	Chair as Instructional Leader
Communication	Relay information from administration	Create dialogue with department members related to instructional concerns
Relationships with fellow department chairs	Isolated, competitive, communicate during leadership team meetings	Supportive, collaborate to address concern within the entire school and individual departments

Chair: Traditional VS Instructional

Task	Traditional Chair Role	Chair as Instructional Leader
Relationships with administration	One way flow of information, hierarchical structure	Two way flow of information, work collaboratively to create solutions and identify areas of weakness
Relationships with fellow department members	Provide a link to administration , allocate resources	Provide instructional support individually and departmentally, provide a channel of communication with administration

Chair: Traditional VS Instructional

Task	Traditional Chair Role	Chair as Instructional Leader
Knowledge of department chair role definition and expectations	Unsure and variant across individuals	Secure and invested in their new role
Perception of department chair role	Manager, information deliverer, limited change power	Facilitator within departments, member of a productive leadership team, able to impact change