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Mission-Driven Leadership: Understanding the Challenges Facing Schools Today

New book by Stetson professor provides specific leadership behaviors that have positive impact on school culture and climate.

DELAND, Florida, March 29, 2018 – Education leaders including school- and district-based administrators, face ever-increasing challenges and responsibilities. Leadership skills and behaviors that may have worked in the past are no longer adequate to meet the expectations of today's school communities. A new book by Chris Colwell, Ed.D., associate professor and chair of Teacher and Graduate Education at Stetson University, provides specific, actionable, daily behaviors that high-impact school leaders can cultivate to make a profound difference in the lives of the students they serve. *Mission-Driven Leadership: Understanding the Challenges Facing Schools Today*, released this month by Rowman & Littlefield, is available in bookstores and online retailers.

"The competencies that are considered essential to high performance for leaders of educational institutions continues to expand in both number and complexity," said Colwell. "In the early twentieth century, successful school leaders were efficiency experts, while in the later decades they needed to possess expert power as 'instructional leaders' in response to the expanding complexity of school curriculum. Today, high performing leaders must also be experts in a third tier of leadership, interpersonal skills, in order to have a profound impact on school culture and climate."

Colwell outlines many of the challenges facing school leaders including chronic underfunding; massive amounts of local, state, and federal regulation and oversight; shifting societal demands and expectations; and ever-increasing demands for higher student achievement and accountability. High-impact leaders in today's schools must be well-rounded experts committed to building teams and focusing the organization on a common mission.

Mission-Driven Leadership explains three tiers of leadership and the importance of striving to Tier 3. Colwell explains that when a school or district is led by a leader who is a skilled interpersonal leader (Tier 3), the capacity for positive outcomes is greatly enhanced. While Tier 1 and 2 are necessary, they are not in and of themselves enough to lead with impact in 21st century schools.

Mission-Driven Leadership examines 10 specific leadership behaviors that, when implemented with fidelity on a regular basis, will have a profound positive impact on school culture and climate. Colwell provides readers with clear and specific actions to implement these behaviors on a daily basis.

Prior to his tenure at Stetson, Colwell served public P-12 education for 34 years as a classroom teacher; guidance counselor; elementary, middle and high school principal; and as Deputy Superintendent for the Volusia County School Board. He was named Florida's Principal of the Year in 1997 and District Administrator of the Year in 2007, and he is a frequent presenter at the state, national and international level on issues relating to education innovation and reform. Colwell's first book on school leadership, *Impact: How Principals Can Be High Performing Leaders* was published in 2015.

About Stetson University

Founded in 1883, [Stetson University](#) is the oldest private university in Central Florida, providing a transforming education in the liberal arts tradition. Stetson stresses academic excellence and community-engaged learning, and consistently earns high marks in national rankings. Stetson encourages its students to go beyond success to significance in their lives, the lives of others and their communities. [Stay connected](#) with Stetson on social media.