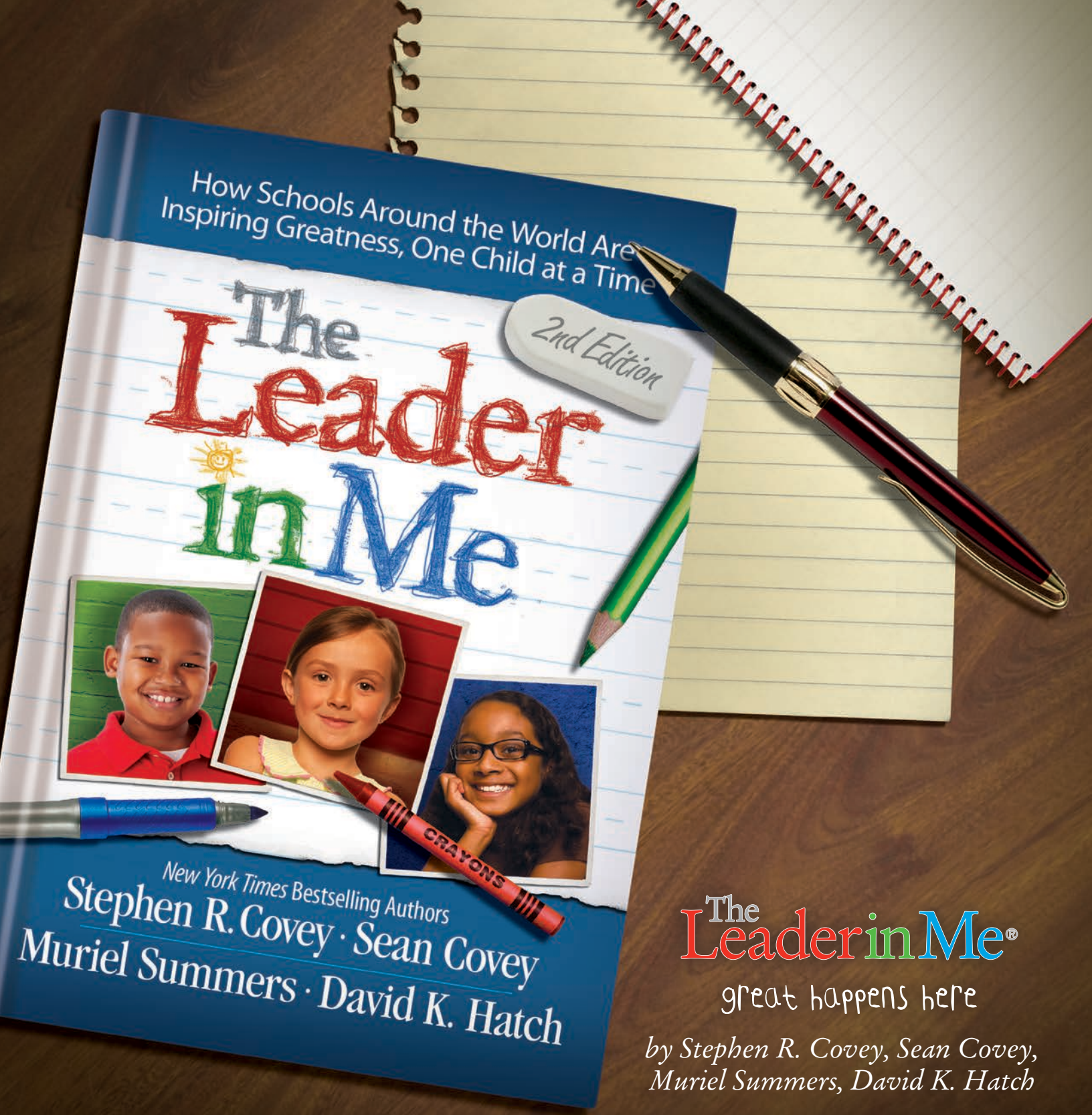

The Leader in Me®

great happens here

by Stephen R. Covey, Sean Covey, Muriel Summers, David K. Hatch

Book Study

FranklinCovey | EDUCATION

www.TheLeaderInMe.org

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Discussion Questions

» Chapter 1: Too Good to Be True?

Chapter 1 sets the tone of the book and begins to explain how and why leadership principles fit today's realities.

1. In the beginning pages, it talks about how just entering the front doors of A.B. Combs was an engaging experience. What examples were given?
2. "Engaging" is a powerful word. What word would you use to describe our school?
3. What are the "people skills" that were highlighted? Do you agree that these skills are more important than ever? Why?
4. What might be gained from stepping back and identifying, amplifying, and finding a niche for students' and adults' strengths and virtues?
5. What are the three overarching themes to look for in the book?
6. What one thing are you looking forward to reading more about in the remaining chapters?

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» Chapter 2: How It Started—And Why

Chapter 2 continues to provide context as it describes how *The Leader in Me* got started—and why.

1. Do you agree that schools do not behave, people do?
2. Why did Muriel need to "reinvent her school"?
3. When asked what they wanted from a school, what was the common thread heard from parents, community members, teachers, and students?
4. If you were asked what you wanted from a school, would you answer similarly?
5. "To Develop Leaders One Child at a Time" is the mission statement A.B. Combs created. How do you think this mission statement changed their behavior?
6. How are academics, culture, and leadership intertwined?
7. What is the definition of leadership Dr. Covey used?
8. What is the ultimate end in mind of *The Leader in Me*?
9. Would you want your child or grandchild to attend a school like A.B. Combs? Why or why not?

Consider the Personal Reflection questions at the end of this chapter before we meet next time.

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» Chapter 3: Teaching the 7 Habits

Chapters 3–5 delve into the how—how *The Leader in Me* helps schools address the three evolving challenges and how educators are seeing it as "not one more thing but a better way of doing what we are already doing."

1. What thoughts did you have on the Personal Reflection questions at the end of Chapter 2?
2. Why do you think the 7 Habits are considered to be timeless principles?
3. Independence is an important accomplishment for a child. Why not stop there?
4. How is the ubiquitous approach different from other initiatives?
5. What is an example of teaching a habit through the integrated approach?
6. What is an example of teaching a habit through a direct lesson?
7. What is an example of teaching a habit through modeling?
8. How can specialist teachers be involved with *The Leader in Me*?
9. How can nonclassroom teachers be involved with *The Leader in Me*?
10. What are the benefits of students teaching the habits?

Consider the Personal Reflection questions at the end of this chapter before we meet next time.

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» Chapter 4: Creating a Leadership Culture

Chapters 3–5 delve into the how—how *The Leader in Me* helps schools address the three evolving challenges and how educators are seeing it as "not one more thing but a better way of doing what we are already doing."

1. What thoughts did you have on the Personal Reflection questions at the end of Chapter 3?
2. What is the difference between a "culture by design" and a "culture by chance"?
3. How would engaging our students, staff, and parents help each feel an ownership with the school?
4. What are the benefits of a common language?
5. How can we build our "interior designer" skills?
6. What does "leadership is a choice, not a position" mean?
7. What are three ways to involve students as leaders?
8. What is the highest level of giving students leadership responsibilities?
9. Which events do we currently have that could incorporate student leadership?
10. What are some of the differences between leadership and management?

Consider the Personal Reflection questions at the end of this chapter before we meet next time.

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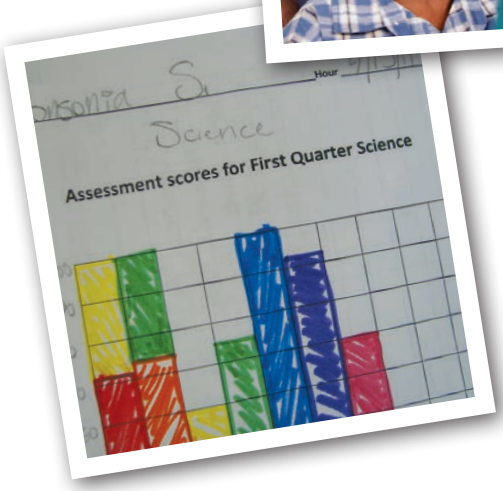
» Chapter 5: Achieving School Goals

Chapters 3–5 delve into the how—how *The Leader in Me* helps schools address the three evolving challenges and how educators are seeing it as "not one more thing but a better way of doing what we are already doing."

1. What thoughts did you have on the Personal Reflection questions at the end of Chapter 4?
2. Why is it important to focus on only one or two Wildly Important Goals?
3. What are the four steps to setting and tracking goals?
4. What are the benefits of sharing and discussing data with students?
5. How does the alignment of schoolwide, classroom, and individual goals facilitate progress?
6. What role do scoreboards play in sustaining excitement around goals?
7. Which of the three tools that augment the goal-setting process are you most curious to try?
8. What role do paradigms play in the goal-setting process?

Consider the Personal Reflection questions at the end of this chapter before we meet next time.



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» Chapter 6: Bringing It Home

Chapters 6 and 7 reveal how schools are engaging parents and community members to strengthen, lengthen, and widen the impact of *The Leader in Me*.

1. What thoughts did you have on the Personal Reflection questions at the end of Chapter 5?
2. What are the benefits of the same common language being used at school and at home?
3. Which suggestion for engaging families sounds most exciting for our school?
4. What message does staff modeling of the 7 Habits send to students and their families?
5. What do the walls of your home communicate to family members and visitors?
6. How can we share the ideas in this chapter with our families?

Consider the Personal Reflection questions at the end of this chapter before we meet next time.

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» Chapter 7: Engaging the Community

Chapters 6 and 7 reveal how schools are engaging parents and community members to strengthen, lengthen, and widen the impact of *The Leader in Me*.

1. What thoughts did you have on the Personal Reflection questions at the end of Chapter 6?
2. Do we have a "Donnie Lane" in our community?
3. Which local organizations have the same end in mind as *The Leader in Me*?
4. What are the benefits of a good workforce to our community?
5. According to several sponsoring agencies, which voids does *The Leader in Me* address?
6. Aside from financial assistance, what other ways are business organizations getting involved with *Leader in Me* Schools?

Consider the Personal Reflection questions at the end of this chapter before we meet next time.

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» Chapter 8: Shifting to Secondary and Beyond

While most examples in the book come from elementary schools, the same process can be applied to secondary schools with some adaptation. Chapter 8 focuses on secondary schools.

1. What thoughts did you have on the Personal Reflection questions at the end of Chapter 7?
2. What are the biggest challenges in taking *The Leader in Me* to secondary schools?
3. What encourages engagement in a secondary student?
4. Why is the use of a strong role model to teach the 7 Habits important at the secondary level?
5. In our school, what scheduling opportunities do we have for teaching the 7 Habits (our "somewhere")?
6. How would we communicate what was taught during our "somewhere" with the teachers who are not involved in directly teaching the content?
7. What instructional strategies have been successful with secondary students?
8. Which of the examples that help students feel connected is most exciting to you?
9. What are we currently doing that students could be doing?
10. Does our school mission statement illustrate who we are and what is important to us?

Consider the Personal Reflection questions at the end of this chapter before we meet next time.

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» Chapter 9: Keeping It Alive

Best practices for how to launch and sustain *The Leader in Me* over time are covered in Chapter 9.

1. What thoughts did you have on the Personal Reflection questions at the end of Chapter 8?
2. Why is it important not to "boil someone else's water" when implementing *The Leader in Me*?
3. What are some of the lessons learned from schools that have successfully implemented and maintained *The Leader in Me*?
4. What is the difference between a school that is principle-centered and a school that is principal-centered?
5. What outcomes would we be trying to achieve with *The Leader in Me*?
6. Why is it so important to embed leadership into the systems of a school?
7. What are the pivotal paradigms necessary to launch and sustain *The Leader in Me*?
8. Why are paradigms so important?

Consider the Personal Reflection questions at the end of this chapter before we meet next time.

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» Chapter 10: Ending With the Beginning in Mind

Chapter 10 is a summary reminder of why *The Leader in Me* is vitally important in today's reality.

1. What thoughts did you have on the Personal Reflection questions at the end of Chapter 9?
2. What do you think is unique about *The Leader in Me*?
3. What would be the impact of focusing on students' strengths instead of focusing on students' deficits?
4. Why do educators feel like this is not "one more thing"?
5. How is *The Leader in Me* like the operating system on a computer?
6. Are the primary and secondary purposes of *The Leader in Me* worthwhile pursuits for our school?

Consider the Personal Reflection questions at the end of this chapter.

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FOR THE FACILITATOR

Definition of a book study:

A group of people who meet regularly to discuss a book they are reading.

General Tips

- **READ THE BOOK.** This may seem obvious, but it is the most important step, so it is worth stating. It is a good idea to plan on finishing each chapter a little earlier than you might do otherwise so that you have time to think about it and prepare before meetings.
- **WRITE DOWN IMPORTANT PAGE NUMBERS.** If there are parts of the book that made an impact on you or that you think may come up in discussion, write down the page numbers so that you can access the passages easily while preparing and leading the discussion.
- **LET OTHERS ANSWER FIRST.** When you are asking questions, you want to facilitate discussion. By letting others answer first, you will promote conversation and help everyone feel like their opinions matter. Note: Sometimes people may need to take time to think before they answer. Part of being a good facilitator is being comfortable with silence. Don't feel like you have to jump in if no one answers immediately.
- **GET EVERYONE INVOLVED.** Each member should assume responsibility for the success of the discussion. To keep the conversation moving, ask participants to elaborate or explain more fully a previous comment or to restate their comment in a different way. Encourage participants to relate the contents to their own experiences.
- **ENCOURAGE PARTICIPANTS TO QUESTION AND COMMENT.** Participants should be encouraged to write questions and comments while they are reading and bring them to each meeting.
- **MAKE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN COMMENTS.** If someone gives an answer to Question 2 that connects well with Question 5, don't feel obligated to ask Questions 3 and 4 before moving to 5. You are the facilitator. Even if you go in order, try to find a link between an answer and the next question. By connecting people's comments to the questions, you'll help build momentum in the conversation.
- **OCCASIONALLY, DIRECT QUESTIONS TOWARD QUIET PEOPLE.** You don't want to put anyone on the spot, but you want everyone to know their opinions are valued. If you have a few talkative people who always jump right in, directing a question to a specific person may help draw out the quieter people (and let the talkative people know it is time to give someone else a turn).
- **PLAN STRATEGIES FOR REFOCUSING.** Keep the discussion "on track" and solicit ideas and comments from all participants. If a discussion veers off track, offer to discuss it after the meeting with anyone who is interested.
- **DON'T FEEL OBLIGATED TO GET THROUGH ALL THE QUESTIONS.** The best questions sometimes lead to intense conversations. That's a good thing! The questions are there as a guide. It may be rare that you finish all of the questions. Respect people's time by wrapping up the discussion when the meeting time is over rather than pushing on until you finish everything you planned.
- **CLOSE EACH SESSION.** Plan a summarizing activity, question, or assignment.

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Structuring the Discussion

You may choose to use some of the following "discussion starters" as you facilitate the discussion.

- **PARTNER INTERVIEWS.** Participants interview one another to get different viewpoints on a topic.
- **JIGSAW.** (Places great emphasis on cooperation and shared responsibility within groups.)
  1. Divide the group into smaller groups.
  2. Divide the chapter(s) of reading into roughly equal parts.
  3. Assign each smaller group one of the parts.
  4. At the following meeting, have each small group discuss their part and come to a consensus on the main points to share with the larger group.
  5. Make sure everyone participates.
- **TABLE TALK.** Allow for discussion at each table with the intent to share with the larger group after a specific time period.
- **POWERPOINT®.** Pose a question on the screen and collect whole-group feedback on a poster.

Opening the Meetings

Ask members for a great idea they tried that was successful.

Ask members a question they may have and need help finding the answer to.

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FOR THE FACILITATOR

Concluding the Book Study

Instruct participants to write what they have learned from the book on sticky notes. Place each sticky note on a large chart paper that has been divided into sections such as “My Ideal School,” “Potential,” “Student Leadership,” “Strategies,” “Culture,” “Families,” “Paradigms,” etc.

Decide Next Steps

Decide whether the group would like to know more about *The Leader in Me* process.

- What should be our next steps?
- Who is responsible for the next steps?

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Will Your School or Child Be the Next *Leader in Me* Success Story?

Drawing from the best practices and thought leadership of successful educators around the world, FranklinCovey's *Leader in Me* process will help schools develop students who are ready to succeed in the 21st century, with critical skills and characteristics such as:

- Trust and trustworthiness
- Effective interpersonal skills
- Strong work ethic
- Sense of teamwork
- Motivation and initiative
- Valuing diversity in a global market
- Problem-solving skills
- Goal setting

What's more, schools will enjoy a culture in which discipline referrals decrease, test scores improve, and engaged staff members contribute the highest and best of their talents and efforts.

Help put the schools in your community on the path to greatness.

For more information about how investing in *The Leader in Me* can help put the schools in your community on the path to greatness, please contact FranklinCovey's Education Practice by calling 1-800-272-6839 or by email at Educate@FranklinCovey.com. Or visit www.TheLeaderInMe.org. You can also visit www.franklincovey.com/education.

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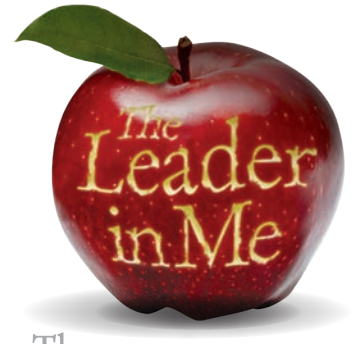

The Leader in Me®

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