



# Transforming School Transportation Through Transformational Leadership

Building a Stable, Motivated, and People-  
Centered Workforce

Speaker- Jason Fredenburg





# Session Purpose

- Explore how leadership style impacts staffing
  - Share real, district-implemented strategies
  - Connect transformational leadership to recruitment and retention
  - Provide actionable steps districts can use immediately
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# The Current Challenge

- Nationwide shortage of school bus drivers
  - Competition with private sector
  - CDL and training requirements
  - Split shifts and job perception
  - External challenges we cannot fully control
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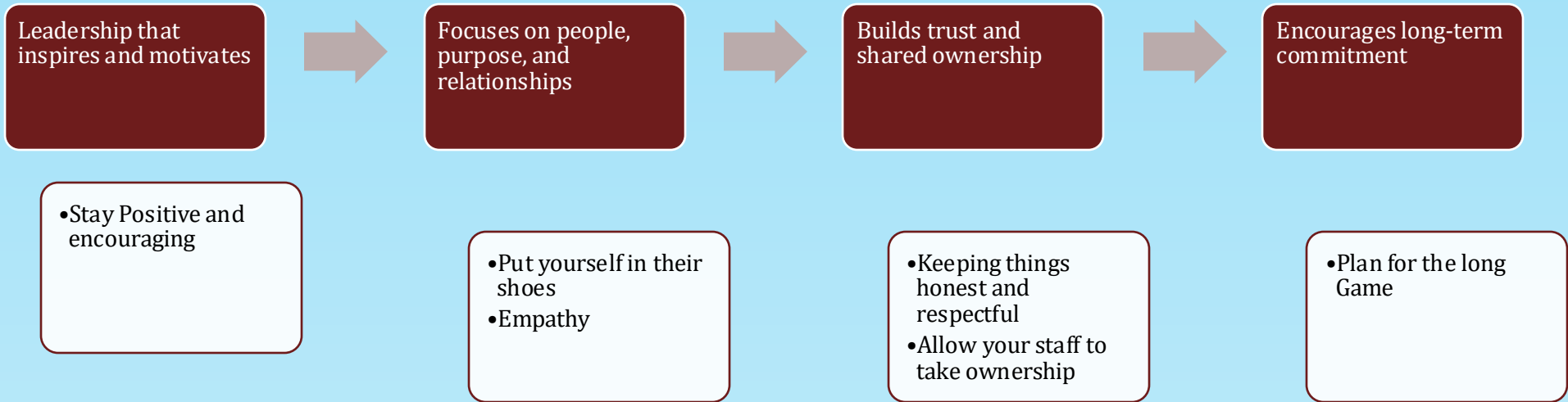




# The Leadership Opportunity

- Many staffing challenges are internal
  - Culture, communication, and trust matter
  - Leadership approach influences:
    - Recruitment
    - Retention
    - Morale
    - Performance
  - Transportation departments are people-driven organizations
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# What Is Transformational Leadership?



# The Four Pillars of Transformational Leadership



**Trust:** Consistent, fair, and transparent leadership



**Inspiration:** Connecting work to purpose



**Individual Value:** Seeing staff as people, not positions



**Collaboration:** Staff as partners in success



# Shifting the Mindset

From: “How do we keep routes covered?”

To: “How do we build a department people want to stay in?”

Culture is not optional — it is foundational

# Recruitment Beyond Job Postings









# Transformational Recruitment Strategies



## Key Recruitment Insight

**A strong culture recruits faster  
than advertising**

- Relationship-based recruiting
  - Word-of-mouth referrals
  - Community presence and outreach
  - Honest and transparent expectations
  - Encouraging staff to recruit people they trust
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# Retention Starts With Investment

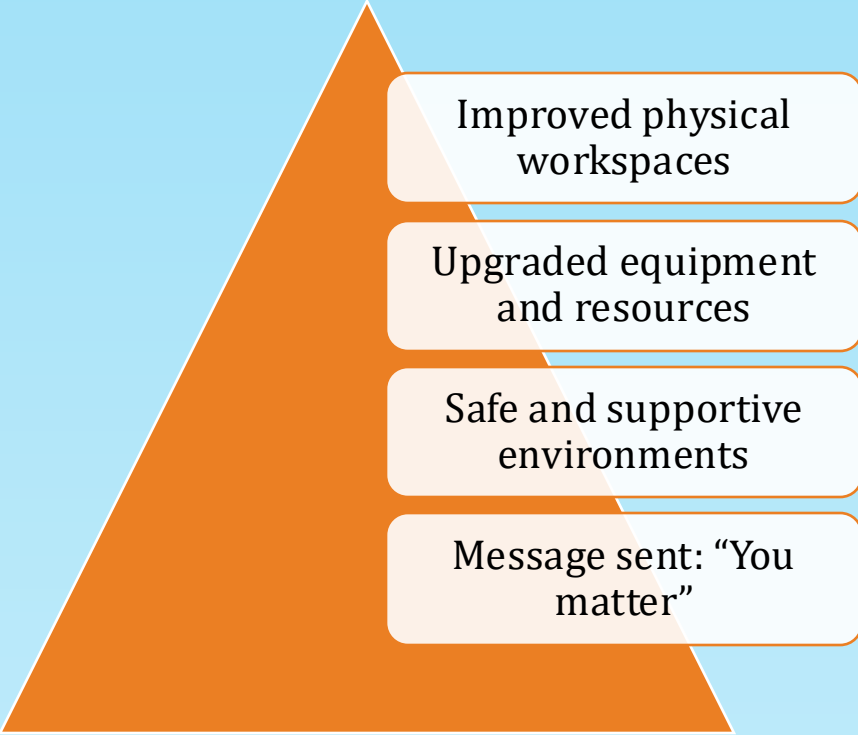
- Retention is built through daily experiences
  - Staff stay where they feel supported and respected
  - Investment communicates value
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# Lincoln Consolidated Schools: Staff Training



- CPR and First Aid training for all staff
- CPI (de-escalation) training
- Restorative practices training
- Focus on safety, confidence, and growth

# Investing in Infrastructure



Improved physical workspaces

Upgraded equipment and resources

Safe and supportive environments

Message sent: "You matter"

# Recognition and Celebration

## Employee of the Month program

- Announced over the radio
- Song is played before announcement

## Birthday Announcement

- Every employee's birthday is in my calendar
- We announce over radio and everyone wishes each other a Happy Birthday

## Years of Service announcements

- We take the time to create an award/certificate for every monumental anniversary (5 year increments)
- We also provide a special pendent

## Public recognition builds pride

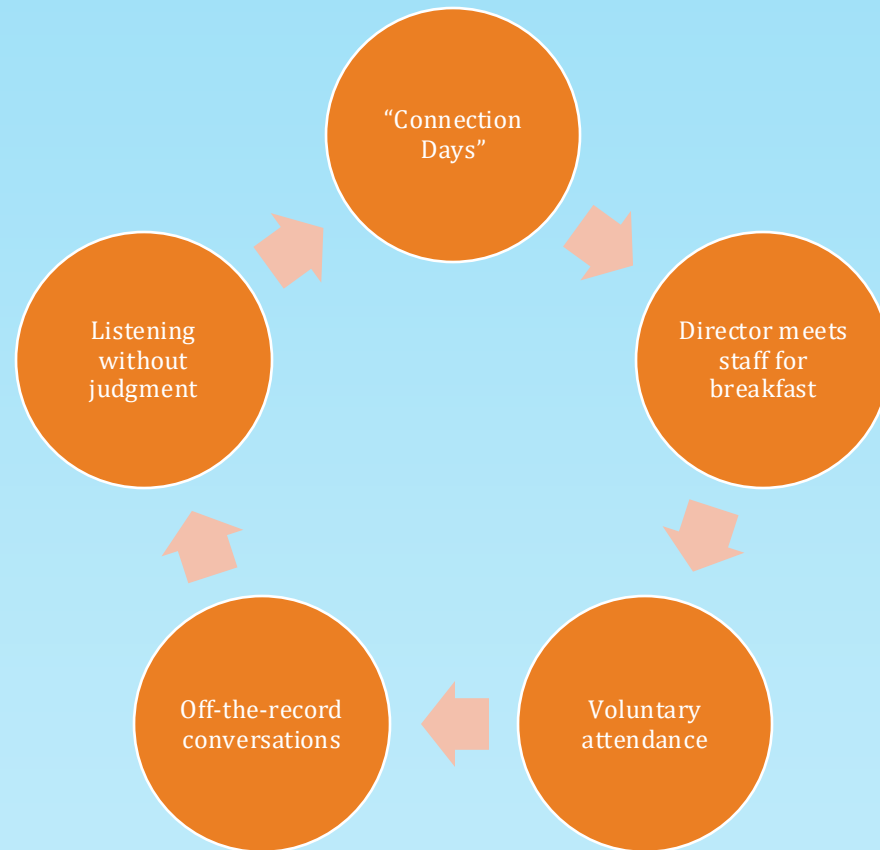
- Announcing over the radio allows the students to be involved in the recognition

# Building Human Connection

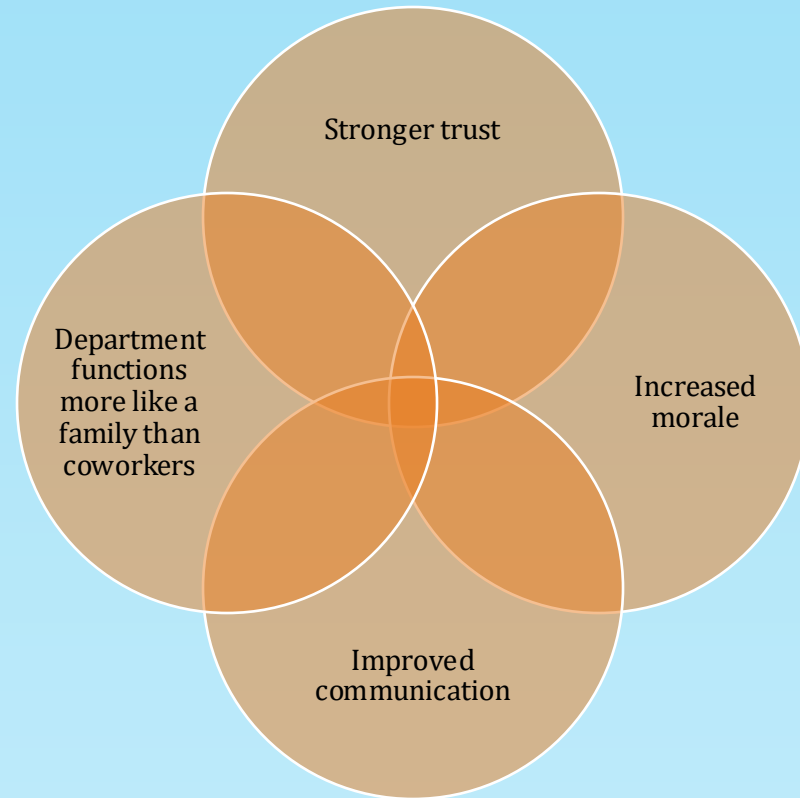
Monthly staff  
meetings

Bi-Monthly  
staff potlucks

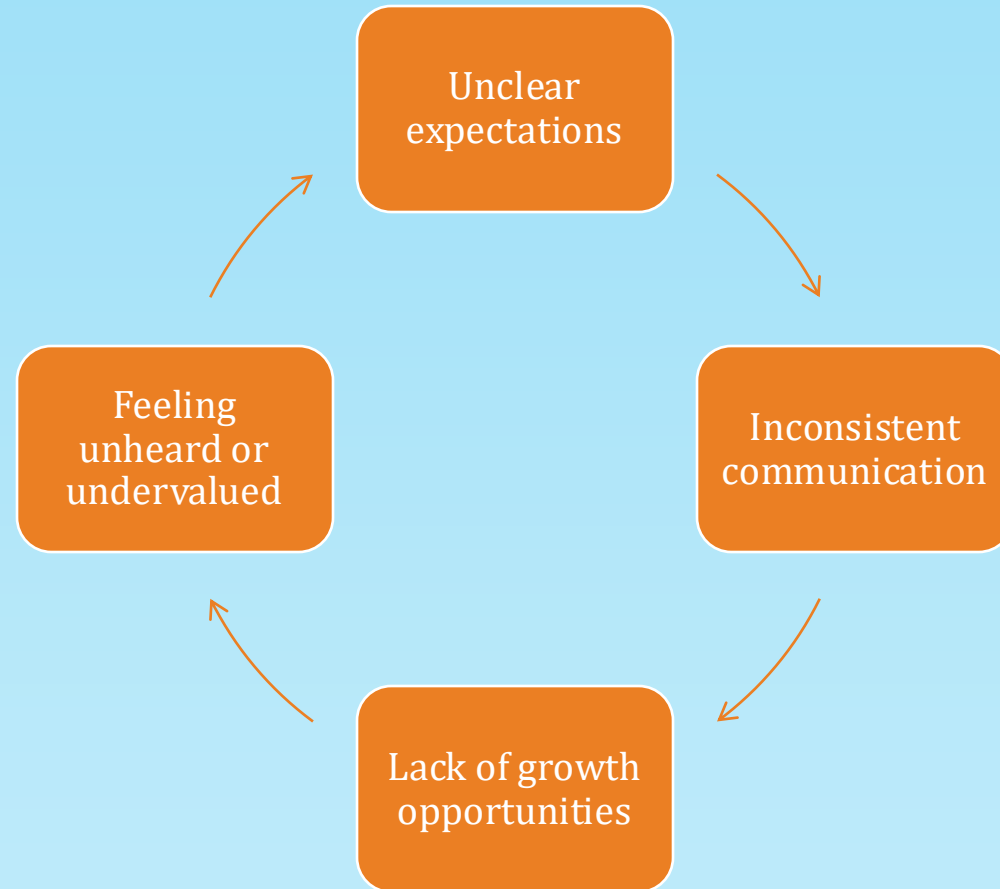
# Leadership Accessibility



# Cultural Outcome



# Internal Barriers to Retention



# Transformational Solutions

Clear expectations with support

Consistent and fair supervision

Transparent communication

Regular feedback and connection

Growth and development opportunities



# A Key Leadership Truth



People rarely leave jobs —  
they leave environments.



# Immediate Action Steps



Increase leadership visibility



Create one intentional connection opportunity



Publicly recognize staff regularly



Listen more than you speak



# Final Takeaway

Transformational  
leadership builds  
stability

Culture drives  
recruitment and  
retention

When people feel  
valued, they stay

# Closing

Thank you for your  
commitment to  
student safety and  
transportation  
leadership.



**Questions or  
Discussion**