Clarifying the vision

PURPOSE

This activity can be used at the beginning of a school or district discussion about the visioning process. It graphically demonstrates that not everyone will come to the table with the same vision. But, with a little effort, everyone can leave with an agreement on a unified vision for the school or district.

COMMENTS TO FACILITATORS

Some participants will find the star very easily. Others will not. Some will have difficulty even when the star is outlined.

According to Roger von Oech, who designed this exercise, the point is that you must have some idea what you’re looking for in order to find it. Among the questions von Oech poses are these: “Did you define what you were looking for? Is it a five-pointed star? A Star of David? A seven-pointed sheriff’s star? Is it a big star? A little star? Is it composed of both black and white triangles?”

The discussion should revolve around the importance of vision and of a clearly stated vision, the necessity of ensuring that everyone understands and can easily define the vision. This should lead into additional work on creating a shared vision.

DIRECTIONS

1. Create a transparency of “Find the perfect star.”
2. Show the transparency. Ask participants to locate and outline the star. Allow about two minutes. (See solution at right.)
3. If the group cannot locate the star, block half the transparency to narrow the field of vision. Allow one minute.
4. If most participants still cannot find the star, block and show the quadrant with the star and ask one of the participants to outline it.
5. Ask: “What does this activity have to do with building a vision?” “What happens if a vision is not shared?” “What are the implications for school teams?”
6. Have participants work in pairs to discuss the questions.
7. Invite pairs to share their reactions.
8. Summarize comments.

Find the perfect star

Can you see the perfect star in the pattern below? As you look for it, be aware of your search strategies.