Lessons from Neuroscience and Effectiveness in the Legislature
Scientists have learned more about the brain in the last 20 years than in the previous five centuries.
Facts about the brain:

- Your brain thrives with exercise and sleep.
- Your brain’s strongest stimulant is emotion.
- Your brain is affected by stress.
- Your brain over relies on vision.
- Your brain develops based on curiosity.
Exercise and Cognition

![Graph showing effect size for different cognitive tasks with error bars for control and exercise conditions.]

- Executive (36C 37E)
- Controlled (69C 74E)
- Spatial (21C 23E)
- Speed (33C 32E)
How much movement is needed?

- Two 30 minute brisk walks per week will start to increase brain function.
- Ideally, 150 minutes per week.
- Lap the Cap
Your brain thrives on good sleep.

- You sleep roughly 1/3 of your life
- Sleep loss = mind loss
  - (memory, mood, logical thinking, dexterity all decrease)
Emotions get our attention.

Emotions are like neon signs telling your brain, “Remember this!”
Exercise
“Effective Multitasking” is an Oxymoron

- “Switch-tasking”
  - Takes longer to complete both tasks AND you have holes in your learning because you cannot focus on two things at once.
Stress

- Not all stress is equal
  - Chronic Stress is bad
  - Acute Stress can be helpful
- Stress responses evolved to solve issues in seconds
  - Today, we have stress for hours, days, weeks not built to sustain that

And you thought there was stress in your life!
Your brain relies heavily on vision.
Vision

- We have five senses, but our brains rely on our vision for 60% of the information.
A picture really is worth a 1000 words.
Curiosity and exploration

- Brains were built to explore
- Curiosity = advancement
10 Things Leaders Do
Essential # 1

☑ SEE THE FUTURE

“To grasp and hold a vision, that is the very essence of successful leadership—not only on the movie set where I learned it, but everywhere.”
Essential # 1a
Nil Desperandum
Essential # 2

ACTUALLY LISTEN

#1—"Of all the skills of leadership, listening is the most valuable—and one of the least understood. Most captains of industry listen only sometimes, and they remain ordinary leaders. But a few, the great ones, never stop listening."

#2—"To listen well is as powerful a means of communication and influence as to talk well."
Essential # 3

☐ COMMUNICATE...COMMUNICATE...COMMUNICATE

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”
Essential # 4

☐ PICK THE RIGHT TEAM
“The best leader is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and the self-restraint to keep from meddling with them while they do it.”
Essential # 5

- BOUNCE BACK AND DON’T FEAR FAILURE

“It has failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”
Essential # 6

- SEEK SOLUTIONS

“Never lose sight of the need to reach out and talk to other people who don't share your view. Listen to them and see if you can find a way to compromise.”
Essential # 7

- REMAIN CALM

#1—“When angry, count to ten before you speak. If very angry, count to 100.”
#2—“Nothing gives one so much advantage over another as to remain always cool and unruffled.”
#3--“The ballplayer who loses his head, who can't keep his cool, is worse than no ballplayer at all.”
Essential # 8

- OPERATE WITH HONOR, INTEGRITY and ETHICS

“The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office.”
Essential # 9

- ARE HUNGRY TO LEARN NEW THINGS AND TRY STUFF

#1—“I credit (my mother) with this lifelong intellectual curiosity I have, and love of reading and learning.”

#2—“I am learning all the time. The tombstone will be my diploma.”

#3—“Once you stop learning, you start dying.”
Essential # 10

- HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR

“Good planning is important. I've also regarded a sense of humor as one of the most important things on a big expedition. When you're in a difficult or dangerous situation, or when you're depressed about the chances of success, someone who can make you laugh eases the tension.”
10 Things Great Leaders Do
&
Neuroscience and Effective Leadership
Lessons from Neuroscience and Effectiveness in the Legislature