

LDSB School Leadership Commitments & Reflections



Introduction

Limestone District School Board is committed to reflecting and focusing on the impact of our collective efforts to advance student achievement and well-being, particularly for those students who have been historically underserved and marginalized. As part of this journey, reflecting on our personal and collective leadership and resulting impact will support moving the system forward. To this end, the following questions guide our work:

1. For whom is the current education system not working and why?
2. How do we (you) know?
3. What can we (you) try? What are we (you) going to do differently?

The Commitment

In order to build a culture of high expectations for all students, LDSB leaders:

Drive student achievement and well-being by focusing and persisting on improving outcomes for all students and in particular for those students who have been historically under-served by actively removing barriers that lead to disparities.

Lead the instructional program, promoting ongoing learning and capacity building through intentional planning, collaborative leadership, co-learning, and providing targeted, constructive feedback to respond to the learning needs of all students and ensure a shared responsibility for the success of all students.

Balance the importance of relationships with accountability by building collaborative and supportive relationships with staff and students, while maintaining high standards and accountability through clarity, ongoing targeted feedback and regular, consistent follow-up.

Engage families, community partners and the school community by intentionally building collaborative and supportive relationships with families, community partners and the broader school community, sharing to understand the school's focus and goals, collecting voice, responding to feedback/input and creating opportunities to genuinely engage throughout their student's education journey in Limestone.

Self-reflect on one's leadership and impact on outcomes for students by seeking, listening to and applying feedback, regularly reflecting on one's decisions, actions, and communication with the intent to continually improve outcomes for all students and staff.

Manage school operations and resources by intentionally aligning decisions and actions with the school's vision and goals that at their core centre student and staff achievement and well-being.

Promote and support LDSB and public education by promoting and championing the Board's mission, vision, values, goals, and achievements.

To inspire true commitment, leaders must practice what they teach.
They must model the behaviour they expect of others.

~John Doerr

Purpose

The Leadership Commitment Profile is intended to support and guide this important work for current and aspiring leaders and will be used to guide LDSB's Succession Process.

Leadership is a journey that requires self-reflection and intentionality to establish meaningful goals and next steps as well as to monitor progress and assess impact. Whether an aspiring leader or current administrator, the Leadership Commitment establishes the standards to which leaders in Limestone hold themselves accountable.

Leaders, current and aspiring, are encouraged to connect with their supervisor(s), with a view to engaging in dialogue to explore each commitment, identifying areas of strength as well as areas for development in order to assess readiness for school leadership.

Leaders become great, not because of their power, but for their ability to inspire and elicit commitment, passion, consistent action and follow through from others. ~Ty Howard



Understanding the Commitment

Drive student achievement and well-being.

What this looks like in practice

- Establishes clear vision, goals and expectations through the Student Achievement Plan.
- Critically examines current practices with a view to challenging mindsets, identifying, and closing gaps that act as barriers to student learning and achievement.
- Understand how and why current systems, structures, and strategies are not working for all students and actively seek different ways to attain maximum growth and success
- In collaboration with the educator, establishes annual learning plans with a focus on school goals.
- Makes goals visible with regular reference to, communication of and monitoring of priorities.
- Identifies and addresses barriers for the educator.
- Actively works to alter mindsets and instructional practices that lead to improved student outcomes
- Asks what is needed to support the educator (instruction, resources, materials)
- Follows up with regular classroom visits, providing tangible feedback from the visits.
- Engages in ongoing collaborative planning with whole group and small group discussions (PLC, divisional meetings), individual staff, and using these meetings to maintain clarity and coherence related to goals.
- Uses data as the 3rd point during discussions about teaching and learning.
- Develops a plan and a timeline as next steps are identified/discovered.
- Innovates, promotes, and supports successful pathways for every student
- Follows up regularly based on the plan.
- Shares school plans and focus with families.



“...collective efficacy is the key organizational variable in facilitating student achievement...it will have the strongest independent influence on achievement.”

Smith, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2001

Reflection Questions

- How are high expectations for every student demonstrated through my leadership?
- How are high expectations for every student evident in every classroom?
- How do I partner with families to reinforce the message of high expectations?
- How do I model positive and affirming views of students, families, and communities we serve?
- What actions have I initiated with staff when students are not achieving?
- What instructional practices and conditions do I expect to observe that affirm the belief that every student is a capable learner?
- What indicators do I use when monitoring student learning and engagement?
- What learning is required to support staff in advancing student achievement and well-being?
- How do I support educators to be responsive in their instruction to the social, emotional, cultural, and learning needs of individual students?
- How have I supported staff to use School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) resources to implement identityaffirming mental health practices as an essential part of daily instruction?
- What identity-affirming mental health practices do I observe in classrooms? What evidence indicates these practices are making a positive difference?
- How do I use LDSB's Data Dashboard and other data sources to identify specific strengths and needs in student achievement and any disproportionate outcomes?

- How do I act on the trends and patterns visible in the various sources of evidence to address those who are underserved?
- How do I ensure equity, inclusion, and anti-oppression are central to all decisions, practices, and conversations about student learning and well-being?
- How am I identifying and dismantling systemic barriers that limit opportunities for marginalized students?
- How am I amplifying student voice and agency in setting learning goals and shaping school culture?

Lead the instructional program, promoting ongoing learning and capacity building

What this looks like in practice:

- Builds educator capacity through intentional coaching and modelling to respond to the learning needs of all students.
- Provides space for open dialogue and sharing to challenge mindsets, expand knowledge and understanding of current contexts and necessary next steps.
- Demonstrates a strong understanding of effective pedagogy and curriculum, including meaningful and evidence-based assessment and evaluation practices.
- Utilizes data to inform and drive school improvement planning, instruction, assessment, and evaluation.
- Develops a shared responsibility for the success of all students.
- Identifies staff strengths and areas of interest to develop leadership.
- Asks educators how to support their leadership.
- Identifies and supports leadership opportunities in the school and provides individuals with scheduled time during staff meetings/PD Days to share resources/ideas/strategies or model a lesson for all staff.
- Plans for and chairs leadership team meetings that are intentional and thoughtful with student achievement as the end goal (Revisit regularly with the team to monitor/discuss progress)
- Encourages leadership within divisions and departments
- Intentionally speaks to those who could excel and lead different topics and encourages their leadership in diverse ways.
- Shares leadership wherever possible - delegates tasks in support of individual leadership plans.

Reflection Questions

- How do I model and build staff capacity through inquiry and reflection?
- How do I promote and support creative and innovative thinking?
- How do I promote collaborative inquiry?
- How do I mentor and coach to build instruction / leadership capacity in others?
- How do I determine if existing learning resources are authentic and culturally responsive?
- What specifically do I look for when visiting classrooms to ensure all students benefit from culturally relevant pedagogy?
- How do I approach critical conversations with staff to support and encourage culturally responsive teaching?
- What learning is required to support staff to understand and engage in short cycle
- How do I support staff in knowing their students/families to respond with instruction and assessment that is authentic and relevant to each student's needs?



- How can I strengthen educators' professional judgment in using assessment opportunities to meet urgent student learning needs?
- How do I support staff well-being while building instructional capacity?
- How do I intentionally create opportunities for staff to develop skills in equity-focused, identity-affirming, and trauma-informed pedagogy?

Balance the importance of relationships with accountability

What this looks like in practice:

- Values the importance of developing positive, respectful relationships with staff, students, and families, and the broader school community that are based on trust and integrity.
- Engages in kind/friendly/collaborative and supportive interactions with staff, students, families and the broader school community, including greeting students, staff and visitors.
- Creates opportunities for families, as partners in education, to take an active role in their child's education.
- Establishes positive working relationships with labour partners, school councils, and community agencies/partners with the goal of improving service to students.
- Demonstrates empathy and a genuine concern for others.
- Creates a welcoming, inclusive, caring, respectful and safe learning environment.
- Publicly acknowledging staff efforts/successes.
- Promotes and facilitates collaboration throughout the building.
- Engages in purposeful, clear, consistent communication (mindful of amount).
- Includes and welcomes school council and community partners into the school environment.
- 2 minutes for 10 days (with students and staff)
- Encourages staff to lead positive events (share successes, positive energy)
- Promotes teambuilding and creates meaningful, collaborative learning and leadership opportunities for teachers and support staff.
- Respects and appreciates individual differences and works to ensure safe learning and working environments by promoting and protecting acceptance and inclusion
- How do I address bias or discriminatory practices when they emerge in staff, student, or community interactions?
- How do I ensure accountability is applied equitably and does not reinforce systemic inequities?

Reflection Questions

- How do I actively engage with and build relationships with all students and staff?
- How do I welcome, transition and support new staff/colleagues?
- How do I foster open communication with staff when making decisions and leading change?
- How do I engage staff in the collaborative development of the Student Achievement Plan?
- How do my intersecting identities influence my relationships and leadership?
- What are my personal biases/assumptions? How do they influence my relationships and leadership?
- How do I invite authentic voice from all students and staff to set goals, advance learning and engage in joint issue resolution?
- How do I manage my emotions in the face of challenges or adversity?
- Have I clearly communicated my vision, goals and expectations for all staff?
- Have I communicated openly and honestly to build trust and clarity around goals and performance?
- Do I regularly and consistently follow up with staff after clarifying expectations/providing supports?

- Do I and/or how do I provide regular growth-minded, meaningful feedback for staff?
- How do I prepare for, engage in and reflect on difficult/courageous conversations?
- When faced with conflict, how do I respond? What strategies do I use?
- Have I avoided holding staff accountable due to personal discomfort and has this adversely impacted student achievement and well-being?
- Have I identified barriers that may be preventing staff from achieving goals?
- Have I provided staff with the necessary tools and resources and have I utilized them or modelled them effectively?
- How do I build trust with others?
- How do I create a working and learning environment where students, staff/colleagues and families feel safe, valued and respected?

Holding people
accountable begins with
relationship.



Engage families, community partners, and the school community

What this looks like in practice:

- Works hard to build relationships with families and communities
- Regularly communicates and collaborates with families and communities to support student achievement and well-being
- Seeks input and feedback from families on School Achievement Plan
- Actively encourages educators to engage families in their student's learning journey
- Reaches out to community partners to explore ways to support student achievement and well-being
- Actively engages families with students who have self-identified to understand how best to serve their student following the principle of "nothing about us without us"
- Acknowledge the primacy of relationship to the land and to each other and recognize that Indigenous languages are integral to these relationships.



Reflection Questions

- How do I build trusting relationships with families and communities?
- How do I engage with and build relationships with families and community partners?
- How do I seek and value the voices, input and experiences of the diverse communities we serve?
- In what ways do I encourage staff to make meaningful connections with families and the broader school community?
- How do I strengthen my relationships with community partners to gain a better understanding of the communities we serve?
- What processes are in place to elicit input and feedback from families and communities on school-based programs and School Achievement Plans related to student learning and well-being?
- How do I foster educator connections with families to support student learning and a positive sense of belonging?
- How do I create a culture that invites and respects voices of underserved families and communities?
- How do I effectively communicate information related to student achievement and well-being without perpetuating stereotypes and assumptions about underserved students and families?
- What has the impact been of my efforts to connect with and engage families and community partners?
- How are spaces created to allow for open dialogue, trust, and vulnerability where the voices of Indigenous partners feel heard, valued, and respected? How do I listen to inform my actions?
- How has my understanding of Indigenous-centered trauma-informed approaches been utilized to nurture relationships with Indigenous students, families, or communities?
- How do I engage directly with student leaders, affinity groups, and equity clubs to understand and respond to their perspectives?
- How do I ensure families who have been historically underserved feel welcomed and empowered as authentic partners in their child's learning?

Self-reflect on one's leadership and impact on outcomes for students

What this looks like in practice:

- Sets and communicates personal goals and monitors progress, including seeking feedback.
- Works collaboratively to develop, communicate, monitor, and assess school-based goals that reflect the shared vision focused on driving student achievement and well-being.
- Regularly reflects on decisions, actions and outcomes for students and staff/colleagues with a view to improving outcomes for all students and staff.
- Actively seeks feedback and information from a variety of sources to enhance leadership practices.
- Seeks, critically reviews, and applies evidence-based research to inform effective practice.
- Acknowledges when decisions do not have the desired impact/outcome, learning from experience and adjusting practices moving forward.
- Demonstrates self-awareness and impact on others and/or the school and/or the system.



Reflection Questions

- How do I set aside time for self-reflection?
- How do I engage in self-reflection?
- Have I thought about my journey to becoming a leader? What has led me to this point?
- How do I identify my areas of strength and areas for growth?
- Do I have a plan to address my areas for growth? What does it look like?
- Have I sought feedback on how to grow my leadership?
- How do I make decisions?
- Do I set goals and monitor my progress towards these goals? What does that look like?
- Am I aware of my personal biases and assumptions? How do I balance these?
- What are my key achievements?
- What has been the impact of my decisions/actions?
- Who has benefited (not benefited) from my decisions/actions?
- What am I doing to understand for whom the education system is not working?
- How do I use data to improve equitable outcomes for all students?
- Am I making a positive difference in the lives of every student? (in every classroom?) How do I know?
- How do I model vulnerability and lifelong learning in my leadership?
- How do I reflect on my own identity, power, and privilege as they impact my leadership?
- How do I continue to learn about equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression to improve my practice?
- Am I actively seeking feedback from diverse voices, including those who may not usually feel heard?

Manage school operations and resources

What this looks like in practice:

- Allocates people and financial resources within the school to support the school's vision and goals focused on improving student achievement and well-being.
- Centres decisions on "is this what is best for students?"
- Understands key responsibilities as required by Collective Agreements such as timetabling and allocation of corresponding preparation time and supervision minutes.
- Understands and communicates key administrative procedures and collective agreement provisions.
- Ensures health & safety of staff, students, and overall worksite.
- Supports change initiatives mandated within the organization, including helping staff understand what the change means to them, and providing the ongoing guidance and support that will maintain enthusiasm and commitment to the change process.

Reflection Questions

- How have I strategically allocated financial and human resources to achieve Board and/or School goals?
- Am I proactive in managing resources?
- How do I ensure clear lines of communication with supporting departments such as Facility Services, Information Technology and Finance?
- How do I advocate for my school, staff and students?
- How do I measure the impact of my decisions?
- How do I balance short-term pressures with long-term strategic thinking?
- How do I balance school and system priorities?
- How do I promote and support staff and student health and safety?
- Have I taken time to understand relevant collective agreement provisions?
- How do I communicate change when I may not understand and/or agree with the change?
- How do I allocate financial and human resources equitably to address gaps in access, achievement, and wellbeing?
- How do I ensure technology, digital learning, and future-ready skills are embedded equitably across the school?
- How do I prioritize staff well-being and workload sustainability in operational planning?



Promote and support LDSB and public education

What this looks like in practice:

- Actively promotes and champions the Board's mission, vision, values, goals, and achievements through a variety of channels.
- Actively supports and promotes public education, Limestone DSB, and one's school, highlighting key achievements, initiatives, and overall good news stories.
- Exemplifies professionalism, respect, inclusion, and openness with all partners in education.
- Promotes 'Seeing Yourself in Limestone' from a student, staff, and community perspective.
- Actively seeks opportunities to share and promote learning and extracurriculars in Limestone.
- Speaks positively about leadership in Limestone.
- Promotes equity and inclusion as foundational to the Board's mission and ensures all public communication reflects diverse student, staff, and community identities.

Reflection Questions

- How do I promote LDSB? Is this visible to others?
- How do I actively support public education? Is this visible to others?
- How do I promote my school?
- How do I recognize staff and student achievements?
- How do my actions reflect on LDSB, my school and public education as a whole?



Leaders who fail to appreciate the fundamental precept of accountability must also fail to muster the profound commitment true leadership demands.

~Peter Cosgrove