CASS
College of
Alberta School
Superintendents

Leading Learning Module
PARTICIPANT GUIDE

- Building Effective Relationships
- Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
- Visionary Leadership
- ✓ Leading Learning
- Ensuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education for All Students
- School Authority Operations and Resources
- Supporting Effective Governance

Leading Learning Competency

A superintendent establishes and sustains a learning culture in the school community that promotes ongoing critical reflection on practice, shared responsibility for student success and continuous improvement.

Leading Learning Module Outcomes

1. Establish and sustain a learning culture in the school community that supports quality leadership, teaching and optimum learning
2. Promote ongoing reflection on practice and shared responsibility for student success through enhanced understanding of evidence-informed self-reflection, collaborative inquiry, complex problem solving, and job-embedded application of learning
3. Ensure that the system's education plan sustains inclusive environments in which diversity is embraced and all members of the school community are welcomed, safe, cared for, and respected

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OVERVIEW

Learning Modules are designed to deepen and apply system leaders professional practice with opportunities to examine Alberta context through a community of inquiry approach based on research. Learning modules begin with a focus on personal capacity leading to the valuable role system leaders play in supporting quality school leadership and teaching to create optimum learning for all students in Alberta.

The CASS professional learning modules are founded on the *Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard* requirement that the professional practice of "jurisdiction leaders and superintendents must be informed by current, relevant educational research, with a focus on career-long improvement" (Alberta Education, 2018, p. 2).

This participant guide supports your examination of ways through which superintendents and system leaders establish and sustain a learning culture that promotes ongoing critical reflection on practice, shared responsibility for student success, and continuous improvement.

Drawing on research involving highly successful and learning focused school districts, you will critically examine your current practices and reflect on how these practices are informed by research about effective learning, teaching and leadership.

Through professional collaboration with other system leaders, you will co-construct strategies for building shared and distributed approaches to overall instructional leadership in your systems. You will develop and enact a responsive and empowering plan to continuously enable high quality leadership and teaching for all students and to cultivate an interdependent and coherent learning system.

Module learning materials will be posted online at: https://cassalberta.ca/conferences-workshops/cass-asboa-summer-learning-conference/ and https://cassalberta.ca/resources/

SESSION A

Establishing and sustaining a learning culture

Wednesday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

A.1 Focusing on Optimum Learning for All Students

Anderson and Louis (2012) underscore the benefits of focusing central office *efforts on teaching and learning*, communicating a strong belief in the capacity of teachers and principals to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and in the district's capacity to develop the organizational conditions needed to make that happen (high collective efficacy).

Competency Matrix: Leading Learning in the Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard, Leadership Quality Standard and Teaching Quality Standard

SLQS	LQS	TQS
Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning 2. A superintendent engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection, identifying and acting on research-informed opportunities for enhancing leadership, teaching, and learning. **Leading Learning** 4. A superintendent establishes and sustains a learning culture in the school community that promotes ongoing critical reflection on practice, shared responsibility for student success and continuous improvement.	**Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning** 2. A leader engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection to identify opportunities for improving leadership, teaching, and learning. **Leading a Learning Community** 4. A leader nurtures and sustains a culture that supports evidence-informed teaching and learning. **Providing Instructional Leadership** 6. A leader ensures that every student has access to quality teaching and optimum learning experiences.	**Engaging in Career-Long Learning** 2. A teacher engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection to improve teaching and learning. **Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge** 3. A teacher applies a current and comprehensive repertoire of effective planning, instruction, and assessment practices to meet the learning needs of every student.

Source: Alberta Education (online). *Professional Practice Standards* https://education.alberta.ca/professional-practice-standards/new-professional-standards/

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Indicators Matrix

Superintendent	School Leadership Teams	Teachers
• Focused on quality leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning for all students • Sustains a learning culture throughout the system	• Focused on quality teaching and optimum learning for all students • Sustains a learning culture throughout the school and between schools	• Focused on pedagogical practices that result in optimum learning for all students • Sustains a learning culture within the classroom
• Modelling Commitment to Professional Learning • (b) collaborating with teachers, principals, school juridcition leaders and aother superintendents to build professional capacities and expertise;	• Modelling Commitment to Professional Learning • (a) engaging with others such as teachers, principal and other leaders to build personal and collective professional capacities and expertise; • *Leadership teams ensure each professional learning community receives feedback, recognizes successes, and discusses challenges* • *Skilled at asking questions to provoke thinking and enable teachers to reflect upon teaching practices* • *Provides access to and opportunities for ongoing research-informed and evidence-based professional learning*	• **Engaging in Career-Long Learning** • (a) collaborating with other teacher to build personal and collective professional capacities and expertise; • *Skilled in ongoing critical reflection (metacognition)* • *Committed to continuous improvement of teaching and learning practices*
• **Leading Learning** • (f) building principals' and school jurisdiction leaders' capacities and holding them accountable for	• **Leading a Learning Community** • (c) developing a shared responsibility for the success of all students.	• **Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge** • (b) using instructional strategies to engage

Superintendent	School Leadership Teams	Teachers
providing instructional leadership through effectdive support, supervision and evaluation practices • *Creates or enables structures and processes to help principals and teachers function as collaborative teams*	• (d) creating a culture of high expectations for all students and staff • **Providing Instructional Leadership** • (a) building capacity of teachers to respond to the learning needs of all students	students in meaningful activities • *Increasingly adept in using evidence-based teaching practices towards improved student outcomes*

A.1 Reflection Questions

1. Review the Competency Matrix and Indicators Matrix. How are they connected?
2. Where are you in your practice? Use the matrixes to highlight the factors that currently apply to your practice and the work that you do.

A.2 What Research Says About Optimum Learning and Quality Teaching

Research Excerpt: Findings on Effective Teaching Practices

Teachers strive to develop a responsive pedagogy and build adaptive expertise throughout their careers. From an examination of the research literature and according to the findings from the *What Did You Do in School Today* (Friesen, S. 2009) research study involving over 30,000 Canadian secondary students, the following set of principles and strategies reflective of effective teaching practices emerged:

- Teachers are designers of learning who thoughtfully and intentionally design learning environments to engage students both academically and intellectually.
- The work that students are asked to undertake is worthy of their time and attention, is personally relevant, and deeply connected to world in which they live. Work is authentic to the disciplines being studied and fosters deep understanding of important concepts, competencies and ways of knowing.
- Assessment practices are clearly focused on improving student learning, building student efficacy and guiding teaching decisions and actions.
- Teachers foster a variety of interdependent relationships in classrooms that promote learning and create a strong learning culture.
- Teachers take the initiative to seek out colleagues and others to engage in a scholarship of teaching to improve teaching and learning throughout their careers.

A.2 Activity: Three Challenges/Barriers, Three Solutions

1. What are *three* challenges or barriers you face in creating a learning culture that focuses on quality teaching?

Three Challenges/Barriers

Three Solutions

A.3 Optimizing Learning

Research Excerpt: Shifts in Learning

Much of the change literature is driven by a sense of genuine urgency to create fundamental shifts in our images of learning. Research from the learning sciences forward a "*theory of learning … that leads to very different approaches to the design of curriculum, teaching, and assessment than those often found in schools today*" (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000, p.3).

Today's students, they contend, require much more than the memorized facts and procedures that counted for learning in previous times. Today, students need "*a deep conceptual understanding of complex concepts, and the ability to work with them creatively to generate new ideas, new theories, new products and new knowledge*" (Sawyer, 2006, p.2). The implications for the classroom and for those charged to lead the adult learning in the school are significant.

Principals, charged with leading schools and the adult learners in them, face a daunting challenge, charting a learning direction that is unfamiliar to most of them. With the growing awareness that incremental improvements to existing structures and practices are not adequate and therefore unlikely to get us to where we need to go in the 21st century, many are starting to realize their efforts to improve the obsolete are actually likely to make things worse (Gilbert, 2005; Fullan, Hill & Crevola, 2006).

McKinsey and Company (2007) identify pedagogical knowledge as a key aspect that defines effective school leadership "to develop principals into drivers of improvement in instruction" (p.33). They also note that while a focus on improvement is a necessary condition, it is insufficient to bring about the changes needed for the 21st century. "In order to improve instruction, school systems need to find ways to change fundamentally what happens in classrooms" (McKinsey and Company, 2007, p.30)

Scenario Introduction: Quality Teaching for Optimum Student Learning

The superintendent and other members of the system's leadership team are often invited to visit schools and observe first hand while leaders, teachers and students are engaged in the learning process.

Here, system leaders and other members recount their experiences from these school and classroom visits. These are some of the observations that leaders recounted during their short, 5- to 10-minute visits into the various schools and classrooms within their jurisdiction.

A.3 Activity: Effective Pedagogy, Teaching Approaches and Teacher Effectiveness

1. Divide the scenarios that follow between colleagues. Review one of the scenarios and highlight or list evidence indicators of effective pedagogy, teaching approaches and teacher effectiveness.

2. Form new groups with representation from each scenario group and identify common evidence and indicators across the five scenarios.
3. Use these indicators to inform and identify common themes of effective pedagogy, teaching approaches and teacher effectiveness. Use the template on page 17.

A.3 Reflection Questions

1. Who else should be involved with identifying high quality evidence of teacher practice? How do you ensure that teachers are involved in this process?
2. What strategies and approaches do you use to promote ongoing critical reflection on quality practice?

Scenario #1 - Grade 10 English

Upon entering this grade 10 English classroom, you observe students working in pairs viewing speech performances on iPads. When asked what students were working on, you were told they were providing feedback to peers about their preliminary speech performances which had been recorded on the iPads. It's worth noting that all the students seemed to be familiar with the specific criteria with which their performances were being assessed and could talk knowledgeably about the goals they were aiming towards.

During this particular class, students were tasked with finding specific evidence and examples from one another's recorded speeches of background information and details in support of the arguments each was advancing. Peers were also expected to identify specific examples of where the authors/performers used effective word choices and imagery and provide feedback about how their presentation skills could be improved. Each student was tasked with completing a feedback form for each of the recorded speeches and then discussed their evidence and observations with one another.

It was clear that this wasn't the first time that students had participated in these types of assessment processes because they were very engaged in obtaining and providing feedback and seemed to clearly understand the importance of feedback for strengthening their work. It was also interesting to note that although the classroom was somewhat noisy, everyone seemed to be productively engaged in the feedback process and serious about providing helpful suggestions for improvement.

Scenario #2 - Grade 7 Social Studies

Outcomes from the Social Studies Grade 7 Program of Studies: Canada Before Confederation

- *Research for deliberative inquiry; Analyze selected issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in context of time and place;*
- *Communicate in a persuasive and engaging manner*
- *Understand the unique nature of Canada and its land, history, complexities and current issues.*
- *Understand historic and contemporary issues, from multiple perspectives.*
- *Engage in active inquiry and critical and creative thinking.*
- *Apply historical and geographic skills to bring meaning to issues and events.*
- *Use and manage information and communication technologies critically.*
- *Conduct research ethically using varied methods and sources; organize, interpret and present findings; and defend their opinions.*
- *Apply skills of metacognition, reflecting upon what students have learned and what they need to learn.*
- *Examine the concepts of power, authority and decision making from multiple perspectives and consider how these concepts impact individuals, relationships, communities and nations.*
- *Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the distinct roles of, and the relationships among, the Aboriginal, French and British peoples in forging the foundations of Canadian Confederation.*

Students were presenting historical fiction one-minute movies that they had produced to demonstrate their understanding and competency of Social Studies and Language Arts outcomes.

Students explained that through a number of small and large group discussions the class generated a list of questions that they felt would be important to investigate and to help guide their research. Some of these ideas were also used to generate assessment criteria to help all students better understand what was being expected in terms of high quality research. Time was scheduled for the class to critique examples of research both as a whole class and in small groups. Once the research was completed, students incorporated key ideas into historical fiction scripts. The scripts had to be written in first person from the perspective of the explorer who they researched.

Students explained that they patterned their final products after the historical minutes that they analyzed together as a class. The teacher felt this type of format would be an excellent way for students to communicate their understandings about the age of exploration prior to Confederation and the contributions of the individual explorers who they researched. The students agreed that this would be a challenging but interesting way to demonstrate their research abilities and their understanding of key figures in the development of our national identity. Students also liked the creative challenges that this project would require.

The historical minutes needed to be illustrated with maps, historical photos and other visual and audio details as deemed appropriate. When students were asked how they would know if they were doing good

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work they explained that they always develop assessment criteria as a class after analyzing exemplars. So assessment criteria for research, scripts, and final movies were developed together and used throughout the process to guide teacher feedback as well as that from peers, parents and students' own self assessments.

When speaking to the teacher afterwards she indicated that she was very impressed with the caliber of thinking and quality of work that students produced and with how much they seemed to understand about the complex relationships that developed between various groups during this time in history.
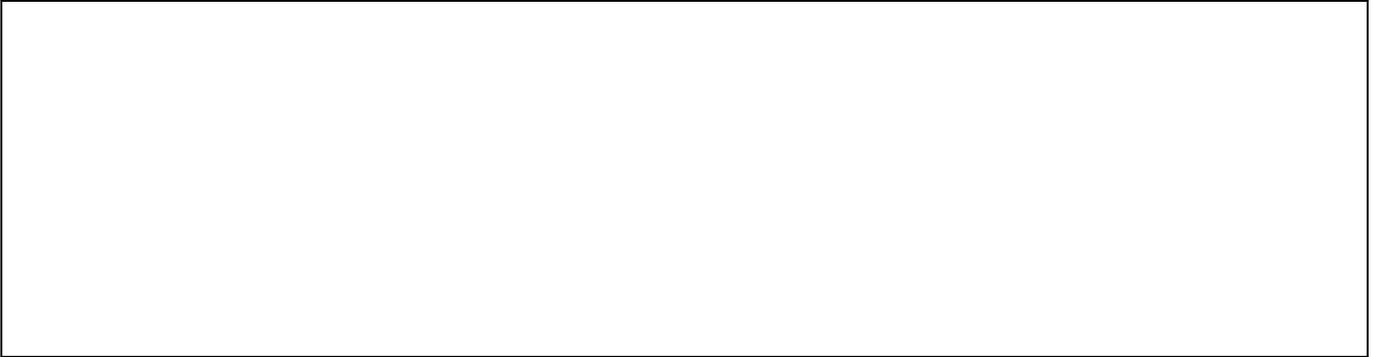
Scenario #3 - Grade 5 Science Class

Students prepare to organize the pictures they took on a fieldtrip into a presentation. The assignment handout instructs students to include photos and explanations of each of the following:

- an ecosystem showing the interactions that are occurring.
- the difference between a species, population and community
- at least two of the basic needs of the organisms
- an adaptation of an organism that helps it to survive
- one negative and one positive human impact on the environment

The teacher reminds the students to refer to the assessment rubric that they helped to create to help guide their work. Tomorrow they will have an opportunity to get some feedback from peers based on the preliminary work from today. Students immediately rush to the cart of laptops at the back of the room to secure one of the computers. The teacher circulates observing how various groups and individuals settle into the work and offering prompts to those who are having trouble getting started.

Students gather in groups of various formations. One group is taking pictures of themselves for their title page when the teacher asks them to identify which science concepts they must demonstrate understanding of through this project and to explain where in the assessment criteria the title page fits. The group admits that title page with their pictures might be fun to make but no significant learning will result from time spent on such an activity.

There is a great deal of conversation occurring amongst the rest of the students many who are negotiating which of their images reflect which aspects of the ecosystems. When asked about what they were doing and how their work was going to be assessed one student explained, "We need to demonstrate how the parts of the ecosystem we've been studying are interrelated. We also need to find plant and animal species that have adapted to the wetland environment that we investigated. The class has a rubric that we helped create by analyzing exemplars and non-exemplars of ecosystems that scientists have studied and documented so I actually have a really clear idea of what I need to focus on in order to demonstrate my understanding of ecosystems and specie adaptations."

For homework students are asked to review their progress so far and identify a specific aspect of their work where they would appreciate feedback. Tomorrow's class will begin with getting feedback from peers after which they will be given time to act on the feedback to revise and improve their work.

Scenario #4 – Grade 2

A large group of new teachers from across the school authority had been coming together each month to engage in ongoing professional learning supported by their jurisdiction. The superintendent and other district leaders attended one of the sessions to get a sense of the learning of these early career teachers and determine if the district's investment in teacher learning has been worthwhile. The superintendent sat at a table with a group of grade two teachers who had formed a professional network as a result of coming together during this series. One of the teachers explained that the focus of the last session was on formative assessment with an emphasis on peer feedback.

As part of their applied learning, the teachers had been teaching students how to provide kind, specific and helpful feedback to one another to improve their work. In keeping with the professional learning expectations, teachers had brought back evidence of impact from their assessment practices to examine with colleagues.

The following examples of student work were presented by teachers from two different schools. One class was investigating the endangerment of brown bats in their region and the other class was exploring different types of butterflies as part of their science study. The teacher whose class was studying butterflies explained how she was creating a culture of critique to help students see that the "kind, specific, helpful" feedback they give one another helps everyone improve. She presented the following iterations of butterfly drawings from one of her students to illustrate the improvements that occurred each time the child received feedback from his peers.

Impact evidence from teacher #1
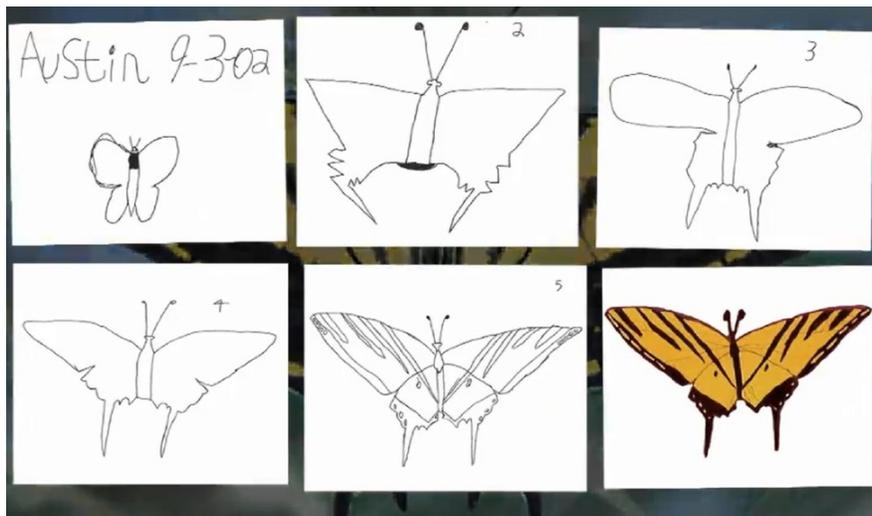
The other teacher showed presented various iterations of a student's written work to show the improvements that resulted because of the feedback she received from peers who were also taught how to provide kind, specific and helpful feedback to one another. All of the teachers sitting at the table were excited about the
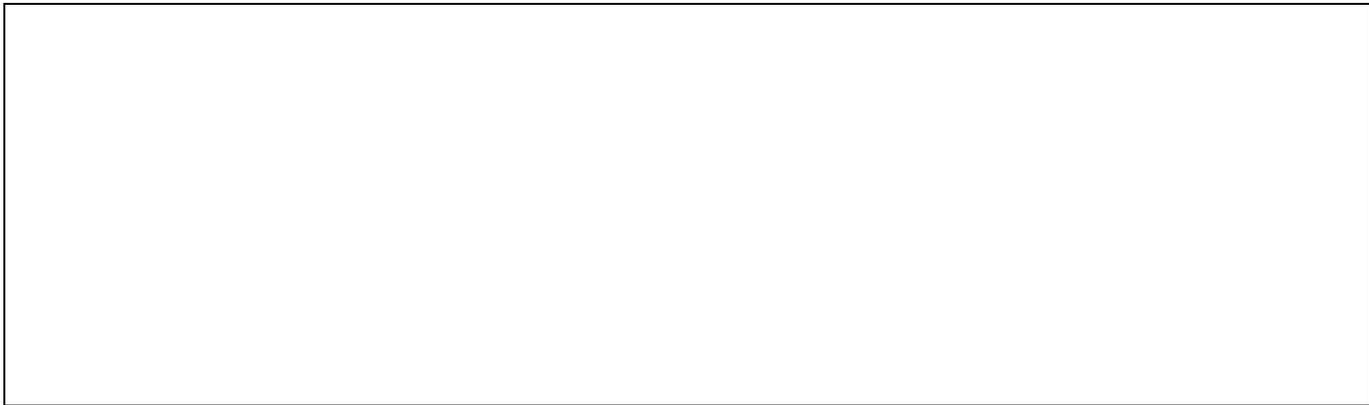
improvements they were seeing in the learning of their students as a result of the formative assessment strategies they enacted. They also really appreciated having the opportunity to interpret evidence of learning.

Impact evidence from teacher #2

Scenario #5– Grade 8 Math

Students were seated in table groupings. The following problem was on the board at the front of the room.

How can you straighten the fence (AB) between these two sections so that you don't change the area of either section?

A

Amy's property

Jim's property

B
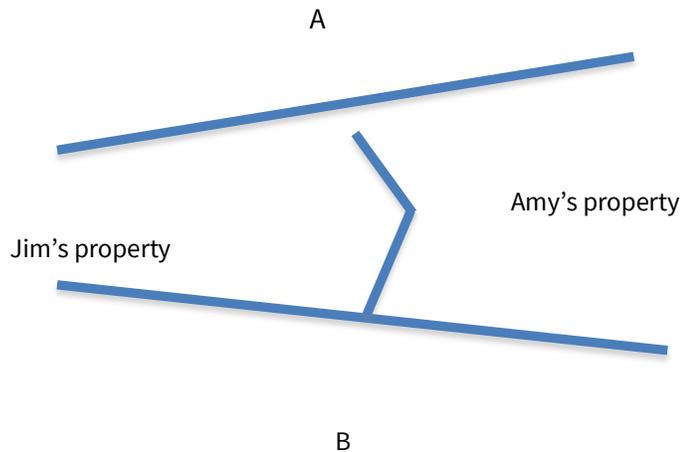
Students were working in a variety of configurations: some students were working alone, others in pairs and others in triads. The teacher was walking around from group to group. After five minutes she asked two of the groups and one of the students who was working alone to put their solutions to this point on the board. The rest of the students kept working while three students put partial solutions on the board.

Once the students had added their partial solutions to the board, she asked all students to put down their pencils and, in turn, asked each of the students to come forward to explain their preliminary ideas to the class. As each of the students explained where they were in their solutions, the teacher highlighted various concepts that the solution illustrated.

When the three partial solutions had been discussed, she asked the students to continue with the problem. She reminded them to check their rubrics to ensure that their solutions addressed each of the areas of mathematical proficiency they had been focusing on.

Common Themes

Themes	Evidence Indicators

A.4 Growing as a Learning Leader

Leading Learning	
A superintendent establishes and sustains a learning culture in the school community that promotes ongoing critical reflection on practice, shared responsibility for student success and continuous improvement.	
Indicators	**Evidence in Practice**
Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as: 1. fostering in the school community equality and respect with regard to rights as provided for in the *Alberta Human Rights Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*; 2. providing learning opportunities, based on research-informed principles of effective teaching, learning and leadership, to support building the capacity of all members of the school community to fulfill their educational roles; 3. ensuring that all instruction in the school authority addresses learning outcomes outlined in programs of study; 4. promoting collegial relations, collaboration, critical thinking and innovation in the school community; 5. ensuring that staff have access to resources, programs and expertise to support them in meeting their professional responsibilities and in addressing the learning needs of all students; 6. building principals' and school jurisdiction leaders' capacities and holding them accountable for providing instructional leadership through effective support, supervision and evaluation practices; and 7. ensuring school authority student assessment and evaluation procedures are fair, appropriate, evidence-informed and used to enhance learning, teaching and leadership. •	•
	Areas for Growth
	•
	Emerging Questions
	•

A.4 Reflection Questions

1. How are the indicators of practice in the SQLS informed by what you have learned in this session?
2. What questions have emerged in this session about leading the learning within your school authority?

SESSION B

Creating a Collaborative and Coherent Learning Organization

Wednesday 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

B.1 What the Research Says

Research Excerpt One

Collaborative and coherent learning organizations (Senge, 1990) are capable of adapting quickly to the rapidly changing environment through effective coordination of information and focusing on the discipline of team learning. Team learning is vital because teams, not individuals, are the fundamental learning unit in modern organizations. For school systems, the lesson is to promote continuous learning within and across organizational levels. Everyone learns and learning together is the way to move forward.

Anderson and Louis (2012) observed, "district policies and practices around instruction are sufficiently powerful that they can be felt, indirectly, by teachers as stronger and more directed leadership behaviors by principals" (p. 181). Among the most important findings, were the benefits of focusing central office efforts on teaching and learning through the following six jurisdiction leadership practices:

- Communicating a strong belief in the capacity of teachers and principals to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and in the district's capacity to develop the organizational conditions needed for that to happen (high collective efficacy).
- Building consensus about core expectations for professional practice (curriculum, teaching, leadership).
- Differentiating support to schools in relation to evidence of implementing these core expectations, with flexibility for school-based innovation.
- Setting clear expectations for school leadership practices and establishing leadership-development systems to select, train, and assist principals and teacher leaders consistent with district expectations.
- Providing organized opportunities for teachers and principals to engage in school-to-school communication, focusing on the challenges of improving student learning and program implementation.
- Coordinating district support for school improvement across organizational units in relation to district priorities, expectations for professional practice, and a shared understanding of the goals and needs of specific schools. (p. 181-182)

Research Excerpt Two

Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010), reported similar findings about the ways that school district leaders fostered stronger instructional leadership. Such leaders:

- Were crystal clear and repetitive when communicating the district's agenda for student learning. Effective superintendents are visible and articulate, but they also work with others in the district office so that all central office staff members convey the message.
- Ensured coordination and coherence in support for schools across different organizational units at the district level. Schools benefit from coordinated support provided in relation to district goals and based on shared understandings of school- improvement plans and needs.
- Provided a wide range of intensive opportunities for teachers and school-level leaders to develop the capacities they need to accomplish the district's student-learning agenda. These opportunities will often take place in schools and be aimed at meeting pressing challenges unique to the individual school.
- Provided increased opportunities for administrators to collaborate on common work. Without collaboration, principals' collective sense of efficacy is unlikely to increase. In addition, as with teachers, collaboration is associated with increased job satisfaction and motivation.
- Gathered and used data about how well district policies are working at the school level. Working continually to increase synergy among district policies, procedures, and practices aimed at guiding and supporting the district's agenda for student learning.
- Differentiated the support provided to schools in light of schools' individual priorities, strengths, weaknesses, and circumstances. One-size-fits-all district interventions are typically of much less value to schools than many districts believe.

The need to pay closer attention to the benefits of collective, shared efforts to improve instruction is supported by evidence from Louis and Wahlstrom (2012.) One of their significant claims is that "leadership effects on student achievement occur largely because effective leadership strengthens professional community, a special environment within which teachers work together to improve their practice and improve student learning" (p. 3)

Professional community, in turn, is a strong predictor of instructional practices that are strongly associated with student achievement. The link between professional community and student achievement may be explained by reference to a school climate that encourages levels of student effort above and beyond the levels encouraged in individual classrooms… Increasing teachers' involvement in the difficult task of making good decisions and introducing improved practices must be at the heart of school leadership. There is no simple short cut (p. 25).

Five Key Ideas

B.1. Activity: Using Key Ideas to "Move to the Right"

1. Assess where you are in relation to these key ideas from the research. Add additional key ideas relevant to your context.

2. How do these key ideas support the indicators of practice in the competency? Revisit your final Practice Profile reflection from the end of the first session.

3. How can you move your practice at least one row to the right?

Key Ideas from Research	Not happening yet	Some instances of this happening in a few places	Many instances of this happening in various contexts throughout the system	Embedded in every context throughout the system
Team learning is vital to promote continuous learning within and across organizational levels.				
Provide a wide range of intensive opportunities for teachers and school-level leaders to develop the capacities they need to accomplish the district's student-learning agenda.				
Provide increased opportunities for administrators to collaborate on common work. Without collaboration, principals' collective sense of efficacy is unlikely to increase. ...as with teachers, collaboration is associated with increased job satisfaction and motivation.				
Effective leadership strengthens professional community, a special environment within which teachers work together to improve their practice and improve student learning.				
Professional community... is a strong predictor of instructional practices that are strongly associated with student achievement. Increasing teachers' involvement in the difficult task of making good decisions and introducing improved practices must be at the heart of school				

Key Ideas from Research	Not happening yet	Some instances of this happening in a few places	Many instances of this happening in various contexts throughout the system	Embedded in every context throughout the system
leadership.				

B.2 System Structures and Expectations

Research Excerpt: Three Practices

An increasing number of research studies illustrate how persistent senior leader commitment to the development of instructional leadership is impacting leadership and teaching quality (Anderson & Louis, 2012; Barber et al., 2010; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2012; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Robinson, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008; Togneri & Anderson, 2003; Wahlstrom, 2012).

Research in Alberta districts (Brandon, Hanna & Negropontes, 2015; Brandon, Hollweck, Donlevy, 2018; Whalen, Maguire, 2003), illustrates how superintendency teams can positively impact student success through three distinguishing practices:

1. Communicating and enacting a clear vision focused on teaching and learning that is forward looking and coherent throughout the system.
2. Expecting and supporting shared instructional leadership at the both jurisdiction and school levels.
3. Employing ongoing evidence informed approaches to professional learning for leaders and teachers.

Research Excerpt: Shared Responsibility

Anderson and Louis (2012) underscore the benefits of focusing central office efforts on teaching and learning and the communication of a strong belief in the capacity of teachers and principals to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and in the district's capacity to develop the organizational conditions needed for that to happen (high collective efficacy). System and school-based educational leaders indirectly impact student learning through their actions in supporting and guiding teachers to ensure quality teaching (Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Robinson, 2011; Robinson et al., 2008).

Wahlstrom (2012) stresses that "Principals need to be held accountable for taking actions that are known to have direct effects on the quality of teaching and learning in their schools" (p. 84). This involves more than expecting principals to have a vision (creating *instructional ethos*) and "popping in" or "being visible". She claims that district leaders can play a significant role by expecting principals to regularly undertake *instructional actions* by being "very intentional about each classroom visit and conversation, with the explicit purpose of engaging with teachers about well-defined instructional ideas" (p. 83).

In Robinson's conception, the "principal is an instructional leader and a leader of instructional leaders" through shared instructional leadership (2011, p. 82). Shared instructional leadership is manifested through engagement in professional learning communities where open-to-learning conversations and evidence-informed dialogue on multiple matters related to curriculum and instruction occur. Such efforts build relational trust, enable the application of relevant knowledge, and help solve complex problems enroute to establishing high performing schools (Robinson, 2011. p. 38).

Evidence supporting the importance of professional learning was claimed in 21 of the 33 studies reported in Leithwood's (2008, 2010b) review. This was the largest number of studies reporting evidence about any of the 12 dimensions Leithwood identified as characteristic of high-performing districts. Several studies support the benefits of evidence based professional learning (Brandon, Hanna, & Negropontes, 2015; Campbell, 2017; Firestone & Riehl, 2005; Pritchard & Marshall, 2002; Timperley, 2011; Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). An important component of this research is the assertion that when leaders publicly engage in ongoing learning with other educators, the impact is magnified.

B.2 Activity: Three Roles

1. Use a three-step interview to apply the three questions below to a shared story of practice or to the example of high expectations for student success.
   a. What is the role of the superintendent in ensuring the three distinguishing practices?
   b. What is the role of other system leaders?
   c. What is the role of the principal?
2. Interview a partner, using the three questions in relation to the personal story or scenario.
3. Switch roles and repeat the process.
4. Combine with another partner group into groups of four and share your perspectives and insights.

Research Excerpt: An Example of High Expectations

The suggestion that senior district leaders, far removed from daily contact with students, and typically embroiled in the management of complex organizational, legal, financial, and political issues should somehow be "instructional leaders" seems unrealistic. Yet research by Skrla and her associates (Skrla et al., 2000; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001; Koschoreck, 2001) in four Texas districts that dramatically improved the achievement of their disadvantaged and minority students, illustrates this as a real possibility.

Faced with a mandate from the state to improve the achievement of disadvantaged children in their districts, the role played by superintendents gradually shifted from acting as organizational managers to being instructional leaders. As the four districts changed their beliefs about equitable achievement for all children, and as they developed practices consistent with this belief, there was a profound change in the role definition of other educators in the districts as well. The description of the instructional leadership of the superintendent included: "keep[ing] both the community and the district staff focused on learning as the primary activity and goal of the school district. The superintendent must literally sell it to the community. He or she must also continually sell it the district staff" (Skrla et al., 2000, p. 33).

In one of these districts, the superintendent also created senior administrative positions responsible for instruction, who, along with district support staff worked directly with principals on instructional matters. Superintendents were also prompted to look for exemplars of districts, schools, and classrooms in which instruction was more successful for previously low-achieving, disadvantaged children. The new role of the central office was to support principals and teachers in their efforts to improve instruction and ensure high levels of learning for all students. The role of the school boards in these four districts included clarifying for

their superintendents the expectation that changes in student performance were anticipated, and then monitoring progress toward improvements in students' results.

B.2 Reflection Question

1. What is in place within your school authority to ensure high expectations are reflected in the learning culture throughout your system?

B.3 Collective Instructional Leadership

Research Excerpt

Fullan (2014) describes *overall instructional leadership* as the wider range of purposefully employed leadership practices designed to positively impact teaching and learning in schools (Author et al., 2015, Robinson, 2011, Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Robinson's (2011, p. 16) model of leadership outlines five dimensions of leadership that describe what leaders do:

1. establishing goals and expectations
2. resourcing strategically
3. ensuring quality teaching
4. leading teacher learning and development
5. ensuring a safe and orderly learning environment.

Robinson (2011) then identifies the following three capabilities that leaders must acquire to enable the five dimensions to work:

1. applying relevant knowledge
2. solving complex problems
3. building relational trust

The key aspect of each of these conceptions of instructional leadership points to the importance of all leadership practice being focused on improved instructional practice to optimize learning for all students.

The following quotation indicates that district leadership has a significant role to play in supporting the advancement of school-level instructional leadership:

> *The gap between how principals spend their time and what they are being encouraged to do has persisted for at least a half century. By now it should be obvious that structural changes in the work of school leaders are a pre-condition for the emergence of this significant change: cajoling, demanding, advocating, explaining, and wishful thinking— typical strategies used to date—just will not do it (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood and Anderson, 2010, p. 1).*

B.3 Activity: Leadership Impact on Learning: Viviane Robinson

Student Centred Leadership	Your notes https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rB7wP8WJZeU
Here's What What are the main messages from the video?	
So What/Now What? Considerations for applying this information to your districts work?	

B.4 Creating and Nurturing Conditions for Effective Instructional Leadership

B.4 Activity: Four A's of an Instructional Leadership Example

After viewing the video "Our Digital Journey: William G. Davis Sr. Public School," complete the Four A's Chart to summarize the lead learner's actions. https://michaelfullan.ca/ontario-wg-davis/

Assumptions	Agreements
What assumptions can you make about the work the principal has done prior to the video?	What competencies did the principal display as a lead learner?
Arguments	**Actions**
Was there anything you would have done differently?	What are the next steps for the principal as lead learner?

CASS College of Alberta School Superintendents

Research-Based Framework: Coherence Making

Coherence is "…a shared depth of understanding about the purpose and nature of the work in the minds and actions individual and especially collectively."

Coherence: The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts, and Systems by Michael Fullan and Joanne Quinn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, www.corwin.com

Coherence: The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts and Systems Michael Fullan and Joanne Quinn: Ontario Principals' Council and Corwin 2016	Moving From: Current State for Your Context	Moving Toward: Ideal State for Your Context
Focusing Direction: "…establish a focused direction that engages everyone with shared moral purpose, a small number of goals, a clear strategy for achieving them and change leadership that mobilizes action." (p. 48)		
Cultivating Collaborative Cultures: "A dynamic force that uses relationships and shared expertise to turn complexities and fragmentation into a focused, coherent force for change." (p. 48)		
Deepening Learning: "We must shift to a deeper understanding of the process of learning and how we can influence it. This requires knowledge-building partnerships for everyone engaged."		

Coherence: The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts and Systems Michael Fullan and Joanne Quinn: Ontario Principals' Council and Corwin 2016	Moving From: Current State for Your Context	Moving Toward: Ideal State for Your Context
Securing Accountability: "Internal accountability occurs when individuals and groups willingly take on personal, professional and collective responsibility for continuous improvement and success for all students." (p. 110) Internal accountability precedes and supports external accountability.		
BASED ON:		
Leadership: "Leaders influence the group, but they also learn from it. Joint learning is what happens in effective change processes." (p. 138) "…Key attribute of leaders…balancing innovation with implementation" (p. 127)		

Coherence: the Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Systems and Districts *Fullan & Quinn, 2015,Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin via Corwin with links to infographics and other resources or Michael Fullan @ http://www.michaelfullan.ca/

The Taking Action Guide for Building Coherence in Schools, Districts and Systems, Corwin 2016

New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) www.NPDL.global

B.4 Reflection Questions

1. Which of the coherence making conditions in Fullen and Quinn's framework has the biggest impact on the development of quality school leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning?

2. How do you know?

3. To what extent is coherence reflected in your school authority's education plan?

SESSION C

Sustaining a Collaborative and Coherent Learning Organization

Thursday 8:30 am - 11:30 am

C.1 Supporting Leadership and Teacher Growth

Research Excerpt One: Supervision

One important feature of instructional leadership is adopting a research-based image of *supervision as varied, informed instructional support* synthesized from both the seminal and the more recent teacher supervision literature. Component one is the idea that teacher supervision should be *varied.* Both seminal and current literature support the contention that supervision should differentiate according to the pedagogic styles, developmental stages and learning needs evident in the community of professional practice (Brandon, Saar, & Friesen, 2016; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2017; Glatthorn, 1984, 1997; Le Fevre & Robinson, 2015; Marshall, 2013; Ozyildirim, & Bilgin Aksu, 2017, Pajak, 2003; Robinson, 2011; Timperley, 2011; Zepeda, 2017).

The second main idea is that supervision should be *informed* by evidence gathered from multiple sources – classroom observations, pedagogic dialogue, artifacts – to both inform supervisors about instruction and at the same time form the basis for deepening instructional leadership practice (Brandon, Saar, & Friesen, 2016; Glatthorn, 1984, 1997; Marshall, 2013; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011; Pajak, 2003, Robinson, 2011; Timperley, 2011).

The third key idea of *supervision as varied, informed instructional support* is that the focus of supervision should be on *instructional support* that seeks to improve learning, teaching and shared instructional leadership. The seminal study conducted by Blase and Blase (1998) reported the now widely held view that "the facilitation of learning and growth should be the number one responsibility of an educational leader" (p. 14). This consensus on the purpose of supervision is well supported in the literature (Blase, & Blase, 1998, 2000; Author, 2006, 2008; Author, Saar, & Friesen, 2016; Glickman, Gordon, & Gordon, 2017; Ozyildirim, & Bilgin Aksu, 2017; Pajak, 2003; Robinson, 2011; Sullivan & Glanz, 2013; Timperley, 2011; Willam, 2016; Zepeda, 2017). Zepeda's (2017) instructional supervision model indicates that teachers should be given opportunities to transfer information and to construct deeper understanding of their own practices within a capacity-building learning community. Such supervision is a reciprocal process that respects the differing developmental learning needs of novices and veterans.

Research Excerpt Two: Leaders' Practices

Le Fevre and Robinson (2015) argued that if "increased instructional leadership is to make a difference to student outcomes, leaders' practices need to be informed by defensible and evidence-based understandings

of how to improve teaching and learning" (p. 60). Engaging teachers in critical, evidence based, and reflective conversations about their practice helps teachers to generate insights to formulate actions along an improvement continuum. In this manner, principals work with teachers to support changes in practice (Robinson, 2011, p. 38). The data collected and interpreted together can help the teacher reflect and move student learning forward.

C.1 Reflection Questions

1. Consider the following reflections:

   Supervision and evaluation are varied. Consider the ways in which supervision is tailored to individual learning needs. Consider the ways in which evaluation is tailored to individual learning needs.

   Supervision and evaluation are informed by evidence gathered from multiple sources – classroom observations, pedagogic dialogue, artifacts – to inform supervisors about instruction and, at the same time, form the basis for deepening instructional leadership practice. Consider they ways in which multiple sources of evidence are used in supervision. Consider the ways in which multiple sources of evidence are used in evaluation.

   The focus of supervision should be on *instructional support* that seeks to improve learning, teaching and shared instructional leadership. Consider the ways in which supervision in your school authority reflects the widely held view that "the facilitation of learning and growth should be the number one responsibility of an educational leader" (Blasé & Blasé, 1998, 2000, p. 14). Consider how the instructional supervision model in your school authority provides teachers with opportunities to transfer information and to construct deeper understanding of their own practices within a capacity-building learning community.

2. As you reflect on current practices for supervision and evaluation in relation to this competency, might something need to change?

3. What capacity do you and others on the system leadership team require to offer effective supervision and evaluation that best models the expectations of this competency?

C.2 Challenges of Instructional Leadership

Example: Analyzing Capacity

Principal workload has been identified as a concern. Principals expressed concerns about the complexity of their work, the increased needs of students and parents in their schools, the amplified expectations for accountability and the resulting increased paperwork, and the lack of sufficient supports to allow them to be instructional leaders whose primary focus is leading learning.

C.2 Activity: 80% Problems/20% Conditions

What "problems," as defined by Lipton and Wellman, are raised by insight and reflection on the Leading Learning competency and indicators? What "conditions" affect your work?

80% Problems

These are issues . . .

- within our sphere of influence or control.
- that we want to spend time and resources on.
- that can be resolved.

20% Conditions

These are issues . . .

- over which we have no influence or control.
- that we do not have enough resources to change.
- that we do not want to change at this time.

Barth, R., Darnell, B., Lipton, LO. and Wellman, B. (2003) Guide for Instructional Leaders, Guide 1: An ASCD Action Tool.

Problems	Conditions

What might be some possible solutions to identified problems?

C.2 Reflection Questions

1. Given these problems/conditions, what should a superintendent do to support the responsibilities of each of the following individuals and teams in moderating these challenges and in nurturing a learning culture?
   - System leaders
   - The principal
   - School leadership teams

2. What professional learning can the superintendent facilitate to lead the learning for each of the following individuals and teams?
   - System leaders
   - The principal
   - School leadership teams

C.3 Ensuring Optimum Learning

Research Excerpt One: Establishes and sustains a learning culture…

Research from Robert Kaplan and David Norton (2005) from Harvard found that 95% of a company's employees are either unaware of or do not understand its strategy. In PLC lite schools and districts, that percentage of educators who don't know or are unclear about the PLC strategy can't be too far off. This feeling of not being sure of the direction or expectations quickly leads to unproductive team meetings and frustrated individuals.

Therefore, it is critical that the leadership team critically reflect upon their road map or strategic plan and avoid "detours" to success by addressing the following three fundamental questions:

Detour #1: Does a document exist that succinctly explains the key benchmarks for professional learning teams and timelines?

Tip #1: Leadership teams should start with a one-page road map that defines what it means to be committed to the three big ideas of the PLC process: focus on learning, build a collaborative culture, and focus on results. This road map simply guides each team on the sort of work that should be taking place continuously and avoids confusion.

Detour #2: Do struggling teams have a sense of the first, second, and third action steps?

Tip #2: Sometimes it is helpful to have staff members refer to a basic teaming cycle to avoid paralysis by analysis. Start by establishing a simple cycle any struggling team can follow. For example, 1) determine the specific learning targets, 2) develop a common formative assessment to support learning, 3) analyze the results to determine if progress is being made and if the learning is heading in the right direction and 4) develop timely interventions and adjustments to ensure learning designs and activities are in fact having the intended impacts. While a true PLC is not a checklist, struggling teams sometimes need extra guidance in taking the first and second steps of the journey.

Detour #3: Do teams regularly receive feedback on their progress?

Tip #3: Leadership teams need to ensure that they regularly set up opportunities for each team to receive feedback, celebrate successes, and discuss challenges. Professional Learning Communities are one such opportunity. Each team should have an opportunity to present on different components of the road map or action steps that have been established. In other words, don't just state that a "team must collaborate." Instead, ask teams to produce a common unit guide or a grade-level assessment, or some other type of learning artifact and give timely feedback.

Research Excerpt Two: Promotes ongoing critical reflection on practice…

Persistent senior leader commitment to *scaffolding overall instructional leadership* is becoming more widely evident in Alberta (Brandon et al., 2015; Brandon et al., 2017). Increasingly, leaders at a variety of levels are

working to improve instructional leadership practices in what Wahlstrom (2012) found to be two complementary categories: *Instructional Ethos* and *Instructional Actions*. These leaders are working broadly to build professional community to generate benefit through the establishment of school and jurisdiction cultures that support continual professional learning. At the same time, they are working to enhance school leader capacity to supportively engage with individual teachers to promote professional growth in classroom settings. Such efforts align with a growing research base that provides direction about how to do this important work well (Anderson & Louis, 2012; Barber, Whelan, & Clark, 2010; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2012; Robinson, 2011; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008, Wahlstrom, 2012).

Considerable evidence supports the idea that instructional leadership is more effective when it is shared among teachers and school leaders (Day et al., 2011; Hallam, Smith, Hite, Hite, & Wilcox, 2015; Heck, & Hallinger, 2014; Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010a, 2010b; Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014; Tschannen-Moran, 2016; Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010; Willam, 2016). Louis and Wahlstrom (2012) claimed "leadership practices targeted directly at improving instruction have significant effects on teachers' working relationships and indirectly on student achievement" and that "when principals and teachers share leadership, teachers' working relationships are stronger and student achievement is higher" (p. 25). The effect occurs "largely because effective leadership strengthens professional community, a special environment within which teachers work together to improve their practice and improve student learning" (p. 25).

Research Excerpt Three: Shared responsibility for student success

John Hattie points out the link between collaborative expertise and student growth.

> *"So, my claim is that the greatest influence on student progression in learning is having highly expert, inspired and passionate teachers and school leaders working together to maximize the effect of their teaching on all students in their care. There is a major role for school leaders: to harness the expertise in their schools and to lead successful transformations. There is also a role for the system: to provide the support, time and resources for this to happen. Putting all three of these (teachers, leaders, system) together gets at the heart of collaborative expertise."*

Hattie, J. (2015) *What Works Best in Education: The Politics of Collaborative Expertise*. London: Pearson: p. 2.

Research Excerpt Four: Continuous improvement

The superintendent understands that principals must lead the learning of staff, of their "class" (Timperley, 2011). They must know how to build a learning-driven school culture, establish effective professional learning communities, and learn how to deal with those who are resistant to ongoing learning (Katz & Dack, 2013). Collaborative Learning Communities (CLCs) were identified as a strong practice for promoting teacher collaboration and learning through the practice of evidence informed conversations. As a result, all principals were directed to establish CLCs in their schools and guidelines for effective CLCs were provided. Some schools took the guidelines and established effective CLCs while others renamed existing meetings as CLCs and maintained the status quo.

In *Learning by Doing* (2010), DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many state, "In every instance of effective system wide implementation of the [collaborative] learning community process we have witnessed, central office leaders visibly modeled the commitment to learning for all students…. They created structures and processes to help principals and teachers function as collaborative teams" (p. 211). The superintendent acknowledges that something needs to be done to sustain a collaborative and coherent learning organization.

As superintendent, you are continually asked for permission to provide funds for professional learning opportunities as well as authorization to attend conferences across the globe. You know that these are important learning opportunities but at the same time wonder how these experiences are promoting a cohesive learning model within the school authority. You are aware of Hargreaves' and Fullan's (2012) research that suggests that professional development has limited impact unless opportunities are provided for follow-through support for teachers working and learning in teams. Many principals and jurisdiction leaders report the desire for more ongoing and connected ways to develop instructional leadership capacity. The superintendent believes that developing instructional leadership through sustained, job embedded, and evidence-based approaches is considerably more impactful than attendance at conferences and one-shot presentations by headline speakers (Brandon et al. 2015).

C.3 Activity: Stop, Continue, Start

1. Review the four excerpts from research and revisit the chart examples of practice shared throughout the sessions that support each component of the Leading Learning competency:

    Chart 1 Establishes and sustains a learning culture in a school community…

    Chart 2 …that promotes ongoing critical reflection on practice…..

    Chart 3 …shared responsibility for student success….

    Chart 4 …and continuous improvement.

2. Based on your learning and the expectations of this competency and this module's learning outcomes, use the triple t-chart that follows to consider what might you:

    1. Stop doing?
    2. Continue doing?
    3. Start doing?

Stop doing….	Continue doing….	Start doing….

C.3 Reflection Questions

1. How would you know the impact of your actions? How do you know that what you have done has resulted in improved instructional practice and increased student success?

2. What opportunities might be created to enable school and other system leaders to collaborate and support one another? Consider the roles and responsibilities in supporting the ongoing professional learning of school leaders.

3. How does a school authority leverage all the learning opportunities being offered to ensure they reflect important aspects of job embeddedness that truly impact the practices of leaders and teachers towards creating optimum learning of all students?

SESSION D

Friday 8:30 – 11:30

D.1 Deepening Understanding and Applying the Learning

Based on your learning respond to these prompts

Here's What – identify a new idea, insight or learning you gained this week.	
So What? – What significance will your learning have in your work?	
Now What? – what actions will you take now? What questions do you still have?	

D.2 Competency Overviews and additional supports for implementation

Visit www.cassalberta.ca the professional learning component of the CASS.ab.ca website.

Key resources:
- Competency overviews (updated this fall based on your input) https://cassalberta.ca/professional-learning/ click on a competency to access the overview or visit the resources page to download a set. https://cassalberta.ca/resources/
- Planning for implementation planning templates and samples of CASS plans at: https://cassalberta.ca/planning-for-implementation/
- Conferences/modules include current learning opportunities as well as conference reading and resource materials https://cassalberta.ca/conferences-workshops/
- Research/resources page includes current resources with new materials coming this fall.
- Check out the new research summaries focused on developing leadership programs.

CASS Support for Implementation Professional Practice Standard
https://cassalberta.ca

Additional resources
Motion Leadership – Michael Fullan
Santiago Rincon-Gallardo

- Fullan and Rincon-Gallardo worked with CASS members focusing on supporting implementation of the professional practice standards. Based on practice in Alberta the content was   based Coherence: the Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Systems and Districts; * Fullan & Quinn, 2015,Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin via Corwin with links to infographics and other resources   or Michael Fullan @ http://www.michaelfullan.ca/

- Numerous handouts from CASS conferences are posted at https://michaelfullan.ca/handouts/

- Additional resources:

- New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL) www.NPDL.global

- One example of a template from The Taking Action Guide for Building Coherence in Schools, Districts and Systems, Corwin 2016

    resource supports competency learning specific to visionary leadership, leading learning and governance.

5. Coherence Framework Assessment Protocol

The Coherence Framework

Purpose

- Use the Coherence Framework Assessment Protocol to assess the degree of coherence in your school/district.

Coherence Framework Assessment Protocol

1. As a school or district team, review the Coherence Framework Assessment Protocol.

2. Provide evidence for the statements as an assessment of your school or district's degree of coherence.

Component		Evidence
Focusing Direction	• Shared purpose drives action. • A small number of goals tied to student learning drives decisions. • A clear strategy for achieving the goals is known by all. • Change knowledge is used to move the district forward.	
Cultivating Collaborative Cultures	• A growth mind-set underlies the culture. • Leaders model learning themselves and shape a culture of learning. • Collective capacity building is fostered above individual development. • Structures and processes support intentional collaborative work.	
Deepening Learning	• Learning goals are clear to everyone and drive instruction. • A set of effective pedagogical practices is known and used by all educators. • Robust processes, such as collaborative inquiry and examining student work, are used regularly to improve practice.	
Securing Accountability	• Educators take responsibility for continuously improving results. • Underperformance is an opportunity for growth, not blame. • External accountability is used transparently to benchmark progress.	

Appendices

Teacher Effectiveness Framework

Appendix Activity

References

Teacher Effectiveness Framework
TEF Principles
Principle 1: Teachers as Designers • *begins with thoughtful and intentional design of learning* • *engages students intellectually and academically*
Principle 2: Worthwhile Work • *worthy of their time and attention* • *personally relevant* • *connected to the world in which they live*
Principle 3: Assessment for Learning • *focused on improving student learning* • *guides teaching decisions and actions*
Principle 4: Learning Relationships • *teacher fosters interdependent relationships (students, teachers, work) that promote learning* • *teacher creates a strong culture around learning*
Principle 5: Teachers Improve Practice in the Company of Peers • *teaching is a scholarship*

Friesen, S. (2009). *What did you do in School Today? Teaching Effectiveness: A Framework and Rubric*. Toronto: Canadian Education Association.

Appendix Activity

Activity: Give One, Get One Scenarios

1. As you consider each scenario, think about how you establish and sustain a learning culture that promotes ongoing critical reflection on practice, shared responsibility for student success, and a commitment to continuous improvement.
   a. Identify the issue in a single statement.
   b. Describe the part that stakeholders play in the solution, considering:
      i. Superintendent
      ii. System Leaders
      iii. Principals
      iv. Assistant Principals
      v. Middle level leaders within schools
      vi. Teachers?
   c. What might the superintendent do to ensure that conditions are in place to support all staff?
2. Share one insight or example regarding the scenario(s) with a partner; get one insight or example from the partner.

Scenario 1:

Although the superintendent is new to the school authority, he is familiar with the research which asserts, "leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning" (Leithwood and Louis, 2012, p. 3). However, in monthly meetings with principals, it has become evident that there is limited consistency in leadership practice. There are discrepancies in the ways in which schools are managing assessment and reporting and there appears to be significant difference in the ways in which elementary, middle, and high schools are taking up the Programs of Studies. There also appears to be a considerable amount of tension between instructional leadership and management responsibilities within schools (Day, et al., 2001; Donaldson, Marnik, and Akerman, 2009; Grissom and Loeb, 2011; Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keer, 2011; Nohria, Joyce & Robertson, 2003; Purinton, 2012). Finally, there does not appear to be a consistent approach to leadership that sees principals and their leadership teams intentionally engaging with teachers about instruction.

Scenario 2:

The superintendent is new to the district. One of the things that drew the superintendent to the school authority was their focus on inclusive learning environments and their claims of being "safe, caring, and promoting of student learning and well-being". The authority's Three-Year Education Plan outlines the need to "know" each learner and develop learning environments that allow each student to succeed. The School Board Trustees, however, continue to receive complaints from parents that their child's needs are not being met in their school. They also hear from school-based staff who express concerns about their ability to meet

student needs. Many cite large class sizes and increasing classroom complexity as significant problems. Teachers are also concerned that they don't have the capacity to meet the social, emotional, and learning needs of each of the students they serve. Principals tell trustees that they struggle to know how to provide the supports their teachers need given limited time and budgets. Trustees want the complaints to stop and have directed the superintendent to find a way to improve the situation.

Scenario 3:

Provincially, mathematics results are declining on both Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma exams. The district's scores are also showing a decline and several parents and the media are calling for a movement back to the basics because teachers are not teaching mathematics as outlined in the Program of Studies. Teachers are offended by the criticism and feel deflated by the fact that no matter how hard they work it is never enough to satisfy parents and other stakeholders. Principals acknowledge the downward trend is an issue but are not sure what to do about it. The superintendent is familiar with the research that suggests that one of the biggest barriers to improving learning and achievement is that many school leaders do not feel competent to talk to teachers about instruction because they don't feel knowledgeable (Elmore, 2010). The superintendent wonders if this may be the case currently with mathematics. Trustees call on the superintendent to develop a strategy that will increase student achievement in mathematics…quickly.

Reflection Questions

1. What evidence can you provide regarding the coherence of our organizational professional learning plan?
2. What conditions are in place for the ongoing learning of teachers, middle-level leaders, school leaders, and system leaders?
3. What are our potential next steps?

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