CASS College of Alberta School Superintendents

# Visionary Leadership Module
# PARTICIPANT GUIDE

## Visionary Leadership Competency

A superintendent engages with the school community in implementing a vision of a preferred future for student success, based on common values and beliefs.

## Visionary Leadership Module Outcomes

1. Engage the school community in contributing to and understanding the vision, mission and other pertinent organizational statements.
2. Ensure that organizational statements are expressed in the school authorities' education plan and is responsive to the ongoing review of the districts achievements, meets all requirements identified in provincial legislation, incorporates the school communities' perspective and is informed by research on effective learning.

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Dr. Barb Brown, Dr. Sharon Friesen and Dr. Lori Pamplin contributed to the design of the Visionary Leadership Module.

Thank you to Gary Strother, who will be facilitating the Visionary Leadership Professional Learning Module at the 2018 CASS / ASBOA Summer Learning Conference.

# 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

**Wednesday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Wednesday**<br>9:15-12<br>Session A | Intro to Module Learning, Research Overview, Alberta Stories of Practice - CCSD, Practice and Research Review |
| 1-3:30<br>Session B | Organizational statements, Applying the research/public participation - CBE and CCSD |
| **Thursday**<br>8:30 - 11:30<br>Session C | Community Engagement Strategies, Research, AERR and 3 Year plan - using data to measure impact of Organizational statements |
| **Friday**<br>8:30 - 9:30<br>Session D | Action planning/Lessons Learned: Competency Overview, Practice Profile, |
| 10:00 - 11:30 | OPTION to meet with your district team or stay with cohort for District Planning |

## Terms

**"Standard"**
A standard (Small S) is a policy that identifies the requirements for the competent professional practice of members of a profession. In turn, Alberta's "Capital S" Standards adopted by Ministerial Order are authorized under Section 39(1) (f) of the *School Act.* This makes them part of the legislative framework under the *School Act*.

Within each of the TQS, LQS and SLQS "Standard" polices is the "standard" statement. This standard is the clear expression of the outcome of competent practice.

**"competency"** means an interrelated set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed over time and drawn upon and applied to a particular leadership context in order to support quality leadership, teaching

and optimum learning as required by the Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard; e.g., Visionary Leadership

**"Descriptor of the competency"** The sentence that describes the competency. A superintendent engages with the school community in implementing a vision of a preferred future for student success, based on common values and beliefs.

**"indicators"** means actions that are likely to lead to the achievement of the competency and which, together with the competency, are measurable and observable;

## CASS Terms

**Competency Overview** – "Two pager" providing awareness of the competency based on 4 frames: Legal and Key References, Research, Practice in Alberta, Resources

**Learning Modules** - are designed to deepen and apply system leader's professional practice with opportunities to examine Alberta context through a community of inquiry approach based on research.

**Braid –** Image CASS developed to represent that competencies are interrelated and interdependent.

## Practice Profile https://cassalberta.ca/resources/

| **Visionary Leadership**<br>A superintendent engages with the school community in implementing a vision of a preferred future for student success, based on common values and beliefs. | |
|---|---|
| **Indicators** | **Evidence in Practice** |
| Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as:<br>(a) ensuring that the vision is informed by research on effective learning, teaching and leadership;<br>(b) promoting innovation and continuous improvement by building structures and developing strategies to support staff in professional collaboration;<br>(c) promoting in the school community a common understanding of and support for the school authority's goals, priorities, and strategic initiatives; and<br>(d) ensuring that the vision expressed in the school authority's education plan is responsive to the ongoing review of the school authority's achievements, meets all requirements identified in provincial legislation, and incorporates the school community's perspectives.<br>• | •<br>**Areas for Growth**<br>• |

# A.1 What does the research say?

## Words, Phrases, Sentences

1. Read this research summary and use three separate index cards to record one key word (green card), one phrase (pink card), one sentence (blue card). Each card should represent an important idea or concept for you.
2. Place your cards by category on the table (all of the one-word statements, all phrases, all sentences.) Group similar index cards with your table mates.
3. How might you compare and contrast your individual choices?

Leithwood (2010) argues high performing school authorities (1) develop a widely shared set of beliefs and vision about student achievement; and (2) include in this vision the concepts of "closing the gap" as well as "raising the bar" (p. 249-250). Enacting a widely shared sense of educational purpose through a sharply focused vision is central to instructional improvements in learning-centered environments (Robinson, 2011; Zhao, 2012). Research carried out in different school district contexts demonstrates that visionary leadership practices aimed at creating a widely shared sense of purpose that focuses jurisdiction energy and efforts on teaching and learning can have a significantly positive impact on all learners (see Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Leithwood & Azah, 2017; Leithwood & McCullough, 2016; Louis, Leithwood, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2010; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008, etc.). Likewise, research in Alberta districts demonstrate superintendents and superintendency teams can positively impact student success through distinguishing characteristics, such as communicating and enacting a clear vision focused on teaching and learning that is forward looking and coherent throughout the system (Brandon, Hanna & Negropontes, 2015; Maguire, 2003).

Articulating a coherent vision that is responsive to the community context is a hallmark in school improvement (Brandon, Hanna, Negropontes, 2015; Maguire, 2003; Murphy & Torre, 2015). Developing a widely shared vision about achievement can impact student learning and student well-being (Leithwood & Azah, 2017; Leithwood & McCullough, 2016; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). One of the critical features defining strong districts is a "broadly shared mission, vision and goals founded on ambitious images of the educated person" (Leithwood, 2013, p. 19). Highly successful school authorities have directional vision with a limited number of defined priorities that are clearly articulated, collaboratively developed, continuously revisited and effectively communicated. Concentrating on a few clear, research-informed and widely understood priorities on teaching and learning can lead to powerful results for the learning and well-being of all children. In contrast, an unclear vision or static vision can lead to a lack of coherence (Daniels, Friesen, Jacobsen & Varnhagen, 2012; Fullan & Quinn, 2016) and limit school community understanding and support for the school authority's goals, priorities, and strategic initiatives. Strong visions that encompass contemporary learning and school improvement need to be shared widely and continually revisited (CASS, 2017; Daniels et al., 2012; Friesen & Lock, 2010; Fullan & Langworthy, 2014).

High-performing districts contribute to the achievement and well-being of students (Leithwood & McCullough, 2016).

Strong district leaders:

- Ensure that a transparent visioning/direction-setting process is carried out

- Consult extensively about district directions as part of the process
- Spend sufficient time to ensure that the mission, vision and goals (directions) of the system are widely known, understood and shared by all members of their organizations.
- Articulate, demonstrate and model the system's goals, priorities, and values to staffs when visiting schools
- Embed district directions in improvement plans, principal meetings and other leader-initiated interactions.

In Maguire's (2003) study of four consistently improving Albert districts, the following distinguishing characteristics of district practices were identified:

- Vision statements were more sharply focused on student learning and more widely promulgated and internalized at all levels
- More links with community partners and agencies capable of supporting students.
- A collective culture in which school administrators and teachers took pride in their district because they shared in its planning, decision-making and achievements.
- The determination to measure schools against district-level expectations, not the parochial yardsticks of individual principals or teachers.
- Greater emphasis on improving the understanding and use of assessment data among school staff.
- Successful implementation of a curriculum-based, collaboratively developed and instruction-embedded model of staff development

## A.2 Practice and Research

CALGARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

After hearing the CCSD Story…

1. Reflect on your tables key word (green), one phrase (pink) and one sentence (blue). (Research Summary)
2. Did this school district story represent the research? Be prepared to share your findings with the large group. (e.g., the story reflected this research and not this research)
3. Does the district story share effective practices not reflected in the research summary you created? If not what key word, phrase or sentence would you add to your summary?

# SESSION B

**Wednesday 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm**

## B.1 Video Learning

## Key Terminology in Alberta

What organizational statements does your district use? Do the organizational statements represent "a preferred future for student success" as identified in the competency?

Alberta Education
Policy and Requirements for School Board Planning and Results Reporting
https://education.alberta.ca/media/3739843/school-board-guide-april-2018_final.pdf

Identifies legislation and definitions for school board planning and reporting.

From this foundational document, the following words are defined:

- **Goals:** Broad statements that look towards the long term and steer organizations in the direction of realizing their vision. Goals are typically expressed as desired conditions or aims.
- **Mission Statement:** A clear, concise description of an organization's overall purpose and role. It gives direction to the programs and services that the school authority provides for its students.
- **Outcomes:** Measurable statements of what an organization seeks to achieve. In broad terms, they answer the question, "What will this look like when we get to where we want to be?"
- **Strategies:** Strategies are actions that school authorities take to achieve goals and desired outcomes that meet the needs of all their students. They address local circumstances, issues, trends and opportunities.
- **Vision:** A vision describes a possible and desired future state for the organization, grounded in reality, which inspires and guides decisions and actions.

| **Start with Why – Simon Sinek** | **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPYeCltXpxw**<br><br>**Your notes** |
|---|---|
| What are main messages from video? | |
| So what/now what? Any considerations for applying this info to your districts work? | |

| **How to Write a Mission Statement that Doesn't Suck– Dan Heath** | **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJhG3HZ7b4o**<br><br>**Your notes** |
|---|---|
| What are main messages from video? | |
| So what/now what? Any considerations for applying this info to your districts work? | |

## B.2 What does the Research say?

### Review your Districts Organizational Statements

Organizational statements, such as vision, mission and goals are a common part of planning practices for school jurisdictions. Brandon, Hanna and Negropontes (2015) conducted a case study involving superintendents in six Alberta school jurisdictions. The researchers found that leadership practices in these highly successful school districts promoted a widely shared sense of vision and direction setting consisting of three dimensions.

1. Review the research (left hand column) and highlight those statements that initially resonate with your districts practice.
2. Confirm your initial reaction by identifying which organizational statement (vision, mission, goals, priorities) is coherent with the research. (right hand column)
3. Which "term" best describes your "why"?
4. How are you putting the organizational statements into practice ("living" "applying" "implementing")

| **Dimensions of Compelling School District Visions** (Brandon, Hanna & Negropontes, 2015 based on Leithwood, 2008) | **Assess your System Vision/Organizational Statements**<br>**Which statement is coherent with the research?**<br>**If not how might you adapt/enhance/adjust?** |
|---|---|
| **Focus on Student Learning**<br>a. The school system had developed a widely shared vision and beliefs about student learning and well-being in the 21st century that falls within the parameters set by the province<br>b. The vision includes a focus on nurturing student engagement and welfare.<br>c. The vision includes a focus on closing the achievement gap as well as raising the achievement bar<br>d. The school system's vision and beliefs for students are understood and shared by almost all staff | |

| **Dimensions of Compelling School District Visions** (Brandon, Hanna & Negropontes, 2015 based on Leithwood, 2008) | **Assess your System Vision/Organizational Statements Which statement is coherent with the research? If not how might you adapt/enhance/adjust?** |
|---|---|
| **Curriculum and Instruction**<br>a. The school system and its staff strongly support the efforts of schools to implement curricula that foster deep understandings of big ideas and to develop the basic competencies students need to acquire such understandings<br>b. Work effectively with schools to help provide all students with engaging forms of instruction<br>c. Work effectively with schools to help establish ambitious but realistic student performance standards<br>d. Work with schools to align curriculum, instruction, assessment and teaching resources in an extensive and ongoing manner<br>e. Include teachers in a majority of schools in the district's instructional improvement work and assist teacher in developing sophisticated understandings of powerful instruction for students | |

| **Dimensions of Compelling School District Visions** (Brandon, Hanna & Negropontes, 2015 based on Leithwood, 2008) | **Assess your System Vision/Organizational Statements**<br>**Which statement is coherent with the research?**<br>**If not how might you adapt/enhance/adjust?** |
|---|---|
| **Uses of Evidence**<br>a. The school system has an efficient information management system<br>b. Provides schools with relevant data and assists them in using data to improve performance<br>c. Creates collaborative structures and opportunities for the interpretation of data in schools, including the use of external expertise when needed<br>d. Uses appropriate data for accounting to stakeholders<br>e. Makes effective use of existing research to guide policy making and planning | |

This is an additional research summary that provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your own organizational statements. Consider doing this review with your district team when you return to work.

| Classifying Organizational Statements | |
|---|---|
| **Three classifications of mission statements emerged from content analysis of 480 school district mission statements (Schafft & Biddle, 2013):** | **Evidence of the three classifications and coherence from Your organizational statements:** |
| **School-society relationship** (mention of school-community ties, the local school district embedded within a global society, and the provision of education within the context of a changing world) | |
| **Student outcomes** (mention of academic outcomes, educational excellence, pursuit of high standards, student achievement, academic success, maximum potential, future success) | |
| **School environment** (academic rigor of the school district, mention of desire to provide high quality education, rigorous educational experiences, challenging towards academic excellence, school safety, supportive environment, accommodating individual differences) | |

| Student-Centred Leadership – Viviane Robinson | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rB7wP8WJZeU<br><br>Your notes |
|---|---|
| What are main messages from video? | |
| So what/now what? Any considerations for applying this info to your districts work? | |

# SESSION C

**Thursday 8:30 – 11:30**

**Engaging your community**
International Association of Public Participation
https://www.iap2.org/

## C.1 World Café

Overview of process http://www.theworldcafe.com/

- What are ways I can "apply" my vision/organizational statements?
- What evidence exists that the learning community is "living" the shared vision for all learners?
- What process is used to facilitate ongoing review of the shared vision by stakeholders?

## C.2 Annual Education Results Report and 3-Year Plan

Andrea Holowka
Superintendent, Instructional Services
Calgary Catholic School District
Phone: 403-500-2424
andrea.holowka@cssd.ab.ca

**Annual Education Results Report and 3 Year Plan: Using and Reporting School Jurisdiction Data**

**Benefits of Data-Informed Practice:**

- Gathering of data and housing this data in one place
- Embedding our organizations in data-informed practice
- Allows for measurement of continuous improvement and determination of goal attainment
- Incorporates stakeholder feedback and allows for assurance, transparency and accountability to community, government, and other stakeholders
- Allows for determination of future vision and priorities for the district, continued focus on **student success**

**Alberta Education Business Plan:**
Must be incorporated into jurisdictional reporting and planning document. Five outcomes are provided in the Business Plan for 2018-2021:

Outcome One: Alberta's students are successful
Outcome Two: Alberta's education system supports First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students' success
Outcome Three: Alberta's education system respects diversity and promotes inclusion
Outcome Four: Alberta has excellent teachers, and school and school authority leaders
Outcome Five: Alberta's education system is well governed and managed

Also included in the Business Plan are:

**Strategies** - generally linked to AB Ed's major initiatives (curriculum, First Nation, Metis and Inuit, inclusion, nutrition, integrated services, etc.)

**Performance Measures** - 2 sources:

1. Survey data from staff, students and parents
2. Student performance data - exam results as well as completion, drop out, Rutherford eligibility, post-secondary completion

**Fiscal Reporting**

Full plan can be found at: https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/cea65c12-a239-4bd9-8275-3ab54d84f5b3/resource/83da58a3-4ceb-45f4-a471-aad897f8b9e1/download/education.pdf

**Alberta Education's Reporting Requirements:**

- Requirements for jurisdictions are provided annually each spring, and are based on the Business Plan
- Slight changes every year (this year: outcomes for First Nation Metis and Inuit and Inclusion have slight changes, otherwise outcomes are similar to previous year)
- Reinforces delegation and accountability structure as well as related legislation and regulations
- Reports should reflect local needs and priorities within the context of provincial direction and framework

**Required Components:**

A = indicates requirements in the AERR
3 = indicates requirements in the 3YEP

- An Accountability Statement, signed by the board chair (A/3)
- The Accountability Pillar Overall Summary and FNMI Summary in colour, as provided by Alberta Education on the Extranet (A)
- Provincial Outcomes taken from the current business plan:
    - Results (A), Performance Measures, Targets and Strategies (3). For each outcome, include:
        - Five years of jurisdiction results (if available) (A)
        - Most recent result comparable to previous target (A)
        - The measures used to assess progress and achievement of the outcome (3)
        - Results and evaluations for the measures or reference to the overall summary page (3)
        - At least one strategy to address each outcome (3)
- Targets for each year of the plan for measures with an overall evaluation of "Issue" or "Concern" and a clearly identified strategy for improvement (3)
- Summary of Financial Results - summary of past year (A)
- Budget Summary - plan for upcoming year and key information (3)
- Summary of Facility and Capital Plans - include a web link to information on the jurisdiction's facility and capital plans (3)
- Parent Involvement Strategies (A/3)
- Timelines and Communication - posted on website by November 30 of each year (A/3)
- Class Size Report link (A)
- Whistleblower Protection - annual report of disclosures (A or 3)
- AERR Summary (separate from report, for stakeholder review)

**Optional Components:**

- Message from Board Chair
- Summary of accomplishments
- Foundation statements – vision, mission, principles and beliefs
- Profile of the jurisdiction
- Trends and issues
- Comparison of jurisdiction and provincial data
- Targets for measures that do not have an overall evaluation of "Issue" or "Concern"
- Commentary on results
- Future challenges
- Supplemental local measures to assess progress in achieving outcomes
- Collaborations with other school boards to enhance efficiencies, improve effectiveness and reduce costs

Complete requirements provided at: https://education.alberta.ca/media/3739843/school-board-guide-april-2018_final.pdf

**Goal Setting Considerations:**

- Use your district's priorities (set in collaboration with Board and Senior Administration)
- Know your context
  - History
  - AERR Data Analysis – What is working? What needs improvement? What is complete?
  - Stakeholder feedback
  - Student centered

**CCSD Process for Development of AERR and 3YEP:**

- In early spring, we start building a skeletal combined report with the results that we do have and goals we are planning for, based on district priorities
- Receive Business Plan and Reporting Requirements from government around April
- Continue building district plan and start building School Plans template
- The first portion of Accountability Pillar results is released to districts in May (does not include PAT and Diploma results, which are received in the fall)
- In late August, let schools know that the school results are ready on extranet, inform schools of pertinent planning dates, reporting requirements and timelines
- Late Sept - schools can print off individual student profiles for parents
- Early Oct - multi-year reports available
- October 12-ish (can be delayed or early) - receive complete data
- Present embargoed data to board in private by prescribed date
- Listen to AB Ed technical briefing
- Province and jurisdictions then present data to media/public
- Compile three report drafts (Oct to Nov) to present to board and incorporate feedback
- Final version - post and send link to AB Ed by November 30, provide bound copies for Trustees, AB Ed, stakeholders

**School Reporting:**

- Each jurisdiction establishes requirements for the content, process and format for school annual reports
- CCSD - Data Leadership Plan:
  - Senior High Teachers and Admin – All gather on Oct PD day to review data and goals
  - Elementary and Junior High Principals - half day analysis session provided with use of PAT analysis tool
  - Optional AERR and 3YEP report writing sessions with support (for interested principals)
  - Timelines given to all principals (must be posted by mid-Nov and website link emailed)
  - Each school checked for compliance
  - School shares report with stakeholders (via school website, School Council)
  - Area teams review AERR/3YEPs with principals throughout the year

# 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?<br>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.

## 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

## 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.<br>• A small number of goals tied to student learning drives decisions.<br>• A clear strategy for achieving the goals is known by all.<br>• Change knowledge is used to move the district forward. | |
| **Cultivating Collaborative Cultures** | • A growth mind-set underlies the culture.<br>• Leaders model learning themselves and shape a culture of learning.<br>• Collective capacity building is fostered above individual development.<br>• Structures and processes support intentional collaborative work. | |
| **Deepening Learning** | • Learning goals are clear to everyone and drive instruction.<br>• A set of effective pedagogical practices is known and used by all educators.<br>• 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.<br>• Underperformance is an opportunity for growth, not blame.<br>• External accountability is used transparently to benchmark progress. | |

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