

## **DIMENSIONS OF PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP**

### **Introduction**

Since its inception, L.E.A.D.S. members have centred their attentions on notions related to professional educational leadership, on appropriate policy positions for their leadership roles and on professional development initiatives related to the challenges of delivering quality educational services to the people of Saskatchewan.

In 1990 the L.E.A.D.S. membership considered a foundational position paper that defined leadership as “the ability to both manage and create change, which results in the improvement of educational quality for Saskatchewan schools”.

In 1993 L.E.A.D.S. commissioned Dr. Keith Walker, under the direction of the Educational Leadership Committee to prepare a paper entitled **Educational Leadership for Saskatchewan**. The conceptual model presented in the paper bases education leadership on an unchanging core of four fundamental commitments: to common ethical principles (at the centre of the commitments); to the L.E.A.D.S. code of ethics; to professional conviction; and to the voice of personal conscience. The paper proposes a model of leadership based upon four key roles: leader of leaders, servant of leaders, professional advocate, and steward of educational resources. The four roles are grounded in an unchanging commitment to leadership integrity.

Walker (1993) stated, “It is properly assumed that periodic analysis and reflection-in-action relative to the notion of leadership will enable L.E.A.D.S. members to better understand their mission, values and goals; their present challenges and, hopefully, enhance the future advocacy, support and delivery of quality educational services. By intentionally encouraging the discussion of and the development of both individual and collective concepts of leadership, L.E.A.D.S. members will continue to mature (perfect) their practice of educational leadership. In short, leadership is not a casual nor an optional concern for L.E.A.D.S. members. The League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents is now mandated to deliver educational leadership that serves the greatest of public good.”

In 1999, the Educational Leadership Committee synthesized the key components of the conceptual leadership model and blended those with current practice and research to formulate the Dimensions of Professional Leadership. L.E.A.D.S. members should meet and be able to demonstrate competencies and skills that serve the greatest public good and sustain the high standards of educational leadership.

From this perspective the following eight Dimensions of Professional Leadership offer some descriptors that provide a focus for personal and professional growth planning as L.E.A.D.S. members evolve in their School Division leadership roles. These dimensions are not intended to prescribe a uniform model for School Division leadership. Rather, recognition of, and the inherent value in individual styles of leadership are acknowledged. So is the need for diversity in the execution of L.E.A.D.S. member leadership roles.

**Dimension 1**  
**Leadership and School Division Culture**

L.E.A.D.S. members are leaders in developing and shaping school division climate and culture. They work collaboratively to provide purpose and direction, formulate strategic plans and change efforts, set priorities and assume the role of professional advocates.

Some of the skills and abilities for L.E.A.D.S. members to fulfil this dimension of their work include expertise in:

1. formulating a written vision statement of future direction for the division
2. promoting academic excellence for staff and students
3. maintaining personal, physical and emotional wellness
4. empowering others to reach high levels of performance
5. building self-esteem in staff and students
6. modelling creative problem-solving
7. promoting and modelling risk-taking
8. respecting and encouraging diversity among people and programs
9. managing time effectively
10. conducting school and division climate assessments
11. exhibiting multicultural and ethnic understanding, and
12. promoting the value of understanding and celebrating school/community cultures.

**Dimension 2**  
**Policy and Governance**

L.E.A.D.S. members work with boards of education in developing school division policy. They work effectively in developing mutual expectations, working relationships, and strategies to meet provincial requirements and develop accounting standards.

Some of the skills and abilities for L.E.A.D.S. members to fulfil this dimension of their work include expertise in:

1. describing the principles and practices of public school governance in our democracy
2. describing, fostering and implementing effective working relationships for Director and Board processes in a collaborative manner
3. formulating a division policy for external and internal programs
4. ensuring congruency of local policy to provincial regulations and requirements
5. understanding and being able to work effectively in the division governance structure, and
6. ensuring compliance with board policy.

**Dimension 3**  
**Communications and Community Relations**

L.E.A.D.S. members communicate school division purpose and priorities to the community. They seek and respond to community feedback and use consensus-building and conflict mediation as required.

Some of the skills and abilities for L.E.A.D.S. members to fulfil this dimension of their work include expertise in:

1. articulating the division vision, mission, and priorities to the community
2. implementing an understanding of theory and skills needed to build community support for division goals and priorities
3. understanding and communicating with all cultural groups in the community
4. understanding and communicating with all groups with children at risk
5. developing formal and informal means to gain external perception of the school division by means of surveys, advisory groups, and personal contact
6. communicating and articulating a position supporting education
7. utilizing skills in listening, writing and speaking
8. recognizing the political context of the community environment
9. empowering the community to adopt an initiative for the welfare of students
10. understanding theories of conflict resolution and being able to use these skills in practice, and
11. understanding theories of consensus building and being able to use these skills in practice.

**Dimension 4**  
**Organizational Management**

L.E.A.D.S. members display an understanding of the school division as a system within the larger community context. They develop processes for gathering, analysing, and using data for decision making.

Some of the skills and abilities for L.E.A.D.S. members to fulfil this dimension of their work include expertise in:

1. employing processes for gathering, analysing, and using data for informed decision-making
2. utilizing problem-framing processes in decision-making when appropriate
3. employing the major components of quality management
4. developing, implementing, and monitoring change processes to building capacities to serve clients
5. utilizing legal concepts, regulations, and codes for school operations
6. developing a process for maintaining accurate fiscal reporting

7. acquiring, allocating, and managing human, material, and financial resources to effectively and accountably ensure successful student learning
8. using technological applications to enhance administration of business and support systems
9. understanding and being able to use financial forecasting, planning, and fiscal management systems
10. performing budget planning, management, and monitoring, and
11. formulating a plan to co-ordinate Integrated School-Linked with Social Services, Justice, Health, and other community agencies to support each child in the division.

### **Dimension 5** **Curriculum Actualization**

L.E.A.D.S. members provide leadership in all phases of curriculum actualization - design, evaluation, implementation and renewal.

Some of the skills and abilities for L.E.A.D.S. members to fulfil this dimension of their work include expertise in:

1. supporting core curriculum and delivery systems for diverse school communities
2. describing curriculum planning/future methods to anticipate occupational trends and their educational implications for lifelong learners
3. describing and implementing an understanding of instructional approaches, goals, objectives, and processes
4. describing a process to create developmentally appropriate curriculum and instructional practices for all children and adolescents
5. developing the effective use of a plan for technology in educational programming
6. conducting assessments of present, and future student learning needs
7. developing a process for staff input in continued and systematic renewal of the curriculum to ensure appropriate scope, sequence, and context, and
8. Modelling an understanding of curricular adaptation to ensure improved student performance and higher-order thinking.

### **Dimension 6** **Instructional Leadership and Accountability**

L.E.A.D.S. members demonstrate knowledge of instructional processes by using strategies that include research findings in all areas that impact on the classroom and student learning.

Some of the skills and abilities for L.E.A.D.S. members to fulfil this dimension of their work include expertise in:

1. developing, implementing, and monitoring change processes to improve student learning, adult development, and climates for learning

2. fostering understanding of the importance of motivation in the instructional process
3. describing cognitive development, learning theories and their importance as they relate to instruction
4. describing how to interpret and use testing/assessment results to improve education
5. encouraging the application of research findings in the use of instructional approaches, and
6. describing and knowing how to develop student achievement monitoring and reporting systems

### **Dimension 7** **Human Resources Management**

L.E.A.D.S. members recognize the importance of the human resource component of school divisions. They effect staff development, supervision and evaluation programs to improve the performance of all staff.

Some of the skills and abilities required for L.E.A.D.S. members to fulfil this dimension of their work include expertise in:

1. developing a plan to assess system and staff needs to identify areas for staff development
2. evaluating the effectiveness of comprehensive staff development programming to determine its effect on professional performance
3. providing for the use of system and staff evaluation data for personnel policy and decision-making
4. diagnosing and improving organizational health/morale
5. implementing personnel management strategies
6. understanding the skills needed to be able to work in a unionized/professional organization environment
7. assessing individual and institutional sources of stress and developing methods for reducing stress (e.g., counselling, exercise programs and diet), and
8. demonstrating knowledge of pupil personnel services and special programs

### **Dimension 8** **Values and Ethics of Leadership**

L.E.A.D.S. members, as school division leaders, understand and model appropriate value systems, ethics, and moral leadership. They know and act in accordance with the L.E.A.D.S. code of ethics.

Some of the skills and abilities required for L.E.A.D.S. members to fulfil this dimension of their work include expertise in:

1. exhibiting multicultural and ethnic understanding and sensitivity

2. understanding and articulating the evolving role of schooling in a democratic society
3. demonstrating ethical and personal integrity
4. modelling accepted moral and ethical standards in all interactions
5. describing and establishing a strategy to promote moral and ethical practices in each classroom and school
6. describing a strategy to ensure that diversity of religion, ethnicity, and way of life in the district are not violated.