



The Institute for
Education Leadership

L'Institut de leadership
en éducation

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Association des directions et
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Association des gestionnaires de
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Catholic Principals' Council of
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Council of Senior Business
Officials

Council of Ontario Directors of
Education

Ministry of Education

Ontario Catholic Supervisory
Officers' Association

Ontario Principals' Council

Ontario Public Supervisory
Officials Association

Module One: Strong Districts and Their Leadership

A Broadly Shared Mission, Vision and Goals Founded on Aspirational Images of the Educated Person

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A Broadly Shared Mission, Vision and Goals Founded on Aspirational Images of the Educated Person

Agenda

1. Objectives

As a result of participating in this module, district leaders will improve their capacities to:

- Help create a set of district directions that are appropriate for their local communities, consistent with provincial educational goals and both ambitious and inspiring to all stakeholder groups.
- Create wide support for, and understanding of, district's directions among staff, students, parents and other community stakeholders.
- Engage elected officials productively in the development and mobilization of district directions.

2. Overview of Relevant Research ([PowerPoint presentation](#))

3. Case Study: Surrey School District (British Columbia)

What can be learned from this case study about how to build A Broadly Shared Mission, Vision and Goals Founded on Aspirational Images of the Educated Person?

- Discussion of the written case study (in teams of four or five people)
- Debriefing of what was learned from the written case study by each team
- Synthesis of key findings

4. Case Study: Sudbury Catholic District School Board

What can be learned from this case study about how to build A Broadly Shared Mission, Vision and Goals Founded on Aspirational Images of the Educated Person?

- Discussion of written case study (in teams of four or five people)
- Debriefing of what was learned from the written case study by each team
- Synthesis of key findings

5. Case Study: Durham Catholic District School Board

What can be learned from this case study about how to build A Broadly Shared Mission, Vision and Goals Founded on Aspirational Images of the Educated Person?

- Discussion of the written case study (in teams of four or five people)
- Debriefing of what was learned from the written case study by each team
- Synthesis of key findings

6. Case Study: Algoma District School Board

What can be learned from this case study about how to build A Broadly Shared Mission, Vision and Goals Founded on Aspirational Images of the Educated Person?

- Discussion of the written case study (in teams of four or five people)
- Debriefing of what was learned from the written case study by each team
- Synthesis of key findings

7. Case Study: Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

What can be learned from this case study about how to build A Broadly Shared Mission, Vision and Goals Founded on Aspirational Images of the Educated Person?

- Discussion of the written case study (in teams of four or five people)
- Debriefing of what was learned from the written case study by each team
- Synthesis of key findings

8. Full group discussion

- Compare and contrast contexts for setting directions in the case study districts.
- How does the research summarized in 2 (above) relate to or inform these district cases?
- Key lessons: what to do for sure, what not to do at any cost?

Self-assessment

*In order to assist you with your learning, use a rating scale in response to the following:
(1 = not at all, 2 = a modest amount, 3 = significantly, 4 = a great deal)*

Please indicate the extent to which you feel that participation in this module has extended your ability, or increased your awareness of the need, to address the following challenges associated with the creation of a widely shared vision, mission and set of improvement goals for your school district:

1. Help create a set of district directions that are appropriate for their local communities, consistent with provincial educational goals and both ambitious and inspiring to all stakeholder groups;
2. Identify key goals for students that should be addressed by any district;
3. Create wide support for, and understanding of, district's directions among staff, students, parents and other community stakeholders;
4. Engage elected officials productively in the development and mobilization of district directions.

Samples of Relevant Research

- Berson, Y., Halevy, N., Shamir, B., Erez, M. (2015). Leading from different psychological distances: A construal-level perspective on vision communication, goal setting and follower motivation, *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26, 143-155.
- Bitter, C., Taylor, J., Zeiser, K., Rickles, J. (2014). Providing Opportunities for Deeper Learning: Findings From the Study of Deeper Learning: Opportunities and Outcomes, American Institute for Research (September)
- 21st Century Skills, Center for 21st century skills, Education Connections (355 Goshen Road, PO Box 909, Litchfield, CT 06759)
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2014). *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario* (April)
- Yettick, H., Brounstein, K. (2014). Benefits of 'Deeper Learning' Schools Highlighted in Studies: Students did better in and out of class, *Education Week* (September 30).
- Zeiser, K., Taylor, J., Rickles, J., and , M. (2014). Evidence of Deeper Learning Outcomes: Findings from the Study of Deeper Learning: Opportunities and Outcomes. *American Institute for Research* (September).

Appendix A: Surrey School District: Refreshing Our Vision and Refocusing Our Leadership Capacity: A Surrey Story

Guiding Questions

Surrey School District is in British Columbia and so functions in a context different in important respects from the contexts in which Ontario districts find themselves. This case was written by the Superintendent (CEO or Director) of Surrey in the early stages of his tenure.

British Columbia has introduced significant reforms in its' schools' and curriculum expectations are now focused on key competencies and big ideas.

1. How does Surrey School District's overall approach to clarifying its mission and vision compare to processes you have used in your district?

To ensure clarity in its' leadership approach, Surrey School District embraced the practice of executive coaching and the work of Marshall Goldsmith. Goldsmith has a six question executive coaching framework that calls for multiple meetings a year with direct reports focusing on alignment between the organization and between individuals; these meetings also invite individuals to identify what they need from the superintendent to support their own leadership.

2. What is your reaction to the use of this coaching model in Surrey School District and how does it compare to the strategies used in your system to ensure that there is clarity in leaders' work?

Surrey School District has adopted the use of electronic portfolios for each member of the senior team so that they can access responses from the system, and have a chance to provide further reflections and comments. The electronic portfolio also allows them to add to the portfolio anytime, anywhere.

3. What was your reaction to the use of technology in this way and what impact do you think this may have? Would there be some use for it in your own district?

CASE STUDY

Appendix B: Sudbury Catholic District School Board

Guiding Questions

Sudbury Catholic District School Board began to undertake a mission and vision process at same time a new Director of Education had been appointed. There had never been a plan in place prior to this.

1. *How does Sudbury Catholic District School Board's process compare to the experiences you have had in your district? Please discuss the similarities and differences to the current reality in your district.*

The role of the trustees in the strategic planning process and the multi-year planning process was highlighted in the Sudbury Catholic District School Board case.

2. *How do your district's experience in engaging trustees in the strategic planning process and the multi- year plan compare with Sudbury Catholic District School Board?*

The Sudbury Catholic District School Board case study was an example of having a strategic plan developed but also re-visiting and renewing it after a 5 year time period. This case also outlines lessons learned.

3. *What has been your experience with renewing your strategic plan and what lessons learned did you take from this experience?*

CASE STUDY

Appendix C: Durham Catholic District School Board

Guiding Questions

This case first describes what this district did to create a broadly shared mission, vision and goals, the focus of this module (it also provides an account of its approach to leadership development, the topic of Module 6). The context for the work on mission, vision and goals was a desire by the board to renew its focus at the time of the appointment of a new director of education and several new superintendents.

Durham Catholic engaged in an extensive consultation process prior to beginning their strategic planning process. From this themes emerged and a committee was struck.

1. *Using Durham's example, what are the merits and potential pitfalls with this level of consultation?*

After watching Durham Catholic's video it is evident that Durham Catholic took an innovative approach in the sharing of their strategic plan through face-to-face meetings and also through the effective use of technology.

2. *What experiences have you had in successfully engaging your system in the sharing and input towards a plan?*
3. *What new innovations have you adopted to ensure robust communication and sharing has occurred?*

CASE STUDY

Appendix D: Algoma District School Board

CASE STUDY

Appendix E: Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

CASE STUDY

Appendix F: Knowledge Building Principles and Knowledge Forum Supports: Making Principles Transparent

Knowledge Building Principles

Knowledge Forum Supports

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|--|---|
| 1. <i>Real Ideas and Authentic Problems.</i>
Students identify problems that arise from their efforts to understand the world and pursue sustained creative work surrounding them. | Notes and views serve as direct reflections of the core ideas and work of the community; problem statements and scaffolds highlight unsolved problems, promising ideas, and other high-level knowledge objects. |
| 2. <i>Improvable Ideas.</i> Ideas are treated as improvable rather than simply accepted or rejected; students work continuously to improve the explanatory power, coherence, and utility of ideas. | Note revision and scaffolding enhance theory development and discourse for idea improvement; background analytic tools and feedback support idea revision and the monitoring of coherence among ideas. |
| 3. <i>Epistemic Agency.</i> Students set goals, assess their work, engage in long-range | Analytic tools support reflection on individual and group progress; co- |

planning, monitor idea coherence, use contrasting ideas to spark and sustain knowledge advancement, and engage in high-level knowledge work normally left to the teacher.

construction and refinement of theories is supported by viewing ideas in multiple contexts; scaffolds encourage the use of epistemological terms (e.g., *conjecture*, *wonder*, *hypothesize*) and growth in conceptual content.

4. *Collective Responsibility for Community Knowledge.* All participants are legitimate contributors to community goals and take high-level responsibility for advancing the community's knowledge, not just for their individual learning.

Open, collaborative workspaces encourage the production and refinement of conceptual artifacts; reading, building on, and linking notes and views help ensure that these artifacts are informative and helpful for the community; social and semantic networks and other visualizations support reflection.

5. *Democratizing Knowledge.* All participants are empowered as legitimate contributors to the shared goals; all take pride in knowledge advances of the community. Diversity and divisional differences are viewed as strengths rather than as leading to separation along knowledge have/have-not lines.

Multimedia facilities provide a way into shared problem spaces for all participants; analytic tools provide feedback to allow participants to achieve greater evenness of contributions and distributed, collective engagement.

6. *Idea Diversity.* Knowledge advancement depends on the diversity of ideas, just as the success of an ecosystem depends on biodiversity. To

Linking and rise-above facilities bring different combinations of ideas together in different notes and views; semantic analysis and visualizations convey the

understand an idea is to understand the ideas that surround it, including those that stand in contrast to it.

diversity and connectedness of ideas.

7. *Rise Above.* Students work with diverse ideas in complex problem spaces; they transcend trivialities and oversimplifications and work toward more inclusive principles and higher level formulations of problems.

Rich intertextual and inter team notes and views support emergent goals and workspaces; revision, build-on, reference, and annotation further encourage participants to identify shared problems and gaps, interweave peer input, and advance understanding beyond the level of the most knowledgeable individual.

8. *Constructive Use of Authoritative Sources.* Participants access and critically evaluate authoritative sources and other information. They use these sources to support and refine their ideas, not just to find “the answer.”

9. *Pervasive Knowledge Building.* Knowledge Building is not confined to particular occasions or subjects but pervades mental life—in and out of school and across contexts.

10. *Symmetric Knowledge Advance.* Expertise is distributed within and between communities and team members, with knowledge exchange

and co-construction reflecting the understanding that “to give knowledge is to get knowledge.”

11. *Embedded and Transformative*

Assessment. Assessment is integral to Knowledge Building and helps to advance knowledge through identifying advances, problems, and gaps as work proceeds.

12. *Knowledge Building Discourse.*

Students engage in discursive practices that not only share but transform and advance knowledge, with problems progressively identified and addressed and new conceptualizations built.

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1. If your participation in this module has caused you to consider doing something different in your own system, please describe what that is.
 2. Please identify any changes or refinements that could be made to this module that would improve participants’ learning.
 3. How can this work best be used with others in the future?

The Institute for Education Leadership (IEL) invites you to share your responses to the above questions with the coordinator of the IEL at communication@education-leadership-ontario.ca.