

## **Charter School Principals School Leadership Professional Development**

### **Scenarios Relating to Leadership Dimension Four - Providing Instructional Leadership**

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#### ***4. Leadership Dimension - Providing Instructional Leadership***

The principal ensures that all students have ongoing access to quality teaching and learning opportunities to meet the provincial goals of education.

##### ***Descriptors***

The principal:

- a) demonstrates a sound understanding of current pedagogy and curriculum
- b) implements strategies for addressing documents of student achievement
- c) ensures that student assessment and evaluation practices throughout the school are fair, appropriate and balanced
- d) implements effective supervision and evaluation to ensure that all teachers consistently meet the Alberta Teaching Quality Standard
- e) ensures that appropriate pedagogy is utilized in response to various dimensions of student diversity
- f) ensures that students have access to appropriate programming based on their individual learning needs
- g) recognizes the potential of new and emerging technologies, and enables their meaningful integration in support of teaching and learning
- h) ensures that teachers and other staff communicate and collaborate with parents and community agencies, where appropriate, to support student learning
- i) supports the use of community resources to enhance student learning.

#### **Scenario One Question-As a school leader, how do you promote exemplary teaching and strive to ensure that all teachers are exemplary teachers?**

You are contacted by a colleague who has been recently appointed to a school administrative role and she comments, "I want to make a difference as a school leader and the research is clear, the most important aspect of the leader's role is to serve as an instructional leader. It's easy to say, but, I'm not sure what it looks like in reality. I know one thing, I need to get into the classrooms, but, I feel intimidated as a new principal and one of the youngest members on staff. I feel like an insurance salesman making cold calls. I don't think the teachers want to see me in their classrooms. We talk as a school staff about promoting exemplary teaching, but, the teachers are going to question what I know about exemplary teaching. Quite frankly, I'm not even sure what to look for or what to do when I go into a teacher's classroom. How would you respond?"

**Scenario Two-Big Question - As school leader, how do you engage students, staff and members of the school community in setting the direction for meeting the needs of students as modern-day learners and addressing the Alberta Education Framework for Student Learning (Competencies for Engaged Thinkers and Ethical Citizens with an Entrepreneurial Spirit?)**

As principal at your first organizational meeting prior to school opening, you pose the question, "what are we going to do as a school community to meet the modern-day needs of our students and address the expectations of the Alberta Education Student Learning Competencies?" You didn't anticipate the staff member response which included: "Our students are too caught up in technology. We don't want to have a bunch of techno-nerds. We need to teach students how to socialize and relate to people. We need rules about cell phones and laptops, iPods etc. because they're distractions to learning". These comments are contrasted by several teachers who observe, "we need to recognize that our students learn in different ways; they are multi-taskers and they know how to communicate and access information through technology so much better than we do. We need to embrace their expertise in technology and let them show us how learning and teaching can be enhanced through technology. We don't know as much about technology as they do but we know more about learning and teaching." A third group of teachers expresses the view that, "preparing students as 21st century learners is not all about technology; it is about developing our students as critical thinkers, problem solvers, team players collaborators and caring individuals who know how to build positive relationships with others". How do you deal with these contrasting viewpoints and bring your staff together in addressing the needs of the modern-day learner and the Alberta Education learner competencies?

**Scenario Three- Big question-How do you effectively deal with concerns in regard to the performance of teachers in your school and strive to ensure that a high level of competence among the members of the teaching staff is maintained?**

The principal, early in September receives a phone call from a parent who indicates that she is speaking on behalf of a significant number of parents who have a concern with the quality of teaching of a particular teacher. The parent comments, "I've been informed that it is the principal's responsibility to ensure that there are competent teachers in every classroom. What approach are you going to take in addressing the concerns which I have brought to your attention?" The same day, the president of the Students' Union indicates that he is representing the students' view that they should have an opportunity to provide feedback in regard to the quality of teaching they are experiencing. The student observes, "we have some outstanding teachers in our school and everyone appreciates what they do for us as students but there are some individuals who are barely adequate and we try to avoid being in their classes. We can tell you what kind of teachers we think you should be hiring. We want to be actively engaged in our

learning and we want it to be meaningful. Are you going to give us a voice and an opportunity to be part of what goes on in our school?" What approach are you going to take in addressing these concerns and striving to ensure that there are appropriate measures in place for maintaining a high level of competence among the members of the teaching staff?

#### **Scenario Four-Big Question-What does maintaining high standards in a school look like?**

A parent comes to see you early in the school year with a newspaper supplement ranking schools based on the Fraser Institute report on Achievement Test and Diploma Examination results. The parent observes, "this is a good school but I am concerned with the below average ranking of the school, based on the provincial examination results. It is important for my child to achieve a high standard of academic achievement in order to be eligible for university programs. I want to know what you as principal are going to do about the examination results. If you don't take standards of student achievement seriously, I will be forced to place my child in another school." How would you respond to the parent as the principal and what approach would you take with the school staff in addressing the concerns which the parent has raised and articulating your view of high standards for students?