

Growing the Capacity of Self and Others: School Leaders: School Leaders

Introduction

Growing the capacity of self and others is central to effective school leadership. Principals and vice-principals are responsible for nurturing the professional growth of both themselves and their colleagues, ensuring that leadership is not defined by position alone, but shared across the school community.

This work begins with self-awareness—understanding personal strengths, growth areas, and the need for continuous learning. It also requires intentionally creating spaces where staff, students, and families can learn together, take risks, and contribute meaningfully to the school’s shared vision.

Drawing from Indigenous teachings, capacity building is rooted in reciprocity, trust, and the recognition that everyone has knowledge to contribute. In a school setting, this means valuing the voices of all community members, holding high expectations for one another, and working collectively to improve student outcomes and well-being.

When school leaders grow capacity, they invest in the long-term strength of the school community, create opportunities for emerging leaders, and ensure that professional learning is collaborative, embedded, and sustained.

Self

As leaders committed to growing capacity, principals and vice-principals:

- Engage in Lifelong Learning: Seek professional learning that challenges and strengthens leadership practice.
- Model Humility: Show openness to feedback and demonstrate a willingness to learn from colleagues, students, and the community.
- Clarify a Leadership Vision: Develop and communicate a personal theory of change that guides decision-making and growth.
- Demonstrate Self-Awareness: Reflect regularly on leadership effectiveness and adapt practice accordingly.

Community

As community leaders, principals and vice-principals:

- Empower Others to Lead: Provide opportunities for staff and students to take on leadership roles and contribute to decision-making.
- Foster Collaborative Professional Learning: Facilitate ongoing, job-embedded learning that connects directly to the school’s goals and student needs.

- Value Diversity of Voice: Actively seek and integrate perspectives from all members of the school community, particularly those historically underrepresented.
- Build Trust and Reciprocity: Establish relationships grounded in mutual respect, shared responsibility, and a commitment to collective success.

Reflective Questions for School Leaders and Teams

1. How do we model lifelong learning and humility in our daily school leadership practice?
2. In what ways are we empowering staff, students, and families to take on leadership roles?
3. How do we ensure professional learning is sustained, collaborative, and connected to student outcomes?
4. How are we honouring and amplifying voices that have historically been underrepresented in school decision-making?
5. What shared language and vision guide our growth and improvement as a learning community?
6. How do you translate these aspirational statements to a practical professional growth plan goal?