

Discussion Paper: Growing the Capacity of Self and Others

Introduction

Growing the Capacity of Self and Others is a foundational leadership competency grounded in the belief that people are the heartbeat of strong and thriving school systems. This competency speaks to the responsibility of system leaders to nurture, empower, and elevate individuals and teams—ensuring that leadership is not confined to titles, but is lived and shared across all levels of the organization.

Leaders must engage in lifelong learning, model humility, and recognize their own learning needs while simultaneously fostering environments where others can flourish. Leadership growth is both an individual and collective endeavor—supported through intentional professional learning, reciprocal relationships, and courageous conversations about change and improvement.

This competency also recognizes that to lead is to serve, and that meaningful change requires trusting relationships, shared language, and aligned action. Inspired by Indigenous teachings, it calls us to create space for reciprocity, uphold high expectations, and instill a shared responsibility for Indigenous education across the system.

When leaders commit to building capacity, they invest in the long-term strength of the system. They make space for new voices, distribute leadership, and sustain the learning organizations our schools and districts need to become.

Considerations for Leaders

1. Lead Self

- Reflect on your own learning needs and seek out professional development that both challenges and strengthens your leadership.
- Embrace humility and model lifelong learning in both formal and informal settings.
- Lead by example by demonstrating openness to feedback and personal growth.
- Develop and articulate a theory of change for your leadership journey.

2. Lead Teams

- Convene and support diverse teams with a range of perspectives, identities, and experiences.
- Empower others to lead, share agency, and contribute meaningfully to decision-making.
- Promote and facilitate high-quality professional learning within and beyond the team's daily context.
- Foster collaborative inquiry that builds shared understanding and forward momentum.

3. Lead Organizations

- Build systems that support sustainable, embedded professional learning for all staff.
- Identify and elevate internal and external expertise across the district to support learning.
- Ensure leadership opportunities are distributed across the organization with equity and intentionality.
- Deploy district resources to support the conditions necessary for growth, change, and continuous improvement.

Reflective Questions for Leaders and Teams

1. How are we modelling lifelong learning and cultivating humility in our leadership practice?
2. In what ways are we identifying, supporting, and empowering emerging leaders across the district?
3. Do we have systems in place to support continuous, job-embedded professional learning?
4. How do we support and respect the agency of all employee and stakeholder groups, particularly those who have historically lacked influence?
5. How are we building a shared language and theory of change to guide our collective improvement?