

East Renfrewshire Education Department

Leadership Strategy 2023-2028



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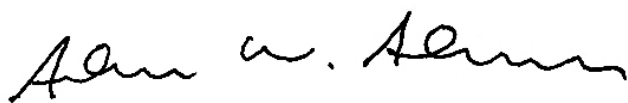
Foreword by Convener for Education and Equalities Councillor Andrew Anderson

As the convener for Education, Equalities, Culture and Leisure, I am pleased to introduce the Education Department's Leadership Strategy for 2023 -2028. The strategy outlines our ambition to ensure that learners are placed at the heart of everything we do in education and that their success fundamentally depends upon the quality of teaching and learning in our classrooms and playrooms, the quality of learning experiences and the quality of leadership in all our establishments at every level.

This strategy is bold in proposing leadership pathways to inspire people to become leaders in our establishments, to support this with successional leadership opportunities for aspiring and talented practitioners who are committed to improvement and to ensuring every learner fulfils their own high aspirations.

It identifies key aims that will be achieved through clearly defined actions which will be implemented by the Education Department, establishments and individual practitioners themselves, in order to deliver the required outcomes. This outcome focused approach will ensure we develop inspirational leaders for the future whilst supporting our established leaders to deliver excellent experiences for all our learners and staff.

I commend the Leadership Strategy to you and invite parents, carers and all other partners to work with staff in our schools and services in delivering the key aims identified in the action plan.



Councillor Andrew Anderson

Convener for Education, Equalities, Culture and Leisure



Introduction

In the past jobs were about muscles, now they are about brains, but in the future they'll be about the heart.

Miniuche Shafik, director, London School of Economics

Since the launch of the East Renfrewshire Council (ERC) Education Department Leadership Strategy in 2019, most areas of public and personal life have changed significantly and at pace. The coronavirus pandemic had a wide reaching and pervasive impact on the whole of the education system in Scotland, and on society at large. ERC Education Department, establishments, education professionals and local government staff rose to the challenge and delivered for our communities, children and young people. As schools have settled back to a more normal way of working, the demands and expectations on establishments, the scale and pace of change, combined with challenging budget settlements, provide a contentious educational landscape which has placed ever increasing pressures on leaders at all levels in the system.

In addition, politically there is a desire by the Scottish Government for more establishment based decision making in the context of an ambitious national vision for improved outcomes for all learners. The National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan (NIF 2023)¹, has set a vision and expectation of priorities for Scottish education and together with the National Discussion on the Future of Scottish Education (2023)² and the Hayward Review of qualifications and assessment (2023)³, is intended to provide the opportunity for fresh innovative ideas to drive improvement. Within this backdrop, the challenge facing ERC Education Department is to continue to develop the leadership capacity and resilience of our workforce to manage these significant challenges and others that will follow.



Harris (2014)⁴ highlights in her work that there is no single example of school reform or system transformation without some change in leadership or leadership practice, and that in terms of establishment performance, leadership is second only to the influence of teaching and learning on student outcomes (Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins, 2008)⁵. Investment in building leadership capacity is therefore essential if we are to bring about required change in the system. However, such investment is only effective if it makes a real and sustainable difference where it matters most, that is, in improved experiences and outcomes for all learners.

In 2019, the ERC Leadership Strategy recognised that a bold and ambitious approach to leadership was required, one that recognises that developing leadership capacity takes time and must be a continual process involving constant reflection and re-evaluation from learned experience. As Goffee et al (2015, pxi)⁶ explain;

“Great leaders are never finished. All of us are constantly challenged to renew and review our leadership skills.”

As such, if our schools are to translate the aspirations of national policy as set out in the NIF (2023, p5)¹ in ‘ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed, no matter their background or shared protected characteristics, with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap’, we will need to ensure robust levels of leadership at all levels of the system. Such an endeavour will require our school leaders to be selfless, reflective, restless learners with the ability and desire to develop leadership in others, a point argued strongly by Hallgarten et al (2015)⁷ and highlighted by ADES (ADES, 2017, p7)⁸.

“If transformation is to come from within education systems themselves, then it will depend upon the emergence of a different kind of leadership. System leaders need to support schools to think more often, more deeply and more radically about their mission. Whilst systems can be far better at creating the enabling conditions and cultures for innovation, schools need to take ultimate responsibility for their own ethos. Inevitably, this points to a significant leadership challenge at all levels. We need leadership which has authentic conviction about the potential for education as humanity’s best hope; and which can both assemble and communicate a compelling case for change.”

Our 2019 Leadership Strategy explored the notion of being an authentic leader, however in the intervening years leadership theories have almost made authentic leadership an orthodoxy and another educational buzz word. We aim in this updated strategy to review our thinking around authentic leadership to help all practitioners reflect on its true meaning, ensuring that authenticity is not misinterpreted as an individual attribute or an interchangeable leadership style. This review will offer an interpretation that suggests that authenticity manifests itself in a leader’s local, professional and personal context and in our relationships with others. Goffee et al (2019)⁹ ask the questions that every leader should be asking of themselves ‘Why should anyone be led by you?’



Authentic leadership has become a paragon of excellence and perfection as it associates leaders with a narrow expected set of values and an individual moral purpose. Hargreaves (2022, page vii)¹⁰ states;

“In most areas of life perfection is a futile goal. Zero tolerance policies, elimination of achievement gaps, the insistence that failure is not an option and impeccable leadership – for most things, in most circumstances, these ends are all unattainable.”

As such, our thinking on leadership development will move to an exploration of the term phrased by Munby (2019)¹¹ of ‘imperfect leadership’ which displays authenticity in its truest sense. When describing imperfect leadership, Hargreaves (2022, pviii)¹⁰ explains that:

“There is a depth of authenticity and honesty, rather than just a level of skill or sophistication, which marks out the imperfect leader as someone we can trust, admire and follow.”

Equally, Bretherton states in her joint work with Munby (2022, p1)¹⁰

“..there is something powerful and liberating about owning your own imperfections as a leader. Being an imperfect leader creates space for learning and growth; it opens up opportunities for others to contribute when we humbly ask for help. It means we can acknowledge mistakes and failures without writing ourselves off.”

As well as an exploration of authenticity in leadership, another important aim of the 2019 Leadership Strategy was a determination to ensure all leaders encouraged others to *‘foster leadership capacities at all levels’* by providing meaningful opportunities for development with the aim of building confidence in the system and the individual. In line with McKinsey’s *‘How the world’s most improved school systems keep getting better’*¹², our strategy introduced the notion of a move towards a distributive rather than a distributed or delegated form of leadership, stating that the strategy is to be underpinned by the notion that *‘Leadership is an act that enables others and allows them in turn to become enablers’*.

In our renewed strategy we will go further and suggest that established Head Teachers and senior leaders should be evoking the type of *‘systems leadership’* outlined by Harris et al (2021)¹³ who advocate that senior leaders need to be empowered and trusted to act outside their comfort zone and experience and take risks with others in the system to drive and embed sustainable improvement. They define system leadership as having a systemic orientation in which leaders at any level exert influence beyond their immediate context and are intentionally deployed to drive change and invest in improving other schools in addition to their own. Harris et al (2021)¹³ also highlight the importance of distributive leadership in action as a strength of system leadership in enabling organisational change and suggests that true distributive leadership emphasises the collective processes through which individuals and teams work together to create the conditions for change and this collective efficacy impacts positively on educational improvement. Thus distributive leadership needs to go further than just providing opportunities for aspirant leaders in our own establishments and should be a concept that challenges Head Teachers and senior leaders in order to facilitate the greater good of the system as a whole and which ultimately improves the life chances of learners across the school, cluster, local authority and wider.

In keeping true to the principles of our 2019 strategy, a review of distributive leadership within ERC was carried out by a number of teaching, Early Learning and Childcare (ELCC) staff and leaders in the authority. Rather than being tasked with evaluating progress in overtaking each of the aims of the 2019 strategy paper, these groups were tasked with holistically evaluating the effective use of distributive leadership. The research question posed was;

“Is distributive leadership being effectively utilised to develop capacity and collegiality in the system which positively influences quality in the classroom and helps deliver excellent experiences for all?”

In holistically reviewing our 2019 key aims, we will present our findings from each inquiry group (presented within the Evaluation Report) on how far we have come in embedding this principle and then provide an outline of our proposed next steps in ensuring a culture in ERC where leadership capacity is nurtured, embedded and exercised across all establishments at every level. Since the launch of our Leadership Strategy in 2019, there is much to be celebrated in the progress we have made with regards to leadership development, however if we are to embrace the concept of imperfect leadership we should remain *“restless learners”* and look to build on what has been achieved. In *‘Good to Great’*, Collins (2001)¹⁴, reminds us that any improvement starts with *‘confronting the brutal facts’* – we need to do the same with this review. As such, we have undertaken an honest evaluation in order to highlight areas of success and aspects where greater self-evaluation and reflection will be required to assess possible alternative pathways, solutions and actions if quality in the classroom and playroom is to be achieved.

Although this updated strategy paper may seem challenging in places, the intention in its design was to provide a think piece which encourages and facilitates deeper discussion, in order that all practitioners who engage with this paper feel they have the space and tools to be *‘a better version of themselves tomorrow than they are today.’* (Munby 2022 p3)¹⁰

Revised Key Aims and Action Plan

The overall findings from each research inquiry group reveal that, whilst there are real improvements in line with the Key Aims of our 2019 strategy, distributive leadership in itself doesn't guarantee better performance and it is not necessarily a panacea for success: much depends on the opportunities created, the nature of distributive practice, the support provided and the intentions of those creating the opportunities i.e. our Head Teachers, Heads of Establishment and senior leaders. If distributive leadership is to make any real difference senior leaders in schools have a substantial and integral role to play in making it a positive and meaningful experience. The Key Aims as set out in our 2019 strategy remain relevant in a number of key areas, but where required, have been refreshed to ensure they are now appropriate to the context of the Departments leadership aspirations for all staff. These refreshed Key Aims will be considered within a new and evolving context of national and local policy when informing our action planning and target setting.

REVISED KEY AIMS

1. Effectively develop resilient and reflective practitioners who consistently deliver high quality learning experiences within and beyond their own setting by engaging individually and collaboratively in contemporary, meaningful and inspiring professional learning.
2. Cultivate an informed, inspiring and creative approach to improving learning and teaching across all settings by utilising disciplined collaboration which not only develops and enriches the leadership skills of practitioners but provides a positive impact on outcomes for all learners.
3. Ensure that existing and aspirant middle leaders are supported and challenged to develop and continue to build the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding required of highly effective leaders, as well as the confidence to begin to explore their own authentic style of leadership.
4. Empower and support all newly appointed Heads of Establishment and Senior Leaders to develop their own authentic leadership in order to lead a school community strategically and effectively.
5. Utilise the expertise and depth of experience of established Senior Leaders to inform policy and practice beyond their own settings locally, regionally and nationally to unite in a single focus on collaborative approaches to systemic change aimed at improving the outcomes for all learners.

To achieve the above we will engage in the actions as set out below

KEY AIM 1

Effectively develop, resilient and reflective practitioners who consistently deliver high quality learning experiences within and beyond their own setting by engaging individually and collaboratively in contemporary, meaningful and inspiring professional learning.

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND IMPACT	ACTION	MONITORING & EVALUATION
<p>Expected Outcome: Resilient and reflective practitioners who demonstrate the values, knowledge, skills and abilities required to lead learning effectively and who are committed to quality education and making a difference to the lives of all children and young people.</p> <p>Impact: Raised attainment levels across all curricular areas through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in innovative pedagogical practices and thus quality of teaching and learning through the adoption of evidence based practice. • All early career practitioners are confident and know the level they are working towards • Improved pedagogical expertise for all practitioners in order raise attainment and promote achievement. 	<p>The Department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to ensure where possible we continue to support masters level learning for all staff groups. • Provide opportunities for our early career practitioners to work collaboratively with established practitioners on research based professional inquiry linked to improvement priorities. • Develop a programme of CLPL for probationer supporters in school to ensure quality of teaching for our learners and quality experiences for probationers. <p>The School/Early Years Setting will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all practitioners understand and adhere to the requirements of their professional body in terms of professional practice, values and competence. • Look inwards and outwards to provide high level CLPL for practitioners which develops curricular knowledge and pedagogical skill set to enrich the experiences for all learners. <p>Practitioners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively engage in academic research and professional inquiry to bring about pedagogical improvement which improves outcomes for learners. • Engage in reflective practice to develop and advance career long professional learning and expertise. • Engage in collaborative working with peer practitioners and colleagues to promote the sharing of best practice and excellent experiences for all. • Ensure all professional inquiry activity includes an evaluation of impact on learners and quality of teaching in the classroom. Adopt an approach to their practice where professional inquiry is a stance not an action. 	<p>Improved consistency in the quality of teaching and learning as evidenced by establishment, local and national quality assurance processes.</p> <p>Evaluations from CLPL sessions show satisfaction with sessions and confirmation of improvement in understanding and confidence.</p> <p>Increase in the number of practitioners engaging in professional inquiry.</p> <p>An increase in the number of establishments who can evidence that almost all practitioners regularly engage in inquiry and research which has a measurable positive impact on outcomes for learners as evidenced in standards and quality reports and departmental reviews.</p> <p>Positive feedback received from ERC pupil questionnaires.</p>

KEY AIM 2

Cultivate an informed, inspiring and creative approach to improving learning and teaching across all settings by utilising disciplined collaboration which not only develops and enriches the leadership skills of practitioners but provides a positive impact on outcomes for all learners.

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND IMPACT	ACTION	MONITORING & EVALUATION
<p>Expected Outcome: Confident and innovative practitioners, who inspire colleagues to be creative in their professional practice so that all young people achieve and attain their best through excellent experiences.</p> <p>Impact: A culture of collaborative inquiry across the setting leading to engaging experiences for learners. Workload is reduced through collaboration to provide more time to enhance learner experiences.</p>	<p>The Department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate partnership working to develop innovative ideas and solutions and to learn from national and international studies as to how they can make an impact locally. Look to provide funding to establish a Research Hub in every ERC Cluster to enable staff and learners to acquire the necessary skills to undertake their own action-based research inquiry which informs learning and teaching to ultimately improve outcomes. <p>The School/Early Years Setting will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endeavour to provide the space and time for practitioners to plan collaboratively with colleagues to create relevant, engaging and challenging learning experiences for their learners. Provide the opportunity for practitioners to undertake meaningful collaborative inquiry to improve practice and outcomes for learners. <p>Practitioners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically examine the connections between their personal and professional attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to affect improvement and, when appropriate, bring about transformative change in practice. Master the skills required to engage critically in collaborative research to challenge and inform professional practice to improve teaching and learning. Work collaboratively to contribute to the professional learning and development of colleagues, by disseminating experience and expertise and seeking opportunities to collectively lead learning and improve practice. 	<p>Evaluations indicate evidence of empowerment across settings leading to innovation and creativity in the classroom</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate the number of practitioners taking part in collaborative opportunities across the school, cluster community and wider.</p> <p>ERC Quality Assurance programme.</p>

REFRESHED KEY AIM 3

Ensure that existing and aspirant middle leaders are supported and challenged to develop and continue to build the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding required of highly effective leaders, as well as the confidence to begin to explore their own authentic style of leadership.

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND IMPACT	ACTION	MONITORING & EVALUATION
<p>Expected Outcome: Effective middle leaders who have a well-considered, clearly communicated and ambitious vision and who can provide a clear sense of direction and purpose underpinned by meaningful self-evaluation.</p> <p>Impact: A culture of distributive leadership at the middle level is embedded and is evident across all establishments. Learners consistently experience excellent learning, teaching and assessment approaches in all curriculum areas.</p>	<p>The Department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a robust induction programme for middle leaders which focuses on the key skills for effective middle leadership linked to the Standards for Leadership and Management, including interpersonal skills, organisational skills, innovation, professional knowledge and integrity. • Provide the opportunity for middle leaders to be active contributors to strategic policy making rather than implementers. • Continue to deliver and evaluate the aspiring leaders programme with a particular emphasis on exploring personal and professional values and the development of an authentic leadership. <p>The School/Early Years Setting will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop staff potential and take risks on ambitious and capable teachers who have the skills and abilities to make effective leaders. • Develop in middle leaders the skills to build a culture of collegiality demonstrating the frequent sharing of best practice and opportunity to take risk in curriculum innovation. • Utilise the skills, experience and expertise of established middle leaders as mentors for aspiring teacher leaders and newly appointed middle leaders. <p>Aspiring and Existing Middle Leaders will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an authentic commitment to motivating and inspiring learners, acknowledging their social and economic context, individuality and specific learning needs and taking into consideration barriers to learning. • Engage with all aspects of professional practice and work collegiately with all members of our educational communities with enthusiasm, adaptability and constructive criticality. • Build and sustain personal credibility by modelling their commitment to CLPL, integrity and ethical practice, thus developing a culture of trust and respect. • Encourage the development of leadership skills and qualities in others and cultivation a culture of constructive criticality among colleagues. 	<p>Participant evaluations of middle leadership induction programme</p> <p>Participant evaluations of aspiring leadership programme</p> <p>Teacher leadership via peer visit evaluations</p>

KEY AIM 4

Empower and support all newly appointed Heads of Establishment and Senior Leaders to develop their own authentic in order to lead a school community strategically and effectively.

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND IMPACT	ACTION	MONITORING & EVALUATION
<p>Outcome Empower and support newly appointed Heads of Establishment and Senior Leaders to develop their own authentic leadership in order to lead a school community strategically and effectively.</p> <p>Impact A strong foundation of agreed inclusive values which align with our desire for authentic leadership and build coherence towards a vision of “Everyone Attaining Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences”.</p> <p>Equity and fairness in the establishment of distributive leadership by creating a sustainable system of challenge, support and accountability.</p> <p>Leaders have a clarity in terms of their personal capacity for growth, for action and for understanding personal strengths and limitations.</p>	<p>The Department will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop and review a robust CLPL programme for aspiring Head Teachers with a focus on professional standards for leadership and management and which delivers an effective balance between developing practitioners operationally and strategically and which provides an insight into the importance of emotional intelligence. • Utilise existing Head Teachers and senior leaders as mentors for newly appointed senior leaders in order to support and enhance leadership capacity. • Create a pool of newly appointed senior leaders who can share experiences and provide critical friendships in ‘safe’ settings. • Create opportunities for involvement in collaborative improvement planning, projects, initiatives and self-evaluation within and beyond the local authority to spread innovation, extend impact and increase collective responsibility for quality and equity. <p>Aspiring and New Head Teachers will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and sustain a culture where all practitioners and learners are involved in meaningful decision-making about the planning and enhancement of learning and in wider school/centre improvement. • Develop and use knowledge from literature, research and policy sources to support the processes of self-evaluation for the enhancement of professional practice and decision-making. • Engage actively in ongoing professional learning including the Into-Headship qualification to deepen personal and professional skills and knowledge base. • Create meaningful distributive leadership opportunities for staff, within the revised ERC definition. • Encourage flexibility for principal teachers and deputes in order to broaden experiences of leadership across the school and beyond. • Engage critically with knowledge and understanding of research and developments in teaching and learning and work with others to ensure the strategic leadership of relevant developments to improving learner outcomes. • Ensure that meaningful and rigorous PRD takes place regularly and that the outcomes of the process contribute to improvement of professional practice and outcomes for learners. 	<p>Evaluations of 1.3 leadership of change as good or better within Standards and Quality Reports.</p> <p>PRD evaluations reveal growth in confidence and authentic leadership.</p>

REFRESHED KEY AIM 5

Utilise the expertise and depth of experience of established Senior Leaders to inform policy and practice beyond their own settings locally, regionally and nationally to unite in a single focus on collaborative approaches to systemic change aimed at improving the outcomes for all learners.

EXPECTED OUTCOME AND IMPACT	ACTION	MONITORING & EVALUATION
<p>Expected Outcome: Sector leading practice characterised by an ambitious leadership community with the skills, capabilities and motivation to ensure excellent outcomes for all learners.</p> <p>Impact: Build coherence towards the vision of “Everyone attaining everyone achieving through excellent experiences”</p>	<p>The Authority will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with established senior leaders to build and embed a shared vocabulary for leadership. • Work in partnership with our established senior leaders to embed a strong foundation of agreed inclusive values which align with our desire for authentic leadership. • Strengthen existing systems to identify and share best practice within the local authority and beyond. • Provide opportunities to contribute towards strategic policy development locally, within the regional improvement collaborative and nationally. • Create a coaching culture within our community which can ultimately reach beyond East Renfrewshire to our partner schools and early years settings in the West Partnership. <p>Established Senior Leaders will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build trust by encouraging risk-taking and creating the opportunities for empowerment. • Embrace opportunities to build on existing involvement in local authority and regional self-evaluation activities. • Become coaches for newly appointed senior leaders, providing an objective view on headship whilst affirming, probing and challenging less experienced leaders in terms of their decision making strategies. • Act as role model for the vision and values of the local authority and education as a career in general. 	<p>Improvement in evaluations of 1.3 leadership of change as very good or better within Standards and Quality Reports.</p> <p>PRD evaluations reveal growth in confidence and authentic leadership.</p> <p>Participation in West Partnership leadership activities.</p> <p>Evaluations indicate a positive impact on authentic leadership development for coaches and coaches.</p>



Planning For and Measuring Success

Our renewed strategy for leadership informs and empowers school and establishment leaders to set their own actions which will foster a culture of distributive leadership at all levels within the context of their own setting. We have however provided appropriate action planning in this document which sets out our Departmental expectations to ensure all establishments continue to proactively move towards a self-sustaining system of leadership which is values based and has the ambitions and aspirations of our learners at the heart of everything we do.

A strategic planning template is provided ([Appendix 1](#)) to enable establishments to forward plan measurable outcomes which will support these next steps. It is expected that going forward, strategic planning for leadership will be incorporated into the usual improvement planning and reporting processes with successes being evaluated annually in each establishment's Standards and Quality Report and measurable targets being included in the annual School/Establishment Improvement Plan.

The Action Plan which illustrates how we will achieve our aims has a variety of actions specific to the Education Department whilst others will be required to be actioned at establishment level. The Department will update the Local Improvement Plan (LIP) on an annual basis to reflect the aspirations identified in this document and establishments will utilise the LIP to inform their own School Improvement Plans (SIP) to reflect these priorities. Personal Development plans for all staff will take cognisance of the action points and recommendations made in this document ensuring a focus on leadership development, professional inquiry and disciplined collaboration.

The Department and establishments will commit to working together to ensure we have the systems in place that can robustly measure the impact of our actions in this leadership journey and in ensuring our endeavours not only positively impact our staff but also result in improved outcomes for our learners.

In addition a number of Key performance indicators for measuring success have been provided. A caveat to these targets must however be the financial climate within which we are operating to bring about our leadership aims.

Scottish Government has withdrawn all funding for masters level learning which will inevitably impact the number of staff who can undertake this level of learning due to personal financial constraints. In addition, the Departmental budget available for CLPL and leadership activities has reduced significantly which will affect the implementation of some of our next step proposals.

Reporting on progress

The Department and schools/early years setting undertake annual self-evaluation exercises which are summarised in Standards and Quality Reports. These reports will now include both progress made in meeting the priorities of the National Improvement Framework and detail of the steps taken to develop distributive leadership at all levels.

As is current practice, we shall continue to report annually to East Renfrewshire Council Education Committee on the attainment and achievements of our pupils in the Broad General Education and Senior Phase. We will also report on the quality of education provided by our establishments through Education Scotland school/early years setting inspection reports and Care Inspectorate reports. These will provide further evidence of our progress in implementing the actions set out within this strategy.



Key Performance Indicators and Targets

Indicator	Achieved (2017-23)	Target (by 2028-29)
1. Number of staff taking Masters level Learning	290	350
2. Number of Staff with Masters Degrees	95	120
3. Number of staff undertaking Professional Inquiry * Based on knowledge of whole school approaches, probationer programmes and feedback from Head Teachers	60%*	90%
4. Number of Staff with Into Headship Qualification	27	40
5. Number of staff engaged in the Aspiring Leaders Programme	28	75
6. Number of Staff engaged in Excellence in Headship Programme	11	20
7. Percentage of positive results on CLPL evaluations	91%	100%
8. Percentage of positive results from evaluations of probationer induction programme. ** Probationers surveyed who agreed that CLPL provided by the local authority has developed professional skills and abilities. *** Probationers surveyed who agreed they have developed as an enquiring professional through completion of a professional inquiry.	100%** 93%***	100% 100%
9. Number of ERC schools achieving good or better in school inspections for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning, teaching and assessment; • Raising attainment and achievement; • Leadership of change. 	8/8 100% 8/8 100% 5/5 100%	100% 100% 100%
10. Number of teachers who have had their Professional learning confirmed through Professional Update and subsequently recorded by the GTCS	100%	100%
11. Number of staff engaged in leadership programmes through the West Partnership.	145	300
12. Number of staff engaged in systems level leadership programmes.	16	35

Conclusion

Imperfect, authentic leadership is the premise upon which this renewed leadership strategy has been developed. The emphasis on imperfect leadership is to ensure that our strategy does not focus upon the polarisation of one type of leadership as good or bad, but to ensure our strategy provides direction as to how individual leaders can themselves build capacity and understand that to secure future improvement more attention needs to be given to developing leaders who can lead and learn in unpredictable situations. The ADES (2017, p7)⁸ think piece, *'Towards a learning system'* observes that;

“The translation of national policy aspirations into practical improvements in the lives of young people requires leadership at all levels of the system. It will require work in partnership across networks of relationships as a result of flatter management structures, driven by budget reductions and working across organisation boundaries on a shared endeavour. It will need systemic insight, reflective learning and the ability to develop leadership in others.”

However, the complexity involved in moving from a focus on individual leaders to a focus on shared leadership should not be underestimated. It has to be viewed as a learning process that takes time, patience and courage. Fullan (2020, p142)¹⁵ explains that *'the job of the leader is to develop collaborative cultures and leadership of others to the point where the leader becomes dispensable.'* This will take courage, a moral imperative to improve the life chances of all learners over self-promotion and a more radical way of thinking.

This strategy purports that through focused and disciplined collaboration, professional inquiry and distributive leadership, senior leaders can create the internal conditions where professional learning communities become established, grow and

flourish. As senior leaders we are the *'gatekeepers of change'*. Real transformational change that has a positive impact for our learners will only happen if collectively we endeavour to make it happen. If we are serious about transformational change, it is imperative that we invest in the most powerful forms of professional learning i.e. those that make a difference to learner outcomes.

Under such conditions improved outcomes for learners will be created and true authentic and imperfect leadership will become second nature. To be effective we need to ensure appropriate and meaningful leadership opportunities are being created. There then needs to be challenge and support from the Department to ensure initiatives are delivered effectively, have impact and above all are outcome driven. Just creating communities of professionalism and learning does not guarantee meaningful change or improvement. Real improvement through such professional communities of collaboration and learning, means focusing on our learners first and working relentlessly to improve pedagogy so the needs of both learners and practitioners are effectively met (Harris 2014)⁴. Fullan (2021)¹⁶ highlights his fears regarding real change in the system when he highlighted the words of Giridharadas:

“My goal is to create change. But change doesn't happen if you're just campaigning for it or if, on the other side, you're just theorizing about it. You need to know how to actually work over a long, patient period to sit down and help change makers carry it out. It's easy to preach. There are many preachers of what the good thing is to do. There are few who sit down and do it.”

Together let's make transformational change happen and become the leaders our practitioners can trust, admire and above all wish to follow.

Appendix 1

Leadership Strategic Plan 2023-2026

School/Establishment Improvement Priorities

Following engagement with the Leadership Think Piece, this template should be used to identify priorities for next steps over the next 3-year strategic planning cycle. Thereafter, leadership and improvement priorities should be incorporated into self-evaluation school improvement planning under Leadership and Management. This will ensure measurable outcomes leading to continuous improvement.

Use this space to identify over-arching priorities for each of the next steps highlighted in the Leadership Think Piece

Learning on the Job

Collaborating Effectively

Access to High Quality Research

Coaching and Opportunities for Personal Reflection

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