Assurance Framework:
Stakeholder Engagement

The intent of a CASS Learning Guide is to apply research, deepen understanding and enhance professional practice within the Alberta context. With a focus on optimum learning for all students, a Learning Guide provides an opportunity to grow system leader knowledge, resulting in quality school leadership and quality teaching throughout Alberta.

Summary Messages (February 9, 2021 Learning Opportunity)

Stakeholder Engagement: System Leaders shared their stories of practice to address the intent of the assurance framework. Watch recording here.

Dr. Clint Moroziuk was appointed Superintendent in August 2020 and has been exploring, with his central office team and school leaders, aspects of the assurance framework. He noted that Alberta Education has encouraged him to look at ways to be creative in determining how to represent the school authority and community since there is no one way to plan and report through the lens of assurance. GSACRD engages with stakeholders (parents, students, and staff) and their public, which informs their discussions and decisions. They endeavour to be responsive to the voice of their community, listening with open hearts and minds. Dr. Moroziuk cautions that earning trust from stakeholders and the public takes time and commitment, but it takes little to break it.

GSACRD has relied on several tools, which includes the Accountability Pillar data, division satisfaction surveys, Thoughtexchange, the Gallup Q12 survey, and the Gallup Student Poll to inform planning. Recently, principals and school staff were engaged to determine which tools have had significant real and/or perceived value. Findings indicate that there was survey fatigue and that not all measures had the same value to the planning and reporting processes. Moving forward, they will rely on Alberta Education's survey data as well as revising, with a district committee, the student, parent, and staff division survey. The survey is being rebranded as an assurance survey focused on: *Do our stakeholders feel assured that the division is delivering on its commitment to teaching and learning?*

Dr. Moroziuk concluded that he feels it is no accident that Building Effective Relationships is the first competency in the Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard. It is foundational and highlights the value and importance of stakeholder engagement with all involved in supporting optimum learning for all students. Clint Moroziuk cmoroziuk@gsacrd.ab.ca (Timestamp 5:32 on recording.)

Establishing a Culture of Engagement
Superintendent Shauna Boyce and Assistant Superintendent Scott Johnston emphasized the importance of purposefully developing a culture of engagement focusing on five points.

1. Strong relationship with your Leadership Team; we would not engage anywhere near as successfully without the full support of our lead team. Over the years we have built this culture, so everyone knows it is part of what we do – not an add on. This only exists because of the trust we have with our school leaders.

2. Engagement processes - Wherever/whenever possible; We engage regularly with 3 large engagements a year and smaller opportunities with specific groups as needed
   - There are "Known-Knowns" – in this case you know what is to be known, and so there is little point engaging

   - Known-Unknowns occur when we do not know how a stakeholder will respond to a plan of action that we have
   - Unknown-knowns – in this case you are seeking wisdom. Engagement to move unknown-knowns occur every time you reach out to community partners
   - Unknown to unknown – help to bring unknown-unknowns to light. In this case, we engage with general

questions: *Tell us – what in your opinion is not working well? What is working well? What should we be doing in the future?*

3. Authenticity Matters; we have learned the value of being honest. That not everything is always going well - we cannot continue to do this, so help us to do it differently.

4. Think long-term; consider the direction you are headed and think very long term about ensuring everyone has had an opportunity to be engaged in the process.

Acknowledging the IAP2 process of why you are engaging will help to determine how you will engage.

5. Be part of the community = crucial role of the Superintendent being connected with the community helps to build trust and relationships and as a result ensures that engagements are authentic.

Shauna Boyce sboyce@psd70.ab.ca and Scott Johnston SJohnston@psd70.ab.ca
(Timestamp 32:20 on recording.)

Connections with the Alberta Context

Quality superintendent leadership occurs when the superintendent's on-going analysis of context, and the superintendent's decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply result in quality school leadership, quality teaching and optimum learning for all students. There is a direct alignment with the SLQS professional practice standard and the 5 domains of the assurance framework. One specific example of this alignment is the building effective relationships competency.

This competency requires superintendents to establish a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment by building positive and productive relationships with members of the school community and local community. The work of transitioning to or practicing the assurance framework model with respect to stakeholder engagement and communication lends itself to fulfilling the indicators of this competency.

CASS Professional Learning: https://cassalberta.ca/professional-learning/?competency=building-effective-relationships

Research to Practice

Questions for reflection and dialogue within your context.

1. What actions might you take to strengthen the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement and communication in your school authority?
2. What tools or techniques have you found most effective for engaging stakeholders?
3. How do you communicate the findings back to stakeholders?
4. How does stakeholder engagement evidence drive planning decisions?

Additional Supports for System Leadership Capacity

CASS Professional Learning outcome is to: Create assurance framework resources for school authorities to support SLQS growth. Resources created based on this learning opportunity focused on Approaches to Strategic Planning and Reporting:

- Slide deck
- Padlet (Online repository) of System Authority, Alberta Education and CASS resources
- A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions
- CASS resource library including additional Assurance Framework Learning Guides

✓ **Building Effective Relationships**
✓ **Leading Learning**
✓ **Supporting Effective Governance**