

# Unpacking Instructional Leadership

Four Leadership Practices That Are Impacting Leaders, Teachers and Students

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools



Red Deer Catholic  
Regional Schools

# Agenda



- 01** Background
- 02** Our Journey
- 03** Key Understandings
- 04** Questions

# Historical Context

- Awareness and implementation of LQS
- Our division began work with the Galileo group examining optimal learning and the TQS, LQS and,SLQS
- We found quickly that in examining instructional leadership our administrators had varying degrees of understanding and widely different definitions



# We determined we needed:



- **RDCRS Context**
- **Common Language/  
Understanding**
- **Narrower Focus**

## We aligned our work with current research:



- Viviane Robinson - ***Student Centred Leadership***
- Kenneth Leithwood - ***Linking Leadership to Student Learning***





# 4 Pillars of Instructional Leadership

<b>Setting Direction</b>	<b>Leading Learning</b>	<b>Instructional Walkthroughs</b>	<b>Collective Leadership</b>
Embodying Visionary Leadership	Leading a Learning Community	Providing Instructional Leadership	Developing Leadership Capacity



***Interconnectedness:  
Weaving In and Through***

# With your table discuss:

How is instructional leadership defined in your school division?

- What are the actions and practices your administrators are doing on a daily basis to tell you instructional leadership is alive and well in your school division?
- Is there a common understanding?

# Dug into the 4 Pillars at our annual leadership retreat:

*Aligning research to action.*

- 1. Self analysis of school**
- 2. Set targets for implementation**
- 3. Plan for action**



# Setting The Direction

- 10 Year Process in Division Education Plan and School Improvement Plans
- Measurements tied to goals



# Early Days!



## Provincial Goal One: High Quality Learning Opportunities for All

Outcome 1.1: School environments are safe and caring.

<i>Performance Measures</i>	Last Actual	Previous 3-Yr. Avg.	Evaluation			Targets 2012/13
			Achievement	Improvement	Overall	
1.1.1 Overall teacher, parent, and student agreement that students are safe at school, learning the importance of caring for others, learning respect for others, and are treated fairly at school.	89.4	86.2	Very High	Improved Significantly	Excellent	91
<b>Division Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Promote and monitor appropriate community and school resources to enhance safe and caring atmosphere in schools.</li><li>Continually update staff on Crisis Response protocol.</li><li>Provide opportunity to hear student voice on safe and caring schools to inform follow-up action.</li><li>Communicate to stakeholders how resources are accessed to achieve the safe and caring atmosphere in schools.</li></ul>			<b>Responsibility:</b> Associate Sup't – Student Services  Communications Director			

# Visionary Planning Evolution



- Senior Administration School Reviews
- Evidence Column
- Next Steps Column (One year SIP to align with 3 year Education Plan)
- AERR Connection
- Board Accountability Highlights
  - Comment on Strategies (Connecting Data and Research)
  - Comment on Results
- Evidence to Measurement
- Lead or Lag Measures
- Administration Collaborative Conversations (from a show to a plan)



# Recent Iteration

Red Deer Catholic School Division Outcome #2 :First Nation, Metis and Inuit students in RDCRS are successful.

Goal	Strategies	Measurement	
		Lead	Lag
<p>In collaboration with our Indigenous communities, build upon foundational knowledge of First Nations, Metis and Inuit teachings to benefit all students and build capacity of staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue to respond to the calls to action from the <b>Truth and Reconciliation Commission</b>.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all teachers have acquired skills to meet and exceed the <b>foundational knowledge of First Nations, Metis and Inuit competency</b> as outlined in the Alberta Education professional practice standards.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue <b>programs and academic and cultural supports</b> for all self-identified students.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop collaborative plans with Indigenous communities to meet the <b>cultural, academic and social emotional well being</b> of all self-identified students braiding indigenous ways of knowing into the program of studies.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure staff <b>recognize and respond to intergenerational trauma</b> on learning and families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Host three circles with Urban Aboriginal Voices Society to generate feedback on progress and areas of continued growth for division goals.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Division Treaty Flag ceremonies will be developed for the beginning and end of the year in all schools.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Student Voice Panel to engage in conversation surrounding educational learning environment, successes and considerations with students two times a year.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Professional development sessions in each school building on Indigenous foundational understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increased Provincial Achievement Exam results and increased correlation between school awarded marks and achievement test results by Indigenous students.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase in the number of Indigenous students attaining excellence and acceptable on the Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Exams.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student feedback on the Accountability Pillar Survey. Specifically responses to the questions: I feel welcome at my school, At school, I feel like I belong., Other students treat me well, &amp; At school, students respect each other.</li> </ul>

# Becoming Visionary Leaders: “The Project”

Vice Principal  
Leadership  
Development -  
Action Research  
Projects



A Natural  
Progression  
to Lead and  
Lag Measures

## **With your table discuss:**

In reflecting on your school leaders what are the actions and practices they implement that set direction?

How are you supporting them in setting the direction at the division level?

# Leading Learning

**.42 effect size**



**SIP**

Framework to drive learning

**Mentorship**

AP/VP weekly met with new teachers

**Collaboration**

**Weekly** focus on data to impact instructional practices. Administrators in the meetings.

**Evidence Informed**

Data informed Student work at the center

# 2019-2020 Results from Schollie



- To what extent does your school provide you with opportunities to collaborate with teacher colleagues on student learning.
  - 54% to 75% - A great deal
  - 15% to 25% - A moderate amount

# Instructional Walk Throughs

*Senior administration was wondering.....*

- Is teacher practice changing student learning based on our current LIFT model and focus on instructional leadership?
- How are administrators ensuring that this change is occurring in the classrooms?
- How do we support our administrators to ensure effective instructional practice is occurring in the classroom?
- How will we know that our actions are making a difference?

# What keeps you from visiting classrooms?



## Obstacles to Instructional Leadership and Supervision

- Complexity of Role
- Learning Challenge

These obstacles should not come at the expense of improving the learning culture in order to increase optimal learning.

Knowing that these obstacles are present everyday how are you going to manage these to ensure you are in classrooms?

# Mindshift....



- Culture: From evaluation to growth through conversations
- Structure: Committing time each day to teachers
- Positive Intention: LIFTING teachers...celebrating, areas of growth, goal setting
- Reflection/Action: Administrators and instructional leadership.
  - Increased instructional credibility and confidence
  - Discussing teacher practice weekly

# Pilot Study...Justin Baeder's (PhD) Research

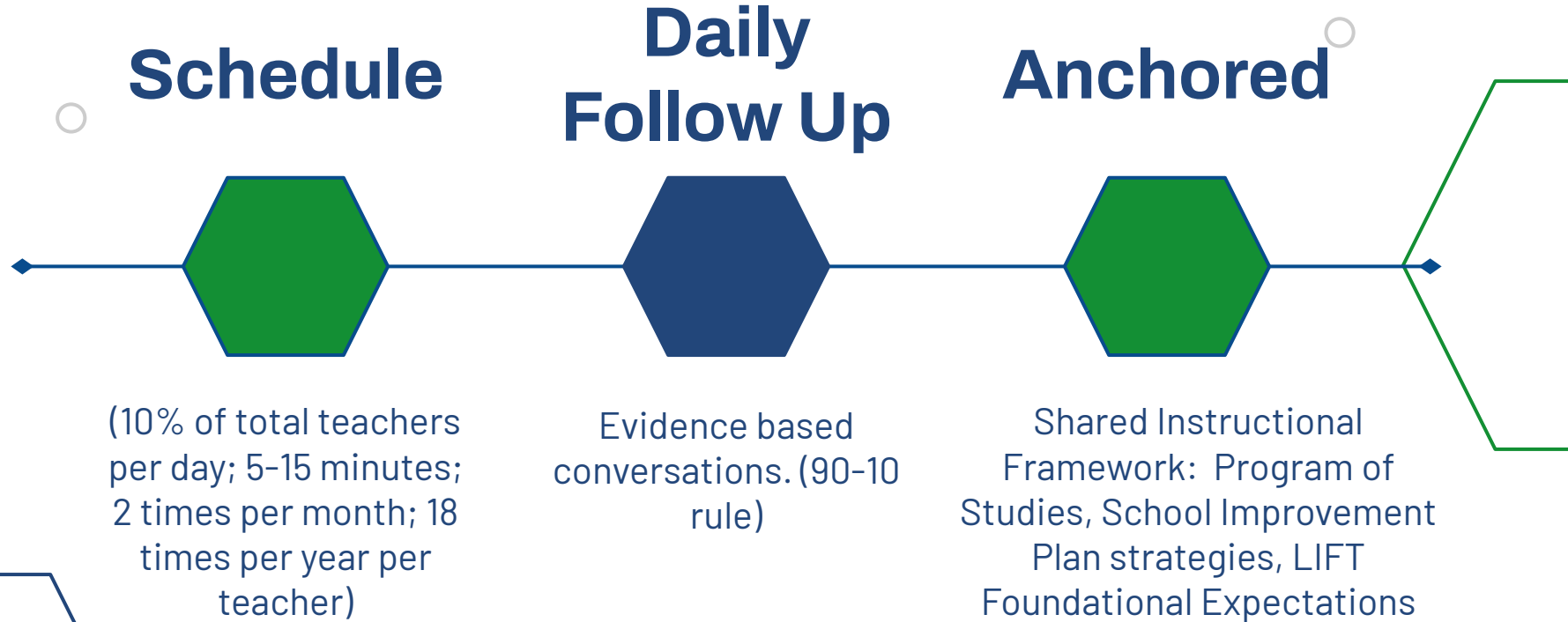
## Action Research Question:

*As instructional leaders, how can we enhance our in-depth conversations with teachers about high-quality teaching and learning on a regular basis (daily)?*

## The WHY?



# Criteria....



***The HOW***



# Evidence Based Conversations....

Ten Questions for Better Feedback on Teaching....Without Suggestions

(Baeder, 2018)

Teachers want feedback. Longer visits, reflective conversations. Communication is beneficial both ways.

(Brandon, 2018)

Districts make teachers' work the main focus of attention for school leaders.

(Leithwood, 2012, p. 129)





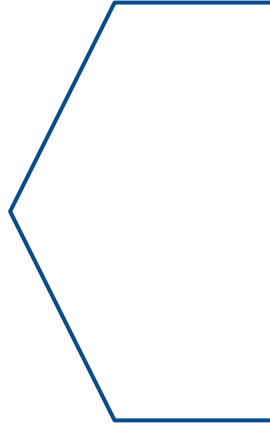

# Classroom Visit Index Cards

10 Questions for Better Feedback On Teaching



## LIFT Questions

Possible follow up questions for walkthroughs



# ***Professional Practice Standard...***

- Administrators build the capacity of teachers to respond to the learning needs of all students (Leadership Quality Standard, Competency 6a).
- This is accomplished by explicitly engaging teachers about well defined instructional pedagogy, professional goals and the Program of Studies.
- Administrators need to be **intentional** about each classroom visit and conversation with the **explicit purpose** of engaging with teachers about these key areas.



## We asked administrators...

- What is the evidence of change occurring? With you? With the teachers?
- How did the walkthrough schedule affect your instructional leadership practice?
- How did the prompted questions facilitate an evidence-based conversation?

Remember: Walk thru practices can help with *decision making, improving professional relationships and enhancing professional development* both within the school and personally for teachers.

In your weekly admin team meetings talk about an area that showed change as the result of your walkthrough practices this past month.

Tell us, show us during monthly school visits - walk us through your classrooms first.



## ***Education Plan: Teaching and Leading Outcome***

*Implement effective instructional walkthrough practices and evidence-based conversations with teachers about high-quality teaching and learning on a regular basis.*



# We asked teachers...



## Survey Questions

- With regards to feedback from administrators on your instructional practices, what was effective in supporting your growth as a teacher this year?
- Please provide some examples of ways your administration supported your instructional practices this year?
- What are some ways your administrators could assist you in enhancing your instructional practices in your classroom?



# RDCRS AERR.....



## Teaching and Learning:

Assurance Domain	Measure	Red Deer Catholic			Alberta			Measure Evaluation		
		Current Result	Prev Year Result	Prev 3 Year Average	Current Result	Prev Year Result	Prev 3 Year Average	Achievement	Improvement	Overall
Teaching & Leading	Education Quality	92.7	94.0	92.9	89.6	90.3	90.2	N/A	N/A	N/A

Our Division focused a significant portion of its professional learning on expanding the knowledge of our staff in relation to the Alberta Education Professional Practice Standards namely, Teacher Quality Standard (TQS) and Leadership Quality Standard (LQS). Our Division led the way provincially by developing a Catholic version of the provincial standards. This version was vetted and adopted by CCSSA to become a provincial resource for Catholic divisions. Our Division leadership team explored, defined and implemented the Four Pillars of Instructional Leadership as a catalyst for school improvement. This work had administrators expand their professional knowledge and formulate school-based plans centered on Setting Direction, Leading Learning, Instructional Walkthroughs, and Collective Leadership. This work enhanced school professional learning, classroom instruction and student learning experiences. In examining the data further 89.9% of parents, 90.3 % of students and 97.9% of teachers indicated satisfaction in the overall quality of basic education.

Examining our results demonstrates that this work has contributed to 92.7% of parents, students, and staff, indicating they are satisfied with the quality of education in our communities. Overall, our achievement in this measure has improved and remains very high with the Division results maintaining an increase when compared to the provincial average.

## **With your table discuss:**

As you reflect on the walkthrough processes in your schools:

- What is the expectation for leaders to be in the classrooms?
- What could enhance this process?

# Collective Leadership



- Recognized Hierarchical Structure of Organization - Goal was to flatten organization
- Culture Survey: Call for professional autonomy and tapping into intellectual capacity of staff.
- Vision, Visibility, Voice
- Still evolving this model
- How can we build teacher leadership capacity?

## IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM



The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

# Examples:

- Learning Disruption Grant -  
Localized approach with  
collaborative decision making
- Covid Approach - Weekly  
Principal Meetings = equal voices
  - Modelling how to increase  
authentic voice = increased  
staff voice across division
- New Curriculum Implementation

**Leading to increased  
innovation and risk taking**



# Continuing Challenges

- **Slowly moving back from COVID**
- **Collective Leadership**
  - Still developing our structure
  - Implementation of the New Curriculum



# Key Successes

**Culture of Coaching,  
Culture of Trust**

**Interconnectedness**

**Vision - Visibility -  
Voice**

**Collaborative  
Conversations  
Replacing Sr.  
Admin Reviews**

