

CASS Leading for Learning 2025

21 People Services & HR Skills That Help School Leaders Succeed



July 8, 2025 (1:15 - 4:00)

Land Acknowledgement



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Welcome & Rapid Introductions

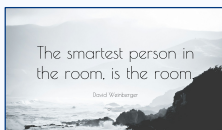
Small group

- Name
- Role, Organization & School
- First memory of putting your hands on a computer...



Norms For Our Time Together

- Safe, honest dialogue & sharing
- Theft of good ideas
- Be present, engaged, and vulnerable.
- Ensure equal voice and input.
- Sit and 'give' trumps sit and 'get'.



Agenda

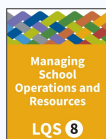
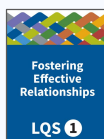
- 1:15 - Welcome, Introductions & Norms
- 1:25 - Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) Competencies
- 1:30 - 21 HR Skills: Great leaders learn how to...
- 1:35 - HR Skills 1-11 (45 min)
- 2:35 - Stand-up Break (10 min)
- 2:45 - HR Skills 12-21, plus a bonus:-) (45 min)
- 3:45 - Reflections & One take-away from our time together
- 3:58 - Out of the gate by 3:58

AGENDA

LQS Competencies

Fostering Effective Relationships

1. A leader builds positive working relationships with members of the school community and local community.



Managing School Operations and Resources

8. A leader effectively directs operations and manages resources.

What Problem Are We Trying To Solve?



August 15, 1999

21 HR Skills: Great leaders learn how to...

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Think of others as a loved one | 12. Meet with their own team |
| 2. Do the right thing | 13. Collect and use feedback |
| 3. Check references really, really well | 14. Manage technology |
| 4. Conduct evidence-based interviews | 15. Use HR data effectively |
| 5. Ask effective interview questions | 16. Build trust |
| 6. Welcome and support new hires | 17. Find the 'will of the group' |
| 7. Set the stage with staff in August | 18. Learn from exit interviews |
| 8. Be highly visible | 19. Apologize, often |
| 9. Focus on growth & supervision | 20. Plan next year's roles |
| 10. Pierce the bubble | 21. Take care of staff |
| 11. Utilize amazing ATA resources | +1: Take care of themselves |

Scenario - The Last One In...

* 5 min group

During the first month of school, you notice that Mr. G (one of your more experienced teachers) is arriving at school after the 4-minute warning bell a few times each week. The first few times you notice this, you ask him if everything is ok. He replies, "Top Notch!" and carries on with a smile. One day, you go to Mr. G's classroom to supervise his students prior to his arrival. When he walks in, he simply begins his lesson and gives you the 'thumbs up'. As the year goes on, Mr. G is late once every few weeks. Each time you bring up the notion, he thanks you for having his back. Mr. G seems unfazed and unaffected by your efforts. How will you proceed?

1. Think of others as a loved one

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- If this was my spouse, my sibling, my parent, or my child, how would I approach the situation?

A Great Read

- What Great Principals Do Differently: 18 Things That Matter Most. (2012) Whitaker, Todd.

A Story - Chiune Sugihara

- Chiune Sugihara
- Japanese Diplomat
- 1939 assignment to Lithuania
- Jewish refugees from Poland and Europe
- Transit visas to Japan for safe passage to the Soviet Union
- Orders from Japan vs. people before him
- The Moral Dilemma
- Thousands of visas, tens of thousands of descendants



2. Do the right thing

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- Am I ready to act with integrity, and do the right thing, whether or not someone is looking?

A Great Read

- Practical Wisdom - The Right Way to Do The Right Thing (2010). Schwartz, Barry.

Sharing - Reference Checking 3-2-1 * 5 min group



In your small group, please share:

- 3 - Favourite questions you love to ask references
- 2 - Mistakes you've made in the past
- 1 - Thing you wonder about regarding reference checking

3. Check references really, really well

Great leaders learn how to.

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- What evidence do the references provide that convince me that the candidate will be great?

A Great Read

- Talking to Strangers: What We Should Know About the People We Don't Know (2019). Gladwell, Malcolm.

Handout - Evidence-Based Interviews

- How are evidence-based interviews conducted?
- What are the benefits and strengths?
- What are the challenges?

Handout: [Evidence-Based Teacher Interviews in CESD](#)



4. Conduct evidence-based interviews

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- How can I observe candidates teaching lessons to students and engage in meaningful dialogue around their teaching?

A Great Read

- Open-to-learning Conversations (2009). Robinson, Viviane M.J. ([article link](#))

Sharing - Your Favourite Question

* 5 min group

In your small group, please share:

- Your favourite interview question?



5. Ask effective interview questions

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- How can I engage candidates in higher level thinking and honest reflective dialogue?

A Great Read

- 10 Mindframes for Visible Learning - Teaching for Success (2018). Hattie, John and Zierer, Klaus.

Handout - The New Teacher Checklist * 5 min group

- What common mistakes do principals and supervisors make with new hires?

Handout: [The CESD New Teacher Checklist](#)



6. Welcome and support new hires

Great leaders learn how to.

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- What are all the things I need to do to support new hires, and how do I organize and institutionalize my efforts?

A Great Read

- 20 Biggest Mistakes Principals Make and How to Avoid Them. (2004) Grady, Marilyn L.

Scenario - The August staff address * 5 min group

It's August and you are getting ready to welcome your staff and share three key points with your staff. What will you say?

(Pick one, and share)



7. Set the stage with staff in August

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- I get one chance to deliver my key messages, non-negotiables, etc.? What will I say?

A Great Read

- People Leadership: 30 Strategies to Ensure Your Team's Success. (2015) Folk, Gina.

Guessing Game - Admin Evaluations

Over the past decade, I've had the opportunity to evaluate dozens of high functioning school leaders who have had a profound positive effect on students, parents, and staff? These school leaders are highly skilled and greatly appreciated by those they serve. However, there is one area of growth that is identified almost every single time.

What do you think it might be?

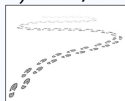
8. Be highly visible

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- What's my visibility plan? How will I ensure I'm out in classrooms, hallways, and spaces?

A Great Read

- Move Your Bus: An Extraordinary New Approach to Accelerating Success in Work and Life. (2015) Clark, Ron.



Scenario - Eugene

* 5 min small group

Eugene is in his 16th year of teaching. He often complains about his students in the staff room, and many parents submit requests to avoid having their children in his class. Also, when Eugene gets upset, he raises his voice in anger. Colleagues in Eugene's wing of the school regularly comment to you that they can hear him yelling at his students to "Get to work or get out!" Last week, while a regular parent volunteer was walking by the room, Eugene yelled "Shut Up!" at two of his students during silent reading time. The parent lets you know right away and pleads for you to do something about it. How will you proceed?

9. Focus on growth & supervision

Great leaders learn how to

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- What's my plan for supporting the growth and supervision of my teachers and support staff? How can I help? (99.9%)

A Great Read

- [Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy](#)

Scenario - Rose Marie

* 5 min small group

One fine November day, you are informed by your admin support that one of your teachers (Rose Marie) has posted her displeasure with her current homeroom class on Facebook. She has posted a few quotations about parents not taking responsibility for their own kids. You are hesitant to address this with Rose Marie as she has indicated to you before you shouldn't be 'creeping on her Facebook account.' How will you proceed?

10. Pierce the bubble

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- What's my plan for talking, pierce the bubble

A Great Read

- Crucial Accountability: Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behavior. (2013) Patterson, Kerry et al.



Commercial - The ATA



The Alberta
Teachers' Association

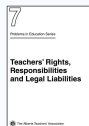
11. Utilize amazing ATA resources

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- How can ATA's resources and people help me?

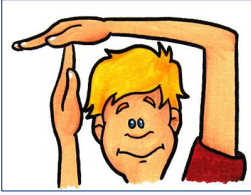
A Great Read

- [Teachers' Rights, Responsibilities and Legal Liabilities. \(2023\). The Alberta Teachers Association.](#)



Take breaks...

Great leaders learn how to:



Sharing - Protective Hands...

Chat/Discuss

When will you and your admin partner (or key team) meet on a weekly basis to stay connected?



12. Meet with their own team

Great leaders learn how to:

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- When will you and your admin partner meet on a weekly basis to stay connected? Your whole office team? How will you schedule and stick to the plan?

A Great Read

- Death by Meeting: A Leadership Fable About Solving the Most Painful Problem in Business. (2004) Lencioni, Patrick.

A Story - The Educational Assistants

- Principal or Vice-Principal selection process
- Large group meeting
- "What do you want to see in your next leader"
- A few confident voices and lots of nodding heads
- ...a phone call a few days later



13. Collect and use feedback

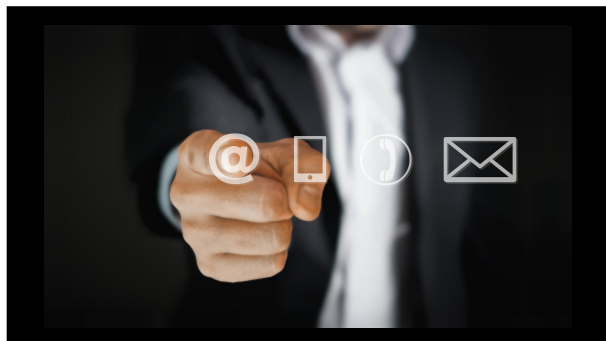
Great leaders learn how to

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- How will I collect meaningful feedback from everyone (extroverts and introverts) on my staff?

A Great Read

- Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking. (2013) Cain, Susan



Hey, sorry to bug you on a Sunday, and there is no rush, but I just wanted to check and see if you got my email yesterday.

Good evening Team, I'm thinking we should move the assembly tomorrow morning to 9:00 a.m. Any concerns?

...just being honest, I was pretty disappointed in you today. We'll need to talk tomorrow first thing - people matter you know.



Handout - Weekdays 'Til 6

Research is crystal clear. Multitasking is harmful to our:

- **Productivity:** Multitasking is actually 'task switching' which devastates our effectiveness.
- **Well-being:** There is a direct correlation between stress levels and multitasking. Both are unwanted.
- **Brain:** Multitasking affects our brain's regular functions and abilities.
- **Happiness:** New studies clearly link unhappiness with increased multitasking.

Handout: [CESD Weekdays 'Til 6](#)



14. Manage technology

Great leaders learn how to

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- How will I protect myself and my deep work from an onslaught of emails, texts, posts, and social media comments?

A Great Read

- Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World. (2019) Newport, Cal.

A Story - Loretta

- Very good elementary teacher
- Principal wanted to address missed days
- Principal shared parental complaints - missing a lot
- Principal wondered if EDB would be better for Loretta
- What does the data tell us?

15. Use HR data effectively

Great leaders learn how to

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- Do I have quick access to HR and payroll data so I can base my decisions on facts and trends?

A Great Read

- Influencer: The Power to Change Anything. (2008) Patterson, Kerry et al.

Scenario - Building Trust

* 5 min group

It's June. You've just been named Principal of a large 450-student school in your school division. How will you build trust with your 45 new colleagues in the school? What's your plan?

16. Build trust

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- How will I build trust with those that I serve?

A Great Read

- Everyone Communicates Few Connect: What the Most Effective People Do Differently. (2010) Maxwell, John C.

A Story - Literacy, Numeracy, & Physical

- Large elementary school
- Planning and celebrating
- Literacy, numeracy, physical activity, safe & caring
- 55 out of 60 staff
- Paralysis of choice

17. Find the 'will of the group'

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- What is the will of the group and how can I honour it?

A Great Read

- Emotional Intelligence 2.0. (2009) Bradberry, Travis & Jean Greaves.

Handout - Departing Staff Member Checklist

- Staff members who are leaving your organization have lots to share.

Handout: [Departing Staff Member Checklist](#)



18. Learn from exit interviews

Great leaders learn how to

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- What can I learn from staff who are leaving my school or organization?

A Great Read

- [Indeed - 8 Exit Interview Questions That You Should Ask](#)

The Power of A Story - Evan Dunfee

- 2016 Olympics in Rio
- Dunfee places 4th in the 50 km race walk
- Hirooki Arai gets disqualified for a bump
- Dunfee is awarded the bronze medal
- Upon review, Arai's disqualification is Overturned.
- And then Dunfee views the video.



19. Apologize

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- Am I ready to apologize when I make mistakes or when things go awry?

A Great Read

- Creating Magic: 10 Common Sense Leadership Strategies from a Life at Disney. (2008) Cockerell, Lee

Scenario - The Plan for Next Year

* 5 min small group

Next year's enrollment projections and budget allocations dictate that you must assign one of your four grade 4 teachers to a different grade within your school. You have strong opinions about who you'd like to see move, and the teacher will not be happy. You will also have to re-assign a number of educational assistants. How will you proceed?



20. Plan next year's roles

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- What is my process for assigning roles for the next school year? How will I collect feedback from support staff and teachers?

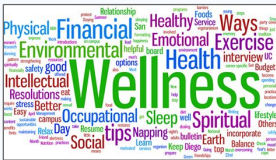
A Great Read

- Unmistakable Impact: A Partnership Approach for Dramatically Improving Instruction. (2011) Knight, Jim.

Discussion - Staff Health and Wellness

* 5 min small group

What are three things you'd like to implement (or maintain) to help take care of your staff from a Staff Health & Wellness perspective?



21. Take care of staff

Great leaders learn how to

- Key Question Great Leaders Ask**
- How will I support staff health and wellness in my school and my division while also promoting personal responsibility?
- A Great Read**
- [ASEBP Wellness - It Takes A Village](#) (formerly Sandbox)

Sharing - One Thing For Me

* large group

What's one thing you know helps you take care of you?



Bonus. Take care of themselves

Key Question Great Leaders Ask

- How will I take care of myself.



A Great Read

- The Happiness Advantage: How a Positive Brain Fuels Success in Work and Life. (2010) Achor, Shawn.

Wrap-Up and Discussion

What's one take-away that you are leaving with today? It could be:

- Something you learned today;
- One thing you are leaving with;
- A concept that you are thinking about;
- An observation of the day or of the process;
- An idea about your school or department;
- One thing that you are still wondering about;
- Anything that you are proud of; or
- Just something that you'd like to share with our group.



Thank you!!

Questions, follow-up and parking validation:

- Ray Hoppins
➤ rayhoppins@gmail.com