

Figure 1:

9 Practices of Strong District Leaders



Dimensions	Specific Leadership Practices	Dimensions	Specific Leadership Practices
<p>1 Establish broadly shared mission, vision and goals founded on ambitious images of the educated person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that a transparent visioning/direction-setting process is carried out Consult extensively about district directions as part of the process Spend sufficient time to ensure that the mission, vision and goals (directions) of the system are widely known, understood and shared by all members of their organizations Articulate, demonstrate and model the system's goals, priorities, and values to staffs when visiting schools Embed district directions in improvement plans, principal meetings and other leader-initiated interactions 	<p>6 Align budgets, personnel policies/procedures and uses of time with district mission, vision and goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the allocation of resources with district and school improvement goals Align personnel policies and procedures with the district's improvement goals Align organizational structures with the district's improvement goals Provide principals with considerable autonomy in the hiring of teaching staff Expect and assist schools to allocate instructional resources equitably 		
<p>2 Provide coherent instructional guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a service orientation toward schools Align curricular goals, assessment instruments, instructional practices and teaching resources Insist on ambitious goals for teaching and learning Advocate for attention to the best available evidence to inform instructional improvement decisions Expect schools to focus on needs of individual as well as groups of students Encourage staff to be innovative within the boundaries created by the district's instructional guidance system 	<p>7 Use a comprehensive performance management system for school and district leadership development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the best available evidence about successful leadership as a key source of criteria used for recruiting, selecting, developing and appraising school and district leaders Match the capacities of leaders with the needs of schools Provide prospective and existing leaders with extended opportunities to further develop their leadership capacities Develop realistic plans for leadership succession Promote co-ordinated forms of leadership distribution in schools 		
<p>3 Build district and school staffs' capacities and commitments to seek out and use multiple sources of evidence to inform decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data from all available sources to assist decision making in the central office Insist on the use of the best available research and other systematically collected evidence to inform decisions wherever possible Encourage collaboration in the interpretation and uses of data Build system's capacity and disposition for using systematically collected data to inform decision-making Provide training for principals and staff on the use of data and research literature to sustain decision-making Model evidence-informed decision-making to school staffs Ground interactions with, and advice to, trustees in sound evidence 	<p>8 Advocate for and support a policy-governance approach to board of trustee practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage trustees to focus on district policy and the achievement of the district's goals and priorities (policy governance model of trustee practice) Encourage participation of the elected board in setting broad goals for its use in fulfilling its policy-setting and policy-monitoring responsibilities Regularly report to the board progress in achieving these broad goals 		
<p>4 Create learning-oriented organizational improvement processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require improvement processes to be evidence-informed Set a manageable number of precise targets for district school improvement Include school-level leaders in decisions about district-wide improvement decisions Create structures and norms within the district to encourage regular, reciprocal and extended deliberations about improvement progress within and across schools, as well as across the system as a whole Develop and implement board and school improvement plans interactively and collaboratively with school leaders Create structures to facilitate regular monitoring and refining of improvement processes Acknowledge provincial goals and priorities in district and school improvement initiatives Allow for school-level variation in school improvement efforts 	<p>9 Nurture productive working relationships with staff and stakeholders</p> <p><i>Internal district and school staffs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop communication systems and processes throughout the district to keep all members informed Develop open, accessible and collaborative relationships with principals Encourage reciprocal forms of communication with and among schools Promote high levels of interaction among all school leaders, driven by a shared sense of responsibility for system improvement Create structures to facilitate reciprocal forms of communication, resulting in deeply interconnected networks of school and system leaders working together on achieving the system's directions Buffer schools from external distractions to the district's and schools' priorities and goals <p><i>Local community groups</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routinely consult with community groups on decisions affecting the community Encourage staff to participate directly in community groups Demonstrate the importance the district attaches to its community connections <p><i>Parents</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold schools accountable for developing productive working relationships with parents Influence the work of schools toward fostering improved educational cultures in the home environments of their students 		
<p>5 Provide job-embedded professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide extensive PD opportunities for both teachers and school-level leaders, most of it through some form of learning community or on-the-job context Use internal system networks as central mechanism for the professional development of school-level leaders Align the content of professional development with the capacities needed for district and school improvement Require individual staff growth plans to be aligned with district and school improvement priorities Hold staff accountable for applying new capacities by monitoring the implementation of school improvement plans 	<p><i>Ministry of Education</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/maintain high levels of engagement with provincial department/ministry of education Engagement with department/ministry is frequently proactive rather than only responsive Make flexible, adaptive use of provincial initiatives and frameworks, ensuring that they contribute to, rather than detract from, accomplishing system goals and priorities 		