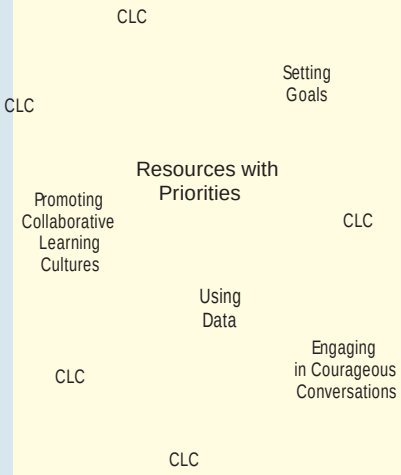
ONTARIO LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

1 !D (shows how it is derived from the)Tj ET EMC /Span <</MCID 84 >>BDC BT /T1_0 1 Tf 8.55 0 0 9 165.5842 289.114 Tm



Effective Resource Alignment: What Does It Look Like?

It is leadership-driven

According to Levacić (2010), effective resource alignment is inextricably linked with successful leadership, and with the effective management of teaching and learning. Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) whose research illuminates the complex relationship between educational leadership and student achievement echo this view. They argue further that this is not an "ad hoc process," but rather, "a process guided by clear goals and purposes." These purposes help to shape the criteria used to make resource allocation decisions. They found that when identifying and obtaining resources, leaders in high-performing schools:

- use clear criteria that are aligned to pedagogical and philosophical purposes
- ensure that there is sustained funding for pedagogical priorities.

For Miles and Frank (2008), aligning resources with priorities involves three distinct functions:

1. Clearly de ning what the school intends to accomplish
2. Developing an instructional model appropriate to that goal
3. Organizing resources in a way that supports the instructional model.

In addition, they argue that while schools can and do organize resources in a variety of ways, high-performing schools organize people, time and money against three key resource allocation strategies:

1. Investing continuously in improving teaching quality through hiring, professional development, job structure and common planning time
2. Creating opportunities for individual attention and personal learning environments
3. Maximizing academic time and linking that time to student learning.

It is strategic and supports ef ciency of operations

2. Organizing people, time and money to support this instructional model by investing in teaching quality, using student time strategically, and creating individual attention for students.

s These schools are priority-focused. They make trade-offs to invest

It is purposeful

Another important window into effectively focusing resources is provided by Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010) whose research into how schools are organized and how schools interact with the community can make the difference. Their research identi ed the following interrelated organizational features of schools that are essential to advancing student achievement and engagement:

1. A coherent instructional guidance system: These schools have instructional systems in place that articulate the “what” and “how” of instruction, and clearly set out both the learning tasks given to students and the assessments that will inform ongoing instruction.
2. Professional capacity: This feature encompasses the quality of teaching staff, the professional development that supports their learning and the social resources within a staff that enable them to work together and solve problems.
3. Strong ties between parents, the community and the school: Having strong ties in place between school professionals and the parents and community they serve is essential. The quality

Organize for instructional improvement

The work of Horng and Loeb (2010) suggests that leaders should "think differently" about how to ful l their role as instructional leaders. Instead of following the tradition that has characterized successful instructional leaders as "hands-on" leaders, "engaged with curriculum and instruction issues, unafraid to work directly with teachers, and often present in classrooms," they present a broader conception of instructional leadership.

School leaders, they say, exert a tremendous effect on student learning through organizational management – the teachers they hire, how they assign those teachers to classrooms, how they retain teachers and how they create opportunities for teachers to improve.

Support for Horng and Loeb's conception about how school leaders in uence teaching and learning can also be found in the Wallace Foundation's six-year study of school leadership (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson, 2010). This research shows that school leaders primarily affect student learning by in uencing teachers' motivations and working conditions. This study suggests that, by comparison, leaders' in uence on teachers' knowledge and skills has far less effect on student learning. The authors therefore caution against conceiving of "instructional leadership" as leadership solely focused on classroom instruction.

Build capacity to put priorities rst

Wagner, Kegan, Lahey, Lemons, Garnier, Helsing, Howell, Thurber and Rasmussen (2006) present an important perspective on what leaders need to do in order to improve their capacity to focus. Most leaders, they say, understand the importance of choosing a priority and focusing on it relentlessly, but very often fail to do so. "So, why don't they?" is a question these researchers address.

In their work, Wagner et al describe leaders who are "dancing as fast as they can" and putting enormous effort into sound initiatives that make sense. But in most cases, they say, no signi cant progress is being made. Furthermore, it becomes increasingly dif cult to enlist people's energies in future efforts. "Look how hard we tried last time and we still didn't get anywhere. So what's the use?" goes the logic, they say.

"Trying harder" may be an effective approach to technical challenges. However, for adaptive challenges these researchers suggest we need to "move to the balcony, away from the dance oor" and look at the underlying factors that are preventing us from doing the "relentless

Challenge #2: Staying on Track

Set meaningful benchmarks

Hattie (2009) demonstrates through his compelling research that the "claim that an initiative 'works' is unpersuasive because a comparison with 'no impact at all' is a bar set so low that all initiatives appear worthwhile." In fact, the vast majority of initiatives do produce some small gain. "Impact worthy of leadership focus," he argues "is one that requires evidence that the proposed initiative can effect a signi cantly greater gain over current practice."

Because 95 percent of interventions result in some gain in achievement, Hattie concludes that the "criterion of impact" must be "more than 'better than nothing.' It must surpass a benchmark of real-world change."

Marzano (2011/2012) adds an important perspective to Hattie's convincing ndings, which is the proviso that "a strategy is just a tool." It's "how you use the strategy" that is key – the effect on student learning will be dependent on the extent to which the strategy is effectively put into practice.

Expect the unexpected

Levin (2008) argues that no organization can do everything at once at a high level. We must identify and focus unremittingly on a small number of high-pro le priorities. He also suggests, however, that "surprise" is an inevitable part of the work of school improvement. Many plans, even well-made ones, are thrown off track – or abandoned entirely – in the face of completely unexpected developments. In effect, the truly important is often driven out by the "urgent."

While there are no easy solutions to this challenge, it is important that leaders recognize they will always have more things to do than they have time for. Distractions are inevitable but have to be managed to minimize their negative impact.

One key distinction Levin (2008, 2012b) offers is that there are two types of things a leader can spend time on:

1.

Levin (2012b) believes that it is possible for leaders to get closer to an optimal use of time and offers these suggestions:

- Accept the reality that surprises will occur.
- Determine the few critical things that must happen for your organization to succeed and only you can do.
- Build these most important things into your schedule and protect them so they are more likely to bind you.
- Make your commitments public; tell others you have scheduled them.
- Hold fewer and shorter meetings. Eliminate discussion of things that can be communicated on paper or through e-mail and focus meetings on things that require discussion.
- Delegate work to others and trust them to do it.
- Avoid deferring entirely to the demands of the larger organization.

Deal with distraction

In *Change Leader*, Michael Fullan (2011a) identifies what he calls the "disease of distraction." It is easy, he suggests, to become overloaded, confused and misdirected by too much information. While we must

Recent research conducted by - œ Õ ˆ Ì > À ˆ Ã Ê > ˜ ` Ê > À V i • • œ Ê - Ó ä £ £ ® Ê on executive teams suggests Ì ... > Ì Ê Ì ... i Ê L ˆ > Ã Ê > } > ˆ ˜ Ã Ì ê “ Õ ì ˆ ì > Ã ing may be misguided. A third of the executive teams they surveyed displayed a preference for interruptions; i.e. “polychronicity.” About half as many preferred to focus deeply; i.e. “monochronicity.”

Embrace “positive interruptions”

Cathy Davidson (2011, 2012) offers an alternative – and somewhat provocative – perspective on how to deal with distraction, which may apply to at least some leaders. “Instead of battling distraction” she suggests that we “embrace our brain’s proclivity for it.” Research she says shows that 21st Century knowledge workers “switch tasks an average of once every three minutes. Forty-four percent of the switches are caused by ‘internal’ rather than ‘external’ sources of distraction – meaning our minds simply wander.” Once focus has been interrupted, it takes an average of 25 minutes to return to it.

With this research in mind, Davidson counters the view that we should try to eliminate distractions. She believes that “today’s leaders are capable of coping with and sometimes even thriving on them.” Her argument is that “because our brains are built to multitask” we should “unlearn” the skill of making undivided attention an ideal. Why? “Because not everyone has the same style requirements for attention.”

Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do.

– Steve Jobs – cited in Isaacson 2012

She cites research that shows that “accident, disruption, distraction, and difference increase our motivation to learn and solve problems, both individually and collectively. The key is to embrace and even create positive interruptions.”

Keep it simple

In contrast to Davidson’s perspective, Jim Collins (2001), in his book Good to Great, reveres simplicity and offers it as the answer to putting first things first and staying on track. “The real path to greatness [and excellence]” he says, “requires simplicity and diligence. It requires clarity, not instant illumination. It demands each of us to focus on what is vital – and to eliminate all of the extraneous distractions.”

That’s why, as many know, he reveres hedgehogs, which do one thing well – roll into a ball to protect themselves – as opposed to foxes, which plan and plot and scheme as they “pursue many ends at the same time.” Foxes aren’t simple. They are “scattered and diffused, moving on many levels.” That’s why they fail. By contrast, hedgehogs with their simple, singular focus succeed because they commit entirely and exclusively to “what is essential and ignore the rest.”

Practice selective abandonment

Lovely (2006) agrees with Collins and suggests that leaders need to have a framework in place that helps them identify what is essential, before they can effectively decide what to let go of – a process she calls “selective abandonment.” Selective abandonment involves eliminating things that don’t bring enough value to the implementation of key priorities. She offers a “making room for essentials” checklist of “quality screening indicators” as a means of assessing which activities

or projects are worth retaining. Ask yourself if the program, service or activity

- has evidence or data to indicate it directly contributes to increased academic performance for all students?
- aligns with the school district mission and goals?
- is research-based?
- has an evaluation process? If not, can one be developed?
- results in outcomes and contributions that justify the amount of resources required?

i > ` i À Ã Ê “ Õ Ã Ì Ê > Ã Ž Ê Ì Ü œ Ê i Â Ã i ˜ Ì ˆ > • Ê questions about every decision they consider:

£ ° Ê … > Ì Ê ˆ Ã Ê Ì … i Ê i Ý Ì i ˜ Ì Ê œ v Ê ˜ Ê ability to in uence this action?

Ó ° Ê

In practicing “selective abandonment” of course, we would do well to avoid prematurely abandoning strategies that may take time to become established and produce results.

Challenge #3: Making Optimal Use of Available Resources

Strengthen strategic nancial and human resource management skills

In Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice, a study commissioned by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Pont, Nusche, and Moorman (2008) identify “strategic nancial and human resource management” as one of four major domains of responsibility essential for school leadership to improve student outcomes. The argument made is that “effective planning and management of resources can improve school outcomes by strategically aligning resources with pedagogical purposes.”

The authors point out that the challenge in ful lling this responsibility is that almost all principals or aspiring leaders have a background as teachers. They suggest that “when principals take up their position they may not necessarily be competent as pedagogical leaders and they often lack knowledge in personnel and nancial management and the skills for working beyond the school borders – the leadership tasks required for schools of the 21st Century.” It is therefore important to ensure that school leaders are equipped to make strategic use of resources.

Dodd’s (2006) research puts this view into perspective arguing that a school can manage its budget to high accounting standards, while failing to move learning forward. He argues that the allocation of resources for educational purposes is crucial rather than expertise in nancial management. This is not to say that competence in nancial management is not essential to effective resource allocation. On the contrary, the majority of the sample schools in Dodd’s study appear to be competently managed in terms of nance, and some appear very well managed. And in fact, a lack of expertise in managing nances

led Dodd to conclude that greater investment in the experience and expertise of the staff related to resource allocation will lead to improvements in nancial and resource management and control.

This view nds support in ‘Instructional Leadership vs. Instructional Management,’ (Ontario Principal Council’s Professional Services Team, 2011). The authors suggest that “an effective instructional leader needs to have well-developed management skills in order to lead effectively…an instructional leader is accountable for the

District leaders must portray a

District Leadership: Implications for Effective Practice

Effective resource allocation at the school level depends on similarly coherent strategies at the district level. In fact there is strong consensus among researchers and practitioners alike that if the senior leaders in a system do not “walk the talk” by effectively aligning resources with priorities at a district level, they cannot expect this alignment to happen in schools. The following section draws on a sampling of current research ndings to suggest essential actions systems must take to make successful resource allocation possible at the school level.

Adopt resource alignment as a key district focus

Marzano and Waters (2009) offer an evidence-based perspective that illustrates how aligning resources with priorities is one of ve important actions that districts must take to bring about improved teaching and learning. Their meta-analysis – which included determining the speci c district leadership behaviours associated with student achievement – identi ed the following ve speci c actions:

1. Ensure collaborative goal setting
2. Establish non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction
3. Create board alignment with and support of district goals
4. Monitor achievement and instruction goals
5. Allocate resources to support goals for achievement and instruction.

According to these researchers, resource alignment – along with collaborative goal setting and district alignment – is a necessary foundation for reaching non-negotiable goals for achievement and instruction. They argue further that the necessary resources including time, money, personnel and materials, must be allocated to accomplish the district’s goals and can mean “cutting back on or dropping initiatives that are not aligned with district goals for achievement and instruction.”

De ne and support a clear success trajectory

For Levin (2012b) effective resource alignment with priorities must be embedded in an overall strategy for school and system improvement. To illustrate this notion his proposals for improvement in high school settings include an implementation plan that consists of the following interrelated and interdependent dimensions:

- a strong focus on a few clear priorities throughout the organization
- a widely understood and accepted plan
- infrastructure and resources focused on the priorities
- systems, structures, and processes to support the plan
- the capacity to deal with resistance
- monitoring measures of progress
- extensive two-way communication.

In Levin's view the rst and most important requirement for effective implementation is "sustained attention." This sense of focus and attention, he argues, must start at the top of the organization. What does a clear district focus look like? Levin paints a clear picture of such a focus in the following:

- Key priorities permeate everything the organization does.
- Priorities are the main focus of all internal and external communi - cation so that everyone recognizes and understands them.
- People throughout the organization can see their role in achieving

Pursue true district-wide coherence

The Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) provides a powerful example of the interrelatedness and interdependence of key dimensions of a district-wide framework for improvement (Childress, Elmore and Grossman, 2006). The PELP framework grew out of the belief that school-based solutions to student improvement, while important, aren't enough.

For the PELP team, achieving improvement on a broad scale required a district-wide strategy for improving classroom instruction and an organization capable of implementing it. In response they developed the following framework, one that clearly identi es and organizes a

Aligning Resources with Priorities in the Ontario Context: The Ontario Leadership Framework 2012

How are these research findings reflected in the Ontario Leadership Framework 2012? Within the framework, the core leadership capacity (CLC) "aligning resources with priorities" is recognized as essential to successful leadership.

The CLCs apply across the domains of the school-level practices rather than residing within a particular domain of school level leadership practices. They are supported by the use of personal leadership resources – cognitive, social and psychological resources.

The "aligning resources with priorities" CLC is about strengthening leadership practices and personal leadership resources. This CLC helps ensure that resources – including financial, capital, human resources, curriculum and teaching resources, professional learning resources and program allocations – are linked to priorities in a coherent fashion, with student achievement as the central focus.

The primary challenge implicit in this CLC is one of getting the most educational value for students from resources already available. Addressing this challenge entails good stewardship of public resources and careful alignment of resources in support of the school's improvement priorities to support student success.

Making Connections: Aligning Resources with Priorities and Other Core Leadership Capacities

It is important to view the five Core Leadership Capacities – setting goals, aligning resources with priorities, promoting collaborative learning cultures, using data, and engaging in courageous conversations – as interconnected and interdependent in theory and in practice. In fact, all of the CLCs can and do interact with and support

[1] The Ontario Leadership Framework 2012 (OLF) provides the foundation for implementing the Ontario Leadership Strategy. The OLF 2012 incorporates evidence from recent research and provides new insights into what effective leadership looks like.

This table illustrates how “aligning resources with priorities” is embedded in the Ontario Leadership Framework 2012		
DOMAINS OF THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK 2012	SELECTED SCHOOL-LEVEL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES & EXAMPLES OF WHAT THESE PRACTICES LOOK LIKE IN ACTION	PERSONAL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES: Leaders draw upon their personal leadership resources to effectively enact leadership practices
Setting Directions	Building a shared vision U Ê i • « Ê Ã Ì > v v Ê > ˜ ` ` Ê ` ` ˆ Û i À Ã i Ê Ã Ì > Ž i ... œ • ` i À Ã Ê Ì œ e Ê Õ ˜ ` ` i À Ã Ì > ˜ ` ` Ê Ì ... i Ê À i • > Ì ˆ œ ˜	

- Communicate with stakeholders throughout the various stages of all projects, including advice/direction at the front end, input/ feedback during the review process, and formal and informal communication on a regular basis; and
- Capitalize on cost savings and cost containment wherever possible.

For more information on sector resources designed to help strengthen management capacity, contact the ministry's School

Implementing Full-

MathGAINS

MathGAINS is a website that provides learning materials for students

- Report on Leading Practices in Attendance Support for Ontario School Boards identifies leading practices across the education sector to support student achievement through the development of a healthy work culture and consistent staff attendance. The report provides a practical approach to support the implementation of an effective attendance support program.
- Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive Implementation Guide for Ontario School Boards is designed to support school board compliance with the Broader Public Sector (BPS) Expenses Directive, which will increase the accountability and transparency of all BPS organizations while making effective use of taxpayer funds. The

- Ontario Education Leaders (OEN) is a professional network, a Ning set up for school and district leaders across Ontario. It provides a forum for the discussion of topics of interest to members about leadership practice. Principal Congress materials are provided on the Ning along with the PW2K series. Members are encouraged to post items, share ideas, ask questions, and suggest topics for new issues of PW2K. Ontario leaders can sign up to join the Ning by visiting the Institute for Education Leadership (IEL) website at www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/content/home

Professional Learning Opportunities and Resources Offered by Ontario Leadership Associations:

- Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO) and Association des gestionnaires de l'éducation franco-ontarienne (AGÉFO)
- Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO) and Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association (OCSOA)
- Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) and Ontario Public Supervisory Officials' Association (OPSOA)

Dialogue: What You Told Us

Ideas Into Action is designed to support the capacity building being undertaken by the ministry, Ontario's provincial leadership associations, the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) and districts. It is intended to contribute to your ongoing professional learning and provide you and your colleagues with a meaningful springboard for re ection and professional dialogue and for putting these ideas into action.

Reader Insights and Perspectives on the Five CLCs

In the last issue of *Ideas Into Action*, we asked you to share your thoughts and experiences. Here is a sampling of comments received:

Connective Intelligence® and the Five Core Leadership Capacities

Connective Intelligence® (C.I.) is the capacity to harness the combined use of these five core leadership capacities, transforming intentions into effective actions and results.

"During the Ontario Principals' Council's Connective Intelligence® Program, participants are given the opportunity to examine each

Selected Resources and Publications: Recommended by Ontario Leaders

Change Leader: Learning to Do What Matters Most by Fullan (2011a) focuses on the following seven core practices of leadership Fullan argues are vital for leading in today's complex world: practice drives theory, be resolute, motivate the masses, collaborate to compete, learn con dently, know your impact, and sustain simplexity.

Change Leadership: A Practical Guide to Transforming Our Schools by Wagner et al (2006), members of Harvard's Change Leadership Group grows out of a ve-year study of school improvement. Wagner et al present a framework to analyze the work of school change and provide exercises that guide educators through the development of their practice.

Correcting the Money Myth: Rethinking School Resources by Grubb (2010) revisits the concept of "the money myth", which he says is the "contention that any education problem requires increased spending and, conversely, that reform is impossible without more funding." Grubb argues that many reforms require resources that money cannot buy and what is needed is building capacity of schools to use resources more effectively and to create new resources on their own.

Dealing with Information Overload by the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (2011) offers tips for avoiding "technostress" by "taming information overload at work."

District Leadership that Works: Striking the Right Balance by Marzano and Waters (2009) addresses the central research question: "What is the strength of relationship between district-level administrative actions and student achievement?"

Doubling Student Performance…and Finding the Resources to Do It edited by Odden and Archibald (2009) combines the latest research with the authors' national study of diverse schools that were able to signi cantly boost student achievement. This resource provides examples and case studies, strategies for increasing student achievement and clear steps for alignment of resources with priorities.

Finding Your Leadership Focus: What Matters Most for Student Results by Reeves (2011) blends research and practice to address a major challenge faced by today's school leaders: an ever-growing number of programs and initiatives. Reeves shows how leaders can determine what is truly most important based on their local concerns, challenges, populations and other school factors.

Focus: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning by Mike Schmoker (2011) makes the case that what is “essential” for schools amounts to three simple things: coherent curriculum (what we teach), sound lessons (how we teach) and purposeful reading and writing in every discipline, or authentic literacy (integral to both what and how we teach).

Good Strategy Bad Strategy: The Difference and Why It Matters by Richard Rumelt (2011a) provides a clear way to create and implement a powerful action-oriented strategy by shedding light on the elements of “bad strategy” and awakening an understanding of the power of a “good strategy.”

Improving Teaching and Learning when Budgets are Tight by Todd Odden

Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago by Bryk et al (2010) chronicles a groundbreaking systematic longitudinal study of the internal workings and external community conditions that distinguished improving elementary schools from those that failed to improve. Through this research, the authors identi ed ve organizational features of schools that interact with life inside classrooms and are essential to advancing student achievement.

Resourceful Leadership: Tradeoffs and Tough Decisions on the Road to School Improvement by City (2008) examines how tradeoffs among time, people, and money are integrated into school leaders' improvement strategies in the context of two small urban high schools.

Setting Leadership Priorities: What's Necessary, What's Nice, and What's Got to Go by Lovely (2006) provides school leaders with practical strategies for "(a) stepping back from the fray, (b) asking 'who is better equipped to handle this problem' or (c) say 'no thank you' without feeling guilty about it."

The Money Myth: School Resources, Outcomes, and Equity by Gibb (2009) argues for "a different approach to schooling, to implement the many interconnected elements necessary for a complex and constructivist approach, and to provide both the complex array of school resources and the non-educational policies necessary" for effective and equitable schools.

The Strategic School: How to Make the Most of Your School's People, Time, and Money by Miles and Frank (2008) focuses on this question "How can schools best use the resources they already have?" The authors explore the link between purposeful resource allocation and academic achievement and demonstrate how educational leaders can develop successful and strategic schools by assessing how well they use all available resources – people, time, and money – by creating effective alternatives to meet goals.

Unleashing Your Leadership Potential: Seven Strategies for Success by Lees (2009) provides strategies leaders can implement to unleash their

References

Alexander, C., Boyer, H., Brownson, A., Clark, C., Jennings, J., & Patrick, E. (2000). Resource allocation practices

Notes

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2012