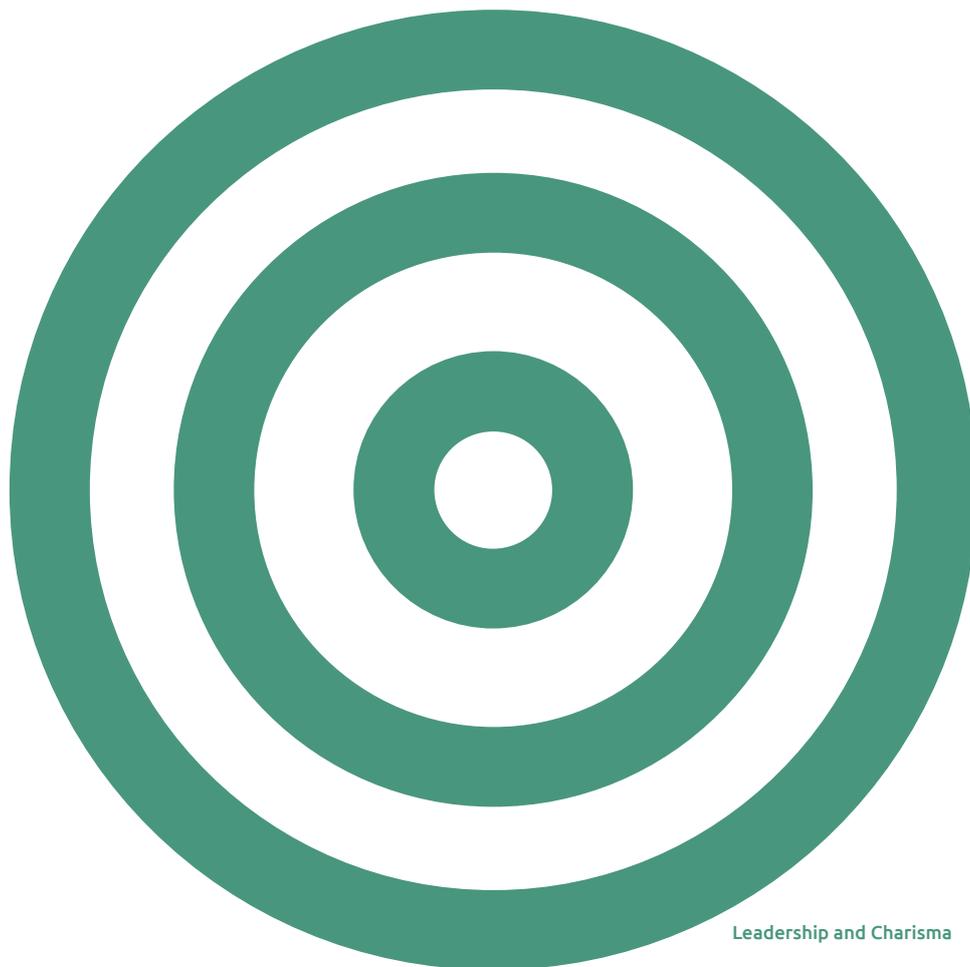


# LEADING A LEARNING-FOCUSED SCHOOL: SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP

Resources for School Leaders in Ghana Handbook



Leadership and Charisma

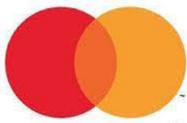


Ghana Education  
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mastercard  
foundation



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*LEADERSHIP RESOURCE HANDBOOK: MODULE ONE*

# **LEADING A LEARNING-FOCUSED SCHOOL: SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP**

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**Resources for School Leaders in Ghana**

**July 2022**



# Foreword

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Welcome to the *Leadership Programme Resource Handbook for School Leaders in Ghana*. The role of school leaders including their boards in providing equitable quality teaching and learning and ensuring that all learners achieve their full potential is both a professional responsibility and a moral obligation. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning is considered a major contributory factor to positive learning outcomes, there is growing evidence on the positive relationship between effective leadership, continuing professional development and continuous school improvements. The Ghana Education Service will ensure that all Ghanaian children of school-going age, irrespective of tribe, geographic location, gender, disability, religious and political affiliations, are provided with an inclusive and equitable quality learning experience.

The Ghana Education Service in collaboration with the National Teaching Council with support from Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning (T-TEL) through its Transforming Senior High School Education, Teaching and Learning (T-SHEL) programme funded by the Mastercard Foundation, is ensuring that the capacity of secondary school leaders is enhanced. In this way, such school leaders can create a positive environment in all educational institutions for learning because schools are effectively led, and teaching is inclusive and effective. Through this support, six practical school leadership capacity development handbooks would be developed considering six modules and eight quality indicators identified from a deep dive exercise undertaken by the Ghana Education Service in December 2020. Gender equity approaches and social inclusion practices have been integrated into the modules to ensure an inclusive programme delivery in schools considering the diverse needs of teachers, non-teachers, and students. Opportunities are provided for school leadership teams to work with their stakeholders to regularly undertake self-evaluation of their practices against the eight quality indicators and use the outcome for school improvement planning.

The six modules are:

**Module 1:** Leading and Managing a Learning-Focused School: Systems Leadership

**Module 2:** Leading and Managing Change for Schools and Students' Performance: Operations Leadership 1 (School Improvement Planning)

**Module 3:** Leading and Building Effective Community and Stakeholders' Engagement: Operations Leadership 2

**Module 4:** Leading and Managing Curriculum Planning and Implementation, Teaching and Learning (teachers taking responsibility for their personal, professional improvement and for students' learning performance)

**Module 5:** Leading and Managing Change for School Effectiveness

**Module 6:** Strategic Leadership (Leading Development Planning and Monitoring for Progress)

The eight quality indicators are:

1. leadership and management,
2. teaching and learning,
3. assessment,
4. monitoring and evaluation,
5. student support services,
6. gender equality and social inclusion,
7. stakeholders' engagement
8. school infrastructure and environment.

The leadership resource training handbooks are intended to *be used to enhance the capacity of school leaders (school management and board of governors) through structured training to improve the quality of leadership and management*. Through these trainings, leadership and management practices will be improved, leading to transformed schools with a culture that promotes:

- *robust internal quality assurance practices* to include continuous whole school self-evaluation and improvement planning through a participatory approach,

- *leading from the middle* with more attention given to efficiency and effectiveness of programmes and departmental heads,
- *practical approaches to teaching and learning* where schools can maximise available and potential resources by building a strong partnership with stakeholders, leveraging their resources and expertise,
- *prioritisation of learning needs of every student* through an institutionalised gender equality and social inclusion responsive practices,
- *the establishment of a network of relevant and supportive stakeholders* and adopting a periodic and continued engagement process to working with them,
- *the use of technology for effective teaching and learning* and for stakeholder engagement; and
- *the creation of a sense of responsible accountability* for learning systems that support continuous and sustainable school improvement as an internal quality assurance practice.

Module 1 of the *School Leadership Resource Training Handbook* is the first of six handbooks as a practical leadership guide for improving management, leadership, and governance of schools so that the schools are transformed into centres of learning: a learning-focused enterprise (education institutions). The Ghana Education Service (GES) is ensuring that the capacity of all school heads, their leadership teams and school boards are developed through structured cluster-based workshops and coaching support informed by this practical leadership guide.

I am optimistic that together we can make our schools more learning-focused by making the schools teacher-centred and classrooms more learner-centred.

**Prof. Kwasi Opoku Amankwah**

*Director General, Ghana Education Service*

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# Module One: Leading a Learning Focused School: Systems Leadership

## 1.0 Introduction

This module – divided into four sections – is intended to support school leaders to adopt practical strategies to transform their schools into centres of learning by ensuring continuous improvement in the performance of all students in their learning. As a school leader you are required to work with your teams to create a *shared vision* for your school. This vision should be informed by the school's *motto* and the *broad vision* and *mission* of the Ghana Education Service (GES). The linkages to the motto, vision and mission statements of the GES Service should assist schools to come out with their own vision and mission that will underpin the ethos of the school and drive school and students' performance.

In the performance of your roles as a school leader, you are expected to work with your teams to put in place relevant guidelines to implement national level policies and programmes such as teaching and learning, assessment, and safe schools considering the expectations and demands of the school curriculum. School leaders are expected to become systems leaders by taking the responsibility for and embracing any risk of creating a school climate and the enabling environment for enhanced learning and teaching. As a systems leader, you are a leader of learning with the skills and competencies to lead others to learn within a shared-value, culture, and belief system in the school.

In this context, school leaders are required to take deliberate steps to build a shared vision and establish effective management systems to track the progress of every learner and implement an individual learning support plan including institutionalisation of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) practices and leading school improvement planning. The aim is to ensure that schools become centres of learning with a clear focus on the achievement of all learners. This means that through effective systems leadership practices, and procedures, your schools must be strengthened, and your school must work for the benefit of all learners. In this way, your school becomes a centre of learning characterised by continuous improvement in the performance of all learners. This module therefore explores how you as a school leader, can lead your teams to:

- build a shared vision,
- ensure that leadership focuses on learning,
- make your school a gender equality and social inclusive one,
- make quality assurance including whole school self-evaluation and school improvement planning a culture in your school; and
- work collaboratively with the school so that school governance is aimed at achievement for all learners.

The diagram below shows the five elements of systems leadership in this context.

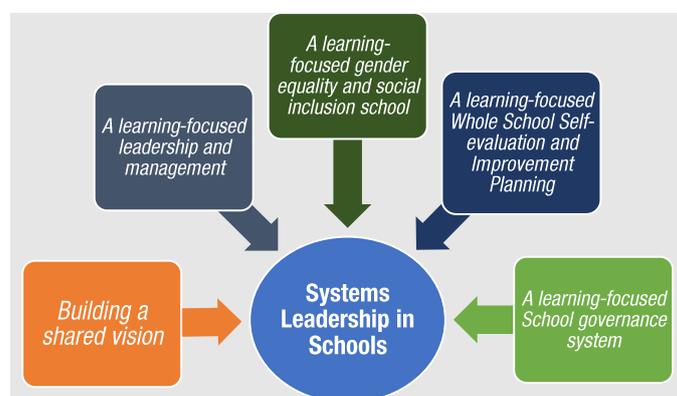


Diagram 1: Elements of Systems Leadership

## 1.1 Purpose

This handbook aims to equip you – the school leader – to better appreciate your roles and responsibilities and equip you with the essential skills in using basic tools needed to make your school a centre of learning. You will be exposed to some of the practices required to sustain and improve the performance of your school and learners. In this regard the use of the Handbook is to enable you and your school board to:

- reach an agreement on what it means to be a school leader,
- lead learning in your school,
- lead in crafting and communicating a vision statement for your school,
- lead in crafting and communicating a mission statement for your school,
- adopt gender equality and social inclusion responsive leadership and management practices,
- lead the development of strategies to improve the achievement of all learners,
- embed quality assurance into your school improvement processes; and
- develop action plans to enable leaders to perform their roles more effectively.

Before we begin to explore the practical leadership practices for creating a learning focused school, it is important to note that leadership is influence, a process and not an end. Activity 1.0 is an icebreaker and provides you the opportunity to explore aspects of your leadership skills and competencies.

### Activity 1.0 – Preparing for a New World

Your world is about to change, and your new world will be very different. Your group must decide how your race is to survive with the expertise of the people listed. Keep in mind that you can only take seven people on the boat to get to your new world. Who will you compromise, and who will go with you on this adventure? The existence of humanity is up to you now. How will you survive? Sailor: Male, age 25, Religious Leader: Male, age 43, Expectant Mother: Age 28, Child: Female, age 6, Carpenter: Female, age 68, Veterinarian: Female, age 32, Culinary Expert: Male, age 57, Wildlife Biologist: Male, age 49, Engineer: Female, age 22, Financial Advisor: Female, age 36, Teacher: Male, age 23, Marine: Male, age of 19

#### Discussion Questions

- Who did you decide you are taking to the new world?
- What is your justification for this decision?
- What have you learned from this exercise?
- What organisation and prioritizing skills are necessary?

## 1.2 Learning Focused Leadership

The core role of the school leader is to ensure that all learners are receiving quality education. Leadership and management that focus on learning provide the tools to achieve the provision of quality education through five key principles.

The five principles see leadership as an activity that anyone can undertake, regardless of status, just as learning also applies to everyone. The five principles of a learning focused leadership are presented in the diagram below:

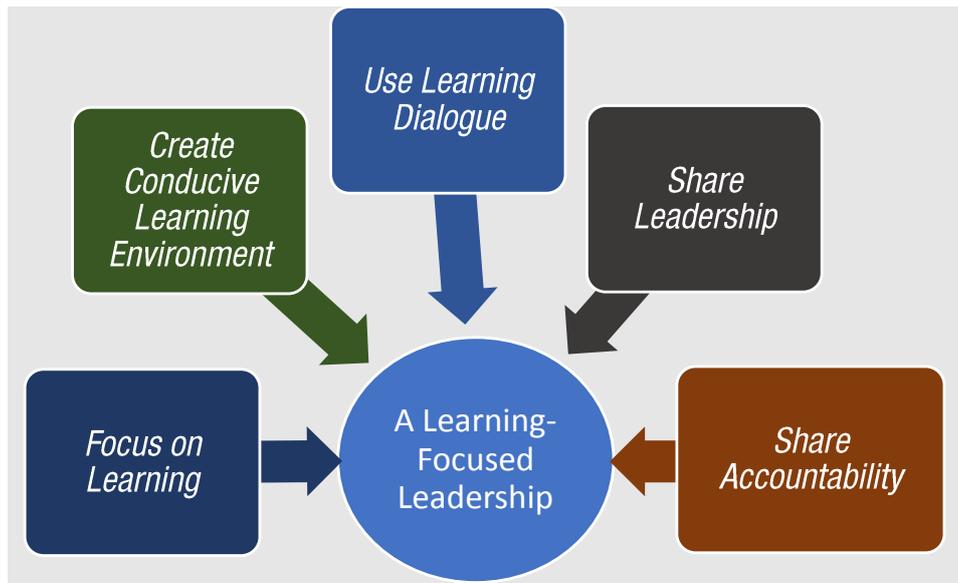


Diagram 2: Principles of a Learning Focused School

As a school leader you are expected to:

- lead all stakeholders of the school to focus on learning,
- create a conducive learning environment for all,
- engage all stakeholders in dialogues around learning,
- share leadership; and
- share accountability.

### 1.2.1 Principle 1: A Focus on Learning

Leadership for learning practice involves maintaining a focus on learning as an activity in which:

- everyone is a learner,
- learning relies on the effective interplay of social, emotional, and cognitive processes,
- different ways of learning by individuals and the context are explored and used,
- the capacity for leadership arises out of powerful learning experiences; and
- opportunities for leadership in the classroom, school and community are provided to enhance learning.

### 1.2.2 Principle 2: Conducive Learning Environment

Leadership for Learning practice involves creating conditions for learning in which:

- a culture of learning is nurtured in everyone has an opportunity to reflect on the nature, skills, and processes of learning,
- physical and social spaces stimulate and celebrate learning,
- safe and secure environments enable everyone to take risks, cope with failure and respond positively to challenges; and
- tools and strategies are used to enhance thinking about learning and the practice of teaching.

### 1.2.3 Principle 3: Learning Dialogue

Leadership for learning practice involves a dialogue about learning in which:

- practice is made explicit, discussable, and transferable,
- active, collegial inquiry focuses on the link between learning and leadership,
- there is coherence through the sharing of values, understandings, and practices,

- factors that inhibit and promote learning are examined and addressed,
- the link between leadership and learning is a concern for everyone; and
- different perspectives are explored through networking with researchers and practitioners.

### 1.2.4 Principle 4: Shared Leadership

Leadership for learning practice involves the sharing of leadership in which:

- structures support participation in developing learning communities,
- shared leadership is symbolised in the day-to-day flow of activities,
- everyone's experience and expertise are valued and drawn upon as a resource,
- collaborative activity across boundaries of subject, role and status are valued and promoted.

### 1.2.5 Principle 5: Shared Accountability

Leadership for learning practice involves mutual accountability, which means a:

- systematic approach to self-evaluation embedded at every level,
- focus on evidence and its congruence with core values,
- shared approach to internal accountability is a pre-condition of external accountability,
- recasting of national policies in accordance with a school's core values,
- choice of how to tell one's own story while taking account of political realities; and
- continuing focus on sustainability, succession and leaving a legacy.

#### Activity 1.2

Reflections:

- Take some time to reflect on the five principles of leadership for learning presented above and how wthe principles reflect in the activities of your school?
- Evaluate your current practices using the leadership for learning principles having an overview of strengths and weaknesses and use it to complete the table that follows.
- Make a list of all the things you are already doing, what you are needed to do (from the reflections so far) and the interesting points related to each key principle from your own context.

Principle	What are you already do well?	What do you need to do more of?	How do you intend to make the principles part of the school culture?
Focus on learning			
Conditions for learning			
Learning dialogue			
Shared leadership			
Mutual accountability			

In summarising your reflections on the case study and the principles of leadership for learning discussed above, what does it mean to be a school leader and be focused on learning?

### Activity 1.3 – Being a School Leader

- In groups, discuss who a school leader is
- Reflect on what you are expected to do to lead learning in your school
- Write your views below in the boxes below


- Reflect on the systems school leaders must institutionalize or entrench (see Annex AA).

## 1.3 Being a School Leader

A leader in a learning-focused school is expected to play the following key roles:

- create and communicate a shared vision for learning,
- lead learning,
- lead gender equality and social inclusion for learning; and
- lead school improvement planning for learning.

A school leader can refer to any individual or group of people who have the legitimate responsibility to lead or guide other members of the school system, teams, or the entire school to achieve the school's vision and mission.

The foregoing means that to be a school leader does not mean that one must be in a key position in the school. Leadership is about making the school function effectively and is a process of influencing people to accomplish the vision and mission, inspiring their commitment for improving the school.

In simple terms, being a school leader means the ability to influence.

## 1.4 Levels of Functional Leadership in a Senior High/Technical School

Functional leadership levels in a senior high/technical school can be put into four with varied but complementary roles. The levels are:

- Board of Governors
- Senior Level Leadership
- Middle Level Leadership
- First Level Leadership

### 1.4.1 Board of Governors

Members of the Board of Governors are constituted as established by GES Policies and Procedures (Revised Constitution of Board of Governors for Senior High Schools – 2022) and Pre-Tertiary Education Act, 2020 Act 1049, Section 37(1b) (2).

The Board of Governors is a critical friend to the school and is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the school. The details of the nature, composition, and roles of the Board of Governors of a senior high/technical school are discussed in section three of this module.

### 1.4.2 Senior Level Leadership

The Senior Leadership Team of a senior high school/technical is responsible for ensuring that the strategic direction set by the Board of Governors of the school is successfully implemented. Depending on the size, a Senior Leadership Team in a senior high/technical school includes:

- Head of School
- Assistant Head in charge of administration

- Assistant Head in charge of academics
- Assistant Head in charge of domestic affairs
- Accountant/ Bursar (Head of Accounts)

The Senior Leadership Team is expected to:

- lead the development of guidelines and programmes to implement relevant policies and procedures of the GES at the school. These guidelines emanating from the policies and procedures will include teaching and learning, lesson observation, professional learning, and development, homework, learner progress monitoring, classwork and marking.
- facilitate the implementation of the guidelines and programmes of the school by putting in place measures and processes to ensure teamwork, coordination, effective time management, and efficient but simple record management and tracking of progress.
- create the enabling environment for what is learnt during the sessions to be used in the classroom when teaching learners.
- take all major decisions affecting the school and where appropriate in consultation with the school board of governors.
- have the responsibility to mobilise human, financial, and physical resources and ensure an efficient use of these resources.
- decide on the code of conduct of learners and staff.
- ensure that decisions on the academic activities of the school (e.g., timetabling, intervention programmes and homework) take place within a predetermined framework and or directives of GES and approved by the school board of governors.
- establish networks and partnerships with other stakeholders and among others to ensure that the school works closely with the community, other schools, and institutions of higher learning, submit reports – e.g., learner performance data to GES headquarters through the appropriate channels.
- promote collaboration between the school and other schools for the purpose of resource sharing and best practice; networks and partnerships between the school, other schools, universities, and colleges of education is essential for learners' transitional arrangements for example.
- ensure that there is a functioning Alumni Association.

### 1.4.3 Middle Level Leadership

Middle level leaders in senior high schools play significant roles in ensuring that learning is effective, and all learners are achieving to their full potential. Through the individual and collective functions of middle leaders, life chances of all learners are improved, and senior high/technical students are prepared for further studies, world of work and adult life.

The middle level leadership of a school may consist of:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| • Principal Administrative Officer | • Guidance and Counselling Coordinator |
| • Heads of Departments/Programmes  | • Librarian                            |
| • Senior Housemaster/mistress      | • Supply Officers                      |
| • School Chaplain                  | • Principal Technical Officer (Head)   |
| • Accountant                       | • ICT Coordinator                      |
| • Domestic Bursar (Head)           |  |

Among the many other roles, middle leaders also have the responsibilities of:

- ensuring that effective teaching and learning is a culture of the school,
- coordinating the activities of the departments so that all learners are learning,
- ensuring the effective day-to-day running of their departments because there are clear departmental procedures and guidelines,
- reporting to the senior leadership team about their activities including the progress that learners are making

- coordinating and implementing school policies; and
- facilitate and coordinate extracurricular activities for learners.

#### 1.4.4 First Level Leadership

The first level leadership of a school encompasses staff engaged in the day-to-day operational activities of the school and student leadership. This includes:

- House Masters/Mistresses
- Subject/Unit Heads
- Form Masters/Mistresses
- Teachers
- Accounts Staff
- Secretarial and Clerical Staff
- Storekeepers
- Lab-Assistants
- Artisans/Drivers/General Hands/Security
- Canteen and pantry staff
- Student Leadership

First level leaders as the name implies provide the essential first level support necessary for learning to take place. These supports include:

- implementing school policies,
- ensuring social and emotional wellbeing of learners,
- serving as parental surrogate for learners,
- reporting to the middle level leadership about their activities,
- coordinating the activities of learners of the school.

#### Activity 1.4: Devolving Leadership Responsibilities

Following the discussion on the different levels of leadership roles and responsibilities in a school, consider the scenario below and discuss reflective questions around devolution of leadership and decision-making in a senior high school.

##### Activity 1.4: Case Study – Evolving Responsibilities

Mr. Quash is a newly appointed head of Kaati Senior High School, this is his first ever appointment as a Head of a Senior High School with seven years of experience as Assistant Head, Academics in his previous school.

Mr. Abatey is also a teacher on the rank of Assistant Director I with ten years of teaching experience and holds a first Degree in Management Studies. He has been assisting and understudying the former Head of Business Department for the past four years.

Mr. Quash, the new head of the school has instructed the assistant head, academics to assign a newly appointed teacher from the university who is on the rank of Principal Superintendent but holds master's degree in Accounting Education to head the department with the reason of applying the principle of leading from the middle.

In his view regardless of rank or number of years of experience, a teacher who is fresh from the university has fresh ideas to guide colleagues in the department and must be given the opportunity to lead.

##### Reflective questions (activity 1.4)

- What is your opinion about the decision of the head?
- Is Mr. Abatey the right person to lead the department?
- Reflect and discuss (e.g., in groups) the appropriate devolution of leadership and decision-making in a senior high school.

## 1.5 Managing Devolved Leadership Responsibilities

It is important to devolve responsibility to those who have been empowered to take that responsibility. It would, for instance, be inappropriate to devolve financial management responsibilities to the Assistant Librarian. This is because the Assistant Librarian lacks the skills, knowledge, and confidence to manage school finances. However, it might be very appropriate to have the Assistant Librarian taking a leadership role in relation to managing the book acquisition and computer software budget.

Devolving responsibility to the wrong person or level puts those given the leadership responsibilities under undue stress and may lead to inappropriate decisions and ultimately disempowering and destructive to the smooth running of the school. Distribution of leadership roles within an institution when done appropriately can assist in the effective management of the school.

It is therefore important that:

- leadership is devolved to an appropriate level and to appropriate office holders; and
- systems are put in place to allow an element of autonomy and risk taking at the various decision-making or leadership levels, with constant communication.

Jointly, the school leadership groups and individuals have specific responsibilities in driving excellence within their schools including quality assurance. Schools must endeavour to prioritise quality assurance in the following areas as part of effective leadership:

- Leadership and Management
- Teaching and Learning
- Assessment
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Student Supportive Services
- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- Stakeholder Engagements
- School Infrastructure and Environment

The activity below is to identify leadership qualities that may promote or impede a school leader's effectiveness.

Please tick (✓) in the cells to indicate your belief of a quality which is considered as more effective or less effective.

### Activity 1.5: Assessment of School Leadership Qualities

- The activity below is to identify leadership qualities that may promote or impede a school leader's effectiveness.
- Reflect and identify two of your personal attributes and classify them as 'less effective' or "more effective" and think about what you can do to improve or change the attributes.
- Reflect and tick (✓) in the cells to indicate your belief of a quality being considered as more effective or less effective.
- Share your decisions with your pair's partner.

In plenary allow a few volunteers to share their 'less effective' attributes and what they intend to do to reverse these.

Leadership Quality	Generally, Makes School Leader	
	More effective	Less effective
Persistent: continuing firmly; trying to do something even though it is difficult		
Eloquent; good speaking ability		
Perfectionist: usual attitude of regarding anything short of perfection as unacceptable		

Leadership Quality	Generally, Makes School Leader	
	More effective	Less effective
Impulsive: interrupts others when they are talking; always react defensively		
Sociable: willing to talk and be friendly with other people		
Argumentative: begins an argument and always trying to prove a point.		
Conceited: full of oneself; egotistic.		
Cooperative: ability to receive critical feedback in good faith and with minimal reactivity or defensiveness.		
Adaptable: creates an environment that embraces the diversity of views and takes advantage of such collective knowledge to benefit the school.		
Patient: steadfast despite opposition.		
Self-confident: accepting compliments graciously; being confident in one's beliefs despite possible negativity from others		
Task oriented: the ability to focus on tasks that need to be performed and completing them within a specified period; and initiate step-by-step planning and reward or punishment systems		
Dedicated to duty: always punctual for meetings, work, and functions.		
Self-control: the ability to exercise restraint.		
Empathetic: able to understand what other people are feeling and share their feelings.		
Indecisive: uncertain, wavering, doubtful, hesitating: react out of proportion to situations.		

## 1.6. Qualities of a School Leader

It is said that everything rises and falls on leadership; as the Head of the school, you must:

- ensure that your school is effective,
- cultivate some qualities that promote and enhance the effectiveness of school leadership teams and practices,
- implement practices and policies.

### Activity 1.6: Accountability Issues

1. In your mixed school groups reflect and discuss the following:
  - With your understanding of accountability, would you say that it is important for the leadership teams to be accountable?
  - Who should X be accountable to?
  - What should X be accountable for?

2. Give reasons for your answers.

NB: X could be any member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of the school.

## 1.7 Professional and Personal Accountability of a School Leader

Accountability means being answerable for your actions and inactions. In this section, we examine your professional and personal accountability in your school.

### 1.7.1 Professional Accountability of a School Leader

Professional accountability is about the commitment that leaders bring to their workers and institutions. Professional accountability depends on a moral commitment to serve the interest of clients in the school. It is obligatory for you to self-monitor and to periodically review the effectiveness of your own practice.

To ensure professional accountability as a school head, you are expected to:

- Respect your staff and the institution.
- Make decisions and act in a way that best serves the interests of the school and all who work and study in the school.
- Be accountable to the Board of Governors.
- Be accountable to GES for the decisions and actions of your school.
- Behave in acceptable ways as prescribed by your code of professional conduct to promote learning and teaching in your school.

### 1.7.2 Personal Accountability of a School Leader

- The school leader has a moral duty to be committed to the running of the school in various capacities.
- A school leader must answer for their actions and inactions.
- A school leader must consider personal accountability important and must not be told to do the right things.
- A school leader must first be accountable to themselves before authority demands it.

# Building a Shared Vision

## 2.0 Introduction

The development of a shared vision is an essential school strengthening practice. As the school leader (head of school), you are expected to work with the school board, the staff, students, and other key stakeholders to set a clear direction for your school. This starts with developing a shared vision.

There may be some very great things that you may be doing in your school. It is therefore necessary that you regularly reflect on your leadership practices, identify what is working that needs consolidating, and the areas of growth that need new and innovative interventions. It is similar with our school vision. Some of us inherited our school visions and missions, others were part of the development and others were the originators. No matter where we stand, as the world changes, it may be expedient for us to review our mission and vision statements to align with the demands of the time.

## 2.1 Building the Shared Vision

Now, think of building a shared vision for your schools in terms of embarking on a journey to a 'New World' – a Learning Focused School. What reflections would go into your actions (for example, how to get there, who to include, beliefs to uphold, directions to take and indicators of success)?

Activity 2.1 provides an opportunity for you to reflect on this question as a school.

In the following sections, we shall explore the meanings of vision, mission, and core values with the intention of helping you the school leader to revisit your school's vision, mission, and value statements, to reflect your schools' preferred destination as a learning focused enterprise.

### Activity 2.2 – Understanding your School's Vision and Mission

- In groups, refer to your school's Vision and Mission.
- Identify the differences and similarities and note them down.
- In plenary, share and discuss the identified differences and similarities.
- Agree on the differences and share with the larger group

## 2.2 Understanding Vision, Mission, and Values

In this section, we will explore the meaning of vision and mission statements and core values and how these can be developed.

### 2.2.1 What is a Vision Statement?

The term vision and mission can sometimes be confusing. Vision is a long-term view, expressing what you hope your school will become to attain its mandate as a learning focused enterprise.

A vision statement therefore describes what the school wants to be in the future and what one will see when the school reaches its future destination. The vision statement provides the direction and identifies what you want your school to be known for and/or what distinguishes your school from others.

In other words, a school's vision statement is the mental image of the future we seek to create for the school. It reflects the goal and preferred destination for the school in the future and how the school will

be seen by the public. A very good example of a mental image of a preferred future is seen in the 'I have a dream' speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. For the sake of emphasis, a part of this speech is quoted below:

*"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colours of their skin but by the content of their character".*

A vision statement from the Luther King's vision could read "A nation of equals" or "A nation without discrimination."

From the above quote, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. expresses the future he sought and which he was working assiduously towards. Thus, seen in this context, and in summary, a vision:

- is a specific future destination.
- expresses the preferred future.
- addresses what one wishes to accomplish.
- provides parameters for long-term action.

## 2.2.2 Attributes of Vision Statement of a School

The vision statement of a school should have the following attributes. It should be:

- **Realistic** – It must be practical and achievable. It must not be too abstract.
- **Credible** – It must be convincing. Stakeholders must trust it to be the way to go.
- **Attractive** – It must be eye-catching and convincing to attract stakeholder buy-in.
- **Inspiring** – It must motivate action and create a sense of hope in all stakeholders.
- **Clear and concise** – It must be short and easily understood. The language must be clear and to the point for stakeholders to understand.
- **Unambiguous** – The statement must not be open to multiple interpretations; everyone must be able to understand the key message.
- **Futuristic** – Indicates how the future is an improvement over present condition.

In addition, a vision comprises both stability and change.

- **Stability** is created by the core ideology, which never changes and creates the purpose of the school's existence. The values the school holds most dear are at the centre of this solidity and stability. They provide the foundation for the movement towards the vision.
- **Change** is generated by the passion to constantly improve. This involves taking risks, learning, challenging accepted beliefs and experimenting.

Some examples of school vision statements include the following:

- A fast-moving centre for learning, fully focused on high expectations and challenge.
- Delivering high quality learning results and excellent outcomes for all learners.
- A positive learning environment where every learner has the right to achieve their potential.

## 2.2.3 Why is a Vision Statement Important?

Below are some of the reasons why vision statements are particularly important to schools.

- The vision helps simplify the decision-making process as schools make a great number of decisions each day to stay afloat in the ever-changing educational and world environments.
- A school's vision provides the school with a framework of what they want to become and how they would like to be viewed, as they actualize their mission at a point in the future.
- A well-articulated vision of the school provides a common direction for growth, which inspires commitment to a cause by all stakeholders.
- A school's vision thus provides a destination for the school. A common understanding of the destination allows all stakeholders to align their school improvement efforts for optimum results.
- The school's vision will be the desired picture of the school once the mission has been implemented through programmes and activities. It shows what the stakeholders of the school perceive to be possible and what can be done.

- A vision can propel individual stakeholders and inspire those around them to reach their own dreams and support the attainment of the school vision.

Nanus (1995) maintains that the 'right vision':

- attracts commitment and energizes people,
- creates meaning in workers' lives,
- establishes a standard of excellence,
- bridges the present to the future; and
- transcends the status quo.

## 2.3 Mission Statement

A mission statement, on the other hand, describes how the school will achieve the vision. The mission reflects the reason for establishing the school and describes what the school does towards attaining the vision. This is seen in the French translation of Mission – *raison d'être*, which means '*reason for being*'. It is therefore dominated by verbs denoting action. The mission statement describes the niche of the school.

Thus, whereas vision is future oriented, the mission describes what is done now towards the attainment of the vision. The mission must therefore support the vision and allow the vision to be realised. As such, when you have a well stated mission statement; it must be easy to deduce a vision from it. For example, could you deduce a vision that aligns with a mission that includes the statement 'we provide educational technical assistance for improved learning outcomes and greater productivity'. This mission statement is derived from the mission of T-TEL, and their vision is 'Transformed Education for Development'. Can you see the alignment?

It is clear from the above that the vision and mission statements of any institution of learning are invaluable to the institution's development and growth. For this reason, these statements should be short and memorable so that students and staff are able to remember and understand what they mean. Long or complex statements are not or should not be encouraged in writing up these statements, as they fail to drive the institution in the desired direction.

When setting or reviewing the mission statement we can be guided by answers to the following questions:

- What is the main purpose of the school?
- What do you want the school to be known for?
- What sort of students do you want the school to nurture?
- What are the school's values?
- Who are the school's main clients (stakeholders)?
- What are the main benefits the school provides to its stakeholders?
- What are the school's responsibilities to these clients?
- How is the school serving its clients?
- What is the school doing now to achieve its vision?

## 2.4 Core Values

For stability, the school must be fully aware of its core values. The core values should be embodied in a values statement. Values are beliefs that the school cherishes and upholds. We associate some rightness or wrongness with values as beliefs. For example, 'I believe that I will be paid my salary at the end of the month', is simply a belief. There is no rightness or wrongness about it, but a statement like 'I believe in honesty' is a value since we can associate some rightness or wrongness with it.

Thus, core values are the beliefs that an institution considers important in carrying out its purpose. They constitute the driving force behind what a school does. A school's core values are the foundation on which the school conducts its activities. The core values constitute a set of beliefs about the key success factors in the school. Hence the core values, if expressed succinctly should describe beliefs about:

- Students
- Teachers

- School leaders
- Parents
- General or school public
- Curriculum
- Facilities
- Environment

Examples of core values include:

- Commitment to quality,
- Respect for learners,
- Commitment to gender equality and social inclusion,
- Honesty and integrity; and
- Commitment to safety and security.

We often overlook these values since we assume that we all know them. However, some of our core values must be written and displayed together with our vision and mission statements.

### Activity 2.3 – Revisiting the school’s Vision and Mission Statements

Now with the understanding of Leadership for Learning, and the aspiration to make senior high schools (your school) learning focused, critique your own vision and mission statements, highlighting the areas of strength and the areas that need change

## 2.5 Developing a Vision Statement for your School

It is worth noting that developing a vision statement requires, setting in motion the process of visioning. School leaders must reflect on their current realities to help their schools to achieve the future desired state. Visioning, therefore, entails collectively exploring the:

- a. needs of the school,
- b. problems and challenges of the school, and
- c. capabilities and opportunities in the school.

This invariably means, the development of a school vision must be a shared responsibility, which requires the involvement of various stakeholders.

In formulating the vision statement for your school, it is crucial to involve all major stakeholders. The development of a shared vision involves the following:

- Initiating the process for developing a shared vision,
- Working collaboratively with stakeholders:
  - encouraging dialogue among stakeholders
  - discussing and listing core values of the school
  - discussing what is important and unique to the school
- Guiding the process of reaching consensus to determine the salient elements of the vision and mission:
  - sharing the vision and mission statements to ensure clarity and accuracy
- Addressing the all-important question: does the statement paint a clear picture of where the school wants to be in the future?

The process outlined above can be attained by adopting the six-step guide indicated here:

1. Gather input from all the stakeholders.
2. Conduct a series of meetings and processes to hear everyone's voice, so there will be unconditional support for the vision.
3. Lead with essential questions. For example:

- a. Does it reflect the school's conception of a successful learner?
  - b. Does it make clear the school's direction and purpose?
  - c. Does it present a clear picture of an attainable bright future?
  - d. Are there images and words that will inspire commitment, loyalty, and excitement in all school stakeholders?
  - e. Does it contain memorable and engaging statements?
  - f. Does it align with the school's values and culture?
  - g. Does it refer to the unique strengths, culture, values, beliefs, and direction of the school?
  - h. Will it instill the belief in employees that they are part of something bigger than themselves and their daily work?
  - i. Does it challenge people to excel in reaching out for a great and worthwhile future?
4. Brainstorm all the possible answers to the questions.
  5. Develop focus areas that are more specific to the future.
  6. Narrow the answers down into a statement.

## 2.6 Communicating your School's Vision, Mission, and Values

When the vision and mission statements are complete, they must be communicated to all stakeholders to inform them and to enlist their support towards the attainment of the school's goals and vision. They must not be posted in the headmaster's office alone, but at all vantage points so that they are accessible to all stakeholders.

The following are some of the ways in which vision and mission statements of institutions are communicated:

- post the vision and mission statement at vantage points in the school, including in the classrooms.
- include both statements on all the school's official correspondence.
- put the school's vision and mission in the students' handbook, notebook and exercise books.
- if the school has a website, load the vision and mission statements in a prominent place on your home page or landing page.

Also, every member of staff and students should know the vision and mission statements by heart and be able to relate to them and how the work they do or the roles they play feed into that vision. This means doing much more than ensuring it is on key documents.

## 2.7 How is a Vision Statement Implemented – From Vision to Action?

Having a mental image of where the school will be in the future is certainly a good beginning. However, the school must walk a designated path guided by the mission statement to attain the future which has been identified in the vision statement. The school will have to act consistently and be driven by the set of core values which have been identified. The school's stakeholders should know what they want and remain unwavering as they put in place structures to get to where they want the school to be.

Two key questions must be addressed as the school works towards the attainment of its vision through its mission statement. These key questions are:

- What kind of school do we hope/want to be?
- What do we need to do differently to achieve this vision?

The core values become the anchor that holds the school as it addresses these questions, sets its direction, and plans, and executes these plans. Thus, from vision to action, there is a need for improvement plans that require setting goals (signposts towards the attainment of vision) and developing strategies for improvement. In this context, it is important to revisit your School Improvement Plan (SIP) to see if it aligns with your vision and mission statements.

The School Improvement Plan needs to be implemented to make your vision a reality. Therefore, conscious efforts must be made to implement the plans, with a clearly outlined monitoring and evaluation framework to help ensure effective implementation. In Module 2, you will have more opportunities to explore the

process of undertaking a whole school self-evaluation and how you can use the outcome from the evaluation to develop a school improvement.

### Activity 2.4 Case Study

Two school heads are posted to two different schools on the same day. Upon arrival in the school Mr. A called a staff meeting and shared his vision for the school with them. He then encouraged everyone to support him to achieve his vision.

On the part of Mrs. B, she called a staff meeting to review the state of the school and tasked a committee to, based on the review findings, develop a vision for the school to be discussed and adopted at another meeting

#### Questions for discussion

- What are the merits and demerits of each approach?
- Which approach do you think would yield better results and why?

# Governing a Learning-Focused Secondary School

## 3.0 Introduction

The focus of this section of the module is school governance. The section clarifies those involved in school governance. Specifically, as members of your school's Board of Governors, you must have a common understanding of what your functions are in ensuring that your schools are centres of learning and that every learner receives quality education. It is also important to be equipped with the skills needed to make your Board effective with all standing committees in place and functioning. The section below provides an overview of school governance is all about.

## 3.1 What is School Governance?

School governance in this context is a system and process of ensuring that an educational institution's vision, mission, and objectives are attained. It involves oversight of the school's human, material, financial resources, and instructional practices towards achieving short and long-term objectives. The Board of Governors leads governance of Senior High Schools in Ghana with support from other key stakeholders in the school.

## 3.2 Nature of School Governance

Governance of Senior High Schools and Senior High Technical Schools is structured and guided to ensure that it is delivered effectively. This section explains the structure and importance, of effective delivery of school governance.

### 3.2.1 What does School Governance Entail?

Broadly, school governance entails identifying, understanding, and performing the responsibilities and the adherence or enforcement of procedures towards achieving the school's short and long-term objectives. Below are details of what school governance entails.

- Providing strategic direction for the school.
- Addressing academic issues (ensuring good academic achievements of learners).
- Effective and efficient management of resources.
- Ensuring accountability including demanding self-evaluation of all personnel,
- Enforcement of national standards and policies.
- Providing internal policies for quality assurance.
- Promoting a cohesive and collaborative culture and ethos in the school.
- Ensuring cooperation and participation of stakeholders, including the Board of Governors, teachers, old students, community members, learners, and PTA in decision-making.

### 3.2.2 Importance of Good School Governance

For school governance to be effective, it must be well guided and purposeful. There possibilities and procedures involved must be performed in a well-balanced approach to derive its enormous benefits. An ineffective school governance system may also become detrimental to the school and hinder the learning achievement of learners.

Good or effective school governance, therefore, is important because:

- it promotes a more cohesive and collaborative culture in schools,

- it helps to foster good cooperation, trust, and improve working relationships within the school, between the school and governing Board and with the school community,
- it fosters good planning, monitoring, and evaluation of school processes and practices; and
- it ensures effective assessment as an essential component of learning.

### 3.2.3 Structure of School Governance for Senior High/Technical Schools

In the Ghanaian Senior High/Technical School system, governance of schools is a shared responsibility of the Board of Governors (BoGs), the Senior Management Staff and other downstream leaders in the school. BoG members are constituted as established by GES policies and procedures (Constitution of Boards of Governors for Senior Secondary Schools – revised 2000). Senior Management Staff includes Heads of School, Assistant Heads, Senior House Mistress or Senior House Master and Bursar or Accountant. Other downstream leaders within the school include Heads of Departments, House parents, School Administrators, and the Students' Representative Council.

### 3.2.4 How do you Achieve Effective School Governance?

Effective School governance can be achieved when the groups and individuals involved in school governance work together toward the school's shared vision. A well-focused (i.e., learning-focused) school governance system must look out for the following key areas of school governance practice.

**Power and Politics:** In every organisation, there are power relations between the organisation's various organs, which can cause disharmony in the institution when not properly managed. Therefore, it is important to establish such relations and clearly identify the roles and functions of every group involved in the school's governance.

In the Senior High/Technical School, there is the likelihood of Power Play between the Board and Head, Head and staff, staff, and community members, or even the school and the traditional authorities or the entire community. Affiliation of some individuals to political parties may also ignite unpleasant power and political situations that may not help the effective governance of the school. In some areas, tribal affiliations or politics may affect the effective governance of the school.

To forestall the occurrence of power play and politics in the governance of the school, the following should be practiced:

- The laid down structure for school governance should be followed,
- The roles and responsibilities of each group within the school governance structure should be clearly defined and understood.
- All interested groups or key individuals should be engaged through consensus building and the practice of participatory leadership.
- Individuals and groups involved in school governance should understand and practice ethnic tolerance and competency-based support within the structure of school governance.

**Academic Issues:** School governance aims to ensure that learners' learning outcomes are improved and the overall learning achievement of learners of the school is good. Therefore, the groups or individuals involved in the school's governance have a greater responsibility to concern themselves with the academic issues of the school; thus, effective teaching and learning in the school must be the key focus of the school governance system. All activities, projects and programmes undertaken in the school must ensure improved academic attainment.

**Quality Assurance:** Quality assurance ensures that the school maintains and improves its leadership performance and learners' achievements based on externally and internally set standards. The external standards are those set by the Ghana Education Service and other regulatory bodies, and the Senior High/Technical School must comply with these standards. The school should also develop internal policies, procedures, and standards consistent with the external standards that will enable it to achieve its vision and objectives. The Quality assurance efforts of the governing body should therefore be focused on:

- Quality of leadership and management,
- Quality of teaching,
- Quality of learning and learning achievement; and

- Quality of other services such as health, catering, security, sanitation, guidance, and counselling.

Within the school governance system, the Board of Governors must lead and approve the school's quality assurance policies and activities, while Management (working as part of the governance system) focuses on developing and implementing the approved policies.

To ensure quality assurance is achieved, the school management should appoint a designated officer or staff member to coordinate quality assurance activities.

**Transparency and Accountability:** Serving on the school's Board of Governors is a public responsibility. Therefore, members of the Board of Governors must be guided by the principles of Transparency and Accountability in the discharge of their duties.

Transparency refers to conducting activities openly and clearly, while accountability refers to being responsible for one's actions or in-actions with reasons. As a principle, public officials must act visibly, predictably, and understandably to promote participation and accountability. To ensure Transparency and Accountability in school governance, Board members will be expected to practice the following:

- Present up-to-date, accurate and complete information in clear language and in a manner that all will understand.
- Involve all stakeholders in all processes through participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation, and review of achievements and solutions to challenges.

### 3.2.5 Functional Relationships between the School Board and School Management

The School Board is the highest governance body that provides strategic direction and decisions for the school. It also has oversight responsibility of the management of the school. On the other hand, the School Management is responsible for the day-to-day running and administration of the school. The School Management is responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the strategic decisions provided by the School Board. Key actions that the Board and the Management need to take to achieve successful functional relationships include:

- Maintaining a cordial working relationship always and consider their roles as complementary; one cannot exist and operate effectively without the other.
- Taking deliberate steps to build consensus and inspire confidence in each other.
- Adhering to the assigned roles to avoid unnecessary interference in performing their functions.
- Complying with the Standard Operating Procedures to guide the Board and management's functional relationship.

## 3.3 The Board of Governors for Senior High Schools and Senior High Technical Schools

Section 37, 1(b) of the Pre-Tertiary Education Act, 2020 (Act 1049) provides that "the Education Service shall establish a Board of Governors for the management of a public senior high school." In line with Act 1049, all Senior High Schools must have in place the Board of Governors as part of the school governance system.

The Board must be constituted with the representation of the various key stakeholder groups as established by the Ghana Education Service.

The membership of the Board of Governors include:

- Representative of the Director-General of Ghana Education Service selected in consultation with the Minister
- Two members elected by the staff: one representing the teaching and the other representing the non-teaching staff
- Two members elected by the Alumni (preferably a female and a male); in the absence of an association, the District Director through the Regional Director shall nominate members to represent the Alumni.
- Two members to represent historical interest: Mission or founder and or the traditional authority. Where the two members are from only one of the historical interests, one shall be a female.
- The Regional Director or their Representative

- The District Director or their Representative
- The Head of School
- One member to represent the Parent-Teacher Association
- Two representatives of the Social Services Sub-committee for the District/Municipal/ Metro Assembly, one of whom shall be a female.

### 3.3.1 Functions of the Board of Governors

Subject to the Constitution of the Board of Governors and any laws or regulations relating to education, the Board of Governors shall perform the following functions:

- Control the general policies of the school subject to any further directives of the Director-General.
- Shall supervise and approve the operational Budget of the School.
- Shall ensure the good administration of the funds of the school
- Shall assist and support the head of School and Management in the discharge of their duties.
- Shall not encroach upon the authority and responsibility of the Head of School
- Shall submit an annual report on activities undertaken in the preceding year to the Director-General by March 31st each year.
- Shall submit accounts of all revenue and expenditure or such related information that the Director-General may require from time to time.
- Shall ensure that the school premises are kept in good sanitary and safe condition and generally in good state of repair.

### 3.3.2 Setting up Standing and other Committees of the Board of Governors

The Constitution of the Board of Governors enjoins the Board to appoint a Standing Committee and other Committees that may be necessary to discharge its duties. This is to enable the Board to perform specialised and emergency related tasks to support the effective governance of the school. Apart from the Standing Committee, the Board of Governors can also put in place a Budget and Finance Committee, Quality Assurance Committee, or a Development and Projects Committee depending on necessity and exigency. The Board may co-opt other school staff members or community members who have expertise in specialised fields to offer advice and assistance to the Committees in the performance of their tasks.

## 3.4 Serving on the School Board

It is a privilege and a call to duty to be nominated to serve as a member of the School Board of Governance. Therefore, members of the Board must be conscious of their roles and responsibilities and key qualities they must possess to deliver school governance effectively.

### 3.4.1 Qualities of a Board member:

A School Board member should be:

- well informed and knowledgeable and can make decisions on learning outcomes,
- a person who acts with integrity, honesty, and objectivity always,
- prepared to work as part of a team in the best interest of the school,
- committed, selfless and dedicated to duty; and
- resourceful and possess a network of influential individuals.

### 3.4.2 Responsibilities of School Board Members:

A School Board member must perform the following responsibilities:

- Attend all meetings (scheduled and emergency) of the Board.
- Contribute to the development of the shared vision, mission, and core values of the school.
- Put their expertise at the complete disposal of the Board or the School.
- Participate actively in preparing the schools' strategic and annual plans.

- Analyse the performance of the school and offer strategic directions for improvement.
- Always defend and promote the success of the school.
- Ensure that all learners, teachers, and staff are treated fairly.

**Conflict of Interest:** Conflict of Interest is when a person uses their official position for personal benefit. This occurs when an individual's interests, including family, friends, and financial or social factors compromise or influence their judgement, decisions, or actions in the workplace.

According to Article 284 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana, "*A public officer shall not put himself in a position where his personal interest conflicts or is likely to conflict with the performance of the functions of his office*".

Therefore, School Board members must maintain a high level of integrity, selflessness, transparency, and accountability. This means that Board members must avoid all forms of engagements resulting in a conflict-of-interest situation. To avoid such conflict-of-interest situations, Board members will be expected to practice the following:

- Demonstrate transparency in all dealings for and on behalf of the school
- Declare any relationships with persons involved in contractual matters or disciplinary issues
- Promote collective decision making in the interest of the School or the Board.

# A Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Responsive Secondary School

## 4.0 Introduction

The constitution of Ghana guarantees quality education for all citizens without discrimination in any form or shape. However, the reality of senior high schools is that there are observed groups and individuals genuinely disadvantaged in the learning process and other aspects of school life due to gender and social inclusion issues in the Ghanaian society (think of examples of disadvantaged groups or individuals in the senior high schools). This demands school level efforts to empower the disadvantaged to promote their learning for further education and adult life as well as career progression. This is referred to as Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in senior high schools.

In this module, the term disadvantaged is used to capture all groups and individuals who are under-represented and marginalised based on gender, health, varied abilities, low socio-economic background, or belonging to ethnic or linguistic, religious, or cultural minority groups.

This section focuses on senior high school leaders' awareness of and commitment to providing intentional leadership that promotes learning for the disadvantaged to enhance their opportunities for further education and adult life as well as career progression. It seeks to build the capacity of senior high school leadership to lead GESI responsive senior high schools in the country.

### Section Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section, you should be able to:

1. demonstrate an appreciation of the need for GESI responsive school leadership and management,
2. demonstrate understanding of GESI related concepts relevant for improved learning outcomes,
3. develop and apply GESI leadership skills for effective management strategies to promote quality learning outcomes for all particularly, the disadvantaged; and
4. conduct institutional GESI audit using GESI scorecard.

### Section Outline:

- Why we should focus on GESI
- GESI responsive leadership for promoting learning in senior high and technical schools
- GESI responsive management for promoting learning in senior high and technical schools
- Creating a GESI responsive senior high/technical school for promoting learning
- Conducting GESI audit in your school

### Activity 1: Brainstorming

- Reflect, identify, and list learner groups and individuals who in your view are disadvantaged in your school.
- Reflect, identify and list staff groups and individuals who in your view are disadvantaged in your school
- How have they been disadvantaged?
- Why have they been disadvantaged?
- How can your school support them?

In view of this activity, do you think the school and society have roles in assisting disadvantaged learners to improve upon learning activities?

**Introduction to activity:** You are required to share your ideas or experiences of disadvantaged groups or individuals in your school community and how they can be supported.

## 4.1. Why should we focus on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion?

There is a need to focus on GESI because there are unfair or unequal treatment of females, males, and minority groups or individuals in the senior high and technical school system. These unfair or unequal treatments of victims are based on false assumptions about their intelligence, ability, sex, socio-economic status, ethnicity, linguistic, race, culture, or religion.

These unfair treatments might have left some members of the senior high school system vulnerable and disadvantaged. There is the need to ensure their inclusion in the school community. This will empower and promote their learning and progression.

### Activity 2: Experience sharing

Think about a time you or someone have been treated unfairly or unequally in life. Fill out the table below in your group and discuss it with the group

Reflection

From the experiences shared, what impact(s) do you think unfair treatment have on the victim. Some effects of unfair or unequal treatment

- It limits learners and staff aspirations
- It affects individual achievements
- It limits the whole school's achievements and representations

## 4.2. Understanding GESI and Related Concepts

To be able to provide GESI responsive leadership in your school, you need to understand certain concepts related to GESI. The concepts *vulnerable*, *disadvantaged*, *empowerment* and *inclusion* are explained below:

**Vulnerable** refers to your staff and learners who experience a higher risk of social exclusion and poverty than the general population. Examples are ethnic minorities, migrants, person with disabilities, the homeless, those struggling with substance abuse, pregnant girls and those facing difficulties that can lead to further social exclusion, such as gifted and talented.

**Disadvantaged** are those whose identities cause harassment and are underserved and are often excluded from certain school practices through policies, procedures, and practices. They are often systematically denied equitable access to the same resources, opportunities, and benefits theoretically available to all learners resulting in their inability to succeed in academic and social activities. Disadvantaged learners may include those from linguistic, ethnic, gender, geographic or religious minority, from economically impoverished background as well as children with special educational needs including those with varied abilities and health issues.

**Empowerment:** is the process through which the disadvantaged learners and staff such as those from linguistic, ethnic, gender, geographic or religious minorities, from economically impoverished backgrounds including those with varied abilities and health issues and females who become aware of their subordination and acquire the skills and knowledge they need to analyse and overcome their disadvantage.

### Activity 3: GESI Terminologies

Work in groups to explain the following terminologies related to GESI:

- Sex
- Gender
- GESI Bias
- GESI blindness
- GESI awareness
- GESI Analysis/Audit
- GESI Sensitive
- GESI Equity
- GESI Equality
- GESI Mainstreaming
- GESI Responsive

Share your understanding of the terminologies with the entire group

**Inclusion:** refers to the process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of ALL learners and staff through increasing participation in learning, school cultures and communities, and reducing or eliminating exclusion within and from education. This involves modifications in content, instructional approaches, and decision-making structures to ensure that all learners achieve quality learning outcomes which is the responsibility of your school.

**Sex** refers to biologically determined reproductive anatomy that defines who is a female or male. It is an aspect of one's biological makeup that depends on whether one is born with distinct male or female genitals and a genetic programme that releases either male or female hormones to stimulate the development of one's reproductive system. It is universal and unchanging.

**Gender** refers to socially constructed differentiated roles assigned to both sexes whereby both females and males are expected to conform to and perpetuate the roles and behaviours assigned to them. These roles differ between and within cultures and are learned through socialisation via family, community, schools, culture, religion, government, and media. It is about the differences in roles, responsibilities, opportunities, needs and constraints of men and women.

**GESI Bias** is when your school shows preference or prejudice towards one gender or majority group, resulting in unequal expectations, attitudes, language use and treatment that disadvantage the others. Biases may be conscious or unconscious and may manifest in both subtle and obvious forms.

**GESI Blindness** refers to the failure of your school management, staff, learners, and other stakeholders to recognise the differences among males, females, and disadvantaged groups; and the impact these may have on learning outcomes for girls, boys, and learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) resulting in failure to provide for the differences.

**GESI Awareness** occurs when members of your school community can identify problems arising from inequality and discrimination based on gender, varied ability, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds even if these are not apparent on the surface. It is about knowing that there are issues, differences and inequalities between females and males including persons from disadvantaged groups.

**GESI Analysis/Audit:** the process by which your school examines how access to and control over resources, decision making power, and developmental benefits are different among females, males, and other disadvantaged groups of the school community for the purpose of decision making and quality learning.

**GESI Sensitive:** the ability of your school board, management, staff, and learners to acknowledge that the differences and inequalities among females, males and disadvantaged groups' needs, roles, identities, and achievements require attention.

**GESI Equity** refers to the initiatives and processes your school adopts to enable all learners and staff to access resources and opportunities according to their respective needs. The concept recognises that females, males, and disadvantaged groups have different needs and power in society which should be

recognised and addressed to rectify the imbalances among them. This may include giving equal or different treatment that enables everyone to equally exercise rights, obligations, enjoy benefits, and opportunities.

**GESI Equality** occurs when your school eliminates all forms of discriminatory acts and attitudes based on gender, culture, socio-economic status, or disability so that females, males, and the disadvantaged have equal opportunities to access, participate and achieve equal outcomes in all aspects of their school life.

**GESI Mainstreaming** occurs when your school consistently integrates gender and inclusion concerns into the development and implementation of policies, plans including budgets, programs and projects at the classroom, school, community, and national levels.

**GESI Responsive:** is when your school board, management, staff, and learners take actions to address the different needs, aspirations, capacities and achievements of males and females and persons who are disadvantaged through policies and initiatives to ensure that no one is disadvantaged. GESI responsiveness also means your school has the capacity to analyse a specific context from a GESI perspective, to develop GESI responsive course outline, lesson plans, teaching and learning materials and pedagogy, and to allocate budgets in a GESI responsive way.

### 4.3 Promoting GESI Responsiveness in Learning Focused Schools

Your school must be GESI responsive to promote learning for the disadvantaged learners and staff.

#### Activity 4: Role Play

Invite 4 volunteers to decide who will play Mr Mensah, a male senior staff member on the budget committee; one of the female tutors involved in the case; a male tutor irritated by the extra work they do to cover for the absence of the female staff. Hold a meeting chaired by the headmaster, where he solicits the views of the various members of the meeting and proposes a solution, which he must present to the meeting. A conclusion and decision should be attained. (This activity should be done within 15 minutes)

#### Role Play Scenario

When Mr Mensah took office as headmaster of Hebam SHS he found an outstanding argument that the previous headmaster had failed to resolve. Two female members of staff, both with young children, had been accused by male colleagues of missing early morning lessons and afternoon committee meetings and extra-curricular responsibilities and, by implication, not pulling their weight. Mr Mensah found management meeting minutes which indicated that the women had explained their behaviour in the context of having no option but to arrive late for class and miss afternoon commitments due to the responsibilities that they must care for their own children. The two women argue that the SHS requires a crèche and that this would also help attract more female students and stop the present practice of female students with young children being forced to leave them with relations or drop out of the SHS. However, the previous headmaster and senior managers refused to budget for a crèche. The women claimed that the budget committee had instead prioritised the building of a spectator stand on the football field. This argument had been raging for the last two years.

#### Plenary Discussion: Reflection

1. Do you believe that the women are justified in their position?
2. Are the male tutors justified in their argument that the female tutors are not pulling their weight?
3. How would you resolve this issue if you were Mr. Mensah? What process would you put in place?
4. What outcome would you seek?
5. Is this a GESI issue? Explain

In your opinion how can GESI Responsive leadership promote effective learning in your school?

### 4.3.1 GESI Responsive Leadership for Promoting Learning

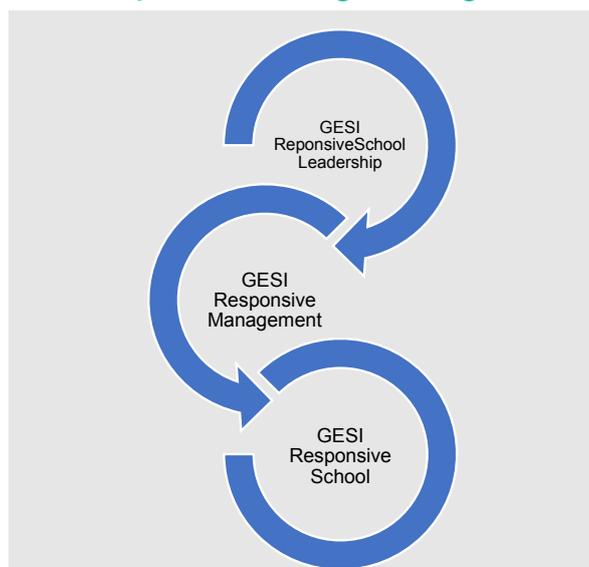


Diagram 3: GESI Responsive Leadership

GESI responsive school leadership influences and directs behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, and values to ensure improved learning outcomes.

#### GESI Responsive School Leadership:

- Are equipped with GESI responsive skills that enable them to conduct their job with a GESI lens.
- Acknowledge that the differences and inequalities among females, males and disadvantaged groups need attention.
- Make a conscious effort to address inequalities through formulation of policies and guidelines from a GESI perspective so that the needs, capacities and aspirations of females, males and disadvantaged groups are considered with the purpose of creating enabling environments for all to achieve quality outcomes.
- Disseminate GESI related school-based policies and guidelines for promoting learning among all learners and staff.
- Support school management to mobilise resources to build a GESI responsive infrastructure for the school.
- Monitor the implementation of GESI responsive school policies and programmes with a GESI lens.

#### Activity 5: Pair Work

Why is it important to have a GESI Responsive School Leadership?

Participants discuss in pairs.

Leadership is about influencing and directing people towards accomplishing tasks or to achieve a desired goal. It is a facilitative process that involves the shaping of the behaviour, attitude, beliefs, and values of people to help the leader carry out tasks. Females, males and the marginalised can and must be appointed to leadership positions. However, inequalities have contributed to the disproportionate representation of females and disadvantaged groups and individuals in our senior high education. Therefore, a GESI responsive school leadership is urgently needed to promote effective learning for both females and disadvantaged groups and individuals.

An effective GESI responsive school leadership has the following responsibilities:

- Guides the school to develop a vision and set objectives and tasks that addresses inequalities and ensure equal learning outcomes of all learners.

- Guides the school to develop a clear mission that addresses gender imbalances and issues of exclusion.
- Develop policies or guidelines that ensure equal opportunities for both females and males including the disadvantaged to participate in leadership and achieve at various levels of the school system.
- Plan programmes, activities and budgets that meet the needs of all females, males and the marginalised equally.

### 4.3.2 GESI Responsive School Management

GESI responsive school management refers to implementing and supervising programmes and activities in a manner that creates a congenial environment to foster quality learning outcomes.

An effective GESI responsive school management brush up on what is great to know, good to know, and must know about GESI issues in the classroom and the entire school life. They ensure to implement all GESI related school policies and programmes and ensure that school practices recognise and addresses the needs of the disadvantaged. Thus, they should focus on:

- Developing GESI responsive management skills and endeavour to foster GESI responsive attitudes among stakeholders and school community members.
- Ensuring that procedures and policies in the school are implemented to address concerns of inequality and exclusion of females, males, and the disadvantaged persons in the school.
- Creating a GESI responsive school environment that reflects understanding of the realities of females, males, and the disadvantaged by consciously removing all forms of discriminatory practices against both genders and the disadvantaged.
- Ensuring adequate and accessible infrastructure for females and learners with disabilities, such as separate and accessible toilets for females, males, and wheelchair ramps.
- Establishing safe space that guarantee student safety and protection against sexual harassment and other abusive practices in the school.
- Preparing and implementing GESI responsive work plans and budgets.
- Ensuring that teachers are properly trained and equipped to create GESI responsive classroom environments that foster equal participation and high-quality learning outcomes for all girls, boys, and learners with special education needs and disability.
- Providing professional development opportunities for non-teaching staff on GESI-responsive practices.

#### Activity 6: Think-Pair-Share

In your opinion why do you think GESI responsive school management is important?

GESI responsiveness in school management is vital because:

- Male domination over knowledge creation has contributed to disadvantaged females' knowledge, experience, competence, and aspirations.
- There is a disparity between male and female retention, completion rates and achievement at various levels of education including senior high and technical schools.
- Education is perceived as perpetuating male domination in second cycle education where there are more male than female completion rate, as well as in school leadership roles.
- Potential female teachers who constitute a significant resource for second cycle education are lost.
- Second cycle schoolgirls have fewer role models than they should have and thus may perform poorly.
- Second cycle schools are likely to be male dominated, with a tendency to overlook unequal treatment of females and the disadvantaged.

An effective GESI responsive school management implements and supervises targeted programmes and activities that promote effective learning and career progression for all learners, particularly the disadvantaged learners and staff of the school community respectively.

### 4.3.3 GESI Responsive School

A GESI responsive school is one in which the academic, social, and physical environment considers the specific needs of females, males and persons who are marginalised based on disability, health, poverty, and culture. This implies that all stakeholders understand the educational principles and practices that promote gender equality and social inclusion. Teachers understand and protect the human rights of all learners and can provide learner-friendly and age appropriate sexual and reproductive health information that addresses issues of sexual violence. For example, the teaching methodologies, language use, educational materials, classroom set-up, interactions, and physical environment and indeed the entire life of the school should respond to the needs of both genders and persons with special educational needs.

#### Activity: 7. Plenary Discussion – Think pair share

What in your opinion should constitute a GESI responsive school?

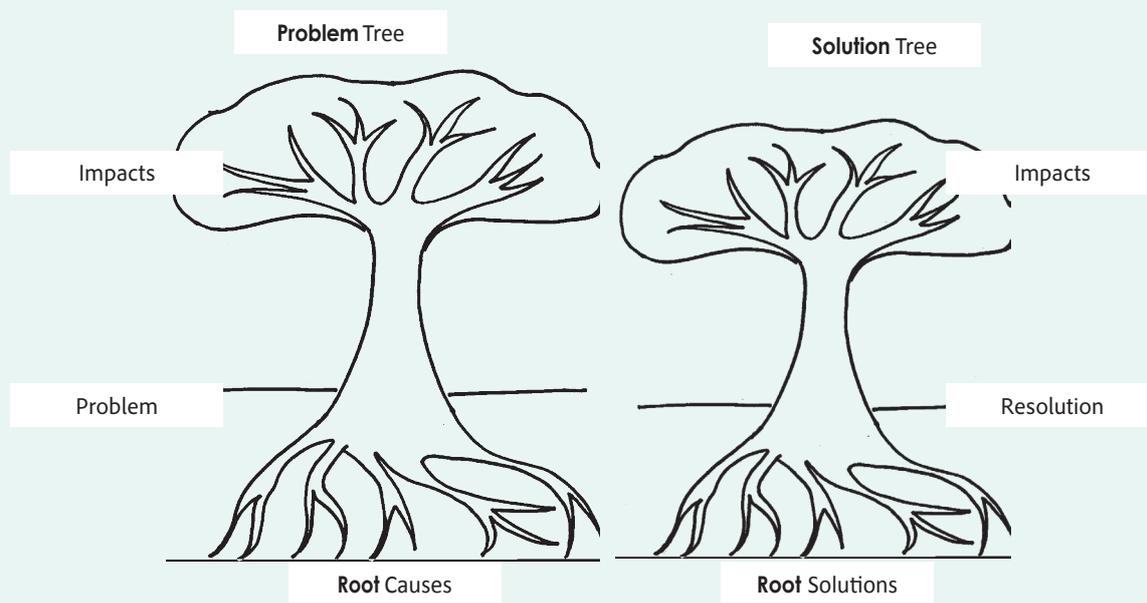
A GESI responsive school must fulfil the following.

- All members of the school have received GESI training
- Classroom practices are GESI responsive
- Teachers challenge traditional gender roles during lessons
- School practices and activities are GESI responsive
- School infrastructure is GESI responsive
- School has a sexual harassment policy that is fully implemented
- School policies are GESI responsive
- Strategies to include and empower marginalised groups within the school are in place
- Staff recruitment is GESI responsive
- Staff protocols and procedures are GESI responsive
- School data is collected and analysed in a GESI responsive way
- School planning is GESI responsive
- School budgeting is GESI responsive

### Activity 8: Case Study - Problem/Solution Tree

In Hebam SHS, enrolment of female students is estimated at 57.5% in year one. By the end of year three, the completion rate is 32.2% with less than 10% making it to the tertiary level. An estimated 0.3% of students with Special Education Needs (SEN) are enrolled in the school. And yet none can qualify for tertiary institutions or live a successful adult life after secondary school. Results from the school shows that the majority who perform poorly are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Kuukuwa skips the biology class because of what happened the last time. Her school has no Guidance and Counselling Coordinator to provide a safe space for reporting and seeking redress. Similarly, Kojo who uses a wheelchair is unable to access the school library and the closest toilet to his classroom block. The only female dormitory is 400 metres away from the main classroom block which has only one open urinal. Often, board and management decisions are skewed towards male staff and students.

1. Identify the key GESI issues in Hebam SHS
2. Develop a problem and solutions trees for the issues identified



### 4.4. Creating a GESI Responsive School to Promote Learning

Senior high and technical school leaders are required to develop GESI responsive activities to promote and improve educational goals. These involve GESI Audit, GESI Planning and GESI Mainstreaming as indicated in Figure 2. Modules 2 and 3 will deal with GESI Planning and GESI Mainstreaming respectively. However, this section will focus on GESI Audit.

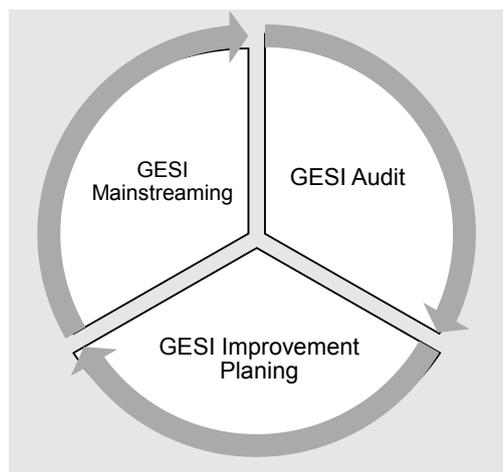


Diagram 4: GESI Responsive Planning

#### 4.4.1 GESI Audit

To create a GESI responsive school, you must undertake a whole school GESI audit. This includes:

- assessing whether your school has good gender and social inclusion balance,
- accessing whether your school follows government rules, policies and actions formulated for supporting the marginalised; and
- assessing the impact of the school's current and proposed policies and practices on the marginalised.

#### 4.4.2 Why GESI Audit?

The GESI audit aims to ensure that your school leadership identifies gaps in the school's GESI responsiveness practices and policies that could be reinforced to promote learning for females and the disadvantaged.

#### 4.4.3 The GESI Audit Process

In undertaking the GESI audit, the school management should constitute a committee or appoint a coordinator and provide clear terms of reference for the audit exercise. The audit process involves:

1. Determining what to be audited (whole school for the first time)
2. Constituting a GESI audit team
3. Giving orientation to the team
4. Preparing a scorecard (provided)
5. Administering the scorecard
6. Writing report

The GESI Audit is undertaken using a scorecard which is discussed in the next section.

#### 4.4.4 GESI Responsive scorecard

A GESI responsive scorecard for senior high and technical schools is a standardised assessment of gender and social inclusion mainstreaming policies and practices, designed to ensure adherence to minimum standards for gender equality and social across senior high and technical schools. It serves as an accountability framework for assessing the effectiveness of GESI mainstreaming. The scorecard is a tool for undertaking the GESI audit to inform improvement planning. The GESI responsive scorecard focuses on the following competencies:

- All members of the school have received GESI training
- Classroom practice is GESI responsive
- Teachers challenge traditional gender roles during lessons
- School practices and activities are GESI responsive

- School infrastructure is GESI responsive
- The school has a sexual harassment policy that is fully implemented
- School policies are developed and/or amended to be GESI responsive
- Inclusion and empowering marginalised groups within secondary education
- Teacher recruitment is GESI responsive
- Staff protocols and procedures are GESI responsive
- School data is collected and analysed in a GESI responsive way
- School planning is GESI responsive
- School budgeting is GESI responsive

## 4.5 Conclusion

A GESI responsive leadership creates a GESI responsive school and GESI responsive school promotes learning for the disadvantaged. This helps every learner to maximise their learning potential for improved learning outcomes essential for secondary education graduates to progress to further studies, the world of work and adult life.

## Annex 1

### Characteristic features of a learning focused school

- School leadership team placed priority on knowing the students as individuals—as both learners and members of a cultural community— a recipe that creates an environment that assures every student can learn, could learn, and is supported to do so.
- An existence of a school-wide learning improvement “agenda”—that defines a set of improvement goals generated and communicated by a leadership team, led by the principal, including assistant principals and several teacher leaders— heads of departments, Guidance and Counselling
- An institutionalised regular and functional instructional support for all teachers (professional learning communities), especially newly appointed, those serving on national service programme – including student on practice offered by administrative leaders and several others in the school who had assumed newly reconfigured roles that offer instructional leadership.
- School-based (self-developed) or own system for tracking students’ progress and for making regular adjustments in their learning experiences, informed by measures of their progress. This allows them to compare performance with schools and students in the same category and region (ensure a link with regional and national monitoring support for schools) tracking measures and other data the school found useful.
- School staff shared responsibility for student progress, reflected in a set of agreements as well as unspoken norms among school staff, to assume such responsibility and to accept that all will be answerable for their efforts to accomplish this goal.

## Acknowledgements

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