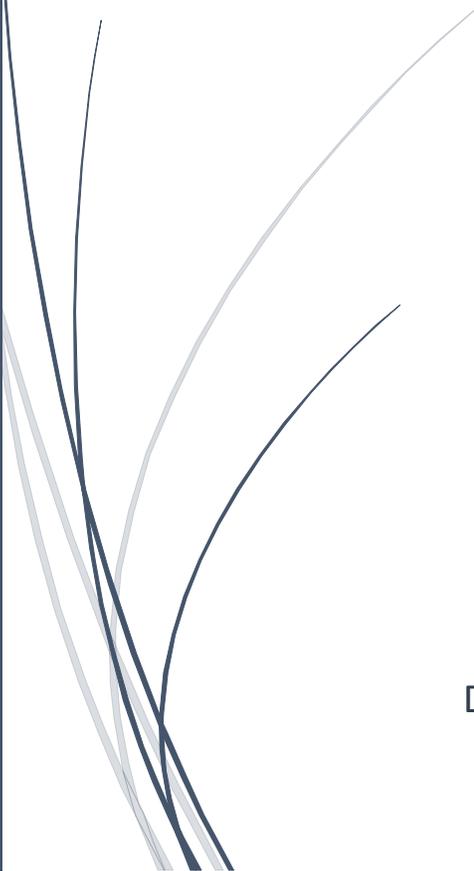




# Aspiring Leaders Program

Serving Nova Scotia Public Schools



Developed by the ALP Design Team (2015)  
Revised February 2016

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## Section 1: Introduction

Effective school leadership is a cornerstone to advance school effectiveness and student achievement. School-based leaders need to be knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Principals and vice-principals also need to be competent managers of people, data, and processes to ensure the school is organized and functioning well as an organization. As *learning leaders*, they also need to respect the principles of adult learning, have a strong understanding of equity and diversity, and know how to shape a positive school culture and lead school change.

To perform these varied roles requires a unique and practiced set of knowledge and skills. The Design Team believes the Aspiring Leaders Program will provide participants with a solid introduction to critical knowledge and skills that they will need to be successful school administrators. While learning on the job is one of the ways that individuals learn what they need to know, it is more effective if aspiring school-based leaders are provided with quality learning opportunities before they take on these challenging and critical roles.

The purpose of the Aspiring Leaders Program is to provide a coherent and integrated learning experience for teachers who aspire to be principals and vice principals. A multi-disciplinary Design Team has worked together over the past year to create a program that has a balance between theory and practice. Team members understand that teachers who aspire to be school-based leaders need to acquire theoretical knowledge about leadership. It is equally important for them to learn practical know-how— that is, to be able to apply many skills and competencies in order to be successful school leaders. The intention to create an Aspiring Leaders Program that includes this balance between theory and practice, between knowledge and skills, has been central to the Design Team’s dialogue and decision-making.

This report provides information about the content of the Aspiring Leaders Program, how the program is organized and structured, and the recruitment and applications processes. It also highlights the strong alignment with the 2015 Nova Scotia Action Plan for Education.

## Section 2: Aspiring Leaders Program and the 2015 Action Plan for Education

The Province of Nova Scotia has introduced an ambitious new action plan for education. The plan is designed to renew, refocus and rebuild the education system. The 2015 Action Plan lays out a set of specific strategies and actions under four broad goals or pillars. Achievement of each of these four pillars depends greatly on high quality school-based leadership.

The four pillars of the 2015 Action Plan for Education are:

1. Modern Education System
2. Innovative Curriculum
3. Inclusive School Environments
4. Excellence in Teaching and Leadership

It is clear from our analysis that the proposed Aspiring Leaders Program has a tight alignment with all four domains. For example, our Diversity and Social Justice seminar as well as our School Culture and Building Relationships and Student Services seminars connect with 'Creating Inclusive School Environments' and 'Building a Modern Education System'. Our Instructional Leadership, Collaborative Learning Teams, and School Management seminars align with the Action Plan's focus on 'Innovative Curriculum' and 'Excellence in Teaching and Learning'. Our Communication and Leading Change seminars relate to helping leaders gain knowledge and skills in all four domains.

The intention of the Aspiring Leaders Program is to increase the capacity of our education system by helping new leaders be more prepared for the challenges of school-based leadership. The program will only support the efforts of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to implement its 2015 Action Plan for Education.

## Section 3: Structure of the Aspiring Leaders Program

There are four fundamental components of the program that include:

- two summer institutes
- seven seminars (Friday-Saturday)
- eight residency days
- a culminating assessment

The program extends over a period of thirteen months, beginning with the first summer institute and ending the following October. The Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium (NSEL) will be responsible for developing and delivering the Aspiring Leaders Program.

### First Summer Institute

The focus of the first day of the three-day institute will be orientation and self-awareness. Day 1 will provide an orientation to the goals and learning processes to be used throughout the program and an Insights discovery experience (personality types). Days 2 and 3, protégés will work with Dr. Mike Rutherford focused on the themes of the Artisan Teacher.

### Friday - Saturday Seminars

There will be seven seminars throughout the program, six of which begin on Friday at 1:00 PM and end on Saturday afternoon (10 hours total). The exception would be *Instructional Leadership*, which will be two full days beginning on Friday at 9:00 AM and ending on Saturday afternoon (12.5 hours total).

Seminar topics are outlined below:

- a. Diversity and Social Justice (September)
- b. School Culture and Building Relationships (October)
- c. Leading Change (November)
- d. Instructional Leadership (January)
- e. Collaborative Learning Teams (February)
- f. Communication Skills (April)
- g. School Management (May)

Each seminar will include current and relevant knowledge about the topic, as well as opportunities for participants to practice basic school-based leadership skills and competencies.

### Residency

Protégés will be expected to complete an eight-day residency throughout the year. This will provide them with the opportunity to be placed in a school where they will learn under the mentorship of an experienced principal. The protégé will be assigned in-school leadership tasks to complete under the mentor's guidance, and as such, will provide protégés an opportunity to learn by doing and to practice or implement what they are learning in the seminars. It is recommended that protégés and their mentors meet to review the mentorship program before the first residency day.

### Second Summer Institute

During the second summer institute, participants will be immersed in a range of learning activities to help them understand the complexities of Student Services and the role of the school-based leader. This institute will be two full days in length.



## Culminating Assessment

The Culminating Assessment is an opportunity for participants enrolled in the Aspiring Leaders Program to demonstrate what they have learned in relation to the program content and domains of school leadership. The assessment will also examine what participants have learned as protégés during their residency. These assessments will be conducted by individual boards participating in the program.

The Exit Assessment must be successfully completed by participants to be eligible for the Aspiring Leaders Certificate awarded by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

## Locations

Summer institutes and Friday-Saturday seminars will rotate around the province. Seminar locations will be coordinated by NSELC in consultation with superintendents/ALP board contact persons.

## Tuition

**Tuition cost is \$2390.00 plus HST per participant.**

The cost covers two summer institutes, including the Artisan Teacher Conference/Symposium and the seven seminars. It does not cover costs associated with the residency program, travel, meals, and accommodations.

### **Summer Institute #1 August 8-10, 2016:**

Location: BADDECK, NS Cost: \$590.00 plus HST  
 Day 1: Program orientation and *Insights Discovery*  
 Day 2-3: *The Artisan Teacher* with Mike Rutherford (two days).

### **Seminars**

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| a. Diversity and Social Justice (September 16-17, 2016)     | Cost: \$225.00 plus HST |
| b. School Culture/Building Relationships (Oct. 14-15, 2016) | Cost: \$225.00 plus HST |
| c. Leading Change (November 18-19, 2016)                    | Cost: \$225.00 plus HST |
| d. Instructional Leadership (January 13-14, 2017)           | Cost: \$225.00 plus HST |
| e. Collaborative Learning Teams (Feb. 24-25, 2017)          | Cost: \$225.00 plus HST |
| f. Communication Skills (April 7-8, 2017)                   | Cost: \$225.00 plus HST |
| g. School Management (May 5-6, 2017)                        | Cost: \$225.00 plus HST |
| h. Summer Institute #2 (August 8-9, 2017)                   | Cost: \$225.00 plus HST |

## Section 4: Content of the Aspiring Leaders Program

The Design Team understands that the Aspiring Leaders Program (ALP) is the beginning of a long learning journey for participants who want to become principals or vice principals.

The description of program content and outcomes in this section is intended to articulate the critical knowledge and skills participants will be introduced to over the course of the thirteen-month program. Program content was based on *the Domains and Competencies* identified by the Design Team, as outlined in Appendix A.

These *Domains and Competencies* serve to assist participants in establishing their vision and goals to be achieved throughout the program and into their early years of practice. They also act as a guide for ALP curriculum writers and program instructors as they develop and teach the seminars and institutes.

### Seminar 1: Diversity and Social Justice

The content of this seminar is to help participants understand what diversity means in schools, and what policies and practices create authentic learning experiences and success for all learners. Participants will examine systemic barriers to social justice in schools and the responsibilities of school leaders to facilitate change for social justice and diversity.

Instructors will focus on teaching skills related to identifying appropriate classroom practices, fostering openness and fairness, responding to systemic barriers and how to be a proactive socially just leader.

### Seminar 2: School Culture and Building Relationships

In this seminar participants will learn about school culture, how to impact change in school culture, and how values, expectations and beliefs play a significant role. Seminar content will help participants understand emotional intelligence in schools, and be able to identify and respond to different personality types. They will also learn about the impact of personality types and emotional intelligence on school culture. It will also include learning about current motivation theories and how this knowledge can be used to develop adult learners and teams.

Instructors will focus on teaching skills related to developing a learning community culture, communicating high expectations, motivational practices, and managing difficult people.

### Seminar 3: Leading Change

The content of the Leading Change seminar will focus on increasing participants' understanding of current change processes with special attention given to transitions. Participants will come to understand why creating a sense of urgency is important, and

the impact of context on how leaders implement change.

Instructors will focus on teaching skills related to creating a school's vision, empowering individuals and teams, building consensus, and using data to guide school decision-making practices.

#### Seminar 4: Instructional Leadership

The Instructional Leadership seminar will focus on increasing participants' understanding of best practices in teaching, learning, and assessment. Participants will explore brain development, coaching for instructional improvement, and the fundamentals in leading school improvement and individual professional growth planning.

Instructors will focus on teaching skills such as managing time, facilitating conversations about teaching and learning, recognizing teacher talents, and identifying effective classroom-based teaching practices.

#### Seminar 5: Collaborative Learning Teams

The content of this seminar will be organized to develop participants' understanding of the fundamental components of collaborative learning teams, the key differences between groups and teams, expectations for collaborative learning teams, and effective ways that the school-based leader can empower them.

Instructors will focus on teaching skills and strategies for creating horizontal teams (across subjects within a grade) and vertical teams (across grade levels). They will help participants learn how to create the conditions that stimulate the growth of a school learning community. Instructors will also teach concrete practices that collaborative learning teams employ, such as developing common assessments, examining student work, engaging in lesson study, and using data to improve teaching

#### Seminar 6: Communication

The content of the Communications seminar will increase participants' understanding of the interpersonal dynamics involved in communications activities, how personal biases can impact our ability to communicate, the role of trust in communications and the importance of effectively managing power dynamics.

Instructors will focus on teaching fundamental communication skills, including how to manage conflict, how to skillfully have difficult conversations, and how to communicate effectively with different audiences.

#### Seminar 7: School Management

This seminar will help participants understand existing school management policies that need to guide practices. This includes legislation and regulations, student services

guidelines, policies related to student safety, hiring practices and other procedures governing human resource management, staffing processes, and associated legal obligations.

Instructors will focus on teaching skills related to setting priorities with management tasks, utilizing regional office staff to achieve success, delegating management tasks, and creating formal and informal support networks.

For a more complete list of domains and program competencies refer to Appendix A.

## Section 5: Recruitment, Application and Selection Processes

### Recruitment

Recruitment is a critical stage in the process to build a strong roster of skilled and knowledgeable aspiring leaders in each school board. It is very important to attract and engage those individuals who have the dispositions and leadership qualities to motivate others, which leads to effective instruction in every classroom, a positive school climate and a growth-oriented school culture. The Design Team further recommends that school boards hold information sessions on the Aspiring Leaders Program at various locations throughout the board.

Other marketing tools could also be used to develop awareness and encourage applications, such as well-designed posters placed in staff rooms. The Educational Leadership Consortium of Nova Scotia (NSELC) could develop an ALP web presence where program information and updates could be readily available. A set of Q&As on the website would be helpful for interested teachers, to have their anticipated questions answered easily with quick and informative responses. School boards could also consider the use of social media to communicate messages about the program. More traditional methods, such as brochures (if broadly distributed), could also heighten awareness.

### Application and Selection

The application process and selection of candidates will be undertaken by individual school boards. Interested teachers will be asked to submit an online application through his/her school board's website.

The NSELC will prepare a standard application form and it will be sent to school boards to be placed on their website. Using a standard application form will support gathering consistent information from each interested teacher. As part of the application process, participants will be required to provide three work-related references, including their current supervisor.

Each school board will review the applications it receives and make selections based on identified criteria. Applicants who meet the identified criteria will be interviewed by a panel of school board personnel. The interview may include such things as a series of questions, a presentation, and/or a performance task.

The interview panel will make the final selection of successful candidates and all applicants will be notified. Debriefing opportunities for unsuccessful applicants will be available upon request.

The Design Team encourages school boards to identify possible openings for school-based leadership positions over the next two to three years, and inform teachers of these upcoming positions.

### Summary

The development of the Aspiring Leaders Program evolved from a sense of urgency expressed by superintendents that more needed to be done to support principals and vice principals as they transition from the classroom to the challenging role of school leader. Superintendents understand deeply the critical role school administrators play in support of student learning, and they understand the challenges facing new principals in those first years as a school leader.

The intention of the Aspiring Leaders Program is to increase the capacity of our education system by helping new leaders be more prepared for the challenges of school-based leadership. This program will provide a solid foundation of knowledge and skill development that principals will continue to build on throughout their careers.

The Design Team is very excited about the promise and the possibilities that a new Aspiring Leaders Program can bring to support students, teachers and schools.

### Final Note of Appreciation

The Design Team Co-chairs, Tony Stewart and Margo Tait, wish to acknowledge and extend a heartfelt thank you to the members of the Design Team for their commitment, energy, ideas and enthusiasm throughout the design process. Membership on the ALP Design Team is outlined in Appendix B.

A special thank you is extended to superintendents and Human Resources directors who were instrumental in initiating the development of this program and for their guidance throughout the design process.

## Appendix A: Domains and Competencies

### Seminar 1: Diversity and Social Justice

<b><i>Participants will know and understand:</i></b>	<b><i>Participants will be able to</i></b>
<p>What diversity means in our schools, the principles of social justice within a school context, and the policies and practices that create authentic diversity</p> <p>Systemic barriers (such as mental health issues, lack of cultural proficiency, multiple intelligences, social and emotional learning, poverty and differentiation)</p> <p>Themselves as a leader and their social justice responsibilities for staff and students</p> <p>Processes for assessing students and their needs to identify programming options</p> <p>What accessibility means in relation to physical support and student learning</p> <p>Educational implications related to race, transgender and sexual orientation; provincial guidelines for supporting transgender and gender-non conforming students</p>	<p>Recognize inequities, create a culture where all feel valued and change existing school and classroom practices to reflect diversity</p> <p>Design and deliver classroom instruction aligned to the needs of the student population</p> <p>Develop and implement effective ways to respond to systemic barriers at the school level, while fostering openness and fairness</p> <p>Monitor student progress via TIENET</p> <p>Fulfill their proactive role as a social justice leader</p> <p>Recognize barriers to social justice, such as appropriate and inappropriate language</p> <p>Build critical capacity to move social justice throughout the school and to motivate buy in</p> <p>Identify useful resources to support diversity and socially just schools</p>

## Seminar 2: School Culture and Building Relationships

<b><i>Participants will know and understand:</i></b>	<b><i>Participants will be able to:</i></b>
Fundamentals of school culture, underlying assumptions and expectations, and ways to create change	Communicate high expectations for all and be able to walk the talk.
Current motivation theories and practices	Communicate with different partners about the current and envisioned school culture
How school vision and values influence school culture	Use a variety of ways to reshape school culture, pace, guide, change and use motivational strategies to encourage and support staff
How to develop individuals and teams, stages of adult development, and the value of shared experiences	Value different points of view, but manage difficult people
How to create and maintain a work/life balance	Focus on people's strengths and talents
The impact of different personality types on school culture, and emotional intelligence in the workplace	Develop a learning community culture
How to assess your school's culture from different perspectives (staff, students, parents, community)	Engage staff in authentic group decision making and foster open discussions about school culture

## Seminar 3: Leading Change

<b><i>Participants will know and understand:</i></b>	<b><i>Participants will be able to:</i></b>
Change processes, their impact on individuals and factors inhibiting change	Lead staff through complex change, such as those presented in the Action Plan for Education 2015
Different organizational structures and organizational development	Create a school vision
Context: local, provincial and national policies and direction	Empower individuals and teams, and create ownership for change
Adult learning principles and practices	Develop shared leadership
How to create urgency and buy-in	Use data to guide decision making
Ways to inspire innovation	Build consensus and implement ways to create urgency
The implementation of different planning processes	

## Seminar 4: Instructional Leadership

<b><i>Participants will know and understand:</i></b>	<b><i>Participants will be able to:</i></b>
Best practices in teaching, learning and assessment	Manage their time effectively
Brain development and learning theories	Use data to improve teaching in math and literacy
How to coach and provide helpful feedback	Be a critical friend, and problem solve with individuals and groups
The role of equity in high quality instruction	Systematically observe teaching and give insightful feedback
Technology that enhances and supports learning	Have focused conversations with teachers about student achievement
How to lead continuous school improvement and growth planning	Celebrate accomplishments
Essential curriculum learning outcomes	Recognize and develop teacher talents
The framework for teaching standards for Nova Scotia	Support teachers as they embed formative assessment practices
	Lead the implementation of curriculum components that address social and emotional learning

## Seminar 5: Collaborative Learning Teams

<b><i>Participants will know and understand:</i></b>	<b><i>Participants will be able to:</i></b>
The fundamentals of successful group work	Create a safe learning environment for adults
How to empower groups and teams	Facilitate shared leadership with staff
The fundamental differences between groups and teams	Create a learning community in a school and provide opportunities for teachers to network
How school culture can impact team development	Organize collaborative learning teams (horizontal and vertical) throughout the school
Characteristics of collaborative learning teams	Lead the learning and implementation of the collaborative learning team practices: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. data analysis</li> <li>2. classroom observations</li> <li>3. common assessments</li> <li>4. instructional design</li> <li>5. examining student work</li> <li>6. lesson study</li> </ol>

## 7. action-orientated study groups

## Seminar 6: Communication

<b><i>Participants will know and understand:</i></b>	<b><i>Participants will be able to:</i></b>
Power dynamics related to communication in an organization	Communicate effectively with different audiences
Basic fundamentals of interpersonal communication and how to align verbal and nonverbal messages	Effectively use active listening, questioning and summarizing skills
Cultural factors that influence communications	Effectively begin, manage and end difficult conversations; and deliver hard messages in a caring and respectful manner
Lenses and biases that impact observations	Be concise when presenting information
How school culture influences communication, and ways to develop trust	Identify common interests
Conflict resolution processes and strategies	Keep conversations focused and relevant
The fundamentals of difficult conversations	Diffuse volatile people and situations

## Seminar 7: School Management

<b><i>Participants will know and understand:</i></b>	<b><i>Participants will be able to:</i></b>
Relevant policies and procedures (such as the new provincial school code of conduct, student assessments, evaluation and reporting; student promotion, retention and acceleration; new homework standards)	Build and collaborate with a network of informed colleagues
Associated regulations and how to access them	Prioritize management tasks
Safety guidelines	Delegate management tasks
Organizational structures	Utilize regional office staff as support personnel
Hiring and HR procedures	Achieve effectiveness and avoid pushing for perfection
Staffing and scheduling	
Legal obligations	

## Second Summer Institute: Student Services

<b><i>Participants will know and understand:</i></b>	<b><i>Participants will be able to:</i></b>
The inclusion continuum of support and the need to work with student services staff and outside agencies	Lead problem solving facilitation based on individual student needs
Special education policies and documents	Access support for students and lead core teams through the program planning process
Program planning process, including the core team, managing caseloads, referral processes, and roles and responsibilities	Articulate their beliefs and expectations about school level student services
The role of school administration	Use data to inform next steps and student progress
Different models of service delivery	Develop their own network of support
Transitioning students	Facilitate effective meetings and conversations
Behavioural interventions	Be an advocate for students
Cultural proficiency lens	Ensure all voices are heard

**Appendix B**      **Aspiring Leaders Program Design Team**

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