



A Principal's Guide to CLC

Revised February 2020



Successful school leaders create and protect their school environment while at the same time encouraging active participation by and partnership with all members of the school community. Knowing how to align the diverse activities, programs and initiatives within a school and being able to gauge the magnitude of change and implementation, requires more than just skill, it involves a combination of emotional intelligence, confident leadership, and visionary thinking.

The principal of a Community Learning Centre (CLC) school is in the middle of the action, interacting with a myriad of groups - the school board, families, teachers, community organizations, partners, governing boards, CDAs, and the Provincial Resource Team (PRT) - in order to enhance student success and community engagement.

Being a CLC principal requires a shift from the traditional principal leadership style to a more community-based, collaborative leadership style. Empowerment, shared leadership, trust, flexibility, versatility, innovation, capacity building, and sustainability are all common place in the vocabulary and daily work of a CLC principal.

The CLC principal collaborates with the CLC Community Development Agent (CDA) and the various community partners to develop a school culture that engages families and community members. They also help teachers and CDAs make connections to the QEP and the school educational project, ensuring that CLC programming/activities compliment what is already happening in the classroom. The principal also works with the school board to ensure the school is open and welcoming to the community.

The role of a CLC principal involves some or all of the following challenges and skills:

1. ***Removing Boundaries / Barriers:*** working collaboratively with school boards, teachers, and community organizations to facilitate program development and cultivating teacher participation in CLC programming/activities.
2. ***A Commitment to Communications and Public Relations:*** Becoming a visible and active partner in the community.
3. ***Time Management:*** Identifying people who can share the management and leadership responsibility of the CLC school – CDA, teachers, partners.
4. ***Promoting Development, Growth, and Stability:*** embrace leadership of the CLC school and ensure that programs and activities are aligned with the school educational project.

Children, staff, families and community all make up the clientele and partnership base of the CLC School. Each CLC school has its own flavour and reality therefore each CLC principal has a different way of working to move their CLC school initiative forward.



The following comments from CLC principals clearly demonstrate that, although there are many ways to approach the task, the commonalities remain the essence of the principal's job.

- *“My role as a CLC Principal is to ensure that the vision and structures are in place to foster the long term development of a culture of lifelong learning.”*
- *“My role is to work together with teachers, community leaders, and private citizens in formulating community based projects and initiatives.”*
- *“My role as a CLC Principal is to oversee the smooth running of the initiative and acting as an encourager, motivator, and a leader. I will instill a life-long learner culture in our CLC School.”*
- *“As a pedagogical leader of the CLC School, my role is to support, advance and focus our efforts for the benefit of our children's experience. As a community leader of this Initiative it is my role to involve, support, and transform our CLC School into a hub for the community according to the needs identified.”*
- *“My role is to facilitate the development of long lasting partnerships between the school and the various community groups and to empower the CDA to effectively develop and deliver services to our school community in the context of sustainability.”*

Common themes such as transformational leadership, catalyst for educational-community action, developing consensus building approaches to change, operationalizing partnerships by giving voice to all stakeholders, sharing responsibility and authority in the decision-making process, listening and responding to community needs, are how CLC principals articulate their unique role.

To date, the reports and evaluations indicate that the CLC principal and CDA are the key contributors to the growth and development of the community school initiative. This document is meant to begin the process of looking at the unique role a CLC Principal has in providing leadership and building leadership capacity for both the CLC school and the school community.

