

The Condition of *Leadership & Responsibility* means being able to express ideas and demonstrate a willingness to accept the consequences of our actions. Fostering leadership empowers students to make just and appropriate decisions and to take pride in their actions. Schools that promote this Condition expect their students to have a voice and be good decision makers. They provide legitimate decision-making opportunities, seek student input, and expect participants to be accountable for their actions and words.

### 3 KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING STUDENT LEADERSHIP



Student leaders possess a range of traits—they can be quiet or loud, high achieving or struggling academically, introverted or extroverted, skilled orators or students with speech-related disabilities.



Leaders are not born—all students should be taught and encouraged to practice leadership skills. Students learn to express their ideas, take action, and make a difference through genuine opportunities and with support from those around them.



There must be leadership opportunities for all students—possibilities should be as varied as the student body. Opportunities ought to be consistent with how a school differentiates instruction, scaffolds learning, and addresses the needs of each student.

### UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

#### Teach Leadership Skills

Identifying concerns   brainstorming ideas   understanding different perspectives   setting goals  
 being authentic   listening   being inclusive   supporting all students   collaborating  
 making informed decisions   communicating with adults and peers   developing a plan  
 learning from mistakes   standing up for what you believe in   sharing responsibility  
 respecting and learning about diverse populations   being a good follower   compromising  
 being inclusive   remaining sensitive to individual needs   welcoming constructive criticism  
 persevering   sharing ideas   being honest   analyzing

Choose three of the skills above. Consider how each skill is taught to all students AND how those skills are assessed.

Skill	Taught	Assessed
#1		
#2		
#3		

## Provide Opportunities

Individual: Do all students ...

- Have a voice in their education?
- Have opportunities to improve their leadership skills?
- Have a leadership mentor?

Classroom: Do all students ...

- Participate in classroom discussions?
- Have a teacher who understands and supports their current leadership skills?
- Feel confident they can be leaders?

School-wide: Do all students ...

- Know how they can become involved beyond the classroom?
- Have opportunities to participate on school-wide committees?
- Feel respected by adults at school?

Community-wide: Do all students ...

- Understand the needs within the community?
- Recognize formal and informal leaders in the community?
- Have access to a community mentor?

## OPENING DOORS

### Reflect on current student leadership systems and structures

Use the chart below to discuss the current status of student leadership with colleagues and students.

Step	Stride	Sprint
Students apply or are chosen for traditional leadership opportunities at school.	Student leadership opportunities change based on students' needs and input. All students are encouraged to participate.	Student leadership opportunities exist at all levels: individual, classroom, school-wide, and community-wide. Teachers help all students find opportunities that optimize their interests and current skills.
Adults communicate with students about leadership opportunities.	Students share and encourage each other to get involved.	Students develop, promote, and lead various leadership projects, clubs, and initiatives.
Adults ask for students' input into assessment.	Student self-assessment occurs alongside teacher assessment.	Students provide constructive peer feedback and support on assignments.
Adults ask for students' ideas related to building-wide committee work.	Students fill out feedback forms for adult leadership committees on a regular basis.	Students participate in discussions and tasks that genuinely impact school-wide decisions.

Step	Stride	Sprint
Students participate in community service programs organized by the school.	Students identify community needs and teachers decide where, when, and how to participate.	Students organize, develop, and lead community service initiatives.
Students list perceived school needs for the budget.	Students and teachers discuss potential budget items.	Students are taught about the school budget process, coached on effective presentations, and asked to present their ideas to the school board.
Nontraditional student leaders are asked for their ideas and then left alone.	Nontraditional student leaders are encouraged to join school clubs and organizations.	Nontraditional student leaders are provided mentors to support the development of leadership skills.
The primary form of student representation is student council.	Student council invites a revolving group of students to participate in meetings.	Alongside student council, the school develops opportunities to hear the voices and ideas of a broad range of students.
Student voice is sporadically invited in the classroom.	Student voice is a significant factor in the learning the process.	Student voice is a way of being throughout the school.
Students accept responsibility when an adult brings it to their attention.	Students understand they're responsible for what they say and do.	Students readily accept responsibility <i>and take action</i> .

### Expand Leadership Opportunities

With an understanding of your Step, Stride, or Sprint starting points, work with students to design a plan for how to enhance student leadership. Consider how the following events and systemic leadership opportunities can either be created or expanded in your school: student council, student-led conferences, peer advising, students as co-teachers, student clubs, student committees, collaborative projects, school internships, student voice in the classroom, student participation in community service, student involvement in school website, student clubs, student-adult partnerships.

*Note: Expanding student leadership skills and opportunities does not mean current opportunities are not effective. Traditional student councils are one of many meaningful leadership opportunities. The goal is to build upon student council and other existing leadership opportunities for as many students as possible in order to develop and support the leader in ALL students.*