GROWING DEEP

Leadership & Formation Framework

Resources for
Governing Bodies

Lutheran Education
AUSTRALIA

Contents

The purpose of Lutheran schooling

While there is a major focus on teaching and learning, each school strives to offer far more than that. When a family joins a Lutheran school they become part of a community which strives to be a secure place which offers warm, caring relationships and a safe environment. A Lutheran school sees each student as being unique with their own particular gifts and needs. The approach is not to ask what students and their families can do for the school, but what the school can do for them.

Lutheran schools have developed a special vision for themselves which is based on the teachings of the Bible. As a Christian learning community each school aspires to provide a culture and ethos permeated by the core values of love, justice, compassion, forgiveness, service, humility, courage, hope, quality and appreciation. *(From [What is so special about a Lutheran School?)](#)*

Specifically, through its schools the church offers a program of Christian education which:

- serves students, parents, the church, the community, and the government, by providing a quality education for the whole person
- strives for excellence in the development and creative use by all students of their God-given gifts
- equips students for a life of service to God in the church and the community
- provides an alternative to a secular, humanistic philosophy and practice of education
- includes, as a core part of the program, a Christian Studies curriculum which has been developed deliberately and consciously from the perspective of what the Lutheran church believes and teaches
- involves the school community in regular Christian worship.

(From: [The Lutheran Church of Australia and its Schools](#) – Policy of the Lutheran Church of Australia)

The role of the governing body

The role of school council or board is incredibly important and good governance demands structured system and process. When done well it provides an oversight of the conformance (government and church compliance) and performance (strategic vision and achievement of learning outcomes for students) foci of schools and therefore allows the management of the school to focus on the day-to-day operation and the core business of teaching and learning. When council understand their role and perform it to a high level, the principal feels empowered, staff are engaged and the school flourishes. (From:http://www.lutheran.edu.au/school-professionals-2/governance/governance-professional-learning-modules/)

The church expects the governing councils and principals of its schools to:

- staff its schools with skilled and registered educators who are able to uphold the teachings of the church and model the Christian lifestyle. In the first instance it seeks to use the services of active members of the church. Beyond that, the church seeks to staff its schools with active Christians from other denominations who are willing to uphold Lutheran teachings
- support and encourage in-service training — including theological training — for the professional development of teachers
- promote the purpose of the school in the local congregation, zone, or district
- help local congregation, zone, or district to use the school as a means of establishing and maintaining contact with the wider community
- actively pursue every opportunity for maximising the school's effectiveness as a mission agency of the Church

(From: The Lutheran Church of Australia and its Schools – Policy of the Lutheran Church of Australia)

It is vital that the School Council and the principal work within a relationship of trust to achieve the three key roles of governance:

1. Oversight of educational programs
2. Appointment and support of principal
3. Finance and risk

The Lutheran Education Australia website contains expanded resources, policy and training to assist members of the school governing bodies to understand these roles.

Introduction to growing deep

The Growing deep leadership and formation framework is an important resource for governing bodies to understand. The document:

- Provides opportunity for all leaders in Lutheran schools and early childhood services to reflect on and plan for growth in their leading responsibilities, spiritual journey and ongoing formation
- Inspires and enables Lutheran schools and early childhood services to be places of service and transformation and contribute to the ministry of the LCA
- Grows a common and consistent language that builds a shared vision and understanding of how each individual contributes to the school and centre in the Lutheran context
- Identifies the practices and capabilities that contribute to improving student learning outcomes
- Clarifies and develops an understanding of how God's word, Lutheran theology and spirituality informs leadership across all areas of responsibility
- Connects all of our learning communities nationally, through shared visions and goals centred on formation and leadership
- Is to be used for strategic renewal and development at both a personal and school level

(From: Growing deep – purposes)

The framework consists of **our foundation** statements that inform all learning and teaching, all human relationships, and all activities [The LCA and its schools, 2001]. The Lutheran lens identifies key theological concepts that underpin Lutheran education. The lens provides a way of seeing and being in Lutheran education.

There are then three interrelated components of the framework:

- Vocational Practices – what we do in Lutheran schools and services.
- Capabilities – How we do what we do in Lutheran schools and services.
- Our culture – which describes the atmosphere or climate of the work environment.

When all three of these components, underpinned by our foundation, are working well we have a place where our students, staff and community are 'Free to flourish', which is the Lutheran education statement on learners and learning.

The vocational practices in the framework can provide a guide for governing bodies on what they should expect to see as part of authentically Lutheran education and questions to ask to ascertain how well your school or service is measuring against these goals.

The vocational practices

There are five key areas of work or Vocational practices that describe what we do in Lutheran education. We all are engaged in each of these Vocational practices to varying degrees, at different times, as we live out our service and vocation in Lutheran education.

Excellence in learning

Lutheran schools and early childhood services value excellence and creativity in teaching and learning for all community members. A culture of challenge and support nurtures enthusiastic, independent learners, committed to lifelong learning. Excellence in teaching and learning is focused on improving student outcomes which includes spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, cultural and social dimensions. All learners should have access to quality learning experiences that ensure they develop their God-given abilities so that they may enrich the world. High expectations are established through reflective practice, collaborative planning, monitoring, providing feedback and reporting on the effectiveness of learning. The learning environment promotes active engagement, risk taking, motivation and a strong learner voice.

What you would expect to see

- A culture of challenge and support for all.
- A focus on improving student outcomes which includes spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, cultural and social dimensions.
- All learners have access to quality learning experiences.
- High expectations are established.
- A culture of reflective practice and collaborative planning,
- Consistent monitoring, provision of feedback and reporting on the effectiveness of learning.
- A learning environment that promotes active engagement, risk taking, motivation and a strong learner voice.

Ongoing improvement and innovation

Improvement in Lutheran schools and early childhood services is guided by its values, vision and mission. Excellence is pursued through a culture of reflection, collaboration, innovation and creativity. Evidence is gathered to develop and implement improvement plans and policies for the continuous development of teaching and learning, the institution and its facilities. Ongoing professional learning encourages all members of the community to achieve high standards and develop their service and leadership capacity.

What you would expect to see

- Improvement plans guided by its values, vision and mission.
- Excellence pursued through a culture of reflection, collaboration, innovation and creativity.
- Evidence gathered to develop and implement improvement plans and policies for the continuous development of teaching and learning, the institution and its facilities.
- Ongoing professional learning.

Strengthening Lutheran identity

Lutheran schools and early childhood services, as agencies of the Lutheran Church of Australia, share a recognisable Lutheran identity in which the gospel of Jesus Christ informs all learning and teaching, all human relationships, and all activities in the school. The rituals, symbols, visual displays and practices convey its Christ-centred identity. The school/ early childhood service community is regularly involved in Christian worship which includes daily devotions. Christian Studies is an essential and distinctive part of the formal curriculum. Lutheran schools and early childhood services deliberately and intentionally share and live the good news of Jesus Christ with students, families, staff and the broader community. Opportunities for faith nurture are actively promoted and maintained.

What you would expect to see

- Rituals, symbols, visual displays and practices convey the service or school's Christ-centred identity.
- The school/ early childhood service community is regularly involved in Christian worship which includes daily devotions.
- Christian Studies is an essential and distinctive part of the formal curriculum.
- Intentional sharing and living the good news of Jesus Christ with students, families, staff and the broader community.
- Behaviour management policies and processes are based on restorative practices.
- Opportunities for faith nurture are actively promoted and maintained.

Community building

Lutheran schools and early childhood services value the richness and diversity of the wider community and other education sectors. Positive and strategic partnerships are developed and maintained with students, families, local Christian communities, the broader community and Lutheran education. The relationships are built upon support, collaboration, trust and reconciliation. The Lutheran school/early childhood service community lives out the gospel and is active in service of others. The multicultural and multi-faith nature of Lutheran education and Australian society fosters understandings of diverse cultures. Lutheran education promotes the understanding of, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

What you would expect to see

- Positive and strategic partnerships are developed and maintained with students, families, local Christian communities, the broader community and Lutheran education.
- Relationships are built upon support, collaboration, trust and reconciliation.
- Living the gospel is active in service of others.
- Multicultural and multi-faith understandings are nurtured and fostered.
- Intentional promotion of the understanding of, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Leading effective organisation and management

In Lutheran schools and early childhood services, roles, responsibilities and procedures are clearly articulated so that staff can participate in its smooth and efficient operation. Data and knowledge management methods and technologies are used to ensure that resources (human, physical, technological and financial) are efficiently organised and managed to provide an effective, safe and caring, growth-oriented learning and working environment. Strategic planning ensures the ongoing improvement and sustainability of the school/early childhood service. Best practice is built upon effective collaboration between the governing body, staff, students, families, church and others.

What you would expect to see

- Roles, responsibilities and procedures are clearly articulated so that staff can participate in its smooth and efficient operation.
- Data and knowledge management methods and technologies are used to ensure that resources (human, physical, technological and financial) are efficiently organised and managed to provide an effective, safe and caring, growth-oriented learning and working environment.
- Strategic planning ensures the ongoing improvement and sustainability of the school/early childhood service.
- Best practice is built upon effective collaboration between the governing body, staff, students, families, church and others.

Questions to ask

Excellence in learning
How do you ensure that individual and team expectations and accountabilities in terms of student learning are clearly defined, understood and agreed upon by relevant parties?
How is the service/school's commitment to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, cultural and social learning and growth of young people demonstrated?
How do you implement an effective learning and assessment framework that uses data, benchmarking and observation to monitor progress of every student's learning?
How do you advocate for best practice for students and the school/service, even when it is difficult to do so?
How do you lead and facilitate inquiry to inform innovative practice towards teaching and learning?
How are high expectations through reflective practice, collaboration, monitoring, feedback and reporting on the effectiveness of learning for every learner including students, staff and self determined?
How do you foster creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate new technologies and learning spaces?
How are students able to have voice in their learning?

Ongoing improvement and innovation
How do improvement plans reflect the values, vision and mission of the school or service?
How is reflection and collaboration used in staff meetings?
What data is collected about students to inform directions and planning?
What evidence is gathered to develop and implement improvement plans and policies?
Tell me about staff performance procedures and professional development strategies.
How is ongoing and regular formal and informal feedback to provided to all staff?
How are opportunities for, and staff encouraged to attend professional learning linked to their performance goals and Lutheran accreditation processes?
How do you know there is shared understanding of the vision for the school or service?
How do you build commitment, confidence, shared understanding and enthusiasm about the vision for the school or service?
In what ways is the student at the centre of strategic planning directions?

Strengthening Lutheran identity
What is the visual presence of the Gospel in the school/service?
Tell me about our school's worship program.
How is Christian studies taught, staffed, resourced? Is it valued, as a legitimate subject?
How do you engage with the congregations, other Lutheran Schools, agencies of the LCA, regional and national offices?
How does our behaviour management policy and process reflect the Gospel?
What does it mean to be the spiritual leader of the school? What does it look like for you on a daily basis?
What is your staff accreditation and formation plan and your progress?
What criteria do you use to choose staff?
What is our school's community care and service program?

Community building
How do you build and maintain positive and strategic partnerships with students, families and carers?
What strategies are used to ensure educational opportunity including countering discrimination and the impact of physical, social and economic disadvantage?
How is active citizenship and Christian service to others promoted within the school/service?
What do you know about the rich diversity of cultural groups within the broader community?
How do you recognise, value and use the rich and diverse linguistic and cultural resources in the school/service community?
How do you seek feedback from families and carers and the wider community, and take appropriate action in response?
Which agencies and community groups do you engage with to protect and support children and young people?
How is understanding and reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people fostered?

Leading effective organisation and management
Are all roles, responsibilities and procedures clearly articulated and accessible?
How were the roles and responsibilities determined?
What data collection tools and methods are being used?
What activities are in place to ensure that this a safe and respectful working environment?
How do you monitor and align people, budgets and resources with learning priorities and the school's strategic plan?
How is strategic planning linked to ongoing improvement and sustainability of the school/ service?
How is the diversity of the school/service reflected in the policies and practices of the school/service?

A reflection tool for governing bodies

This tool is designed to assist school/service governing bodies to reflect on the school/service against the Vocational practices of Growing deep. It would not be expected that all aspects of the framework would be audited at once. Governing bodies may choose to focus on one of the practices that they feel are of greatest importance at that time. They may also choose to focus on each of the practices, one at a time, across a period of time, as a cycle of regular reflection on the school or service.

Excellence in learning	0	1	2	3	4	5
Individual and team expectations and accountabilities in terms of student learning are clearly defined, understood and agreed upon by relevant parties.						
There is a demonstrated commitment to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, cultural and social learning and growth of young people.						
There is an effective learning and assessment framework that uses data, benchmarking and observation to monitor progress of every student's learning.						
Leadership advocates for best practice for students and the school/service, even when it is difficult to do so.						
Leadership leads and facilitates inquiry to inform innovative practice towards teaching and learning.						
High expectations are determined through reflective practice, collaboration, monitoring, feedback and reporting on the effectiveness of learning for every learner including students, staff and leadership.						
Creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate new technologies and learning spaces is fostered.						
Students to have voice in their learning.						

Ongoing improvement and innovation	0	1	2	3	4	5
Improvement plans reflect the values, vision and mission of the school or service.						
Reflection and collaboration are used effectively in staff meetings.						
Accurate, timely and appropriate data is collected about students to inform directions and planning.						
Accurate, timely and appropriate evidence is gathered to develop and implement improvement plans and policies.						
Staff performance procedures and professional development strategies are rigorous and regular.						
Ongoing and regular formal and informal feedback is provided to all staff.						
Opportunities for, and staff are encouraged to attend professional learning linked to their performance goals and Lutheran accreditation processes.						
There is a shared understanding of the vision for the school or service.						
Commitment, confidence, shared understanding and enthusiasm about the vision for the school or service is established.						
The student is at the centre of strategic planning directions.						

Strengthening Lutheran identity	0	1	2	3	4	5
There is a visual presence of the Gospel in the school/service.						
The worship program is regular, established and accessible to all.						
Christian studies is valued, taught, staffed, resourced as a legitimate subject.						
The school/service engages with the congregations, other Lutheran Schools, agencies of the LCA, regional and national offices.						
The behaviour management policy and processes reflect the Gospel.						
The leader is a visible spiritual leader in the school.						
There is an effective staff accreditation and formation plan.						
The leader is fully accredited as a leader in Lutheran schools.						
The criteria for staff selection reflects the Lutheran foundation of the school while adhering to anti-discrimination legislation.						
The school/service has a well established community care and service program.						

Community building	0	1	2	3	4	5
There are well established and maintained positive and strategic partnerships with students, families and carers.						
Strategies are used to ensure educational opportunity including countering discrimination and the impact of physical, social and economic disadvantage.						
Active citizenship and Christian service to others is promoted within the school/service.						
The school reflects the rich diversity of cultural groups within the broader community.						
The rich and diverse linguistic and cultural resources in the school/service community are recognised, valued and used.						
Feedback from families and carers and the wider community is actively sought and appropriate action is taken in response.						
The school engages with agencies and community groups to protect and support children and young people.						
Understanding and reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is fostered.						

Leading effective organisation and management	0	1	2	3	4	5
All roles, responsibilities and procedures clearly articulated and accessible.						
Roles and responsibilities are determined using school improvement plans, policy, and collaborative processes.						
Effective and accurate data collection tools and methods are being used to ensure the smooth running of the school/service.						
Activities, policies and procedures are in place to ensure that this a safe and respectful working environment.						
People, budgets and resources are monitored and aligned with learning priorities and the school's strategic plan.						
Strategic planning linked to ongoing improvement and sustainability of the school/ service.						
The diversity of the school/service is reflected in the policies and practices of the school/service.						

Further useful resources

BLEA Mission, vision and core values, available at: https://www.lutheran.edu.au/about/blea-vision-mission-and-core-values/

Growing deep leadership and formation framework, available at: http://growingdeep.lutheran.edu.au/

LEA Governance professional learning modules, available at http://www.lutheran.edu.au/school-professionals-2/governance/governance-professional-learning-modules/

Lutheran Education Australia Policies and Guidelines, available at: https://www.lutheran.edu.au/publications-policies/policies-guidelines-2/

The LCA and its Schools, available at: https://www.lutheran.edu.au/download/lcaschools/?wpdmdl=141&refresh=60caec27eb27d1623911463

The Lutheran School as a place of mission and ministry, available at: https://www.lutheran.edu.au/download/the-lutheran-school-as-a-place-of-ministry-and-mission/?wpdmdl=1057&refresh=60caec2849bf31623911464

The Principal as Spiritual Leader, available at https://www.lutheran.edu.au/download/directions-4-principal-as-spiritual-leader/

Staffing policy for Lutheran Schools, available at: https://www.lutheran.edu.au/download/staffing-policy/?wpdmdl=1887&refresh=60caec280f9081623911464