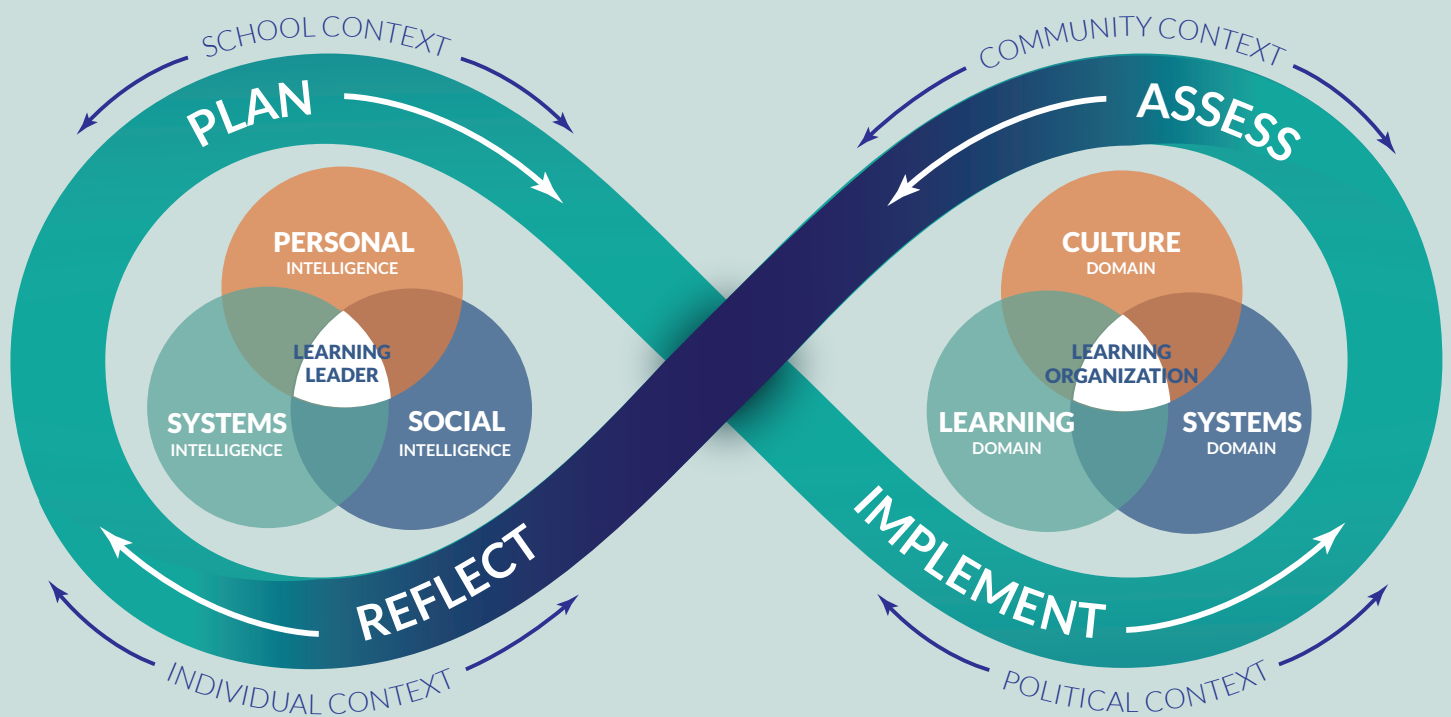


SCHOOL LEADER PARADIGM LEADERSHIP CONTEXTS



“Paying Attention to and Successfully Navigating Context”

**Creating Hope for All *through*
Understanding & Reflection on Context**

SCHOOL LEADER PARADIGM RESOURCE



**SCHOOL
LEADER
COLLABORATIVE**

UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT

Understanding context is crucial to leadership effectiveness and sustainability. Context matters and leaders need to pay attention to the interplay between the individual context of the lead learner and school, community, and political contexts of the learning organization. Although each of the four contexts (Individual, School, Community and Political) each plays a separate role within the Paradigm, the intersectionality and influence can make or break a leader's ability to persist and effectively lead ongoing cycles of inquiry.

To be effective, **school leaders must be part of, pay attention to, and successfully navigate the contexts** in which they lead.



SCHOOL CONTEXT

Defined: Past and present multi-layered facets that influence, and often define, the current climate, culture, and environment of a school.



COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Defined: Local history combined with current community expectations both within and outside of the school and district.

INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT

YOU

**Lead Learner of a
Learning Organization**

Defined: The influences of the past and present that shape who you are as a leader.



POLITICAL CONTEXT

Defined: Seen and unseen forces, both current and historical, that actively influence the culture of a school, district, and community.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What do you know about yourself, your background, your lived experiences, your biases, and other influences that shaped you into the person you are today?
- What would other people say about you as the leader?
- How do those influences spill into your ability to navigate your school's context, the community context, and the current political context?

ASSESSING YOUR CONTEXTS

INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT

How would you define your individual context?

Things to consider:

- Where were you born? Where were you raised and how?
- Who or what influenced your journey through life?
- What lived experiences have shaped your ongoing leadership development?
- What or who influenced or influences your opinions and beliefs?
- How do you get feedback from multiple perspectives?
- What do you know about the blind spots of your leadership?
- What is going on in your personal life right now (physical, emotional, spiritual and financial health)?
- What is your Domain strength? (Culture, Systems or Learning)

SCHOOL CONTEXT

How would you define your school context?

Things to consider:

- How old is your school? What are the demographics?
- What are the experience ranges of the teaching staff?
- How many school leaders have been there before you?
- How united is the staff around the school's culture and mission?
- Is the building student-centered or more adult-centered?
- What are the decision making teams and processes?
- What does the building look, sound, and feel like?
- How do all parents have access and opportunity to be involved?
- How do all student groups have voice, access, and opportunities?

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

How would you define your community context?

Things to consider:

- What is the reputation of the school?
- Where does the school sit within the larger community?
- What community groups have influence within or over the school?
- What's the history of the school within the community?
- What are the demographics of the community?
- What is the level of trust and respect of the school within the community?
- What influence does the school board or central office have on the school?
- What is the longevity of the current superintendent?
- How is your school adapting to an ever changing community?

POLITICAL CONTEXT

How would you define your political context?

Things to consider:

- What formal and informal power structures exist in the school and beyond?
- What influence does the union have on the building and beyond?
- What is the relationship between the building reps and past and present administration?
- What influence do parent and/or community groups have on the school and beyond?
- What is the impact of previous administrators or administrative teams?
- What programs/celebrations/traditions exist at the school?
- How is student voice authentically engaged in school leadership?
- Does the district typically pass bonds and levies?
- How divided "politically" is the community on social issues?

FROM UNDERSTANDING TO ACTION

If I know this about myself, my school, my community, and the political landscape, then I will lead by...

INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT	MY LEADERSHIP ACTIONS	
<i>I know these things about myself...</i>	<i>Becoming...</i>	<i>Doing...</i>
SCHOOL CONTEXT	MY LEADERSHIP ACTIONS	
<i>I know these things about my school...</i>	<i>Becoming...</i>	<i>Doing...</i>
COMMUNITY CONTEXT	MY LEADERSHIP ACTIONS	
<i>I know these things about my community...</i>	<i>Becoming...</i>	<i>Doing...</i>
POLITICAL CONTEXT	MY LEADERSHIP ACTIONS	
<i>I know these forces are at play...</i>	<i>Becoming...</i>	<i>Doing...</i>