



Presentation notes: "Lasallian Leadership in the Secondary School Context."

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1. Outline Content

All of us in the worldwide Lasallian education community recognise our Holy Founder, St John Baptist de La Salle was a true leader. A man of extraordinary vision, courage and resilience, with the desire and ability to inspire and support, de La Salle modelled exemplary leadership attributes. Research and analysis of his work and the manner in which he was able to lead, direct and shape the development of a revolutionary new system of schooling provides salient lessons for 21st century school leaders. This paper is designed to inform educators and leaders in Lasallian schools on how school leadership can be exercised using the following as the key influence / drivers:

- the Five Core Principles of Lasallian Education
- the Twelve Virtues of a Teacher / Leader in Lasallian schools
- making links with the Founder's writings on how schools should be run with contemporary works on school leadership

- The Heroic Vow 1691
- Vows of 6th June 1694
- The recall from Parmenie
- how to apply the Founder's messages to today's school leadership challenges
- use the Founder's works as the basis for leadership lessons in learning and teaching, student wellbeing, community, education in faith and leadership and management in today's school setting

His preparedness and determination to serve his community was central to de La Salle's work

2. Lasallian Leadership (1)

De La Salle's leadership was characterised by his vision, listening, and community building. These features of his leadership are central, intrinsic and crucial to the success of 21st century school leaders.

Like all of us in schools today, de La Salle's leadership faced many challenges. He succeeded with the Brothers in fulfilling his vision of a community of teachers dedicated to the education of the poor. De La Salle's leadership is relevant to modern day education and the current corporate governance under which so many of our schools operate.

3. Lasallian Leadership (2)

The Founder's alignment to a vision is a key theme explored and applied to today's school context. De La Salle certainly had goals and vision, which he eventually passed on to his disciples and which inspired himself and others to commit themselves to the education of the poor. This vision is what kept De La Salle and

the Brothers he served striving to develop excellent schools and kept them going forward in spite of crushing obstacles from powerful political and ecclesiastical forces.

While the pressures and obstacles may differ in contemporary times, those of us in school leadership positions often find ourselves looking to the Founder's example, experience and message for guidance and inspiration. In our attempts to tackle the modern day challenges of school leadership, it is remarkable how often de La Salle's work of 300 years ago provides at least a strategy and often a solution.

4. Being Lasallian

Challenge you to think about these propositions and apply them to your everyday work

This paper is designed for Lasallian Leaders, but the following points are relevant to all in any Lasallian community

- What does "being Lasallian" really mean in 2019?
Be ready to give an example.....
- Lasallian education occurs in context of community
- Lasallian reality is born from need
- The ability to see it, courage to answer it
- Being willing to *spend* ourselves for a cause
- Being willing to take a risk
- Faith, Service and Community.

5. Being Lasallian (2)

- being part of a community
- seeing things that aren't right and
- having the courage to change them.

- giving of ourselves for a something unselfish you believe in
- taking risks to make the world better, not for ourselves but for others
- Pope Francis – finding those on the periphery and meeting their needs

Shepherds need the smell of their sheep

Be among and as one with your students and staff

6. Five Metaphors for Lasallian Leadership in 21st C

Thanks to Br William (Bill) Mann, who delivered an excellent paper in 2017 outlining our responsibilities in our school as Lasallian Leaders, where we are called to be:

Ambassadors – to act as God’s ambassadors, to be the ambassador or link between our students and their families, to the staff, each faculty and indeed ambassadors of hope for the whole community

Good Shepherds – pursuing and encouraging a fullness of life for all – especially the lost, forgotten, and vulnerable – is our mission, assisting with inclusiveness and accepting diversity.

Angels among them - The work that we do, de La Salle suggests, is the work of *angels*. The work we do, whatever our role in schools, to assure accessibility, excellence, and sustainability

and in our outreach to those who are poor economically, educationally, affectively, and spiritually.

Architects of tomorrow – we are called to lead the laying a new foundation for the Lasallian network of the future

Good and Faithful Stewards - schools of quality made possible because of the work Lasallian leaders and educators do as a matter of course

7. Five Core Principles of a Lasallian Education

In a demanding and challenging contemporary context for educational leaders, the *Five Core Principles of Lasallian Education* have been a tremendously valuable source of guidance for all aspects of our school's administration and policy-making. In a clearly defined goal of maintaining and enhancing our school's Lasallian identity the Principles have been analysed and given a high degree of significance and influence in the community landscape.

My research and presentations found that the Five Core Principles resonated very strongly with staff, students and especially prospective parents. In the busy-ness of the 21st century, the Core Principles are found to provide an anchor, a sense of purpose, something to identify with and guide us, regardless of our role in the school. There is a "presence" and influence inherent in the Principles that all in a Lasallian community can relate to and understand.

8. Five Core Principles adapted at our local level

In looking at the detailed explanations of the Principles we decided they would resonate more with our community and be easier to memorise and refer to if we simplified them to one or two words. After two years of using and promoting the Principles

in their abbreviated form, all in our community now recognise them as our guiding principles, summarising and exemplifying what and who we stand for as a Catholic, Lasallian community and informing our leaders' policies and decision-making. As such, the following adjustments were made:

In simplifying the Principles and the explanatory text associated with them, we found the five became clear, unambiguous "pillars" for what we stand for as a Lasallian institution, as Lasallian leaders with the responsibility of ensuring a legacy for our College's future staff, students and families. A senior art student produced the graphic below for publication and publicity within our community.

9. DLS the CEO

The research also drew remarkable parallels between the leadership of de La Salle and what is accepted as quality leadership in business and education circles in the 21st century. The Founder can be seen to have exercised and emphasised vision. Other key leadership principles identified in de La Salle's career include seizing opportunities, inspiring staff, being innovative, compassionate and consultative.

He sets us an example as a modern day servant-leader, insisting on the Brothers' participation in decision making and preparing them to take full responsibility for direction and success of the Institute

Strong, effective and visionary leadership is required at all levels of the Lasallian school and all must be very clear about their roles, obligations and accountabilities. To assist what de La Salle referred to as "Order with purpose" in schools there must exist an interdependence, an attitude of all being in it together for unity of purpose. Common and shared expectations – collective responsibility - reduce tension for both students and staff.

The holistic education at De La Salle is part of a bigger picture around character, citizenship, respect, decorum and civility – respect for self and others, for the school, owning and upholding our agreed expectations and standards to establish a sense of belonging to our community.

Given the importance we attach to high expectations and rigour in a Lasallian education school leaders must take the appropriate steps to ensure firmness does not degenerate into harshness and gentleness not degenerate into weakness. This is achieved in the Lasallian school through:

- personalised knowledge,
- an ability to listen and to discern character;
- closeness which makes possible transparency and tenderness;
- witness which convinces and attracts;

10. Three key historical events in the Founder's Leadership

The three key historical events mentioned in this paper each provide a salutary lesson of exemplary leadership by de La Salle, which with analytical thought, can be used in many of our contemporary school situations.

With the “heroic vow” of 21st November 1691, discouraged by the apparent collapse of his work, the Founder accepted the challenge to dedicate himself to his work and invited Gabriel Drolin and Nicolas Vuyart to make the vow with him. The Founder proposed that the three of them bind themselves by vow to establish the Society, no matter what it might cost them, and even if all the others should abandon it.

De La Salle taking his vows with 12 Brothers on 6th June 1694 represents an extraordinary act of association, a key theme of

Lasallian education, which remains valid today. Together with twelve Brothers chosen by him, the Founder takes vows of obedience, association and stability in the Society.

The letter to Parmenie from the “principal Brothers” reminded de La Salle that in the name of the same vows as he had pronounced on 6th June 1694 he was now being called back to reassume the leadership. He obeyed, but his significant leadership once he returned was to free the Brothers from the priestly superiors that had been imposed on them.

11. Twelve Virtues of a Lasallian Leader

The 12 Virtues of a Lasallian Leader has also been a valuable tool in the formation and professional development of our school leaders. The list of qualities inherent in a Lasallian leader and what we should be displaying as evidence of good leadership were recognised in the research as valuable and useful guidelines. Senior student leaders and teachers in Executive and middle-management positions reported the simplicity and meaning within the Virtues as informative, educational and of significant substance in distinguishing Lasallian leadership from regular school leadership.

Very familiar to all Lasallians, the twin spirits of faith and zeal are also woven through the language and message of the 12 Virtues, adding to the relevance and usefulness. The 12 Virtues, displayed below are best read in conjunction with the Twelve Virtues of a Lasallian Teacher, where a range of similar themes is explored.

Go through each slide / Virtue and elaborate

12. Lasallian Leadership, some conclusions

All of us in leadership positions in Lasallian schools can learn from these examples – be faithful to your promises, empower your leaders and encourage and support their dedication to the cause.

Thank you