

# Distributed Leadership

## Features

Executive responsibilities that are spread across a school have significant features.

- They exist for the life of a project or role
- They engage specific expertise to match specific targets
- They contribute to a culture of high staff morale
- They contribute to a culture of high performance and development

## A Model

Distributed leadership can be assigned to individuals and/or teams. For both, a model of autonomy best serves the intent of sharing leadership whilst maintaining central control by the Principal.

## Autonomy

Organisational autonomy exists when people are empowered to make judgements and decisions without the Principal's express consent. To ensure that such judgements and decisions are in the best interests of the school, a description of expectations, guidelines and accountabilities is created for each project or role and approved by the Principal.

## Projects

These are usually components of the school's annual improvement plan and defined in the action plans that accompany each one. Otherwise, they can be incidental according to changing needs or innovations introduced by the governing body.

Project leaders are assigned to each project for the life of the project and usually paid an allowance to do so. Generally, project leaders lead a small team. This can be representative of the various interest groups in the school community and/or based on expertise.

## Roles

These are the substantive leadership positions in the school, such as Assistant Principals and Heads of Faculty. Each should have a generic role description that defines their responsibilities and an annual action plan for each of these responsibilities. Further to projects arising from role descriptions, substantive leaders may also assume other projects that require significant leadership or management expertise. The expectations, guidelines and accountabilities for these are expressed in the targets, timelines, resources and performance measures of the action plan for each project.

## Accountability

Accountability functions at two levels; intrinsic commitment and extrinsic compliance. Commitment is focusing on the agreed goal and getting the job done. Compliance is gained through regular meetings of team leaders, led by the Principal. At these meetings, leaders report the progress of their projects and role responsibilities in the light of targets and performance measures. Actions arise from each meeting that support teams and refine future directions. Teams also gain synergies at these meetings by identifying opportunities for collaboration and contributions.

Final accountability is expressed in each project's final report, which includes an evaluation of the extent to which targets were met and recommendations for future action.