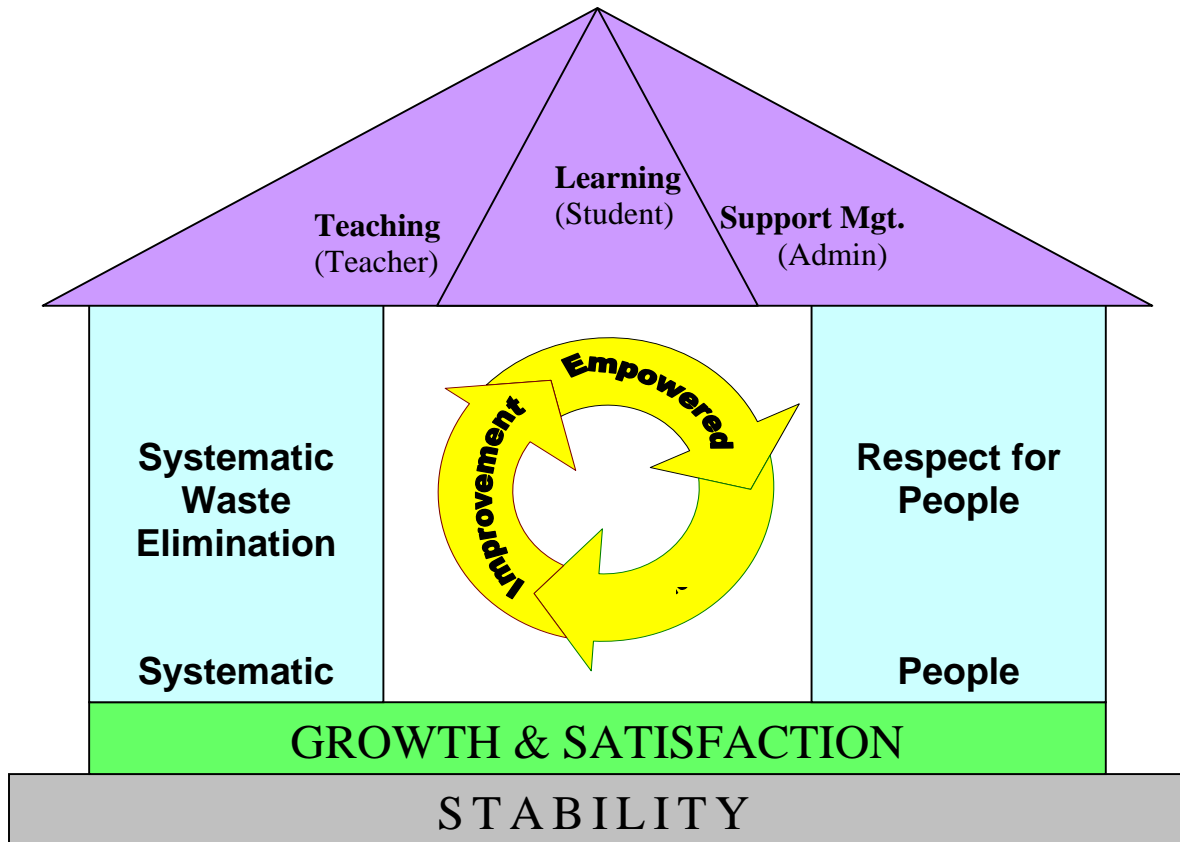


## The LEAN School

A structure of any kind has several key components without which it will collapse. Basic tenets of sound construction call for a solid foundation upon which the structure will be built, a strong upright framework, and a cap or roof which the strength of the foundation and framework will support. These tenets are as true for figurative structures as they are for tangible ones.



### FOUNDATION LEVEL 1 - STABILITY

A solid foundation is one that is anchored and not subject to shifts which could displace it or the structure it holds up. In the case of a Lean School, the required solid foundation is two tiered. The bedrock foundation is **STABILITY** as demonstrated through:

- Shared vision and clear mission/goals
- Disciplined commitment to uphold the vision and mission and the values they represent
- Awareness and clear understanding of work integration, necessary outcomes, and rationales
- A trained and empowered workforce of leaders who are also learners
- Mutual trust

Without the shared focus, common values, the commitment and discipline to uphold them, a comprehensive understanding by everyone of the big picture and everyone's integral contribution to it, the authority to improve, and absolute trust in humane treatment and support, no school can really sustain progress. Fear, apathy, shifting values, and forced change prohibit sustained progress in any enterprise. A Lean School, by definition, constantly seeks greater levels of progress by engaging and supporting all employees in active and continuous process improvement.

## FOUNDATION LEVEL 2 - GROWTH AND SATISFACTION

The second level of foundation upon which the structure is built is GROWTH AND SATISFACTION. This foundation level guarantees that all framework will be built upon each individual worker's and learner's fundamental need and desire to learn, grow, and feel satisfied and fulfilled in their work. Personal growth and satisfaction involve meaningful endeavor and the knowledge of its results, the opportunity and encouragement to expand skills, the feeling of belonging to and working with a team who shares a common value focus, as well as the granting of responsibility and autonomous control in problem solving to make work and the workplace better.

### THE PILLARS OF SUPPORT

Two pillars form the upright framework of the Lean School. Each pillar is a composite of two inter-related components.

#### THE LEFT PILLAR

SYSTEMATIC WASTE ELIMINATION is a component of the left pillar. Anything that does not add value to the education or education-related process utilizes precious resources unnecessarily, and thereby can be considered a waste. Educational Wastes [\[establish a link from the words "Educational Wastes" to the document "9 Wastes in Education"\]](#) fall into nine different categories. The focus of a Lean School should be on forwarding the flow of education activities rather than being sidetracked with activities that impede or sidetrack that flow or do not add educational value.

The second component of this pillar is SYSTEMATIC PROBLEM SOLVING. Ongoing reflection, evaluation, and problem solving to make things better is inherent in the never-ending quest for perfection that is continuous improvement. Key elements for success in this pillar include separating the work from the worker to effectively impersonalize the basis for improvement, and self/successor checks for quality – did I do a quality job that includes all necessary components? (self check), and did I receive exactly what I needed/expected from the person who delivered something to me?(successor check).

The left pillar defines the strategic focus for improvement in a Lean School.

#### THE RIGHT PILLAR

The right pillar defines the strategic approach necessary for real and sustained improvement in a Lean School.

The first component of the right pillar, RESPECT FOR PEOPLE, is the essence of any Lean improvement program: respect for the person and contribution of each individual worker. Any organization is made up of people, all of whom do essential work to support the mission of the organization. No person's work is less valuable or critical than another's, regardless of what that work is. Schools cannot function without the contributions of custodians, food service workers, bus drivers, business office personnel and others as well as teaching staff, and administrators. Each person plays a vital role in supporting the delivery of the education service. Therefore, each person, the work they do, and the knowledge of and expertise in that work commands the respect of everyone

The second component of the right pillar is PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT. Human beings are hungry to learn what they do not know. We never stop learning, regardless of our age. It is in an organization's best interest to capitalize on that innate desire and ability to learn by encouraging the growth and development of its employees as well as its youthful students. Those who advance their learning have more expertise to share. Their contributions grow in relation to their own personal and professional growth, as does the work of the organization as a whole.

#### THE STRUCTURAL CAP

The cap the structure supports is three-faceted: TEACHER INSTRUCTION, STUDENT LEARNING, and ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT MANAGEMENT. Each benefits from the organization's structural stability, emphasis on growth and satisfaction, and ongoing refinement.

#### THE ENERGY SOURCE

But the engine that powers the creative and progress-oriented education machine that is a Lean School is found at the heart of the structure: EMPOWERED CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, this based on Respect for Humanity at all levels and all ages. It is creative in its reliance on the imaginations, intellectual talent, and analytical skills of students, teachers, support staff and administration to be innovative in making educational process improvements that result in increased student performance scores, improved education services, and greater efficiency in the use of scarce resources

#### A LEAN SCHOOL

- Focuses on improving people first
- Respects, involves and serves its people, its community, and the common social good.

- Values learning, where everyone learns and improves every day
- Pursues a common vision and clear goals
- Anticipates, identifies and solves problems throughout the student, teaching, and support workplace
- Effectively and efficiently achieves continuous and sustained progress through ongoing and involved process improvement by students, teachers, support staff, and administration