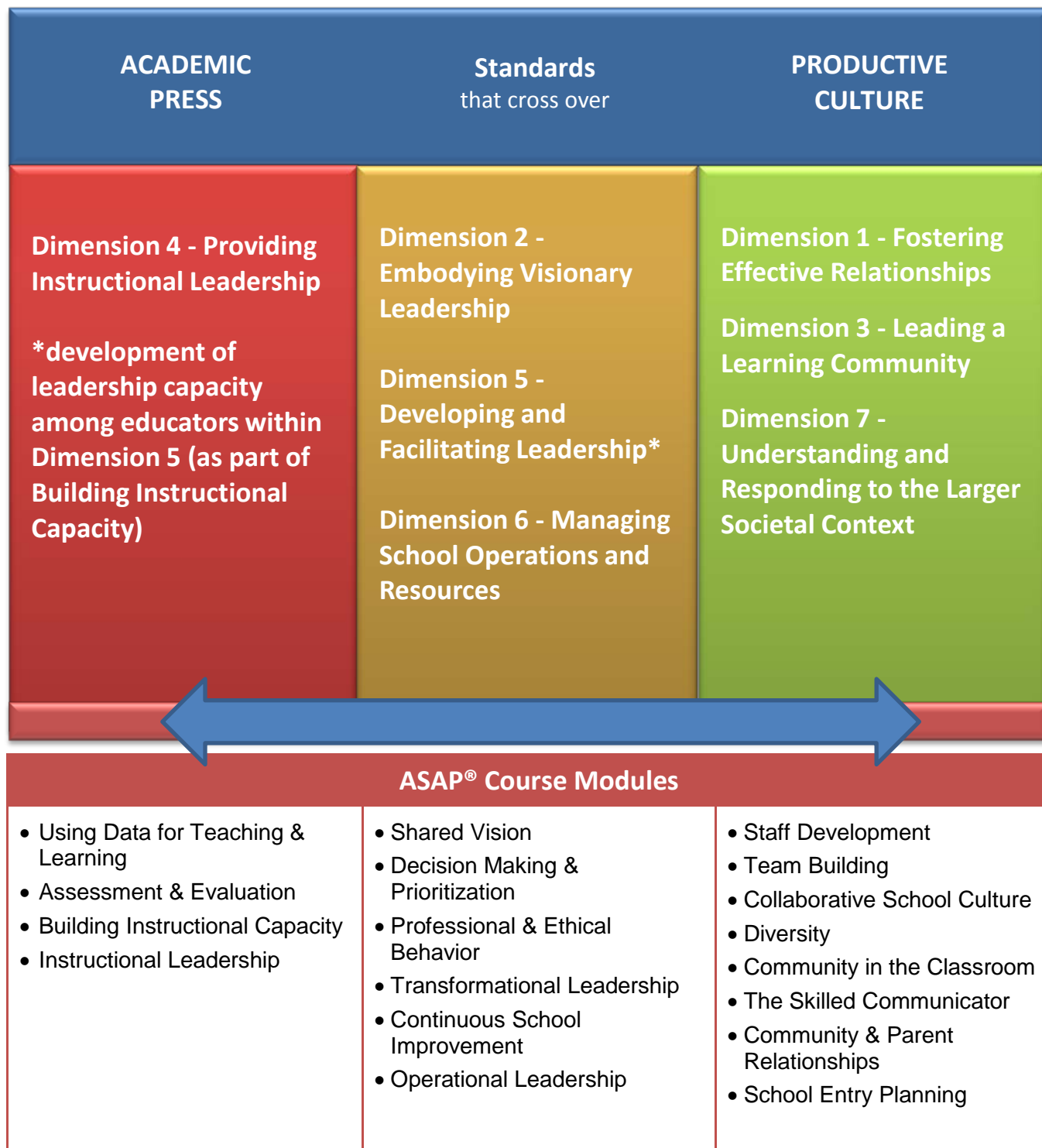


The Principal Quality Practice and Leadership Dimensions published by Alberta Education state, “The principal is an accomplished teacher who practices quality leadership in the provision of opportunities for optimum learning and development of all students in the school.”

Here is how the seven leadership dimensions and ASAP® Course Modules are aligned:



## Academic Press and Productive Culture

Research has consistently shown that academic press and productive culture are the two areas in which school leaders can most affect student learning outcomes. “Most of the impact of principals occurs through their influence on school culture and the instructional program” (Murphy & Torre, 2014).

For our purposes, academic press relates to the leadership styles and practices that promote schoolwide academic achievement. These include instructional leadership, evaluation and assessment, curriculum development and delivery, and school policies and practices which shape an environment that “presses” students to achieve at a higher level. Academic press is, “the degree to which environmental forces press for student achievement on a schoolwide basis. The concept, however, is broader than high staff expectations; it pulls together various forces—school policies, practices, expectations, norms, and rewards—generated by both staff and students. Together, these forces constitute the academic environment experienced by students and press them to respond in particular ways, specifically, to work hard in school and to do well academically” (Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1982).

“Academic press is absolutely necessary, but not sufficient to operationalize the mission of the school. No school improvement effort will be effective, maintained, or enhanced unless school culture and academic press are both addressed and aligned.” (Fisher, Frey, & Pumpian, 2012)

Productive culture refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationship, attitudes and behaviors that shape and influence how a school functions to support higher student learning outcomes. Each school’s culture is the result of both conscious and unconscious perspectives, values, interactions, and practices. School culture is heavily shaped by the school’s unique history, and the beliefs and actions of the people in the school community. “Values and beliefs inform the principal’s decisions and actions” (Silins & Mulford, 2010), and impact school success (Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2006).

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