



Lighthouse School Spotlight

The Leader in Me™

1. **A.B. Combs Elementary**—Principal Muriel Summers attended *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* training and, while there, kept thinking, “Why do we wait to teach these concepts until people reach adulthood? Why don’t we teach them to children when they are young...before their habits become set?”

Before long, Principal Summers had her entire K-5 staff in Raleigh, North Carolina, trained in the 7 Habits. The school took on as a theme, *Developing Leaders, One Child at a Time*, and began teaching the habits to the students in very creative ways. The focus was not on making CEOs, but on helping children learn how to lead their lives.

It wasn’t long before teachers and parents began noticing a dramatic difference in the school’s culture. Teachers not only enjoyed teaching the principles, but were applying the habits themselves. Discipline problems dropped dramatically. Not only were there less problems, but students were given the language and tools to solve problems on their own. Parent satisfaction went up. Meanwhile, even though the new emphasis was not on academics, students passing end-of-grade tests rose from 65 percent to 97 percent. The teachers knew that they were on to something.

In 2006, A.B. Combs was named the #1 Magnet School in America. That’s when other schools started to catch on. In 2008, *The Leader in Me* book was published telling the A.B. Combs’ story and the successes of other schools who have adopted the leadership theme.

A.B. Combs Elementary was the motivation behind *The Leader in Me* book and process. Muriel and her staff showed us that all children, indeed even the youngest children, can learn and apply the 7 Habits.

2. **Beaumont Elementary** – Pulling into the parking lot of Beaumont, a public K-5 Elementary School in Waterford, Michigan, the first thing you see is a huge bright blue bench framing the word “Leadership”. And today “Leadership” is precisely what this school embodies.

Principal Jan McCartan and her staff were actively seeking a transformational change. They chose to adopt *The Leader in Me* process to help them to get the results they wanted to see at their school. The staff, who call themselves “Team Beaumont”, kicked off the school year with a ribbon cutting ceremony, complete with the high school marching band playing. Students, parents, and community members waited outside next to the school billboard, which announced “WE ARE A LEADER IN ME SCHOOL”. When the ribbon was finally cut, students raced around looking at the inspiring quotes, murals, 7 Habits Tree, and general bursts of new colors everywhere; all done by the staff over the summer. The new Staff

Collaboration room, where decisions are made based on data displayed around the room, is bustling with activity on any given day.

Modeling is important for Team Beaumont so, in addition to a Staff Lighthouse Team, there is also a Student Lighthouse Team. The Student Lighthouse Team feeds into and supports the Staff Lighthouse Team by making weekly rounds to the classrooms and sharing best practices with other students around how to succeed in their individual classroom leadership roles. The Student Lighthouse Team is just one of many ways students lead at Beaumont Elementary.

3. **Brentwood School of Business & Leadership**—Opened in September, 2010; Brentwood is a K-6 public school of choice school in Victorville, CA. As a leadership and business school, Brentwood has a strong partnership with the Victorville Chamber of Commerce and the Victorville Rotary Club. “One important thing we are doing is changing the way schools work with business,” says Minda Stackelhouse, Principal. “We aren’t going to them asking for money, we are asking for involvement, mentors, and relationships.”

Unique displays help students stay focused on living the 7 Habits and developing their leadership skills. The “Wall of Success” displays pennants from the colleges, universities, and tech schools students have written to in order to start planning their future. Another wall display is a circle that focuses on the principles students work to center their lives around; honesty, caring, loyalty, patience, and hard work.

Students host Chamber and Rotary members at a monthly, student-run Brentwood Morning Insights breakfast. Opportunities for public speaking, greeting, and networking are just a few of the takeaways of this event. In addition, students attend monthly community Chamber meetings and are learning how to form a Jr. Chamber and Jr. Rotary group at the school. Students are learning to write by-laws, run meetings, host events, find business speakers, get involved in community programs, and attend outside events with the goal of coming back with ideas about how to implement those events at the school level.

4. **Chestnut Grove Elementary**—Decatur, Alabama is the home to Chestnut Grove Elementary, a K-5 public school. When Principal Lauretta Teague and her staff first heard about A.B. Combs Elementary they were intrigued and decided to take a small group of people to visit.

Following a presentation from the small group, the rest of the staff became excited. The staff decided to be trained in the 7 Habits (Note: This occurred prior to *The Leader in Me* process). During breaks and in the evenings, they brainstormed ways they could best transfer the habits to the students. The staff returned as a unified team with a great attitude.

At Chestnut Grove, they share leadership insights each morning, the halls are eloquently decorated with reminders of the 7 Habits as well as the school’s mission statement and code of conduct. Street signs hang in the hallways and murals provide splashes of color.

According to Laretta “Implementing *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* into our school has made a significant difference in how we respond to each other and how we teach children to take responsibility for their own actions and behavior. It is making an impact on children and the culture of the school. Students are taking ownership for their education. It’s making the teachers and students talk performance. They are all tracking their own progress. It truly is a win-win!”

5. **Crestwood Elementary**—“It gives us a common language that has unified us” is the response Principal David George will give when asked what the 7 Habits have done for Crestwood Elementary, a K-6 public school in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

Parents have been very supportive and it shows on the parent approval survey which has shown “very favorable” ratings for the 7 Habits. Crestwood has also offered *The 7 Habits for Families* and had over 60 families in attendance.

The staff of Crestwood Elementary has been very creative in developing ways to reinforce leadership within the school.

- “Catch Somebody Doing Covey”: Students are encouraged to notice their classmates exhibiting one of the habits. During assemblies, those students are recognized as 7 Habits Heros.
- Music: “Color Me Covey” was written by the music teacher and matches each habit to one of the colors of the rainbow. When a local business heard that Crestwood was teaching the 7 Habits, they called and offered to purchase t-shirts in a rainbow of colors to go along with the “Color Me Covey” song. This association has turned into a valuable business-school partnership.
- Staff meetings: Designated time is allotted to swap ideas and share successes.
- Report card: Incorporation of the habits was adopted to give students feedback on how they were progressing relative to each habit.

6. **English Estates Elementary**—Located in Fern Park, FL, English Estates Elementary is a K-5 public school. The English Estates journey began after a district administrator heard Muriel Summers of A.B. Combs Elementary speak at a conference. Shortly afterward she attended a Leadership Day at Combs and knew right away that she wanted to bring the leadership model to her district.

Dr. Beth Sharpe had recently been named principal of English Estates and was intrigued by the thought of something new for a school that was struggling. Dr. Sharpe and several staff members visited Combs and formed a team to develop a strategy to bring the leadership model to their school (Note: This occurred prior to *The Leader in Me* process). Following that very first year, English Estates was awarded the district’s award for “Most Improved Academic Scores.” Discipline referrals had dropped dramatically and the students, parents, and staff were thrilled!

Dr. Sharpe will tell you that one of the keys to the success of the leadership theme is that teachers love teaching the materials to the students and they are very creative in how they go about it. Some examples include:

- Each student has a visual display of their personal Emotional Bank Account.
- Each class has collaboratively created a class flag.
- The Physical Education teachers have taught and practiced the 7 Habits hand signs.
- Each class has a 7 Habits Talking Stick to use during class meetings and discussions.
- The music teacher has created 7 Habits songs.
- Many classes use a Plus/Delta discussion to review the day and set goals.

Early on, Beth was challenged with a question: “With all the pressure to perform academically, how did you dare choose to work first on changing the culture?” She responded with “The core of our school is relationships and the culture. The 7 Habits is the catalyst that enhanced both our relationships and the new culture.”

Since that time, Beth has moved to another elementary school in the district. And, as a testament to her hard work, the pervasiveness of the leadership culture, and the continued focus of the staff, the leadership model continues to thrive.

7. **Joseph Welsh Elementary** — “Leaders for Life” is the vision at Joseph Welsh Elementary, a K-5 public school in Red Deer, Alberta. The sign at the entrance greets you and makes it obvious that this school values leadership. Inside, the message continues; hallways are named for the habits, and every open space screams 7 Habits through quotations, murals, paintings, banners, and posters listing their core values and vision. The website, school clothing, official letterhead, and even meeting agendas all proclaim the schools adherence to *The Leader in Me* philosophy.

Principal Fritz confirms that his school is “all in” when it comes to *The Leader in Me*. Every teacher in every classroom is conversant with and uses the 7 Habits whenever appropriate. Indeed, to quote Principal Fritz, the habits are “ubiquitous” at Joseph Welsh. What about academic performance on standardized tests? Joseph Welsh has always been a high-performing school. In 2005, for example, only 5.7 percent of the students were below standard on English tests. But, in 2008, after *The Leader in Me*, the percentage dropped to 1.9 percent and to *zero* in 2009.

100 percent of the teachers say that the 7 Habits helped them in teaching students the principles they need in their daily lives and 97 percent of parents want to see the 7 Habits program continue at the school.

At Joseph Welsh, all students are leaders. Not only are they leaders of tomorrow, but they are leaders today. Students understand that they control their destiny and can make

decisions to solve problems. The students are recognized by the adults as contributing members of the school culture and community.

8. **Minchau Elementary** – Approach the front entry of Minchau Elementary school in Canada’s Edmonton Public School District and a brightly decorated question will ask you “CAN YOU SEE THE LEADER IN ME?” Upon entering, a student wearing a bold blue scarf embroidered with ‘Minchau Greeter’ will bid you a happy “Good morning!” and then remind you of one of the 7 Habits. If you’re not quite yet inspired, Gandhi’s famous quotation will put you in the right frame of mind: BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD.

According to Principal Pat Davidson, after beginning *The Leader in Me*, the staff noticed an immediate change to the tone in the school; “When a child comes to school, and someone says ‘Good Morning – don’t forget to Be Proactive today!’, just being acknowledged in a positive way has a huge impact on how that child will feel for the rest of the day.” This is how every student, teacher, and visitor to Minchau Elementary starts their day, and is only one aspect of the many commitments Pat and her staff have made to transforming Minchau’s population into a dynamic team of leaders.

“Kids used to be sent to the office for discipline. Now they come to the office for commendations.” Regardless of the fact that 40% of the school’s population is identified with special needs or has an ELL code, this important work has resulted in an increase in student achievement for three years running. As Pat and the team explain, the school’s success began with a commitment to creating a system that ensures their vision of “a leader in everyone” happens.

9. **Mountainville Academy** – Over the past two years, the culture of this K-8 Charter School located in Alpine, Utah has completely turned around at the staff level, and measurable results at the student level have gone from “good” to “great”. Mountainville’s Vision: Building tomorrow’s leaders one student at a time, through academic excellence and character development.

Principal Emma Bullock attributes Mountainville’s exciting results to the school’s dedicated implementation of *The Leader in Me* process. Implementing the full process has had such a dramatic impact at Mountainville that has captured the attention of awarding bodies. The school was recently presented with the award for “Charter School Innovations Excellence” in recognition of their implementation of *The Leader in Me*. Mountainville was also just named the “2011 State School of Character” and received the “2010 Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Center for Community of Caring Innovating Practice Award.”

10. **Moulton Elementary**—Located in Moulton, Alabama, this K-4 public school began their journey with a book study of *The Leader in Me* book. Following the book study, Paige Terry, Principal, and her staff agreed that leadership was the direction they wanted to go. Although they have a high rate of free and reduced lunch, very limited funds, and a student

population of 750, this staff was committed to following *The Leader in Me* process and the benefits are evident.

Leadership is ubiquitous; it can be seen and heard with the 7 Habits used naturally throughout the school. Student work displays, quotes, and tee-shirts for all (with special *The Leader in Me* tee-shirts for the cafeteria ladies) are just a few of the ways you know that leadership is the focus of this school. Creative skits and pep rallies to teach and celebrate the habits have become a tradition enjoyed by everyone. “Moulton Elementary School Leaders” participate in community events and have taken the lead on community projects, such as “Cupcakes for Sadie” to raise funds for a kindergartner with cancer.

The Lighthouse Team meets regularly, shares decision making, engages staff, students, and community, and provides ongoing training to all staff, including the bus drivers.

Parents are more engaged in their child’s education and are volunteering in new ways. Students proudly show off their Leadership Notebooks and student-led conferences have become the norm.

11. **Mildred B. Janson Elementary**—The campus of Janson Elementary, a K-6 public school in Rosemead, CA, leaves no doubt that this school has embraced *The Leader in Me*. There are banners everywhere outside, quotes on the walls inside, and hallways named “Believe in Me Blvd.” and “Leadership Lane”. Sponsored by Panda Express, Janson’s success can be seen in their increase in enrollment and Academic Performance Index (which moved from 808 to 868) and the decrease in discipline issues.

The mission of the school is LEAD and they coordinate the 7 Habits with each of the letters; Loyalty (Habits 4 & 5), Excellence (Habits 6, 7, & 8), Achievement (Habits 1 & 3), and Discipline (Habit 2).

The staff at Janson use every opportunity to teach leadership to their students. Being technology heavy, they have integrated technology into the election of their student council members. Recently, students who were interested in running for student council used live streaming to do their speeches, all done from a mocked “oval office”. If there is a technology issue in a classroom, the Leader in Technology for that classroom visits the multi-media specialist. The leader shares the problem with the specialist, is taught how to fix it, and returns to the classroom to take care of the problem. This is just one way leadership is being taught at Janson Elementary.

12. **Somerville Road Elementary**—Supported by the Decatur Chamber of Commerce, Somerville Road Elementary is a PreK-5 public school in Decatur, Alabama. With 25% of the population working under an IEP, Dr. Dee Dee Jones, Principal, is often tied up with IEP meetings. So, early on, the Lighthouse Team took the lead with Dr. Jones acting as the administrative advisor.

The habits and leadership are reinforced effectively throughout the school by students and staff, yielding a 34% decrease in discipline issues this year. The action steps taken have made significant progress in changing paradigms.

- The cafeteria looks like a French café with black and white checked tablecloths, table flowers, French chef paintings on the wall, and classical music at lunch.
- “Days of our Lives” wall chronicles each day of the year with a colored picture and a brief description of what happened that day.
- Student maestros lead music alongside the music teacher.
- Career characters (policeman, nurse, etc.) are painted on the wall. Mirrors take the place of faces on the characters so students can “see” themselves in those roles.
- Leadership Notebooks are started in the age 3 class and travel from home to school daily. They are a simple, engaging, and consistent way for parents, many of whom are Hispanic and unfamiliar with the US educational system, to have conversations with their child and with the school. As a result, there was standing room only for the three parent events this year.

13. **South Dade Middle School** – “Love, Learn, Lead” is the motto at South Dade Middle School, a 4-8 public school in Homestead, FL. At South Dade Middle School, Principal Brian Hamilton, the staff, and the students have embraced the 7 Habits as the foundation of their leadership program. All staff, including administrators, teachers, and office, custodial, and cafeteria staff work as a team to find ways to include the habits into the school culture.

At South Dade Middle School, today’s students are being taught to be tomorrow’s leaders by equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to make a positive difference in their community.

Through the leadership model, students become active leaders who are highly responsible in both their personal and academic lives. South Dade students benefit from a diverse learning environment based on courtesy, respect, and integrity. By incorporating leadership into every day curriculum, students learn about future career opportunities while becoming effective leaders with all the skill sets necessary to thrive in real-world situations.

14. **St. Charles Elementary**— One of the first things you notice when on the website for this K-6 Catholic school in Edmonton, Alberta is the announcement “We are a 7 Habits school! Building Leaders for TODAY! WE are a Lighthouse School! Ask us about our Leadership for ALL initiative.” Principal Dan Friedt and his staff have created a leadership environment that has embedded the principles, practices, and habits of *The Leader in Me* into its culture.

With a strong leadership and literacy focus, this school provides students with the opportunity to become “Literate Leaders for a Lifetime!” They attribute their success to the belief that ALL students regardless of grade, age, ability or background can become leaders.

Students, including kindergartners, know that each of them has a mission in life to “change the world”.

The students, staff, and parents of St. Charles have created a school atmosphere where behavioral issues (50% in one year) have decreased, social and global awareness has increased, and an atmosphere of excitement for learning in the 21st century has been created. As their leadership focus grows so does their students’ abilities.

Recently, St. Charles hosted a Leadership Day that included the mayor of Edmonton as a special guest. The Mayor’s message was the importance and significance of teaching leadership skills to every single child to develop the skills and self-confidence for them to lead their lives and succeed in the 21st century.

15. **Winchester Elementary** - At Winchester Elementary, a K-5 public school in New York, leadership is a lifestyle rather than a lesson. Kathy Brachmann, Principal, and her staff believe “Our focus is character. Our outcomes are leaders. We build community with our learners that lasts a lifetime.”

Leadership is ubiquitous in the school. The staff examined and aligned school practices to ensure that children practice and employ the leadership strategies in all aspects of their school day. Students take responsibility for their choices and behaviors. Leadership tools and best practices are utilized in instruction. Motivation and initiative are inherent in daily task selection and completion, problem solving skills have increased, and goal setting is routine. Interpersonal skills are enhanced and a sense of teamwork is apparent. These skills are witnessed each day when students show compassion for each other, willingly take turns, and share their belongings. Following rules and using self-discipline is no longer simply a choice, but rather, a paradigm shift in how they go about doing business – actively doing what it takes to improve a situation for all involved.

Students are actively engaged in service learning projects with all ideas generated by the students. Staff members Synergize to choose professional development opportunities, set goals, and celebrate successes. Parents are offered training in *The 7 Habits of Successful Families*, invited to a “Wellness Night”, and are treated to a student-led Open House.