

What is *The Leader in Me*?

The Leader in Me starts from a powerful premise: every child possesses unique strengths and has the ability to be a leader, which shapes the views of staff to value and develop the whole child. The process integrates leadership development into existing programs, curricula, and traditions and serves as a foundational operating system for the school, improving relationships, transforming culture, and highly motivating staff and students.

The Leader in Me helps students learn how to become self-reliant, take initiative, plan ahead, set and track goals, do their homework, prioritize their time, manage their emotions, be considerate of others, express their viewpoint persuasively, resolve conflicts, find creative solutions, value differences, and live a balanced life. In short, *The Leader in Me* helps students develop the skills and self-confidence they need to lead their lives and succeed in school and beyond. All stakeholders are impacted by *The Leader in Me*, starting with the staff of a school, then expanding to students, their families, and the community at large. This approach is a key ingredient to successfully creating positive change in a school.

The Leader in Me utilizes and integrates several leadership, social-emotional learning, quality, and educational models and processes from past and current thought leaders including *The 4 Imperatives of Great Leaders* and *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*. The process includes student participation in goal setting, data tracking, leadership roles, Student-Led Conferences, leadership environments, and Leadership Events. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* is also a key component of the overall *Leader in Me* process and is a synthesis of universal, timeless principles of personal, interpersonal, and organizational effectiveness such as responsibility, vision, integrity, teamwork, collaboration, and renewal, which are common to all people and cultures.

The Leader in Me differs from other whole-school transformation processes in that it offers a holistic, school wide experience for staff, students, and parents, and creates a common, age-appropriate language and culture within the school. The leadership principles and lessons are not taught as a curriculum, but instead are *incorporated* into coursework, traditions, systems, and culture.

For more information about *The Leader in Me*, visit www.theleaderinme.org.

Who started *The Leader in Me*?

The Leader in Me was originally developed by a principal and teachers who wanted to teach their students life skills such as leadership, responsibility, accountability, problem solving, adaptability, effective communication, and more.

For more information on Muriel Summers, principal of A.B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School in Raleigh, North Carolina, please visit here: <http://www.theleaderinme.org/what-is-the-leader-in-me/>

How many schools participate nationwide?

Since its official launch nearly six years ago, over 3,000 public, private, charter, and magnet schools across 50 countries have adopted *The Leader in Me*. Educators continue to offer feedback on best practices, which provides the basis for continuous improvement and refinement of the process.

What do students learn through *The Leader in Me* process?

The Leader in Me helps students develop the skills and self-confidence they need to lead their lives and succeed in school and beyond. Specifically, *The Leader in Me* focuses on students learning the following 21st century skills:

Student self-confidence
Teamwork
Initiative
Responsibility
Communication

Creativity
Self-direction
Leadership
Problem solving
Social etiquette

Students learn these skills through participating in goal setting, data tracking, leadership roles, Student-Led Conferences, leadership environments, Leadership Events, and more.

Why did Sharon Elementary School decide to implement *The Leader in Me*?

In the 2014-15 school year, staff members at Sharon participated in a book study about *The Leader in Me* by Stephen Covey. Many of the staff who participated were inspired to implement ideas from the book within their classrooms. They also suggested we read *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids* by Sean Covey to our students. It is a children's book that contains short stories to teach about the 7 Habits in a child friendly way. Our Building Leadership Team then traveled to Columbus, Ohio to attend *The Leader in Me* Symposium.

Upon their return, the team shared their experiences at a staff meeting, which included visits at schools that are implementing *The Leader in Me*, national speakers such as Muriel Summers and Ron Clark, student-led presentations, and teacher-led breakout sessions. After hearing and seeing what other schools had been able to accomplish through the book study and visits, the staff at Sharon decided that they wanted our students and community to have the same opportunities. They saw the potential to further increase our success with student achievement while meeting the needs of the whole child.

Since student leadership had been a tradition at Sharon for many years, it was a great fit for our school.

What is the cost of *The Leader in Me* at Sharon Elementary School and what does it include?

Schools that implement *The Leader in Me* process over the first three years receive:

- Student leadership curriculum, teacher resources, and other classroom materials
- The Leader in Me Online, which includes numerous resources, such as digital training modules, classroom videos, lesson resources, assessment tools, best practice sharing, etc.
- Regional principal development
- Regional new-staff training
- Coaching phone calls and other virtual coaching support
- Two community coaching days per year
- Two onsite coaching days per year
- Five days of on-site staff training, which includes training in The 7 Habits (two days), Launching Leadership (one day), Creating Culture (one day) and Aligning Academics (one day)

Over the past three years at Sharon Elementary, the program has averaged approximately \$15,000 per year. During the first three years of this program, there are higher initial costs for staff training and professional development. For the 2017-18 school year, the cost is anticipated to be approximately \$1,500.

To date, the program has been co-funded through the following:

- Sharon Community Trust (donated \$6,000 over the past three years)
- Sharon PTO (one-time donation of \$8,000)
- Highland Schools General Fund (\$12,000)
- Sharon's Principal Account (\$19,000)

How much time is being spent on *The Leader in Me* process in the classroom on a daily basis?

The leadership principles and lessons are not taught as a curriculum. This is not a separate class. This is merely an enhancement of everyday learning.

What are The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People?

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People	Principles	Application Using Age-Appropriate Language for Students
<i>Habit 1: Be Proactive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative • Responsibility • Choice • Accountability 	You're in Charge: "I am a responsible person. I take initiative to make things happen. I choose my own actions, attitudes, and moods. I do not blame other people for my mistakes. I focus on the things I can influence.
<i>Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • Planning • Purpose 	Have a Plan: "I plan ahead. I know how to set and achieve goals. I do things that have meaning and make a difference. I am an important part of my classroom and contribute to my school's mission and purpose.
<i>Habit 3: Put First Things First</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritization • Organization • Discipline 	Work First, Then Play: "I spend my time on things that are most important. This means I say no to things that are less important. I set priorities, make a schedule, and follow my plan. I am disciplined and organized."
<i>Habit 4: Think Win-Win</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration • Courage • Mutual benefit • Fairness 	Everyone Can Win: "I balance courage for getting what I want with consideration for what others want. I build good relationships with others by being kind, saying sorry when needed, and keeping commitments. When conflicts arise, I look for options that work for both sides."
<i>Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Mutual understanding • Empathy 	Listen Before You Talk: "I listen to other people's ideas and feelings. I try to see things from their viewpoints. I listen to others without interrupting. I am confident in voicing my ideas. I look people in the eyes when talking."
<i>Habit 6: Synergize</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity • Cooperation • Diversity • Humility 	Together Is Better: "I value other people's strengths and learn from them. I get along well with others, even people who are different from me. I work well in groups. I seek out other people's ideas to solve problems.
<i>Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewal • Health and wellness • Continuous improvement • Balance 	Balance Feels Best: "I take care of my body by eating right, exercising, and getting sleep. I spend time with family and friends. I learn in lots of ways and lots of places, not just at school. I find meaningful ways to help others. I am balanced."

Is Sharon Elementary a pilot school for the rest of Highland Schools?

No. The decision to do *The Leader in Me* was made in collaboration with the principal and staff at Sharon.

How is information on the process communicated to Sharon Elementary parents?

- Sharon Elementary hosted a Leadership Day in May 2016 for parents to visit the school and learn about the program.
- Sharon Elementary sends out weekly newsletters that include information about *The Leader in Me*.
- Classroom teachers often include information in newsletters and emails.
- Sharon Elementary hosted its first community event at The Akron Children’s Museum on March 12, 2017, with over 300 in attendance. The purpose was to raise awareness of the program.
- We also have ongoing dialogue at our PTO meetings.

Additional information can always be found at: www.theleaderinme.org/parents.