APLL LEADER PRACTICES

A Practice-Based Approach to Public Library Leadership

The following nine practices emphasize the leader’s responsibility for creating the conditions where others can be successful.

Animate the vision
Instigate the work of envisioning a future rooted in exciting possibilities for the library. Enlist others in a shared vision by appealing to shared aspirations. Advocate the vision as the source of alignment and meaningful action.

Reach for exemplary service
Understand the diversity of individuals within the community. Convey a deep commitment to meet and anticipate emerging and evolving needs. Emphasize exceptional service, defining standards for quality.

Make intelligent decisions
Value information and seek it broadly, involving others who think differently and have other areas of expertise. Employ creative and critical thinking in exploring options and then evaluating those options. Facilitate consensus by seeking common ground.

Embrace strategic and purposeful change
Champion change and innovation; take risks and act as a catalyst for continuous improvement. Create the conditions that inspire others to change and improve. Implement and manage change skillfully.

Create a learning environment
Value learning and cultivate the conditions that embrace and encourage lifelong learning. Seek and provide training and development as needed. Encourage staff to see themselves as self-directed learners. Engage in background reading, consultation and conversation as ways of gathering information and making sense together.

Cultivate relationships
Build a network of respectful, mutually empowering relationships that value and utilize diversity and differences of opinion. Facilitate collective responsibility and collective action based on trust, respect and shared aspirations. Model a commitment to exceptional listening skills and asking probing questions.

Develop individuals
Help employees be successful by building their capacities, stretching their potential, evoking their leadership. Expect and demand everyone’s best performance. Create the conditions that allow for an expansive, creative exchange of ideas and viewpoints. Share the power, the decision-making and the responsibility for library success.

Sustain a healthy workplace
Establish a caring environment where everyone feels connected, respected and appreciated. Convey reasonable expectations of self and others. Encourage work-life balance and personal well-being by modeling healthy habits. Develop a collective sense of fun to lighten the demands of the workplace.

Navigate municipal and community connectedness
Know the community; understand local issues and concerns. Establish the library as a valued community service. Advocate the integration of the library into other community services and promote its advancement in terms that support the vision and strategies of Municipal Council.

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