

410 Crerar Drive, Hamilton, Ontario, L9A 5K3

Website: lcrss.ca

(905)979-3975

Being Professional?



**LCRSS
Directors:**

**Kevin
Hutchinson**
League Chair

Gerrit Bos
League Vice-
chair

Joanie Vis
Treasurer

**Calvin
Kapteyn**
Director

**John
Vanlperen**
Director

**LCRSS
Recording
Secretary:**
Leanne Van
Bostelen

**LCRSS
Coordinator:**

Jason
Heemskerk
jason@lcrss.ca

What does it take to be considered a professional? Is it a matter of graduating from university or college with the right degree, like being a professional masseuse? Is it about getting paid for something that otherwise would be considered recreation, like professional gamers? Or is being a professional more about the embodiment of a code of conduct, like the Hippocratic oath?

More than likely, a professional embodies all of the above: some training, some drive to work beyond a pay scale, and a motivation to do no harm.

The desire to be professional is prevalent in our schools as well. **Teachers, board members, parents, even students have the sense that 'professional' is something that people should aim to be.** This is not only important for ourselves, but also (perhaps more importantly) it is what we count on in others: students look for it in teachers, teachers look for it in board members, and parents look for it in both. The trouble is, what 'it' looks like is not always clear.

It is easier, perhaps, to list what it does not look like. It does not look like showing up late to a meeting with a takeout coffee in hand (even if it is from Starbucks), wearing clothing to work that falls below a standard of care and/or modesty, or opening your mouth when it ought to stay closed. There is a myriad of things that we could list which may define what we see as unprofessional behaviour. However, being professional is more than avoiding certain pitfalls. And, even if we were to develop a list, what is a pitfall for one community, is not for another. (That can be seen simply by asking different schools if their male teachers should wear ties, or whether board members should wear suits to membership meetings).

Thoughts about being professional have come up because the League's Professional Development Committee has just released a Professional Development Strategy for League schools. What that includes is outlined in another section of this newsletter, but as schools begin to work with it, as they make it

their own, it is important to remember that attaining and maintaining 'professional' status consists of more than checking off the boxes on a list; it is a state of being.

The question is, what does that state of being look like?

Atul Gawande, an American surgeon and the author of a brilliant little book entitled, *The Checklist Manifesto*, has found three commonalities in the definitions of professionalism from what he calls, 'learned occupations'. "First is an expectation of selflessness: that we who accept responsibility for others...will place the needs and concerns of those who depend on us above our own. Second is an expectation of skill: that we will aim for excellence in our knowledge and expertise. Third is an expectation of trust-worthiness: that we will be responsible in our personal behavior toward our charges." And there is one more, Gawande writes, that only pilots seem to have written down ... discipline.

"Discipline," he tells the reader, "is hard—harder than trustworthiness and skill and perhaps even than selflessness. ... Discipline is something we have to work at."

This resonates with what we know about ourselves as broken people- being disciplined is hard work!

If you read Gawande's definition it is interesting to note that he calls professionals to do the hard work of being disciplined enough to serve selflessly, skillfully, and show ourselves to be worthy of trust. This resonates with us as Christians. We read his words as focused on the other, not on ourselves. The only thing he is missing is the 'why'. Why do we serve the other in a professional manner? What drives us to be disciplined at it? As teachers, board members parents and students we are called to, "serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people". (Eph. 6:8a) The Christian's 'why' is the fountain of our passion- whether we are teaching, completing assignments or cleaning toilets, we work because we serve our Lord. We do so professionally, out of thankfulness to the Lord who gave us gifts to use so richly.

Jason Heemskerk

Professional Development Strategy

LCRSS Committees:

Assistance for the Special Child (ASC)

Compensation Committee

Curriculum Assistance for Reformed Educators (CARE)

Government Contact Committee (GCC)

Pension Committee

Professional Development Committee (PDC)

At the last meeting of the League, the members accepted a new *Professional Development Strategy* document proposed by its Professional Development Committee (PDC).

The *Professional Development Strategy* document proposes a strategy for growth and implementation of a professional development program based on the premise that ongoing professional development at the level of each individual teacher who is employed by a LCRSS member school board is expected within the schools affiliated with the League.

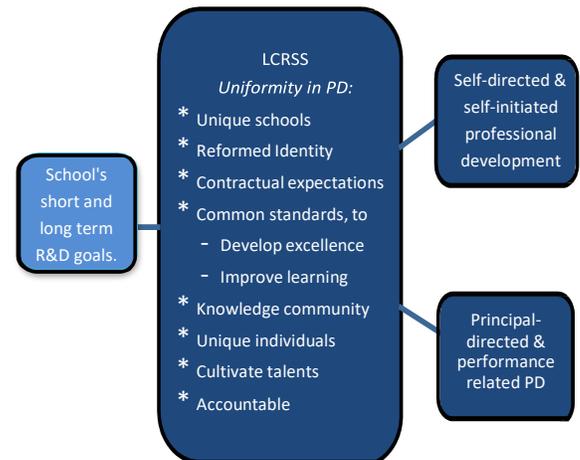
As such, the PDC recognizes the diversity within the unity represented by the League schools, and urges local schools to develop a local professional development policy that reflects the tenets set out in this strategy document, using the monitoring guidelines included as appendices.

The PDC acknowledges that personal professional development is closely connected to the professional performance evaluation conducted by the principal on behalf of the school board. Identifying areas of professional growth and development is a collaborative task

involving both the teacher and the principal.

The PDC also acknowledges that professional development serves one aim: To support, enhance, and improve student learning. Each teacher, as a child of God, will strive to develop his or her God-given talents to the best of his or her ability.

The following chart works to summarize areas League schools can and may use to promote professional development among teaching professionals. The document in its entirety is available on the League website.



Meet the new Directors



Kevin Hutchinson has taken on the Chairman's role in the League. Kevin and his wife Geri live in the village of Morristown, Ontario and they are members of Emmanuel Canadian Reformed Church in Guelph. Kevin is very active with charitable organizations and has served multiple terms on school boards, consistories, and related committees.

Kevin is the founder, president and CEO of Balla Machree Inc., a leading Management Consulting & IT solutions firm. He has twenty-five years of broad, in-depth experience with technical and managerial achievement in outsourcing, telecommunication networks, operations, IT strategy, project management, process, and business reengineering. Kevin received a B.Sc. in Engineering from University of Guelph and is a registered Professional Engineer of Ontario.



Gerrit Bos has taken on the role of Vice Chair for the League. Gerrit and his wife Freda live in the village of Everton, Ontario, with their family of four children. They are members of Emmanuel Canadian Reformed Church in Guelph. Gerrit has been, and is, involved in various school and church boards and committees.

Gerrit is the Information Security Risk and Compliance Officer in Computing and Communications Services (CCS) at the University of Guelph. Gerrit has worked at U of G since 1987, including 20+ years as an analyst with CCS, and more than seven years as an Information Technology Security Officer. Gerrit holds a CISM from ISACA and is a CISSP Associate. He also received his MA Leadership in 2014 from U of G.