



School Seasons xSEleratED

Summer Book Study for Educational Leaders

A Comprehensive Guide for Leadership Teams

Overview

This summer book study is designed to prepare educational leaders to implement the *School Seasons xSEleratED Framework* throughout the new school year. Through collaborative learning, reflective practice, and strategic planning, participants will develop the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to lead transformative, heart-centered professional development that nurtures both educators and students.

Purpose & Goals

By the end of this summer book study, participants will be able to:

- Implement the *xSEleratED Schools Framework* and its five core competencies: Understanding Myself, Nurturing Myself, Understanding Others, Nurturing Others, and Building a Better World
- Explore monthly themes across the school year calendar
- Develop authentic leadership practices rooted in vulnerability, relationship-building, and social-emotional wellness
- Create a year-long professional development plan aligned with the framework
- Build leadership team cohesion with a shared commitment to heart-centered education
- Plan to facilitate monthly faculty meetings using the book's themes and activities

Recommended Participants

This book study is designed for school leadership teams, including:

- School administrators (principals, assistant principals)
- Instructional coaches and teacher leaders
- SEL coordinators and wellness staff
- Department chairs and grade-level leaders
- District leaders seeking to support school-based implementation
- Any stakeholder interested in transformational leadership

Time Commitment

The summer book study consists of six 3-hour sessions over 4-6 weeks, with additional independent reading and reflection between sessions.

Meeting Time	18 hours (6 sessions × 3 hours)
Independent Reading Time	8-10 hours
Total Time Invested	26-28 hours

Summer Book Study Session Structure

Session 1: Foundations & Framework (3 hours)

Reading: Foundations, Meet the Authors, Framework to Field Guide, Preface, August (Begin with Belonging)

- Session Objectives:
 - Understand the *xSEleratED Schools Framework* and its connection to SEL
 - Explore the authors' perspectives and leadership approaches
 - Build community within the leadership team
 - Establish group norms and participation agreements
- Key Activities:
 - Welcome circle: Share hopes and intentions for the study
 - Framework exploration: Map the five competencies to current practices
 - August theme dive: Experience "Begin with Belonging" activities firsthand
 - Reflection: How does belonging show up in our leadership team?
 - Planning ahead: Assign reading for Session 2

Session 2: Fall Season - Identity, Trust & Gratitude (3 hours)

Reading: September (Teaching from the Inside Out), October (Trust Takes Practice), November (Holding Gratitude & Grief)

- Session Objectives:
 - Explore fall themes of identity formation, trust-building, and emotional honesty
 - Examine how leaders model authenticity and vulnerability
 - Understand the connection between personal wholeness and professional effectiveness
 - Develop strategies for supporting educators through the challenging fall months

- Key Activities:
 - Identity mapping: Personal and professional identity exploration
 - Trust Temperature Check: Assess trust-building practices in your school
 - Gratitude & grief circle: Practice holding both emotions simultaneously
 - Case study discussion: Real scenarios from your school context
 - Planning: Draft September-November faculty meeting outlines

Session 3: Winter Season - Boundaries, Renewal & Love (3 hours)

Reading: December (Boundaries Are Love in Practice), January (Begin Again, Softly), February (Love Is a Collective Practice)

- Session Objectives:
 - Understand boundaries as an expression of care and sustainability
 - Learn strategies for midyear renewal and recommitment
 - Explore love and justice as leadership practices
 - Address winter burnout and compassion fatigue
- Key Activities:
 - Boundary-setting practice: Identify personal and professional boundaries
 - Renewal reflection: What needs to be released or recommitted?
 - Love in action brainstorm: How does love show up in leadership decisions?
 - Fuel & Friction Inventory: Assess what drains and sustains you as a leader
 - Planning: Draft December-February faculty meeting outlines

Session 4: Spring Season - Equity, Curiosity & Celebration (3 hours)

Reading: March (Every Heart, Every Voice), April (Cultivating Curiosity), May (Celebrate the WE)

- Session Objectives:
 - Deepen understanding of equity as shared power and authentic inclusion
 - Cultivate inquiry-based leadership approaches
 - Plan meaningful end-of-year celebrations that honor your community
 - Sustain momentum through the final stretch of the school year
- Key Activities:
 - Boundary-setting practice: Identify personal and professional boundaries
 - Voice & Power Map: Examine whose voices are centered in decision-making

- Curiosity protocol: Practice inquiry over judgment in leadership scenarios
- Celebration planning: Design May faculty meeting to honor collective growth
- Spring energy boost: Strategies for maintaining engagement through May/June
- Planning: Draft March-May faculty meeting outlines

Session 5: Summer & Closure - Rest & Integration (3 hours)

Reading: June (Letting Go with Love), July (Rest Is Revolutionary), Afterword

- Session Objectives:
 - Understand closure and transition as essential leadership practices
 - Embrace rest as revolutionary and necessary for sustainability
 - Integrate learnings from the entire book study
 - Prepare for implementation with confidence and clarity
- Key Activities:
 - Closure rituals: Practice letting go with love
 - My Rest Recipe: Create personal and organizational commitments to rest
 - Leadership legacy map: Visualize the leader you're becoming
 - Integration reflection: What are you carrying forward?
 - Planning: Draft June-July faculty meeting outlines

Session 6: Implementation Planning & Commitment (3 hours)

Focus: Review full-year plan, finalize materials, practice facilitation

- Session Objectives:
 - Finalize the year-long professional development calendar
 - Practice facilitating activities from the book
 - Anticipate challenges and develop contingency plans
 - Make collective commitments to heart-centered leadership
- Key Activities:
 - Gallery walk: Share monthly PD plans with feedback protocol
 - Facilitation practice: Leaders role-play facilitating key activities
 - Troubleshooting scenarios: Address anticipated implementation challenges
 - Commitment ceremony: Create personal leadership declarations
 - Closing circle: Celebrate growth and look ahead to the school year

Facilitation Guidelines for Summer Sessions

Creating Psychological Safety:

- Begin each session with a brief centering practice or mindfulness activity
- Use the circle format when possible to equalize power dynamics
- Model vulnerability by sharing authentic reflections and challenges
- Establish and honor confidentiality agreements
- Create space for silence and reflection; not everything needs to be shared aloud
- Acknowledge the emotional weight of this work and normalize struggle

Honoring Adult Learners:

- Connect content to participants' lived experiences and leadership contexts
- Provide choices in activities and reflection formats
- Balance structured learning with open discussion time
- Recognize that leaders are at different stages in their SEL journey
- Encourage peer learning and collaborative problem-solving
- Make space for dissent and divergent perspectives

Modeling the Framework:

- Your facilitation should embody the xSELEratED competencies
- Share your own learning edges and growth areas
- Practice the activities before facilitating them
- Be responsive to group energy and adjust pacing as needed
- Center relationships over content delivery
- End each session reflecting on both content and process

Materials & Resources

Required Materials:

- *School Seasons xSELEratED* book (one per participant)
- Journals or notebooks for personal reflection
- Chart paper and markers for collaborative work
- Index cards for various reflection activities
- Laptop/projector for viewing sample activities

Optional but Recommended:

- Music for transitions and reflections
- Fidget tools or art supplies for kinesthetic engagement
- Large wall calendar for mapping the entire school year
- Digital collaboration tools (shared Google Drive, planning templates)
- Snacks and beverages to nurture participants

Assessment & Reflection

Throughout the summer book study, participants will engage in ongoing reflection to track their learning and growth. Consider incorporating:

- Weekly reflection journals responding to prompts from the book
- Mid-study check-in to assess understanding and adjust pacing
- Final reflection on personal leadership growth and commitments
- Group assessment of readiness to implement the year-long plan
- Creation of a personal leadership declaration or manifesto

Deliverables

As the summer book study concludes, leadership teams should have:

- A complete year-long professional development calendar aligned with School Seasons themes
- Detailed facilitation plans for each monthly faculty meeting
- Shared understanding of the *xSELERatED Framework* and competencies
- Strong leadership team cohesion and commitment to heart-centered education
- Personal leadership practices to sustain themselves throughout the year
- Strategies for responding to challenges and adapting plans as needed

The accompanying Monthly Faculty Meeting Professional Development Plan provides detailed guidance for implementing *School Seasons xSELERatED* throughout the school year, ensuring that the transformative work begun in summer continues to flourish in every season.

Closing Reflection

Leadership is not a position we hold; it is a practice we live. This summer book study is your foundation for a year of transformative, heart-centered leadership. As you prepare to guide your faculty through the seasons ahead, remember that your commitment to your own growth and wholeness is the greatest gift you can offer your school community.

"Leadership as love in action is a living, breathing commitment. It is the daily choice to show up fully, to listen deeply, and to act courageously."

— Team xSELERatED