Many people believe that students are our leaders of the future. At Presidents Elementary School we don’t believe this to be true; we believe that our young people – each and every one of them – are leaders today! These leadership skills in our students are demonstrated in a variety of ways: in their classrooms, among their peers, through their unique skills and talents, and their ability to show compassion for one another. Our challenge today as educators, however, is that many students do not see or believe this to be the case ~ yet. It is our goal and desire to create a culture among our staff and students that inspires each child to see the greatness in them as leaders each day. To that end we, the adults of Presidents Elementary School, have embarked on a journey of learning around leadership capacity within students and our own school community.

Presidents Elementary School is one of four elementary schools in Arlington. Our school serves over 525 students and their families from our community. The teachers and support staff at Presidents has teamed with the FranklinCovey group this year to make student leadership a reality. FranklinCovey has a distinguished reputation worldwide for providing leadership training to organizations and schools, based in part on the highly impactful principles found in the timeless and bestselling works of Steven Covey and the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. In recent years, FranklinCovey has developed a leadership process that has inspired thousands of teachers and students to learn how to live authentic lives of leadership. This school-wide transformative journey that we are thrilled to be taking our staff and students on in the years ahead is called *The Leader in Me* (TLIM). This program shows educators what is possible in helping students foster the critical character traits needed to reach their potential and to accomplish any goal they set for themselves in their lives. It provides faculty and students with an empowering mindset, toolset and skillset of leadership that can be used today and every day thereafter in navigating an unpredictable future. As students are immersed in a culture that promotes a vision that believes in each student, and is the very “walk and talk” of every faculty member they see, they will be inspired. They will see in themselves that they are leaders, not just today, but for the rest of their lives.

The Leader in Me adapts the seven habits taken from author Steven Covey’s *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and puts them into kid-friendly language and concepts.

The first three habits focus on personal victories.
**Habit 1. Be Proactive** (You’re in Charge),
**Habit 2. Begin With the End in Mind** (Have a Plan)
**Habit 3. Put First Things First** (Work First, Then Play).
The next three habits focus on public victories.

**Habit 4. Think Win-Win (Everyone Can Win),**

**Habit 5. Seek First to Understand - Then be Understood (Listen Before You Talk)**

**Habit 6. Synergize (Together is Better).**

The seventh habit is about self-renewal.

**Habit 7. Sharpen the Saw (Balance Feels Best).**

This project closely aligns with our district and school improvement goals to establish life-long learning and leadership capacity for all students.

We have already seen significant, positive changes in our teaching staff concerning their ability to understand their own mindsets about students and their learning during our four days of training that began in early September 2015. We have also seen higher levels of confidence and leadership skills amongst our student population.

We invite you to visit Presidents Elementary School to see how we are currently implementing *The Leader In Me* with students in the classroom. You will be amazed how the learning experiences for all our students is enhanced and enriched on a daily basis. We are honored to be a part of a process that helps students discover and embrace the leader and greatness that exists within each one of them – both now and for the future.