

SUPPORTING THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

Evaluation of the Strategy, September 2011

The Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS) was launched in fall 2008, with an initial three-year timeline. An evaluation of the strategy was conducted towards the end of that three-year period by the Leadership Development Branch of the Ministry of Education, under the direction of Professor Emeritus Dr. Kenneth Leithwood, leadership adviser to the ministry. The purpose of the evaluation was twofold: to document progress and to identify features of the strategy that need to be refined or adjusted in order to ensure that OLS initiatives support the province’s core education priorities – high levels of student achievement, reduced gaps in achievement, and increased public confidence – as effectively as possible.

Major OLS Initiatives – Key Facts and Findings of the Evaluation

Initiative*	Key Facts and Findings
Ontario Leadership Framework (including five Core Leadership Capacities [CLCs] and <i>Ideas Into Action</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has been widely used by schools, districts, and principal and supervisory officer qualification programs across the province</li> <li>• Provided a foundation for the development of other key OLS initiatives</li> <li>• Has contributed to improving the alignment of leadership initiatives across significant numbers of schools, and across divisions of the ministry</li> </ul>
Mentoring for Newly Appointed School and System Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 5000 leaders participated as either mentors or mentees</li> <li>• Was rated highly by participants, who reported that the program helped improve their confidence and skills</li> </ul>
Principal Performance Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standardized implementation began in September 2010, so current data is insufficient for reliable evaluation</li> </ul>
Leading Student Achievement (LSA): Networks for Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involved 1600 school leaders</li> <li>• Led to better understanding among participants of how effective leadership can support improvement in teaching and learning</li> <li>• Contributed to strengthening instructional leadership</li> </ul>
Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently supports leadership development for 8100 school and system leaders</li> <li>• School boards have documented good progress in implementing effective practices along the continuum outlined in the BLDS manual</li> </ul>
Executive Programs for Supervisory Officers and Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involved 250 system leaders</li> <li>• Was rated highly by participants</li> </ul>
Institute for Education Leadership (IEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced tri-level (school, district, ministry) cooperation and collaboration</li> <li>• Contributed significantly to leadership research and to the development of the leadership resource bank (APPLIKI)</li> </ul>
Principal Congress (PC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resulted in the collection and analysis of 600 expert principal leadership practices (soon to be published)</li> <li>• Was rated highly by participants and facilitators</li> </ul>
Minister’s Principal Reference Group (MPRG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vetted a wide range of ministry programs (close to 40 programs and/or policies)</li> <li>• Received strong endorsement by the Minister</li> <li>• Was rated highly by participants</li> </ul>
Canada’s Outstanding Principals (COP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognized 81 Ontario principals over seven years</li> <li>• Was rated highly by participants</li> </ul>

\* Quick Facts sheets on some of these initiatives can be found at [www.ontario.ca/eduleadership](http://www.ontario.ca/eduleadership).

## Overall Results of the Evaluation

The evaluation demonstrated:

- a high level of stakeholder satisfaction with the OLS;
- significant progress in implementing the board leadership development strategy across all boards; and
- a high degree of alignment in leadership activities undertaken across the ministry.

At the same time, the evaluation pointed to a lack of data on depth of impact – that is, on the impact that leadership development initiatives have had on the actual practices of leaders in the field.

## The OLS Theory of Action

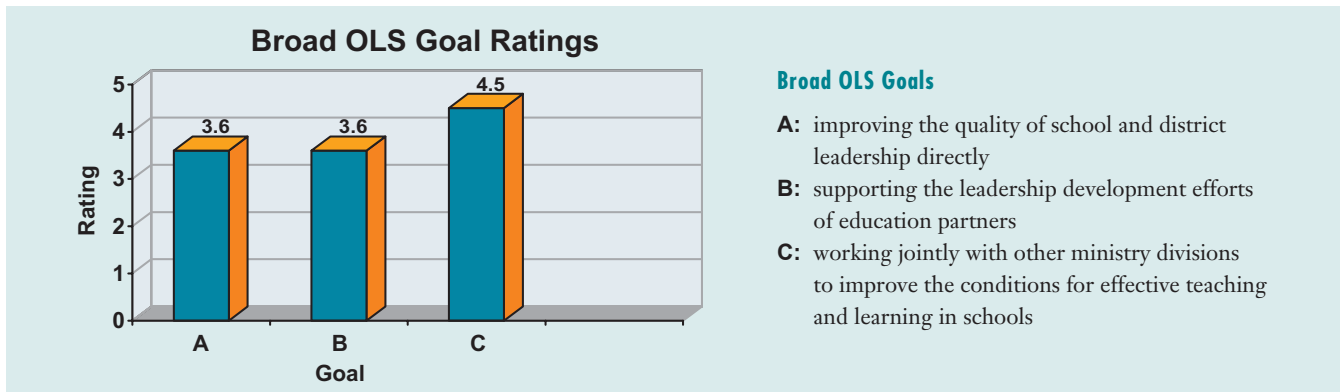
The OLS is grounded in the belief that significant progress can be made towards achieving the province’s three core priorities by focusing on three broad goals: (A) improving the quality of school and district leadership *directly*; (B) supporting the leadership development efforts of school boards, leaders’ associations, and other education partners; and (C) working collaboratively with other ministry divisions to improve the conditions for effective teaching and learning in schools.

## Evaluation Methodology and Ratings

Each of the OLS initiatives was evaluated to determine the degree to which it had succeeded in meeting certain specific and measurable objectives, and to judge the scale of its impact. The various objectives were then linked to one or more of the three broad goals (A, B, and/or C) to which they potentially contributed. A rating scale was used to indicate the overall impact of each initiative, from “minimally successful on a small scale” (a rating of 1) to “very successful on a large scale” (a rating of 5). Finally, through a simple calculation, an overall rating of the success of the OLS was assigned for each of the three goals.

“Transparency and clarity of steps in the formal leadership-track process have generated excitement and enthusiasm for leadership development – vice-principal applications are up 60 per cent!”

– A BLDS board lead



### Broad OLS Goals

- A:** improving the quality of school and district leadership directly
- B:** supporting the leadership development efforts of education partners
- C:** working jointly with other ministry divisions to improve the conditions for effective teaching and learning in schools

The ratings from this initial evaluation of the OLS initiatives must be viewed in the context of circumstantial factors such as the relatively brief period of implementation, the difficulty of measuring certain types of effects directly (e.g., the effects of mentoring on instructional leadership practices in the field), and the absence of baseline data (e.g., the extent to which the availability of mentoring might attract candidates to a leadership role).

## What’s Next?

For future evaluations of the OLS, the Leadership Development Branch plans to implement a data collection process that will provide insight into depth of impact without complicating data collection demands on school boards.

Findings from the current evaluation and from ongoing stakeholder consultations will determine the components of the second phase of the Ontario Leadership Strategy, to be rolled out in 2012–13.

### LEARN MORE

See the ministry’s website, at [www.ontario.ca/eduleadership](http://www.ontario.ca/eduleadership)

Questions may be addressed to:

Laurie Pedwell

Leadership Development Branch

Email: [Laurie.Pedwell@ontario.ca](mailto:Laurie.Pedwell@ontario.ca)

Phone: 416-325-7692