

SUPPORTING THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

Board Leadership Development Strategy

What Is the Board Leadership Development Strategy?

The board leadership development strategy (BLDS) requires districts to establish a systematic approach to fostering high-quality leadership throughout the organization. The BLDS is focused on improving student achievement and well-being through effective leadership. It is aligned with research based on effective leadership development and is a component of the ministry's operational reviews of districts. In addition, the strategy is directly aligned with, and supports, the goals of the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS) and the province's three core priorities:

- high levels of student achievement
- reduced gaps in student achievement
- increased public confidence in publicly funded education

The Ontario Leadership Strategy

Launched in 2008, the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS) is a comprehensive plan of action designed to support student achievement and well-being by attracting and developing skilled and passionate school and system leaders. The OLS is grounded in the belief that significant progress towards the province's three core priorities can be accomplished by directly improving the quality of school and district leadership, supporting leadership development, and working with other ministry divisions to improve the conditions for effective teaching and learning in schools and classrooms.

The strategy was developed over time, in partnership with districts and key partners representing associations of principals, supervisory officers, and directors of education. During the first year of the Ontario Leadership Strategy's initial three-year plan of action, districts were required to initiate mentoring for newly appointed school leaders. A succession planning and talent development (SPTD) initiative was introduced in year two of the strategy. In 2010–11, the third year of the strategy, succession planning and talent development, mentoring for newly appointed

school and system leaders, and principal/vice-principal performance appraisal (PPA) became components of a broader initiative – the board leadership development strategy (BLDS). Districts are required to appoint a BLDS lead to promote alignment of the leadership development components.

Why the BLDS?

The goal of the BLDS is to ensure that districts are able to attract and develop leaders of the highest quality. It targets school leaders (principals and vice-principals), system leaders (supervisory officers and directors of education), and those who aspire to a leadership role, whether academic (such as principal or school superintendent) or non-academic (such as business superintendent or manager).

Key Elements of the BLDS**Succession planning and talent development (SPTD).**

SPTD is about encouraging all in the system to see themselves as part of the leadership strategy. The focus is on attracting and developing passionate and skilled leaders who can effectively support student achievement and well-being. Talent development throughout the system encourages staff to build leadership skills in their current role, and supports their preparation should they wish to consider other leadership positions.

Mentoring for newly appointed leaders. Mentoring provides guidance and support tailored to the unique roles of newly appointed school and system leaders. It helps new leaders acquire and put into practice the technical and adaptive skills that are essential in these important stages of their leadership careers.

Principal/vice-principal performance appraisal (PPA).

PPA is designed to ensure that school leaders are well supported in their professional growth and development through a targeted, district-wide strategy that provides formal and informal opportunities for feedback, dialogue, and ongoing professional learning.

Digging Deeper

The Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF)

The OLF describes what good leadership looks like and provides the foundation for implementing the OLS. The framework supports career-long professional learning, helping to stimulate and guide learning-focused conversations about effective leadership practice, as well as approaches for resolving specific issues and challenges that school and system leaders face.

The Core Leadership Capacities (CLCs) are derived from the OLF and support districts and individual leaders in focusing their leadership development efforts. Research has shown that the following five CLCs are linked to student achievement – setting goals, aligning resources with priorities, promoting collaborative learning cultures, using data, and engaging in courageous conversations.

District Effectiveness Framework

Based on empirical research in Ontario led by Dr. Kenneth Leithwood, and commissioned by the Institute for Education Leadership, a district effectiveness framework (DEF) is under development and will become a component of the Ontario Leadership Framework. It includes four broad dimensions:

- **core processes** – characteristics of school systems that most directly affect the quality of teaching and learning
- **supporting conditions** – conditions that enable the core processes
- **leadership** – professional leadership and elected leadership
- **relationships** – those within the system and between the system and external partners

BLDS Implementation Continuum

The BLDS implementation continuum sets out the ministry's expectations for the elements and strategies to be included in a district's leadership development plan. The continuum outlines areas of focus designed to support the ongoing process of identifying, acquiring, and developing talented leaders who are able to exercise leadership and sound resource and service management. Districts are able to self-identify their placement on the continuum to focus resources and alignment with priority areas. Components of the continuum include the following:

- **Identification and recruitment practices** are well-developed, well-communicated, and inclusive.
- **Training and development for aspiring leaders** provide opportunities to acquire leadership competencies.
- **Selection processes** are systematic, transparent, equitable, and inclusive.

- **Professional learning opportunities for newly appointed leaders** are aligned with district priorities and include high-quality mentoring.
- **Placement and transfer processes** are supportive to ensure successful transitions.
- **Capacity building for experienced leaders** is systematically supported to build capacity using a range of professional learning opportunities.

Institute for Education Leadership

The Institute for Education Leadership (IEL) provided a foundation for the succession planning and talent development component of this strategy. The IEL commissioned a report entitled *Succession Planning for Ontario Schools and School Boards*, released in 2008. The report is available on the IEL website, at www.education-leadership-ontario.ca.

Goals of the BLDS

The BLDS is intended to:

- foster processes and practices that will attract high-quality people who reflect Ontario's diversity to academic and business leadership positions in the system, and to help those in leadership positions develop into the best possible leaders;
- enable districts to develop comprehensive BLDS implementation plans through the use of the BLDS implementation continuum;
- strengthen succession planning and talent development initiatives to support professional learning opportunities for newly appointed school and system leaders, as well as capacity building for experienced leaders.

What Has Been Accomplished?

BLDS leads have indicated that a strategic focus on the BLDS has led to positive succession and talent development outcomes. For example, "transparency and clarity of steps in the process [formal leadership track] have generated excitement and enthusiasm for leadership development."

What's Next?

During the 2011–12 school year, we will consolidate OLS and BLDS efforts made to date in order to broaden and deepen implementation and to strengthen connections and build synergy between leadership development and initiatives that support student achievement and well-being.

LEARN MORE

Board Leadership Development Strategy
www.ontario.ca/eduleadership