

2010

# School Effectiveness Framework

A support for school improvement and student success



# K-12

reach every student

 Ontario



Ministry of Education

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Dear Colleagues,

As we continue our work to enhance life opportunities for all of our students, we look to both research and practice to inform our thinking. The K-12 School Effectiveness Framework – A Support for School Improvement and Student Success (SEF) is based upon research about effective elementary and secondary schools, and examples of existing K-12 practices from across the province.

The K-12 SEF identifies evidence-based indicators of successful practice in a number of components of effective schools. The indicators, with sources of evidence, assist educators in building coherence and aligning practices across an entire school. The SEF is a key resource to assist in precise and intentional school improvement planning focused on the achievement of all students. It is also an opportunity for schools to closely examine their practices to determine areas of strength and areas that would benefit from refinements. The K-12 SEF is not a checklist, it is instead a tool and an opportunity to engage staff in deep and purposeful dialogue about their school and students. The process of school self assessment provides a rich foundation for collaborative action for the sake of all of our students. The results of School Self-Assessments assist in strategic planning, allocation of resources and board improvement planning for student achievement.

Schools also benefit from the District Review process, whereby educators from outside the school join with the school team to look for evidence of student learning and implementation of the school improvement plan. This is a process that is to be carried out with integrity and transparency for the purpose of promoting reflection, collaborative inquiry and ultimately improved student learning. As professionals, we welcome the opportunity to reflect upon and improve our practice in the light of emerging professional knowledge, and recent evidence about our students' learning.

Many voices were engaged in the process of developing this draft resource document. Focus groups of educators across the province provided valuable input to the School Effectiveness working group, providing examples of school assessment and district review processes, and submitting sources of evidence for indicators. This current draft K-12 Framework will be implemented over the next two years. Following the implementation period, the SEF will be reviewed and refined based upon feedback from the field. It is through continued collaborative work that we ensure the best possible education for all of our students.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to learning, teaching and leading,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mary Jean Gallagher".

Mary Jean Gallagher  
Chief Student Achievement Officer of Ontario  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Student Achievement Division

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raymond Thériault".

Raymond Thériault  
Assistant Deputy Minister,  
French Language, Aboriginal  
Learning and Research Division



# K-12 School Effectiveness Framework

## A support for school improvement and student success

### Assessment for, as and of Learning

- 1.1 Students and teachers share a common understanding of the learning goals and related success criteria.
- 1.2 During learning, students receive ongoing, descriptive feedback based on the success criteria, from the teacher and from peers.
- 1.3 Students are taught, and regularly use self-assessment skills to monitor their progress toward achieving learning goals, and to set their own learning goals within the context of the Ontario curriculum and/or Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- 1.4 Assessment tasks are aligned with the curriculum, collaboratively developed by teachers and the resulting demonstrations of student learning analyzed to ensure consistency with success criteria.
- 1.5 A variety of valid and reliable assessment data is used by students and teachers to continuously monitor learning, to inform instruction and assessment and to determine next steps.
- 1.6 Assessment of learning provides evidence for evaluating the quality of student learning at or near the end of a period of learning.
- 1.7 Ongoing communication is in place to allow students, teachers and parents to effectively monitor student learning.

### School and Classroom Leadership

- 2.1 Collaborative instructional leadership builds capacity to strengthen and enhance teaching and learning.
- 2.2 Processes and practices are designed to deepen content knowledge and refine instruction to support student learning and achievement.
- 2.3 Organizational structures are coherent, flexible and respond to the needs of students.
- 2.4 Job-embedded and inquiry-based professional learning builds capacity, informs instructional practice and contributes to a culture of learning.
- 2.5 Staff, students and school community promote and sustain student well-being and positive student behaviour in a safe and healthy learning environment.

### Student Voice

- 3.1 The teaching and learning environment is inclusive and reflects individual student strengths, needs and learning preferences.
- 3.2 School programs incorporate students' stated priorities and reflect the diversity, needs and interests of the school population.
- 3.3 Students are partners in conversations about school improvement.
- 3.4 Explicit strategies are in place to enable students to demonstrate strong citizenship skills such as leadership, teamwork and advocacy.

### Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

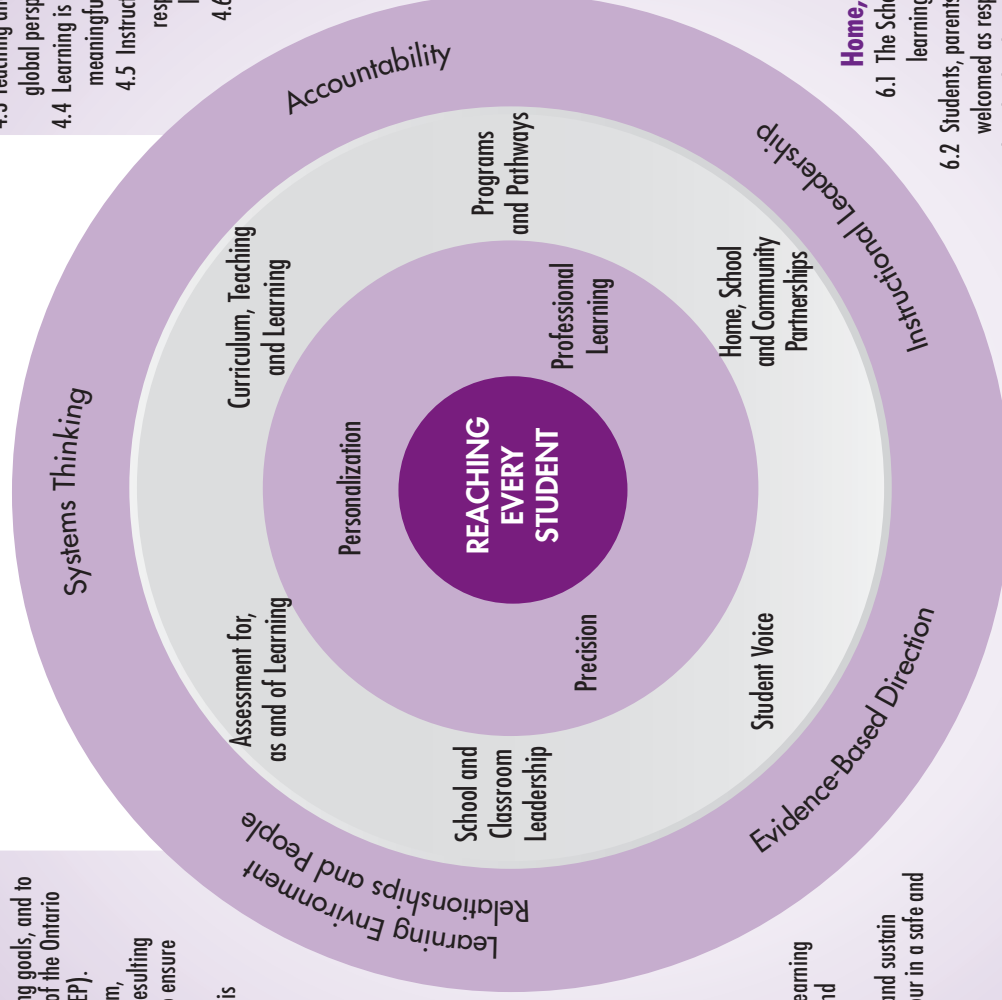
- 4.1 A culture of high expectations supports the belief that all students can learn, progress and achieve.
- 4.2 A clear emphasis on high levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy is evident throughout the school.
- 4.3 Teaching and learning incorporates 21st century content, global perspectives, learning skills, resources and technologies.
- 4.4 Learning is deepened through authentic, relevant and meaningful student inquiry.
- 4.5 Instruction and assessment are differentiated in response to student strengths, needs and prior learning.
- 4.6 Resources for students are relevant, current, accessible and inclusive.
- 4.7 Timely and tiered interventions, supported by a team approach, respond to individual student learning needs.

### Programs and Pathways

- 5.1 Programs, pathways, and career planning meet the learning needs and interests of all students.
- 5.2 Authentic learning experiences and experiential learning are built into all subject areas and programs.
- 5.3 Students, parents, and teachers understand the full range of pathways, options, programs and supports that are available.
- 5.4 Students have opportunities to build on in-school and out-of-school experiences and activities to further explore personal interests, strengths and career options.

### Home, School and Community Partnerships

- 6.1 The School Council has a meaningful role in supporting learning and achievement for students.
- 6.2 Students, parents and community members are engaged and welcomed as respected, valued partners.
- 6.3 The school and community build partnerships to enhance learning opportunities for students.
- 6.4 Learning opportunities, resources and supports are provided to help parents support student learning and have productive parent-teacher-student conversations.





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# 1

## Part 1

# Context

The School Effectiveness Framework (SEF, K-12) is a school self-assessment tool, grounded in research and professional learning, used to promote school improvement and student success. The SEF (K-12) supports the core priorities of the Ontario Ministry of Education:

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

In 2007, the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat released the first School Effectiveness Framework for implementation in elementary schools. In January 2009, in response to extensive feedback, a Ministry of Education working group was established to develop a K-12 framework. In May 2009, an initial draft of the K-12 framework was shared provincially with the expectation that development would continue, with ongoing feedback. Throughout 2009-2010, development continued drawing on expertise from districts and with an emphasis on alignment across the Ministry. The result is this current framework.

From September 2010 to 2012, the School Effectiveness Framework (K-12) will be implemented in all elementary and secondary schools. Following this period, the SEF will be refined, as necessary.

### The Basic Tenets of School Self-Assessment

- Self-knowledge and self-efficacy are as important for schools as they are for individuals.
- Reflective, self-critical schools are better for teachers and students.
- Shared understanding of what makes schools 'good' provides a basis for dialogue among all stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents and students).
- Tools of self-assessment, built into the day-to-day life of the school, improve the quality of teaching and learning, school ethos and leadership.

*(summarized by Riley and MacBeath, 2000, p.1)*

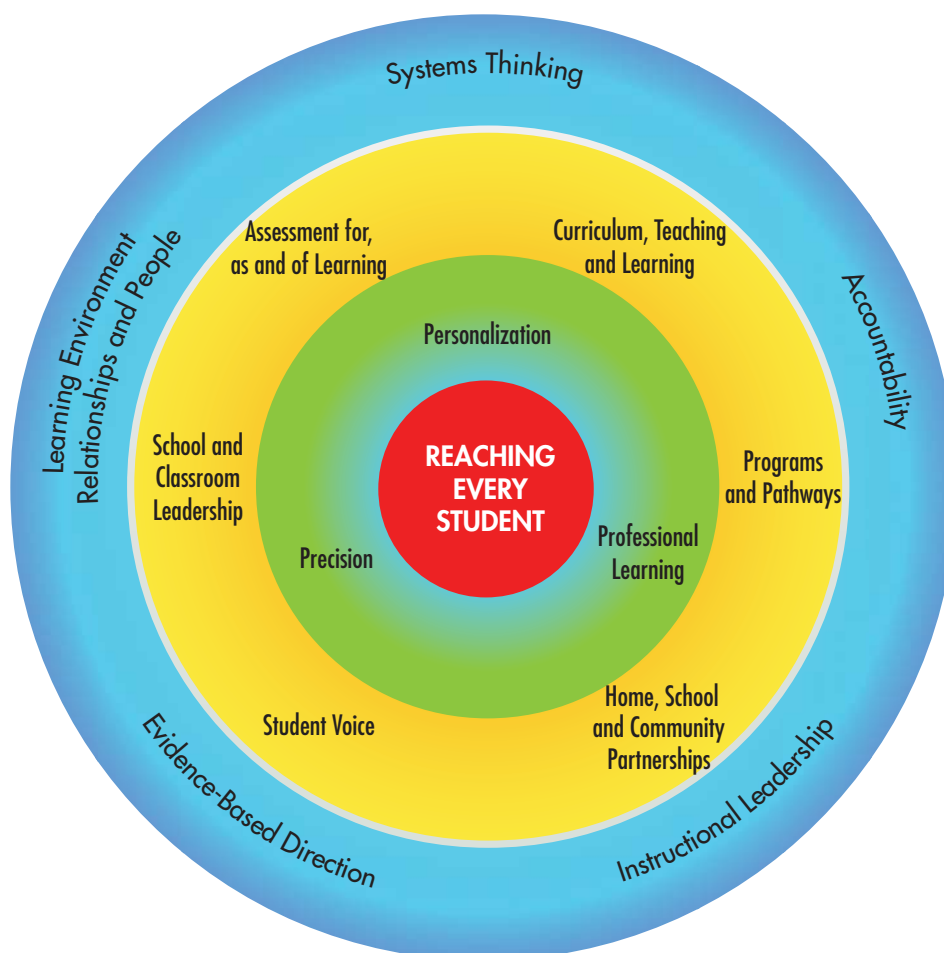
### Key Purposes of the School Effectiveness Framework (K-12)

The primary purpose of the School Effectiveness Framework (K-12) is to function as a tool for schools to identify areas of strength and areas requiring improvement in order to reach all students and improve student achievement. The SEF serves to:

- ❖ act as a catalyst for shared instructional leadership in collaborative and collegial conversations about high levels of student achievement
- ❖ promote inquiry focused on student learning, achievement and well-being that informs the determination of SMART goals and effective teaching and learning practices/strategies
- ❖ build school and board capacity in identifying strengths, areas which require attention and next steps
- ❖ inform intentional and precise improvement planning through consensus building and professional learning of all staff
- ❖ inform monitoring and feedback for continuous school improvement and accountability
- ❖ support communication with stakeholders to foster increased public confidence about school effectiveness.

## Design of the Framework

The School Effectiveness Framework (K-12) diagram outlines interdependent areas of activity that need to be considered if improvement for students is to happen in and through schools.



Students are at the heart and centre of the framework. High expectations for their achievement are paramount. This framework identifies practices to support educators in reaching every student. Barriers to student learning and achievement are lessened as schools assume responsibility for creating the conditions to support success and enable all students to achieve ambitious outcomes.

Moving out from the centre, the SEF (K-12) reflects the personalization, precision and professional learning that occurs at all levels in the school. Personalization puts the student at the centre, providing assessment and instruction that are tailored to students' particular learning needs. Precision links assessment *for* and *as* learning to evidence-based instruction on a daily basis in order to respond to the learning needs and readiness of each student. Focused, ongoing job-embedded professional learning for every educator links new conceptions of instructional practice with assessment *for* and *as* learning.

The next ring is the main focus of the SEF. Six components have been identified as significant in informing instructional practice and professional learning and lead to focused instruction and assessment for each student. A number of effective practice indicators are included as well as sources of evidence organized by district, school, classroom and student.

The outer ring of the SEF (K-12) diagram provides the big picture view of the school that must be attended to by all staff as they sustain a culture of learning and collaboration. The interrelationships among the elements in the outer circle and the manner in which the elements function together contribute directly to the quality of student learning. 'Systems thinking' allows schools to look both within and to the larger system for connections that will help them maximize organizational effectiveness toward the common purpose of student learning. 'Accountability' means that staff engage in systematic, continuous improvement and that they measure their success by how well each student progresses. All staff share the responsibility for instructional leadership, sustaining a positive learning environment and working to develop relationships and people.

### **The School Self-Assessment Process**

The SEF provides a set of evidence-based criteria to consider when determining actions that ensure continuous improvement. Assessment of school effectiveness is an inquiry process that considers the following:

*Are we reaching our student learning and achievement goals?  
How do we know? What is the quantitative and qualitative evidence that supports this?  
What actions will we take to ensure continuous improvement?*

This is a thoughtful inquiry rather than a checklist; it is a way to identify strategies that will leverage improvement and inform implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Participation by all schools and all staff in an annual self-assessment process will enhance school effectiveness, build capacity and foster improved student achievement and well-being.

### **Linking School Self-Assessment and School Improvement Planning**

- ❖ Review recommendations from previous School Self-Assessments & District Reviews. (if applicable)
- ❖ Complete School Self-Assessment for current year.
- ❖ Review indicators and determine areas requiring attention.
- ❖ Share the results of the School Self-Assessment, according to board protocols. (see Appendix A for a sample School Self-Assessment Summary Report)

## Data Collection and Analysis

- ❖ Review and analyze all assessment data (student achievement, perceptual, demographic and program).
- ❖ Select, revise or refine SMART goals setting targets for student achievement. The School Improvement Plan might indicate an overarching goal related to the area of greatest student need and then departments, divisions or grades could select an aspect of the goal, specifically based on their data, as their focus.
- ❖ Identify curriculum expectations that relate to the SMART goal.
- ❖ Examine the indicators in the SEF (K-12) that require attention. Select a number that will directly impact on the student learning goals selected.
- ❖ Consider completing the chart below which reflects the relationship of the School Effectiveness Framework and school improvement planning.
- ❖ Move into action on SMART goals, set targets for student achievement, plan instruction, and implement strategies.

Goals identified in SIP	Indicators from the framework related to goals	Where are we now?	Where do we want to be?	What student work/evidence will tell us we're there?	What do we have to do differently or learn to get there?	Who can help us?	Who is monitoring? When? How? What is being monitored?
1.							
2.							
3.							

## Monitoring

Some suggested methods of ongoing monitoring:

- ❖ Discuss the School Improvement Plan at staff, division, department or PLC meetings.
- ❖ Plan professional development based on the specific actions/strategies in the SIP.
- ❖ Meet to assess progress according to established checkpoints and timelines.
- ❖ Meet to do a collaborative analysis of student achievement data.
- ❖ Reflect on targets and the results of instruction. What does the data tell us about next steps?

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**Essential Conditions for Success**

For District Reviews to be successful, the following conditions must be demonstrated:

- collaborative, collegial and respectful interactions
  - open, honest and transparent communication, throughout the process
  - a non-evaluative, supportive stance.
- 

## The District Review

The District Review process promotes a culture of reflection, collaborative inquiry and shared responsibility for continuous improvement. The uniqueness of each school and strategies undertaken to promote increased student learning, achievement and well-being provide the context for the District Review which:

- ❖ builds upon the school self-assessment process (School Self-Assessments precede District Reviews.)
- ❖ helps districts develop a deeper understanding of the strengths and areas of need in elementary and secondary schools
- ❖ informs board improvement planning, goal setting, professional learning supports and budget processes
- ❖ focuses on continuous improvement in student learning and achievement
- ❖ supports schools in the complex inquiry process and ongoing self-reflection in which they are involved
- ❖ follows a cycle that allows all schools to benefit from a District Review within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., three to five years).

## The District Review Steering Committee

Districts create a District Review Steering Committee and may in addition create one or more district review teams. The composition of the steering committee is determined by the board. Since teachers' federations and support staff unions have a vested interest in the quality of schools, districts are encouraged to include the federations and unions in their efforts to engage in a process that is truly collegial and collaborative.

The District Review Steering Committee:

- ❖ assists with the overall plan for the implementation of the SEF (K-12)
- ❖ has in-depth knowledge of the board improvement plan
- ❖ develops protocols for the process, timelines, implementation and follow-up for School Self-Assessments in all schools and District Reviews in selected schools
- ❖ provides orientation and professional learning for those that will serve on the district review teams.

## District Review Team(s)

Members for each team:

- ❖ are determined by the chair of each District Review Team
- ❖ are well versed in the protocols developed by the District Review Steering Committee
- ❖ have an in-depth knowledge of the Board Improvement Plan
- ❖ commit to attending to all phases of the District Review process, as outlined in the protocols created by the District Review Steering Committee.

## Suggested District Review Process

### Pre-Meeting

- ❖ Review the data, plans and progress from the school's self-assessment process as well as any evidence the school has prepared to share with the District Review Team.
- ❖ The District Review Team, in consultation with the principal and school team, will learn about the impact to date of the staff's implementation strategies.

The school may provide information about the following:

- ❖ any local conditions that are noteworthy
- ❖ the alignment of the selected SEF indicators/components to the School Improvement Plan
- ❖ data and evidence of where they are now and how they know
- ❖ results of the school self-assessment process
- ❖ revisions made to the School Improvement Plan as a result of the self-assessment process
- ❖ information on where they intend to be by the end of term/semester/year.

## Determining Scope of Review

The school team and the District Review Team use the school's completed self-assessment to determine collaboratively the scope of the review and to identify the areas of focus for the school visit.

As identified by the staff, consideration will be given to:

- ❖ the specific indicators
- ❖ the evidence the District Review Team will look for/collect.

## School Visits

The District Review Team conducts a school visit to collect data and observations to be analyzed by team members. Consideration is given to:

- ❖ student work that is available and/or on display
- ❖ what the students are engaged in and doing
- ❖ other evidence identified by staff during the pre-visit meeting

The District Review Team meets to discuss and consolidate observations and to prepare feedback that will be shared with staff.

## Feedback to Staff

The District Review Team provides first verbal and then written feedback to the staff to support school planning and the implementation of improvement strategies.

The conversation may include:

- ❖ general observations of the district review team
- ❖ evidence of student learning
- ❖ areas of strength in the implementation of the School Improvement Plan
- ❖ degree of consistency between and among grades/divisions/departments
- ❖ suggestions for next steps.

The written summary report should provide:

- ❖ a summary of strengths
- ❖ suggestions for next steps
- ❖ recommendations for supporting staff capacity-building
- ❖ a concluding statement about the effectiveness of the school in implementing its plan for improving student learning and achievement.

It is recommended that the summary report be provided in a timely fashion so that it remains relevant and responsive to the process.

## Analysis of Feedback

The principal and teachers analyze the feedback for the purpose of sharpening the focus, setting the direction for capacity building and developing actions that will be incorporated into the cycle of ongoing school improvement planning and implementation.

Sample questions to stimulate school dialogue:

- ❖ What new information about our students' learning do we have?
- ❖ What can we learn from this information?
- ❖ What further opportunities are there for precision, personalization and professional learning?
- ❖ What actions will we take to achieve our student learning and achievement goals and why?
- ❖ Will our targets be revised? Why?
- ❖ What will we do differently by the end of the current term/semester/school year?
- ❖ How will we know that student learning has been impacted by what we have done?
- ❖ How often will we monitor our progress?
- ❖ What student work/evidence will we gather for analysis of growth in student learning and achievement, based on the actions implemented?
- ❖ What revisions will we make to our school plan to monitor student learning and achievement for continuous improvement?

### **Follow-up and Support by the Superintendent of Schools**

The Superintendent of Schools plays an important role in school improvement and monitoring of student learning and achievement throughout the school self-assessment and district review processes. Follow-up and support may include making board resources available to support the revised school plan, aligning board and school capacity-building efforts and creating opportunities for shared learning across schools.

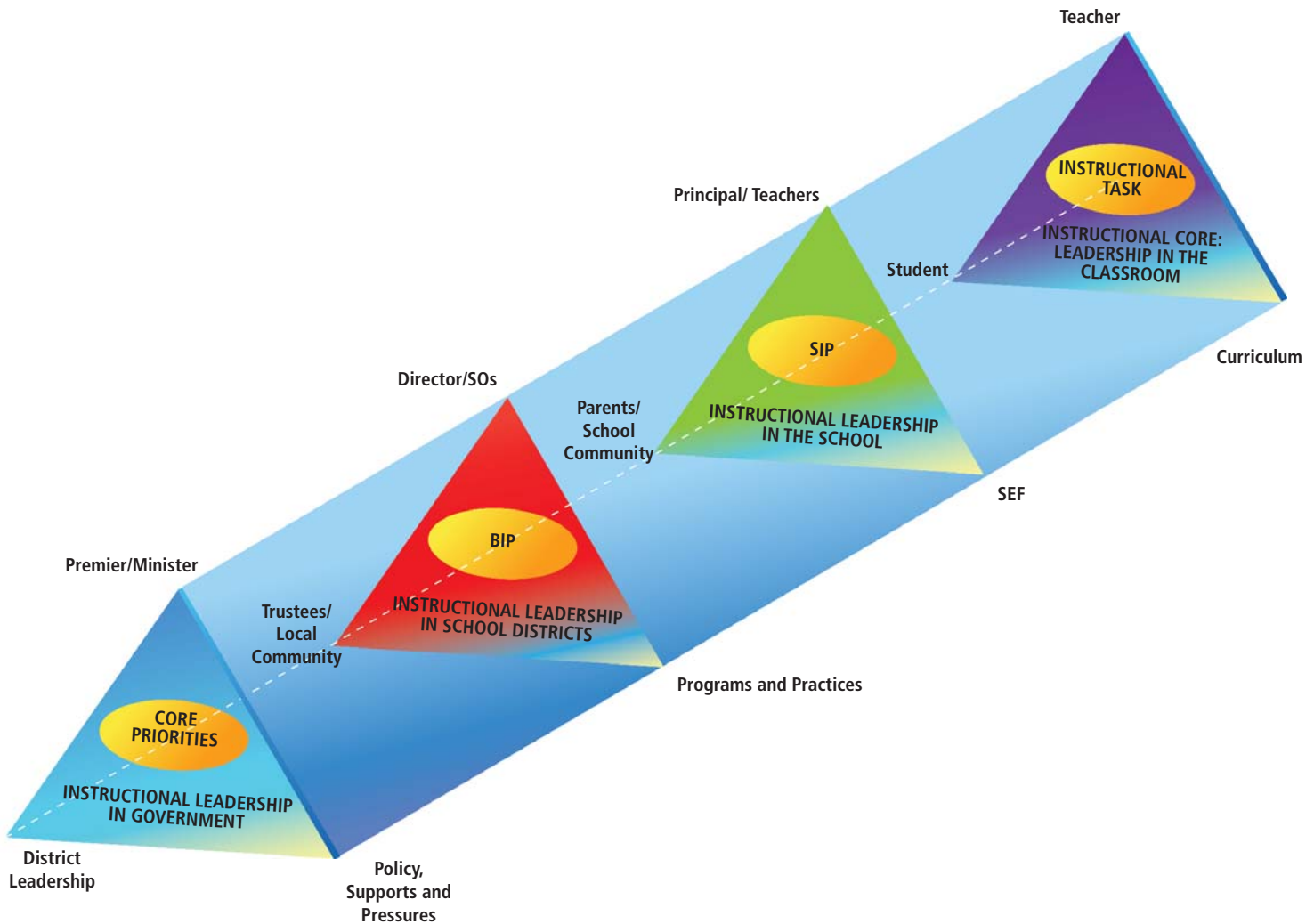
### **Review of the Process**

Results from District Reviews are analyzed to determine trends and patterns to inform:

- ❖ board improvement planning and capacity-building needs
- ❖ allocation of resources (human, material, financial) to schools for the next school year through the board's budget process
- ❖ expectations and supports for coaching and monitoring.



## How the Province, District and School Lead Learning and Support the Instructional Core



Alignment of focus and energy on the instructional core is key to teaching, learning and leading in Ontario. The prism serves to illustrate how provincial direction, district priorities, and school improvement efforts are in support of classroom instruction. It also shows how classroom data and narrative inform school planning which in turn inform the district and province about student learning needs and the policy, program and professional learning supports that may be needed.



# 2

## Part 2

# Components, Indicators, Evidence

## Component 1 Assessment for, as and of Learning

*“Assessment is the process of gathering information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is seen as both “assessment for learning” and “assessment as learning”. As part of assessment for learning, teachers provide students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement. Teachers engage in assessment as learning by helping all students develop their capacity to be independent, autonomous learners who are able to set individual goals, monitor their own progress, determine next steps, and reflect on their thinking and learning.”*

*Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010, p. 28*

### At the District

Districts draw on the Ontario Leadership Framework of practices and competencies for individuals and system practices and procedures for districts, to guide their leadership in relation to this component, for example, districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Guide decision making and actions to use systematically collected evidence for planning, problem-solving and accountability at the district, school and classroom level.
- ❖ Align assessment, evaluation and reporting policies with *Growing Success* in a way that is fair, transparent, and equitable for all students.
- ❖ Establish collaborative structures and opportunities to collect and disaggregate student achievement data at several predetermined points throughout the year.
- ❖ Use data to
  - a) identify gaps in achievement
  - b) set targets to address the gaps
  - c) monitor progress toward the SMART goals stated in the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIP)
  - d) determine the next set of actions to improve achievement for every student through school improvement planning.

### **Indicator 1.1 Students and teachers share a common understanding of the learning goals and related success criteria.**

#### **At the school:**

- ❖ A fair and equitable assessment and evaluation policy is in place, is clearly articulated and shared with staff, students, parents and the community.
- ❖ Common instruction and assessment language is used across classrooms.
- ❖ Data about professional learning are collected on an ongoing basis throughout the year to ascertain impact on instructional capacity, student learning and professional learning needs (e.g., information is collected on professional learning supports provided to teachers, the number of teachers that have been supported through the strategy, the impact on classroom instructional practice and the resulting growth in student achievement).
- ❖ Assessment and instruction are collaboratively designed to ensure a clear understanding of the learning goals and success criteria.
- ❖ Collaborative development of common assessment tools and practices ensures consistency of practice in and between grades, divisions, departments and courses.

#### **In the classroom:**

- ❖ Students and teacher co-construct the success criteria.
- ❖ Success criteria, learning goals and exemplars are visible.
- ❖ Curriculum expectations related to the identified learning goals inform the creation of anchor/criteria charts.
- ❖ Learning goals and success criteria are expressed in language meaningful to students to ensure common understanding of the learning.
- ❖ The connection between instruction and assessment and the learning goals is made explicit to students.

#### **Students:**

- ❖ Can describe what they are learning and what it looks like from classroom to classroom, grade to grade, course to course and in all pathways.
- ❖ Articulate the learning goals and the success criteria that will be used to assess their learning.
- ❖ Participate in the development of their own learning goals.

### **Indicator 1.2 During learning, students receive ongoing, descriptive feedback based on the success criteria from the teacher and from peers.**

#### **At the school:**

- ❖ Anchor/criteria charts, or rubrics and/or exemplars are used consistently in the school to scaffold student learning, provide descriptive feedback and set high expectations for students.
- ❖ Processes and practices are in place to recognize and celebrate student progress.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Interviews, conferences and learning conversations with small groups, pairs and/or individual students are used to clarify understanding of students' achievement of the learning goals (e.g., curriculum expectations, and development of the learning skills and work habits) throughout the lesson and/or unit of study.
- ❖ Ongoing feedback to students is timely, explicit, constructive and linked to success criteria to improve their learning.
- ❖ Based on explicit, descriptive teacher feedback, students have multiple opportunities to revise and refine their demonstrations of learning.
- ❖ Multiple opportunities for feedback and follow-up are planned at critical checkpoints in the learning.
- ❖ Feedback can be oral or written and should be descriptive rather than evaluative.

**Students:**

- ❖ Make explicit connections among content areas and between prior and current learning (e.g., independently activate and use relevant prior knowledge, skills and experiences).
- ❖ Use success criteria/rubrics as a basis for discussion with peers and/or teachers to reflect on their progress and plan next steps.
- ❖ Provide constructive, descriptive feedback to their classmates using assessment tools as the basis for discussion.

**Indicator 1.3 Students are taught, and regularly use self-assessment skills to monitor their progress toward achieving learning goals, and to set their own learning goals within the context of the Ontario curriculum and/or Individual Education Plan (IEP).**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Self-assessment skills are taught and modelled.
- ❖ Effective self-assessment tools are used to support student learning.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Students refer to anchor/criteria charts, rubrics and/or exemplars to help them understand what quality work looks like and to identify next steps in their learning.
- ❖ Goal setting is taught and modelled (e.g., think-alouds, anchor charts/criteria charts, exit cards).
- ❖ Exemplars are used to support students in developing their self-assessment skills.

**Students:**

- ❖ Participate in the collection and development of personal learning files (e.g., portfolios, learning logs, course notebooks, student files) that assist in informing the next steps in their learning.
- ❖ Set and track learning goals based on identification of strengths and needs (e.g., student-led conferences)

- ❖ Use established success criteria to set individual learning goals in order to continually improve their own learning.
- ❖ Engage in learning conversations and peer assessment to explain and question their own thinking.

**Indicator 1.4 Assessment tasks are aligned with the curriculum, collaboratively developed by teachers and the resulting demonstrations of student learning analyzed to ensure consistency with success criteria.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Assessment practices and procedures reflect the school assessment and evaluation plan and are collaboratively developed across grades/courses.
- ❖ Collaborative planning processes are used to craft meaningful assessment tasks that will:
  - build on students' knowledge and experiences
  - determine the depth of new learning in order to identify next steps in the teaching learning process
  - align understanding of performance levels across grades, divisions, courses, pathways (e.g., teacher moderation, co-planning, co-teaching)
- ❖ Common assessments of learning are developed collaboratively by grade/course partners or departments.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Collaboratively created, rich performance tasks inform the teaching-learning process.
- ❖ Information/data from moderated marking is used to plan and adapt instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- ❖ Assessment as and for learning is based on success criteria.
- ❖ Students are supported in developing the learning skills and work habits and are assessed on that development.

**Students:**

- ❖ Engage in authentic and rich performance tasks that enable them to demonstrate their learning.
- ❖ Understand and demonstrate the success criteria.
- ❖ Demonstrate achievement of the curriculum and/or IEP expectations, and development of the learning skills and work habits.

**Indicator 1.5 A variety of valid and reliable assessment data is used by students and teachers to continuously monitor learning, to inform instruction and assessment and to determine next steps.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Student profiles, learning portfolios of student work, IEPs, assessment data are shared in a confidential manner as students progress from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and/or between schools.

- ❖ Collaborative processes are in place to guide problem-solving and decision making in relation to prevention and interventions that may be required where data indicate students are not demonstrating the intended learning expectations.
- ❖ Student achievement data are collected and disaggregated at critical checkpoints in the learning each term/semester/year to monitor progress toward school targets in order to determine next steps to assure continuous student achievement (e.g. observation, work samples, assessment tasks).
- ❖ Student assessments and achievement data inform the focus of professional learning.

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ A variety of assessment strategies and tools that meet the needs of all students are used to improve learning and inform instructional decisions (e.g., demonstrations and presentations, projects, work samples, observations, conversations, portfolios of student work).
- ❖ Student achievement information is collected through common assessment tools identified by the board and/or school, analyzed and shared as part of the assessment for learning process.
- ❖ Instructional decisions are made and actions are taken to respond to what student demonstrations reveal.

#### Students:

- ❖ Use assessment data to refine their work, plan next steps and monitor their own progress.
- ❖ Provide feedback about their learning needs through the work they produce.
- ❖ Advocate for what they need as learners.

### Indicator 1.6 **Assessment of learning provides evidence for evaluating the quality of student learning at or near the end of a period of learning.**

#### At the school:

- ❖ Evaluation is based on the most consistent, more recent demonstration of learning.
- ❖ Evidence for evaluation (assessment “of” learning) is collected through observation, conversations and student products.
- ❖ Comments on report cards are personalized, clear, precise and meaningful to reflect individual student progress.

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ Tasks/assignments for evaluation are moderated to ensure that they are aligned with the curriculum expectations and/or the learning expectations in the IEP
- ❖ Evidence for evaluation is collected through observations, conversations and student products (e.g. tests, exams, assignments for evaluation).
- ❖ Assessments of learning provide evidence to inform next steps.
- ❖ Evaluation (assessment of learning) is based on the Achievement Chart levels of achievement and the overall curriculum and/or IEP expectations.
- ❖ The development of the learning skills and work habits are evaluated and reported to parents.
- ❖ Success criteria are embedded in the rubric that is the basis of the evaluation of the overall expectations.

**Students:**

- ❖ Understand how their work is evaluated.
- ❖ Use evaluation results to set new learning goals.

### Indicator 1.7 **Ongoing communication is in place to allow students, teachers and parents to effectively monitor student learning.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Communication protocols and timelines are clearly communicated in school publications, including websites.
- ❖ School-wide processes are developed to inform and engage parents and students in learning, assessment and next steps.
- ❖ Communication is provided to parents and students about the different purposes of assessment and evaluation.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ A system is in place that allows teachers, students and parents to continuously monitor student progress (e.g. student agenda, classroom website, moodle, blog)
- ❖ Clear learning goals and success criteria are identified, shared and clarified with students and parents.
- ❖ Communication at critical check points in the learning allows students and parents to monitor progress during the learning.
- ❖ Students are supported and prepared to participate in meetings regarding their learning and progress (e.g. student-led conferences, IEP meetings, conferences with teachers).
- ❖ A variety of strategies (i.e. portfolios, student-led conferences, reporting, IEPs, communication logs, phone calls, calendars, work samples, interviews) are used by parents and students to monitor progress.
- ❖ Report card comments are personalized, clear, precise and meaningful.

**Students:**

- ❖ Identify and communicate their preferred learning style, individual strengths and areas for further improvement
- ❖ Participate in meetings regarding their learning and progress (e.g. student-led conferences, IEP meetings, conferences with teachers).
- ❖ Engage in learning conversations and discussions that elicit evidence of understanding.
- ❖ Comment on their report cards about strengths and goals.

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*“Engaging students in generating effective questions helps them to perceive themselves as autonomous and independent learners, producers of knowledge, and generators of important lines of inquiry.”*

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Moss & Brookhart, 2009, p. 122



## Component 2 School and Classroom Leadership

*“Professional learning communities judge their effectiveness on the basis of results. Every educator participates in an ongoing process of identifying current levels of achievement, establishing goals to improve those levels, and working together to achieve those goals. Sustaining an effective professional learning community requires that school staff focus on learning as much as teaching, on working collaboratively to improve learning, and on holding themselves accountable for the kinds of results that fuel continued improvements.”*

*Learning for All K–12, Draft, 2009, p. 49*

### At the District

Districts draw on the Ontario Leadership Framework of practices and competencies for individuals and system practices and procedures for districts to guide their leadership in relation to this component; for example, districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Assume responsibility for improving collaborative instructional leadership in schools.
- ❖ Assist educators in developing sophisticated understandings of effective instruction for students.
- ❖ Establish ambitious and realistic goals for student achievement through board improvement planning.
- ❖ Monitor the implementation of both the BIP and individual School Improvement Plans (SIPs)
- ❖ Review student progress and support improvements in instructional practice.
- ❖ Provide differentiated professional learning opportunities in response to the needs of individual schools identified through the School Self-Assessment Process.

### Indicator 2.1 Collaborative instructional leadership builds capacity to strengthen and enhance teaching and learning.

At the school:

- ❖ School Improvement Planning:
  - involves all staff in planning, implementing, monitoring and refining the SIP based on the most current student achievement data.
  - identifies areas requiring an instructional emphasis (e.g., through the development of a small number of SMART goals based on current student achievement data)
  - communicates progress in improving student achievement and meeting targets to parents and the school community (e.g., newsletters, school council agendas, school website)
  - informs the school budget
  - is supported by school administration through “open to learning” classroom visits and conversations.
  - includes the review of student achievement data at specific times throughout the year to ensure that schools can demonstrate progress in meeting the targets and SMART goals in all classrooms and for every student.

- ❖ A school improvement team supports the principal/staff to collaboratively develop and monitor the goals in the school improvement plan and to complete the School Self-Assessment based on the School Effectiveness Framework.
- ❖ Collaborative planning, design of common assessments and unit plans, use of resources and culminating activities occurs within grade levels and courses of study.
- ❖ Professional learning priorities are based on needs that emerge from the analysis of student work and are aligned with the goals in the SIP.
- ❖ Structures are in place to ensure that school leaders actively co-learn with staff.
- ❖ A collaborative learning culture (e.g. a commitment to continuous improvement, a collective focus on student learning for all, deprivatization of practice and reflective dialogue) is evident.

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ Planning, instruction and assessment align with SMART goals identified in the SIP.
- ❖ Student achievement data are used to identify and plan for instruction that continuously moves students from current levels of achievement to applying new knowledge and skills independently.
- ❖ Effective teaching practices, modelled in the PLC are used within classrooms.
- ❖ Collaborative learning, co-planning and/or co-teaching inform instructional practices to meet the needs of students.

#### Students:

- ❖ Confidently engage in the learning process (e.g. use accountable talk, are on task, self-advocate, demonstrate curiosity, persevere, have ownership for their learning/classroom).

### **Indicator 2.2 Processes and practices are designed to deepen content knowledge and refine instruction to support student learning and achievement.**

#### At the school:

- ❖ The learning environment supports professional dialogue about the big ideas in the curriculum and how to implement instructional practices that lead students to deep conceptual understanding (examples of big ideas in the curriculum – audience and purpose determine text form; numbers can be expressed in many ways)
- ❖ Professional learning is continuous and responsive to student learning needs, identified by a wide range of data and informed by ministry policy, resource documents and board guidelines.
- ❖ A range of current professional learning resources as well as school-level human resources are strategically used to support students in greatest need.
- ❖ Hubs/networks support the learning of all educators.
- ❖ System resources are accessed to support professional learning.
- ❖ Structures, processes and practices that have been collaboratively established at the school and community level are used to determine day-to-day decision making based on student need e.g. pyramid of interventions/tiered approach.

In the classroom:

- ❖ Input from students on the effectiveness of strategies is used to address next steps.
- ❖ Professional learning supports the growth of a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies and their appropriate use.
- ❖ Ongoing communication regarding prevention and interventions supports student success.

Students:

- ❖ Take ownership for actively engaging in the intended learning as individuals, in small groups and as a whole class.
- ❖ Independently apply knowledge, skills and strategies in different contexts.

### **Indicator 2.3 Organizational structures are coherent, flexible and respond to the needs of students.**

At the school:

- ❖ The learning environment is intentionally organized to optimize learning time.
- ❖ Timetabling is strategic and facilitates learning for all students.
- ❖ (Elementary) Sustained uninterrupted blocks of learning time are used daily for literacy and numeracy (e.g. 100-120 minutes for literacy, 60 minutes for numeracy.)
- ❖ The budget process is transparent and reflects school priorities in the School Improvement Plan.
- ❖ Communication and procedures support student learning during all transitions.
- ❖ Teams meet regularly for the purpose of supporting learning for students who are not meeting subject/course requirements and/or learning expectations in the IEP.

In the classroom:

- ❖ The learning environment is challenging, developmentally appropriate for all students and organized to optimize teaching/learning time and time on task.
- ❖ Students work in flexible and varied groupings according to the learning task and student need.

Students:

- ❖ Contribute to the building of a classroom and school community that respects the diversity of all learners.

### **Indicator 2.4 Job-embedded and inquiry-based professional learning builds capacity, informs instructional practice and contributes to a culture of learning.**

At the school:

- ❖ Professional learning is inquiry-based and responsive to student assessment data.
- ❖ Administrators are involved in professional learning with staff.
- ❖ Conditions that promote collaborative learning cultures are established (e.g. time to meet and talk, common planning time).

- ❖ Administrators regularly visit all classrooms to participate in the ongoing inquiry into effective instructional practices and how to increase their impact on student learning.
- ❖ Administrators support staff in gaining access to relevant professional learning and resources (e.g., curriculum and resource documents, webcasts, monographs, podcasts, ministry websites, institutes, conferences, etc.).
- ❖ Evidence of student learning is shared (e.g., writing samples, mathematical representations of thinking, running records, class profiles) as a catalyst for professional dialogue.
- ❖ Professional dialogue, based on research literature and learning in the field, establishes consistent language and practices.

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ Knowledge and effective instructional practices are shared (e.g., through co-planning, co-teaching, mentoring and coaching).
- ❖ Risk taking is demonstrated by trying new instructional practices and strategies.
- ❖ Consistent language and practices (e.g., use of graphic organizers, Bansho) are modelled across classrooms.

#### Students:

- ❖ Articulate how instructional practices support their learning (e.g., how technology helps them extend their ideas and challenges their thinking)
- ❖ Have access to multiple learning opportunities.

### **Indicator 2.5 Staff, students and school community promote and sustain student well-being and positive student behaviour in a safe and healthy learning environment.**

#### At the school:

- ❖ A process is in place to survey students regarding school climate once every two years.
- ❖ Based on the findings from the school climate survey, Safe Schools Teams develop strategies to improve the school climate.
- ❖ Opportunities are provided to gather input regarding school climate from staff and parents.
- ❖ School-wide programs promote positive relationship building using tools such as peer mediation, conflict resolution, and restorative justice.
- ❖ All staff are aware of their role in safe reporting practices (e.g. in reporting incidents of discrimination and harassment).
- ❖ All staff are aware of their role in responding to emergencies, including those under the local police/board protocols.
- ❖ The Foundations for a Healthy School framework is used to develop a healthy school environment.
- ❖ School staff are engaged in the implementation of healthy schools initiatives.

- ❖ Supports are provided to students who are involved in unsafe and/or unhealthy relationships.
- ❖ Processes are in place to welcome and support new students as they become part of the school community (e.g. student ambassadors welcome new students to the classroom/school).

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ Classroom management strategies establish safe, caring and healthy learning environments for all students.
- ❖ Learning related to safe and healthy schools is integrated into all relevant areas of the curriculum.
- ❖ The learning environment supports the diversity of learners.
- ❖ Character attributes are clearly articulated, consistently modelled, reinforced at all times and integrated into the instructional process.
- ❖ Staff intervenes early to apply progressive discipline when student behaviour varies from the Code of Conduct in such a way that students learn to make better choices.
- ❖ Classroom instruction provides the necessary knowledge and skills for students to make healthy decisions.

#### Students:

- ❖ Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of healthy living and healthy relationships.
- ❖ Demonstrate their understanding of the school's Code of Conduct and act according to that code.
- ❖ Contribute to the establishment of a safe and healthy learning environment.
- ❖ Know how to respond to emergencies (e.g. fire drills, lock downs)
- ❖ Report incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying and injustice and contribute to solutions.
- ❖ Contribute to problem-solving in respectful, responsible ways.

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*“Collaborative professional learning benefits students and educators. Educators must assess their instructional practices and their students’ learning to determine whether the lessons they planned, and the new strategies they used, and the explanations they devised helped students achieve what the teachers intended. Working together, teachers are able to assist one another in continually improving their practices, reflecting on and refining their work with the support of colleagues.”*

Hirsh, 2009, p.5

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## Component 3 Student Voice

*“The power of positive teacher-student relationships is critical for learning to occur. This relationship involves showing students that the teacher cares for their learning as a student, can see their perspective, and communicate it back to them so they have valuable feedback to self-assess, feel safe, and learn to understand others and the content with the same interest and concern.”*

Cornelius-White, 2007, p. 123

### At the District

Districts draw on the Ontario Leadership Framework of practices and competencies for individuals and system practices and procedures for districts to guide their leadership in relation to this component; for example, districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Play a critical role in providing opportunities for students to be partners in decisions impacting their educational experience.
- ❖ Seek student input regarding policies and programs through channels such as the Student Trustees, Advisory Councils, Student Senate, Student Council and district-wide surveys.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for student input on a regular basis that reflects the diversity, needs and interests of the student population.
- ❖ Help ensure that students understand the purpose of the consultations and the outcome and product resulting from their input.

### Indicator 3.1 **The teaching and learning environment is inclusive and reflects individual student strengths, needs and learning preferences.**

#### At the school:

- ❖ Equity and diversity practices align with board and Ministry policy.
- ❖ Student leadership positions are filled by a diverse group representative of the school population.
- ❖ Curriculum materials, digital tools and resources reflect the needs, interests, and demographics of the student population.
- ❖ Students have a voice in the process of identifying what helps their learning and well-being and the learning and well-being of others.
- ❖ Student input is actively and regularly sought with regard to school climate, curriculum delivery and program needs.
- ❖ Instruction is differentiated and learning resources provided to reflect student strengths and needs.

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ Students and teachers work together to build a collaborative and safe learning environment free from discriminatory bias.
- ❖ Feedback from students is collected and supports the teaching learning environment.
- ❖ Students are involved in problem-solving processes on a variety of issues.

**Students:**

- ❖ See themselves, their values, culture and interests reflected in their learning environment.
- ❖ Advocate for conditions that support their learning.
- ❖ Represent their own voice and the voice of others.
- ❖ Give feedback related to the teaching and learning environment.
- ❖ Demonstrate confidence in their capacity to learn and succeed (e.g. risk taking, willingness to try new tasks and share learning with others).

**Indicator 3.2 School programs incorporate students' stated priorities and reflect the diversity, needs and interests of the school population.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Processes to ensure student input are clearly articulated and students' stated priorities are evident in the school (e. g., a student advisory council which is reflective of the diversity of the student population)
- ❖ Barriers to student participation have been identified and resolved where possible.
- ❖ A process is in place to inform students about co-curricular activities/programs and to actively encourage their participation.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Teachers and students are co-creators of the learning environment in the classroom and school.
- ❖ Students see their successes, cultures and views represented.
- ❖ Curriculum and programs provide students opportunities to experience real life situations and to develop and refine transferable skills.

**Students:**

- ❖ Provide input related to stated priorities, school programs and activities.
- ❖ See their successes, cultures and views represented in their classrooms and in their school.
- ❖ Develop and refine transferable skills.

**Indicator 3.3 Students are partners in conversations about school improvement.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Opportunities are provided for students to give input and to respond to school improvement strategies.
- ❖ Conditions are created to enable *SpeakUp* or other student-led projects.
- ❖ School improvement plans are focused on student learning needs and how the needs will be addressed.
- ❖ Divisional/department goals are shared with students for their input.

In the classroom:

- ❖ Subject/course goals are shared with students for their input.

Students:

- ❖ Articulate their role relative to the priorities of the school and contribute ideas, identify needs and celebrate strengths.
- ❖ Engage with the support of their teachers in *SpeakUp* or other student-led projects designed to improve their learning environment.
- ❖ Articulate what would help to strengthen the learning environment.
- ❖ Are aware of the goals in the School Improvement Plan.

#### Indicator 3.4 **Explicit strategies are in place to enable students to demonstrate strong citizenship skills such as leadership, teamwork and advocacy.**

At the school:

- ❖ Programs and activities are provided to develop students as leaders, effective team members and advocates (e.g. school-wide projects, service days, volunteering)

In the classroom:

- ❖ Opportunities are provided for students to develop and strengthen their peer relationships and relationships with their school and community through leading service projects (e.g. healthy schools, green schools, safe schools).
- ❖ Authentic learning experiences develop action-oriented global mindedness.

Students:

- ❖ Participate in programs and activities that develop leadership, teamwork and advocacy.
- ❖ Demonstrate positive influence through building strong peer, school and community relationships.
- ❖ Connect to the global learning community through technology.
- ❖ Demonstrate action-oriented global mindedness.

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*Engagement is “the extent to which students identify with and value schooling outcomes, have a sense of belonging at school, participate in academic and non-academic activities, strive to meet the formal requirements of schooling, and make a serious personal investment in learning”.*

Willms, Friesen, and Milton, 2009, p. 7

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## Component 4 Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

*“Teachers need to help students to develop a series of learning strategies that enables them to construct meaning from text, develop understanding from numbers, and learn principles in science. The teaching of these strategies needs to be planned, deliberate, and explicit, and part of active programs to teach specific skills and deeper understanding. Such strategies can then lead to a student’s further engagement in the curricula, lead to the development of problem solving skills, and lead to the enjoyment of some control over one’s learning.”*

Hattie, 2009, p. 160

### At the District

Districts draw on the Ontario Leadership Framework of practices and competencies for individuals and system practices and procedures for districts to guide their leadership in relation to this component; for example, districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Establish a culture of collective responsibility for high levels of student achievement and well-being.
- ❖ Reinforce the importance of teaching and learning through alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment and resources in order to meet the diverse learning needs of students.
- ❖ Establish and support comprehensive literacy and numeracy programs to equip students for success.
- ❖ Develop policies and funding to help ensure that learning resources are current, culturally relevant and inclusive.

### Indicator 4.1 **A culture of high expectations supports the belief that all students can learn, progress and achieve.**

#### At the school:

- ❖ Data is used to identify achievement gaps and to determine goals for school-wide improvement.
- ❖ The School Improvement Plan identifies ambitious targets for students’ achievement.
- ❖ The focus on student achievement is evident and is celebrated in an inclusive way throughout the school.
- ❖ The student achievement focus is clearly communicated to the school community in a variety of ways and in languages relevant to the community (e.g. newsletters, curriculum nights, websites, assemblies).
- ❖ Professional learning focuses on continuous improvement of teaching practices.

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ Ambitious and realistic goals are set and regularly reviewed for every student.
- ❖ Ongoing monitoring and moderation of student work informs instruction to ensure that each student learns, progresses and achieves.

Students:

- ❖ Learn, progress and achieve in relation to their goals.
- ❖ Strive to demonstrate their learning.
- ❖ Demonstrate and apply their learning in a variety of contexts and forms.

**Indicator 4.2 A clear emphasis on high levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy is evident throughout the school.**

At the school:

**Literacy and Numeracy**

- ❖ Data is analyzed to identify gaps in literacy and numeracy achievement and to determine goals for school-wide improvement.
- ❖ Comprehensive literacy and numeracy programs support student achievement through use of the current Ontario curriculum and associated resource documents.
- ❖ English/Language and Mathematics curriculum expectations are appropriately clustered and considered as a developmental continuum of learning across the grades/courses.
- ❖ Cross-curricular planning and programming enables students to practise and apply literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills in meaningful ways.
- ❖ Literacy and numeracy instruction is inquiry-based, challenging and developmentally appropriate for all students.

In the classroom:

**Literacy**

- ❖ Instruction is scaffolded (e.g. the gradual release of responsibility – modelled, shared and guided teaching-learning processes) to enable students to confidently and independently demonstrate the intended learning.
- ❖ Instruction is designed to support students in developing capacity for metacognition.
- ❖ The teaching-learning process enables students to practise, apply and see relevance in their learning across curriculum areas.
- ❖ Instruction supports clear connections among reading, writing, oral communication and media literacy.
- ❖ Instruction in every subject area supports students in organizing and expressing their thoughts, reflecting on a widening range of perspectives and learning how to communicate effectively for specific purposes and audiences.
- ❖ Instructional practices are strategically used to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

In the classroom:

**Numeracy**

- ❖ Mathematics learning goals, success criteria and learning materials are visible and accessible.
- ❖ Modeling and encouragement of positive attitudes builds confidence, perseverance towards solving problems and making sense of students' mathematical ideas and understandings.

- ❖ Three-part mathematics lessons are designed for students to: solve problems, communicate their thinking in different ways (i.e., oral, modelled, written), make sense of and question others' mathematical approaches and ideas, develop collective knowledge in relation to the lesson learning goal, and practise their new learning.
- ❖ Instruction and inquiry engage students in developing deep conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and strategic competence through tasks that require the use of the mathematical processes.
- ❖ Records of students' mathematical thinking, analysis, and discussion are used to illustrate different aspects of effective mathematics communication.

#### Students:

##### Literacy

- ❖ Understand, acquire and build on oral communication, reading, writing and media literacy knowledge and skills.
- ❖ Independently choose to read and write.
- ❖ Listen actively to others (e.g. ask questions, share ideas and strategies and build on the ideas of others).
- ❖ Produce a wide variety of texts for different purposes and audiences.
- ❖ Ask questions during reading for different purposes (e.g. clarify meaning, detect bias, determine author's intent).
- ❖ Retell, summarize and synthesize in order to understand what they read and hear.
- ❖ Sort and analyze information from a variety of sources.
- ❖ Use critical literacy and numeracy skills to think more deeply about the texts they read (situations and problems) and the texts they create (interpretations and solutions).

#### Students:

##### Numeracy

- ❖ Persevere to solve mathematical problems and demonstrate mathematical thinking in different ways.
- ❖ Problem solve to make connections among mathematical concepts, procedures, and strategies.
- ❖ Make connections between their tacit mathematics knowledge and problem situations.
- ❖ Develop and apply reasoning skills to make and support their mathematical conjectures.
- ❖ Participate actively with other students and the teacher (e.g. ask questions, elaborate on ideas and strategies and make sense of errors).
- ❖ Reflect on and monitor their thinking to help clarify their understanding and make sense of the mathematics they are learning (e.g., compare, contrast and adjust strategies used, explain their solutions, record their mathematics processes).
- ❖ Make connections across other mathematics strands and subject areas.

### Indicator 4.3 **Teaching and learning incorporates 21<sup>st</sup> Century content, global perspectives, learning skills, resources and technologies.**

#### At the school:

- ❖ Professional practice, lifelong learning and leadership are modelled through the effective use of digital tools and resources.
- ❖ Policies for the safe, legal and ethical use of digital information and technology are established, modelled and promoted.
- ❖ Students are connected and challenged beyond the world of the school using learning technologies.
- ❖ A global perspective is developed and presented in content areas where appropriate.
- ❖ Critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration are emphasized.
- ❖ Collaboration, lifelong learning, inquiry, reflection and technology use are modelled.

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ A personal and local perspective is cultivated so that each student can make relevant links to the curriculum.
- ❖ Higher order thinking skills are taught and consistently integrated across disciplines.
- ❖ Students are taught to integrate, synthesize and apply content knowledge in novel situations.
- ❖ Assignments and assessments require students to engage in critical thinking, problem solving and analytical tasks.
- ❖ Students work with real world data, tools and experts.
- ❖ Instruction includes how to access resources, connect with others and create e-communities and learn about the ethical/legal issues surrounding access and use of information technologies.

#### Students:

- ❖ Have access to and use technologies to support and document their learning.( e.g. digital cameras, film, web 2.0, podcasting, video, graphing technology, assistive software and interactive whiteboards).
- ❖ Integrate, synthesize and apply content knowledge in novel situations with growing independence.
- ❖ View challenges as opportunities to learn.
- ❖ Work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams.
- ❖ Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information technologies.

#### **Indicator 4.4 Learning is deepened through authentic, relevant and meaningful student inquiry.**

At the school:

- ❖ Courses/units of study are developed to promote student inquiry.
- ❖ Inquiry-based teaching and strategies support student inquiry.
- ❖ Learning through problem-solving supports students to connect ideas and develop conceptual understanding.

In the classroom:

- ❖ Students are engaged in exploring real-world issues and solving authentic problems.
- ❖ Self and peer assessment opportunities are used to establish a culture of inquiry.
- ❖ Critical thinking skills are taught, modelled, practiced and developed.
- ❖ Metacognition is modelled through the instructional process.
- ❖ Instruction enables all students to explore the big ideas – to go beyond discrete facts and skills – in order to develop deep conceptual understanding.

Students:

- ❖ Identify authentic problems and pose significant questions for investigations across all curriculum areas.
- ❖ Demonstrate curiosity and a positive and productive disposition to learning.
- ❖ Demonstrate skills of metacognition (e.g. monitor their own learning and thought processes by asking themselves questions such as “what if”).
- ❖ Take risks to share works in progress (ideas, solutions, strategies) in order to obtain feedback and suggestions from peers and teacher.

#### **Indicator 4.5 Instruction and assessment are differentiated in response to student strengths, needs and prior learning.**

At the school:

- ❖ A wide range of instructional strategies are considered to meet the diverse learning needs of students.
- ❖ Individual and team planning is based on assessment of student strengths and needs.
- ❖ Student work is examined to identify ways to differentiate instruction and assessment.

In the classroom:

- ❖ Based on the analysis of student data, personalized learning activities are designed, developed and evaluated to address students’ diverse learning styles, working strategies and abilities.
- ❖ Learning groups are based on prior assessment of student learning, strengths and needs, interests and/or learning preferences.
- ❖ Students are grouped and regrouped, frequently and flexibly, based on their readiness to learn a concept, interest in a concept and/or learning preferences in working with or thinking about a concept.

- ❖ Choices are provided based on prior assessment of student learning, interests and/or learning preferences.
- ❖ Students are taught how to make choices (e.g. assignment, learning centre task, resources) based on their readiness, interests and learning preferences.
- ❖ Learning goals are addressed and may vary in sophistication in order to accommodate student learning needs.
- ❖ Students whose first culture and/or language differs from the language of instruction are intentionally supported (e.g., given opportunities to develop ideas in their first language).

**Students:**

- ❖ Are comfortable working in groups and follow collaborative group norms.
- ❖ Make choices (e.g. assignment, learning centre task, resources) based on their readiness, interests and learning preferences.
- ❖ Have opportunities to identify preferred learning style and/or environment (e.g. individually, in a quiet location away from others, in an active area of the room, as part of a group).

**Indicator 4.6 Resources for students are relevant, current, accessible and inclusive.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ Resources are available to support all areas of learning in the Ontario curriculum and student needs as indicated on the IEP (e.g., digital tools and resources, graphic novels, manipulatives).
- ❖ Assistive technologies are available to support students with special needs to view, listen to and process texts in order to engage actively in classroom learning.
- ❖ A process is in place to review student learning materials to ensure that resources are relevant, current and inclusive.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Authentic learning experiences and assessments incorporate contemporary tools and resources to maximize learning in context.
- ❖ Learning experiences that incorporate digital tools and resources are designed to promote student learning and creativity.
- ❖ Resources are selected strategically to support instruction (e.g. engaging, high-quality texts, free from bias, that reflect a multicultural, multimedia world).
- ❖ Supports for mathematical thinking and representation are available as thinking tools (e.g., manipulatives, calculators, internet, computer software, sources of data, newspapers, textbooks, picture books).

**Students:**

- ❖ Explore, make connections to the world and apply their learning using resources that reflect diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures.

- ❖ Communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
- ❖ Work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.

**Indicator 4.7 Timely and tiered interventions, supported by a team approach, respond to individual student learning needs.**

**At the school:**

- ❖ School/Student Success Teams meet on an ongoing basis to review student progress.
- ❖ Gaps in achievement are identified for specific clusters of students through disaggregated data and targets are set to close achievement gaps.
- ❖ Communication and collaborative planning result in early intervention to support students.
- ❖ Tracking mechanisms are current, available to all staff and used on an ongoing basis for discussions on refining instructional strategies for student learning.
- ❖ A cyclical review of individual education plans (IEPs) provides parents and students with an opportunity to contribute to the refinement and revision of ambitious learning goals.
- ❖ Staff are aware of external agencies involved in assisting students and can facilitate appropriate access to those services.

**In the classroom:**

- ❖ Student learning profiles are current and are used to support student learning.
- ❖ Trends and patterns in student data are used to identify and implement interventions to support student learning (e.g. access to School/Student Success team, credit rescue, credit recovery).
- ❖ Responsibility for the success of all students is demonstrated.
- ❖ Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are developed to describe the programs and services that are to be implemented as part of students' educational program.

**Students:**

- ❖ Demonstrate confidence in their capacity to learn and succeed (e.g., risk taking, willingness to try new tasks and share learning with others).
- ❖ Reflect on their needs and advocate for appropriate interventions.
- ❖ Are aware of and respond to interventions.

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*“...it is teachers using particular teaching methods, teachers with high expectations for all students, and teachers who have created positive student-teacher relationships that are more likely to have above average effects on student achievement.”*

Hattie, 2009, p. 126

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## Component 5 Programs and Pathways

*“...meeting the social and economic needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century society demands that we nurture the talents, skills and aspirations of all young people in Canada. The emergence of a knowledge-based economy, combined with a more diverse and complex society, compels us to rethink schools and learning. More than ever before, Canada needs engaged young people who have the skills, knowledge and dispositions necessary to become expert learners with a passion to learn throughout their lives and to contribute to a civil society.”*

Willms, Friesen, and Milton, 2009, p.7

### At the District

Districts draw on the Ontario Leadership Framework of practices and competencies for individuals and system practices and procedures for districts to guide their leadership in relation to this component; for example, districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Develop programs and pathways to support career planning and successful transitions for all students.
- ❖ Establish policies and procedures for the development and implementation of pathways and programs to address all destinations (community, workplace, college, apprenticeship and university).
- ❖ Work with the community to provide equity of opportunity for students to access specialized programs and communicate the availability of these programs to students and parents.

### Indicator 5.1 Programs, pathways and career planning meet the learning needs and interests of all students.

#### At the school:

- ❖ Programs and pathways address all destinations (e.g. workplace, college, apprenticeship and university).
- ❖ Teaching and learning opportunities are provided for all pathways and support career planning.
- ❖ A variety of diverse programs are accessible to meet the needs of learners.
- ❖ Students are supported in education and career planning (e.g. learning profiles, Annual Education Plans – Grade 7-12).
- ❖ Structures and processes are in place to support students in all transitions (e.g. grade, school, post-secondary).

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ Instruction supports students to make informed and appropriate choices to support their successful transitions.
- ❖ Opportunities are provided for students to learn about their personal interests, strengths and career options (e.g. interest surveys, websites, Career Cruising).
- ❖ Respect for all destinations is evident in instruction (e.g. messaging, visuals).



Students:

- ❖ Know, understand and respect all programs and pathways.
- ❖ Explore and evaluate education and career opportunities; make appropriate choices from among those opportunities and set goals.
- ❖ Create and evaluate plans for the future.

**Indicator 5.2 Authentic learning experiences and experiential learning are built into all subject areas and programs.**

At the school:

- ❖ All curriculum programs provide relevant and contextualized connections in learning.
- ❖ A variety of flexible programs support students in all subject areas (e.g. career fairs, guest speakers, job shadowing, continuing education, co-operative education in all three destinations, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program).
- ❖ Reach ahead opportunities help students explore future programs and opportunities (e.g. program, school and workplace visits).
- ❖ Schools reach out to community partners to support authentic out-of-school experiences.
- ❖ Authentic out-of-school learning experiences are supported by community partners.
- ❖ Planned and purposeful experiential learning in every subject/course helps all students develop skills, explore opportunities and reflect on their learning.

In the classroom:

- ❖ Authentic connections are planned for and evident in instruction and learning.
- ❖ Experiential learning is embedded in all subjects/courses.

Students:

- ❖ Identify and articulate their learning needs and interests.
- ❖ Understand the relationship between what they are learning, why they are learning it and how it connects to their lives.
- ❖ Engage in goal setting and select appropriate activities/program and pathway choices that reflect their interests, skills and abilities.

**Indicator 5.3 Students, parents, and teachers understand the full range of pathways, options, programs and supports that are available.**

At the school:

- ❖ Methods are in place to provide students and parents with information about all pathway destinations.
- ❖ Information regarding supports, program and pathway opportunities are visible and accessible to all.
- ❖ Students, parents and staff have access to critical information to inform decisions at each transitional stage.

In the classroom:

- ❖ Career awareness/exploration is addressed in every subject area/course.
- ❖ Transition plans are implemented using available supports and resources.

Students:

- ❖ Gain an expanding awareness of the full range of pathways and career choices.
- ❖ Set goals and make informed decisions about pathways, options and programs.
- ❖ Meet the curriculum expectations related to career awareness/exploration.

#### **Indicator 5.4 Students have opportunities to build on in-school and out-of-school experiences and activities to further explore personal interests, strengths and career options.**

At the school:

- ❖ Students are introduced to a variety of career options (e.g. guest speakers, career fairs, cooperative education, job shadowing, community hours).
- ❖ A variety of programs within the school and/or across the district are available to students.
- ❖ Various activities and events allow students to learn more about their potential (e.g. Skills Canada, Arts Camp, Science Fairs, extra-curricular).

In the classroom:

- ❖ Appropriate support and flexibility allow students to engage in in-school and out-of-school activities.
- ❖ Students have opportunities for community and workplace experiences.

Students:

- ❖ Reflect on and share how experiences relate to their learning.
- ❖ Choose appropriate experiences, programs and/or pathway opportunities related to their interests.
- ❖ Articulate their personal interests, strengths and potential career options.

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*“For their educational, social, and career success in the twenty-first century, students will require effective work habits and the ability to make sound decisions, solve problems, plan effectively, work independently, communicate well, research, evaluate themselves realistically, and explore new educational and career opportunities. A carefully planned guidance and career education program, beginning in the elementary grades and continuing through secondary school, will help students acquire these skills.”*

*Choices Into Action, Guidance and Career Education Program Policy for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999, p. 5*

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## Component 6 Home, School and Community Partnerships

*“Parents play a vital role in the development and education of their children. Parents and families have the primary responsibility for the development of their children’s character, with the support of their school and community. In addition, research clearly indicates that good schools become better schools when there is a strong connection with parents as part of the learning community. Thus, parents play an important role within the school community, but also through the attitudes they help to shape, and the direct supports they provide to their children.”*

*Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools (draft), 2010, p. 4*

### At the District

Districts draw on the Ontario Leadership Framework of practices and competencies for individuals and system practices and procedures for districts to guide their leadership in relation to this component; for example, districts/district leaders:

- ❖ Commit to outreach and development of partnerships with parents and community to support student achievement and well-being.
- ❖ Build and support home, school and community partnerships by sharing current information about student learning and achievement in an ongoing and transparent manner.
- ❖ Provide learning opportunities, resources and supports to help parents support student learning.
- ❖ Establish and maintain a Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) to seek the advice and ideas of School Councils, other parents and community partners.

### Indicator 6.1 **The School Council has a meaningful role in supporting learning and achievement for students.**

#### At the school:

- ❖ The School Council in partnership with staff consults with and assists the parent community to become familiar with current issues and information (e.g., by sponsoring learning opportunities to learn about the School Improvement Plan).
- ❖ The School Council partners with staff to support implementation of the School Improvement Plan.
- ❖ Targets and achievement results are communicated to the school community both to build public confidence and to engage parents to support student learning.
- ❖ There is a focus on increasing parent involvement to reflect the diversity of the school community to support student achievement.

#### In the classroom:

- ❖ The School Council encourages and organizes parent involvement in classroom activities.
- ❖ The School Council identifies and works with staff to address barriers to parent engagement.

#### Students:

- ❖ Benefit from role models in the community.
- ❖ See the link between home and school.
- ❖ Recognize and value the contribution of parents and community members.

## Indicator 6.2 **Students, parents and community members are engaged and welcomed, as respected and valued partners.**

### At the school:

- ❖ Various strategies are used to communicate and engage parents (e.g., informal discussions, school and/or class newsletters, websites, student agendas, surveys).
- ❖ Messaging to parents is consistent and timely.
- ❖ A positive school climate is fostered to encourage, value and consider parent and community perspectives.
- ❖ An ongoing assessment of parent and community engagement is conducted.
- ❖ A process is in place to welcome and support new families to the school community.
- ❖ The cultural and linguistic diversity of the school and community is recognized and respected.
- ❖ A range of opportunities for parent involvement is available.

### In the classroom:

- ❖ The classroom environment is inviting and respectful for students, parents and community members.
- ❖ Parents and community members are invited to participate in various activities and learning opportunities (e.g, reading mentors, math coaches, employers, story tellers).

### Students:

- ❖ See themselves as valued members of the school community and take pride in representing their school.
- ❖ Identify how their culture is reflected in the learning and activities of the classroom and school.
- ❖ Interact positively with peers, parents and community members.

## Indicator 6.3 **The school and community build partnerships to enhance learning opportunities for students.**

### At the school:

- ❖ Student learning and well-being are intentionally supported through the meaningful involvement of parents, members of the School Council and community partners.
- ❖ Participation in community activities is supported (e.g., career fairs, charity events, Skills Canada).
- ❖ Parents have opportunities to enhance their own learning and skills in order to support student learning in the school.
- ❖ Processes are in place to establish partnerships (e.g. co-op placements, School College Work Initiative).
- ❖ Partnerships with community organizations are established so that students and their families have access to programs and services on the school premises during and outside of regular school hours (e.g. breakfast programs, tutoring, Community Use of Schools funding).

In the classroom:

- ❖ Instruction prepares students to interact positively with community partners.
- ❖ Students are provided with planned and purposeful learning experiences with community partners.

Students:

- ❖ Participate in and learn from interactions with community partners both in school and in community settings (e.g. 40 hours of community service, volunteerism).
- ❖ Demonstrate social responsibility in the school and in the community.

**Indicator 6.4 Learning opportunities, resources and supports are provided to help parents support student learning, and have productive parent-teacher-student conversations.**

At the school:

- ❖ A variety of forums and supports are available both at the school and in the community (e.g. curriculum evenings, workshops and guest speakers) to deepen parents' understanding.
- ❖ Parents have opportunities to expand their own learning (e.g. sessions on parenting skills, internet safety).
- ❖ Communication and outreach activities increase parent engagement and build effective school-parent relationships.

In the classroom:

- ❖ Information about courses/units of study are shared with parents (e.g. learning goals, success criteria).
- ❖ A variety of methods are used to engage parents' support for student learning (e.g. class website, conferences, newsletter).
- ❖ Partnerships with parents foster positive attitudes about school and improved academic achievement.
- ❖ Parents are enabled to participate fully in parent/teacher conferences (e.g. translators, babysitting, scheduling).

Students:

- ❖ Share positive attitudes with their parents about school and improved academic achievement.
- ❖ Demonstrate that learning is valued at home.

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*“...parents need to hold high aspirations and expectations for their children, and schools need to work in partnership with parents to make their expectations appropriately high and challenging, and then work in partnership with children and the home to realize, and even surpass, these expectations.”*

Hattie, 2009, p. 70

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# 3

## Part 3

# Appendix

## Appendix A School Effectiveness Framework (K-12): School Self-Assessment Sample Summary Report

The purpose of this report is to identify the key areas of strength and needs and to outline the next steps for improving student learning and achievement.

SCHOOL NAME: _____ PRINCIPAL: _____			
SMART Goal:			
SEF Component	SEF Indicators	Strengths	Needs
Next Steps For Planning and Implementing Improvement Strategies:			

## Appendix B School Effectiveness Framework District Review Summary Report

The purpose of this report is to identify strengths, key areas of focus and recommendations for next steps for improving student learning and achievement.

DATE OF SCHOOL VISIT:		DISTRICT REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS:	
NAME OF SCHOOL: _____			
SCHOOL ADDRESS: _____		PRINCIPAL: _____	
_____		VICE-PRINCIPAL: _____	
SCHOOL CONTEXT:			
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA:			
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN:			
School Effectiveness Framework Indicators (supported by data and evidence)			
Component	Areas of Strength	Areas for Focus	
Recommended Next Steps:			



# 4

## Part 4

# Glossary

**Accountability** refers to transparent processes that lead to collective responsibility for strong practice and continuous improvement in student learning and achievement and ensure accountability on the part of everyone responsible for student learning. This means that staff engage in systematic, continuous improvement in the quality of the educational experience of students and participate in the discipline of measuring their success by the metric of students' academic performance.

**Anchor charts** are co-created by teachers and students as a way to record thinking (e.g., about a text, problem or strategy) and make it visible for future reference and study. Anchor charts can also list procedures and processes for a particular activity (e.g., the stages of the writing process, the problem-solving process in mathematics). They help students clarify thinking, make connections and/or remember a specific skill, strategy or concept.

**Assess** is to thoroughly and methodically analyze student accomplishment and to provide detailed feedback to the student against specific goals and criteria.

**Assessment** is the process of gathering, from a variety of sources, information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course.

- ❖ **Assessment as learning** is the process of developing and supporting student metacognition. Students are actively engaged in this assessment process: that is, they monitor their own learning; use assessment feedback from teacher, self, and peers to determine next steps; and set individual learning goals. Assessment as learning requires students to have a clear understanding of the learning goals and the success criteria. Assessment as learning focuses on the role of the student as the critical connector between assessment and learning.
- ❖ **Assessment for learning** is the ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence about student learning for the purpose of determining where students

are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. The information gathered is used by teachers to provide feedback and adjust instruction and by students to focus their learning. Assessment for learning is a high-yield instructional strategy that takes place while the student is still learning and serves to promote learning.

- ❖ **Assessment of learning** is the process of collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of summarizing learning at a given point in time, to make judgements about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria, and to assign a value to represent that quality. The information gathered may be used to communicate the student's achievement to parents, other teachers, students themselves, and others. It occurs at or near the end of a cycle of learning.
- ❖ **Student Self - Assessment.** The process by which a student, with the ongoing support of the teacher, learns to recognize, describe, and apply success criteria related to particular learning goals and then use the information to monitor his or her own progress towards achieving the learning goals, make adjustments in learning approaches, and set individual goals for learning.

**Assignment for evaluation** is used to evaluate student learning. Most assignments for evaluation are rich performance tasks, demonstrations, projects, or essays. Assignments for evaluation do not include ongoing homework that students do to practise skills, consolidate knowledge and skills, and/or prepare for the next class.

**Authentic learning experiences** are problem-solving activities that are meaningful to the life of the student and connected to real-life questions and issues. Authentic learning experiences encourage collaborative effort, dialogue with informed expert sources and generalization to broader areas and application. The Internet and a variety of emerging communication, visualization, and simulation technologies now make it easier to offer students authentic learning experiences ranging from experimentation to real-world problem solving.

**Bansho**, in Japanese, literally means board writing. It is an important instructional tool used to organize students' mathematical thinking. Such board writing includes the use of mathematical expressions, figures, and diagrams of students' solutions and strategies to a lesson problem on a large-size chalkboard or dry erase board. This written record is derived from the students' perspective for the purpose of facilitating a simultaneous comparison of multiple solution methods. Such facilitation enables the students' discovery of new mathematical ideas and deepens the students' mathematical understanding. Because the chalkboard is a written record of the entire lesson, it gives both the students and teacher a whole view of the class' mathematical discussion throughout the lesson. Also, it fosters student note-taking skills by modelling effective organization.

**Big Ideas** are the broad, enduring understandings that should be retained even if the many details of study may not be. Big ideas go beyond discrete facts or skills or fragments of knowledge; they focus on larger concepts, principles or processes that develop over time and support students in future learning endeavours. The curriculum expectations and the instructional focus are the building blocks that deepen understanding of the big ideas. Big ideas are transferable beyond the scope of a particular unit of study. They can be thought of as the meaningful patterns that enable one to connect the dots of otherwise fragmented knowledge.

**Career Cruising** ([www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com)) is an industry-leading online education and career planning tool that is licensed for use in all schools, Grades 7-12 in Ontario. The resource includes career interest assessments, occupational profiles, informational interviews, post-secondary information, portfolio development and printable lesson plans.

**Collaborative Inquiry** is a process in which a group of educators studies its practice and shares results of their studies to deepen the understanding of every group member. Collaborative inquiry provides a means for taking up the answer to the question: what is it that educators need to learn in order to refine classroom practice in a way that will respond to student learning needs. To answer questions about student learning, much of the data collected will be student work or information about student work.

*"Collaborative inquiry is a way of trying to ensure that collaboration goes beyond casual story swapping and becomes true, intentional joint work that results in new understandings that will move practice forward."*

(Katz, Earl & Jaffer, p. 74)

**Collaborative Instructional Leadership** is a particular type of influence process in which principal and teachers engage in collaborative work focused on student learning and achievement across grade levels through reflection, dialogue and inquiry.

*"This influence can be direct, as when leaders interact with others, or indirect, as when they change the conditions in which people work. From this perspective, leadership is embedded within specific tasks and situations and distributed across people ...and includes the influence of those with formally recognised positions and the influence of those who exercise leadership informally" (Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd, 2009).*

**Collaborative Learning** is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Usually, students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product. Collaborative learning activities vary widely, but most center on students' exploration or application of content.

**Common Board Assessments** are used to collect, record and analyze the achievement of students across schools in order to identify and provide professional learning and resource supports. Examples of common board assessments are DRA, PM Benchmarks, CASI and board-created assessment tools in mathematics and literacy.

**Common School Assessments** are based on the Ontario Curriculum and are designed by two or more teachers.

**Community Use of Schools** is the term that refers to the way in which Ontario's schools are community hubs where people can stay active, gather to learn and participate in the activities of community-based organizations. The government provides funding to all school boards so they can make school space more affordable for use after hours. Both indoor and outdoor school space is available to not-for-profit community groups outside of regular school hours.

**Contextualized Connections in Learning** occur when students process new information/knowledge in such a way that it makes sense to them in their own frames of reference. This approach supports the student in seeking meaning in context in relation to the student's current environment. Students discover meaningful relationships between the abstract ideas and practical applications in the context of the real world, concepts are internalized through the process of discovering, reinforcing and relating.

**Co-teaching** is an informal professional learning arrangement in which teachers with different knowledge, skills and talents have agreed to share responsibility for designing, implementing, monitoring and/or assessing a curriculum program for a class or group of students. Co-teaching makes it possible for teachers to engage in teaching as collaborative problem-solving.

**Criteria charts** clarify the required components/traits of a response, product and/or performance which demonstrate student learning.

**Culture** refers to the way in which people live, think, and define themselves as a community.

**Deep understanding** reflects having sufficient grasp of concepts, principles, or skills in order to bring them to bear on new problems and situations and to do a variety of thought-demanding things with a topic – like explaining, finding evidence and examples, generalizing, applying concepts, analysing, and representing a topic in a new way. *Teaching for deep understanding means helping students weigh all sides of an argument and come to their own conclusion* (Adapted from Leithwood, McAdie, Bascia, and Rodrigue, 2006).

**Differentiated instruction** is a teacher's response to a learner's needs guided by general principles such as continual assessment to inform instruction in order to address the interests, readiness and learning preferences of students. Key features of differentiated instruction include choice, respectful tasks, quality curriculum, flexible grouping, shared responsibility for learning and building community. Differentiated instruction recognizes that equity of opportunity is not achieved through equal treatment. Educators select from a broad repertoire of instructional and assessment strategies to differentiate how students learn and how they demonstrate their learning.

**Disaggregating data** refers to looking at assessment scores by specific sub-groups of students (e.g., ELL, students with special education needs, Aboriginal students or by gender) in order to identify trends and patterns that can be used to inform instructional practices.

**Descriptive feedback to students** notes strengths and areas for improvement through comparison to the clearly communicated success criteria. It provides a way to close the gap between the student's present position and the learning goal. It is the combination of timely and continual feedback, guidance, and the opportunity to revise that lead students to excellence.

**Descriptive feedback to teachers** is information teachers gather about what students can and cannot do and use to intervene in calculated and meaningful ways to ensure that learning goals are met.

*"When teachers seek ... feedback from students as to what students know, what they understand, where they make errors, when they have misconceptions, when they are not engaged – then teaching and learning can be synchronized and powerful."* Hattie, 2009

**Evidence-based** refers to strategies or practices that are supported by empirical research and/or inquiry and experiences in classrooms, schools and school boards and have been validated over time.

**Exemplars** are samples of authentic student work that exemplify the intended quality of work as described by the success criteria or assessment tool. Anchors are used to set the specific performance standard for each level of a **rubric**. The anchor for the top score is often called an exemplar. Anchors contribute significantly to scoring reliability. A rubric without such anchors is typically far too ambiguous to set a clear standard for judges and performers alike. Anchors also support students by providing tangible models of quality work.

**Experiential learning** is inductive, learner centered, and activity oriented. Personalized reflection about an experience and the formulation of plans to apply learning to other contexts are critical factors in effective experiential learning. The emphasis in experiential learning is on the process of learning and not on the product. Experiential learning can be viewed as a cycle consisting of five phases, all of which are necessary:

- ❖ experiencing (an activity occurs);
- ❖ sharing or publishing (reactions and observations are shared);
- ❖ analyzing or processing (patterns and dynamics are determined);
- ❖ inferring or generalizing (principles are derived); and,
- ❖ applying (plans are made to use learning in new situations).

**Foundations for a Healthy School Framework** outlines the four components of a healthy school, including High-Quality Instruction and Programs, Healthy Physical Environment, Supportive Social Environment and Community Partnerships. The comprehensive framework also outlines the health-related topics a school may wish to address in becoming healthier including healthy eating, physical activity, bullying prevention, substance use and abuse, personal safety and injury prevention, growth and development, and mental health. A copy is available on the ministry's website at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/foundations.html>

**Global Mindedness** is a world view in which an individual perceives him or herself as connected to the world community and is aware of his or her responsibility for its members. It involves being literate about and respectful of the cultures with which one interacts and visits on or off-line. Students must have the knowledge and skills to investigate the world in robust ways, to recognize and weigh their own perspectives as well as the perspectives of others, to communicate ideas effectively to diverse audiences in multiple ways, and to take action in order to not just learn about the world but to make a difference in the world.

**Higher-Order Thinking** refers to the transformation of information and ideas that occurs when students combine facts and ideas and use them to synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize, or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation. By manipulating information and ideas through these processes, students are able to solve problems, acquire understanding and discover new meaning. In contrast, lower-order thinking occurs when students are asked to receive or recite factual information or to employ rules and algorithms through repetitive routines. As information-receivers, students are given pre-specified knowledge ranging from simple facts and information to more complex concepts. Students are in this role when they recite previously acquired knowledge by responding to questions that require recall of pre-specified knowledge.

**Individual Education Plan (IEP)** is a written plan describing the special education program and/or service required by an individual student. An IEP must be developed for a student who has been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and may also be developed for a student who has special education needs, but has not been identified as exceptional.

**Inquiry-based learning** engages students in asking questions and problem solving to build knowledge.

**Job-embedded Professional Learning** is the result of educators sharing what they have learned from their teaching experiences, reflecting on specific work experiences to uncover new understanding, and listening to colleagues share promising practices. Job-embedded learning is learning by doing, reflecting on the experience, and then generating and sharing new insights and learning with oneself and others. Such things as study groups, action research, mentoring, and coaching have frequently been identified as examples of job-embedded learning; however, almost any interaction between two or more educators provides an opportunity. Both formal activities designed to promote job-embedded learning and the formal and informal interactions within a school can be employed to promote important professional learning.

**Learning Environment – Relationships and People –**  
See culture

**Learning Goals** are brief statements that describe for a student what he or she should know and be able to do by the end of a period of instruction (e.g., a lesson, series of lessons, or subtask). The goals represent subsets or clusters of knowledge and skills that the student must master to successfully achieve the overall curriculum expectations.

**Literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** is defined as the ability to use language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, view, represent, and think critically about ideas. It

involves the capacity to access, manage, and evaluate information; to think imaginatively and analytically; and to communicate thoughts and ideas effectively. Literacy includes critical thinking and reasoning to solve problems and make decisions related to issues of fairness, equity, and social justice. Literacy connects individuals and communities and is an essential tool for personal growth and active participation in a cohesive, democratic society.

**Mathematical Processes** refer to problem solving, reasoning and proving, reflecting, selecting tools and computational strategies, connecting, representing and communicating – the processes through which students acquire and apply mathematical knowledge and skills.

**Metacognition** refers to higher-order thinking that involves active control over the cognitive processes engaged in learning. It is the process of thinking about one's own thought processes. Metacognitive skills include the ability to monitor one's own learning. Metacognitive activities can include planning how to approach a given learning task, evaluating progress, and monitoring comprehension.

**Moderation** is an assessment strategy that involves educators coming together to collaboratively look at student work or the tasks assigned to students in order to assess the work or align the tasks to the curriculum. See also Teacher Moderation

**Moodle** is a free open source course management system and it is used to produce websites and Internet-based courses. Guided by a social constructionist philosophy of learning (that is, explaining ideas to someone else as a method to learn it yourself: constructing something for someone else to understand and experience), Moodle is designed to help educators create effective online learning communities. The focus of Moodle is on the learner's perspective.

**Numeracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** equips students with knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that are essential for successful and rewarding participation in society. Mathematic structures, operations, processes, and language provide students with a framework and tools for reasoning, justifying conclusions, and expressing quantitative and qualitative ideas clearly. Through mathematical activities that are practical and relevant to their lives, students develop mathematic understanding, problem-solving skills, and related technological skills they can apply in their daily lives and in the future workplace.

**Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)** is a school-to-work transition program offered through Ontario secondary schools. Full-time students in Grades 11 and 12 earn cooperative education credits through work placements in skilled trades.

**Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)** is a committee that must be established by school boards to support parent involvement at the regional level. The PIC is chaired by a parent with membership including a majority of parents, the director of education and trustee representatives. The intent of its structure is to help communication flow both ways so that the school board communicates with parents and at the same time parents are heard by the board. For more information visit: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/PIC.html>.

**Pathways Thinking.** To promote success in school and in life, it is essential for Ontario schools to provide each student with the opportunities and support to plan their individual pathway through school and to make a successful transition to post-secondary education, training and work. This “Pathways Thinking” includes:

- ❖ Supporting students in identifying their personal interests, strengths, abilities and accomplishments and using this knowledge of themselves to inform their choice of programs and learning opportunities;
- ❖ providing a range of diverse and engaging learning opportunities, courses and programs both in and out of school that meet the interests, strengths and needs of the students and honour all pathways – apprenticeship, college, community living, university, workplace.

**Personalization** puts each and every child at the centre and provides an education that is tailored to the students’ learning needs.

**Precision** means instructional refinement based on assessment for learning. Precise instruction provides explicit feedback to students enabling them to set appropriate learning goals and improve their achievement.

**Procedural Fluency** is considered to be a characteristic of mathematical literacy. It involves the ability to carry out procedures (e.g., multiplication, addition) flexibly, accurately, efficiently and appropriately.

**Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)** suggests a group of people sharing and critically interrogating its practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way, and operating as a collective enterprise. While various characteristics of professional learning communities have been identified, they can broadly be summarised as shared values and vision that focus on improving learning and teaching, collective responsibility for the learning of all students, reflective professional inquiry to deepen practice, collaboration and teamwork, and group and collective learning, as well as individual learning. An example of an exemplary inquiry process in a PLC is teacher moderation where teachers work together to design assessment tasks and assess student work.

**Portfolio** is a collection of samples of student work that the student, with teacher support, carefully selects and adds to on an ongoing basis to track what the student has learned throughout the year. Both teachers and students assess the work in portfolios. Because students are asked to actively reflect on their learning in order to choose the samples that will go into the portfolio, a portfolio is an especially powerful self-assessment tool.

**Rubric** is a scale that uses brief statements based on the criteria provided in the achievement chart and expressed in language meaningful to students to describe the levels of achievement of a process, product, or performance.

**Scaffolding** is an instructional approach that involves breaking down tasks so that students can concentrate on specific, manageable objectives and gradually build understanding and skill, with the aid of modelling by the teacher and ample opportunity for practice. Scaffolding provides students with a supportive structure within which to learn.

**Skills Canada (Ontario)** is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting the skill trades and technologies as a viable, first-choice career option for Ontario youth. [www.skillsontario.com](http://www.skillsontario.com)

**Student-Led Conference** is a student-parent conference that engages the student in direct communication with the parents through the use of portfolios which illustrate the student’s achievement and learning. Students take the lead in walking their parents through a selection of accomplishments and demonstrations of their work. Student-led conferences bring students to the centre of classroom assessment.

**Student Voice** describes the many ways in which youth might have the opportunity to participate in school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers. It can be a powerful tool for improving student performance and closing the achievement gap. Students can and should participate, not only in the construction of their own learning environments, but as research partners in examining questions of learning and anything else that happens in and around schools. The three main components of the initiative are:

1. **Speak Up Projects.** Student-led projects are activities that focus on strengthening participation by those students who are traditionally not achieving success.
2. **Minister’s Student Advisory Council (MSAC)** – seeks to encourage under-engaged students to apply for a seat on the council. MSAC applications are available on-line.
3. **Student Forums** involve the MSAC, Ontario Student Trustees Association, Student Council and other students.



**Student Well-Being** is a broad concept that encompasses and depends on academic learning and discipline. That is, student well-being is necessary in order for students to learn, and their learning will improve their well-being. Well-being is the realization of one's mental, emotional, social, physical and spiritual potential.

**Success Criteria** are standards or specific descriptions of successful attainment of learning goals co-constructed by teachers and students or developed by teachers and discussed and agreed upon in collaboration with students. They are used to determine to what degree a learning goal has been achieved and should reflect the categories in the achievement chart. Criteria describe what success "looks like", and allow the teacher and student to gather information about the quality of student learning.

**Systems Thinking** is a coherent and strategic process that aims to integrate the components of the educational system to maximize organizational effectiveness toward the common purpose of student learning. The interrelationships among staff and the manner in which each component of the educational system function together contributes directly to the quality of student learning.

**Targets** represent improvement in student learning. They are achieved by the focused efforts of staff, parents and students themselves. A wide variety of data are used to set the targets.

**Teacher moderation.** A process for ensuring that the assessment of student learning and the results of assessment and evaluation are comparable across classes and/or schools. In teacher moderation, teachers examine student work together to share beliefs and practices, enhance their understanding, compare their interpretations of student results, and confirm their judgements about a student's level of achievement. Teachers might also look at the assignment that was given and analyse its effectiveness in relation to the learning achieved by the students.

**Technology.** Information technology is a general term that describes any technology that helps to produce, manipulate, store, communicate, and/or disseminate information. **Assistive Technology (AT)** refers to products, devices or equipment, whether acquired commercially, modified or customized, that are used as accommodations to maintain, increase or improve the functional capabilities of students.

**Transferable Skills** are skills that are portable from one context to another including from subject to subject, grade to grade, school to work, independent living and further education or training, as well as from job to job and sector to sector. The Ontario Skills Passport (<http://skills.edu.gov.on.ca>) provides clear descriptions of the Essential Skills and work habits that are important in work, learning and life and which are transferable from one context to another.

# 5

## Part 5

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