



O N T A R I O

The Institute for Education Leadership
L'Institut de leadership en éducation

SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

for

PRINCIPALS and VICE-PRINCIPALS



The Institute for Education Leadership
L'Institut de leadership en éducation

The Institute for Education Leadership (IEL) brings together representatives from the principals' associations, the supervisory officers' associations, councils of directors of education and the Ministry of Education in a unique collaborative partnership. It advances and advocates for tri-level leadership (school, district and system). Its main objective is to assist school and system leaders in maximizing the achievement of all students.

The IEL has articulated four key goals: development, research, practice and communication. Development includes defining leadership, identifying the necessary skills and competencies (see the Ontario Leadership Framework) and staying on the leading edge of leadership knowledge and practice. The IEL supports research on effective leadership practices both in the Ontario context and internationally. It connects leadership practice to initiatives that support student achievement and well being.

To learn more about the work of the IEL and to access resources including the APPLIKI site that hosts the Leadership Self-Assessment Tools, go to <http://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/home.shtml>.

As part of its work on research into practice the IEL has adopted the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) and continues to support and promote it as a powerful vehicle for strengthening school and system leadership in the province. This Leadership Self Assessment Tool is another resource school and system leaders may choose to use to inform their professional practice.

Self Assessment Tool for Principals and Vice-Principals

Purpose:

The purpose of the Self Assessment Tool for Principals and Vice-Principals is to enable practicing school leaders to assess their practices with reference to the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to lead schools in the province of Ontario. Derived from competencies and practices within the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF), the approach is evidence-based, giving principals and vice-principals the opportunity to reflect upon and cite evidence of the experiences that have contributed to their leadership development. Using this self assessment as a starting point, principals and vice-principals can identify areas for growth as leaders and can give further thought and planning to the development of their annual Growth Plan¹. The purpose of this tool is to help to develop reflective practitioners who can lead schools towards achieving the three provincial education priorities of: high levels of student achievement; reduced gaps in student achievement; and increased public confidence in publicly funded education.

Context:

In 2010, the Board Leadership Development Strategy requires that boards develop a plan to assist leaders in continuing their professional growth. Support such as mentoring for newly appointed school leaders, principal and vice principal performance appraisal, and opportunities for professional learning need to be developed as part of this plan. School leaders need a clear understanding of their present level of leadership development as well as direction in ongoing leadership growth efforts. The development and implementation of a self assessment tool, based on the Ontario Leadership Framework, informed by evidence of practice and supported by school boards across the province will provide the foundation for the development of the leaders in our schools and districts.

Development:

The Self Assessment Tool for Principals and Vice-Principals was based on the framework developed by the York Region District School Board. Administrators from the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board developed indicators, based on the practices and competencies from the Ontario Leadership Framework. School leaders from various school boards validated the self-reflection tool to provide further precision in the indicators of practices.

¹ Beginning in September 2010, principals and vice-principals are required to complete an Annual Growth Plan in consultation with their supervisors as part of the Principal Performance Appraisal process (O.Reg.234/10).

Implementation Tips

The Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) provides an excellent “roadmap for the path to effective leadership.” The Principal / Vice-Principal Self Assessment Tool expands on the practices and competencies in the OLF to further clarify the actions/behaviours required to attain the desired outcomes in a variety of key roles and responsibilities related to each of the five domains.

The following tips were suggested by members of a provincial validation team². It is hoped that the list can be expanded by users of the assessment tool.

Growth and Development

The self assessment tool can be used:

- To highlight a leadership experience and reflect on it. As part of identifying evidence, focus on three main practices and highlight the indicators that helped you identify areas for growth.
- For personal self-reflection to help identify areas of growth for inclusion in the Annual Growth Plan (AGP).
- To work with a critical friend or mentor to help analyse the:
 - ✓ Quality of the evidence;
 - ✓ Identify areas of growth in the Annual Learning Plan
 - ✓ Impact the evidence had on achieving the school’s vision and improvement goals.
 - ✓ Next levels of learning for personal growth and development – i.e., the identification of practices and related skills, knowledge and attitudes that will have the desired impact.

Professional Development

Use the self assessment tool:

- To assist families of schools determine strengths and needs.
- To guide conversations between mentors and mentees and to collaboratively determine areas for further development.
- To help analyse case studies and to determine steps required to address issues and concerns.
- To assist those who have used the tool to network with others who have used it.

Leadership Development

While the 118 practices and indicators in the self-assessment tool may initially seem too extensive, the tool was purposely designed to reflect the current reality of the principal’s / vice-principal’s varied leadership roles and responsibilities. As such, the self assessment tool could be used to:

- Develop leadership programs.
- Prepare for the promotion process and related interviews or activities.
- Assist Supervisory Officers with the development of authentic and relevant interview questions.

² District School Board of Niagara, Grand Erie District School Board, Halton District School Board, Niagara Catholic District School Board, York Region District School Board, Waterloo Region District School Board, Waterloo Catholic District School Board.

Setting Direction

The principal/vice-principal builds a shared vision, fosters the acceptance of group goals and sets and communicates high performance expectations.

Practices

- 1. Establishes a sense of shared purpose.**
 - Fosters trust and confidence in the organization and the goals outlined in the Board's strategic directions
 - Demonstrates the vision and values in everyday work and practice
 - Motivates and works with all stakeholders to create a positive and collaborative school culture

Indicators

- Articulates understanding, support and commitment to the Board's mission, vision and core commitments
- Engages the school community in the development of a shared vision
- Utilizes the vision to guide, resource and sustain school improvement efforts
- Aligns school and Board goals
- Ensures that strategic planning incorporates the diversity, values and experience of the school community
- Listens to and acts appropriately on community feedback.
- Promotes and advocates for public education

Evidence / Reflection / Impact

- 2. Understands the strengths and needs of the school and to develop and inform the school improvement planning process.**
 - Collects, analyzes manages and utilizes data in setting direction and informing decision-making for improving student achievement.

- Creates conditions for individual, team and whole-school accountability to improve student achievement and success
- Works with all stakeholders to set appropriate targets and goals for improved student achievement and success and uses a range of evidence to support, monitor, evaluate and improve aspects of school performance
- Shares data routinely with staff, and involves them in analysis, interpretation and action planning
- Makes decisions that reflect equity of opportunity for all students

- 3. Builds consensus around the school improvement plan.**
 - Engages all stakeholders in development, implementation, monitoring and reviewing the school improvement plan
 - Influences staff to improve student achievement and success
 - Fosters genuine commitment among stakeholders to achieving the goals in the school improvement plan

- Uses an inclusive process to develop, implement, monitor and review the school improvement plan
- Communicates the roles and responsibilities of all partners with regard to school improvement planning.
- Seeks community input to clarify and inform school improvement from a community perspective
- Collaborates with staff to develop action plans for improving student achievement and success
- Incorporates discussion with all staff regarding school direction and goals when engaged in performance appraisal processes and reviewing annual learning plans
- Engages school volunteers to effectively support the school improvement plan

Competencies for Setting Direction

Skills	Knowledge	Attitudes
<p>The principal is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Think strategically and build and communicate a coherent vision in a range of compelling ways ▪ Inspire, challenge, motivate and empower others to carry the vision forward ▪ Model the values and vision of the board ▪ Actively engage the diverse community, through outreach, to build relationships and alliances 	<p>The principal has knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local, national and global trends ▪ Ways to build, communicate and implement a shared vision ▪ Strategic planning processes ▪ Ways to communicate within and beyond the school ▪ New technologies, their use and impact ▪ Leading change, creativity and innovation 	<p>The principal demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to setting goals that are not only ambitious and challenging, but also realistic and achievable ▪ A belief that all students can learn ▪ Commitment to an inclusive, respectful, equitable school culture

Next Level of Learning

What skills, knowledge and attitudes do I need to further develop?

Building Relationships and Developing People

The principal/vice-principal strives to foster genuine trusting relationships with students, staff, families and communities, guided by a sense of mutual respect. The principal/vice-principal affirms and empowers others to work in the best interests of all students.

Practices	Indicators	Evidence / Reflection / Impact
<p>1. Is consistently visible and approachable within the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has quality contact and interactions with students, teachers, family, and community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures frequent and regular opportunities for interaction with students and staff in classrooms and throughout the school Initiates positive interaction with family and community members Provides effective feedback Receives feedback with openness to continuous improvement 	
<p>2. Encourages all staff to see themselves as leaders with an important role to play in school and student success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates conditions for staff to succeed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops effective strategies to welcome and orient staff to the school community Helps staff find meaning, increased skill development, and personal satisfaction in making contributions to improved student achievement and success 	
<p>3. Appreciates, respects, and affirms others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates and sustains a caring, positive school culture <p>Fosters a learning and working environment which is inclusive and affirms the gender, faith, culture, race and sexual orientation of students, staff and community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fosters a collaborative culture which recognizes and affirms the efforts and achievements of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treats people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect and addresses disrespectful treatment of others Relates genuinely to others in ways that demonstrate appreciation and value Supports staff members who are experiencing difficulties Encourages, challenges, influences, motivates and supports others to attain high goals Affirms growth and excellence through recognition, celebration, communication, promotion and encouragement 	
<p>4. Mediates and resolves conflict.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipates, identifies, analyzes and resolves problems, consistently striving for mutually beneficial solutions Sees resistance as an opportunity for dialogue to find common ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies restorative approaches in resolving differences with the goal of reconciliation Involves others in problem-solving and reaching resolutions that respect the core values of the organization and the dignity of all participants, while fostering continued relationship development 	

Competencies for Building Relationships and Developing People

Skills	Knowledge	Attitudes:
<p>The Principal is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster an open, fair and equitable culture ▪ Develop, empower and sustain individuals and teams. ▪ Give and receive effective feedback ▪ Challenge, influence and motivate others to attain high goals ▪ Communicate effectively with a diverse range of people, including the public and the media ▪ Manage conflict effectively ▪ Listen empathetically and actively ▪ Foster anti-discriminatory principles and practices 	<p>The principal has knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The significance of interpersonal relationships, adult learning and models of continuing professional development ▪ Strategies to promote individual and team development ▪ The relationship between performance management and school improvement ▪ The impact of change on organizations and individuals 	<p>The principal demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to effective working relationships ▪ Commitment to shared leadership for improvement ▪ Commitment to effective teamwork ▪ Confidence, optimism, hope, and resiliency ▪ Integrity

Next Level of Learning

What skills, knowledge and attitudes do I need to further develop?

Developing the Organization

The principal/vice-principal builds collaborative cultures, structures the organization for success, and connects the school to its wider environment.

Practices	Indicators	Evidence / Reflection / Impact
<p>1. Builds a collaborative learning culture within the school and actively engages other schools to build effective learning communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops a culture that promotes shared understanding, decision-making and responsibility for outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fosters the development of professional learning teams Encourages teams to share successful practices both in the school and with other schools Ensures students, parents and teachers understand the full range of pathways, options, programs and supports that are available to facilitate student transitions 	
<p>2. Fosters a changing culture in the school and within the system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates an environment that welcomes change as an opportunity for growth and improvement Understands change theory and leads change with processes to meet the goals of the Board's Strategic Directions and the school's improvement plan Values and acts on suggestions for continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a clear picture of what is to be achieved Scaffolds change initiatives to ensure manageable steps Utilizes a variety of strategies to support staff as they engage in changing practice Deals collaboratively with obstacles and provides feedback that is honest, specific and balanced Provides input into and/or feedback on system initiatives and contributes to the development of system initiatives as appropriate 	
<p>3. Fosters growth and development in self and others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a combination of strategies and resources to support personal and individual staff growth and organizational learning Supports and encourages active participation in professional development that is aligned with school and system initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides induction and mentoring for new teachers Establishes an orientation procedure for new staff Supervises all staff justly and appropriately Uses performance appraisal processes to foster professional growth and development in all staff Visits classrooms to understand and monitor progress Engages individual staff in courageous conversations that encourage further development of effective teaching practice Ensures staff are aware of current theories and practices and engages regularly in professional dialogue as a regular aspect of the school's culture 	
<p>4. Develops the leadership capacity of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowers staff and provides opportunities to achieve goals for professional growth and leadership development. Distributes leadership equitably amongst staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurtures and empowers a diverse workforce providing equity of access to opportunity and achievement. Challenges thinking and learning of self and others to further develop professional practice. Identifies, trains, advises, mentors and coaches future leaders to build capacity consistent with school and system needs. 	

Competencies for Developing the Organization

Skills	Knowledge:	Attitudes
<p>The principal is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create efficient administrative routines to minimize efforts on recurring and predictable activities ▪ Collaborate and network with others inside and outside the school ▪ Perceive the richness and diversity of school communities ▪ Foster a culture of change ▪ Engage in dialogue which builds community partnerships ▪ Listen and act on community feedback ▪ Engage students and parents 	<p>The principal has knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building and sustaining a professional learning community ▪ Change management strategies ▪ Models of effective partnership ▪ Strategies to encourage parent involvement ▪ Ministry policies and procedures ▪ Models of behaviour and attendance management 	<p>The principal demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acceptance of responsibility for school climate and student outcomes ▪ Ethical behaviour

Next Level of Learning

What skills, knowledge and attitudes do I need to further develop?

Leading the Instructional Program

The principal/vice-principal sets high expectations for learning outcomes and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction.

Practices

- 1. Fosters professional, ethical learning communities.**
 - Builds a collaborative learning environment focused on improved student achievement

- 2. Demonstrates a deep knowledge of teaching and learning processes.**
 - Establishes a supportive, learning environment in which all students are meaningfully engaged in authentic learning
 - Fosters a commitment to equity of outcomes and to close the achievement gap

- 3. Empowers teachers and support staff to become instructional leaders.**
 - Distributes leadership to build capacity and support for attaining the goals in the school improvement plan

- 4. Engages families and communities in supporting student achievement.**
 - Understands the importance of family and community involvement in supporting student achievement and success

Indicators

- Networks with others inside and outside the school
- Facilitates the development of professional learning teams and ensures they engage in collaborative inquiry to improve instruction
- Establishes a process for the development of a timetable that promotes collaborative team learning
- Utilizes system and school data to inform decisions and to monitor progress

- Implements appropriate curriculum, assessment and instructional processes and resources to maximize student learning to meet the needs of diverse learners
- Uses data to inform, develop and improve instructional practice
- Ensures the development of student and class profiles which include information that informs practice to improve student learning
- Monitors progress to assess the effectiveness of program delivery
- Integrates technology to maximize student learning
- Ensures effective use of and appropriate access to information communication technology for students and staff

- Ensures clear and consistent high expectations for all staff are communicated, understood and pursued
- Stresses the importance of implementing instructional and assessment strategies that maximize student learning and meet the needs of diverse learners
- Engages staff in opportunities to learn about and to practice effective instructional and assessment strategies
- Provides teams with strategies that foster reflective practice.
- Encourages risk-taking and creativity

- Assists parents to understand the developmental stages of their children and to create home conditions that support their children as learners.
- Uses a variety of communication strategies to connect with all families
- Works with the school council and school staff to provide home programs which actively engage parents in working directly with their children
- Engages students, parents and the community to build partnerships that enhance student learning and work together to create a variety of involvement opportunities.

Evidence / Reflection / Impact

Competencies for Leading the Instructional Program

Skills	Knowledge:	Attitudes:
<p>The principal is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate the principles and practice of effective teaching and learning ▪ Access, analyse and interpret data ▪ Initiate and support an inquiry-based approach to improvement in teaching and learning ▪ Establish and sustain appropriate structures and systems for effective management of the school ▪ Make organizational decisions based on informed judgments ▪ Manage time effectively ▪ Support student character development strategies 	<p>The principal has knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategies for improving achievement ▪ Effective pedagogy and assessment ▪ Use of new and emerging technologies to support teaching and learning ▪ Models of behaviour and attendance management ▪ Strategies for ensuring inclusion, diversity and access ▪ Curriculum design and management ▪ Tools for data collection and analysis ▪ School self-evaluation ▪ Strategies for developing effective teachers and leaders ▪ Project management for planning and implementing change ▪ Legal issues ▪ The importance of effective student character development 	<p>The principal demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to raising standards for all students ▪ Commitment to equity of outcomes and closing the achievement gap ▪ Belief in meeting the needs of all students in diverse ways ▪ Commitment to sustaining a safe, secure and healthy school environment ▪ Commitment to upholding human rights

Next Level of Learning

What skills, knowledge and attitudes do I need to further develop?

Securing Accountability

The Principal/Vice-Principal is responsible for creating conditions for student success and contributing to the effective management of the school so that everyone can focus on teaching and learning. They are accountable to students, parents, the community, supervisors and to the Board for ensuring that students benefit from a high quality education.

Practices

1. **Takes responsibility and is accountable for the goals set out in the school improvement plan.**
 - Has a focused plan to sustain continuous improvement
 - Aligns school improvement initiatives with mandated Board and Ministry directions
 - Works collaboratively with the Supervisory Officer to reflect on progress and establish new goals to meet student needs

2. **Manages day to day operational tasks and processes to ensure optimal school functioning.**
 - Assumes responsibility and is accountable for a safe, orderly, supportive and healthy learning environment
 - Assigns and supervises staff consistent with legislation and Ministry and Board policy and procedures

3. **Manages the school budget procedure.**
 - Demonstrates accountability for processes that monitor finances and resources

4. **Demonstrates reflective practice as a leader.**
 - Reflects on personal contribution to school achievements and responds to feedback from others

Indicators

- Works collaboratively to set reasonable, achievable targets.
 - Works with others to develop and implement strategies to support achievement of goals outlined in the school improvement plan
 - Leads a school assessment and review process to measure results and provide evidence of outcomes
 - Works to develop a climate of trust in collaborating with teachers on the Annual Learning Plan
 - Assesses personal growth as outlined in the Annual Growth Plan
 - Supports the school council so it can participate actively and authentically in its advisory role
-
- Ensures staff roles and responsibilities are clearly understood, implemented and subject to rigorous review and evaluation
 - Responds appropriately to legislation and Board policies
 - Conducts performance appraisals of staff consistent with legislation and procedures
 - Participates in recruitment, hiring and retention of staff with the interest and capacity to further school and system goals
 - Attends to and complies with all school operations (e.g. plant, finance, H.R. policies, information technology)
 - Monitors and reviews I.E.P. and provides parents and students with opportunities to contribute and refine learning goals
 - Maintains accurate records that reflect system and Ministry requirements, and completes reports accurately and in a timely fashion
-
- Implements Board business and financial procedures
 - Deploys resources to support school improvement initiatives and to ensure equitable opportunity of all students
-
- Reflects on and responds to feedback based on external evaluations (i.e., District Reviews and Principal Performance Appraisal)
 - Develops and presents a coherent and transparent account of the school's performance to a range of audiences (e.g., school council, parents, Board)

Evidence / Reflection / Impact

Competencies for Securing Accountability

Skills	Knowledge	Attitudes
<p>The principal is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage the school community in the systematic and rigorous evaluation of school effectiveness ▪ Collect and use a rich set of data to understand and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the school ▪ Combine the outcomes of regular school self-review with provincial and other external assessments for school improvement 	<p>The principal has knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accountability frameworks including self-evaluation ▪ The contribution that education makes to developing, promoting and sustaining a fair and equitable society ▪ The use of a range of evidence to support, monitor, evaluate and improve school performance ▪ The principles and practices of performance management 	<p>The principal demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commitment to individual, team and whole-school accountability for student outcomes ▪ Commitment to the principles and practices of school self-evaluation ▪ Commitment to personal self-evaluation

Next Level of Learning

What skills, knowledge and attitudes do I need to further develop?