

Ontario Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers

Preamble to the Leadership Frameworks for Principals and Vice-Principals and for Supervisory Officers

Introduction

Leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student outcomes¹. Principals and vice-principals play an essential role as school leaders to achieve this impact. Supervisory officers, in turn, play a critical role by putting in place supportive system practices and procedures for school and system leaders. In the ministry discussion paper, *Leading Education: New Supports for Principals and Vice-principals in Ontario Publicly Funded Schools*, released in December 2005, a commitment was made to a number of initiatives intended to develop, support and sustain the highest quality leadership possible in schools and boards across the province. In keeping with this commitment, and in order to ensure a consistent and effective approach to implementing these initiatives, the Leadership Framework for Principals and Vice-Principals and the Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers (the frameworks) were developed.

Purposes

The purposes of the frameworks are to:

- inspire a shared vision of leadership in schools and boards
- promote a common language that fosters an understanding of leadership and what it means to be a school and system leader
- identify the practices and competencies that describe effective leadership
- guide the design and implementation of professional learning and development for school and system leaders.

The frameworks are not intended as a job description for the leader, nor as a checklist against which to assess performance. Rather, they provide frameworks for growth, which are sufficiently detailed to describe good leadership, but broad enough to be applicable in the various contexts in which school and system leaders function throughout their career.

Structure of the Frameworks

The frameworks are made up of two parts:

- Part One – Leader Practices and Competencies
- Part Two – System Practices and Procedures

Part One – Leader Practices and Competencies

Leader practices are the actions, behaviours and functions found through research and professional experience to have a positive impact on student achievement. Leader competencies are the skills, knowledge and attitudes of effective school or system leaders.

Leader practices and competencies are organized into five domains, in no particular order: setting directions, building relationships and developing people, developing the organization, leading the instructional program, and securing accountability. Each domain is then described through the practices, skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to the domain.

Part Two – System Practices and Procedures

System practices and procedures, which support successful school leadership, are organized into six domains, in no particular order: school and district improvement, fostering a culture of professionalism, leadership development, administrative structures, parent and community supports, and succession planning. Each domain is then described through indicators relevant to the domain. The Leadership Self-Review Tool² provides a set of materials leaders can use to assess the extent to which system practices and procedures provide the structures and supports principals and vice-principals need to be successful school leaders.

Background on the Development of the Frameworks

The Leadership Framework for Principals and Vice-Principals and the Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers complement each other to the extent that successful leaders draw on the same fundamental repertoire of leadership practices. The Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers is tailored to address the complexity of supervisory officer roles as reflected in legislation and in the wide-ranging academic and administrative settings within which they provide leadership.

Contextual factors that should be taken into account when reviewing the frameworks include the research foundations, the Ontario perspective, the evolving focus of school leaders, and the range in roles and responsibilities of supervisory officers in the Ontario context.

¹ Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004, September). How leadership influences student learning. (Review

Research Foundations

There is currently a large and evolving body of professional knowledge about effective leadership. The frameworks rely on this research to define leadership practice as a collection of patterned actions that draw on a set of competencies comprised of skills, knowledge and attitudes³. The core leadership practices delineated in the frameworks are those that have been found to have the greatest impact on student outcomes⁴.

These broad categories of leadership practices are the basis for the articulation of more finely detailed practices, informed by professional experience, in four of the five domains of the frameworks: setting directions, building relationships and developing people, developing the organization, and leading the instructional program⁵. The fifth domain, securing accountability, was developed to specifically address the accountability function of school and system leaders in all the domains, as practised in the Ontario context.

The Ontario Context

Successful school and system leadership is responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario's communities. The practices and competencies in the frameworks describe leadership broadly in a way that is intended to be inclusive of the diversity found in schools and communities across the province. Their application will be shaped and informed by the community context. For example, in francophone schools and school boards, the application of the practices and competencies will take into consideration the implementation of the *Politique d'aménagement linguistique (PAL)* already underway in these boards. In another example, leadership in Catholic schools and boards will be carried out in the context of the board's articulation of Catholic faith perspectives.

The demographic and contextual diversity in Ontario schools together with the province's commitment to high levels of student achievement have heightened the importance of school and system leaders as instructional leaders⁶ who support the diverse needs of all students through their commitment to equity in student outcome. As instructional leaders, principals and supervisory officers embed direct involvement in instruction in their daily work through teamwork with all staff focused on improved school and classroom practices. As leaders who are committed to equity of outcome, they help to ensure inclusive and instructionally effective learning environments that increase the likelihood that all students will be successful learners. School and system leaders carry out these specific aspects of their role using a growth-oriented and collaborative approach across all the domains of the frameworks.

The Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers additionally takes into account the diverse functions and duties of system leaders: those with direct school accountability will apply leadership practices and competencies differently from those whose main focus is on district administration related to human resources or business.

Practices and competencies evolve as leaders move through various career stages, specialized assignments, and unique educational environments. School and system leaders expand and strengthen their repertoire of practices, skills, knowledge and attitudes over time, provided they have opportunities to grow and are supported by school boards that are committed to leadership development.

Note: The frameworks are working drafts which continue to evolve as a result of continued research in Ontario and international jurisdictions and through consultation with across section of stakeholders. Individual school and system leaders can provide feedback on the framework to the ministry or to the Institute for Education Leadership through their associations.

³ Elmore, R. (2006). Leadership as the practice of improvement. (Paper prepared for the International Conference on Perspectives on Leadership for Systemic Improvement). *OECD, London, UK.*

⁴ Marzano, R. J., Waters, T. & Mc Nulty, B.A. (2005). School leadership that works: From research to results. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.*

Waters, J.T., & Marzano, R.J. (2006). *School District Leadership that Works: The Effect of Superintendent Leadership on Student Achievement.* Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

⁵ Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2006). Successful school leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning, *UK: National College of School Leadership Report to the Department for Education Skills*

⁶ Cambell. C.. Fullan. M.. & Glaze. A. (2006). Unlocking potential for learning. (Project report on effective district-wide strategies to raise

SYSTEM-LEVEL LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the exercise of influence on organizational members and diverse stakeholders toward the identification and achievement of the organization’s vision and goals
 Leadership practices described in the School-level Leadership section of the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) are equally useful for both school- and system-level leaders, but those practices are enacted in qualitatively different ways. This placemat of system-level leadership practices adds to those common leadership practices a set of unique practices demanded of system-level leaders organized by the nine characteristics of strong districts outlined in the *District Effectiveness Framework* (DEF). The practices and personal leadership resources below capture how system leaders contribute to the development of strong districts.

Establish broadly shared mission, vision and goals founded on aspirational images of the educated person	Provide coherent instructional guidance	Build district and school staff’s capacities and commitments to make informed decisions	Create learning-oriented organizational improvement processes	Provide job-embedded professional learning	Align budgets, time and personnel/policies/procedures with district mission, vision and goals	Use a comprehensive performance management system for school and district leadership development	Advocate for and support a policy-governance approach to Board of Trustee practices	Nurture productive working relationships with staff and stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that a transparent visioning/direction-setting process is carried out Consult extensively about district directions as part of the process Spend sufficient time to ensure that the mission, vision and goals (directions) of the system are widely known, understood and shared by all members of the organization Articulate, demonstrate and model the system’s goals, priorities, and values to staffs when visiting schools Embed district directions in improvement plans, principal meetings and other leader-initiated interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align curricular goals, assessment instruments, instructional practices and teaching resources Insist on ambitious goals for teaching and learning Advocate for attention to the best available evidence to inform instructional improvement decisions Expect schools to focus on needs of individual as well as groups of students Encourage staff to be innovative within the boundaries created by the district’s instructional guidance system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data from all available sources to assist decision making in the central office Insist on the use of the best available research and other systematically collected evidence to inform decisions wherever possible Encourage collaboration in the interpretation and uses of data Build system’s capacity and disposition for using systematically-collected data to inform as many decisions as possible Provide training for principals and staff on the use of data and research literature to sustain decision-making Model evidence-informed decision making to school staffs Ground interactions with, and advice to, trustees in sound evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require improvement processes to be evidence-informed Set a manageable number of precise targets for district school improvement Include school-level leaders in decisions about district-wide improvement decisions Create structures and norms within the district to encourage regular, reciprocal and extended deliberations about improvement progress within and across schools, as well as across the system as a whole Develop and implement board and school improvement plans interactively and collaboratively with school leaders Create structures to facilitate regular monitoring and refining of improvement processes Acknowledge provincial goals and priorities in district and school Allow for school-level variation in school improvement efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide extensive professional learning opportunities for both teachers and school-level leaders, most of it through some form of learning community or on-the-job context Use internal system networks as the central mechanism for the professional development of school-level leaders Align the content of professional training with the capacities needed for district and school improvement Require individual staff growth plans to be aligned with district and school improvement priorities Hold staff accountable for applying new capacities by monitoring the implementation of school improvement plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align the allocation of resources with district and school improvement goals Align personnel policies and procedures with the district’s improvement goals Align organizational structures with the district’s improvement goals Provide principals with considerable autonomy in the hiring of teaching staff Expect and assist schools to allocate instructional resources equitably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the best available evidence about successful leadership (e.g. OLF) as a key source of criteria used for recruiting, selecting, developing and appraising school and district leaders Match the capacities of leaders with the needs of schools Provide prospective and existing leaders with extended opportunities to further develop their leadership capacities Develop realistic plans for leadership succession Promote co-ordinated forms of leadership distribution in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage trustees to focus on district policy and the achievement of the district’s goals and priorities (policy governance model of trustee practice) Encourage participation of the elected board in setting broad goals for its use in fulfilling its policy-setting and policy-monitoring responsibilities Regularly report to the board progress in achieving these broad goals 	<p>Internal district and school staffs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a service orientation toward schools Develop communication systems and processes throughout the district to keep all members informed Develop open, accessible and collaborative relationships with principals Encourage reciprocal forms of communication with and among schools Promote high levels of interaction among school leaders. These interactions should include all school leaders and be driven by a shared sense of responsibility among school leaders for system improvement Create structures to facilitate reciprocal forms of communication. These structures and norms should result in deeply interconnected networks of school and system leaders working together on achieving the system’s directions. Buffer schools from external distractions to the district’s and schools’ priorities and goals <p>Local Community Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routinely consult with community groups on decisions affecting the community Encourage staff to participate directly in community groups Demonstrate the importance the district attaches to its community connections <p>Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold schools accountable for developing productive working relationships with parents Influence the work of schools toward fostering improved educational cultures in the home environments of their students <p>Ministry of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/maintain high levels of engagement with the provincial ministry of education Engage frequently with the ministry proactively rather than only responsively Make flexible, adaptive use of provincial initiatives and frameworks, ensuring that they contribute to, rather than detract from, accomplishing system goals and priorities

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

Leaders draw upon the personal leadership resources to effectively enact leadership practices

Cognitive Resources	Social Resources	Psychological Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem-solving expertise Knowledge of effective school and classroom practices that directly affect student learning Systems Thinking* <p>*Especially important for system leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceiving emotions Managing emotions Acting in emotionally appropriate ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimism Self-efficacy Resilience Proactivity* <p>*Especially important for system leaders</p>