



ONTARIO

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

SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

for
SYSTEM
LEADERS

2014



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en éducation

www.education-leadership-ontario.ca

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 leadership practices and personal leadership resources (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 and also 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 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-level leadership in the province. This Self-Assessment Tool is another resource school and system leaders may choose to use to inform their professional practice.

Self-Assessment Tool for System-level Leadership

Purpose

The purpose of the Self-Assessment Tool for System Leaders is to enable practicing system leaders to assess their practices with reference to those identified in the research that are required to lead districts in the province of Ontario. Using the practices identified in the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) and particularly the nine characteristics of strong districts, the approach is evidence-based, giving system leaders the opportunity to reflect upon and cite evidence of the experiences that have contributed to their leadership development. The purpose of this tool is to help to develop reflective practitioners who can lead districts towards achieving the three provincial education priorities.

Using this self-assessment as a starting point, system leaders can identify areas for growth as leaders and can give further thought and planning to the development of their performance plan. The Self-Assessment Tool for System Leaders can support the supervisory officers' performance appraisal (SOPA). SOPA is a growth-focused performance appraisal model designed to support school and system effectiveness and improve student outcomes. It is a model that addresses professional growth and accountability, fosters leadership development, and provides meaningful professional dialogue to advance continuous improvement and identify support opportunities.

Context

The Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS) requires that boards develop a plan to assist leaders in continuing their professional growth. Supports such as mentoring for newly appointed system leaders, principal and vice principal performance appraisal, supervisory officer performance appraisal and opportunities for professional learning need to be developed as part of this plan. School and system leaders need a clear understanding of their present level of leadership development as well as direction in ongoing leadership growth efforts. The Self-Assessment Tool for System Leaders was developed to give system leaders the opportunity to reflect upon their leadership practices and personal leadership resources in relation to the impact these have on the learning conditions in their schools.

Development

The Self-Assessment Tool for System Leaders is based on the nine characteristics of strong districts described in the District Effectiveness Framework (DEF) of the OLF. The OLF is based on and is designed to assist leaders in recognizing the personal traits associated with cognitive, social and psychological resources. These personal leadership resources have been found to help enact the leadership practices more successfully.

Implementation Tips

Growth and Development

The Self-Assessment Tool can be used:

- to highlight a leadership practice and reflect on how you as a leader implement that practice;
- for personal self-reflection to help identify areas of growth for inclusion in the Performance Plan;
- to work with a critical friend or mentor to help identify and/or analyse the:
 - ✓ quality of the evidence;
 - ✓ areas of growth in the Performance Plan;
 - ✓ evidence of impact on achieving the district's vision and improvement goals;
 - ✓ next levels of learning for personal growth and development – i.e., the identification of leadership practices and personal leadership resources to develop.

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

The tool was intentionally designed to reflect the current reality of the system leader's varied leadership roles and responsibilities.

The practices identified in the OLF are based on research by leading experts and in consultation with educators across Ontario.

The OLF includes key practices of successful leaders. As such, the Self-Assessment Tool could be used:

- to develop leadership programs;
- to prepare for the promotion process and related interviews or activities;
- to assist supervisory officers with the development of authentic and relevant interview questions as part of recruitment and selection processes

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. 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 capture how system leaders contribute to the development of strong districts.

System-level Leadership

Leadership Practices

Reflection on my leadership practices:

What strategies do I use to implement these practices?

What is the evidence of my influence on my school's learning conditions?

What do I need to change/improve/adapt?

What Personal Leadership Resources might help with improving my practice?

Cognitive Resources (CR)

CR1-Problem-solving expertise

CR2-Knowledge of effective school and classroom practices that directly affect student learning

CR3-Systems Thinking

Social Resources (SR)

SR1-perceiving emotions

SR2-managing emotions

SR3-acting in emotionally appropriate ways

Psychological Resources (PR)

PR1-Optimism

PR2-Self-efficacy

PR3-Resilience

PR4-Proactivity

Establish broadly shared mission, vision and goals founded on aspirational images of the educated person

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that a transparent visioning and 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"> ▪ How do I describe our district's visioning and direction-setting process? ▪ Can I clearly describe our consultation process about setting the district's directions? Have I identified which groups are consulted? Are all stakeholders consulted? ▪ If I were to ask my school principals to talk about our district's mission, vision and goals, would most of them be able to articulate them? How about the teachers, the school support staff and the business support staff? What would this look like? ▪ How do I communicate coherent and common messaging about the goals, priorities and values of the districts when I talk to school staff? How do I lead principals and vice-principals to see their roles as key to our mission and vision? ▪ How are our schools' most urgent needs identified and do they drive the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA)? ▪ Can I demonstrate the ability to facilitate change based on the district's vision all the while considering the risks involved and adhering to ethics? |
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<p>Provide coherent instructional guidance</p>	
<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"> ▪ Am I confident that our curriculum expectations, assessment instruments, instructional practices and teaching resources are aligned? ▪ What criteria do I use to determine the quality of the goals for teaching and learning? ▪ In reference to the latest decisions around instructional improvement, what data was used at the district level and at the school level? What type of data do our principals use? ▪ Can I describe how our schools focus on the diverse needs of students? ▪ Is the Professional Learning Cycle being used to guide the school improvement planning and monitoring process? ▪ Can I provide examples of innovative practices implemented in our schools? How do I demonstrate to staff that I value innovation? ▪ How are SEF indicators reflected in the strategies used in the improvement plans?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Am I able to control my emotions and my non-verbal behaviour when communicating my expectations for student achievement to the school staff, to the teaching staff and a principal of a low performing school and to the teaching staff and a principal of a high performing school?
<p>Build district and school staff's capacities and commitments to make informed decisions</p>	
<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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can I confirm that the data used to assist decision-making in the central district office comes from all available sources? ▪ Can I describe the decision-making processes and provide examples of different types of evidence needed and used in order to make a decision? ▪ How do I model collaboration in the interpretation and uses of data? ▪ Can I provide examples of ways to support building system capacity and disposition for using systematically-collected data to inform as many decisions as possible? ▪ What professional learning does the district provide for principals and

System-level Leadership

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ground interactions with, and advice to, trustees in sound evidence. 	<p>staff on the use of data and research to sustain decision-making?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do I model evidence-informed decision-making to school staffs? ▪ In reference to the latest advice to trustees, what sound evidence was provided for their decision-making?
Create learning-oriented organizational improvement processes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What type of data is required for all improvement processes? ▪ Do I have a common expectation about the number of school improvement goals each school should have? ▪ How do I include and value principals and vice principals in decisions about district-wide improvement decisions? ▪ What structures and norms are in place within the district to encourage regular, reciprocal, and extended deliberations about improvement progress within and across the system as a whole? ▪ How do I collaboratively and interactively work with principals and vice principals to develop and implement the board and school improvement

System-level Leadership

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<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 schools. ▪ Allow for school-level variation in school improvement efforts. 	<p>plans?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What structures are in place to monitor and refine the improvement processes on a regular basis? ▪ How do I ensure alignment and coherence between the provincial goals and priorities and the district's and the school's goals? ▪ How do I use the feedback provided from the schools to refine the BIPSA goal iterative cycles of planning? ▪ What criteria do I use to determine school needs and the differentiated support that will be provided?

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Provide job-embedded professional learning

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| <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 job-embedded 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"> ▪ What different types of learning opportunities are offered to teaching staff and school leaders? ▪ Can I describe the use of internal system networks as the central mechanism for the professional development of principals and vice-principals? ▪ Am I confident that the content of professional development activities relates to the development of the Catholic faith and the capacities required to improve teaching and learning in the district and in the schools? ▪ What process is in place to confirm that professional growth plans support the development of leadership practices that are aligned with district and school priorities? ▪ What mechanism is in place to monitor if staff is applying new capacities in the implementation of school improvement plans? What mechanisms are in place to support and motivate staff in the development of these capacities? ▪ How are the nine characteristics of strong districts reflected in our professional growth plans? |
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<p>Align budgets, time and personnel/policies/procedures with district mission, vision and goals</p>	
<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"> ▪ What mechanisms are in place in the annual budget planning process to ensure that the allocation of resources support the achievement of the district and school improvement goals? ▪ What mechanisms are in place to ensure that the personnel policies and procedures do not conflict with district improvement goals and go further to support them as well? ▪ How are principals involved in the hiring process of their staff? ▪ What mechanisms are in place to determine how schools allocate instructional resources? Is it done equitably? ▪ How is staffing reflective of the policies and efforts for equity and inclusive schools?

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Use a comprehensive performance management system for school and district leadership development

- 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 system 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 coordinated forms of leadership distribution in schools.

- Which criteria are used for recruiting, selecting, developing and appraising school and system leaders?
- Which criteria are used to transfer principals and vice-principals to schools?
- What different types of professional development opportunities are offered to develop the leadership practices and personal leadership resources of all leaders?
- Does the district's succession plan recruit and develop leaders ready to step into the role?
- How is leadership distribution part of the district's culture? How is leadership distribution enacted in schools?
- What type of "evidence of learning" is used to supervise principals and vice-principals during their evaluation year as well as their non-evaluation year with regards to their annual growth plan and performance plan goals?

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Advocate for and support a policy-governance approach to Board of Trustee practices

- 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.

- Do meetings with the board of trustees reflect a policy governance model?
- Do meetings of various board committees reflect a policy governance model?
- How do I ensure that the policies and procedures review and revision guidelines reflect the current and applicable policies?
- Is the board's Multi-year Strategic Plan communicated in a way that will mobilize trustees in working towards the achievement of the organization's goals?
- Do the structures and processes that are in place allow for a concerted effort and promote collaboration towards the achievement of targeted priorities?

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Nurture productive working relationships with staff and stakeholders

Internal district and school staffs

- 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'

Internal district and school staffs

- Overall, are principals satisfied with the level of support/service they are receiving from the districts' departments?
- Do employees feel that they are kept well-informed regarding district business, changes, news, etc.?
- Are working relationships with principals open, accessible and collaborative? What are the principals' perspectives?
- Are there formal mechanisms in place to promote reciprocal forms of communication with principals and their staff and among the district's schools? If there are, can you describe them?
- What opportunities to network, share and collaborate towards system improvement are provided to principals?

Local Community Groups

- What processes are in place to ensure that community groups are consulted on decisions affecting the community?
- How is staff encouraged to participate actively in community groups?
- How is the importance of community connections / partnerships communicated to staff?

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priorities and goals.

Local Community Groups

- 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.

Parents

- 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.

Ministry of Education

- 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,

Parents

- How do we monitor the collaboration between the school and parents?
- Is there a mechanism in place to encourage principals to share effective practices that foster the educational culture in the home environment of their students?
- Do we have strategies in place to promote active participation and significant contribution of parents?
- How do I ensure that schools are communicating the changes in practice as a result of literacy, mathematical literacy and the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning in the classrooms and at home?

Ministry of Education

- How are high levels of engagement in ministry initiatives ensured?
- Proactivity is important for all leaders but especially important to system leaders. Do we work in partnership with the ministry of Education? How can I describe this partnership?
- How are ministry initiatives aligned to ensure coherence with the district's goals and priorities?
How does our monitoring process consider ongoing feedback from observation and reflection as part of the Professional Learning cycle?

System-level Leadership

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<p>accomplishing system goals and priorities.</p>	

Personal Leadership Resources

The OLF describes the characteristics of effective leaders such as optimism, emotional intelligence and problem solving abilities, which the research indicates create the variation among leaders in how well they are able to enact the leadership practices. Personal self assessment of the characteristics associated with cognitive, social and psychological resources is a critical component of leadership growth and development. The purpose of this tool is to assist leaders in identifying those characteristics that are contributing to, or detracting from, effective leadership practices.

<p>Cognitive Resources: Problem-solving expertise and knowledge about conditions which have direct effects on student learning and which can be influenced by schools.</p>	<p>Reflect upon your own experiences. <i>When did you feel confident in these situations?</i> <i>When did you not feel confident?</i></p>
<p>Problem-solving</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I spend time analyzing the nature of a problem, before seeking a solution. • I prioritize problem-solving efforts based on impact on student learning. • My values and principles are central to how I respond to problems. • I remain calm and confident during the problem-solving process. 	
<p>Knowledge about School and Classroom Conditions</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am knowledgeable about powerful learning conditions in the school and classroom. • I am aware of my colleagues' emotions from their behavior. • I optimize the organizational conditions (teachers' working conditions) in determining school structures. • I understand the influence of family conditions on student learning and I work with schools to implement policies to improve parental involvement. 	
<p>Systems Thinking</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am able to understand the dense, complex, and reciprocal connections among different elements of the organization. • I have foresight to engage the organization in likely futures and consequences for action. 	

<p>Social Resources: The ability to understand the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of persons, including oneself, in interpersonal situations and to act appropriately on that understanding.</p>	<p>Reflect upon your own experiences. <i>When did you feel confident in these situations?</i> <i>When did you not feel confident?</i></p>
<p>Perceiving Emotions</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am able to recognize my own emotional responses and how those emotional responses influence my actions. • I am able to recognize the emotions of others. 	
<p>Managing Emotions</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am able to understand my own emotional responses and reflect on the potential consequences of those responses. • I am able to help others to be more reflective about their own emotional responses and to reflect on the potential consequences of those responses. • I am usually able to calm my school colleagues when they are feeling agitated. 	
<p>Acting in Emotionally Appropriate Ways</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am able to control my own emotions. • I am able to control my temper and handle difficulties rationally. • I can usually persuade my school colleagues to act in emotionally appropriate ways in our school. • My school colleagues can usually rely on me to help calm them down when they get upset. 	

Psychological Resources: The characteristics that enable leaders to be productive and effective in the highly complex environment of system-level leadership.	Reflect upon your own experiences. <i>When did you feel confident in these situations?</i> <i>When did you not feel confident?</i>
Optimism	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am usually able to see many ways around a problem. • I see the positive elements of most situations. • I approach system-level leadership with an optimistic point of view. 	
Self-efficacy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel confident analyzing long-term problems to find solutions for my district. • I have confidence in my ability to achieve the goals I set in my job. • I will persist in a task regardless of the obstacles. 	
Resilience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I usually take stressful things at work in stride. • I thrive in challenging situations and am able to rise to the occasion. • When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best. 	
Proactivity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am able to stimulate and effectively manage change on a large scale under complex circumstances. • I demonstrate initiative and perseverance in bringing about meaningful change. 	

Next Steps for Leadership Development:

As you consider each leadership practice described in the self-assessment tool, ask yourself to what extent you demonstrate each leadership practice. Select the most suitable response.

Establish broadly shared mission, vision and goals founded on aspirational images of the educated person

1	2	3	4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very evident

Provide coherent instructional guidance

1	2	3	4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very evident

Build district and school staff's capacities and commitments to make informed decisions

1	2	3	4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very evident

Create learning-oriented organizational improvement processes

1	2	3	4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very evident

Provide job-embedded professional learning

1	2	3	4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very evident

Align budgets, time and personnel/policies/procedures with district mission, vision and goals

1	2	3	4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very evident

Use a comprehensive performance management system for school and district leadership development

1 Not at all evident	2 Somewhat evident	3 Evident	4 Very evident
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Advocate for and support a policy-governance approach to Board of Trustee practices

1 Not at all evident	2 Somewhat evident	3 Evident	4 Very evident
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Nurture productive working relationships with staff and stakeholders

1 Not at all evident	2 Somewhat evident	3 Evident	4 Very evident
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Next Steps for Leadership Development:

- 1. What leadership practices do I need to develop?*
- 2. How will I know that I've developed the leadership practices that I've chosen? What evidence and results will inform me?*
- 3. What personal leadership resources do I need to develop?*
- 4. How will I know that I've developed the personal leadership resources that I've chosen? What evidence and results will inform me?*
- 5. What available resources support the development of my leadership practices?*
- 6. What specific commitments will I make?*
- 7. Who can support me?*

Your professional association would like to support you in your professional growth. In order to do so, they require data on provincial needs. Would you be interested in sharing your results with your professional association?

Respondents will not be identified.

Yes _____ No _____

To which professional association do you belong:

OPSOA

PCODE

OCSOA

ECCODE

COSBO (OASBO)