

SUPPORTING THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

Board Leadership Development Strategy

What Is the Board Leadership Development Strategy?

As part of the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS), each district in the province is provided with funding and support to develop and implement a Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS). The goals of the BLDS mirror the goals of the OLS – that is, to:

- attract the right people to leadership roles;
- develop personal leadership resources in individuals and promote effective leadership practices in order to have the greatest possible impact on student achievement and well-being; and
- develop leadership capacity and coherence in organizations to strengthen their ability to deliver on education priorities.

The BLDS targets school leaders, system leaders, and all those within the district who aspire to take on leadership roles of any kind, whether on the academic or the business side of the organization.

Background

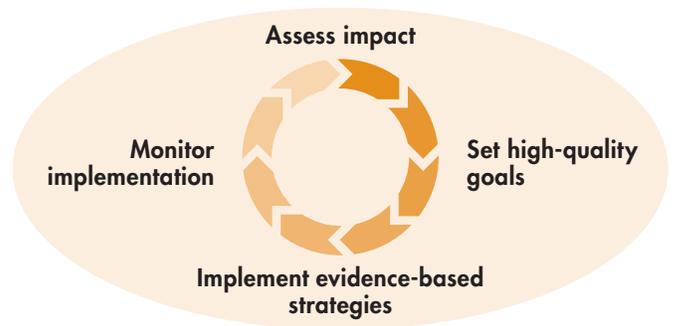
The OLS and BLDS have developed over time, in partnership with districts and associations representing principals, supervisory officers, and directors of education. Mentoring, succession planning, principal/vice-principal performance appraisal (PPA), and other leadership initiatives have been implemented in all districts. In 2010–11, these initiatives all became components of a broader program – the Board Leadership Development Strategy. By the end of 2011–12, a comprehensive evaluation of the BLDS told us that districts had made significant progress in developing infrastructure to support succession planning and leadership development for aspiring, newly appointed, and experienced leaders, but we lacked evidence of the impact of these initiatives. In response, districts were asked to use a new Impact Assessment and Planning Tool in 2012–13 to determine impact and help them determine the goals and strategies of their BLDS. Districts were also provided with a data map summarizing their own and provincial data to prompt reflection and inform cyclical planning and assessment.

The Ontario Leadership Strategy

Launched in 2008, the Ontario Leadership Strategy is a comprehensive plan of action designed to support student achievement and well-being through a coordinated and strategic approach to leadership development, based on research and consultation with education partners.

Where Are We Now?

As we move forward, districts continue to strengthen their BLDS by assessing its *impact*, setting *high-quality goals*, implementing *evidence-based strategies* that will garner the best results, and *monitoring* the implementation of those strategies. This cyclical process is conducted every school year.



Features of the BLDS

A well-planned and well-executed BLDS:

- helps build coherence by supporting the achievement of goals outlined in the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA) and the development of a positive climate in the district and its schools;
- develops collective leadership capacity through collaborative learning, deprivatization of practice, and frontline-led improvement;
- focuses on four key areas:
 - *recruiting and selecting leaders* through structured and innovative succession planning;



- *placing and transferring leaders* in ways that sustain school and system improvement;
- *developing leaders* through mentoring, performance appraisal, and differentiated learning opportunities that meet the needs of leaders in diverse contexts and at various stages of their careers;
- *coordinating support for leaders* to buffer them from distractions, make information easily accessible, and assist them in building coherence across different initiatives.

The Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF)

The framework, which describes what good leadership looks like, is the foundation for the Ontario Leadership Strategy and local board leadership development strategies. The OLF is revised as necessary to reflect the latest research on leadership.

The OLF describes the practices of effective school and system leaders, as well as the characteristics of high-performing districts – in the **District Effectiveness Framework** (revised 2013). The **K-12 School Effectiveness Framework** (revised 2013) is included in the OLF as a companion piece, to show the link between school-level leadership and school effectiveness.

The OLF also identifies a set of **personal leadership resources** (leadership traits and dispositions) that influence how effectively leaders enact leadership practices. The personal leadership resources include cognitive resources (e.g., problem-solving expertise, knowledge of school and classroom conditions that directly affect student learning, and systems thinking*); social resources (e.g., the ability to perceive emotions, manage emotions, and act in emotionally appropriate ways); and psychological resources (e.g., optimism, self-efficacy, resilience, and proactivity*).

* Systems thinking and proactivity, added in 2013, are especially relevant for district leaders.

Achievements to Date

Districts across the province have moved from developing the infrastructure for their BLDS to measuring its impact. Sixty-five of 66 districts that reported in 2012–13 said that “using the BLDS Impact Assessment and Planning Tool has influenced their setting of goals and selection of strategies”. As well, districts made progress in using the BLDS to build coherence in their work. Sixty-one of these 66 districts indicated that “progress was made in building coherence between BLDS and BIPSA [the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement] in 2012–13”.

In 2012–13, over 700 newly appointed principals and over 900 vice-principals benefited from the support of a trained mentor. Through their BLDS, districts have also extended mentoring to other groups of leaders. Participants report that mentoring has improved their confidence and skills. PPA participants are finding their Annual Growth Plans useful in helping them address the challenges they face as school leaders.

In 2011–12 and 2012–13, BLDS leads and supervisory officers from across the province attended the Ontario Leadership Congress, accompanied by a team from their district. Surveys indicate that the congress has had an impact not only on individual leadership practices but also on the way in which districts approach leadership development. In 2012–13, 97.6% of district leaders that responded to the survey indicated that the “congress will have an impact on how their organization develops leaders”, and 89% of district respondents indicated that the “congress will have an impact on their practice”.

What’s Next?

In addition to the base funding provided to districts for their BLDS, the ministry will continue to provide funding for the following supports in 2013–14:

- individualized district visits
- an induction session for new BLDS leads
- face-to-face networking/sharing sessions hosted by districts throughout the province
- web conferencing sessions focused on areas of need
- innovative BLDS implementation projects
- data maps
- the Ontario Leadership Congress

The twofold focus in 2013–14 will be to differentiate support according to need and to encourage networking and sharing across regions.

LEARN MORE

For more information, see the *Board Leadership Development Strategy Manual, 2012*, available on the Ministry of Education’s leadership development website, at www.ontario.ca/eduleadership.