

SUPPORTING THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

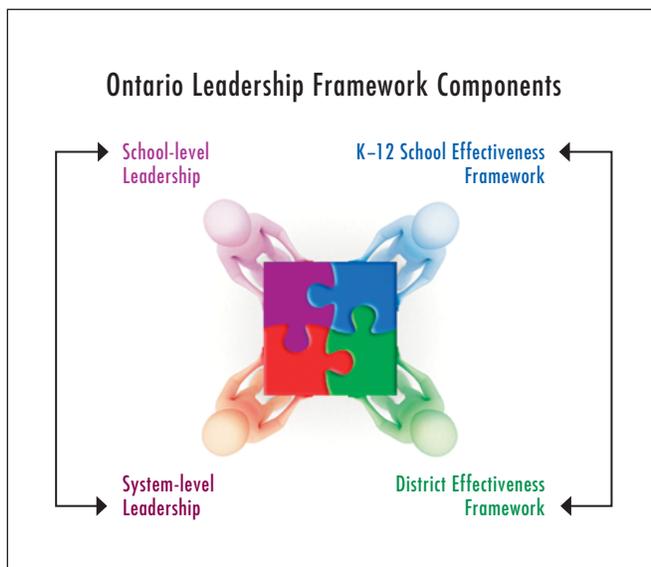
Ontario Leadership Framework

**What Is the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF)?**

The OLF describes what good leadership looks like, based on evidence of what makes the most difference to student achievement and well-being. It identifies the practices of successful school and system leaders, as well as the organizational practices of successful schools and districts. In addition, the framework includes a small but critical number of personal leadership resources (leadership traits and dispositions) that have been found to increase the effectiveness of leadership practices.

**Why a Framework?**

The framework, first set out in 2006, provides the foundation for all aspects of the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS). It is a resource that can assist educators in building coherence and aligning practices across schools and districts. Discussion of the OLF practices provides opportunities for educators to determine areas of strength and areas for growth. The framework is not a checklist but rather a tool for discussion.



The **Institute for Education Leadership (IEL)** is leading the launch, distribution, and implementation of the Ontario Leadership Framework.



**Key Components of the OLF**

- **School-level Leadership Practices.** Identifies 21 distinct practices, organized in five domains, for formal and informal leaders in schools.
- **Characteristics of Effective Schools: The K–12 School Effectiveness Framework (K–12 SEF).** Identifies evidence-based indicators of successful practice in six components of effective schools. Created in 2010 and revised in 2013 by the ministry’s Student Achievement Division, the K–12 SEF is key to the work of schools and boards. It is a companion piece to the OLF 2012, included as one of its components to show the link between school-level leadership and school effectiveness.
- **Characteristics of Successful School Systems: A District Effectiveness Framework (DEF).** Highlights the characteristics of strong districts that make positive contributions to growth in student achievement and well-being.
- **System-level Leadership Practices.** Identifies a set of unique practices required of system-level leaders (academic and business), in nine domains matching those in the DEF, that enhance the school-level practices.
- **Personal Leadership Resources.** Describes a set of personal attributes, in three categories, found to be key to the effective enactment of leadership practices at both the school and system level.

## Goals of the OLF

The framework is intended to:

- provide a robust research foundation on which to base the elements of the Ontario Leadership Strategy;
- help ensure that leadership practices and personal resources support the key goals of improving student achievement and well-being; and
- provide a common language and understanding for leaders to engage in discussions about effective practice.

## What Are the “Big Ideas” in the OLF?

- **Context is important.** Leaders enact leadership practices in ways that are sensitive to the circumstances and settings in which they work.
- **Leadership and management are integrated.** Effective leaders lead instructional activities in their schools *and* manage organizational contexts that support and enable the work of their staff.
- **Formal leaders enact practices directly and indirectly.** Formal leaders take personal responsibility for some tasks and ensure that other staff members have the capacity to do other tasks. They always monitor distributed responsibilities to bring about effective and coordinated implementation.
- **Leadership is best shared in a planned and coordinated way.** Many people make important contributions to the leadership in schools, including staff, parents, and students. The principal’s role is to coordinate these contributions in a way that brings coherence to school leadership overall.
- **System leaders and districts add significant value to students’ learning beyond the contribution of schools and classrooms.** Districts contribute to student learning by developing the nine key characteristics identified in the OLF.

## Resources and Supports

The framework is communicated through four basic products:

- *The Ontario Leadership Framework 2012, With a Discussion of the Research Foundations*, by Kenneth Leithwood, Advisor on Leadership for the Ministry of Education.
- *Strong Districts and Their Leadership (2013)*, by Kenneth Leithwood.
- *The Ontario Leadership Framework: A School and System Leader’s Guide to Putting Ontario’s Leadership Framework into Action*.
- Four placemats that give “at-a-glance” views of school and system leadership practice at both the individual and organizational levels. The placemats are included in the user guide and can also be downloaded separately for use in professional learning contexts. They should be read together with the research reports for a full understanding of the leadership practices and the personal leadership resources.

## Personal Leadership Resources

The OLF includes a small but critical number of personal leadership resources that leaders draw on to enact leadership practices effectively.

**Cognitive resources**, including:

- problem-solving expertise
- knowledge of school and classroom conditions that directly affect student learning
- systems learning\*

**Social resources**, including the ability to:

- perceive emotions
- manage emotions
- act in emotionally appropriate ways

**Psychological resources**, including:

- optimism
- self-efficacy
- resilience
- proactivity\*

\*especially useful for district leaders

## What’s Next?

- Research on effective leadership practice at the school and system levels reflects the need of leadership to address organizational size, increased operational complexity, greater interaction with the wider environment in which the organization finds itself, and the need to anticipate future demands that might require significant organizational adaptation. Two new personal leadership resources have been added: one is a psychological resource (proactivity) and the other is a cognitive resource (systems thinking). Proactivity is a motivational state predisposing one toward initiative, i.e., “future-oriented action to change and improve the situation”.<sup>1</sup>
- The IEL intends to embed opportunities in a variety of professional learning activities to enable school and system leaders to engage in discussions about how to use the OLF to support improved practice.
- The revisions to the OLF in August 2013, particularly in the area of system level leadership, will inform ongoing and future work that supports system leaders, such as mentoring, executive programs, and supervisory officer performance appraisals.

1. Parker, Williams, and Turner (2006, p. 636) as quoted in *Strong Districts and Their Leadership: A Paper Commissioned by the Council of Ontario Directors of Education and the Institute for Educational Leadership*, Ken Leithwood, June, 2013.

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[www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/content/home](http://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/content/home)