

SUPPORTING THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

Principal/Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal

“If we see an increase in the best practices and our case studies show that the practices work and student achievement is increasing over the long haul, time and again, then we can be confident about the difference that leadership practice is making. Leadership has made the difference in Ontario – it’s undeniable – we can trace it, feel it, see it.”

Michael Fullan, at the Ontario Leadership Congress, April 2012

What Is Principal Performance Appraisal?

The province-wide principal/vice-principal performance appraisal (PPA) is a requirement in Ontario Regulation 234/10, and has been in place since September 2010. The appraisal process is based on extensive research and input from associations representing principals, supervisory officers, and directors of education, and is an integral component of the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS). The appraisal process is a growth-based model designed to help principals/vice-principals – both new and experienced – achieve their full potential as school leaders. During the performance appraisal process, the principal/vice-principal develops one or more professional goals that support the improvement of student achievement and well-being, while taking into account the board improvement plan for student achievement, the school improvement plan, and provincial educational priorities. Goals may also be based on the school community and local context as well as the personal development goals of the principal/vice-principal being appraised.

Why PPA?

PPA is designed to ensure that school leaders are well supported in their professional growth and development. Through formal and informal opportunities for feedback and meaningful dialogue with their supervisor, participants have the opportunity to clearly define the supports needed to achieve student goals. The process enables principals and vice-principals to focus on priority areas agreed to by the appraisee and appraiser. It is intended to help districts develop competent and confident leaders who will have a positive impact on student achievement and well-being by providing principals and vice-principals with resources and supports that are aligned with school and system priorities.

Goals of PPA

The PPA is focused on supporting principals and vice-principals in setting and attaining the following goals to:

- strengthen their leadership practice by focusing on student achievement and well-being;
- focus on leadership growth and ensure professional accountability grounded in a commitment to school and district improvement.

PPA and the Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS)

Launched in 2008, the OLS is a comprehensive plan of action designed to support student achievement and well-being through a coordinated and strategic approach to leadership development. The OLS is grounded in the belief that significant progress towards the province’s three core priorities can be accomplished by directly improving the quality of school and district leadership, supporting leadership development, and working with other ministry divisions to improve the conditions for effective teaching and learning in schools and classrooms.

PPA and the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF)

The OLF provides the underpinnings for the principal/vice-principal performance appraisal process and identifies effective leadership practices and personal leadership resources of successful educational leaders. The OLF is based on research by world-recognized experts in leadership and on extensive consultation with educators across Ontario. The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) adopted the OLF for province-wide use and offers professional development in the OLF for districts.

Key Elements of PPA

PPA takes place over a five-year cycle. Performance appraisal is based on an Annual Growth Plan and a Performance Plan developed in the fifth year. The following components of PPA serve as levers to support increased student achievement and well-being:

- The **Annual Growth Plan** provides a powerful vehicle for the appraisee, in consultation with the appraiser, to identify areas of focus for growth and development based on leadership practices, personal leadership resources, and the leadership competencies derived from the OLF (*Principal/Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal: Technical Requirements Manual, 2013, Appendix A*).
- The **Performance Plan** enables the principal or vice-principal to focus on goals that take into account the school improvement plan, the board improvement plan for student achievement, and ministry priorities for student achievement and well-being.
- **Appraisal meetings** occur at least three times during the appraisal process to promote professional dialogue between the appraisee and the appraiser.
- A **summative report** documents the results of the appraisal process and becomes a tool to assist the appraisee in reflecting on feedback in order to monitor his or her growth.
- A **rating** of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory is assigned on the basis of the results of the performance appraisal.

Principals have said...

“The process helps you to focus on the priorities within your job and to determine what you need to work on. It’s an opportunity to plan ahead and think about how you are going to get things done.”

“I see the focus on aligning the performance goals of the principal with the system plan, the school plan, and the ministry initiatives to be beneficial.”

“There is increased accountability.”

What Has Been Accomplished?

- A PPA process was initially informed by input from stakeholder groups.
- A consistent, transparent, and fair model for appraisal for school principals and vice-principals was established province-wide with a due process for unsatisfactory performance.
- A work team of representatives from principal, supervisory officer, and director associations provided ongoing advice to further develop and implement the PPA model across the province.
- Currently 7500 principals and vice-principals benefit from PPA.
- The *Principal/Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal: Technical Requirements Manual, 2013* reflects the most current version of the OLF.

- Resources to facilitate implementation are being developed through ongoing partnerships between the ministry and principal associations.

What’s Next?

During 2013–14, we will be consolidating OLS and Board Leadership Development Strategy (BLDS) efforts to broaden and deepen implementation, strengthen connections, and build synergy between leadership development and initiatives that support student achievement and well-being. We will:

- develop opportunities to align PPA with other initiatives in the OLS;
- develop opportunities to increase awareness of the leadership practices and the personal leadership resources (PLRs), found to be key to the effective enactment of leadership practices at both the school and system level;
- continue to lever PPA as an opportunity for principals and vice-principals to focus on priority areas and align resources with priorities;
- continue to promote the Institute for Education Leadership’s (IEL) Self-Assessment Tools for Principals/Vice-Principals and Aspiring Leaders;
- support boards in their implementation of PPA;
- monitor the effectiveness of PPA.

Partnerships

The Ontario Principals’ Council (OPC), in partnership with the Catholic Principals’ Council of Ontario (CPCO) and the Ministry of Education, offers three webcasts to support PPA:

1. *Performance Plan*
2. *Courageous Conversations & Maintaining the Momentum: Ongoing Feedback*
3. *The Summative Report & Supporting a Principal/Vice-Principal with an Unsatisfactory Rating*

These are available at www.principals.ca.

Resources and Support

- *Principal/Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal: Technical Requirements Manual, 2013*
- Examples of Completed Forms (Performance Plan, Annual Growth Plan, and Improvement Plan)
- Tip sheets: *Engaging in Courageous Conversations, Receiving and Giving Effective Feedback, Setting Goals*
- Publications: *In Conversation, Ideas into Action*
- DVD: *Leadership Matters: Open-to-Learning Conversations*
- Webcasts

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www.ontario.ca/eduleadership