Ontario Institute for Education Leadership
L'Institut de leadership en éducation de l'Ontario

Ontario Leaders Collaborating for Student Achievement, Equity and Well-being
La collaboration des leaders en Ontario assure la réussite, l'équité et le bien-être des élèves.

DEEPENING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK (OLF) FOR SCHOOL-LEVEL LEADERS
USER GUIDE FOR OLF STORIES

OVERVIEW OF *USER GUIDE*:

The *User Guide* includes the following:

Part One: Introduction
Describes how the OLF stories were developed.

Part Two: The Stories
Provides a brief summary of the stories.

Part Three: Development and Relevance to School-level Leadership Learning
Invites school and system leaders to apply lessons learned from these stories.

PART ONE – INTRODUCTION:
This *User Guide* features stories written by Ontario school leaders. Some stories were written as part of the Leading Student Achievement (LSA) project (2014-2017). Other stories were written beginning 2020 by school leaders to describe how they are meeting leadership challenges in their schools every day. All the stories focus on school improvement efforts in elementary and secondary schools.

These stories serve as examples to illustrate the enactment of the leadership practices and personal leadership resources in the OLF under varying circumstances and in diverse contexts.

They stand the test of time given that the challenges these leaders faced in their improvement efforts continue to be relevant. They are intended to inspire school leaders to reflect and consider ways to strengthen the leadership practices and Personal Leadership Resources (PLRs) of the OLF.

PART TWO – THE STORIES

1. **Unleashing the Learning at Pelmo Park Public School by Ainsworth Morgan (principal of a K – 5 school)**
Ainsworth is principal of Pelmo Park Elementary School which is situated in the North end of Toronto. This school has 300 students. There are over 20 languages spoken, over 75% of parents were born outside of Canada, and over 90% of Pelmo's students are identified as racialized. His story illustrates how he drew on his Personal Leadership Resources (PLRs) to ensure student learning, engagement, equity and well-being.

2. **A Journey into Inquiry – A Principal's Real Story by Laurie Reid**
Laurie is principal of a dual track French Immersion school located in an urban, low socio-economic area. Her story focuses on building staff capacity to bring about improved student achievement.

3. **Leading in a Crisis: COVID-19, School Closure by Christy Radbourne**
Christy is principal of a K-8 elementary school located in rural northern Ontario. In this story she reflects on her first months leading staff, students and community in September reopening following school closure.

4. **Leading in a Crisis: COVID-19, School Reopening by Christy Radbourne**
Christy is principal of a K-8 elementary school located in rural northern Ontario. In this story she reflects on her first months leading staff, students and community in the uncharted waters of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. **Leadership Style and Personal Leadership Resources (PLRs) by Gilles Rodrigues (principal) et Gina Kozak (principal)**
Gilles and Gina are elementary school principals. In this story, they describe how they used their personal leadership resources to promote student well-being and student success.

6. **Turning the Ship Around by Christy Radbourne (elementary principal)**
Christy is principal of a K-8 elementary school located in rural northern Ontario. Her story is about leading staff and its community on an improvement journey to raise EQAO scores in math and literacy.

7. **Welcome, Engagement and Learning: The Importance of Emotional Learning at School by Lucien Chaput**
Lucien is principal of a grades 7 to 12 secondary school located in an urban area. His story describes how his French-language secondary school integrated well-being and engagement of students in its school improvement plan with an emphasis on student emotion and empathy.

8. **Collaborative Inquiry in Literacy: Primary Grades by Crystal Côté-Poulin**
Crystal is principal of a Catholic elementary school in a rural area of Northern Ontario. Her story describes a French-language school district's inquiry into

how to improve student achievement in reading in the primary grades. What resulted was improvement in Mathematics and a significant increase in the collective staff efficacy.

9. **The Little School that Could – Even Against the Odds! by Joanna Crapsi-Cascioli**
   Joanna is principal of a small elementary school serving a large proportion of students from economically disadvantaged families. Her story illustrates the potential leverage for student learning that exists in a school's strong relationships with families and the wider community.

10. **Empowering ELL Students to Excel in Mathematics by Debby Culotta and Miranda Kus**
    Debbie is principal of a Catholic K-8 urban elementary school and Miranda works with her as math consultant. Together they describe a three-year journey to improvements in mathematics in a school where most of the students were born in the Middle East, Nigeria and Ghana and many are refugees with limited schooling.

11. **Reflections on Successful Leadership Practices by Secondary Principal Edward DeDecker**
    Edward is principal of a Catholic secondary school in the London area. His story describes how a handful of practices in the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) were successfully enacted.These practices included "…recognizing the importance of building relationships, setting direction collaboratively with staff, creating organizational structures to focus on intentional and purposeful teaching to improve instruction and securing accountability through shared leadership and joint ownership in the direction setting for the school."

12. **Using Collaborative Inquiry Processes to Build Capacity on the Family Path in One Elementary School by Robert Iannuzzi**
    Robert is vice-principal of a high needs urban elementary school. The focus of his story is on the collaborative processes and structures used to bring the staff together for their shared instructional improvement work. The story also illustrates productive ways of engaging parents, keeping all staff focused on a shared set of very specific goals, as well as using data effectively to pinpoint next steps in the school improvement process.

13. **Improving Student Achievement in an Elementary School by Creating a Culture of Appreciation by Brenda Moen**
    Brenda is principal of a small elementary school located in a rural area. Her story provides a good illustration of building trusting collaborative relationships with and among staff with the goal of accomplishing a clearly identified set of shared goals for student achievement.

14. **Leadership in Action – Leading for Inclusion, Anti-racism and Anti-Oppression by Salima Kassam**

Salima is principal of Amesbury Middle School which is located within the Black Creek and Lawrence Avenue area in Toronto. Her story describes her journey in an urban middle school where she created a safe, equitable and inclusive environment for students, families and community.

PART THREE – DEVELOPMENT AND RELEVANCE TO SCHOOL-LEVEL LEADERSHIP LEARNING

Some of the stories originated in the Leading Student Achievement (LSA) project[1] when educators wrote "real stories" about successful initiatives they had undertaken in a classroom, school, or district. Principals are adding to this collection of stories in response to the IEL's invitation to school districts and their school leaders to offer their stories of enacting the leadership practices and PLRs of the OLF in their real-life contexts.

Leaders learning from one another through their stories
The stories show how the authors addressed' specific challenges in their school contexts – what worked for them, what didn't work and why – and identify lessons learned. They provide descriptions of how these leaders have successfully enacted the practices of the O L F drawing on their PLRs in a range of school contexts.

The stories are intended to provide a springboard for dialogue and discussion tailored to the individual needs and interests of those who read and reflect on them. The overarching goal is to deepen understanding of the OLF and strengthen leadership practice.

Using the Stories to Support Leadership Learning
This section of the guide suggests uses for the stories in order to deepen the implementation of the OLF.

Materials Required:
- The OLF placemat which shows the five domains, the 21 leadership practices and sample look-fors, and the three categories of personal leadership resources (PLRs) - cognitive, social and psychological found here:
  - School-Level Leadership
  - Catholic School-Level Leadership
- *THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK 2012 with a Discussion of the Research Foundations*
- Choice of story (see Part Two of this User Guide)

Making Connections to the Research Underpinning the OLF
Keep the *THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK 2012 with a Discussion of the Research Foundations* report available for easy reference as you work with the stories. This research report provides a detailed explanation about the nature of the leadership practices and the PLRs and why they are important elements of an effective leader's repertoire.

Opening Dialogue and Discussion about the OLF Stories:
The purpose of these stories is to promote dialogue and discussion of the leadership practices and PLRs as a way of reflecting on and strengthening your own practice as an ethical leader. Work with the stories on your own and/or with others.

As you work with these stories, respond to the following questions as a way of deepening and

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[1] *Leading Student Achievement (LSA) Even More Real Stories: How LSA Participation has Improved Leadership, Teaching and Student Achievement, Volume 2, May 2014*

challenging your thinking.

Part A: First Thoughts

1. How does the story connect with the reality in your context? How is it the same? How is it different?
2. What aspects of the story are common to all school leaders?
3. What's missing in the story for you in your context?
4. What other strategies would you use to address the challenges in the story?
5. What are some next steps you would recommend to continue the improvement journey in this school?

Part B: Focusing on Equity *

The following questions are meant to engage in reflective dialogue about leading for equity. Depending on the story, participants may have to make inferences about leadership actions as they relate to equity, inclusion, anti-racism and anti-oppression.

6. How has the leadership contributed to equity, inclusion, anti-racism and anti-oppression?
7. What suggestions do you have that would strengthen this leadership?
8. What features of this leadership would be useful for you to enact in your school?

* "How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research," offers the most in-depth review of research on school leadership since Kenneth Leithwood's seminal publication in 2004 made the case that principals were only second to teachers among in-school factors that affect student learning. This major new research review paints a detailed picture of how effective principals affect student learning and other outcomes, concluding that school leaders are even more important than previously believed and that investments in successful strategies to better prepare and support them have a very large payoff.

Drawing on 20 years of research the report identifies the following four principal practices that are linked to positive outcomes which together provide a rounded portrait of principal activities:
- high-leverage instructional activities,
- building a productive culture and climate,
- facilitating collaboration and learning communities, and
- the strategic management of personnel and resources.

It also identifies three overlapping, foundational skills - related to instruction, people, and the organization – that are integral to effectively enacting the four practices. Identifying these practices and skills is important, as it allows us to better specify the *impact* of effective principals and to know what they *do* to be effective.

To meet the needs of growing numbers of students who are underserved, the report calls for principals to develop an "equity lens," defined as ensuring fair, just, and non-discriminatory treatment of all students, the removal of barriers, the provision of resources and supports, and the creation of opportunities with the goal of promoting equitable outcomes. In arguing for continued reorientation of the work of principals toward educational equity it offers an emerging vision of how the four behaviours can be carried out with an equity focus.

All pertinent materials including a highly recommended recorded webinar can be found at How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research |

The Wallace Foundation.

Suggestion One: Work on your own

· Scan the list of stories and choose the story that captures your attention first.
· Read the story noting that there are references to the leadership practices and personal leadership resources (PLRs) in textboxes.
· Do you agree that the leadership practices and PLRs that have been identified are illustrated in the story? Why or why not? Are there others?
· As you work with these stories, respond to the following questions as a way of deepening and challenging your thinking.

Part A: First Thoughts
1. How does the story connect with the reality in your context? How is it the same? How is it different?
2. What aspects of the story are common to all school leaders?
3. What's missing in the story for you in your context?
4. What other strategies would you use to address the challenges in the story?
5. What are some next steps you would recommend to continue the improvement journey in this school?

Part B: Focusing on Equity
The following questions are meant to engage in reflective dialogue on equity leadership. Depending on the story, participants may have to make inferences about leadership actions as they related to equity, inclusion, anti-racism and anti-oppression.

6. How has the leadership contributed to equity, inclusion, anti-racism and anti- oppression?
7. What suggestions do you have that would strengthen this leadership?
8. What features of this leadership would be useful for you to enact in your school?

Suggestion Two: Work with a partner or in a small group
· As a small group repeat the steps for individual work shown above.
· Use the outcomes of the story analysis process to engage in problem- solving to generate additional responses for addressing the challenges described in the stories.
· In addition to the questions above, consider the following questions:
    · What experiences did the authors share that inspired them to further reflect on their professional practice?
    · What experiences in the stories inspire you to reflect on your professional practice and take action?
    · Based on the insights provided by leaders in these stories, consider the specific leadership practices and PLRs to focus on in your own professional learning as a school leader?

Suggestion Three: Use the Stories in a Range of Professional Learning Contexts

· The questions above offer an opportunity to develop leadership practices and PLRs in a variety of contexts:

- · Use with others in job-embedded professional learning contexts such as mentoring, professional networks and study groups.
- · Use with others in local contexts such as professional learning segments of meetings that bring together groups of leaders, such as principals' meetings with their school superintendents.
- · Use with others in district "lead" teams.
- · Integrate in professional learning programs offered by a range of providers including in additional qualifications programs for principals and supervisory officers and other relevant additional qualification programs.
- · Embed key concepts in a wide range of workshops and professional learning supports provided by Ontario's professional leadership associations for their members.