

# Reflecting on school leadership development

## Background

*Leading for impact: Australian guidelines for school leadership development* (Leading for impact), sets out evidence-based guidance to support a nationally coherent and standards-based approach to leadership development in all jurisdictions and schools.

To assist schools and systems/sectors to reflect on their approach to leadership development, AITSL has developed two reflection tools, one for use by systems/sectors and the other by schools.

The reflection tools bring the recommendations within Leading for impact to life by articulating what schools and jurisdictions can do at increasing levels to develop leadership capacity. By demonstrating progression across the rubric for each action, the school or jurisdiction can see what it looks like to improve their approach to leadership development and contribute to developing a pool of aspiring leaders across the education system.

The tools will support users to reflect on their organisation's leadership development approaches against the recommendations provided in Leading for impact.

## Where to begin

When using the reflection tools, users should first determine which tool is appropriate for their context. The schools' tool will be used to reflect on a school's approach to leadership development. The system/sector tool will be used to reflect on a jurisdiction's approach to leadership development.

## Using the tool

The reflection tools each contain quality statements describing what each leadership development component looks like at increasing levels of effectiveness.

Users should look at each action and then work from Step 1 to 4 (left to right) to situate their current practice. Practice can only be situated at a particular step, if each of the previous steps are currently in place/achieved. It's important to note that practice can progress beyond Step 4 of the continuum.

Once current practice is situated on the rubric, the tool then provides an opportunity to develop a strategy and plan to identify the next steps to progress practice along the continuum.

## Section 1: Leadership development

### Identifying future leaders

Recommendation	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Establish a leadership development strategy and communicate its priorities to all members of the jurisdiction, network or school.	Identify need for a leadership development strategy and communicate the purpose.	Design a leadership development strategy linked to system/sector educational objectives and communicate strategy to interested parties.	Develop, implement and commit to a strategy to respond to system/sector demands including recruitment, retention, and development of a diverse range of future leaders.	Review and refine leadership strategy using stakeholder feedback and evidence-based approaches. Examine system/sector communications periodically to ensure they reinforce strategy.
Implement purposeful strategies and use multiple and objective methods to find future leaders.	Recognise individuals who exhibit leadership potential.	Use formal and informal processes to identify, discover and encourage future leaders.	Implement transparent/evidence-based measures and methods that identify a diverse range of future high-impact school leaders.	Evaluate medium- and long-term outcomes of leadership identification policies and processes against equity and diversity criteria.
Create a culture that encourages every individual to develop a leadership identity.	Identify individuals across the system/sector who take up formal leadership roles. Recognise key cultural indicators, and promote key cultural messages related to leadership.	Communicate diverse leadership identities and capabilities required for formal leadership positions.	Use evidence to connect leadership culture to system/sector education goals, equity targets, and community cultures whilst providing regular opportunities for participation in leadership experiences.	Invest in long term and sustainable system/sector leadership development and recruitment processes. Provide early career support for leadership aspirants with targeted development goals.

## Capabilities for leadership in schools

Recommendation	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Use the Teacher Standards at the Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages and the Principal Standard to establish the leadership capabilities required at all levels of school leadership.	Promote awareness and value of Highly Accomplished, Lead Teacher and Principal Standards to schools within the system/sector.	Structure leadership development experiences with reference to Highly Accomplished, Lead Teacher and Principal Standards.	Prioritise development of leadership capabilities with reference to Highly Accomplished, Lead Teacher and Principal Standards.	Conduct regular reviews of strategies aligned to Highly Accomplished, Lead Teacher and Principal Standards to improve leadership capability development.
Prioritise leading teaching and learning, personal qualities and interpersonal skills, alongside management skills, in the leadership capabilities required.	Communicate professional and personal qualities and skills required of leaders in schools.	Structure leadership development experiences with reference to required professional and personal qualities and skills.	Prioritise the development of high-impact school leadership required of a diverse range of leaders in schools in a variety of contexts.	Assess and modify professional and personal qualities required of diverse and emerging leaders according to system/sector needs.

## Developing future leaders

Recommendation	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Implement the <i>Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders</i> and the <i>Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework</i> .	Communicate the potential of professional learning in developing individual and collective leadership performance.	Implement professional learning activities matched to the Charter and Framework and aligned to system/ sector context. Structure professional learning using performance and development cycle.	Design coherent program for school-based staff to develop individual and collective leadership capacity, through a learning culture of reflective action focused on improving student outcomes.	Ensure that professional learning is evidence-based, relevant, collaborative and future-focused. Monitor, evaluate and sustain an effective performance and development culture.
Provide extended experiences that involve learning within the context of work and the provision of ongoing feedback.	Identify and make available leadership experiences.	Provide opportunities for provision of regular feedback on leadership growth and development within the experiences.	Link leadership experiences to school context and provide opportunities for relevant information and real time feedback.	Implement approach to leadership development that focuses on strengths. Use cycles of reflection and feedback to support leadership experiences.
Establish networks to support leadership development.	Encourage links between current and future leaders through informal leadership development networks.	Engage current leaders to participate in formal leadership development networks as mentors and coaches and engage future leaders to participate in formal networks.	Support and encourage participants in leadership development experiences to build and maintain networks through formalised structures.	Link and leverage internal leadership development networks with networks external to the system/ sector including national and international opportunities.

## Principals' role in leadership development

Recommendation	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Provide principals with targeted professional learning to build the capacity to prioritise leadership development within and beyond their school.	Include leadership development element in professional learning.	Provide formal professional learning programs focused on leadership development of others.	Implement comprehensive skill-based experiences to upskill principals to develop leadership capacity in teachers and school leaders. Implement measures to assess what works.	Utilise principal feedback to assess and improve experiences that significantly assist system/sector leadership development.
Build the expectations for leadership development into principals' performance and development goals.	Include leadership development goals in principals' performance plan.	Support principals to identify a performance goal prioritising the identification and development of leaders.	Provide timely and actionable feedback to principals based on leadership development goals.	Implement system/sector wide data collection, analysis and review of principal leadership development goals.
Establish explicit, formalised roles to harness the expertise of highly skilled and accomplished current and retired principals to support leadership development. This should include coaching roles.	Encourage informal leadership development support and opportunities involving expert principals.	Facilitate leadership development mentoring experiences using expert principals.	Utilise expert principals as targeted, purposeful and systematic coaches and to assess individuals' leadership capacity.	Establish roles for expert principals to share advice and manage the design, delivery and assessment of system/sector leadership development programs.

## Measuring the success of leadership development activities

Recommendation	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Articulate the leadership development strategy's objectives and identify appropriate metrics and measurement methods.	Identify the leadership development strategy's objectives.	Identify evidence and qualitative and quantitative data to be collected and measured.	Generate evaluation metrics matched to leadership development objectives and strategies.	Future proof the metrics and measurements by interrogating them through ongoing review and refinement.
Track progress over time, assess success and continually improve provision in response to findings.	Use informal evidence and inferential judgement to evaluate leadership development activities.	Collect data and analyse results.	Evaluate leadership development provision using robust methods that assess leadership practices leading to improved student outcomes.	Design and implement improvements to leadership development provision in response to assessments.

## Section 2: Preparation and development for the principal role

### Identifying future principals

Recommendation	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Implement purposeful strategies, and use both formal and informal, and multiple, objective methods to identify a diverse group of emerging leaders with an aptitude and interest in principalship.	Rely on self-identification by potential leaders.	Provide opportunities for potential leaders to take courses or join programs to build their capacity and interest in leadership.	View leadership capability from a broad perspective and create identification strategies that explicitly support diverse people to develop leadership capacities.	Implement formal and informal strategies, utilising the expertise of principals and multiple objective methods, to identify leaders with aptitude for principalship.
Develop principals' understanding of their critical role in principal preparation and their expertise to support identification of future principals.	Identify need for practicing principals to identify future leaders.	Communicate need for practicing principals to identify future leaders.	Develop principals' understanding of leadership identification with reference to the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.	Build into principals' induction and ongoing professional learning and development their need to identify future leaders.
Provide clear career pathways to principalship.	Provide informal leadership roles including exercises such as shadowing a principal.	Provide regular and diverse opportunities to engage in substantive leadership roles.	Integrate leadership roles with professional learning, financial support and performance and development processes.	Commit system/sector to personal and professional development of identified staff and provide diverse career pathways to principalship.

## Preparation for aspiring principals

Recommendation	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Ensure all principal preparation experiences and programs are evidence informed and align with the Principal Standard and the criteria outlined above.	Identify elements of Principal Standard in program content.	Compare Principal Standard with pre-existing program content and identify gaps in provision.	Align program content to leadership requirements and professional practices in the Principal Standard, and jurisdiction's specific context.	Work with program providers and expert principals to ensure cooperation and embedding of Principal Standard in assessment of readiness for the role.
Evaluate all principal preparation experiences and programs for impact and use findings to continually improve provisions.	Observe principal preparation experiences to gather information.	Evaluate intermediate outcomes, such as change in participant behaviour.	Evaluate long-term outcomes, such as improved student performance.	Evaluate principal preparation program objectives and goals, participant selection processes, program design, and participant performance and outcomes to guide ongoing program improvement.
Implement formal and explicit processes to assess readiness for the principal role.	Rely primarily on personal recommendations.	Encourage self-selection of participants for assessment.	Implement processes that assess generic leadership qualities and experience.	Implement formal and explicit processes that assess high quality leadership requirements that include evidence of impact on student learning outcomes, a record of professional learning, and other preparation experiences matched against the Principal Standard.



## Effective recruitment and selection of principals

Recommendation	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Include processes to target under-represented groups in the recruitment and selection of principals.	Create a value proposition for having a diverse and inclusive culture.	Assess context to inform implementation of targeted processes and to overcome potential bias.	Implement processes to target applicants from under-represented groups.	Invite under-represented groups to provide input about how to engage them in selection processes.
Provide training for panel members to ensure they are equipped to evaluate each applicant objectively.	Select panel members who have received required merit and equity training.	Train panel members in key areas such as unconscious bias and selection management.	Train panel members to be informed and objective evaluators of applicants using the Principal Standard.	Appoint external panel experts that understand and represent community and school needs, appreciate desired leadership competencies, and can apply principles of equality and diversity.
Design and implement targeted recruitment activities that place emphasis on actual behaviour and actions demonstrating application of personal qualities and impact on teaching and learning.	Make decisions based on perceptions of personal and professional qualities.	Make decisions based on qualifications, experience and references.	Assess behaviours and actions that demonstrate application of personal qualities and impact on teaching and learning using high-quality information.	Use innovative approaches including simulations, behavioural/critical incident interviewing, observations, and presentations, that assess leadership requirements in the Principal Standard.

## Support and develop principals in the role

Recommendation	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Implement comprehensive principal induction that meets the criteria outlined in Leading for impact.	Provide mentoring or 'buddy' support.	Clarify rules, regulations, processes and expectations to introduce school culture, community and relationship-building.	Integrate strategies of professional support, guidance, and development to address specific skills in areas of leadership responsibility relevant to principal setting.	Tailor extended activities to context/need that inquire into practice and develop skills. Provide access to networks, line managers, and system/sector professionals that emphasise relationships and cultural expectations.
Provide ongoing effective adult learning experiences that meet the criteria outlined in Leading for impact for new and experienced principals.	Provide learning experiences using uniform course content and traditional teaching methods for new and experienced principals.	Provide a range of learning experiences including study groups, presentations by expert practitioners, and attendance at courses or conferences.	Match instructional strategies to the nature of the material taught including information technologies, small group work, simulation, video, role-playing, and case study.	Use differentiated experiences suited to adult learning environments including expert mentoring/coaching, embedded research projects, networked problem solving, formal coursework, and growth-based performance appraisal.
Align induction and ongoing development with the Principal Standard.	Design formal induction sessions and programs.	Compare induction and development programs with the Principal Standard.	Align induction content to leadership requirements and professional practices in the Principal Standard.	Assess and improve principal induction programs using the Principal Standard as an auditing tool.