

Principal Standard elaborations

Effectively implementing the Disability Standards
for Education 2005

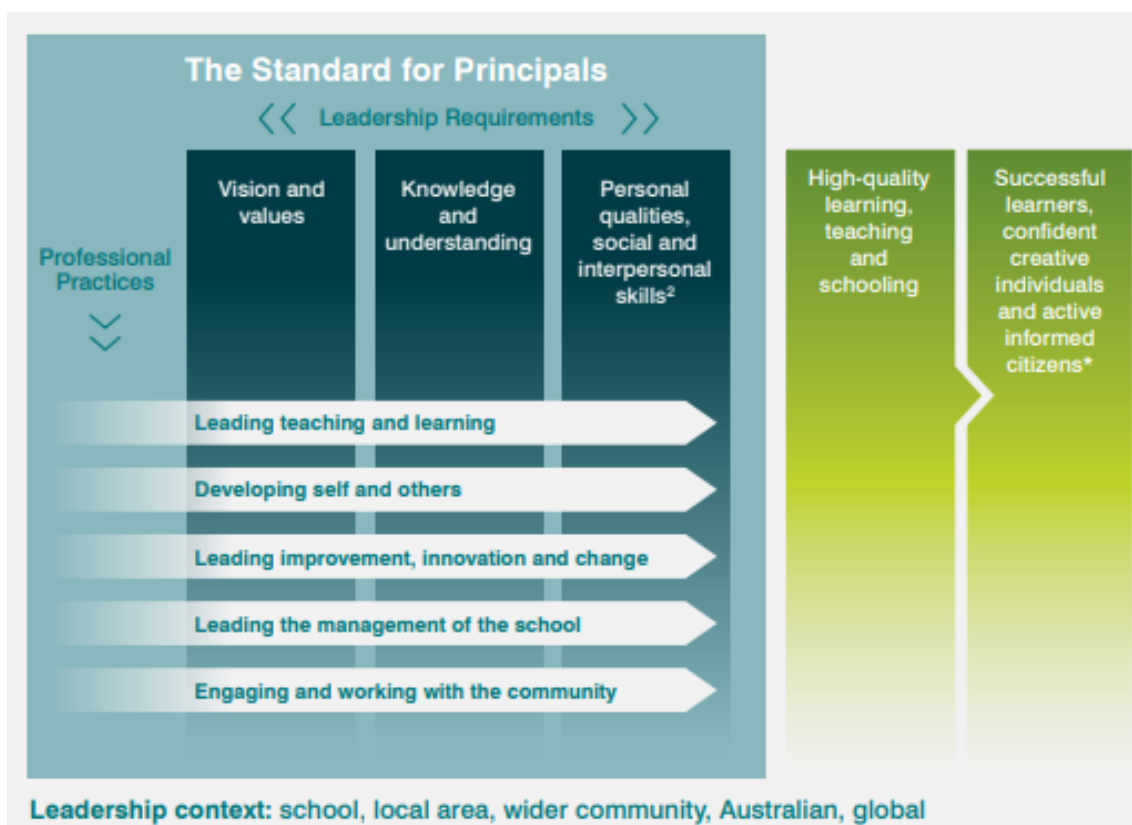


Senior school leaders, including principals, have several key roles and responsibilities within their school to build and promote a student-centred learning environment that is equitable and inclusive. The [Australian Professional Standard for Principals](#) (Principal Standard) promotes a shared vision and common language around effective, high impact school leadership through a framework consisting of five Professional Practices and three Leadership Requirements (AITSL, 2019).

The Principal Standard elaborations seek to support senior school leaders (including principals, and deputy or assistant principals) in understanding their obligations within the [Disability Standards for Education \(DSE\) 2005](#). Compliance with the DSE will help ensure that students with disability can participate in all aspects of their education on an equal basis to students without disability.

The aim of this resource is to support the specific role senior school leaders play in supporting students with disability in schools, referencing the five Professional Practices as shown in Figure 1¹. In adopting a DSE lens over the Principal Standard, the elaborations provide an in-depth understanding of highly effective behaviours that senior school leaders (and to an extent middle leaders) can implement within their school contexts.

Figure 1. Principal Standard: Professional Practices and Leadership Requirements



¹ Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. 2014. *Australian Professional Standard for Principals and the Leadership Profiles*. AITSL. Melbourne, Australia.

Professional practices focus	Focus description	DSE elaborations description
Leading teaching and learning	<p>Principals create a positive culture of challenge and support, enabling effective teaching that promotes enthusiastic, independent learners, committed to lifelong learning.</p> <p>Principals have a key responsibility for developing a culture of effective teaching, for leading, designing and managing the quality of teaching and learning and for students' achievement in all aspects of their development.</p> <p>They set high expectations for the whole school through careful collaborative planning, monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of learning.</p> <p>Principals set high standards of behaviour and attendance, encouraging active engagement and a strong student voice.</p>	<p>Senior school leaders establish and promote a positive culture that is inclusive of all in the school community, through modelling inclusive behaviours and setting high expectations of all staff to include students with disability.</p> <p>They consistently collaborate with teaching staff to reflect on the school's approach to curriculum design and pedagogy, ensuring high quality and inclusive teaching practices so students with disability have the same opportunities to learn as students without disability.</p> <p>Senior school leaders ensure thorough consideration is given to the needs of students with disability with respect to the school's planning, facilities, extra-curricular activities, at-home learning and support services.</p> <p>They ensure that teachers establish regular discussions with the student, their guardian/s and associates², and service provider/s (where relevant) to determine a range of reasonable adjustments to assist in the student's education.</p>

² An associate of the student includes a relative; carer; spouse; another person who is living with the person on a genuine domestic basis; and another person who is in a business, sporting, or recreational relationship with the person (DSE 1.4).

Professional practices focus	Focus description	DSE elaborations description
<p>Developing self and others</p>	<p>Principals work with and through others to build a professional learning community that is focused on continuous improvement of teaching and learning.</p> <p>Through managing performance, effective continuing professional learning and feedback, they support all staff to achieve high standards and develop their leadership capacity. Principals support others to build capacity and treat people fairly and with respect.</p> <p>They model effective leadership and are committed to their own ongoing professional development and personal health and wellbeing in order to manage the complexity of the role and the range of learning capabilities and actions required of the role.</p>	<p>Senior school leaders model fair, equitable and respectful treatment of all in the school community, leading by example to follow ethical values and behaviours.</p> <p>Senior school leaders seek coaching and professional learning opportunities for themselves and all staff to build their knowledge about inclusive practices and the skills required to implement them.</p> <p>They build the capacity of all staff in understanding how to best support the diverse needs of students with disability from a whole-school perspective (including specialist services) as well as implementing strategies that effectively respond to harassment, victimisation, and discrimination.</p> <p>Teachers are regularly encouraged by senior school leaders to collaborate with colleagues in evaluating their practice and engage in learning opportunities that help them to provide individualised teaching and learning and assist in the implementation of reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Senior school leaders ensure that all staff are informed of their obligations as outlined in the policies, procedures and codes of conduct related to inclusive education. Senior school leaders implement inclusive strategies that effectively respond to harassment, victimisation, and discrimination for all learners.</p> <p>Senior school leaders empower teachers to collaborate with colleagues to evaluate and reflect on practice and seek opportunities to improve equitable educational experiences within their classroom.</p>

Professional practices focus	Focus description	DSE elaborations description
<p>Leading improvement, innovation and change</p>	<p>Principals work with others to produce and implement clear, evidence-based improvement plans and policies for the development of the school and its facilities.</p> <p>They recognise that a crucial part of the role is to lead and manage innovation and change to ensure the vision and strategic plan is put into action across the school and that its goals and intentions are realised.</p>	<p>Senior school leaders work with all staff, guardian/s and associates, and service provider/s to develop and implement plans to enhance the inclusion of all students. This can form part of whole-school improvement planning, including the modification and maintenance of school facilities.</p> <p>Senior school leaders regularly collaborate with their leadership team, all staff and service provider/s to innovate better ways of providing a positive and equitable school experience for all students.</p> <p>Senior school leaders keep themselves and all staff accountable to any improvement efforts. They establish clear communication channels to gather feedback from all in their school community.</p> <p>They leverage school boards, governing bodies, parent/carer groups and student representative councils to regularly incorporate their perspectives and considerations for more inclusive school experiences.</p>

Professional practices focus	Focus description	DSE elaborations description
<p>Leading the management of the school</p>	<p>Principals use a range of data management methods and technologies to ensure that the school’s resources and staff are efficiently organised and managed to provide an effective and safe learning environment as well as value for money. This includes appropriate delegation of tasks to members of staff and the monitoring of accountabilities.</p> <p>Principals ensure these accountabilities are met. They seek to build a successful school through effective collaboration with school boards, governing bodies, parents and others.</p> <p>They use a range of technologies effectively and efficiently to manage the school.</p>	<p>Senior school leaders contribute to implementing legislative and system-wide requirements to support the safety and wellbeing of all students.</p> <p>They inform all staff, students, guardian/s and associates of their obligations to support the inclusion of students with disability under the DSE.</p> <p>They work consultatively with other senior school leaders and staff to set up clear monitoring processes to ensure requirements are met.</p> <p>Senior school leaders and their teaching staff use student data to determine school improvements. They empower all staff to take responsibility and creativity in all aspects of the school’s commitment to equitability.</p> <p>Senior school leaders ensure mechanisms are accessible and available to report grievances, and appropriate action is taken to respond to bullying and discrimination of students with disability, in-line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).</p> <p>Senior school leaders will provide communication and support to victimised students, their guardian/s and associates.</p> <p>Senior school leaders work with their school boards, governing bodies, parent/carer groups and student representative councils to regularly incorporate their perspectives, experiences and suggestions for more inclusive school operations.</p>

Professional practices focus	Focus description	DSE elaborations description
<p>Engaging and working with the community</p>	<p>Principals embrace inclusion and help build a culture of high expectations that takes account of the richness and diversity of the wider school community and the education systems and sectors.</p> <p>They develop and maintain positive partnerships with students, guardian/s and associates, and all those associated with the wider school community.</p> <p>They create an ethos of respect taking account of the spiritual, moral, social and physical health and wellbeing of students.</p> <p>They promote sound lifelong learning from preschool through to adult life.</p> <p>They recognise the multicultural nature of Australia's people.</p> <p>They foster understanding and reconciliation with Indigenous cultures.</p> <p>They recognise and use the rich and diverse linguistic and cultural resources in the school community.</p> <p>They recognise and support the needs of students, families and carers from communities facing complex challenges.</p>	<p>Senior school leaders, together with all staff consistently promote an inclusive school culture that connects to the wider school community.</p> <p>All staff do so by recognising and celebrating the diversity of the school's students, exhibiting exemplary behaviour and building positive relationships with all students, their guardian/s and associates.</p> <p>Senior school leaders are responsible for implementing the school's admissions and enrolment procedures with a focus on ensuring equitable opportunities for all students to participate in the school.</p> <p>During transition into the school, senior school leaders work with all staff to ensure students with disability feel welcomed, understood, valued and safe.</p> <p>They work closely with the student's guardian/s, associates, and service providers in maintaining consistent communication, consultation and support to provide a positive learning journey for the student.</p>

References

- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. 2014. *The Australian Professional Standard for Principals*. AITSL. Melbourne, Australia.

Accompanying DSE resources

- [A school leader's guide for inclusive practices within schools: Effectively implementing the Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)
- [Leadership matrix for senior and middle leaders: Effectively implementing the Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)

AITSL resources


- [Australian Professional Standard for Principals](#)
- [The Leadership Profiles](#)
- [AITSL Spotlight – Inclusive education: teaching students with disability](#)

Where can I find out more?

- [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(legislation.gov.au\)](#).
- [The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\) \(DDA\)](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education 2005 Fact Sheet](#)
- [2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)
- [The Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability: 2023 Guidelines](#)
- [NCCD Disability Standards for Education resources](#)

The logo for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) features the lowercase letters 'aitsl' in a sans-serif font. The letters are filled with a vertical gradient that transitions from a light yellow-green at the top to a darker teal at the bottom.

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