

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DRAFT SCHOOL LEADER STANDARD

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DRAFT

School Leader Standard

WHEREAS school leaders have an important role in fostering collaboration, engagement and empowerment of all partners in the education system to ensure that all students achieve their potential.

WHEREAS school leaders in Alberta schools have the critically important role of creating the conditions within which quality teaching and optimum learning can occur and be sustained.

WHEREAS school leaders in Alberta schools play a fundamental role in establishing and supporting the conditions under which the learning aspirations and the potential of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students will be realized.

WHEREAS the *School Leader Standard* provides a framework for the preparation, selection, professional growth and evaluation of all school leaders.

WHEREAS a school leader is able to demonstrate achievement of the *Teaching Quality Standard*.

WHEREAS students, parents and education partners should be confident that Alberta school leaders demonstrate the *School Leader Standard* in their teaching and leadership practices.

WHEREAS it is important to recognize the value of a consistent standard of practice for all school leaders in the province.

1. In the context of this document:

- (a) “competency” means an interrelated set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed over time and drawn upon and applied to a particular leadership context in order to support quality teaching and optimum learning as required by the *School Leader Standard* statement;
- (b) “indicator” means supporting evidence for the practice of a competency; indicators are behavioural in nature and together with the respective competencies, are measureable and observable;
- (c) “local community” means community members who have an interest in education and the school including business and industry, government, and other educational institutions and learning partners;

- (d) “principal” means principal under the *School Act*;
- (e) “school authority” means a public school board, separate school board, Francophone regional authority, charter school operator, private school operator or a school operated by a band;
- (f) “school community” means students, teachers and other school staff members, parents/guardians and school council members, and;
- (g) “school council” means a school council established under the *School Act*, or a parent advisory council established under the *Private Schools Regulation*;
- (h) “school leader” means a principal, assistant principal, associate principal, vice principal and other identified teachers with leadership designations;
- (i) “standard” (as summarized in the *School Leader Standard* statement) means the clear expression of the outcome of competent practice;
- (j) “student” means an individual enrolled in a school or required by law to attend, and includes a child younger than six years of age who is enrolled in an early childhood services program;
- (k) “teacher” means an individual who holds a certificate of qualification as a teacher issued under the *School Act*.

2. The *School Leader Standard* statement:

Quality school leadership occurs when the school leader’s ongoing analysis of the context, and the school leader’s decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality teaching and optimum learning for all students in the school.

3. The *School Leader Standard* applies to all school leaders employed by a school authority. Principals are accountable for the demonstration of all the competencies. Assistant principals, associate principals, vice principals, and other identified teachers with leadership designations are accountable for the demonstration of competencies directly related to their assigned role and leadership designation. Reasoned professional judgment must be used to determine whether the *School Leader Standard* is being met in a given context.

4. Every school leader must:

- (a) be a certificated teacher,
- (b) fulfill the applicable provincial requirements, and
- (c) meet the school authority’s requirements for school leaders.

5. The *School Leader Standard* is described by the following competencies and indicators:

Fostering Effective Relationships

- (1) A school leader fosters positive working relationships within the school community, by:

- (a) acting with fairness, respect and integrity;
- (b) demonstrating empathy and a concern for others;
- (c) creating a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment;
- (d) establishing positive relationships with parents/guardians, school councils and community groups;
- (e) creating opportunities for parents/guardians to take an active role in their children's education;
- (f) demonstrating a commitment to the health and well-being of all students in the school and acting in their best interests;
- (g) modeling and promoting open, collaborative dialogue;
- (h) communicating, facilitating and solving problems effectively;
- (i) implementing processes for improving working relationships and dealing with conflict within the school community;
- (j) establishing relationships based on mutual trust with First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents/guardians, Elders/knowledge keepers, local leaders and community members by:
 - inviting Elders/knowledge keepers and cultural advisors into the school community; and
 - respecting and modeling First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultural protocols.

Embodying Visionary Leadership

- (2) A school leader collaborates with the school community to create and implement the school's shared vision, mission, values and goals, by:
 - (a) communicating and enacting a philosophy of education that is student-centred and based on sound principles of effective teaching and leadership;
 - (b) understanding, communicating and applying educational research to support quality teaching and optimum learning;
 - (c) recognizing the school community's values and aspirations, advocating for all students and demonstrating an appreciation for diversity;
 - (d) helping school community members, including school councils, fulfil their roles and responsibilities;
 - (e) promoting innovation, enabling positive change, and fostering commitment to continuous improvement;
 - (f) using and sharing a range of data to determine the school community's progress towards achieving school goals; and
 - (g) facilitating celebration of school accomplishments.

Leading a Learning Community

- (3) A school leader nurtures and sustains a school culture that values and supports learning, by:

- (a) fostering an inclusive learning environment in which diversity is embraced, a sense of belonging is emphasized, and all students and staff feel welcome, safe, cared for, and respected;
- (b) developing a shared responsibility for the success of all students;
- (c) promoting and modeling life-long learning;
- (d) cultivating a culture of high expectations for all students and all members of the school staff;
- (e) establishing opportunities and expectations for the positive involvement of parents/guardians in supporting student learning;
- (f) enabling meaningful, collaborative learning opportunities for teachers and support staff;
- (g) creating an environment for the safe and ethical use of technology; and
- (h) collaborating with child and youth service agencies to support students, including those with mental health needs and those who may require protective services.

Providing Instructional Leadership

- (4) A school leader ensures that every student has access to quality teaching and optimum learning experiences, by:
 - (a) building the capacity of teachers to respond to the learning needs of all students;
 - (b) implementing professional growth, supervision and evaluation processes to ensure that all teachers consistently meet the *Teaching Quality Standard*;
 - (c) demonstrating a strong understanding of effective pedagogy and curriculum;
 - (d) facilitating technology use to support learning for all students;
 - (e) ensuring that student assessment and evaluation practices are fair, appropriate and balanced;
 - (f) facilitating access to resources, agencies and experts within and outside the school community to enhance student learning and development;
 - (g) using a wide-range of data to inform school practice and enable success for all students; and
 - (h) ensuring that all students have access to educational programming that addresses their individual learning needs.

Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit

- (5) A school leader supports the school community in acquiring and applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit, for the benefit of all students, and supports the process of reconciliation, by:
 - (a) understanding the historical, social, economic and political implications of:
 - treaties and agreements with First Nations; and

- agreements with Métis;
- (b) enabling all school staff and students to gain a knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and current contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit;
- (c) supporting the school community in developing an understanding of:
 - the legacy of residential schools, and
 - the impacts of intergenerational trauma on learner development.

Developing and Facilitating Leadership

- (6) A school leader provides opportunities for members of the school community to develop leadership capacity, by:
- (a) demonstrating consultative and collaborative decision-making that is informed by open dialogue and multiple perspectives;
 - (b) identifying, mentoring and empowering teachers in educational leadership roles;
 - (c) promoting the engagement of parents in the school council and facilitating the constructive involvement of the school council in school life;
 - (d) creating opportunities for students to participate in leadership activities and to exercise their voice in school leadership and decision-making; and
 - (e) promoting team building and shared leadership among members of the school community.

Managing School Operations and Resources

- (7) A school leader effectively directs school operations and manages resources by:
- (a) identifying and planning for areas of need;
 - (b) applying principles of effective teaching and learning, child development, and ethical leadership to all decisions.
 - (c) aligning practices, policies, decisions, and resources (human, physical, technological and financial) with the school's vision, mission, values and goals;
 - (d) acting on decisions made and allocating resources to provide the learning environments and supports needed to enable and/or improve learning for all students;
 - (e) facilitating access to appropriate technology and digital learning environments;
 - (f) ensuring school operations align with provincial legislation, regulations and policies, and the policies and processes of the school authority;

Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

- (8) A school leader understands and appropriately responds to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts impacting the school, by:
- (a) supporting the school community's understanding of legal frameworks and policies that provide the foundations for the Alberta education system;

- (b) advocating for needs and interests of students at the community, school authority and provincial levels;
- (c) assessing local community context and responding appropriately in fulfilling the school's mission and vision; and
- (d) facilitating school community members' understanding of local, provincial, national, and international issues and trends related to education.

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