

SUPPORTING THE ONTARIO LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

Principal/Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal

The entire concept of leadership evaluation is not something that is done to particular school leaders, but rather a process that can be used throughout the school system to improve teaching, learning, and leadership at every level.

D. B. Reeves (2004), *Assessing Educational Leaders*, p. xvi.

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 goals to improve student achievement and well-being based on the board's improvement plan, the school improvement plan, the school community and local context, ministry priorities, and personal growth and development goals.

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 intended to:

- connect the work of principals and vice-principals to ministry and district goals while supporting the professional growth of school leaders;
- help ensure that resources allocated to principal appraisal encourage leadership practices known to have a positive impact on student achievement;
- reduce ineffective leadership practices across schools.

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 by attracting and developing skilled and passionate school and system leaders. 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 practices and competencies, skills, knowledge, and attitudes 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 training in the OLF for school boards.

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 and competencies outlined in the OLF.
- The **Performance Plan** enables the principal or vice-principal to focus on goals that take into account the school improvement plan, the school board improvement plan for student achievement, and ministry priorities for student achievement. It also outlines practices and competencies from the OLF, as well as indicators of achievement and results.
- **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. It includes commentary on practices and competencies, summative comments, and an overall performance rating.
- 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.

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

What’s Next?

During 2011–12, we will be consolidating OLS and board leadership development strategy (BLDS) efforts made to date in order to broaden and deepen implementation and to 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 of the OLS;
- continue to lever PPA as an opportunity for principals and vice-principals to focus on priority areas and align resources with priorities;
- 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, 2010*
- Examples of Completed Forms (Performance Plan, Annual Growth Plan, and Improvement Plan)
- Conversation Starters, 2010
- 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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