Large-Scale Education Reform through System-Wide Teacher and Leadership Development

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Ontario’s education change strategy relies on effective teachers and school and district leaders for its success. This paper examines strategies and supports used to promote the professional growth of teachers and to develop and sustain leadership. The paper begins with an overview of the context and research evidence for moving forward with a comprehensive approach to teacher and leadership development, describes themes that characterize the approach and a number of the development initiatives, and presents early evidence of impact. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the province’s evolving strategy to support leadership development.

Context

In 2004, the Ontario government announced that improvements in publicly funded education would be the centrepiece of its mandate, and that its three goals would be: improving student achievement; reducing gaps in student achievement; and increasing confidence in the publicly funded education system. In that year, the Ministry of Education invited a wide range of education partners to become part of an Education Partnership Table. The Partnership Table was designed to get broad and diverse input from the education sector on provincial education policy early in the government’s policy development process. Collaboration with students, parents, trustees, teachers, support workers and principals was seen as the way to bring about real, positive, sustainable change in the education system and to achieve better results for students.

In the following years, the Education Partnership Table addressed a number of discussion papers produced by the ministry, including two setting out the government’s commitment to supporting teachers, vice-principals and principals: Teacher Excellence – Unlocking Student Potential Through Continuing Professional Learning (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/partnership/potential.html) and Leading Education: New Supports for Principals and Vice-Principals in Ontario Publicly Funded Schools (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/partnership/leadingEducation.html). The papers were built around the principle that students are more successful when they have well-trained teachers and effective school leaders.

There is broad recognition that highly skilled and qualified teachers are key to unlocking student potential and improving student outcomes. Recent research suggests that what teachers know and are able to do are the most important factors influencing student learning (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Fullan, Hill & Crevola, 2006; Wilson, Floden & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). A growing body of research also demonstrates the impact of the principal’s leadership on student achievement (Leithwood et al, 2004). After individual classroom teachers, vice-principals and principals are the most significant influence upon student learning.

The ministry’s Leading Education paper set out the government’s commitment to supporting school leaders. Subsequently, the ministry developed a leadership strategy that includes leadership at all levels with a number of different initiatives. A Wallace Foundation (2006) report states “high quality leadership in schools and school boards is essential…behind excellent teaching and excellent schools is excellent leadership”(p.3). However, researchers and...
practitioners alike advise that providing supports to principals and vice-principals may not have the intended outcome if the role of district leaders (superintendents of education and directors of education) is neglected. In fact, the impact of supports provided to principals and vice-principals may have only a small-scale and non-lasting effect if the system context and those who provide system leadership are not accounted for (Fullan, 2007).

Effective systems provide vision, direction and support that bring coherence to the work of individual leaders. Linda Lambert (2003) argues that a high achieving school district will have a shared vision and inquiry-based accountability at all levels. She describes the “dual nature of district leadership” in which the district must create high leadership capacity itself, while simultaneously supporting leadership capacity in its schools (p. 84).

**Supporting Teacher and Leadership Development**

As part of its education reform agenda, the ministry has committed to providing a continuum of supports to teachers, principals and district leaders throughout their careers. Underlying the ministry’s approach has been respect for educators as professionals with a prominent role in determining their professional learning needs, and support for the concept of shared or distributed leadership as the means to ensure effective teaching and learning in schools.

According to Fullan (2008), at the school level, leadership should be “interactively shared – thereby coalescing the collective effort of the staff. It is about modeling effective leadership for others and cultivating leadership in others for the double payoff of greater immediate impact and the establishment of a pipeline of future leaders” (p. 42). At the district, or system level, Elmore (2000) describes distributed leadership as being “multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture” (p. 15).

The ministry’s *Teacher Excellence* (2004) paper highlighted the need for effective models of professional development that engage teachers in a continuum of professional growth to improve their practice at different stages of their careers (e.g. beginning teachers, mid-career teachers, and experienced teachers). It set out the following ideas for a new teacher excellence program for Ontario teachers:

- Establishing an induction program and mentoring for new teachers;
- Reforming the teacher performance appraisal program and teachers’ annual learning plans to ensure they are strongly tied to professional growth and development;
- Adding Professional Activity days dedicated to teacher professional development; and
- Enhancing professional development opportunities for experienced teachers.

The ministry also committed to enhancing student achievement by supporting school leaders. The *Leading Education* paper set out initiatives designed to focus vice-principals’ and principals’ time on instructional leadership, lessen their administrative work load, improve instructional excellence, give them an enhanced say in education affairs, increase professional respect and security, and define their role.

This commitment led to the development of the Ontario Leadership Strategy, the ministry’s blueprint for fostering the highest quality leadership at the school and district level. The strategy
consists of a four-point action plan, including a Leadership Framework clearly describing effective leader practices and competencies, alignment of leadership development activities within the ministry, support mechanisms for leaders, and the establishment of the Institute for Education Leadership (IEL). The IEL brings together members from organizations representing principals, vice-principals, supervisory officers, directors of education and the ministry at a common table to strengthen connections among leadership development research, policy and practice, and to strengthen school and district leadership in Ontario.

Central to the strategy is a common Leadership Framework with three components, one for principals and vice-principals, a parallel one for supervisory officers and one for districts. The Framework is based on the work of Leithwood and describes what effective leadership looks like in practice. The purposes of the Leadership Framework are to: inspire a shared vision of leadership in schools and districts; promote a common language that fosters an understanding of leadership and what it means to be a leader; identify the competencies and practices that describe effective leadership; and guide the design and implementation of professional learning, training and development for leaders.

At the start of its second mandate, the government released a new paper, *Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education*, (see Appendix A) which reaffirmed the three goals of its first mandate and committed to supporting leadership development. The ministry is now developing a comprehensive leadership strategy to take action on its commitment. This strategy will address four challenges, how to: attract, recruit and retain the right people for the role; make the role more attractive and manageable; provide career long supports; and ensure high performance measures.

**Ontario’s Approach**

The ministry’s approach to teacher and leadership development can be characterized by four themes: tri-level collaboration; the cycle of research, policy and effective practice; professional accountability and growth in the context of student achievement; and support for sustained engagement.

**Tri-level Collaboration**

Research shows that effective teaching happens within the context of effective schools, which are in turn supported by effective systems. Underlying the ministry’s approach to supporting effective teaching and leadership is the recognition of the relationships within and among the three levels of school, district and province (Fullan, 2005). According to Fullan (2003), educational transformation requires changes within and across each of these three levels:

> You cannot get transformation by going it alone. We also do not want to wait for other levels to get their acts together. More insightfully, we have to help other levels to get started…In short, each level has two responsibilities – work hard at increasing interaction within your level; work hard at increasing exchanges across levels. The former will be more intensive than the latter, but both are ongoing and influence each other.

(p.40)
To achieve the transformation, the ministry has committed to approaching its education reform agenda in a supportive and collaborative way with education partners at all levels, rather than relying primarily on command and regulation. This means being less prescriptive, engaging in more discussion, and sharing knowledge about what constitutes good practice. This collaboration is intended to build capacity, knowledge, professional learning, and transparency at all levels in the system.

**Cycle of Research, Policy and Effective Practice**

The ministry approach to its teacher and leadership development initiatives is best described as a continuous cycle of research, policy and effective practice. The initiatives are grounded in research, including reviews of relevant literature and inter-jurisdictional scans. Efforts are made to consult directly with members of the research community, including a network of international experts actively implementing leading edge strategies. Education partners are also consulted for their input on the key elements of the initiatives and any opportunities and challenges associated with them. The initiatives often undergo pilot or field tests, which are evaluated, leading to further refinements.

In addition to being informed by research, initiatives are also influenced by evidence of effective practice in the field. For example, the development of Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) was informed by the successful mentoring practices of the province’s school districts. In 2004, the ministry selected 21 school districts to receive funding to enhance existing mentoring programs supporting 3,000 beginning teachers. These programs assisted the ministry in identifying best practices and informed the development of supports for beginning teachers. In addition, in developing the Leadership Framework, principals and other stakeholders provided feedback to the ministry, which led to revisions being made to the Framework that will make it more relevant to their everyday experience. Recent research shows preliminary support for these revisions.

**Professional Accountability and Growth in the Context of Student Achievement**

The ministry’s teacher and leadership development initiatives focus on growth in the context of student achievement. Although the initiatives include a level of external accountability, the focus is on internal accountability, meaning ongoing improvements in instructional practice supported by processes at the school, district and provincial level. Elmore (2002) describes this in *The Price of Accountability*:

> The imperative here is for professionals, policy makers and the public at large to recognize that performance-based accountability, if it is to do what it was intended to do – improve the quality of the educational experience for all students and increase the performance of schools – requires a strategy for investing in the knowledge and skill of educators.

**Support for sustained engagement**

The ministry’s approach to teacher and leadership development recognizes the need for implementation which is coherent, focused, sustainable, and linked to ongoing work in schools. Fullan, Hill and Crevola (2006) note that “sustained engagement with an idea is critical for deep conceptual change and that such understanding takes years rather than months to acquire…and sustained learning opportunities for teachers depend on leadership and coordination at the school and district level” (p. 86).
An example of a teacher development initiative that provides this kind of support is the New Teacher Induction Program. This program takes place in the context of schools as learning communities in which new teachers are provided with opportunities to engage in ongoing professional dialogue with their principals, mentors and colleagues to determine how the induction supports will best meet their professional learning needs, and to plan for continued growth and development. Another example of an initiative linked to ongoing work in schools is the Leadership Framework. The format for the regional half-day professional development sessions to introduce the Leadership Framework to practitioners was tested by the Institute for Education Leadership with a small number of principals and supervisory officers to ensure that the session is grounded in the real life experiences and contexts of practising school and district leaders. A deep understanding of the Leadership Framework is expected to help practitioners adapt their practice to a model that allows them to consolidate the gains already made in student achievement and continue to make progress in a sustainable way.

**Initiatives**

The following section includes a description of some of the ministry’s key teacher and leadership development initiatives, organized around common characteristics: mentoring and supports; reflective practice and growth; self-directed learning and shared leadership; alignment; and ongoing collaboration with education partners.

**Mentoring and Supports**

Research provides compelling evidence that mentoring and coaching programs have a significant impact on how new teachers and school and district leaders experience their first years in the role. Research indicates that these programs lead to more effective teaching among beginning teachers and an accelerated rate of learning among new leaders (Odell & Huling, 2000; Hobson, 2003). In addition, there is evidence that mentored or coached teachers and leaders tend to stay in their roles at a higher rate than those who have not been mentored or coached (NCTAF, 1996; Nanavati, 2006). There is also evidence that mentoring is an overwhelmingly positive learning process for mentors and mentees alike (Hansford, Tennent & Ehrich, 2004). Ontario has introduced a New Teacher Induction Program and a Mentoring and Coaching Pilot for School and System Leaders to provide educators with this kind of support.

**New Teacher Induction Program**

The New Teacher Induction Program is a legislated program that began full implementation in the 2006-07 school year. It provides a full year of professional support to new teachers. All school districts in Ontario are required to offer the program to all newly certified teachers they hire into permanent positions. The Ministry of Education funds the program, establishes and clarifies program expectations, and provides school districts with resources to support implementation.

Based on research identifying key components of induction programs (e.g. Britton et al, 2000; Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999; Guyton et al, 2004), the program consists of the following elements:

- Orientation for all new teachers to the school and school district;
Mentoring for new teachers by experienced teachers; and
Professional development in areas of need identified by new teachers (e.g. classroom management) or topics that relate to government initiatives (e.g. Literacy and Numeracy strategies).

To complete the NTIP successfully, a new teacher is required to receive two “satisfactory” ratings on teacher performance appraisals conducted by their principals within their first two years of teaching.

Mentoring and Coaching Pilot for School and System Leaders
Research suggests that a minimum of two years of sustained support is necessary to guide a new leader through his or her key developmental stages (Wallace Foundation, 2007). The ministry committed to support principals with the development of a mentoring initiative. Further research and input from principals’ and supervisory officers’ associations supported the expansion of the target group to include vice-principals, supervisory officers and directors of education. In response, the ministry has made a significant investment in a Mentoring and Coaching Pilot for School and System Leaders that was launched in April 2007.

The purpose of the Mentoring and Coaching Pilot for School and System Leaders was to examine a number of mentoring and coaching models in order to determine which models, or components of models, are the most effective in supporting the development of newly appointed school and district leaders in Ontario. Findings from the pilot will help inform future ministry policy direction related to mentoring and coaching.

Reflective Practice and Growth
As part of its change strategy, the ministry addressed the need to evaluate both principal and teacher performance within the context of professional growth. The ministry revised the existing teacher performance appraisal system and proposed the development of a standard basis for performance appraisals for principals and vice-principals.

Teacher Performance Appraisal and Annual Learning Plan
When the decision was made to revise the existing teacher performance appraisal system, advice from stakeholders was that it should follow two tracks – one for new teachers and one for experienced teachers – to reflect the different development needs of the two groups. The existing system had 16 competencies against which teachers were evaluated and a standard process that applied to all teachers.

In 2006, a revised Teacher Performance Appraisal system for new teachers was introduced as part of the New Teacher Induction Program. In the revised system, eight of the existing 16 competencies are highlighted as the most essential for new teachers. NTIP is designed to support and promote the continued growth and development of new teachers. An essential part of the process is the requirement for an enrichment plan to support any new teacher having difficulty reaching a satisfactory level.

The revised process for experienced teachers is also designed to support growth and development. It consists of a set of 16 competencies, an individual growth plan – “annual
learning plan (ALP)” – an appraisal meeting every five years or more frequently if the teacher or principal requests it, and a summative report. The ALP provides a vehicle for professional learning and growth both in appraisal years and in the intervening years. The ALP is teacher authored and directed and is developed in consultation with the principal. Updates of the ALP must take into account the professional growth goals and strategies identified in the summative report.

Principal Performance Appraisal

In Ontario, some school districts have principal performance appraisal systems in place, but there is inconsistency across the province. In *Leading Education*, the ministry committed to developing a standard basis for performance appraisals for principal and vice-principals.

Extensive consultations were held with stakeholders to design an overall framework for the development of a performance appraisal model. A key message from the consultations was the need to balance accountability and growth. Given that principals achieve their goals largely indirectly through other people, a goal-oriented model focused on school effectiveness and student outcomes was developed. This model is designed to foster leadership development, provide meaningful appraisals that promote professional learning and growth, and identify opportunities for additional support where required. Underpinning the model, and of direct relevance to the principal’s annual growth plan, is the Leadership Framework that sets out the competencies – knowledge, skills, and attitudes – and practices of effective leaders. It aims to help principals and vice-principals identify areas of growth in order to better reach their goals. An essential element is the ongoing professional dialogue between appraisers and those who are being appraised.

The model was reviewed by principals’ and supervisory officers’ associations and a reference group of practicing principals. Teacher input is being sought. A field test is taking place in 12 school districts over the course of the 2007-08 school year. Approximately 200 principal and vice-principal participants are being appraised by 120 supervisory officers and principals (where a vice-principal is being appraised). An external consultant was hired to conduct the evaluation of the project. The evaluation takes place at a number of stages over the course of the year. Results will inform further policy on principal performance appraisal.

Self-Directed Learning and Shared Leadership

Fundamental to the ministry’s approach to teacher and leadership development has been respect for teachers and school and district leaders as professionals with a prominent role in determining their professional learning needs and how these needs can best be addressed. Current literature notes that, for adult learners, motivation for professional learning is linked to relevance, meaning and choice. Professional learning should offer opportunities to develop competence and a sense of self-efficacy (Broad & Evans, 2006). Two of Ontario’s teacher and leadership development initiatives that encourage self-directed learning and shared leadership are the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program and Ontario’s Leadership Framework of effective practices for school and district leaders.
Teacher Learning and Leadership Program

In 2007, the ministry, in collaboration with Ontario’s teachers’ federations (unions), developed the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) to support the professional development of experienced teachers whose long-term career choice is the classroom. The program funds self-directed professional learning projects in order to foster the following:

- Professional learning, by funding proposals from teachers for innovative, self-chosen learning activities that teachers undertake individually or as part of a community of practice;
- Leadership development, by providing participants in the program with a two-day Leadership Skills for Classroom Teachers training session to help them develop the skills needed to effectively manage their learning project and share their learning with colleagues; and
- Knowledge exchange, by facilitating the sharing of learning and promising practices that will provide benefits to Ontario students.

In February 2008, successful applicants were recommended by their school districts and chosen by a joint ministry-federation committee. These successful applicants were selected based on criteria that included the extent to which their project topic would have an impact on student learning and development and reflect ministry/district/school goals. Also taken into consideration was the degree to which the project was guided by characteristics of effective professional learning identified by a government-stakeholder working group.

Leadership Framework

The ministry developed the Leadership Framework in order to ensure a consistent and effective approach to implementing the leadership initiatives. The Framework consists of three parts: a profile of the practices, skills, knowledge and attitudes of effective principals and vice-principals; a similar profile for supervisory officers; and a third profile for school districts that identifies the practices and procedures effective boards use to support their leaders. The Framework (Appendix B) is built on a large and evolving body of professional knowledge about effective leadership. Leithwood (2005), Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2003) and others all identify similar core leadership practices and competencies. The four key domains of the Framework are: setting direction, building relationships, developing the organization, and leading the instructional program. In addition, a separate domain describes the accountabilities in the role of the principal and supervisory officer in the Ontario context. The continuum of leadership is reflected in the high degree of coherence between the practices for principals and for supervisory officers.

The Framework is based not only on leading research in the field, but also on extensive input and consultation designed to ensure that it reflects the Ontario context, and is sufficiently flexible to allow leaders across the province to use it to respond effectively to local needs and circumstances. For example, in francophone schools and school districts, the application of the competencies and practices will take into consideration the francophone milieu in which the students are educated. In addition, leadership in Catholic schools and districts will be carried out in the context of the district’s articulation of Catholic faith perspectives.
Ontario’s Leadership Framework is a living document that will continue to change as needed, taking into account research evidence as it becomes available, and feedback received as it becomes widely implemented.

Alignment

The ministry is working towards ensuring a coherent approach to teacher and leadership development through a number of initiatives that encourage alignment, including: characteristics of effective professional learning; the Leadership Framework; the Leadership Self-Review Tool; and the Professional Development (PD) Calendar and Leadership Development Working Group.

Characteristics of Effective Professional Learning

The ministry’s Working Table on Teacher Development, composed of education stakeholders, was established in 2005 and worked over the next two years producing recommendations related to the professional growth of new and experienced teachers. In May 2007, the Working Table recommended to the government that the education sector align all professional development programs with five characteristics of effective professional learning, based on current research; specifically, that the programs be coherent, attentive to adult learning styles, goal-oriented, sustainable, and evidence-informed. Presently, professional learning providers are not required to ensure that their programs exhibit these characteristics, but there is a shared commitment to move forward with these in mind.

Leadership Framework

The Leadership Framework provides an integrated system-wide support for distributed leadership. At the heart of the system is the developing leader. Many of the competencies and practices for supervisory officers are the same as those for principals. Both are supported by district practices and procedures. The diagram below shows those relationships.
Leadership Self-Review Tool
Given the importance of system support for principals to allow them to be effective leaders, the Institute for Education Leadership developed the Leadership Self-Review Tool (LSRT) to help school boards assess the support they offer their school leaders. The supports identified are based on the system practices and procedures set out in the Leadership Framework. The tool is a self-administered survey for districts which helps them evaluate their own practices. It is available at www.education-leadership-ontario.ca. Included are recommendations for effective use, a gap analysis scoring sheet, as well as reviews of the research on leadership and student achievement, and reports on the piloting of the LSRT in five school boards. Districts have the flexibility to determine how they will use the tool and can tailor aspects of the survey to their own context.

PD Calendar and Leadership Development Working Group
To ensure a degree of coherence in leadership development across the ministry, an internal working group was developed to strengthen horizontal information sharing and coordinate leadership activities. The group also assists various units in the ministry to understand how to use the Leadership Framework to identify the leadership competencies and practices required for effective implementation of specific initiatives. This alignment with the Framework is intended to ensure that professional learning targeted to school leaders builds overall system leadership capacity.

The Leadership Development Working Group also introduced a calendar of professional learning activities for teachers, school and district leaders and education support staff. The calendar is posted on the ministry web site and lists major professional learning activities planned or anticipated by the ministry throughout the year. The purpose of the calendar is to align and coordinate professional learning activities across the ministry and to assist districts in planning for their professional learning sessions. By coordinating and aligning activities on the calendar, the ministry is working to minimize the amount of time teachers and principals are away from their schools.

Ongoing Collaboration with Education Partners
One of Ontario’s strengths, as well as one of its challenges, is that many organizations have a stake in the education system, including organizations representing teachers, principals, supervisory officers, school district directors (as superintendents are known) and trustees. These organizations, in addition to individual teachers, principals and supervisory officers, provide ongoing input to the ministry on initiatives relating to teacher and leadership development.

Working Table on Teacher Development
The Working Table on Teacher Development provided recommendations to the ministry that significantly influenced the government’s new initiatives for teacher development and support, including the New Teacher Induction Program, a revised performance appraisal system for experienced teachers, and ongoing professional learning for teachers.

The Working Table has also formed a Provincial Teacher Professional Learning Committee (TPLC) of education partners to steer future initiatives. The TPLC will identify and implement structures and supports to assist in the co-ordination of teachers’ professional learning. It will
provide insight into and oversight of all ministry-funded initiatives, and will provide a clear focus and direction for teachers to continue developing.

**Teacher Preparation Roundtable**
In 2007, the Ministries of Education and of Training, Colleges and Universities established a Teacher Preparation Roundtable to gain advice from stakeholders regarding methods for ensuring an adequate supply of qualified teachers in the province, and to respond to recommendations for revising the province’s teacher education programs.

**Institute for Education Leadership**
The ministry conducted an inter-jurisdictional scan, which indicated that a forum for coordinating research, development and support for principals and other education leaders exists in an institutionalized way in jurisdictions around the world, although the form and details vary. In December 2006, the ministry inaugurated an Institute for Education Leadership, and provided significant funding support.

The Institute includes representation from Ontario’s strata of administrators (i.e. vice-principals and principals, supervisory officers, and directors of education) and the public (secular), Catholic and francophone sectors, as well as representation from the ministry. It is a unique partnership that operates at arm’s length from the ministry and makes decisions based on consensus. Its mandate is to support the professional learning and growth of school and district leaders through research and effective practice, with a focus on improving student achievement. It also sponsors professional learning activities. Everything it undertakes is done with a “tri-level” approach (i.e. involving collaboration among, and focusing on, the three levels of school, district and ministry). The institute currently is engaged in a succession planning study of school and school board administrators to better understand who they are and what their training needs might be. Its most recent undertaking is to support the implementation of the Leadership Framework. The key value of the Institute is that it provides the “practice” element of the “research information policy and practice” sequence.

**Teacher Performance Appraisal Provincial Coordinating Committee**
The ministry developed a training strategy to support the effective implementation of the revised Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) process for experienced teachers. The strategy is based on partnership with school districts, teachers’ federations and principals’ associations at local, regional, and provincial levels to help ensure the effective implementation of the revised appraisal process. Partnership with school districts through the Council of Ontario Directors of Education and supervisory officers’ associations is also an important element for effective implementation.

The strategy has two components: a provincial coordinating committee and regional support teams. The committee works with the ministry to encourage positive and collaborative working relationships between teachers and principals and to support the development and delivery of meaningful training opportunities on the revised appraisal process for both teachers and principals. It plays an active role in helping to build support and capacity among all stakeholders and school districts for the revised appraisal process. The regional support teams include regional ministry staff and one or more representatives from districts in the region (supervisory officers, principals and/or teachers). Teachers’ federations and principals’ associations are encouraged to
participate in the teams. The purpose of the regional support teams is to help build capacity at a regional level across the province, and to provide sustainable ongoing support to school districts for the implementation of the revised TPA process. The teams also address issues arising during implementation.

**Early Evidence of Impact**

The changes the ministry has introduced to better support teachers and school and district leaders are very recent; indeed, some have not yet been implemented province-wide and a full assessment of their success will happen in the future. However, the ministry and its partners have made significant progress to date.

The New Teacher Induction Program was launched successfully across the province in the 2006-07 school year. In the first full year of the program:

- 6,188 new teachers (both full and part-time) were hired into permanent positions between March 1 and October 1, 2006, and participated in the NTIP; and
- 91.5 per cent of school districts offered board level training for mentors.

The retention rate for new teachers who participated in the first year of the NTIP is expected to be at least 90 per cent. In addition, according to a survey conducted by the Ontario College of Teachers, new teachers rate the program highly. To ensure accountability and ongoing refinements to the program, a formal two-year evaluation of the NTIP began in 2007 and will address the impact of the program and the qualitative experiences of the program participants.

Some refinements are already being made to the program based on research conducted by the Ministry of Education. After conducting an online survey of supply teachers hired by Ontario’s school districts under long-term contracts (i.e. Long-Term Occasional Teachers) in order to gain information about the make-up of this group and their professional learning needs, the government revised its policy regarding delivery of the NTIP for the 2007-08 school year. Whereas school districts were previously only permitted to use NTIP funds to offer the program to new teachers hired into permanent positions, the government is now permitting school districts to use these funds to offer the program to their beginning Long-Term Occasional Teachers.

Ontario’s other teacher learning initiatives will be monitored and evaluated as they become fully implemented. However, there are already clear signs of improved morale among classroom educators: individual teachers and their federations say they feel more respected as professionals, and more teachers are choosing to participate in professional learning.

On the leadership side, the cornerstone of the strategy is the Leadership Framework. Internally, it is being integrated into other initiatives, such as mentoring and coaching and principal performance appraisal, as well as initiatives in other parts of the ministry. In the sector, the Institute for Education Leadership has adopted it and is actively working to ensure its effective implementation. It will be rolled out across the province in a series of invitational workshops over the 2008-09 school year. Interest from school boards is high and some are already using the materials prior to their formal introduction in a workshop.
Participants in the Mentoring and Coaching Pilot for principals, vice-principals and supervisory officers view it positively and have indicated an interest in moving the initiative forward. Effective practices are emerging in the areas of project organization, program development, implementation and sustainability. The findings are consistent with earlier research that informed the development of the pilot, lending confidence to the plans for expansion in future years and showing the value of using a pilot approach for new initiatives. Feedback from the evaluation of the Principal Performance Appraisal field test suggests that a number of field test participants found it initially challenging to set meaningful goals, but as they became more engaged they viewed it positively. They see performance appraisal linked to the Leadership Framework as an opportunity for growth.

Next Steps

The government has committed to supporting leadership development and is developing a comprehensive strategy to address key challenges. The work undertaken over the past four years provides a sound policy basis for the future direction. It should address both individual and organizational (school board) development. The ministry is holding a brief consultation on the strategy. Next steps will be to connect the dots and pull initiatives together into a comprehensive leadership strategy with four main thrusts: attracting, recruiting and retaining the right people in the role, making the role more attractive and manageable, providing career-long professional learning supports and creating high performance measures.

Conclusions

The Ontario Ministry of Education has made great progress with its education reform agenda, which relies on effective teachers and school and district leaders for its success. As part of its teacher and leadership development strategy, the ministry is continuing to collaborate with education partners. It is continuing to develop and implement a continuum of professional learning that is based on research and effective practice and focuses on growth and accountability in the context of student achievement. The ministry understands that transforming the culture of the education sector into one in which continuous professional learning is embedded in educators’ daily practice is key to sustained education reform. The ultimate beneficiaries are Ontario’s more than two million students.
Bibliography


APPENDIX A
Reach Every Student

Energizing Ontario Education

WINTER 2008
Introduction

Each school day, two million students attend Ontario’s publicly funded schools. They gather together to learn, with one another and from one another; to acquire the skills needed to succeed in school and in life; and to become confident, well-rounded, critical thinkers.

This is a tall order, and yet we expect even more from our schools.

Each student is unique. Our classrooms are filled with students from every country and every circumstance. All parents hope our schools will bring out the very best in their children and encourage them to reach their full potential. Everyone who works in education, teachers and support workers, and everyone in our government, shares that same firm hope for Ontario’s students.

Our commitment is to every student. This means both “raising the bar,” to encourage the absolute highest achievement from our students, and “closing the gap,” to ensure that we develop strategies to help every student learn, no matter their personal circumstances.

Our collective hope for our students is the driving force behind everything we do in education. A strong, publicly funded education system is at the very heart of this government’s mandate and is the foundation of our province’s future prosperity. The work that goes on in our schools every day is critically important—

to our students, yes, and also to the very future of our province. Ultimately, our schools are called to partner with Ontario’s parents to help students become the best they can be individually. But the schools’ role is also to help students develop into highly skilled, knowledgeable, caring citizens who contribute to our strong economy and a cohesive society. That purpose highlights both the unique promise and the amazing possibility inherent in our publicly funded system.

The first object of a wise government should be the education of the people.

EGERTON RYERSON

If we had to pick a single word to epitomize our aspirations, it would be an education system that “energizes” everyone in it or who comes into contact with it. One measure of success at the end of the next four years, therefore, will be the excitement and pride that Ontarians feel about the province’s publicly funded schools.

This paper presents the government’s plan to continue working with our partners to build and energize Ontario’s schools. Together, we will reach every student and create an education system that is second to none.
Responding to the Challenge

In 2003, the newly elected government inherited an education system that was in turmoil. It responded by making education its first priority, setting bold targets, and investing in the improvement of schools in partnership with local educators and communities. Today, we are seeing success — student achievement is up, more students are graduating, teacher morale has improved, and overall we believe people are satisfied with the direction of Ontario’s education reform.

But there is more work to be done. As the government begins a second mandate, there are two kinds of challenges. One, that we merely continue down the path of incremental improvements. Or two, that we enlarge the agenda so much that it becomes unwieldy and diffuse. Instead, we have chosen to strike a middle ground that substantially extends our initial strategies and builds on successes to date.

It is also common for second-term governments to lose the fresh momentum they had created in their first term. Britain obtained substantial improvements in literacy and numeracy during Prime Minister Tony Blair’s first term, which ran from 1997-2001. Then, performance plateaued as the government lost focus in its second term (2002-2006), even though it had received a decisive majority from the electorate.

Recently, Sir Michael Barber, the chief architect of the Blair government’s literacy and numeracy strategy, was asked what he wished they had done differently in their second term. He indicated that he wished the government had kept the sharp focus on literacy and numeracy, sustained the core implementation methodology for another four years, and showed how they were strongly supportive of a broad curriculum with literacy and numeracy deeply and widely integrated with the education of the whole child.

With these lessons in mind, over the next four years we will continue to work in partnership with the public and the education sector to substantially improve Ontario’s publicly funded education system. In this paper, we outline the core priorities and supporting conditions that will get us there.
Core Priorities

We know that education and schooling are key to our future prosperity and to strengthening our society. It will take a great deal of commitment, skill and collective energy to achieve the ambitious agenda that we have set out.

We commit to prioritizing and integrating our efforts, as well as establishing the conditions needed to unleash the potential of all students. We hope this will energize all levels of the system and our partners.

Our efforts will be sharply focused on three core priorities:

1. **High levels of student achievement**
   - Going deeper and wider on literacy and numeracy, including reaching the targets of 75 per cent of students achieving at the provincial standard in Grade 6
   - Continuing innovation in secondary schools in reaching the 85 per cent graduation rate.

2. **Reduced gaps in student achievement**
   - Reducing the gap in achievement for those groups of students who, for whatever reason, need extra help.

3. **Increased public confidence in publicly funded education**
   - Fostering greater two-way engagement with the public to inform the implementation of the mandate and to foster public confidence
   - Strengthening the role of schools as the heart of communities
   - Recognizing the pivotal role of schools in developing the workforce and citizens of tomorrow.
Core Priority 1  
High Levels of Student Achievement

Strong literacy and numeracy skills are the critical foundation for all other academic achievement and for a lifetime of success. Their importance cannot be overstated. That is why we will continue to focus on ensuring that our youngest students start to build this foundation. And, we will support students throughout their years in school so they have the highest possible achievement in both literacy and numeracy.

Wherever illiteracy is a problem, it's as fundamental a problem as getting enough to eat or a place to sleep. The native language takes precedence over every other subject of study: nothing else can compare with it in usefulness.

NORTHROP FRYE

Deepen and Widen Literacy and Numeracy Efforts
We will expand and deepen the implementation of high-quality literacy and numeracy practices and achievement in all school boards and schools.

Our goal is to have 75 per cent of 12-year-old students achieving a high standard of proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Results for all Grade 3 and 6 assessment areas have improved since the government came to office in 2003. The majority of test results have improved by at least 10 percentage points over the past four years.

The previous government created the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) in 1996. Ontario’s provincial standard, which the government established with the EQAO, is the equivalent of a 70 per cent or “B” grade. If we accept a simple “passing grade” of 50 per cent or better as the benchmark, as some jurisdictions do, over 90 per cent of our Grade 3 and 6 students can read, write, and do basic arithmetic. However, Ontario’s commitment to excellence and “raising the bar” means we are aiming higher.

We know that merely passing is not good enough for students heading into the global economy and complex society of 2008 and beyond. Literacy in both language and mathematics is constantly evolving and today requires highly sophisticated understanding and skills.

To succeed in a knowledge economy, students must develop knowledge and skills that will enable them to analyze complex problems. Our broadly defined concept of literacy is reflected in the Ontario curriculum, which is designed to develop students’ reading, writing, and mathematical skills, abilities, and knowledge at both basic and higher levels.

Indeed, our goal in literacy and numeracy, as well as in other areas of the curriculum,
is to foster creative expression to prepare students for the challenges they will encounter in an ever more complex global society.

Our objectives from the beginning have been to deepen and to widen students’ literacy and numeracy: deepen by helping students fully develop the abilities outlined in the definitions above; and widen by emphasizing how literacy and numeracy interact with learning in all subjects to contribute to the development of the whole student. The “supporting conditions” for achieving these objectives are described later in this paper.

Advanced literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills are the keys to successful lives for students and for a prosperous society. As research clearly shows, growth in a country’s economic and educational competitiveness is directly linked to a strong emphasis on literacy in the early years of school.

Reading achievement is the foundation for success throughout the school years. Children who successfully learn to read in the early primary years are well prepared to read for learning and for pleasure in the years to come.

We also know that those who struggle with reading in Grades 1 to 3 are at a serious disadvantage, academically and in other ways.

They increasingly fall behind in other subjects, are more likely to suffer from low self-esteem, and, in their teen years, are more likely to drop out of school.

Similar findings related to numeracy show that positive attitudes towards mathematics, the ability to understand key concepts, and solid mathematical skills are key indicators of success in school and later in life.

While continuing our efforts in the early elementary years, we will also be paying additional attention to improvements in literacy and numeracy for students in Grades 4 through 8. With all the developmental and social changes facing children in these years, it is crucial that we keep students engaged in meaningful learning through new instructional strategies, hands-on learning, the use of technology, and adequate class sizes.

### Advanced Literacy and Numeracy Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy in the 21st Century</th>
<th>Numeracy in the 21st Century</th>
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<td>Literacy is defined as the ability to use language and images in rich and varied forms to read, write, listen, view, represent, and think critically about ideas. It involves the capacity to access, manage, and evaluate information; to think imaginatively and analytically; and to communicate thoughts and ideas effectively. Literacy includes critical thinking and reasoning to solve problems and make decisions related to issues of fairness, equity, and social justice. Literacy connects individuals and communities and is an essential tool for personal growth and active participation in a cohesive, democratic society.</td>
<td>The study of mathematics equips students with knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that are essential for successful and rewarding participation in society. Mathematic structures, operations, processes, and language provide students with a framework and tools for reasoning, justifying conclusions, and expressing quantitative and qualitative ideas clearly. Through mathematical activities that are practical and relevant to their lives, students develop mathematic understanding, problem-solving skills, and related technological skills they can apply in their daily lives and in the future workplace.</td>
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Continue Innovation in Secondary Schools

Much has been achieved over a short period of time to boost student achievement and make progress towards our target of having 85 per cent of students graduate within five years of starting secondary school. Reaching this target would put Ontario's graduation rate among the highest in Canada.

There are two interrelated aspects to our Student Success Strategy. The first is innovative programs and instruction with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. We will also continue expanding course choices, program innovation, and options, including: cooperative education, dual credits, specialist high skills majors, credits for external credentials, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program.

We will continue to implement the Student Success Strategy in a differentiated way in the French-language sector with “Destination réussite,” leveraging the new joint organizational capacity created by the sharing of resources between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

We will also enhance modes of delivery by:
- expanding e-learning opportunities;
- creating more resources for students and parents;
- increasing opportunities for experiential learning with community partners; and
- supporting specialized schools in business, technology, science, the arts, and sports.

In all of these endeavours, we will stay focused on improving instruction by helping secondary school teachers more fully address the needs of each student.

The second aspect is more personalized help and support for students, beginning with strategies to mitigate the adverse effects experienced by some students in the transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9. We will also address the potential negative impact of other transitions – such as arriving part-way through the school year – that can cause students to fall behind or become disengaged from school.

We know that a caring adult in the school who takes an interest in a student can make all the difference for those on the verge of dropping out. For this reason, we have provided funds for Student Success Teams. Every secondary school student now has access to a dedicated team that includes a principal, teachers, a guidance counsellor, and support workers. These teams provide extra attention and support for individual students and lead transition planning for the move from elementary to secondary school, with a particular focus on helping struggling students.

Innovation at the secondary school level is also critical to encouraging adults – whether in their early twenties or well into their working life – to come back and continue their education. Education and training for adults are critical for the economic prosperity and social well-being of individuals and communities in Ontario. We will continue to work with our partners in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, and with various stakeholders, to ensure that programs are better coordinated and widely accessible.

Our Student Success Strategy will maintain high standards for our students. The strategy is not about making our secondary schools easier but about making them more engaging and relevant, as well as supporting students so they can achieve high levels of skill and understanding across a broad curriculum.
Equity and excellence go hand in hand. And a quality education for all in publicly funded schools is a key feature of fostering social cohesion – an inclusive society where diversity is the hallmark, and where all cultures are embraced within a common set of values.

Our goal is to foster social cohesion through a publicly funded education system that respects diversity and brings all students together to learn through a shared set of experiences.

Our goal is to reach every student, regardless of his or her personal circumstances. Our commitment to both higher achievement and reduced gaps in performance is increasingly being recognized internationally as a unique strength of Ontario’s approach to education.

This is why, for example, the implementation of our new Aboriginal education strategy is so important. As indicated in the Throne Speech, the government is committed to working with all partners, with respect and in collaboration, to improve the quality of life and expand economic opportunities for Aboriginal peoples in our province.

Recent immigrants, children from low-income families, French-language students, boys and students with special needs are just some of the other groups who may be at risk of lower academic achievement.

If you give kids hands-on attention and introduce them to the world of imagination through books, you give them something that can overcome poverty and despair.

JAMES BARTLEMAN

One of the most consistent findings in the educational literature is the strong link between socio-economic status and educational achievement. Poverty matters in education. But fortunately, Ontario educators are proving that poverty is not destiny. Direct interventions, such as our Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership (OFIP), are already helping to narrow the achievement gap between poor children and their wealthier counterparts.

In a truly equitable system, factors such as race, gender and socio-economic status do not prevent students from achieving ambitious outcomes. Our experience shows that barriers can be removed when all education partners create the conditions needed for success.
In spite of the progress realized to date, there are still gaps in achievement among various groups of Ontario students. We fully recognize that equity and excellence, far from being polar opposites, are two sides of the same coin. We cannot achieve one without the other. That is why we have several strategies underway that are making a difference. These include:

- the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework;
- the Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership;
- targeted resources and training to help teachers improve boys’ literacy;
- Destination réussite, volet 2 (targeted strategies for Grade 7 to 12 students in French-language secondary schools);
- an ongoing cycle of curriculum review to ensure that the curriculum reflects the reality and diversity of students’ lives;
- summer programs to ensure that youth, particularly in priority neighbourhoods, have access to programs and support when regular classes end for the year.

Even with all that is being done, we recognize that more effort is needed to reach students who are struggling. We will improve the integration of services on which our young people and their families rely. And by expanding successful tutoring initiatives and giving students more access to help with homework, online and after school, we will better meet these students’ needs.

In this paper, we recommit to educating all children to the highest possible level. Working with our education partners, we are confident we can address the urgent need to close the achievement gap for students across the province.
Core Priority 3

Increased Public Confidence in Our Publicly Funded Schools

Public confidence is key to creating communities that value learning and support the investment and social commitment needed to maintain our publicly funded schools. Our schools are not just buildings where learning occurs. At their best, they are also the heart of our communities. A full 95 per cent of Ontario’s students attend our publicly funded schools. They are the workforce and citizens of tomorrow. They represent our future prosperity.

High levels of satisfaction and confidence in our schools are central to establishing strong community-school partnerships and keeping the focus and energy of the education sector on improving support for student learning. So a key goal of our work will be to build a growing confidence — among parents and non-parents — in the publicly funded education system so Ontarians are enthusiastically supportive of our schools.

Two recent international reports, based on 2006 data, are cause for growing pride and confirm our own strong achievement results.

In the Grade 4 reading results of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), only Hong Kong and the Russian Federation performed statistically higher than Ontario among 45 countries and provinces. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report, which assessed the achievement of 15-year-old students in 57 participating countries, produced similar impressive results. Ontario has demonstrated significant gains in science and continuing high performance in reading and mathematics since 2000. In science, the major focus of PISA 2006, only students in Finland and Hong Kong-China had better overall science achievement.

Despite our students’ very strong showing on international assessments, we cannot be complacent. All countries are pushing forward, and to stand still is to move backwards in global terms.

The broader Ontario public appears to believe that we have an adequate or good education system. Building confidence in our schools will require maintaining high standards and making ongoing improvements in student achievement. Maintaining our school buildings and grounds in good physical condition and ensuring that our schools are safe, healthy places for students to learn are also very important in upholding public confidence.

We must build awareness of the good news in education, so that Ontarians are justifiably proud of the quality of our system and our internationally competitive standing. To achieve this, we will enhance opportunities for two-way communication with the broader public and with community and business leaders.

For French-language schools, this initiative includes a renewed emphasis on the implementation of the government’s Aménagement linguistique policy, with a view to sustain the development of Franco-Ontarian communities, where assimilation remains a constant challenge.

Our goal is to make publicly funded schools the schools of choice for all parents.
As we remain sharply focused on our three core priorities, we must also ensure that a variety of supporting conditions are in place. With these supporting conditions, our strategy will address the education of the whole student and provide the conditions necessary for students to thrive.

**Early Childhood Learning**
A major new commitment has been made to provide full-day learning for all four- and five-year-olds. To this end, $200 million will be allocated for 2010 and $300 million for 2011. The success of this program will depend on strong cooperation with the community and with schools. The issues of implementation are considerable, and the government has appointed Dr. Charles Pascal as Special Advisor to the Premier to assist with this initiative. He will work with the government and with education and community partners to ensure that the program meets the needs of our youngest students. This commitment is crucial to our students’ growing success at the elementary level and will enhance the lifelong success of students who participate.

**Arts Education**
Arts programs can connect with students in ways that other studies don’t. For some students, the opportunity for this form of creative expression keeps them coming back to school. Arts education also fosters important skills, such as creativity and innovation. There is evidence to demonstrate a link between mathematical reasoning and expression, and music. Expression through drama is enhanced by strong literacy skills and vice versa. An appreciation of the arts for their own sake is a fulfilling and socially vital activity.

We have been and will continue to be strong supporters of the arts in both elementary and secondary schools. A focus on the arts is critical to engage a broader range of students by stimulating different learning styles and ways of thinking. Creative expression is an emphasis in all of our curriculum priorities. This focus will build upon the almost 2,000 new specialist teachers funded in elementary schools in the government’s first term.

We are not ignoring the other specific areas of the curriculum, such as science, technology, or history. These subjects are taught in their own right as schools go about implementing the provincial curriculum. All subjects improve when literacy across the curriculum is a priority.

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**Supporting Conditions**

- Early Childhood Learning
- Arts Education
- Character Development
- Student Engagement
- Safe and Healthy Schools
- Parent Engagement

- Peace and Progress
- School Buildings
- Small Class Sizes
- Professional Learning
- Leadership
Character Development
The government will continue its focus on this key initiative, which directly relates to the Premier’s commitment to support schools as agents of social cohesion that nurture students’ academic, personal, and social development. The government has already made a strong start by working collaboratively with school boards across the province.

We need more than ever to look at the public education system as the primary tool we have to ensure that children are able to grow up to become citizens.

JOHN RALSTON SAUL

The best work on character development integrates respect for diversity, citizenship development, personal and emotional intelligence, ethical behaviour, and academic achievement. Personal and social development and academic achievement go hand in hand.

School staff have much to offer our students in this area. Parents, government, and community partners also have distinct roles. As well, Ontario’s students themselves can help to shape school culture. Our shared vision is to ensure that schools are safe, caring, and inclusive places where students and staff treat one another with respect and where students thrive.

Student Engagement
When students are engaged in their learning and social environment, they are better able to develop the skills and knowledge and grasp the opportunities that can help them reach their full potential, pursue lifelong learning, and contribute to a prosperous, cohesive society. As we move forward with our education agenda, we will bring new energy to our efforts to foster student engagement, both academic and social.

Safe and Healthy Schools
Every student has a right to feel safe and to be safe in school and on school grounds. Our government will do its part. The education and safety of our students are a shared responsibility that we take very seriously. We will continue to work in close partnership with Ontario’s school boards and with staff, students, parents, community partners, and others to make our schools safe for all students, staff, and visitors. That means continuing and building on our work to reduce bullying, expanding programs and staff supports for at-risk students, and providing programs for suspended and expelled students.

We have also launched the next steps in our Healthy Schools strategy, designed to promote a lifetime of smart food choices and active living. This strategy includes taking action to drop trans fat from school cafeteria menus and vending machines.

Ensuring that our schools are safe and healthy is essential to students’ well-being. Delivering health and safety measures in an integrated fashion creates a positive spiral – with success in one area providing a springboard for success in another.
Parent Engagement
Explicit initiatives to enhance parent engagement will be an integral part of our strategy to strengthen schools and build public confidence. The Parent Engagement Office will help identify and promote specific parent involvement practices that are known to be effective in supporting student achievement. We will encourage regular surveys of parents to gauge their satisfaction with the quality of education and track it over time. The newly created Provincial Parent Board will also enhance the system’s responsiveness to parents.

Peace and Progress
Four years ago, the new government faced the fact that a staggering 26 million learning days had been lost in our schools in the previous eight years due to strikes, lockouts, and work stoppages. We committed, instead, to respect all education staff and to work in partnership with them. The government’s first-term “peace and stability” priority was highly successful in establishing four years of a positive climate where not a single learning day was lost to strikes by full-time teachers.

Most collective agreements in Ontario’s schools expire in August 2008. We are committed to facilitating an ongoing period of peace and stability that will benefit everyone. Together, we must establish a new set of agreements so that no time or energy is lost as we work together to improve student achievement and build confidence in our schools.

Four years ago, we created conditions for peaceful labour relations to prevent instability. This time, we seek peace and progress. We will work towards a partnership with teachers and support workers that enhances student achievement.

It is not just labour peace that matters. Positive relationships with, and commitment from, everyone involved in our schools all add up to make a daily difference in the lives of students. A key outcome will be teachers, school staff, and administrators who are skilled, enthused and engaged – who are excited about and fulfilled by their profession and see it as one of the highest callings.

School Buildings
Visibly better and upgraded facilities are needed in many areas. Buildings that are in poor repair undermine parents’ confidence as they contemplate sending their children to school. These conditions also undermine the motivation of school staff and students. That is why we have made substantial investments to improve school buildings in the last four years.

Much progress has been made, but the job isn’t done. We will continue to invest in capital improvements to schools around the province. This will require the cooperation of each school board, as well as cooperation between neighbouring boards, municipalities, and other service providers. For parents, students, and all of our education partners in neighbourhoods around the province, school buildings that are in good shape and have up-to-date facilities can be tangible reminders of a high-quality education system of which Ontarians can be proud.

Small Class Sizes
Small class sizes will continue to be a priority. Almost 90 per cent of primary (JK through Grade 3) classrooms now have 20 students or fewer, and we will fulfil our commitment to reaching 90 per cent. In addition, we have committed $150 million to initiatives for Grades 4 to 8, some of which will be used to reduce class sizes. We have always addressed class size in conjunction with improving
classroom instruction. Because learning doesn’t improve just as a result of reducing the number of students in the class, we have directly focused on improvements in instruction.

**Professional Learning**

Teacher education and the continuous professional learning of all education staff are key features of our strategy.

We are firmly committed to the professional development of support staff so they are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills. Everyone who works in our school system has an important role to play in creating a high-quality education system that is among the best in the world.

No bubble is so iridescent or floats longer than that blown by the successful teacher.

*SIR WILLIAM OSLER*

A recent report that examined the “top performing” school systems in the world (including Ontario) found that “selecting, getting and supporting the right people into teaching” was one of the most important qualities of high-performing systems. Getting the “right people” meant selecting individuals with “a high overall level of literacy and numeracy, strong interpersonal and communications skills, a willingness to learn and the motivation to teach.” These prospective teachers should come from all our communities – reflecting the diversity of our students and the rich tapestry of Ontario’s communities.

We need to continue to attract graduates with strong skills and commitment to the teaching profession, give them strong integrated theory and practice experiences, and support them in the critical first years of teaching. We will place special emphasis on enhancing our successful teacher induction program.

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) has often stated how critical the overall climate and specific practices can be to teachers’ motivation and commitment. In the 1990s, when teacher morale was low, OCT stated that for any given three-year cohort of new teachers, approximately 30 per cent dropped out by the end of their third year. The most recent statistics indicate that this number has now fallen to less than 10 per cent.

**Leadership**

Research shows that school leadership, especially by the principal, is the second most important factor (next to the teacher) when it comes to impact on student learning. School principals have a special responsibility to focus on what it takes to implement the core priorities identified earlier in this paper. We will support principals’ development in this regard with a more comprehensive leadership strategy.

School board leadership (trustees, directors and supervisory officers) also needs ongoing development to improve the ability of board leaders to act together within the district to implement the core priorities and provide the supporting conditions required. In this respect, further efforts are needed to improve school board governance and the relationship between trustees and directors. Ten years after substantial changes to school board governance, it is time to clarify and modernize the role of trustees to ensure that they have the supports they need to make sound decisions essential to student success.
Moving Forward

A strong publicly funded education system is the foundation of the competitive economy and cohesive society that Ontarians have called upon this government to help create. Now is the time to redouble our efforts and to be inspired by the shared commitment and shared hope for further substantial improvements.

The Premier has once again made education his top priority. He leads a government that believes publicly funded education is the cornerstone of democracy and the key to our future economic success.

The government’s second mandate is a new call to action for parent, student, sector and community engagement to energize us all to create better schools and a stronger Ontario. We should all have a sense of impatience about getting on with the agenda outlined in this paper.

Moving forward means not only expanding our strategies to support student achievement, but also fostering the right supporting conditions and providing the necessary underpinnings.

We will continue to deliver appropriate and strategic funding so that our schools have the resources they need. We will also work with our partners to ensure that our schools have the capacity to achieve our goals. And we will continue using data and results to assess our work, monitor progress, and address situations where additional guidance may be necessary.

Through it all, extensive two-way communication with our partners and the public will be key.

We are committed fully to this energizing agenda, which builds on the progress to date and deepens our strategies and efforts going forward.

During the next four years, each of us is called upon to recognize our mutual responsibility for improving the educational outcomes of all students and promoting their meaningful participation in Ontario society.

Whether at the school, community, or international level, there is much good news in education. We must all commit to trumpeting our students’ successes publicly whenever we can. Ontario has a great story to tell, and we should tell it proudly.

Together we will reach every student.

Without knowledge the world is bereft of culture. And so we must be educators and students both.

ROBERTA BONDAR
APPENDIX B
Preamble to the Leadership Frameworks for Principals and Vice-Principals and for Supervisory Officers

Introduction
Leadership is second only to teaching in its impact on student outcomes\(^1\). Principals and vice-principals play an essential role as school leaders to achieve this impact. Supervisory officers, in turn, play a critical role by putting in place supportive system practices and procedures for school and system leaders. In the ministry discussion paper, *Leading Education: New Supports for Principals and Vice-principals in Ontario Publicly Funded Schools*, released in December 2005, a commitment was made to a number of initiatives intended to develop, support and sustain the highest quality leadership possible in schools and boards across the province. In keeping with this commitment, and in order to ensure a consistent and effective approach to implementing these initiatives, the Leadership Framework for Principals and Vice-Principals and the Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers (the frameworks) were developed.

Purposes
The purposes of the frameworks are to:

- inspire a shared vision of leadership in schools and boards
- promote a common language that fosters an understanding of leadership and what it means to be a school and system leader
- identify the practices and competencies that describe effective leadership
- guide the design and implementation of professional learning and development for school and system leaders.

The frameworks are not intended as a job description for the leader, nor as a checklist against which to assess performance. Rather, they provide frameworks for growth, which are sufficiently detailed to describe good leadership, but broad enough to be applicable in the various contexts in which school and system leaders function throughout their career.

Structure of the Frameworks
The frameworks are made up of two parts:

- Part One – Leader Practices and Competencies
- Part Two – System Practices and Procedures

Part One – Leader Practices and Competencies
Leader practices are the actions, behaviours and functions found through research and professional experience to have a positive impact on student achievement. Leader competencies are the skills, knowledge and attitudes of effective school or system leaders.

Leader practices and competencies are organized into five domains, in no particular order: setting directions, building relationships and developing people, developing the organization, leading the instructional program, and securing accountability. Each domain is then described through the practices, skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to the domain.

Part Two – System Practices and Procedures
System practices and procedures, which support successful school leadership, are organized into six domains, in no particular order: school and district improvement, fostering a culture of professionalism, leadership development, administrative structures, parent and community supports, and succession planning. Each domain is then described through indicators relevant to the domain. The Leadership Self-Review Tool\(^2\) provides a set of materials leaders can use to assess the extent to which system practices and procedures provide the structures and supports principals and vice-principals need to be successful school leaders.

Background on the Development of the Frameworks
The Leadership Framework for Principals and Vice-Principals and the Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers complement each other to the extent that successful leaders draw on the same fundamental repertoire of leadership practices. The Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers is tailored to address the complexity of supervisory officer roles as reflected in legislation and in the wide-ranging academic and administrative settings within which they provide leadership.

Contextual factors that should be taken into account when reviewing the frameworks include the research foundations, the Ontario perspective, the evolving focus of school leaders, and the range in roles and responsibilities of supervisory officers in the Ontario context.

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\(^2\) The Leadership Self-Review Tool is available on the ministry’s website at [www.ontario.ca/eduleadership](http://www.ontario.ca/eduleadership).
Research Foundations
There is currently a large and evolving body of professional knowledge about effective leadership. The frameworks rely on this research to define leadership practice as a collection of patterned actions that draw on a set of competencies comprised of skills, knowledge and attitudes. The core leadership practices delineated in the frameworks are those that have been found to have the greatest impact on student outcomes.

These broad categories of leadership practices are the basis for the articulation of more finely detailed practices, informed by professional experience, in four of the five domains of the frameworks: setting directions, building relationships and developing people, developing the organization, and leading the instructional program. The fifth domain, securing accountability, was developed to specifically address the accountability function of school and system leaders in all the domains, as practised in the Ontario context.

The Ontario Context
Successful school and system leadership is responsive to the diverse nature of Ontario’s communities. The practices and competencies in the frameworks describe leadership broadly in a way that is intended to be inclusive of the diversity found in schools and communities across the province. Their application will be shaped and informed by the community context. For example, in francophone schools and school boards, the application of the practices and competencies will take into consideration the implementation of the Politique d'aménagement linguistique (PAL) already underway in these boards. In another example, leadership in Catholic schools and boards will be carried out in the context of the board’s articulation of Catholic faith perspectives.

The demographic and contextual diversity in Ontario schools together with the province’s commitment to high levels of student achievement have heightened the importance of school and system leaders as instructional leaders who support the diverse needs of all students through their commitment to equity in student outcome. As instructional leaders, principals and supervisory officers embed direct involvement in instruction in their daily work through team work with all staff focused on improved school and classroom practices. As leaders who are committed to equity of outcome, they help to ensure inclusive and instructionally effective learning environments that increase the likelihood that all students will be successful learners. School and system leaders carry out these specific aspects of their role using a growth-oriented and collaborative approach across all the domains of the frameworks.

The Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers additionally takes into account the diverse functions and duties of system leaders: those with direct school accountability will apply leadership practices and competencies differently from those whose main focus is on district administration related to human resources or business.

Practices and competencies evolve as leaders move through various career stages, specialized assignments, and unique educational environments. School and system leaders expand and strengthen their repertoire of practices, skills, knowledge and attitudes over time, provided they have opportunities to grow and are supported by school boards that are committed to leadership development.

Note: The frameworks are working drafts which continue to evolve as a result of continued research in Ontario and international jurisdictions and through consultation with a cross section of stakeholders. Individual school and system leaders can provide feedback on the framework to the ministry or to the Institute for Education Leadership through their associations.

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Leadership Framework for Principals and Vice-Principals

Part 1: Leader Practices and Competencies

Setting Directions

The principal builds a shared vision, fosters the acceptance of goal groups and sets and communicates high performance expectations.

Practices:
The principal:
- ensures the vision is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon by all
- works within the school community to translate the vision into agreed objectives and operational plans which promote and sustain school improvement
- demonstrates the vision and values in everyday work and practice
- motivates and works with others to create a shared culture and positive climate
- ensures creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate technologies to achieve excellence
- ensures that strategic plans take account of the diversity, values, and experience of the school community
- provides ongoing and effective communication with the school community

Building Relationships and Developing People

The principal strives to foster genuine trusting relationships with students, staff, families and communities, guided by a sense of mutual respect. The principal affirms and empowers others to work in the best interests of all students.

Practices:
The principal:
- treats people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive school culture
- develops effective strategies for staff induction, professional learning and performance review
- engages staff in professional learning
- develops and implements effective strategies for leadership development
- uses delegation effectively to provide opportunities for staff to self-actualize
- acknowledges and celebrates the achievements of individuals and teams
- encourages colleagues to take intellectual risk
- leads by example, modeling core values
- demonstrates transparent decision-making and consistency between words and deeds
- maintains high visibility in the school and quality interactions with staff and students

Competencies: Skills
The principal is able to:
- think strategically and build and communicate a coherent vision in a range of compelling ways
- inspire, challenge, motivate and empower others to carry the vision forward
- model the values and vision of the board
- actively engage the diverse community, through outreach, to build relationships and alliances

Knowledge
The principal has knowledge and understanding of:
- local, national and global trends
- ways to build, communicate and implement a shared vision
- strategic planning processes
- ways to communicate within and beyond the school
- new technologies, their use and impact
- leading change, creativity and innovation

Attitudes
The principal demonstrates:
- commitment to setting goals that are not only ambitious and challenging, but also realistic and achievable
- a belief that all students can learn
- commitment to an inclusive, respectful, equitable school culture

Developing the Organization

The principal builds collaborative cultures, structures the organization for success, and connects the school to its wider environment.

Practices:
The principal:
- builds a collaborative learning culture within the school and actively engages with other schools to build effective learning communities
- nurtures and empowers a diverse workforce
- provides equity of access to opportunity and achievement
- ensures staff effectively
- uses performance appraisal to foster professional growth
- challenges thinking and learning of staff to further develop professional practice
- develops a school culture which promotes shared knowledge and shared responsibility for outcomes

Competencies: Skills
The principal is able to:
- create effective administrative routines to minimize efforts on recurring and predictable activities
- collaborate and network with others inside and outside the school
- perceive the richness and diversity of school communities
- foster a culture of change
- engage in dialogue which builds community partnerships
- listen and act on community feedback
- engage students and parents

Knowledge
The principal has knowledge and understanding of:
- building and sustaining a professional learning and development partnership
- change management strategies
- models of effective partnership
- strategies that encourage parent involvement
- ministry policies and procedures
- models of behaviour and attendance management

Attitudes
The principal demonstrates:
- acceptance of responsibility for school climate and student outcomes
- ethical behaviour

Leading the Instructional Program

The principal sets high expectations for learning outcomes and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction. The principal manages the school effectively so that everyone can focus on teaching and learning.

Practices:
The principal:
- ensures consistent and continuous school-wide focus on student achievement, using system and school data to monitor progress
- ensures that learning is at the centre of planning and resource management
- develops professional learning communities to support school improvement
- participates in the recruitment, hiring and retention of staff with the interest and expertise demonstrated over the school years
- provides resources in support of curriculum instruction and differentiated instruction
- uses feedback from students that detracts from effective teaching
- implements strategies which secure high standards of student behaviour and attendance
- fosters a commitment to equity of outcome and to closing the achievement gap

Competencies: Skills
The principal is able to:
- demonstrate the principles and practice of effective teaching and learning
- access, analyse and interpret data
- initiate and support an inquiry-based approach to improvement in teaching and learning
- establish and sustain appropriate structures and systems for effective management of the school
- make organizational decisions based on informed judgements
- manage time effectively
- support student character development strategies

Knowledge
The principal has knowledge and understanding of:
- strategies for improving achievement
- effective pedagogy and assessment
- use of new and emerging technologies to support teaching and learning
- models of behaviour and attendance management
- strategies for ensuring inclusion, diversity and access
- shared design and management
- tools for data collection and analysis
- school self-evaluation
- strategies for developing effective leaders and teachers
- project management for planning and implementing change
- legal issues
- the importance of effective student character development

Attitudes
The principal demonstrates:
- commitment to raising standards for all students
- commitment to equity of outcome and closing the achievement gap
- commitment to meeting the needs of all students in diverse ways
- commitment to sustaining a safe, secure and healthy school environment
- commitment to upholding human rights

Securing Accountability

The principal is responsible for creating conditions for student success and is accountable to students, parents, the community, supervisors and to the board for ensuring that students benefit from a high quality education. The principal is specifically accountable for the goals set out in the school improvement plan.

Practices:
The principal:
- ensures individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood, agreed to and subject to rigorous review and evaluation
- monitors and monitors teacher and leader effectiveness through student achievement
- aligns school targets with board and provincial targets
- supports the school council so it can participate actively and authentically in its advisory role
- develops and presents a coherent, understandable, accurate and transparent account of the school’s performance to a range of audiences (e.g., ministry, board, parents, community)
- reflects personal contributions to school achievements and takes account of feedback from others
- participates actively in personal external evaluation and makes adjustments to better meet expectations and goals
- creates an organizational structure which reflects the school’s values and enables management systems, structures and processes to work within legal requirements
- makes connections to ministry goals to strengthen commitment to school improvement efforts
- develops and presents appropriate performance management practices to goals and outcomes identified in the school improvement plan

Competencies: Skills
The principal is able to:
- engage the school community in the systematic and rigorous evaluation of school effectiveness
- collect and use a rich set of data to understand and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the school
- combine the outcomes of regular school self-review with provincial and other external assessments for school improvement

Knowledge
The principal has knowledge and understanding of:
- accountability frameworks including self-evaluation
- the contribution of personal outcomes to developing, promoting and maintaining a fair and equitable society
- the use of a range of evidence to support, monitor, evaluate and improve school performance
- the principles and practices of performance management

Attitudes
The principal demonstrates:
- commitment to individual, team and whole-school accountability for student outcomes
- commitment to the principles and practices of school self-evaluation
- commitment to personal self-evaluation
### Leadership Framework for Principals and Vice-Principals
#### Part 2: System Practices and Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School and School Board Improvement</th>
<th>Fostering a Culture of Professionalism</th>
<th>Leadership Development</th>
<th>Administrative Structures</th>
<th>Parent and Community Supports</th>
<th>Succession Planning, Including Recruitment, to Build Capacity and Retain and Sustain Effective Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The commitment the board demonstrates to raising student achievement and closing student achievement gaps, to treating people ethically, and to empowering the whole board.</td>
<td>The procedures that the board uses to ensure that it has positive working relationships with its school leaders, so that principals feel that they are respected and trusted leaders within the system and that their input is sought and considered.</td>
<td>The approaches and activities that the board follows and the administrative structures that it has in place to streamline and buffer internal and external requests (e.g., mail, e-mail, and requests for data) and to provide central office support, including technological resources, to reduce the administrative burden on principals.</td>
<td>The procedures that the board has in place to assist and to support schools in involving parents and community in the school.</td>
<td>The procedures the board has in place to ensure that high quality candidates are ready and willing to take on school leadership roles and that all aspects of the transition from one leader to the next have been carefully considered.</td>
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<td>Indicators:</td>
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<td>• The board provides support for building a common vision and mission for the school.</td>
<td>• The board has policies and processes in place that enhance positive working relationships.</td>
<td>• The board provides training for aspiring leaders.</td>
<td>• The board provides training for school council chairs.</td>
<td>• The board has well-developed, well-communicated, and inclusive identification and recruitment practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All members of the school system (e.g., trustees, leaders, staff, school council members) work together to take responsibility for the learning of all students.</td>
<td>The board supports the development of a positive and supportive school climate in its schools.</td>
<td>The board has a system for coordinating demands made on schools and for gate keeping external requests.</td>
<td>The board uses selection processes that are systematic, transparent and inclusive.</td>
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<td>The board recognizes the importance of professional learning communities and communities of practice as ways of supporting school improvement.</td>
<td>The board recognizes excellence at all levels of the organization.</td>
<td>The board provides support for school leaders to implement board policies and procedures.</td>
<td>The board is in place to assist and to support schools in involving parents and community in the school.</td>
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<td>The board supports capacity-building as the route to improved student achievement.</td>
<td>Flexible structures at all levels of the system communicate a culture of respect.</td>
<td>The board provides technical support for technology applications in schools and data-driven decision making.</td>
<td>Indicators:</td>
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<td>The board exhibits a culture that supports school-based innovation within the board's shared vision.</td>
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<td>The board has clear lines of communication to support a variety of school leader functions.</td>
<td>• The board provides training for school council chairs.</td>
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<td>The board provides financial resources to support school improvement planning.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The board provides human resources to support principals as instructional leaders.</td>
<td>• The board has well-developed, well-communicated, and inclusive identification and recruitment practices.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The Leadership Self-Review Tool (LSRT) [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/systems.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/systems.html) provides a full package of materials for use by boards to assess leadership supports in their boards, including a self-administered survey of leaders and practical advice on how to use the tool.