



District of Columbia  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

# Model DC School Leadership Standards



Center on  
**GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS**

at American Institutes for Research ■

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## Acknowledgments

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) acknowledges the contributions from the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at American Institutes for Research (AIR), specifically Dr. Matthew Clifford, Dana Chambers, and Cassie Meyer, and the Council of Chief State School Officers' staff members Monica Taylor and Laura Checovich.

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We also thank the following external experts for their input on the standards: Mike Casserly, Council of the Great City Schools; Steve Kimball, University of Wisconsin–Madison; Marcy Reedy, University Council of Education Administration, Tanji Reed Marshall, The Education Trust; Irv Richardson, independent contractor.

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# Introduction

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*Leadership and learning are indispensable to one another.*

—John F. Kennedy

Principals are essential to achieving educational equity and achievement at scale in the District of Columbia (DC). After classroom teaching, school leadership is the most significant school influence on student performance.<sup>1</sup> Just as the quality of classroom teaching matters, the quality of principals' work makes a difference in schools. Principals' everyday practice affects school-wide systems and culture, supports teacher collaboration, instructional improvement, and other conditions important to each child's academic and social development.<sup>2</sup> And, just like that of teachers, principals' practice continues to grow and become more powerful over time and through professional learning.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is providing the Model DC School Leadership Standards to support principal development. The standards clearly describe the type of school leadership that the diverse schools in the DC region need and that our students deserve. The standards help educators, parents, and other stakeholders answer questions such as the following:

- What school leadership practices are essential to improving education?
- What do effective principals do to improve teaching and learning?

The Model DC School Leadership Standards reflect the best research on effective school leadership and national professional standards for educational leaders. The leadership actions described by the standards are considered essential to advancing achievement and equity.

Adoption of the Model DC School Leadership Standards is not a requirement, and local education agencies (LEAs) are encouraged to use the standards as an optional tool and to adapt them to reflect the values and direction of their schools. In addition, the standards describe practices for the purpose of selecting, supporting, and retaining principals. However, the

## **The Standards Design Committee**

The Model DC School Leadership Standards were developed by and for educators from District of Columbia charter management organizations, public schools, principal preparation programs, parent groups, and K–12 students in collaboration with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at American Institutes for Research, and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Additional input was provided by researchers and policy experts.

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<sup>1</sup> Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004

<sup>2</sup> Clifford, Behrstock, & Fetters, 2012



standards also can be an important tool for coordinating talent development for assistant principals, teacher leaders, and others who aspire to become principals.

This guidance document provides the standards and an overview of key concepts supporting the standards.

## Why We Need New School Leadership Standards

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Professional standards describe essential practices, skills, and dispositions that organize careers. Standards describe what good practice looks like to ensure that current and future professionals understand what they must do and how to improve. Standards also differentiate professions from one another by specifying technical knowledge and performance expectations necessary to perform well. This knowledge is important when creating training, performance evaluation, supervisory approaches, and other professional supports.



To be useful for guiding principals' development, professional standards have to reflect current professional responsibilities. The educational services in the District of Columbia have changed significantly since OSSE first adopted national professional standards for educational leaders in 2009. Public, public charter, and private schools now offer diverse educational offerings to our dynamic communities. For example, schools—and the educators within them—are now expected to continuously improve and innovate to meet students' developmental needs through differentiated supports. And, in recognition that many factors contribute to students' academic advancement, educators are now also focused each students' cognitive, social, and emotional advancement.

Rising expectations for District of Columbia principals reflect national trends. Today's schools require dynamic leadership and principals who are adept at working with and advocating for many diverse communities. Like other leaders, principals inspire others to reshape ideas, attitudes, and situations to create better practices. Principals also do the following:

- Distribute responsibilities in schools so that many share in leadership.
- Engage deeply with teachers, teacher teams, data, and research to drive ethical, principled decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Coach and otherwise provide job-embedded and personalized professional learning for teachers and other staff.
- Focus efforts on building large-scale, sustainable improvement processes to ensure that schools meet the vital, emergent needs of students and communities.
- Ensure that all students learn skills critical to their success and that demographically driven gaps in student performance are eliminated.

There is also the recognition that leadership is a highly public practice that can be learned and that is developed over time.

The Model DC School Leadership Standards update reflect rising expectations of school leaders in the DC region. The Model DC School Leadership Standards also are aligned to the national Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), released in 2015 (see the Appendix). The PSEL standards are a set of policy standards for *all educational leaders* (including principals) that resulted from a painstaking review of research literature and engagement with educational leaders in the field.<sup>3</sup>

## Uses of the Standards

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Districts, charter management organizations, and other educational organizations can choose to adopt or adapt the Model DC School Leadership Standards, which were written with three main purposes in mind:

- **Foster individual leader learning:** Principals on a learning trajectory are more likely to be effective leaders and to be retained in the profession. The standards can be used as an evaluation and professional development planning tool for principals. For example, principals, their supervisors, and their coaches may use them to gather standards-based evidence about practice quality for formal or informal evaluations, foster reflection, and plan personalized professional learning that builds or extends skills in priority areas.
- **Inform principal talent management systems:** During their careers, principals are supported by many different organizations, but research tells us that professional services to principals are often not coordinated or informed by the same vision for education leadership. Principal talent management is a way of closely coordinating principal workforce development efforts aimed to prepare, select, improve, and retain

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<sup>3</sup> National Policy Board for Education Administration, 2015



principals. Principal standards develop talent management system coherence by providing a common language for leadership among contributing agencies. (See Box 1.)

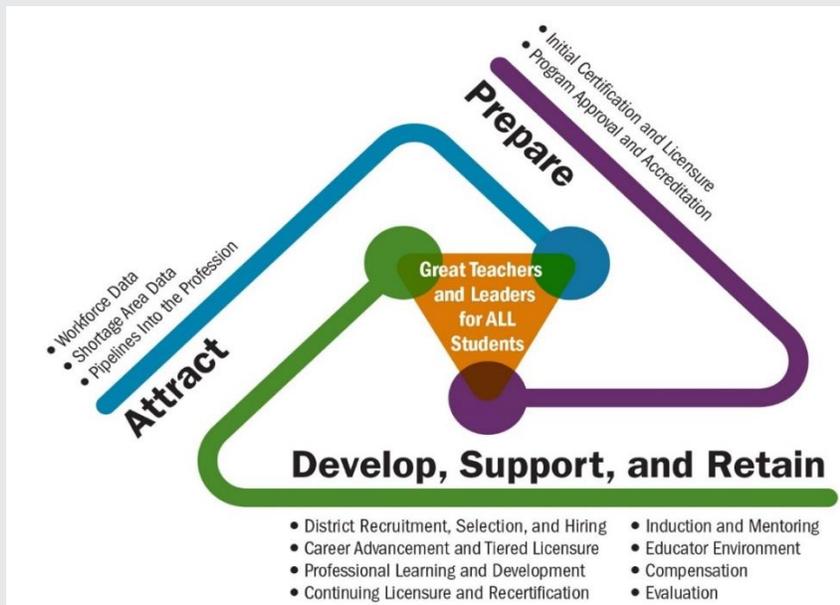
- **Communicate performance expectations:** The standards communicate performance expectations to other stakeholders. Assistant principals and teacher leaders, some of whom may aspire to be principals, will find the standards useful in charting a career path. Parents and other community members reading the standards may deepen their understanding of principals' roles and responsibilities in schools.

Many stakeholders will be interested in the standards, and LEAs should be prepared to communicate with and engage different stakeholder groups.

### Box 1. What Is a Principal Talent Management System?

Recruiting and retaining talented teachers and leaders is essential to advancing school district and charter management organization goals. Educational organizations often compete with other private- and public-sector organizations for talented leaders. Some educational organizations are building "principal talent management systems" as a means of attracting, preparing, supporting, and retaining current and future principals.

A principal talent management system provides a coherent set of coordinated supports at each stage of principals' careers. Performance standards are the foundation of principal talent management systems. The standards inform each human resources process and help coordinate services within and between agencies responsible for principal workforce support. For example, principal preparation programs organize learning experiences around the same set of standards used by local school districts to hire principals. Alternatively, school districts use standards to evaluate principals and organize professional development options for principals.



For more information about principal talent management systems, see resources available at the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders ([www.gtlcenter.org](http://www.gtlcenter.org)).

# The Model DC School Leadership Standards

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The seven Model DC School Leadership Standards are interrelated and connected directly to school principals' practices. Principals' abilities to be effective on one standard will be influenced by their abilities to effectively act on other standards. For instance, principals' abilities to improve professional culture (Standard 5) may be influenced by his or her level of professionalism (Standard 2).

When writing the standards, the committee made certain assumptions about principals' work and the types of standards that principals, their supervisors and coaches, and others would find useful. The committee wrote the DC Model School Leadership Standards to be:

- **Activities-oriented:** The standards focus on principal behaviors and actions rather than attitudes, knowledge, or dispositions.
- **High leverage:** The committee recognizes that codifying everything that principals do can be challenging and could result in an unwieldy document. The standards are intended to represent only the most important actions that might be evaluated.
- **Focused:** The standards describe principals' actions that can be observed or measured annually, rather than providing descriptions of practice accumulated over time. For instance, the standards do not reference principal persistence, which characterizes practice over multiple observations or over time.
- **Accessible:** The standards should include language that is accessible across diverse school contexts and is inclusive of principal practice at the high, middle, and elementary grade levels.

When reading the standards, it is important to keep in mind the following organization:

1. **Standard:** A high-level area of work responsibilities that may not be directly observable and measurable in everyday practice.
2. **Indicator:** Major work responsibilities within standards that focus on principals' organizational management and change management.
3. **Descriptor:** Observable and measurable actions that comprise indicators.

The following sections outline the standards, standard definitions, indicators, and sub-indicators.



# 1 Standard: School mission and vision

**Definition: Effective principals develop and implement a shared school mission and vision to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.**

## What principals can demonstrate

**Indicator 1:** Effective principals enact and enhance a shared school mission and vision, which clearly define what the school strives to do and why the school does its work.

## Descriptors

- Align school mission and vision statements with the district mission, vision, and direction.
- Ensure the mission and vision statement address the social, emotional, and academic success of every student and the need for the school to focus on equity, inclusiveness, and achievement gap reduction.
- Develop and maintain feasible yet ambitious, school-wide plans to meet the mission and vision at prescribed intervals.
- Require school staff to use the school mission and vision as a rationale for decisions.
- Clearly communicate the school mission and vision to stakeholders within and beyond the school.
- Foster shared ownership of the school mission and vision among staff.

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**Indicator 2:** Effective principals employ methods of continuous improvement to ensure that the school meets its mission and goals.

- Use school data to evaluate how well the school is progressing toward its mission, vision, and goals for equity, inclusion, and achievement for each student in collaboration with teachers and others.
  - Convene stakeholders to routinely revisit the mission and vision statements to ensure that they remain vital and representative of school, district, and community values.
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## 2 Standard: Professionalism

**Definition:** Effective principals act ethically, equitably, and according to professional norms to promote each student's social, emotional, and academic development.

### What principals can demonstrate

### Descriptors

#### Indicator 1

Effective principals model ethical, equitable, and professional behavior.

- Act with integrity, fairness, and empathy with each child's development in mind.
- Act with cultural competence in the school and community.
- Safeguard individual student and other stakeholder freedoms and responsibilities.
- Work within policies, procedures, laws, and rules of conduct applicable to principals' conduct.
- Lead with sensitivity and consideration for children and others' social and emotional contexts.
- Allocate time to complete important leadership activities.
- Persevere through difficulty and seek alternative approaches when necessary.
- Take appropriate professional responsibility when successes and mistakes occur.

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#### Indicator 2

Effective principals engage in professional learning.

- Engage in reflection, study, and improvement.
  - Set professional learning goals based on performance evaluation and other data.
  - Improve practice in response to feedback from others on his or her leadership practices.
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### 3 Standard: Student equity and inclusion

**Definition:** Effective principals improve and sustain a school environment that is inclusive, equitable, caring, and culturally competent to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic improvement.

#### What principals can demonstrate

##### Indicator 1

Effective principals maintain policies, procedures, and practices that safeguard student equity and inclusivity.

#### Descriptors

- Ensure that each student is treated fairly, respectfully, and with empathy.
- Maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student.
- Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social supports, and other resources.
- Maintain positive, fair, and unbiased student behavior policies that emphasize relationship reconciliation and behavioral change.
- Work closely with teachers and staff to recognize and employ each student’s strengths and differences as assets for teaching and learning.
- Communicate expectations to staff that the school should be an inclusive, caring environment in which each student is known and valued.
- Develop workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote and safeguard student equity and inclusivity.
- Ensure that instructional staff have a clear understanding of the district’s instructional expectations for student performance and how to address gaps in student learning.
- Maintain school matriculation practices that promote student growth, particularly for students facing disadvantages pertaining to socioeconomic status or prior academic performance.



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**Indicator 2**

Effective principals continuously improve organizational inclusiveness, equity, and cultural competence.

- Confront and change institutional biases of student marginalization and low expectations associated with race, class, culture, language, gender, sexual orientation, and disability or special status.
  - Promote relationships among students, faculty, parents, and others that build trust and value individuality and inclusiveness.
  - Lead routine, critical reflection on school inclusiveness, equity, and institutional bias.
  - Use student performance and placement data, as well as school culture data, to promote greater inclusiveness, caring, equity, and closure of achievement gaps.
  - Use student performance and placement data, as well as school culture data, to identify improvements to school programs, procedures, and practices to promote inclusiveness, equity, and caring.
  - Initiate school staff reflection upon and confront individual and organizational biases that affect student access to resources and success in learning.
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# 4 Standard: Curriculum, instruction, and assessment

**Definition:** Effective principals support and enhance the intellectual rigor and coherence of curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.

## What principals can demonstrate

## Additional descriptors

### Indicator 1

Effective principals maintain a rigorous, aligned system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

- Set high expectations for academic learning among staff and students.
- Promote instructional practices that are consistent with research on effective pedagogy, cognitive growth, social development, and emotional development.
- Ensure that curriculum, instruction, assessment, and social support systems are coordinated across subject areas and grade levels within the school and between schools.
- Frequently observe instruction and provide effective feedback to teachers, both formally and informally.
- Communicate the importance of student engagement in school and community activities for the purposes of learning.
- Develop workplace conditions for teachers and other professional staff that promote the use of rigorous, aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Oversee alignment of academic and social supports to meet the range of learning needs for each student with pertinent academic and other standards.
- Ensure that instructional practice is intellectually challenging and differentiated for students.
- Support the effective integration of learning technologies to support every student’s learning.



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## Indicator 2

Effective principals lead efforts to evaluate and to increase rigor, coherence, impact, and equity of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

- Appropriately use a variety of data to monitor student progress, inform student support programming, and assess the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
  - Lead routine curriculum, instruction, and assessment alignment in light of data.
  - Require teachers to use assessment data and other evidence to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
  - Evaluate the rigor, implementation, and effectiveness of curriculum instruction and assessments.
  - Assess curriculum, instruction, and assessment coherence, both in terms of planning and implementation.
  - Encourage teacher leadership for curriculum, instruction, and assessment improvement.
  - Support teachers in taking instructional risks aimed at improving the rigor and impact of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
  - Manage competing initiatives, politics, and priorities when making strategic improvements to curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
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## 5 Standard: Professional culture

**Definition:** Effective principals foster a professional culture focused on improving the capacity of each educator to promote each student's social, emotional, and academic development.

### What principals can demonstrate

#### Indicator 1

Effective principals manage educator talent systems to select, support, and retain highly skilled, committed teachers and staff.

### Additional descriptors

- Systematically recruit and hire teachers and other professional staff based on their ability to advance the school mission.
- Set teaching assignments by strategically matching teacher talent to student learning needs.
- Plan for and manage staff turnover, projecting vacancies and communicating hiring priorities in coordination with district- or system-level staff.
- Coordinate teacher induction and mentoring opportunities.
- Provide staff time to meet in teams or departments for co-planning, reflection, and professional development.
- Promote mutual accountability among teachers and other staff for student academic success and social-emotional development.
- Encourage open, productive, and trusting working relationships among administrators, teachers, and staff to promote improvement of professional practice.
- Ensure that each teacher and staff member receives regular, evidence-based, actionable performance feedback.
- Ensure that each teacher and staff member has an ambitious, yet feasible, professional learning plan.
- Coordinate professional learning, providing staff with equitable access to learning resources that advance practices.
- Foster staff leadership by recognizing excellent work, encouraging advanced credentialing, and providing formal and informal opportunities for staff to lead.



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**Indicator 2**

Effective principals develop the professional capacity of school personnel through coaching, supervision, and personalized support.

- Orient teachers to the school through induction and coaching.
- Provide frequent, high-quality feedback on instructional practice.
- Link professional learning opportunities for teachers to performance evidence.
- Evaluate teaching according to the district's policies and procedures.
- Empower teachers to take risks that hold potential for advancing student academic and social-emotional development.
- Promote opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning.

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**Indicator 3**

Effective principals foster improvement of the quality, rigor, and equity of professional support systems.

- Use survey or other data collected from staff to inform professional culture improvements.
  - Improve job-embedded and other professional development quality, rigor, and accessibility in light of quality assessment and impact data.
  - Improve staffing plans in light of educator performance evaluation, attendance, retention, and other human resources data.
  - Convene school leadership team, district staff, and other staff members to coordinate improvements in human resources supports.
  - Improve performance evaluation, hiring, induction, and performance evaluations practices, in coordination with district- or systems-level staff.
  - Manage competing priorities, politics, and risks when improving educator support systems.
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## 6 Standard: Community engagement

**Definition:** Effective principals engage parents, families, and the community—especially those who are marginalized or traditionally unable to actively participate—in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.

### What principals can demonstrate

#### Indicator 1

Effective principals maintain open communications with stakeholders, especially those who are marginalized or traditionally unable to actively participate in the school community, in the service of students and to advance the school mission.

### Additional descriptors

- Maintain open, welcoming access for communication with families and community members.
- Provide for routine, two-way communication with families and community members about school activities and culture, student performance and development, and school challenges and accomplishments.
- Ensure that school staff implement the communications plan for keeping families—especially those families who may be disengaged from the school—informed about school happenings and individual students’ development.
- Develop productive relationships with other schools and community agencies to improve student management.
- Maintain productive relationships with school district staff members and the school board.
- Advocate to community groups on behalf of the school, its teachers, and its students.
- Create or sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and community members for the benefit of students.



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**Indicator 2**

Effective principals develop and sustain meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships with school stakeholders.

- Evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the community outreach and communications plan.
  - Evaluate and improve the effectiveness of strategic partnerships with external organizations, with input from school staff and community members.
  - Convene routine strategy discussions to identify new partners or expand existing partnerships to meet emergent needs.
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## 7 Standard: Operational systems

**Definition:** Effective principals strategically manage operational systems to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.

### What principals can demonstrate

**Indicator 1**

Effective principals manage school finances, human resources, and other operational aspects of the school to maximize staff productivity and in compliance with the law.

### Additional descriptors

- Communicate operational priorities, resource allocations, and resource limitations to teachers, school staff, and systems-level staff.
- Know and comply with pertinent local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations governing school operations.
- Consistently make personnel, financial, programmatic, and other decisions that advance the school mission and promote equity.
- Carefully manage financial, material, and other resources to prioritize each student’s academic development and well-being.
- Protect teacher and student work time from unnecessary disruptions.
- Strategically place teaching talent and expertise to ensure that students have access to the right expertise at critical developmental points.

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**Indicator 2**

- Use technology to improve the quality and efficiency
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Effective principals work to optimize operational systems.

of operations, management, and communications.

- Distribute leadership for school operations to qualified personnel.
  - Maintain operational budgets according to timelines.
  - Evaluate how well the school is managed and adjusts approaches to reflect data.
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# Appendix

## Model DC School Leadership Standards Quick Form

<b>Standard 1: School mission and vision</b> Effective principals develop and implement a shared school mission and vision to promote each student's social, emotional, and academic development.	<b>Indicator 1</b> Effective principals enact and enhance a shared school mission and vision, which clearly define what the school strives to do and why the school does its work.
	<b>Indicator 2</b> Effective principals employ methods of continuous improvement to ensure that the school meets its mission and goals.
<b>Standard 2: Professionalism</b> Effective principals act ethically, equitably, and according to professional norms to promote each student's social, emotional, and academic development.	<b>Indicator 1</b> Effective principals model ethical, equitable, and professional behavior.
	<b>Indicator 2</b> Effective principals engage in professional learning.
<b>Standard 3: Student equity and inclusion</b> Effective principals improve and sustain a school environment that is inclusive, equitable, caring, and culturally competent to promote each student's social, emotional, and academic improvement.	<b>Indicator 1</b> Effective principals maintain policies, procedures, and practices that safeguard student equity and inclusivity.
	<b>Indicator 2</b> Effective principals continuously improve organizational inclusiveness, equity, and cultural competence.
<b>Standard 4: Curriculum, instruction, and assessment</b> Effective principals support and enhance the intellectual rigor and coherence of curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems to promote each student's social, emotional, and academic development.	<b>Indicator 1</b> Effective principals maintain a rigorous, aligned system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
	<b>Indicator 2</b> Effective principals lead efforts to evaluate and to increase rigor, coherence, impact, and equity of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
<b>Standard 5: Professional culture</b> Effective principals foster a professional culture focused on improving the capacity of each educator to promote each student's social, emotional, and academic development.	<b>Indicator 1</b> Effective principals manage educator talent systems to select, support, and retain highly skilled, committed teachers and staff.
	<b>Indicator 2</b> Effective principals develop the professional capacity of school personnel through coaching, supervision, and personalized support.
	<b>Indicator 3</b>



	Effective principals foster improvement of the quality, rigor, and equity of professional support systems.
<p><b>Standard 6: Community engagement</b></p> <p>Effective principals engage parents, families, and the community—especially those who are marginalized or traditionally unable to actively participate—in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 1</b></p> <p>Effective principals maintain open communications with stakeholders, especially those who are marginalized or traditionally unable to actively participate in the school community, in the service of students and to advance the school mission.</p>
	<p><b>Indicator 2</b></p> <p>Effective principals develop and sustain meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships with school stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>Standard 7: Operational systems</b></p> <p>Effective principals strategically manage operational systems to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 1</b></p> <p>Effective principals manage school finances, human resources, and other operational aspects of the school to maximize staff productivity and in compliance with the law.</p>
	<p><b>Indicator 2</b></p> <p>Effective principals work to optimize operational systems.</p>



## Alignment Between the Model DC Principal Standards and the Professional Standards for Education Leaders

Model DC Principal Standards	Original PSEL Standards
1. Effective principals develop and implement a shared school mission and vision to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.	1. Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student. 10. Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
2. Effective principals act ethically, equitably, and according to professional norms to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.	2. Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
3. Effective principals improve and sustain a school environment that is inclusive, equitable, caring, and culturally proficient to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.	3. Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being. 4. Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.
4. Effective principals support and enhance the intellectual rigor and coherence of curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.	5. Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
5. Effective principals foster a professional culture focused on improving the capacity of each educator to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.	6. Effective principals manage educator talent systems to select, support, and retain highly skilled, committed teachers and staff. 7. Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
6. Effective principals engage parents, families, and the community—especially those who are marginalized or traditionally unable to actively participate—in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.	8. Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.
7. Effective principals strategically manage operational systems to promote each student’s social, emotional, and academic development.	9. Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.



# Glossary

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**Assistant principal:** An assistant principal supports the administrative operations of the school and typically reports to the principal. An assistant principal may be assigned schoolwide leadership responsibilities or may be assigned administrative responsibilities for grade levels, departments, or other sub-organization of the school. Assistant principals may or may not aspire to become principals. In educational systems, a vice principal or assistant principal may be used interchangeably.

**Biases:** Inclinations or prejudices for or against a person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair, that may be held by a person or organization.

**Community:** A social group exhibiting some affiliation to one another, such as similarities because of location or professional status. The standards use the term “community” to reference teachers, staff, and others who work together with students and to reference families, organizations, and others who do not directly work with students in the school but express some investment in school operations.

**Continuous improvement:** An ongoing cycle of positive change that entails step-by-step or incremental improvements aimed at some goal that is pursued systematically (typically through a plan-do-study-act cycle or some derivation). The standards use this term, which is similar to “continual improvement” or “ongoing improvement.”

**Cultural competence:** The ability to know, appreciate, and interact with people from cultures, races, belief systems, or perspectives other than one’s own. The standards use the term, which is similar to “cultural proficiency.”

**Descriptor:** Observable and measurable actions that comprise indicators.

**Disengaged from the school:** Having little to no involvement in school-related or school-based activities. The term applies to students, parents, and other community members.

**Educator talent system:** An integrated approach to documenting and supporting educators through the steps along a career pathway, which includes recruitment, training/preparation, hiring, induction, professional learning, performance evaluation, and compensation.

**Effective:** An adequate performance to accomplish a purpose or task that produces an intended or expected result.

**Feedback:** A process of providing information about the quality or output of one’s actions, performances, or practices for the purposes of improvement.



**Indicator:** Major work responsibilities within standards that focus on principals' organizational management and change management.

**Mutual accountability:** When two or more people agree to be held responsible for the commitments that they voluntarily make to one another.

**Parent:** A person who has a child or brings up and cares for a child.

**Principal:** A school administrator designated or recognized as responsible for significant financial, human resources, student matriculation, or other decisions in a school. The standards use the term to mean "school principal" and recognize that principals may have many professional titles, including "head of school" or "director."

**Principal supervisor:** A school administrator designated as being responsible for overseeing the work of a principal. Principal supervisors may complete many tasks, including principal coaching, professional goal setting, school performance monitoring, principal feedback, and principal evaluation. Principal supervisors also may be called "superintendent," "assistant superintendent," "director of schools," or "chief executive officer."

**Principal talent management:** A form of talent management specifically addressing the development, recruitment, support, and retention of current or future school principals.

**Productive relationships:** A bond or agreement between individuals or organizations that positively impacts one or more parties in the relationship and may enable the parties to produce or do things that, alone, they could not do.

**Professional culture:** A set of relationships, processes, and procedures within an organization, discipline, or service sector. The standards use "professional culture" in ways similar to "school culture" or "school climate" as these terms pertain to educators, staff, and others working within a school.

**Professional development goals:** A set of statements describing what an individual or group will do to improve the quality or outcomes of their work.

**Professional Standards for Educational Leaders:** A set of national policy standards released by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration in 2015 that describe what principals and other educational leaders should know and do.

**Relationship reconciliation:** The process or outcome of re-establishing affiliation or connection after a conflict between two or more people has occurred.

**Routinely:** A repeated procedure that occurs at a set interval of time, rather than a special or isolated occurrence.



**School environment:** The physical, affective, and cognitive aspects of a school.

**School leader:** An administrator or teacher who is designated or recognized by followers as being influential on school practices, policies, and procedures.

**School matriculation:** The admission, placement, departure, or transition of students into and out of a school.

**School mission:** A summary of the aims and values of the school organization.

**School vision:** The overall direction of a school, which may summarize its status and declare what the school will become.

**School-wide plan:** A set of activities set to a timeline with benchmarks, milestones, or objectives that describes what a school will do to improve, why it should improve in certain ways, and how it will improve. The standards recognize that “school-wide plan” may be similar to a “school improvement plan.”

**Shared ownership:** An agreement by more than one person that a physical space, process, or product is their right and responsibility. The standards recognize that this term is similar to the term “buy-in.”

**Stakeholder:** A person with an interest or concern in something. The standards use the term “stakeholder” to include parents, community organizations, teachers, administrators, students, and others affiliated with a school.

**Standard:** A high-level area of work responsibilities that may not be directly observable and measurable in everyday practice.

**Students’ academic development:** The process of cognitive growth, skill development, and accumulation of knowledge associated with formal and informal learning experiences in a school that is intended to prepare youth for college, career, family, and citizenships.

**Students’ emotional development:** The process of learning to manage emotions in productive and acceptable ways. Often “emotional development” is used synonymously with “social development” or “socioemotional development.”

**Students’ social and emotional contexts:** The status of a student’s’ social and emotional state, which may be influenced by his or her personal histories, development status, race, and beliefs systems in relation to the present context or situation.

**Students’ social development:** The process of skill development for forming positive relationships with family, friends, mentors, coaches, or others significant in a student’s life. Often “social development” is used synonymously with “emotional development” or “socio-emotional development.”



**Systematically:** According to a plan or system of activities, or to be done methodically and intentionally.

**Teacher leader:** Formal or informal recognition of a teacher as assuming additional roles and responsibilities within a school that are traditionally not assigned or given to a teacher.

**Workplace conditions:** A broad set of topics and issues that are experienced by workers, including time allocations, payment, physical conditions, mental demands, and physical safety in a workplace.





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