Ontario Leadership Strategy

**Leadership Succession Planning and Talent Development
Ministry Expectations and Implementation Continuum**

Contents

Ontario Ministry of Education
November 2009
Version 1.1

Purpose

The purpose of this document is:
- To outline the Ministry's expectations under the Ontario Leadership Strategy for board leadership succession planning and talent development (*see 5. Succession Planning and Talent Development Continuum))* and,
- To invite feedback from boards on needs and challenges associated with leadership succession planning and talent development.

The Ministry thanks all of the individuals and stakeholder groups who contributed to the development of this document.

2. Why Leadership Succession Planning and Talent Development?

Strong leadership is a cornerstone of the success of the education system in Ontario. Succession planning and talent development is about encouraging everyone in the system to see themselves as part of the leadership strategy that focuses on attracting and developing passionate and skilled leaders who can effectively support student achievement and well-being. Talent development throughout the system encourages staff to build leadership skill in their current role, and supports their preparation should they wish to consider other leadership positions. It is critical that Ontario school boards continue to refine their recruiting and talent development practices to attract and retain the best candidates for the job, whether principal, vice-principal or supervisory officer.

The Ministry is committed to improving student achievement and well being, closing the gap and increasing public confidence in publicly funded education. Succession and talent development planning is consistent with other ministry initiatives: it is built on the succession planning domain of the Leadership Self Review Tool and Part 2 System Practices and Procedures of the Leadership Framework (both these resources are found at http://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/resources.shtml); and aligns with the Ministry's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and is an element of Operational Reviews.

Research shows that:
- Principals are second only to teachers in the school's influence on how well students learn
- The role of supervisory officer plays an important part in student achievement, and
- Effective systems are necessary to sustain successful schools.

Many school boards, faced with declining student enrolment, are reducing the number of leadership positions through school closures and senior administrative attrition. Some school boards are encountering challenges in filling vacant positions and recruiting teachers as principals and vice-principals can be difficult. Other boards have a stable base of early to mid-career principals. These situations all offer boards the opportunity to provide talent development opportunities to teachers and provide their principals and vice-principals with strategic supports and professional learning so they continue to improve and remain engaged. All boards, within the context of their local circumstances, need to take a long term, leadership approach to succession planning that starts at the teacher level. Leaders are powerful levers for improvement. An organization's most effective leaders are not just acquired, they are grown—in fact an organization has more potential leaders than they realize. Great leaders have a tremendous capacity to learn and need to be challenged in order to continuously grow. Having strong leaders throughout the system results in an improvement and achievement-driven culture.

The Institute for Education Leadership (IEL), with its mandate to support school and system leaders with research and results -based resources, commissioned *Succession Planning for Leadership in Ontario Schools and School Boards* (2008), a research report by The Learning Partnership, which provides an overview of the current state of succession planning in Ontario: the challenges, successful practices, and opportunities. (See the report on succession planning on the IEL website at http://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/research.shtml). Further to this, the IEL will be creating a resource bank of tools and supports for boards' succession plans, to be available on the IEL website in the fall of 2009.

3. Guiding Principles and Practices

- Leadership succession planning and talent development is an ongoing, contextual, orderly yet innovative process to get the right people, including attracting and developing leaders that reflect Ontario's diversity, to see and develop their leadership potential. It starts before there is a vacancy to be filled.
- Leadership talent development takes place over the cycle of an entire career, and in all roles at both the school and the system level.

Promising Practices

The IEL study on succession planning highlights a number of good practices, including:
- Provide active support from top leadership
- Link succession planning to strategic planning
- Identify talent from multiple levels of an organization early in employees' careers
- Emphasize developmental assignments, not just formal training. Motivate future leaders by offering interesting assignments that stretch and challenge
- Address diversity; leadership capacity, especially of under represented groups; and retention of high potential candidates
- Use succession planning to facilitate broader transformation of an organization and inspire leaders who champion change
- Incorporate employee input
- Assign specific responsibility within the organization for reviewing and overseeing the progress of employees

4. Ministry Expectations--Next Steps for 2009-10 and Beyond

The Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS) is designed to foster leadership of the highest possible quality in schools and boards across the province to support student achievement. Succession planning and talent development in school boards is an essential element of the strategy. To this end, school boards are expected to have succession and talent development plans in place in 2009-10, and a leadership development strategy in place in 2010-11. The Ontario Leadership Framework summarizes effective practices and is a critical resource for succession planning and talent development for principals, supervisory officers and boards.

The Continuum that follows sets out the ministry's expectations for what elements and strategies are to be included in board succession and talent development plans. Recognizing that boards are at different stages in this area, it is not expected that all boards will be at a fully implemented state in the first year, however, there are three areas of focus[1] that all boards must include in their plans. The areas are: Data Collection (section A, part 3); Skills and Competencies (section B, part 1); and Professional Learning (section F, part 1). Additional areas of focus will be identified for implementation in subsequent years.

During 2009-10, boards will be required to report on their stage of implementation for each part of each section, whether Early Implementation, Implementation, Building Capacity or Sustaining Capacity. A reporting template will be provided. For the three areas of focus, boards will be required to indicate their plan of action for 2010-11 to move towards Sustaining Capacity.

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[1] Shaded areas

5. Succession Planning and Talent Development Implementation Continuum

The sections in this continuum are based on the succession planning domain in Part 2, System Practices and Procedures of the Leadership Framework and in the Leadership Self Review Tool http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/tools.html

A.	The board has a talent development strategy that includes well developed, well communicated and inclusive identification and recruitment practices.			
	Early Implementation	**Implementation**	**Building Capacity**	**Sustaining Capacity**
1	**Leadership profile** The board develops the profile of a leader, consistent with the Ontario Leadership Framework and the Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.	The profile of a leader is communicated throughout the system in multiple ways.	All staff understand and can articulate the profile of a leader.	The board culture actively encourages potential leaders who reflect the "profile of a leader".
2	**Self assessment** The board develops a plan to help potential leadership candidates self assess and for the board to provide feedback.	The board provides training on the self assessment tools and the leadership role.	The plan and training are well communicated and available to anyone with an interest in the role and the board also seeks out high potential candidates to self assess.	The plan is used consistently and cyclically and helps to inform a gap assessment to understand where development effort should be focussed.
3	**Data collection** The board uses current data to identify system needs, including economic and population trends and information gained from the Leadership Self Review Tool[2]	Data is used to inform long term planning for each school as well as the board, e.g., to ensure continuity of a portion of any given school team from one year to the next.	Training and development ensures an adequate pool of future well qualified candidates.	The board annual strategic plan is informed by The Leadership Self Review Tool[1] and includes talent supply and demand. A well developed leadership recruitment plan is regularly communicated to teachers at all stages of their careers.

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[2] Leadership Self Review Tool or equivalent instrument used by boards

	Early Implementation	Implementation	Building Capacity	Sustaining Capacity
	Data Collection *continued* As part of talent management, data is kept on the range of experience of staff.			
4	**Diversity** The board develops a strategy to attract and develop leaders that reflect the diversity within the community.	The board identifies systemic barriers and discriminatory biases that may limit the opportunities of individuals from diverse communities for hiring and promotion.	The board removes systemic barriers and discriminatory biases that may limit the opportunities of individuals from diverse communities for hiring and promotion.	The board is seen as being strengthened by hiring and promotion practices that reflect the diversity within the community.
5	**Leadership roles** The board actively provides opportunities for teachers to take leadership roles, both formal and informal.	The board promotes widely, to all staff, opportunities for training for teacher leadership positions both formal and informal.	A completed leadership related project is part of the application requirement and provides feedback on leadership potential to the candidate.	The board provides opportunities e.g., an acting position or internship, to try out the vice-principal or principal role.

B.	The board has a talent development strategy that includes training and development for aspiring leaders.			
	Early Implementation	**Implementation**	**Building Capacity**	**Sustaining Capacity**
1	**Skills and competencies** The board has a clear statement of skills and competencies essential to each leadership position to assist potential candidates in career and experience planning.	The board supports potential candidates with self-assessment tool(s) that specifically target growth areas in skills and competencies Potential candidates are provided information on career planning.	The board has a plan e.g. job shadowing program, peer assessment centre, for potential candidates to acquire the necessary skills.	The board supports candidate development with: - growth oriented preparation for the position; -post interview feedback including an opportunity to address areas specified; -career support for all candidates whether selected or not.
2	**Self reflection** The board recognizes the importance of reflection and informed decision making for those considering leadership positions.	The board has a program to support those considering applying for a leadership role and a process for communicating to those considered not suitable.	A program is offered to provide potential candidates with rich opportunities to reflect on personal suitability and decision to apply for a leadership position.	The board provides a variety of options; e.g. teacher leadership, consultancy, for those who wish to pursue a career in leadership.

C.	The board has a talent development strategy that includes selection processes that are systematic, transparent, equitable and inclusive.			
	Early Implementation	**Implementation**	**Building Capacity**	**Sustaining Capacity**
1	**Pathways to leadership** The board makes those in leadership positions aware of the value of having candidates who bring a variety of backgrounds and experience.	Candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences are encouraged to consider the leadership path.	Pathways to and requirements for various leadership positions are clearly identified and well communicated to all.	Candidates feel the selection process is equitable, fair and the background of the leadership cadre is varied.
2	**Selection process** The board recognizes that a multifaceted selection process is required to accommodate a variety of learning styles.	The board uses a variety of means to demonstrate job readiness.	The board's selection process, criteria and tools are well articulated, well understood and communicated.	The selection process is seen as open, transparent and fair.
3	**Identification of barriers** The board identifies biases and barriers in its selection processes.	Board and school leadership are committed to removing bias and barriers.	The board develops a strategy for removing bias and barriers in its selection process; e.g., outreach to employee groups; facilitated access to the selection process.	The selection process is seen as equitable.

D.	The board has a talent development strategy that includes a range of professional development opportunities for newly appointed school and system leaders.			
	Early Implementation	**Implementation**	**Building Capacity**	**Sustaining Capacity**
1	**Training requirements** The board evaluates the training requirements for those new to the role.	The board develops the training plan, materials, and schedule.	Training is integral to the board calendar and expectations for those new to the role.	The board ensures that training and resources are readily available and evaluated annually for improvement.
2	**Mentoring** The board implements mentoring and principal performance appraisal.	All new school and system leaders have a mentor and develop a performance plan and a professional learning plan.	Individual performance plans are used as planning tools to support school and board objectives.	Mentoring, including opportunities for peer-to-peer coaching, networking, feedback and rehearsal, and principal performance appraisal, are integrated into board culture
3	**Supporting instructional leadership** The board evaluates its own processes and information requests.	The board has a system for coordinating demands and for gate-keeping external demands. The board provides technical support for technology applications.	The board provides support for principals as instructional leaders.	The board continually monitors its systems and structures to assist school and system leaders to find an appropriate balance between instructional leadership and administration.
4	**Informal supports** The board accesses the expertise of those recently promoted or retired from the role as supports for those new to the role.	The board facilitates the development of support networks for new school and system leaders to problem solve emerging issues.	The board promotes networking for job embedded learning.	The board actively promotes a collaborative learning culture.

E.	The board has a talent development strategy that includes placement and transfer processes for school leaders with supports for success.			
	Early Implementation	**Implementation**	**Building Capacity**	**Sustaining Capacity**
1	**Transition process** The board develops a comprehensive transition process and document for incoming school and system leaders.	The transition process is communicated to all.	The training on the expected use of the transition process is developed and available to all school and system leaders.	The board transition processes are accepted practice.
2	**Coaching** The board develops a process for providing coaching appropriate to the placement.	New school and system leaders understand that coaching is available and that it is considered a positive option.	All new school and system leaders are provided with information on the school context by the supervisory officer and are able to access coaching support on a needs basis in a timely manner.	The board continuously evaluates the way it provides coaching supports to inform planning.
3	**Transfer policy** The board has a clear placement and transfer policy including opportunity for transferees to have input into placement decisions.	The transfer policy is well communicated and understood.	Transferees feel their input was taken into account and they trust the process.	The board continuously reviews its placement and transfer policy.

F.	The board has a talent development strategy for experienced school and system leaders that systematically builds capacity with a range of professional development opportunities. Skills and knowledge areas required for improving student achievement are central to the strategy and include core leadership capacities of 1) Setting Goals 4) Using Data 2) Aligning Resources with Priorities 5) Engaging in Courageous Conversations 3) Promoting Collaborative Learning Cultures			

	Early Implementation	**Implementation**	**Building Capacity**	**Sustaining Capacity**
1	**Professional learning** The board has developed a plan to support the professional learning of experienced school and system leaders.	The board provides opportunities for professional learning for all experienced school and system leaders.	The board supports networks of schools as professional learning communities for school and system leaders.	Leaders have continual opportunities for professional learning that meets their needs and supports their goals.
2	**Mentoring** The board recognizes the importance of a mentoring culture and has a plan to train its leaders at every level.	The board has a well defined training program of mentoring and coaching skills[3].	Mentoring and coaching training is provided to all school leaders as needed.[4]	The board mentoring culture includes opportunities for school and system leaders at all stages of their career.
3	**Performance appraisal** The board implements outcomes based performance appraisal aligned with the Ministry Guidelines for Principal Performance Appraisal. www.ontario.ca/eduleadership	The board establishes and communicates a performance appraisal cycle.	The board provides professional development in key leadership competencies[5] and to support the needs identified in principals' growth plans.	The board culture includes the use of the performance appraisal process by all leaders as a tool to drive their own professional development.

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[3]For assistance contact the principal associations, supervisory officer associations, and/or CODE

[4] See "Mentoring Conversation Starters and Sample Learning Plans" www.ontario.ca/eduleadership and *"Supporting Effective School Leadership: A Handbook for Implementing Mentoring for Newly Appointed School Leaders in Ontario"* at CPCO www.cpco.on.ca, ADFO www.adfo.org, OPC www.principals.on.ca

[5]The Ontario Leadership Framework can be a planning resource www.education-leadership-ontario.ca

G	The board has a comprehensive talent development strategy.			
	Early Implementation	**Implementation**	**Building Capacity**	**Sustaining Capacity**
1	**Plan** The board develops an overall written plan for succession and talent development.	The plan is communicated throughout the system in multiple ways.	The plan is well understood across the system and addresses the needs of academic, business, and support staff leaders and potential leaders.	The board continually monitors the plan to ensure that its systems, structures, policies, and procedures provide opportunities for the development of a diverse group of leaders throughout the system.