

National Professional Standard for Principals



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The National Professional Standard for Principals

Your working context

Leadership requirements

Vision and values

Knowledge and understanding

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Developing self and others

Leading improvement, innovation and change

Leading the management of the school

Engaging and working with the community

High quality learning, teaching and schooling

Successful learners, confident creative individuals and active informed citizens

National Professional Standard for Principals



Vision and values



Principals lead the development of the vision of the school. They are committed to the learning and growth of young people and adults guided by fairness, ethical practice, democratic values and lifelong learning. Principals understand, lead, mediate and serve the best interests of the community. This resonates through the strategic vision, school culture, traditions and positive ethos they seek to promote across the school. They insist upon high standards and foster respect across the whole school community.

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Knowledge and understanding



Principals understand the practice and theory of contemporary leadership and apply that knowledge in school improvement. Principals are well versed in the latest research and developments in pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and reporting and student wellbeing. They have knowledge of relevant national policies, practices and initiatives as well as relevant federal and state legislation, agreements and policies. They understand the implications of child safety, health and wellbeing, human resource management, financial management and accountability and other legislative and policy requirements in relation to serving their community and broader society.

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Personal qualities and social and interpersonal skills



This requirement recognises the importance of emotional intelligence, empathy, resilience and personal wellbeing in the leadership and management of the school and its community. Principals regularly review their practice and implement change in their leadership and management approaches to suit the situation. They manage themselves well and use ethical practices and social skills to deal with conflict effectively. They are able to build trust across the school community and to create a positive learning atmosphere for students and staff and within the community in which they work.

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Leading teaching and learning



Principals create a positive culture of challenge and support, enabling effective teaching that promotes enthusiastic, independent learners, committed to life-long learning. Principals have a key responsibility for developing a culture of effective teaching, for leading, designing and managing the quality of teaching and learning and for students' achievement in all aspects of their development. They set high expectations for the whole school through careful collaborative planning, monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of learning. Principals set high standards of behaviour and attendance, encouraging active engagement and a strong student voice.

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Developing self and others



Principals work with and through others to build a professional learning community that is focused on the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Through managing performance, effective continuing professional learning and regular feedback, they support all staff to achieve high standards and develop their leadership capacity. Principals support others, build capacity and treat people fairly and with respect. They model effective leadership and they are committed to their own ongoing professional development and personal health and well being in order to manage the complexity of the role and the range of learning capabilities and actions required of the role.

Mentoring and coaching aspirants



“Within our region, we have a group of aspiring leaders who are keen to develop their leadership skills. They attend five professional development sessions – one for each of the five professional practices of the Standard. They are encouraged to reflect on which areas they would like to develop further and their mentor can then support them to do this.”

Marlene Henschke

Principal

Mawson Lakes School

Could you act as mentor to an aspiring leader?

Framing a job application



“When I was applying for my Principalship, I used the Principal Standard as a frame to give evidence of my experience. I was also influenced by a really powerful article from America, entitled ‘Leading Learning Communities: Standard for what Principals should know and be able to do’. I read this over and over again and found it aligned neatly with the Principal Standard.”

Mick Underwood

*Principal
Willunga Primary School*

Would you like to read this article?

You can find it on:

***[http://www.naesp.org/resources/1/Pdfs/
LLC2-ES.pdf](http://www.naesp.org/resources/1/Pdfs/LLC2-ES.pdf)***

Team learning



“We want to unpack the Professional Practices in terms of capabilities. This is what’s needed. We want to flesh out what each Professional Practice looks like in practice, what behaviour is required. We are then hoping to develop some 360 degree feedback tools on the back of this work.”

Dr Kerry Kavanagh

Director, Workforce Devt

SA Dept of Education and Children’s Services

In your network of Principals, could you unpack the Professional Practices or identify the leadership behaviours required?

Structuring leadership development



“We are using the Standard as our fundamental guide to all the professional learning we offer to school leaders and aspirants. We have just entered into a contract with the University of Western Australia for a contextualised Master of School Leadership: there will be core units closely informed by each of the Professional Practices. That’s what we see as the power of the Standard.”

Lindsay Hale

*Acting Executive Director
(Statewide Planning and Delivery)
WA Department of Education*

Are you able to access standard referenced professional development?

Critical reflection and action



“Principals have to juggle many competing priorities and it is all too easy for the urgent to take over from the important. The Principal Standard draws your attention to what is important to develop and sustain our schools. It provokes us to engage in some ‘me time’: to prioritise, to reflect, and to find the courage to act rather than react.”

Professor Sue Willis

*Pro Vice-Chancellor (Social Inclusion)
Monash University*

***Would you benefit from spending more
‘me time’ reflecting on what is important?***

Building leadership capacity



“What I like about the Principal Standard is how it can inspire younger teachers to aspire to leadership positions. If you look at the average age of school Principals, you can see how important it is to build leadership capacity within the next generation of school leaders. The Standard offers a uniform approach to inspiring and training new school leaders.”

Graham Phillips

*Principal
Avalon Public School*

***Are your staff ready to step up to
new leadership roles?***

***Why not start with a small group of those
you think might be interested?***

Focus for staff meetings



“I have introduced both the Teacher Standards and the Principal Standard as topics for discussion in staff meetings. They engendered some lively debate. I think it is important for my staff to be aware of the national scene, and it is really valuable for the profession to have national standards.”

Daniel Zobel

*Principal
Fadden Primary School*

Are your staff aware of the Teacher Standards and the Principal Standard? Could you make these a focus for your next staff meeting? www.aitsl.edu.au contains downloadable materials.

A guide for new principals



“When you first come into the Principal role, there’s nothing definitive that says what to do. You pick it up along the way. I found the Principal Standard a really good guide. I looked at my strengths and weaknesses and realised that I would like to develop my skills in leading change. This is where I am now focusing my professional learning.”

Anne Stewart
*Acting Principal
Reece High School*

***How could you support Principals
who are new into their role?***

Tool for self reflection



“I have found the Standard really useful in terms of self reflection. I have realised that I avoid political leadership and I need to work harder at this aspect of the role. The Standard brings clarity to the role of the Principal, it helps you to reaffirm what you are doing, and it makes you realise the bits you need to prioritise more.”

Rachel Brown

Principal

Sassafras Primary School

Which aspect of the Standard would you like to develop your skills in further?

Inviting appraisal



“When I heard about the Principal Standard, I brought it back to my Governing Council and asked them to use it as an appraisal process for myself. This wasn’t a formal process but I wanted to get input and feedback. I used the Standard as a structure to write up how the school is going under my leadership.”

Nanette van Ruiten

*Principal
Parafield Gardens High School*

How would you use the standard to add value to your existing review process?

Aligning systems to meet the Standard



“We are currently in the midst of creating a strong affiliation and awareness of the Principal Standard to ensure that it will be central to the recruitment, self reflection, performance management and ongoing career development of all public school leaders in the ACT. It will also play an essential part in our continuing development of high performing aspiring leaders.”

Dr Jim Watterston

Director General

ACT Education and Training Directorate

Have you reviewed your systems in the light of the Principal Standard?

Acknowledging your school culture



“Each school has its own culture to which a Principal must apply wisdom, vision and an understanding of self and others in leadership. It is critically important that the role of the Principal is communicated well so that young teachers gain a better understanding of what Principals do: beyond administration to visionary leadership.”

Andrew Barr

Principal

Scotch Oakburn College

The Principal Standard operates in the context of each school. How would you describe your school culture?

Leading Australia's schools



“I am particularly interested in the Principal Standard’s emphasis on personal qualities, social and interpersonal skills. I focused on this area when I participated in AITSL’s Leading Australia’s Schools programme, and I undertook training to become an accredited corporate coach. I feel this has had an enormous impact on my Principalship.”

Martin Barrett

Principal

Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School

***Have you considered joining the next
Leading Australia’s Schools programme?***

Informing professional learning



“The Standard is going to be really useful at a systems level and at a school level. For instance, in our school we have a number of people who are aspiring leaders and some wonderful aspiring Principals as well, and we will be using the Principal Standard within the leadership continuum for professional learning that we have working across the school.”

Liliana Mularczyk

*Principal
Merrylands High School*

How could you use the Principal Standard to inform the professional learning that you offer to staff within the school?

Mapping professional learning



“In New South Wales, we have mapped the professional learning that we currently offer and also the professional learning that we will be offering to school leaders against the five professional practice areas and the three leadership requirements. We have found a very close correlation between what we have done in the past and also what we need to do in the future.”

Ann McIntyre

*Director, Professional Learning
Department of Education and Training, NSW*

Can you access professional learning that will help you to develop your skills in the professional practices and leadership requirements of the Standard?

Structuring feedback conversations



“I really like the Standard as a reflection tool and there were no such reflection tools when I started. When I think back to the first round of feedback with staff, if I’d had something like the Principal and Teacher Standard frameworks, it would have been so much more explicit and I’m sure that the staff would have benefited more from what I was trying to do.”

Sheree Vertigan

President

Australian Secondary Principals Association

***Would the Principal Standard help you
to frame feedback conversations
with your senior staff?***

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Leading improvement, innovation and change



Principals work with others to produce and implement clear, evidence-based improvement plans and policies for the development of the school and its facilities. They recognise that a crucial part of the role is to lead and manage innovation and change to ensure the vision and strategic plan is put into action across the school and that its goals and intentions are realised.

Aligning existing frameworks



“We have a tsunami of initiatives in our schools already and so we were determined to align our school review and improvement framework to the Principal Standard. We found that the synchronicities were strong and significant. In my view, the process of sifting what we were doing through the AITSL net turned out to be both reflective and generative.’

Brendan Spillane

*Project Leader
Quality Catholic Schooling*

Could you align existing frameworks you are using with the Principal Standard?

Guiding planning



“My senior staff and I tried to align some of our major school improvement projects with the Standard. We found it was a great way of reflecting on how we could approach these projects more systematically, taking into account each of the Professional Practices. It is a great tool for streamlining discussions around major projects.”

Clayton Sturzaker

*Principal
East Devonport Primary School*

Can you identify school improvement initiatives that would benefit from such an analysis?

Shadowing and observing



“A local Principal and I have formed a learning pair and we use the Standard to structure our discussions. For example, I will pick an aspect of the Standard for scrutiny, and she will visit my school for a day, make observations and offer me feedback. It offers me a fresh perspective. We even share our school plans with each other now.”

Jim Rudling

Principal

Penguin Primary School

***Could you form a partnership with
a neighbouring Principal?***

A network approach



“Our North West Secondary Principals are working as a network to develop a consistent approach and a common application of the Teacher Standards and Principal Standard. Our next meeting will introduce the Standard and subsequent meetings will be focused on the Professional Practices.”

Roger Eadie

*Principal
Devonport High School*

Could your local school network work on a collegial basis to address the Standard?

Accessing research and best practice



“I think AITSL’s Clearing House is a great initiative as it enables school leaders to have just in time access to current research and best practice to solve problems. It offers a wonderful opportunity for Principals in rural and remote schools to develop their knowledge. Even though I live outside the big cities, I can still tap into national and international research studies.”

Lorraine Hodgson

Director

Australian Professional Teachers’ Association

Have you browsed AITSL’s Clearinghouse for school leaders? You can find it on the AITSL website www.aitsl.edu.au.

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Leading the management of the school



Principals use a range of data management methods and technologies to ensure that the school's resources and staff are efficiently organised and managed to provide an effective and safe learning environment as well as value for money. This includes appropriate delegation of tasks to members of the staff and the monitoring of accountabilities. Principals ensure these accountabilities are met. They seek to build a successful school through effective collaboration with school boards, governing bodies, parents and others. They use a range of technologies effectively and efficiently to manage the school.

Identifying priority areas



“The Standard is broadly applicable to all schools. You can then drill down the Professional Practices to identify sub issues that are relevant to your particular circumstances. For independent schools, for example, the area of financial management is critical, so Principals need to be highly competent in this area.”

Dr Geoffrey Newcombe

Executive Director

Association of Independent Schools of NSW

Does your school context demand special expertise in one of the Professional Practice areas?

Managing time and priorities



“I think Principals are constantly moving between the balcony and the dance floor. They’re always both working in the day to day and having to step out and look at ‘So what’s happening here? And how do I understand it?’ and get to the high level thinking. The real challenge is time.”

Dr Sandra Stein

International Leadership Expert

How well do you achieve that balance between day to day priorities and high level thinking?

Acknowledging school context



“I suspect the challenge for all of us is to make the Principal Standard a real Value Add, something that is really useful for a whole range of people, for a whole range of circumstances... that is very purposeful but very context specific.”

Margery Evans

Chief Executive Officer

AITSL

What impact does the context of your school have on your role as a Principal?

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Engaging and working with the community



Principals embrace inclusion and help build a culture of high expectations that takes account of the richness and diversity of the school's wider community and the education systems and sectors. They develop and maintain positive partnerships with students, families and carers, and all those associated with the school's broader community. They create an ethos of respect taking account of the intellectual, spiritual, cultural, moral, social, health and wellbeing of students. They promote sound life long learning from pre-school through to adult life. They recognise the multicultural nature of Australian people. They foster understanding and reconciliation with Indigenous cultures. They recognise and use the rich and diverse linguistic and cultural resources in the school community. They recognise and support the needs of students, families and carers from communities facing complex challenges.

Involving your school community



“I sat down with my School Association and took them through the key elements of the Standard. We discussed how we could use it as a frame to plan School Association projects. I have found the Standard to be a really good planning tool, as it keeps bringing you back to your vision and values.”

Alex Downes

Principal

Rosebery District High School

Could you introduce the Principal Standard at the next meeting of your school community or Governing Council?

Making connections



“Rural leaders need to bring connections to their job and they need to develop connections with those in their community. I believe that the Principal Standard gives the framework for Principals to make connections, encouraged by the inter-related nature of the five professional practices.”

Gary Allen

Executive Officer

Rural Education Forum Australia

Can you think of organisations in your community with whom you need to make stronger connections?

Using the App



“I use the Principal Standard App a lot in my day to day work. I downloaded it free from the Apple store and it’s quite user friendly. I look at the different Professional Practices in terms of what is most pressing. At the moment, I am looking at community engagement: connecting with the school’s community, listening and promoting messages that are important.”

Donna Bridge

Principal

Fitzroy Valley District High School

***Have you downloaded the App?
If not, check out iTunes now.***

Communicating with students



“At my first school assembly as new Principal, I explained to the children the different roles of the Principal represented by different coloured hats. If I did this again, I would use the five Professional Practices to help communicate to my school community what I do in my job.”

Shanti Clements

*Principal
Beauty Point Public School*

Have you ever tried to explain your role to the children in your school?

The wider school community



“Many Principals would effectively be the mayor of a small village, responsible for up to 1000 students, but also around 2000 parents, lots of grandparents, maybe 100 staff. So you’re mayor of a village of around 3000 people whose job it is to bring up children. They need to understand what the Principal does.”

Allan Shaw

*Chief Executive
Association of Heads of Independent
Schools of Australia*

How do you reach out to your wider school community?

Licence to do the full job



“What we found in the pilot study of the Principal Standard was that the Standard gave Principals licence to act in ways that they hadn’t done before, because it’s OK to do this part of the job. Involving yourself in the community is part of the job.”

Dr John Ewington

*Program Manager – School Leadership
Department of Education Tasmania*

***Does the Principal Standard give you
licence to do parts of the job that
can be overlooked?***

Describing the principal's job



“It describes the job beautifully for parents, for the community, for stakeholders, for employers and for the jurisdictions. It’s a complex job, it’s challenging, it’s exhausting and it genuinely is helping to shape the future of this country.”

Allan Blagaich

*Chief Executive Officer
Curriculum Council WA*

How could you use the Principal Standard to improve communication with your community?