

State Council for Educator Effectiveness

# Technical Advisory Group

Principal Standards Work Group

# Colorado Professional Standards for Principals

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**NOTE: Bold language is Council recommendation for required components of evaluation system; non-bolded text is descriptive of the required elements.**

*Effective principals in the state of Colorado are responsible for the collective success of their schools, including the learning, growth and achievement of both students and staff. As the school's primary instructional leader, effective principals enable critical discourse and data-driven reflection about curriculum, assessment, instruction, and student progress, and create structures to facilitate improvement. Effective principals are adept at creating systems that maximize the utilization of resources and human capital, foster collaboration, and facilitate constructive change. By creating a common vision and articulating shared values, effective principals lead and manage their schools in a manner that supports the school's ability to promote equity and to continually improve its positive impact on students and families.*

Effective principals in the state of Colorado demonstrate a positive impact on student outcomes by demonstrating excellence against the following professional standards:

## Standard I: Principals Demonstrate Strategic Leadership

- a. **School Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals:** Principals develop the vision, mission, values, beliefs and goals of the school, collaboratively determine the processes used to establish these attributes, and facilitate their integration into the life of the school community.  
Principals engage all stakeholders in building a shared vision of student learning outcomes for the school community that reflects the State of Colorado's definition of school readiness, and Colorado's definition of postsecondary and workforce readiness, including student readiness for global citizenship. They ensure that the school's mission and strategic goals all directly support this vision of student success, in a way that is aligned with district priorities.
- b. **School Improvement Plan:** Principals ensure that the unified improvement plan provides the structure for the vision, values, goals, and changes necessary for improved achievement and developmental outcomes for all students, and provides for tracking of progress based on data.  
Principals ensure that the school improvement plan is an actionable, meaningful plan that includes the implementation of strategies to identify and support student engagement, healthy development, attendance and successful completion of school for all students. The plan should be reviewed frequently and revised to adjust strategies based on progress toward goals. The principal shall ensure that any school improvement plans are aligned with and mutually supportive of each other and existing district plans.
- c. **Leading Change:** Principals collaboratively develop a vision and implementation strategies for improvements and changes which result in improved achievement and developmental outcomes for all students.  
Principals demonstrate the ability to effectively manage organizational change, developing and fostering a collaborative culture that inspires innovation, creativity and continuous school improvement. They model self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency and ethical behavior. Principals analyze organizational practices and make changes as necessary based on a review of data. They understand the implications of changes for the school community, and demonstrate flexibility and adaptability. Principals can clearly define and communicate challenges to all stakeholders in their school community and can implement problem-solving strategies to seek positive solutions to school challenges.
- d. **Distributive Leadership:** Principals create and utilize processes to distribute leadership and decision making throughout the school.  
Where appropriate, they involve staff, parent/guardians and students in decisions about school governance, curriculum and instruction. Principals build internal capacity by creating opportunities for staff to demonstrate leadership, by assuming decision-making roles both inside and outside of the school.

## Standard II: Principals Demonstrate Instructional Leadership

- a. **Curriculum, Instruction, Learning and Assessment:** Principals enable school-wide conversations about standards for curriculum, instruction, assessment and data on student learning based on research and best practices, and ensure that the ideas developed are integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional approaches.

Principals demonstrate current knowledge of research in teaching, learning and child development, and ensure that their schools provide a comprehensive education that promotes cognitive, physical, mental, social emotional health and growth. They ensure that an age-appropriate curriculum consistent with the Colorado Academic Standards is taught and monitored through effective formative assessment practices, and the use of summative assessments. They engage staff in developing knowledge about student development, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and analysis and use of data in order to establish and achieve high expectations for students. Principals ensure high expectations for all students, including students identified as gifted, students with disabilities, and students considered "at risk" of school failure.

- b. **Instructional Time:** Principals create processes and schedules which maximize instructional, collaborative and preparation time.

They ensure that teachers and other adults working with students have time, structures, opportunities and the expectation of planning, working, reflecting and celebrating together to improve instructional practice.

- c. **Implementing High-quality Instruction:** Principals support teachers through feedback and appropriate professional development in order to ensure that rigorous, relevant and appropriate instruction and learning experiences, aligned across P-20, are delivered to and for all students.

Principals demonstrate current knowledge of best practices in PK-20 instruction and assessment, and are able to monitor delivery of high-quality instruction. They encourage and support teachers in utilizing research-based methods to develop and employ multiple instructional approaches; developing personalized learning opportunities for diverse learners; planning lessons that allow students to apply and demonstrate learning connections in creative and meaningful ways; integrating technology and formative assessment practices into instruction to increase student engagement and learning; and using multiple methods of progress monitoring to track student learning and adjust instruction as needed. Principals ensure that the school's structures and daily schedules are supportive these instructional goals. They are good listeners and coaches and are able to give and receive feedback.

- d. **High Expectations for all Students:** Principals hold all staff accountable for setting and achieving rigorous performance goals for all students, and empower staff to achieve these ambitious student outcomes.

Principals make available to the school community, as appropriate, data about student performance. Principals actively engage the school community to interpret and respond to available data on student achievement and other performance indicators. Principals collect and analyze available data regularly to monitor progress and make appropriate adjustments designed to improve performance outcomes. Principals ensure that data are turned into meaningful information that can be used by teachers, students and parents/guardians to identify goals, implement evidence-based strategies, monitor and evaluate the impact of instructional programs, and promote organizational learning.

## Standard III: Principals Demonstrate School Culture and Equity Leadership

- a. **Intentional and Collaborative School Culture:** Principals articulate and model a clear vision of the school's culture, and involve students, families and staff in creating a climate that supports it.

Principals articulate a strong and clear vision for the school's culture, and foster broad ownership among the school community for that vision. Principals deploy school structures in a manner the supports the culture. They build relationships that create a trusting, collaborative, innovative, respectful and supportive school culture where teachers want to work, students want to learn and all families feel welcomed and empowered to help their students succeed.

- b. **Commitment to the Whole Child:** Principals value the cognitive, physical, mental, social and emotional health and growth of every student.

Principals build a school culture that supports comprehensive education that promotes cognitive, physical, mental, social and emotional health and growth of students. They engage school and community-based resources to support students and their families.

- c. **Equity Pedagogy:** Principals demonstrate a commitment to a diverse population of students by creating an inclusive and celebratory school culture, and provide direction in meeting the needs of diverse students, talents, experiences and challenges.

Principals ensure that all adults in the school have high expectations for all students, and believe that all students can reach those high expectations. They support the use of a variety of teaching styles designed to meet the diverse needs of

individual students. Students' individual backgrounds are valued as a resource, and principals advocate for approaches to instruction and behavioral supports that build on student strengths.

- d. **Efficacy, Empowerment and a Culture of Continuous Improvement:** Principals and their leadership team foster a school culture that encourages continual improvement through innovation, risk-taking, and an honest assessment of outcomes.

Principals foster a school culture which supports and celebrates on-going efforts at improvement through innovation and risk-taking. They facilitate candid discussions with the school community about student achievement and other performance indicators. They recognize the achievements of individuals and the school as a whole while acknowledging areas needing improvement by modeling self-awareness, transparency and ethical behavior.

## **Standard IV: Principals Demonstrate Human Resource Leadership**

- a. **Professional Development/Learning Communities:** Principals ensure that the school is a professional learning community that provides opportunities for collaboration, fosters teacher learning and develops teacher leaders in a manner that is consistent with local structures, contracts, policies and strategic plans.

Principals communicate regularly about the changing context for teaching and learning, and create a collaborative culture and overall structure for on-going learning that fosters teacher learning and develops teacher leaders.

- b. **Recruiting, Hiring, Placing, Mentoring, and Dismissal of Staff:** Principals establish and effectively manage processes and systems that ensure a high-quality, high-performing staff, including an overall count and percentage of effective teachers that reflects the school's improvement priorities.

Principals include in their professional development plan explicit reference to the ways in which they intend to address the counts and percentages of effective teachers in the building. They recruit, retain and support high-quality and effective teachers and staff, and implement a systemic process for comprehensive, effective, and research-based professional development, coaching and mentoring that is differentiated for adults to support student learning. As appropriate, principals create school-wide structures that ensure that teacher candidates and other educator interns provide support for students, and increase embedded professional learning opportunities for experienced educators in the school. They demonstrate the ability to dismiss staff members who are ineffective or otherwise unsatisfactory after plans for professional improvement and support have proven unsuccessful.

- c. **Teacher and Staff Evaluation:** Principals evaluate staff performance using the district's educator evaluation system in order to ensure that teachers and staff are evaluated in a fair and equitable manner with a focus on improving performance and, thus, student achievement.

Principals implement a systemic process for evaluation of all staff members that leads to the continuous improvement of performance. For teachers, this includes the provision of frequent and timely feedback and supports. Principals recognize and celebrate quality teachers, and provide professional development coaching for teachers needing support in order to improve instruction and student learning outcomes.

## **Standard V: Principals Demonstrate Managerial Leadership**

- a. **School Resources and Budget:** Principals establish systems for marshaling all available school resources to facilitate the work that needs to be done to improve student learning, achievement and healthy development for all students.

Principals implement effective operational systems to use time, personnel, technology and resources to support student learning. Within the parameters of the district and economic environment, principals ensure that all school operation systems are managed according to principles of business management, budgeting and accounting practices.

- b. **Conflict Management and Resolution:** Principals effectively and efficiently manage the complexity of human interactions and relationships, including those among and between parents/guardians, students and staff.

Principals demonstrate awareness of potential problems and areas of conflict within the school, and create processes to resolve areas of conflict which allows diverse interests to be heard and respected. Using a creative problem-solving approach, principals resolve conflicts to ensure the best interest of students and the school.

- c. **Systematic Communication:** Principals facilitate the design and utilization of various forms of formal and informal communication with all school stakeholders.

Principals communicate the school's distinctive learning environment and student learning results in an open and transparent manner, in order to attract parent and community support.

- d. **School-wide Expectations for Students and Staff:** Principals understand the importance of clear expectations, structures, rules and procedures for students and staff.



Principals promote cultural competence among teachers, staff and students, and foster respects for individual needs and differences among students, staff and families. Principals design and implement a plan for proactive student discipline that addresses discrimination, harassment and bullying, and safeguards the values of democracy, equity, citizenship, patriotism, and diversity among students, staff and parents/guardians.

- e. **Supporting Policies and Agreements:** Principals familiarize themselves with federal and state laws, and districts and board policies, including negotiated agreements, and establish processes to ensure that they are consistently met.

## **Standard VI: Principals Demonstrate External Development Leadership**

- a. **Family and Community Involvement and Outreach:** Principals design structures and processes which result in family and community engagement, support and ownership for the school.

Principals create a culture of engagement and communication with families and community to build relationships that support students and families to improve student learning, achievement and healthy development, and school performance. Principals engage parents/guardians in understanding and taking part in activities to improve their student's learning, and partner with school- and community-based resources to support students and their families. They build and sustain school-community partnerships with businesses and other civil and social organizations to ensure multiple learning opportunities for students.

- b. **Professional Leadership Responsibilities:** Principals strive to improve the profession by collaborating with their colleagues, district leadership and other stakeholders to drive the development and successful implementation of initiatives that better serve students, teachers and schools at all levels of the education system. They ensure that these initiatives are consistent with federal and state laws, district and board policies, and negotiated agreements where applicable.

Principals act as leaders in the field to influence local/district/state or national decisions that have an effect on student learning. They are aware of federal and state laws, and district and board policies including negotiated agreements, and ensure that the protocols and processes they adopt in their schools are consistent with these requirements. As necessary they advocate for changes that better serve students, teachers and schools. They establish and maintain systems to protect the confidentiality of student records and family communications.

- c. **Advocacy for the School:** Principals develop systems and relationships to leverage the district and community resources available to them both within and outside of the school in order to maximize the school's ability to serve the best interest of students and families.

Principals act as leaders in the field to influence local/district/state or national decisions that have an effect on student learning. They are aware of federal and state laws, and district and board policies including negotiated agreements, and ensure that the protocols and processes they adopt in their schools are consistent with these requirements. As necessary they advocate for changes that better serve students, teachers and schools. They establish and maintain systems to protect the confidentiality of student records and family communications.

## **Standard VII: Principals Demonstrate Leadership Around Student Growth**

- a. **Student Academic Achievement and Growth:** Principals take responsibility for ensuring that all students are progressing toward postsecondary and workforce readiness by high school graduation. Principals prepare students for success by ensuring mastery of Colorado Academic Standards, including 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
- b. **Student Growth and Development:** Principals take responsibility for facilitating the preparation of students with the skills, dispositions and attitudes necessary for success in work and postsecondary education, including democratic and civic participation.
- c. **Use of Data:** Principals use evidence to evaluate the performance and practices of their schools, in order to continually improve attainment of student growth.