

National Board Certification
for Educational Leaders

Accomplished Principal Standards

First Edition

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
1525 Wilson Boulevard • Arlington, VA 22209 USA
Tel: 703-465-2700 • Fax: 703-465-2715
www.nbpts.org

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Table of Contents

Preface

About the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards	5
About the Standards	6
About Certification	8

Foundation of National Board Certification for Principals

Core Propositions for Educational Leaders	9
Architecture of Accomplished Educational Leading	11

Accomplished Principal Standards

Introduction	13
Standards Statements	17
Standards	
I. Leadership for Results	19
II. Vision and Mission	27
III. Teaching and Learning	33
IV. Knowledge of Students and Adults	39
V. Culture	45
VI. Strategic Management	51
VII. Advocacy	57
VIII. Ethics	61
IX. Reflection and Growth	65
Standards Committee	69
Acknowledgements	71



About the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, advances the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished educators; creating and administering National Board Certification, an evidence-based voluntary assessment program to certify educators who meet those standards; and integrating certified educators into educational reform efforts. NBPTS has a record of developing accomplished standards and rigorous assessments that are recognized in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

More than two decades ago, NBPTS developed National Board Certification for Teachers, a voluntary assessment program designed to develop, recognize, and retain accomplished teachers. While state licensing systems set basic requirements to teach in each state, National Board Certified Teachers have successfully demonstrated accomplished teaching knowledge, skills, and practices. The new NBPTS program, National Board Certification for Principals is the first national certification program for accomplished school-based administrators. It is also the first phase of an expanded program, National Board Certification for Educational Leaders, which lays the groundwork for a new teacher leader certification.

National Board Certification for Principals defines and validates the requirements that identify an accomplished, effective, and results-oriented principal. As in medicine, law, and other fields, National Board Certification for Principals will support excellence, motivation, and prestige within the profession. The National Board's analysis shows that principals support the prospect of advanced certification that recognizes the importance of instructional leadership, organizational change, and community involvement—as well as the principal's essential role in school management.

For more information about the principal certification, visit www.nbpts.org/principals. For more information about NBPTS and National Board Certification, visit www.nbpts.org.

About the Standards

National Board Standards for Accomplished Principals represent a professional consensus on the unique practices that distinguish accomplished principals. *The Accomplished Principal Standards* were identified by a committee of twenty-one independent expert educational leaders—teacher and administrator practitioners, researchers, academicians, business leaders, and policymakers—who identified what accomplished principals should know and be able to do. The resulting work of this forward-thinking group was validated and modified during a public review process to which over 2,500 individuals responded. The NBPTS Certification Council, a nine-member committee made up of two Board of Directors and seven external experts charged with oversight of National Board standards and certification, reviewed the standards and recommended them to the Board of Directors for approval.

These standards are cast in terms of the collaborative actions these accomplished principals take to advance learning to the highest level for every child: to recruit, engage, promote, and retain accomplished teachers; to improve school culture and performance; to advocate for the profession and the needs of their school; and to purposefully engage families and the broader community in the school’s vision and mission. The standards reflect the nine Core Propositions for Educational Leaders, which form the foundation and frame the rich amalgam of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will characterize National Board Certified Principals.

NBPTS recognizes that accomplished principal practice appears in many forms and environments and that there is no single “right” way to be an accomplished principal leader. No linearity, atomization, or hierarchy is implied in this vision of accomplished principal practice, nor is each standard of equal weight. Rather, the standards are presented as aspects of accomplished principal practice that are analytically separable for the purposes of this standards document but are not discrete when they appear in practice. Such leaders draw on varying combinations of these nine standards as they reflect the skills, applications and dispositions of specific leadership roles and developmental levels. The combination of the standards differs for various types of leaders in myriad educational settings.

The document follows a two part format for each of the nine standards:

- **Standard Statement**—The standard statement is a succinct declaration of one vital aspect of accomplished principal practice. Each standard statement is expressed in terms of “what” the standard represents.
- **Elaboration**—The expanded standard language serves as context for the standard as well as an explanation of what accomplished principals need to know, value, and do if they are to fulfill the standard. The elaboration includes descriptions of principals’ dispositions, their distinctive roles and responsibilities, “how” to achieve the results of the standard, and examples to allow principals to see themselves and their practice in the standards.

About Certification

National Board Certification for Principals, the first national certification program focused on accomplished principals, honors the complexities and demands of the role of principal. The evidence-based assessments, aligned with the educational leader core propositions and Accomplished Principal Standards, are designed so that accomplished principals demonstrate their practice by providing evidence of what they know and do. The assessment is process- and systems-based to encompass active, relevant site-based evidence that is demonstrated through application.

The evidence-based assessments are developed by two inter-related committees, one primarily responsible for content and one for technical oversight. The Content Advisory Group is responsible for identifying and defining the evidence that substantiates the core propositions and the standards that is then used to design the assessment, scoring rubric, and scores for principal certification. The committee works collaboratively with the Technical Advisory Group and selected assessment development organizations to design the instrument that measures the evidence.

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) provides expert technical and psychometric guidance on the design and development of all aspects of the assessment. Specifically, this group of six national experts directs the pilot test design and administration, scoring procedures, and standard setting to establish the score scale and cut score for the assessment. The TAG collaboratively analyzes pilot test score results and designs the technical reports and manual for the assessment program. This committee is comprised of experts in measurement, psychometrics, and education policy, as well as professors of educational research and evaluation.

To be eligible for certification, a principal must:

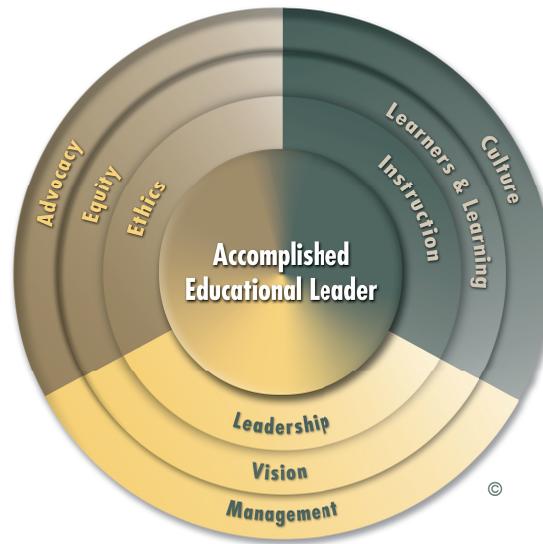
- Hold a bachelor's degree,
- Have completed three full years as a principal leader,
- Possess a valid required state license for that period of time, or, if a principal where a license is not required, have been a principal in schools recognized and approved to operate by the state and federal government.

The assessment is scheduled for delivery in 2012. For more information about the principal certification, visit www.nbpts.org/principals.

Core Propositions for Educational Leaders

The Core Propositions for Accomplished Educational Leaders capture the essence of what accomplished educational leaders should know and do at a consistently high level. They define the essential elements of accomplished educational practice for leaders that establish a vision of the future. They are written in language that covers the multitude of contexts in which leaders act and positions that leaders hold, allowing for changes in educational structure, process, and technology. These core propositions address aspects of practice that carry equal gravitas with little overlap and are designed to stand the test of time.

The Core Propositions are the bedrock upon which the certifications for educational leaders are built. From them, stakeholders have crafted the specific, detailed *Accomplished Principal Standards* and will develop evidence-based assessments that will certify principals as accomplished. The core propositions define the fundamental skills, central applications, and overarching dispositions for such leaders. While accomplished educational leaders' practice must embody all nine core propositions, such leaders draw on varying combinations of these skills, applications, and dispositions to best meet the distinct demands of their learning communities.



National Board Core Propositions for Accomplished Educational Leaders™

Skills

1. Accomplished educational leaders continuously cultivate their understanding of leadership and the change process to meet high levels of performance. **(Leadership)**
2. Accomplished educational leaders have a clear vision and inspire and engage stakeholders in developing and realizing the mission. **(Vision)**
3. Accomplished educational leaders manage and leverage systems and processes to achieve desired results. **(Management)**

Applications

4. Accomplished educational leaders are committed to student and adult learners and to their development. **(Learners & Learning)**
5. Accomplished educational leaders drive, facilitate, and monitor the teaching and learning process. **(Instruction)**
6. Accomplished educational leaders act with a sense of urgency to foster a cohesive culture of learning. **(Culture)**

Dispositions

7. Accomplished educational leaders model professional, ethical behavior and expect it from others. **(Ethics)**
8. Accomplished educational leaders ensure equitable learning opportunities and high expectations for all. **(Equity)**
9. Accomplished educational leaders advocate on behalf of their schools, communities, and profession. **(Advocacy)**

Introduction to Accomplished Principal Standards

Of the factors that are within the control of school, the quality of the teacher is the one thing that has been proven to have the most significant impact on the success of the student. Within the school site the leadership position of principal is the single most significant element in enabling the teacher to teach and the student to learn. As the teacher is to the classroom, the principal is to the school. As the teacher is to the students, the principal is to the adults¹. When the principal is an accomplished leader, teachers and other staff are effective, parents are involved, the community is engaged, and most importantly, students learn.

Leadership matters. The results of accomplished educational leadership elevate our civic engagement, our economic resilience, and our commitment to our democratic ideals. Ultimately, the quality of life improves as people respectfully contribute and honor the contributions of others. Meeting the challenges of American democracy and global leadership requires a highly educated populace and thus the need for excellent schools led by accomplished principals. Accomplished principals create the conditions upon which these democratic ideals can flourish.

Leadership is complex. Teaching and learning take place in the context of complex interdependent human organizations, requiring a leader who possesses deep knowledge of education and sophisticated relationship skills. Accomplished principals balance this complexity. They are able to incorporate the art and science of leadership to orchestrate the diverse, demanding components of the organization. To the uninitiated, the underpinnings of effort, preparation, and prowess behind the accomplished principal's work are invisible and seamless.

Leadership is shared. Because of the complexity of the work, accomplished principals build leadership capacity in others and share leadership responsibility. Understanding the diverse strengths of students, teachers, staff, parents, and community members, accomplished principals enlist them to serve in leadership roles. The principal who has the courage to share leadership reaps the rewards of collective ownership, resulting in a more vital organization. Whereas the traditional role of principals relied on positional authority, accomplished principals distribute leadership as they engage others in

¹ In this document, the term "adults" is used to represent all individuals in the learning community who are responsible for the students' education and well-being.

authentic processes designed to involve the perspectives and talents of many, including other members of their administrative team, teacher leaders, staff, and parents.

Leadership is proactive. Accomplished principals plan for success and seize opportunities. They leave nothing to chance. They neither shy away from challenges nor see themselves or their organizations as victims without options. They move forward with a sense of urgency, creating a culture of accountability where the norm for all is purposeful impatience. Accomplished principals consciously create a culture of collective effort, high expectations, high performance, and supportive structures. Accomplished principals transform schools into learning communities.

Leadership is leading learning. Accomplished principals are humble lead learners. They make their own learning a continuous and public part of the work of leading their school.

Leadership is leading by example. Through their actions, accomplished principals serve as a beacon and motivate each person to reach his or her greatest potential. They continually learn, model and mentor.

Leadership is visionary. When the National Board expanded the certification process to include principals, it moved from a model that focuses on one teacher at a time to a model that focuses on one school at a time. Accomplished principals see the value added to their organization by the integration of National Board Certification for themselves and their teachers. These principals know that true reform happens at the classroom level by accomplished teachers working in concert with accomplished principals and supported by all other adults who have a stake in the well-being of students. In the pursuit of educational reform, these principals purposefully review all proposed educational endeavors and select only those reforms that explicitly support the authentic work of their teachers.

Leadership is the pursuit of excellence. By having a clear vision, a belief in the power of education, and trust in the capacity of those they serve, accomplished principals pursue excellence. Accomplished principals hold themselves accountable to the values and beliefs of the organization and know that their behavioral congruence is a core component in their ability to lead well. Accomplished principals lead their schools to adopt or develop a clear framework for instructional practice. This framework provides a common language about instruction and serves as a touchstone for teacher conversation, instructional observation, and teacher feedback. Further, accomplished principals articulate a theory of action that is clear to teachers, staff, and parents to explain why specific strategies are brought to bear on the particular problems and context of their school.

These standards break new ground by creating benchmarks for performance at the highest level for accomplished principals. First and foremost, these standards are intended to define and describe accomplished leadership for school principals. They

may also be used by individuals to raise their practice, by organizations and institutions of higher education for principal preparation programs, and by school districts and states for professional development of current principals. The standards presented here should be viewed as aspirational. To aspire is to be inspired, to stretch, and to dedicate oneself to reaching a distinguished goal. As the hallmark of accomplished principals across the country, these standards will elevate the work of all staff in the learning community and in the district and realize high performance for all students.

These standards exemplify the most important and lasting skills, applications, and dispositions of principals who operate at the accomplished level. Although each standard is significant and substantive on its own, the accomplished principal must understand how they interrelate and must demonstrate mastery of the whole. These standards represent the profession's fundamental values and principles and the best research available to date. They convey with absolute clarity what accomplished principals know and are able to do. Six strands—communication, collaboration, relationships, equity and diversity, data analysis, and technology—are woven throughout the standards. The overlap is purposeful because these strands are critical to all the standards.

These standards are intentionally written with the assistant principal in mind. Assistant principals may aspire to the level of accomplished practice outlined in these standards and pursue certification. However, realizing that the roles and responsibilities of the assistant principal depend on the individual school setting, assistant principals are encouraged to read the standards thoroughly before deciding if the certification process is applicable to them. Those who determine that these standards do apply to their work should consistently read the word “principal” as applying to them.²

The practices described here are grounded in practical experience and solid research. The examples are real, drawn from the experiences of the accomplished practitioners who served on the expert panel that developed the standards. The panel members, selected for their rich experiences and practical application of research, represented the diversity of settings, viewpoints, and approaches that characterize the educational profession. Members came from 17 states. They included principals and assistant principals working in elementary, middle, and high schools of all sizes, including charter schools and turn-around schools, as well as rural and urban schools. They included lead teachers and National Board Certified Teachers. They included researchers and policy experts, professors of higher education, and representatives of professional associations and teacher unions. Throughout the process, the members of the panel relied heavily on the Five Core Propositions of the National Board for teacher certification, knowing full well that what teachers should know and be able to do is inextricably linked to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the school principal.

² While these standards apply both to principals and assistant principals, the assessments will be separate, requiring appropriate evidence specific to each role.

The quality of the teacher in the classroom is the determining factor in the student's achievement and learning. The quality of the principal in the school is the determining factor in the performance of the entire staff. Great principals recruit and develop great teachers; great teachers seek out and remain with great principals. The two combined create powerful learning communities in which students and adults reach their highest potential. Principals choose to lead so they can affect the highest performance of hundreds of teachers and thousands of students over the years in profound and positive ways.

Accomplished Principal Standards Statements

Standard I: Leadership for Results

Accomplished principals lead with a sense of urgency and achieve the highest results for all students and adults. They build organizational capacity by developing leadership in others. These dynamic, forward-thinking principals lead collaborative organizations that realize and sustain positive change that enhances teacher practice and improves student learning.

Standard II: Vision and Mission

Accomplished principals lead and inspire the learning community to develop, articulate, and commit to a shared and compelling vision of the highest levels of student learning and adult instructional practice. These principals advance the mission through collaborative processes that focus and drive the organization toward the vision.

Standard III: Teaching and Learning

Accomplished principals ensure that teaching and learning are the primary focus of the organization. As stewards of learning, these principals lead the implementation of a rigorous, relevant, and balanced curriculum. They work collaboratively to implement a common instructional framework that aligns curriculum with teaching, assessment, and learning, and provides a common language for instructional quality that guides teacher conversation, practice, observation, evaluation, and feedback. They know a full range of pedagogy and make certain that all adults have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to support student success.

Standard IV: Knowledge of Students and Adults

Accomplished principals ensure that each student and adult in the learning community is known and valued. These principals develop systems so that individuals are supported socially, emotionally, and intellectually, in their development, learning, and achievement.

Standard V: Culture

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture of high expectations, where actions support the common values and beliefs of the organization. These principals build authentic, productive relationships that foster a collaborative spirit. They honor the culture of the students, adults, and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. They create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.

Standard VI: Strategic Management

Accomplished principals skillfully lead the design, development, and implementation of strategic management systems and processes that actualize the vision and mission. These principals lead the monitoring and adaptation of systems and processes to ensure they are effective and efficient in support of a high-performing organization focused on effective teaching and learning.

Standard VII: Advocacy

Accomplished principals effectively advocate internally and externally to advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals strategically seek, inform, and mobilize influential educational, political, and community leaders to advocate for all students and adults in the learning community.

Standard VIII: Ethics

Accomplished principals are ethical. They consistently demonstrate a high degree of personal and professional ethics exemplified by integrity, justice, and equity. These principals establish a culture in which exemplary ethical behavior is practiced by all stakeholders.

Standard IX: Reflection and Growth

Accomplished principals are humble lead learners who make their practice public and view their own learning as a foundational part of the work of school leadership. They are reflective practitioners who build on their strengths and identify areas for personal and professional growth. They adapt their paradigm and practice to result in improved student performance and enhanced teacher instruction through reflective practices.

Standard I

Leadership for Results

Accomplished principals lead with a sense of urgency and achieve the highest results for all students and adults. They build organizational capacity by developing leadership in others. These dynamic, forward-thinking principals lead collaborative organizations that realize and sustain positive change that enhances teacher practice and improves student learning.

Accomplished principals achieve positive results for students and adults. These principals measure performance results through qualitative and quantitative means. For example, with students they may assess engagement, attendance rates, test scores, or discipline referrals. With the adults the accomplished principal may assess levels of collaboration and the quality of classroom instruction. Accomplished principals embrace the responsibility of teacher and staff evaluation, offering support and guidance through consistent classroom visits and dialogue. Accomplished principals know that it is through deep professional conversation that teachers can learn and grow in their practice, and they use the evaluation process as one means to that end.

Accomplished principals willingly give of themselves to meet the high demands of a complex, evolving human organization. Although accomplished principals have the leadership skills to act independently, the most accomplished work interdependently developing the skills of others. These principals understand their strengths and their passions in relationship to their leadership role. They are self-directed leaders who monitor, manage, and motivate themselves and others. Accomplished principals balance the intellectual, emotional, and physical demands of leadership and demonstrate resilience.

Accomplished principals understand the complex and challenging task of effectively leading a learning community. These principals recognize that leadership must be shared and do so with those who have the requisite skills to lead, while also nurturing those skills in others throughout the organization, including capitalizing on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and other accomplished teachers. These principals build leadership capacity in others to ensure the stability of the organization even in their absence.

To lead effective organizations, accomplished principals embody and strategically employ interrelated aspects of leadership that require a balance of substance and style. Accomplished principals demonstrate these aspects:

- achieving results
- leading by example
- thinking in a forward fashion
- thinking strategically
- working collaboratively
- leading change
- implementing ideas and changes strategically
- building organizational capacity

Achieving Results

Accomplished principals believe that every student and adult will achieve his or her highest potential. They act in accordance with that belief by placing students at the core of all decisions. As part of the process, these principals set targets, address challenges, and analyze data to drive their decisions. These principals embrace accountability, holding themselves and others in the learning community accountable for positive results.

Leading by Example

To lead others in accomplishing common goals and objectives, these principals demonstrate multiple dynamic attributes. They have integrity and consistently display behaviors that garner trust, respect, and the allegiance of the learning community. Accomplished principals are confident and tenacious in their pursuit of high standards, yet they bring a generous dose of humility to their role by making their own practice and continuous learning public, modeling the same professional growth expected of teachers and staff. This means accomplished principals are prepared to take risks as they relentlessly pursue their own growth as a foundational part of their work. They approach situations with courage and determination, while remaining flexible, inclusive, and open to new ideas.

Accomplished principals skillfully draw on personal insight and experience. They know how to choose and use appropriate strategies and skills in various situations to achieve successful student outcomes. When faced with a challenging or controversial decision that is in the best interests of academic achievement, these principals explain the context of the situation, provide background, and communicate transparently. They strive to reach consensus without compromising the interests of the parties involved. Accomplished principals have the courage to step into any situation and do what is best for students. For example, such a principal who is well versed in research may decide to

eliminate low-level classes, require that all students take grade-level courses, and support all efforts by teachers to provide appropriate interventions.

Thinking in a Forward Fashion

Accomplished principals are knowledgeable about global trends. They understand and realize that forward thinking is paramount to preparing students, and the adults who serve their needs, for a global society. They advance the organization by exhibiting an entrepreneurial spirit, a pioneering attitude, a technologically innovative approach, and risk-taking that is grounded in reality. These principals are driven to push the organization to new heights to achieve strong student performance in the context of the learning community.

Accomplished principals recognize students as digital learners, with an unprecedented ability to access, acquire, and integrate information. Because technology is instrumental in bringing the world to the learner, these principals make it a priority to acquire and use state-of-the-art technologies to increase interconnectivity in the organization. They find ways to facilitate communication in the learning community and the world at large through multiple forms of media.

Realizing that students today will be the global citizens of tomorrow, accomplished principals raise students' awareness of the world around them. They arrange for students' exposure to multiple cultures. They know that forward thinking is not only about technology but also about capacities to adapt to a changing and more diverse world. Because it is impossible to predict with certainty the world in which today's students will function as adults, accomplished principals ensure that students develop the essential skills of problem solving, critical thinking, and collaboration to succeed in that future. As an example of such forward thinking, they might look at opportunities to bring in members of the business community to discuss the transferable skills that students need for flexibility in their careers. In addition, they might facilitate innovative ways to organize students and teachers for success. These principals know that preparation is not only about content but also about the skills needed to access emerging technologies and resources.

Thinking Strategically

Accomplished principals are intentional strategic thinkers. They possess and maintain a deep knowledge of best practices and current research within and outside education. These principals plan in collaboration with their teams for high performance by diagnosing needs, designing solutions, prescribing actions, achieving results, and evaluating effectiveness. Accomplished principals explicitly articulate the link between selected strategies or solutions and the problems they are meant to address. They ensure that stakeholders can clearly understand why specific strategies are brought to bear



on the unique and particular problems in a school and on what basis they can be expected to succeed. In charting a course of action, accomplished principals pursue diverse opinions. They generate collective buy-in by strategically involving stakeholders in the process of continuous improvement. For example, they may use electronic systems to collect and sort feedback from stakeholders on a particular issue—such as student achievement, school safety, the budget, or the school improvement plan—and send updates to stakeholders.

Accomplished principals seek balance and congruency between the individual and organizational dimensions of the learning community. While cognizant of competing tensions in the organization, they diligently maintain the focus on the core business of learning. Accomplished principals understand their role as it relates to the governing body of the organization. When facilitating decision making that affects the entire organization, these principals explain and communicate how the individual systems and processes within and outside the learning community will mesh to support the decision—from classroom use to bus pickup to food service to district testing schedules. They consider the cascading effects of decisions, such as changes in exam schedules. Although such decisions may have unintended consequences, accomplished principals minimize and plan for such situations. They drive toward achieving instructional goals and focus the demands of the organization to this end.

Working Collaboratively

Accomplished principals foster, encourage, celebrate, and honor multiple perspectives and voices, thereby creating an inclusive environment in which all are equally valued and energized in the pursuit of learning and increased student academic performance. They give priority to communication, exemplified by discussions that accelerate the work and the progress of the organization. By leveraging the power of relationships, including all stakeholders, and appropriately sharing leadership, these principals promote cohesion, collective effort, and cooperation to elevate organizational capacity. They inspire, motivate, and unite all stakeholders, within and outside the learning community so that the priorities of the larger community are reflected in the planning process. Accomplished principals position their own learning as a central element of their work and do so openly and give teacher reflection the same priority.

Accomplished principals seek opportunities to work with others in their extended organization as well as with the greater community. They understand the greater local, state, and national context in which their role and that of their organization exists. Because businesses, institutions of higher education, faith-based groups, and social organizations are integral to the learning community, these principals not only seek advice, input, and resources from such entities but also find ways for them to contribute to the well-being of the organization. Accomplished principals see value in and pursue

collaborative relationships with unions and other organizations that represent school personnel and with their building-level leaders.

Accomplished principals craft solutions to problems by working within the learning community, tapping the expertise and abilities of the staff to generate these solutions. For example, these principals may support and provide the resources for a group of teachers to work together to develop effective teaching strategies for targeted populations.

By empowering and engaging all individuals, accomplished principals gain commitment, focus effort, unify action, and enhance morale. These principals expertly promote formal and informal collaboration to achieve success in the learning community. For example, they may establish committees of internal and external stakeholders to provide guidance for initiatives and programs. Accomplished principals have the fortitude to know when to redirect efforts based on changing circumstances or goals. As a result, their organizations are imbued with a purposeful sense of urgency and unified around the mission of improving student learning.

Leading Change

Accomplished principals lead change as they build sustainable organizations that are driven by the pursuit of excellence. They understand that change is continuous. These principals are firmly grounded in their understanding of change theory and apply it appropriately. They are aware of different change models and of the environment in which they operate. They are vigilant in scanning for opportunities that benefit all. Accomplished principals know who the key decision makers are, and they know how to initiate, implement, and sustain change while maintaining the stability of the organization. These principals know and anticipate where pressure points are and continuously apply positive pressure, so that the learning community is constantly learning and growing. They capitalize on opportunities to advance the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals tackle challenges. They skillfully negotiate with stakeholders within and outside the learning community. Outside the immediate learning community, for example, they might meet with those who resist change in order to engage and involve them in moving the learning community forward. Accomplished principals lay the groundwork before change occurs. Facilitating change and generating commitment to it is a critical focus of such principals. When facilitating change, these principals incorporate external and internal support. For example, they may help people understand the change from a letter-based grading system to a standards-based grading system by hosting focus groups, soliciting public comment, and engaging in community dialogue.

Accomplished principals understand the demand and capacity for change and are willing to take calculated risks for continuous improvement. To that end, they create cogent systems and processes that enable the organization to implement and sustain



change. These principals clearly convey how a change will enhance the performance of students and adults.

Implementing Ideas and Changes Strategically

Accomplished principals skillfully realize the vision and mission of the learning community by turning words into actions. Working collaboratively, these principals communicate the vision in a way that enables others to see and understand their roles in achieving the mission. They ensure that instructional and operational systems are aligned to support the implementation of the vision, vigorously guarding against distractions and abandoning redundancies.

Working with others, accomplished principals not only set the right targets but also get the right results. They conduct constant critical analysis, asking “Are we focusing on the right thing to get us where we want to go?” To do so, they create systems to access real-time data and purposefully monitor progress toward goals. These principals gather, analyze, and leverage data to make sure decisions address organizational needs. For example, they look at social, emotional and academic learning; staff practice and performance; student attendance and referral rates, and transiency rates; and levels of parent participation to identify trends and establish priorities. They scan what is taking place in real time and make appropriate adjustments by constantly refining systems.

Accomplished principals are proactive, using data to anticipate and appropriately intervene, if necessary, rather than responding to failure. These principals correctly identify root causes for lack of performance and establish and monitor appropriate leading and lagging performance indicators. For example, weekly student referral rates may be a leading indicator of student suspension, which may be a lagging indicator of student grade-level retention. Accomplished principals work with teachers to use current data to assess where students are in a particular content area in the fall, instead of at the end of year, to keep students on track. Another example would be responding appropriately to quarterly and mid-year assessments of school safety.

Accomplished principals ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and explicitly linked to student learning and outcomes. They conduct difficult conversations when necessary and hold themselves and others accountable for results. In those conversations, they bring about clarity, thus sharpening the focus on the purpose of action and its contribution to student achievement. These principals foster confidence, credibility, and trust by ensuring that their decisions and actions are transparent, inclusive, and consistent with the organization’s vision and mission.

Building Organizational Capacity

Accomplished principals realize that the strength of an organization lies in its human capital. They understand that the effectiveness of teachers directly correlates with

increased student performance. These principals take the primary responsibility for attracting, retaining, and developing high-quality teachers and other staff. These principals clearly identify and nurture the efforts, skills, and attitudes necessary for all to achieve the organization’s mission and demonstrate the efficacy of the teaching methods in student performance. These principals communicate expectations and are courageous in holding everyone accountable—especially themselves. They value and respect the strengths of individuals, and they create support systems to maximize the performance and retention of the right people. Accomplished principals create and maintain a positive work environment in which people improve their knowledge and develop their skills, so that they enhance the work that they do with students.

Accomplished principals cultivate the varying talents of everyone within the organization. These principals consciously seek to develop leadership capacity throughout the organization by ensuring that different lateral experiences and promotional opportunities exist. They develop the capacity of others through training, guided practice, and mentoring. As they do so, teachers and staff take on more responsibility and more roles—formal and informal—that involve leadership. For example, these principals would capitalize on the expertise of accomplished teachers, particularly National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), to work with colleagues. As another example, when leading the organization to a structure of small learning communities, such a principal would provide professional development for teachers who are going to assume the role of leading cross-content-area teams. This principal would also provide professional development to support teachers in acquiring the appropriate skill set for working with adults. Additionally, an accomplished principal might develop the supervisory skills of a custodian, enabling the custodian to move from doing his or her own job well to leading others in doing their jobs well.

Accomplished principals design and implement succession plans—for every position in the organization—that allow for leadership and growth. They provide for sustainability and stability by ensuring that the organization has a depth of talent to move the learning community forward.

Reflections on Standard I



Standard II Vision and Mission

Accomplished principals lead and inspire the learning community to develop, articulate, and commit to a shared and compelling vision of the highest levels of student learning and adult instructional practice. These principals advance the mission through collaborative processes that focus and drive the organization toward the vision.

Accomplished principals are visionary leaders who put students first. Central to their vision and mission is the belief that all students and adults will perform at high levels. These principals direct, guide, and empower stakeholders to prepare each student to thrive in the present and to have the skills and dispositions to shape his or her future. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, the vision and mission are more than written words; their influence is seen, heard, and felt in the classrooms, in the hallways, on the playgrounds and playing fields, and in the community.

In collaboration with stakeholders, accomplished principals lead the development of the vision and mission. They encourage the creativity and flexibility in strategies that will make improved student learning a reality. They communicate with and engage all stakeholders in a compelling manner, transforming the environment and attitude from one of compliance to one of shared commitment and shared responsibility.

Accomplished principals consistently articulate the collective vision and promote an attainable mission to advance teaching and learning, resulting in increased student performance. In doing so, they recognize ownership of the vision by all stakeholders. Employing appropriate strategic management tools, these principals fully realize stated goals and objectives related to the mission.

Accomplished principals advance the vision and the mission through

- collaborative design and development
- implementation and realization
- reflection, public learning, and recommitment
- championing the vision and mission



Collaborative Design and Development

Accomplished principals collaboratively work with stakeholders to create a shared vision and mission that is relevant and compelling to the present and the future of the organization and aligned with the district requirements. These visionary leaders inspire others to embrace their roles and responsibilities in the creation and pursuit of the vision and mission. To that end, they make certain that teachers, students, and all stakeholders, including those who are less vocal, are heard and are included in the process. Accomplished principals establish a culture in which diverse points of view are encouraged and valued in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the vision and mission. For example, these principals may hold community-based forums with subsets of stakeholders to get their input on initiatives and to engage them in the actualization of the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals communicate with both internal and external stakeholders to keep the vision in the forefront. These principals bring people into the act of determining goals, objectives, and action steps to support the mission. They incorporate input from external partners who have human, fiscal, and material resources and work collaboratively to support the learning community—including parents, faith-based groups, businesses, higher education institutions, and legislators.

Because accomplished principals realize that strong home-school connections are critical to achieving the mission, they intentionally engage parents, guardians, and community networks for direct involvement in student learning. Using traditional and non-traditional settings, these principals find creative ways to connect with stakeholders and set up opportunities to gather input from parents and from community, business, and municipal leaders. These principals continuously communicate with and engage all stakeholders about the direction required to achieve and evolve the goals of the mission. To do so, accomplished principals may use multiple mediums, such as print, digital, or in-person interactions.

Implementation and Realization

Accomplished principals ensure that the collaboratively developed mission is equitable and easily translated into actions. These principals recognize that stakeholders must be able to articulate the mission. More importantly, stakeholders must fully understand their roles and responsibilities for incorporating the mission into the culture of the learning community.

Accomplished principals understand that to be effective, a vision and a mission must be supported by a strategic implementation plan. Through ongoing training, these principals ensure that all teachers, staff members, and other stakeholders have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to execute the action steps and achieve the goals in that plan. For example, they may meet with bus drivers to make them aware of their

impact on student attitudes and behavior, and offer training and strategies, followed by ongoing dialogue and support. These principals ensure that all actions in the learning community strengthen the instructional program and are consistent with the vision and mission.

Accomplished principals identify and anticipate obstacles to the achievement of the vision and mission and work to overcome them. They capitalize on those opportunities as teachable moments, not only to refine the plan and make necessary mid-course corrections but also to enhance a culture of teamwork, cohesion, credibility, and trust.

Reflection, Public Learning and Recommitment

Accomplished principals actively and continuously monitor progress toward achievement of the vision and mission. On an ongoing basis, they collaboratively review progress related to goals and benchmark data, making necessary adjustments to the plan to keep the organization moving forward. Accomplished principals make this reflection and learning process public, approaching challenges with an attitude of inquiry. From this analysis, they incorporate the voices of stakeholders to make decisions that lead to change and improvement in student performance and teacher practices. These principals collaboratively refine goals and establish new benchmarks as the organization progresses toward achieving the mission.

Accomplished principals persistently keep stakeholders focused on the goals of the plan. They prioritize appropriately and relentlessly. These principals use time, systems, and personnel effectively, so that day-to-day distractions do not deter from the achievement of the mission and the core business of the organization. They regularly initiate professional conversations and engage in discussion to determine whether the organization—and their own practice—is on target. They share new information to empower, encourage, and enlighten stakeholders, thereby reinforcing commitment. These principals initiate discussions to encourage stakeholders to review, revise, and improve actions they take toward achieving goals. For example, after discovering from a root-cause analysis of data that students are underperforming on the writing section of a literacy test, an accomplished principal might establish an initiative through which teachers in all content areas create plans to infuse writing skills into their instruction.

Championing the Vision and Mission

As the vision keepers for their learning communities, accomplished principals garner internal and external support. They strategically identify when and how they communicate the vision and mission. These principals articulate a compelling message that communicates the vision for the present and the future of the learning community. Their messages paint a clear picture of the values and beliefs embodied in the culture of the learning community and communicate a sense of focus and urgency. The messages



Standard III Teaching and Learning

Accomplished principals ensure that teaching and learning are the primary focus of the organization. As stewards of learning, these principals lead the implementation of a rigorous, relevant, and balanced curriculum. They work collaboratively to implement a common instructional framework that aligns curriculum with teaching, assessment, and learning, and provides a common language for instructional quality that guides teacher conversation, practice, observation, evaluation, and feedback. They know a full range of pedagogy and make certain that all adults have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to support student success.

Teaching and learning are central to the work of accomplished principals. Every thought, every word, and every action focuses and engages all stakeholders to further learning and to establish a learning environment that develops the whole student. These principals instill a purposeful sense of urgency throughout the learning community, resulting in high performance on the part of each student and adult.

Accomplished principals consciously advance teaching and learning as the core business of the organization. They oversee the planning and development of the curriculum, lead its implementation, develop systems to evaluate its effectiveness, and make adjustments as necessary. These principals develop a comprehensive learning experience with rigorous and relevant academic programming that aligns the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices, providing a variety of opportunities for all students to reach learning goals. They collaboratively set high expectations for all students, staff, and community members and create opportunities for every student and adult to meet those goals. To maintain high standards, accomplished principals continually ask the questions, “Who is learning and why?” and “Who is not learning, why not, and what are we going to do about it?”

Accomplished principals focus on teaching and learning by

- planning for learning
- collaboratively implementing curricula
- continuously monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting performance



Planning for Learning

Accomplished principals ensure that the instructional program is relevant and forward-thinking. They act on the imperative that students must be prepared for a future of undetermined challenges and needs; thus these principals ensure that the curriculum is rich with experiences that will develop students' capacity for living in, working in, and contributing to a global society. They guarantee that classroom experiences include many opportunities for problem solving, critical thinking, and social learning and meet diverse, targeted learning needs.

Accomplished principals collaborate with others to ensure that materials, support, and training are relevant and appropriate, incorporate high expectations, and reflect a balanced curriculum. These principals know how to access and use the professional expertise in the networks within and outside the learning community. They may work through partnerships with civic and community groups to ensure that teachers, staff, and students have access to and support for the use of appropriate technology, instructional materials, and resources.

Accomplished principals effectively communicate the focus on learning and engage support for the learning process. Accomplished principals actively engage all stakeholders in formal and informal dialogue, building a sense of urgency and ownership in the pursuit of established learning goals. Their communication is interactive: they seek and welcome feedback and input from diverse sources, with the aim of continuously improving learning.

Accomplished principals work with staff members to ensure they are proficient in culturally relevant practices and in the consistent infusion of technology. Because these principals understand that curricula are not classroom dependent, they help staff members reach beyond the classroom to provide diverse opportunities. These principals involve and engage the community and its resources in the work of the learning organization. For example, these principals might arrange externships, link to university and skill center programs, or develop online learning facilities. They may use online learning tools to provide access to courses that enrich the curriculum, to enhance academic rigor and relevance.

Collaboratively Implementing Curricula

Accomplished principals lead the implementation of a balanced, rigorous, relevant, diverse, and standards-based curriculum. These principals apply their thorough understanding of the complexity of pedagogy to support teachers in making informed choices about matching instructional strategies to the curriculum.

Accomplished principals identify and creatively minimize or eliminate barriers and obstacles to learning. They structure time and resources to support teachers to work collaboratively in examining student work, in holding professional conversations, and

in adjusting their teaching practices accordingly. These principals empower others to solve challenges to learning. They know what questions to ask, how to help people answer their own questions, and how to problem solve, whatever the situation might be. Accomplished principals understand adult learning theory and employ a variety of strategies that are appropriate to the intended outcomes. Understanding that staff members are on a continuum of development, accomplished principals provide thoughtful support for all staff members at every stage of practice. They do this by building relationships, developing common understandings of effective teaching practices, and communicating clear expectations of performance.

Accomplished principals are consistently present where teaching and learning occur. They model, coach, and mentor in order to support others to grow in their practice. For example, these principals use regular, structured classroom visits with timely, meaningful feedback on performance as one method of participating in observations of teaching and learning.

These principals provide teachers with professional learning that is aligned with the vision, goals, and objectives of the organization. They continually evaluate the learning opportunities provided to staff members and listen to staff members to ensure that professional learning meets individual needs and improves student learning. They design structures so teachers can systematically and regularly observe each others' work and share effective practices. These principals learn from teachers' experiences and use the findings to shape and influence professional development.

Accomplished principals identify individual teachers' needs and provide appropriate strategic support. Peer support might include a well-crafted program for teacher induction and mentoring, professional learning opportunities matched to the various stages of teachers' professional careers, and new roles and leadership opportunities for experienced staff members.

Continuously Monitoring, Evaluating, and Adjusting Performance

Accomplished principals identify and use a variety of methods and measures to analyze performance. They articulate a clear theory of action to explain why strategies are expected to lead to desired results and to identify sources of evidence that are acceptable markers of success. Accomplished principals know what information to seek, how to gather it, and how to analyze it to make informed decisions that support high levels of performance. They are skilled in disaggregating and interpreting data for the purpose of analyzing areas of strength and growth and determining paths to improvement in learning. These principals are adept at assisting teachers with analyzing data and identifying opportunities for improvement and for sustaining successes. For example, accomplished principals who perceive a gap in the instructional program might design a structure to allow teachers to align content with state standards. Such principals would



encourage teachers to take the process to the next level by creating an action plan for teaching week by week throughout the school year and then providing feedback to the principal. Accomplished principals empower teachers to change their classroom practices to adapt content in ways that enhance student learning.

Accomplished principals collaborate with others to collect and analyze information from multiple sources—qualitative and quantitative, formative and summative. For example, they work with leadership teams or horizontal and vertical teams to keep data as a focus on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. They use these data to monitor and evaluate student performance and to inform teacher practice at the classroom level. In addition, accomplished principals look at teacher practices through the same multiple formats with which they encourage teachers to look at students. These formats include formal and informal classroom observations, student work evaluations with teachers, and comprehensive evaluation conferences.

Accomplished principals ensure the attainment of student and adult learning goals. If goals are not met, these principals do what is necessary to identify the causes and work collaboratively to seek and implement remedies. They ensure that appropriate interventions are consistently provided for students and adults who are not meeting targeted goals, without compromising the opportunity for all to engage in the full program of the learning community.

Accomplished principals demonstrate transparency by continually communicating the results of individual students' and school-wide performance. They make sure that the academic progress of the learning community is visible and accessible. Progress may be displayed internally, for example, in charts and graphs for staff use. External displays of progress may include examples of students' achievements in academics, the arts, and athletics. These principals lead the celebration of the attainment of learning goals.

Reflections on Standard III

Standard IV

Knowledge of Students and Adults

Accomplished principals ensure that each student and adult in the learning community is known and valued. These principals develop systems so that individuals are supported socially, emotionally, and intellectually, in their development, learning, and achievement.

Accomplished principals are keenly aware that building relationships is fundamental in establishing a positive learning environment. They value people as individuals. In the interest of valuing students and adults, these principals create systems and procedures that address the development, contexts, support needs, and accomplishments of both students and adults. They ensure that every student is connected consistently in meaningful ways with at least one caring adult advocate and that every adult is connected in meaningful ways with other adults.

In order to know students and adults well, accomplished principals create structures that involve the following:

Students

- understanding of child and adolescent development
- understanding of home structures
- scaffolding community support
- celebrating student accomplishments

Adults

- understanding of human development and learning theory
- understanding of adults in a broader context
- scaffolding support
- celebrating adult accomplishments

STUDENTS

Accomplished principals ensure that each student is known and valued. Regardless of the focus, size, demographics, or grade configuration of the learning community, these principals purposefully and intentionally design and implement systems and

procedures to engage each student. Accomplished principals communicate the resulting information to the staff. For example, they may create face-to-face or digital systems that enable horizontal and vertical teams to meet regularly to discuss students and problem solve for their benefit. To assure that every student has a consistent relationship with an adult, they may establish an advisory system, smaller learning communities within the larger one, or other support systems.

Understanding of Child and Adolescent Development

Accomplished principals are well versed in child and adolescent development theory and proven research. They anticipate and address students' emotional, psychological, and social needs and ensure that programs are in place to meet those needs. These principals empower students to become responsible and advocate for their own learning. They instill high expectations in students, so that students will have high aspirations for themselves and a personal sense of efficacy.

Accomplished principals make certain that each student is known as an individual with unique needs and strengths. They ensure that every student feels like an integral part of the learning organization and understands how their learning is important to themselves and to others. These principals reach out and make sure that opportunities exist for all students to feel that they belong, especially those who may be disengaged.

Understanding of Home Structures

Accomplished principals understand how integral the student's home environment is to his or her development. These principals appreciate the family and social dynamics of each student. They recognize each student as a member of a family or a personal network and as a community member. They honor diverse home structures and recognize the challenges some structures pose. These principals recognize potential bias in the learning community and intervene when practices may marginalize students. For example, for students who may not have a place to do their homework in the evening, these principals might establish opportunities to complete homework at alternative times and locations.

Accomplished principals capitalize on the strengths of families and personal networks, while providing interventions, support, and resources to meet students' needs. These principals create a system within the learning community to increase meaningful family involvement. For example, they might create a room with digital and print resources where parents or guardians can access information to support their children or their own learning. Accomplished principals create a culture in which parents or guardians feel welcome and essential to the learning environment. These principals may arrange for meetings with parents and guardians at flexible times and in such convenient locations as restaurants, apartments, or community centers.

Scaffolding Community Support

Accomplished principals understand the spectrum of student background and contexts and scaffold supports to respond to that diversity accordingly. These principals may enlist social programs, civic and community organizations, and faith-based groups as well as informal supports to provide resources to meet students' needs. Examples might include connecting students with programs that meet such needs as after-school food sources, health care services, employment opportunities, social services, and educational services.

Celebrating Student Accomplishments

Accomplished principals recognize and celebrate students' accomplishments. These principals create multiple opportunities for ongoing recognition of each student, whether through awards ceremonies, bulletin boards, broadcast announcements, or other means. They recognize and support each student to become confident as individuals and learners and to take ownership of and have pride in their learning community.

ADULTS

Accomplished principals ensure that each adult is known and valued. Regardless of the focus, size, demographics, or configuration of the learning community, these principals deliberately design and implement systems and procedures to engage each adult. They intentionally and purposefully build trusting relationships, enabling them to have conversations that are courageous and honest.

Accomplished principals actively listen, observe, and value the power of meaningful communication with adults. They understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across diverse cultures. These principals stay abreast of the personal and professional interests of staff members. They establish routines that foster rich relationships in which all have the opportunity to interact. These opportunities may include one-on-one conferences and other formal and informal interactions.

Understanding of Human Development and Learning Theory

Accomplished principals apply their understanding of adult learning theory and human development, acknowledging what each person brings and how each person's social construct affects the learning environment. These principals create organizations of high purpose and energy. Accomplished principals ensure that each adult is an appreciated, contributing member. Accomplished principals create and maintain both formal and informal structures in order to foster positive relationships among adults.

Accomplished principals appreciate each individual's unique needs and strengths and consider him or her when planning activities and events. These principals ensure that every adult feels like an integral part of the learning community and

understands how his or her learning is important to them personally and to others. They differentiate staff members' professional development based on interests, needs, and technological expertise.

Accomplished principals reinforce high expectations for adults, so adults will have high aspirations for themselves and a personal sense of efficacy. For example, adults who feel a sense of belonging might collaborate with peers to create new classes or teaching arrangements.

Understanding of Adults in a Broader Context

Knowing that a well-grounded faculty is the hallmark of an effective learning environment, accomplished principals support personnel in balancing the demands of the work environment, the home environment, extracurricular activities, and professional study. They do this by establishing relationships with everyone in the building. For example, these principals are aware of key events and dates that are meaningful to individual staff members. Accomplished principals recognize and acknowledge their own obligations and limitations in nurturing relationships. They do not show bias or favoritism.

Accomplished principals work to maintain relationships by being visible throughout the building, by making a concerted effort to converse daily with staff members, and by being familiar with the family dynamics of the staff. For example, they may facilitate social events at which families can get to know one another. They provide support as needed in individual circumstances. When assigning duties, they consider personal circumstances and make appropriate individual accommodations available when it does not negatively affect the learning environment.

Scaffolding Support

Accomplished principals understand that adults function in a world beyond the learning community. Therefore, these principals support adults by scaffolding resources from social, civic, community, and faith-based groups. They know individuals well enough to understand why a particular adult may not be performing well, and whether that person needs assistance. These principals understand that underperformance may occur because of a variety of professional and personal factors and counsel individuals when they perceive changes in demeanor or performance. For example, these principals might help locate resources for a teacher experiencing financial difficulties because of a family member's illness or a spouse's job loss.

Standard V Culture

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture of high expectations, where actions support the common values and beliefs of the organization. These principals build authentic, productive relationships that foster a collaborative spirit. They honor the culture of the students, adults, and larger community, demonstrating respect for diversity and ensuring equity. They create and maintain a trusting, safe environment that promotes effective adult practice and student learning.

Accomplished principals inspire and nurture a culture that is the heart of the learning community. They are passionately committed to creating and leveraging a culture where every student and adult reaches his or her full potential. These principals foster relationships, encouraging each person who participates in the culture to embody the values, attitudes, and behaviors that the organization acts on and celebrates. Accomplished principals understand that collaboration, collegiality, and efficacy permeate an effective culture of high expectations for student learning.

Accomplished principals create and maintain a learning culture that promotes

- high expectations
- collaborative and collegial relationships
- rituals and behaviors that demonstrate common values and beliefs
- respect for cultural differences, diversity, and equity
- a safe and trusting environment

High Expectations

Accomplished principals build a culture of high expectations for student learning and adult practice. They skillfully shepherd and intentionally navigate all elements of the learning community to develop a collective sense of high expectations, resulting in a high-performing organization where all students learn. These principals lead the creation of a culture that generates excitement, encourages innovation and experimentation, and develops commitment—making continuous improvement and maximum effort the norm. Accomplished principals safeguard a culture that values individuals, strives

for maximum learning for students and adults, and structures a productive and orderly environment.

Accomplished principals lead and model a culture that permeates all facets of the learning organization and extends beyond the campus, inspiring others to get involved. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, the culture is so strong that it is manifested in student behavior on and off campus. For example, if local business owners complain about student behavior, an accomplished principal might empower the students to develop their own code of conduct in collaboration with the business owners.

Accomplished principals nurture a culture that focuses on learning for students, staff, parents, and members of the community at large, one that values all human capital in shaping a learning environment that best suits the needs of all students and stakeholders and the demands of a global society. These principals model entrepreneurship; they access and capitalize on the resources of parents and the community.

Recognizing that culture is the medium through which change is initiated and sustained, accomplished principals skillfully embrace change that complements and advances the culture of the organization. They understand that change for the sake of change is meaningless, adds no value, and will not stand the test of time. When faced with a mandated change, they expertly guide implementation in a way that enhances rather than detracts from the culture.

Collaborative and Collegial Relationships

Accomplished principals foster a culture that emphasizes a collaborative spirit within the learning community. These principals embrace, value, and capitalize on the uniqueness of individuals represented in the learning community. They build and foster positive and productive relationships. These principals work with all stakeholders to create and sustain a positive and caring sense of community that everyone can hear, see, and feel in all interactions. All partners productively engage in creating and sustaining a school with student learning as the focus. There is a strong culture of support for students, where teachers work together to achieve high performance.

Accomplished principals establish trust through teamwork and consensus building. These principals shape and maintain a culture in which adults and students demonstrate personal responsibility. They foster an environment that values effort, persistence, and engagement by all students and staff. High expectations lead to better performance by students, teachers, and everyone else in the learning community.

Rituals and Behaviors that Demonstrate Common Values and Beliefs

In collaboration with adults and students, accomplished principals develop agreed-upon cultural values and norms that are consistent with the vision and mission of the

organization. They expect congruence between the stated values and norms and the actions of the students and adults. These principals form an organizational culture in which adults teach and model the essentials of good character. They unfailingly address individuals who act contrary to the norms by initiating critical conversations designed to maintain a cohesive culture of learning. These principals work with stakeholders to develop a culture that honors the existing and evolving values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and rituals of the learning community. They promote ownership and involvement in all phases of establishing and maintaining such a culture.

Accomplished principals constantly monitor the pulse of the culture. They build systems that incorporate qualitative and quantitative data to monitor and assess the culture, gathering such data through formal and informal means. They use data to initiate critical discussions aimed at enhancing adult practices and student behaviors that are necessary for a trusting, effective culture.

Respect for Cultural Differences, Diversity, and Equity

Accomplished principals collaboratively establish and implement policies, systems, and procedures that promote respect for diverse cultures, ethnicities, and lifestyles, including under-represented segments of the learning community. They engage all members of the learning community in processes that identify values and behaviors related to eliminating bias, intolerance, and inequity. Within established policy, these principals build and maintain a culture that fosters a free exchange of ideas and opinions without fear of retribution.

Accomplished principals respect the cultural differences in a global society and make diversity a means for enriching the culture of the learning community. They work to establish a culture in which students find relevancy and are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to succeed. In the learning communities of accomplished principals, diversity is celebrated as a strength and as a tool for learning and growing. Accomplished principals analyze and monitor classroom activities and assignments for cultural sensitivity and relevance. Accomplished principals respect elements of student culture that support and are relevant to the learning environment. For example, they recognize that students may use multiple forms of technology for building relationships, communicating, and learning. These principals encourage taking responsibility and provide opportunities for bridging the differences among students' culture, parents' culture, and staff members' culture for the betterment of the learning environment.

Accomplished principals understand that all students need role models and advocates with whom they can relate. When some groups are not represented by the staff, for example, these principals reach out into the community to find volunteers to fill this need.

Standard VI

Strategic Management

Accomplished principals skillfully lead the design, development, and implementation of strategic management systems and processes that actualize the vision and mission. These principals lead the monitoring and adaptation of systems and processes to ensure they are effective and efficient in support of a high-performing organization focused on effective teaching and learning.

Accomplished principals are strategic managers as well as instructional leaders. They continuously pursue the optimal performance of the complex learning organization. These principals create transparent systems that bolster the sustainability and success of the organization, focused on results and consistent with beliefs and values. These systems are organized for student and staff success in achieving the school's goals of high performance.

Accomplished principals provide organizational oversight and coherent management to carry out the organization's mission. To that end, these principals lead the identification, orchestration, and monitoring of all aspects of operations, from instruction to the use of human and financial capital, to the physical plant and the legal aspects and administration of policies and procedures.

Accomplished principals know and understand the legal rights and responsibilities of students and staff. These principals know that professional knowledge and sensitivity to areas of potential litigation are vital to successful leadership. With increasing decision-making authority vested at the school building level, there is a great need for principals to behave in a legally defensible manner and to know what these behaviors look like.

Accomplished principals demonstrate knowledge of good financial planning and facility management. These principals recognize the importance of budgeting instructional monies, managing the physical environment, and effective fiscal accounting to accomplish its goals as a learning organization.

Accomplished principals develop human resource management processes that are aligned with both local and federal policies and regulations. This requires knowledge of personnel law, collective bargaining when applicable, organizational policy, administrative theory, and an understanding of staff recruitment, selection, development, and performance appraisal practices.

Accomplished principals apply their knowledge, skills, and selected tools to design appropriate and sustainable strategic management systems. These principals create conditions for success through organizational and management practices that effectively support learning and instructional performances, create clarity and trust, organize staff time effectively, and are strong on implementation, operations, and project management. They know when, why, and how to use these systems effectively and build internal capacity to sustain them.

Accomplished principals maximize the focus on instruction by developing systems that operate smoothly and preserve the integrity of the learning environment. They keep the entire organization focused on results and functioning at high levels of efficiency and effectiveness through their use of strategic management systems and processes. These principals demonstrate how a well-managed building contributes to effective teaching and learning.

Accomplished principals develop strategic management systems that reflect the following steps:

- design and development: plan
- implementation: do
- monitoring: check
- continuous improvement: act

Design and Development: Plan

Accomplished principals lead the development of goals and objectives that are in line with the vision and mission. Those goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-specific. To reach these goals, they cultivate and advance management structures to sustain all the elements required for the organization to realize its learning goals, from human and fiscal resources to student achievement, student safety, and building management, leaving nothing to chance.

In doing so, accomplished principals manage the collective expertise at their sites to skillfully design and proactively craft systems and processes essential to maintaining highly effective organizations. They collaboratively lead the development of management structures that engender ownership, commitment, and transparency. These structures support accomplished principals in collaborating, communicating, and responding with foresight, intention, and efficiency.

Mindful of the disparate yet interrelated and interdependent aspects of the organization, accomplished principals make decisions understanding how systems affect one another. These principals collaborate with external and internal stakeholders to make informed decisions aimed at minimizing unintended consequences. For example, they are aware that a decision to adopt a new schedule will affect other systems, such as teacher planning time, state testing, lunch and bus schedules, and professional development, and they plan accordingly.

As part of the design and development process, accomplished principals properly orient all stakeholders to the need for strategic systems. These principals establish common language, understanding, and work norms. They implement strategic management systems that are calculated to support student learning by ensuring role clarity, enhancing organizational discipline, and increasing accountability for results.

Implementation: Do

Accomplished principals realize that effective implementation of systems will result in the alignment of goals, objectives, and resources and purposefully connect systems and processes. They continually reflect on whether the systems are being implemented as designed. These principals monitor goals and objectives to determine if they are achieved, and if so, are according to timelines and benchmarks and within budget. On the basis of their findings, these principals work collaboratively to identify solutions, define roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders, and establish expectations for performance and improvement.

Accomplished principals ensure that communication about systems and stakeholder access and utilization occurs on a timely basis. They strategically conduct public meetings and provide training for all internal and external stakeholders. For example, when introducing new technology for parents to access student information, such as grade reports, attendance, and discipline reports, these principals involve parents and the community in the implementation of the new initiative. All communications from these principals are intentional, clear, consistent, and focused on results.

Monitoring: Check

Accomplished principals consistently monitor the systems and processes against established goals and objectives, using all available resources and technologies. They design each monitoring effort to ensure equity and guarantee that all are justly served. These principals establish real-time and longitudinal data collection systems to monitor progress and trends to inform decisions. They develop processes and protocols for using the student data management system to monitor the instructional program effectively. They use the management structure to disaggregate data from all groups and determine further actions or interventions. For example, they may lead a gap analysis with teachers

to determine why a particular sub-population is achieving and another is not in relation to an established expectation. Accomplished principals analyze the results and use the findings about the root causes to develop a strategic plan and implement interventions.

When monitoring the performance of the organization, accomplished principals ask the following questions: “Are the depth, breadth, and definitions of the strategies sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes of high performance for all students? Are we on time, within budget, and on track for meeting or exceeding our established goals?” These principals continually monitor operational procedures to realize successful student performance. They use each step in the monitoring process to build greater ownership and commitment throughout the organization for the attainment of goals and objectives. After reviewing the process analytically and globally, these principals know whether or not to take action.

Continuous Improvement: Act

Through a collaborative approach, accomplished principals make needed adjustments and communicate them effectively, keeping the systems on track and aligned to organizational objectives. To support continuous improvement, these principals regularly review, evaluate, and re-examine systems and processes, identifying obstacles and barriers, and minimizing or eliminating them. Such principals collaboratively prioritize actions to arrive at what is critical to achieving the goals. They regularly review and evaluate formal and informal processes, to support continuous improvement. As the organization changes, accomplished principals make certain that the systems and processes continue to add value to the organization.

Accomplished principals use appropriate data to make informed decisions. Through a collaborative leadership structure, these principals collect and analyze data to determine appropriate action. They assume personal responsibility and provide leadership to the process. These principals take appropriate and corrective action, report the results to the stakeholders, and identify the progress made. They use their findings to justify resource requests and broadly communicate the current state of the organization to the learning community.

Reflections on Standard VI

Standard VII Advocacy

Accomplished principals effectively advocate internally and externally to advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals strategically seek, inform, and mobilize influential educational, political, and community leaders to advocate for all students and adults in the learning community.

Accomplished principals are driven by a deep desire to enrich the lives of those they serve by supporting the interests of the organization and its members. They passionately advocate—in multiple contexts for a variety of purposes—on behalf of students and adults in the learning community as well as in the education profession. In alignment with the organization's vision, mission, and goals, these principals identify and prioritize the key issues facing their students, the learning community, and the profession. To accomplish these goals, they engage in ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse groups.

Accomplished principals recognize and reflect on major issues confronting society that may affect students and adults, solicit input from individuals within the organization as well as the larger community, and take action. They strategically seek, inform, and mobilize educational, political, and civic leaders to advocate for the best interests of the learning community. Accomplished principals courageously navigate the advocacy process to continuously promote the goals of the organization as well as education in the broader sense as an essential element of a thriving democracy.

Accomplished principals support the interests of the organization and its members by

- advocating for the organization and the individual
- advocating in the broader context

Advocating for the Organization and the Individual

Accomplished principals systemically and strategically promote the well-being of the organization. They are effective communicators who relate to and reach all their constituencies and the larger community in ways that advance the organization's vision and mission. These principals lead advocacy efforts for programs and procedures that realize the vision, mission, and goals of the organization. When an initiative

prescribed by others does not serve the mission, they advocate for the learning community's best interest.

Accomplished principals apply their command of proven marketing theories and skills to foster a recognizable brand for the organization. These principals use data to highlight and promote the positive aspects of the organization. They provide contextual background information and propose options to move the organization forward. They handle communication about issues in a competent, confident, timely, and reassuring manner, using in-person, print, and digital means.

Accomplished principals are primary resources for information about teaching and learning. They are informed advocates for educational practices and tools that lead to successful and accomplished students. They use actual and virtual platforms for sharing education's successes and challenges and are accessible to educate others. In their roles as members of professional or civic organizations or as individual educational leaders, they advocate for the advancement of the profession. Accomplished principals care deeply for teachers and are stewards that advocate for the policies, tools, resources, and support essential for teachers to do their jobs well.

Accomplished principals advocate for the welfare and well-being of each student and adult. They use data to prioritize and address issues that directly affect students and their success in the learning community. For example, if there is a move to eliminate after-school care and it has been a proven program that supports both instruction and safety for students, these principals would advocate to keep the program. Accomplished principals ensure that staff have the tools and resources required to meet the organization's goals and objectives. These principals advocate for staff members so that they feel supported when someone challenges decisions the staff members have made in the best interest of students. For example, if a theatre director had good reason to select a play that elicits controversy, these principals will advocate for the theatre director's choice.

Accomplished principals effectively communicate with staff, students, and parents, providing comprehensive language to guide all advocacy-related interactions and interventions. These principals carefully use multiple measures and instruments to assess needs and prioritize advocacy efforts. For example, they may use the responses to written and digital parent and student survey questions, conversations with colleagues, and administrative dialogue and discussions to construct fair and equitable advocacy programs and procedures.

Advocating in the Broader Context

Accomplished principals realize that a variety of parental, social, community, religious, political, and educational audiences have an interest in and are affected by the learning community. These principals capitalize on the multitude of possible resources in these audiences that can make major contributions to achieving the organization’s goals.

Accomplished principals mentor both internal and external stakeholders so that they can convincingly adopt a position, garner support, and evoke action. These principals commit to a wide variety of advocacy efforts and charge internal stakeholders with building relationships, coalitions, and partnerships with external constituencies to enlist support and obtain resources. They provide internal stakeholders with talking points and marketing plans so that they can influence key external groups in a consistent voice. Accomplished principals use a wide range of print and electronic media and attend a wide variety of meetings and events to make issues visible in the community as well as to recognize the importance of those stakeholders.

Accomplished principals are visible ambassadors in the learning community and in the district, city, state, or nation. They deliberately form relationships with policy makers in these venues. These principals intentionally cultivate internal and external relationships—with colleagues, central office staff, and superintendents in the district, as well as with partners in the community and in important policy positions. They invite civic leaders to visit the learning community to learn about concerns and to celebrate successes.

Accomplished principals inspire members of the community to contribute to the achievement of educational goals. These principals create collaborative networks and serve as advocates for education in the larger community. They galvanize civic leaders who have the resources to support funding, the political power to support needed policies, and the voice to champion educational causes.

Reflections on Standard VII



Standard VIII Ethics

Accomplished principals are ethical. They consistently demonstrate a high degree of personal and professional ethics exemplified by integrity, justice, and equity. These principals establish a culture in which exemplary ethical behavior is practiced by all stakeholders.

Accomplished principals are ethical leaders who possess and demonstrate core values of integrity, honesty, and fairness. They subscribe to, model, and hold themselves and all students and adults in the learning community accountable to a high level of personal and professional ethics. These principals have the courage to lead appropriate and honest communication with all stakeholders. In making informed and just decisions, these principals demonstrate firmness and flexibility, while upholding high standards of accountability to teaching and learning.

Accomplished principals systematically nurture the development of student character and adult professionalism. These principals understand the competing values, cultural norms, and beliefs of the learning community. They realize that these values and norms may, at times, create discord, and they exercise political acumen from an ethical lens to achieve effective resolution. While these principals adhere to existing policies and regulations, they also advocate for additional policies to promote and provide an ethical and safe environment for students and adults. These principals establish procedures to execute the policies. Accomplished principals are committed to creating a collaborative learning community, and they communicate high expectations for civic responsibility and commitment to the common good.

Accomplished principals promote a fair and just organization by

- demonstrating personal and professional ethics
- establishing an ethical culture

Demonstrating Personal and Professional Ethics

Accomplished principals know that effective leadership emanates from their competence and their consistent, ethical behavior—not from their title alone. By modeling personal and professional ethics, accomplished principals establish trusting relationships with all stakeholders as they adhere to and advocate for the creation of policies, procedures,

laws, and contracts. Personally and professionally, these principals operate legally, consistently, and fairly in their words and actions.

Accomplished principals understand the role and power of perception as it applies to ethical judgment. They are committed to the integrity of the decision-making process. These principals make decisions honestly and transparently and communicate them skillfully. For example, they hire the person who best meets the needs of the position, regardless of internal and external pressures. Accomplished principals are unwavering in their decisions and adept at reconciling common sense with policy.

While believing in accountability for all, accomplished principals exercise compassion when difficult circumstances warrant support and encouragement. They respect and honor diversity, and question assumptions as they acknowledge and remove personal bias from their actions. Accomplished principals exercise confidentiality with discretion, while encouraging others to do the same. They reflect on difficult situations and, when faced with ethical challenges, use knowledge gained from past experiences to make wise, informed decisions.

Establishing an Ethical Culture

Accomplished principals work with staff, students, and parents to establish a framework of ethical norms, beliefs, and values to govern behavior inside and outside the learning community. They influence other members of the learning community to be good citizens and contribute in a positive manner to the broader community. These principals are the catalyst, igniting a culture in which students and adults act on their responsibility to be good citizens and address inequities. For example, these principals model and create conditions in which students and adults act altruistically to support those with limited resources in the learning community.

By creating agreed-upon norms and shared expectations, accomplished principals establish the conditions for an ethical culture to be self-sustaining—one that does not rely on the principal's presence. These principals clearly communicate ethical expectations and ensure those expectations are aligned with the vision and mission of the learning community.

Accomplished principals provide for equitable opportunities and results throughout the learning community. These principals always examine the intended and unintended consequences of policies and practices in terms of their effects on students. For example, they may establish open access to all classes for any student who expresses an interest.

Accomplished principals are conscientious about the ethical reporting and use of data. These principals immediately address ethical challenges, particularly those that detract from teaching and learning, in a professional manner. They resolve conflicts in a way that communicates strong ethics while maintaining respect for all individuals.

Standard IX Reflection and Growth

Accomplished principals are humble lead learners who make their practice public and view their own learning as a foundational part of the work of school leadership. They are reflective practitioners who build on their strengths and identify areas for personal and professional growth. They adapt their paradigm and practice to result in improved student performance and enhanced teacher instruction through reflective practices.

Accomplished principals are above all, lead learners. They are intentional about their own learning and engage publicly in refining their practice and learning from mistakes. They are highly reflective individuals who engage in continuous personal and professional growth. These principals honestly and continually assess their strengths and weaknesses while seeking opportunities to improve. Based on the results of this regular assessment, they establish learning goals for themselves and develop a personal plan to attain their professional aspirations. These principals combine new learning with their professional experience and relevant data to improve their leadership, positively affecting adult practice and student learning. Accomplished principals step out of their comfort zones and take strategic risks. They seek new, different, and challenging experiences that enhance their individual and organizational capacity.

Accomplished principals encourage self-reflection and self-renewal for themselves and others in the learning community through

- humility and continuous personal learning
- personal reflection
- reflective strategies
- a culture of reflection
- rejuvenation and recommitment

Humility and Continuous Personal Learning

Accomplished principals view their own learning as an intentional, central, foundational aspect of the work of school leadership, integrally linked to the growth of the school. They are risk-takers who make their own learning journey public, placing their practice—and

the continuous revision of their practice—in view of teachers, staff, parents and students as a model of commitment to perpetual learning. They are modest and unpretentious rather than all-knowing. Accomplished principals learn side by side with teachers and students in service of school goals and student success.

Personal Reflection

Accomplished principals value self-knowledge and self-understanding. Through personal reflection, they examine their practice through the lens of equity, fairness, and justice. They use this process to determine whether there is a connection between their biases and their behaviors, and modify their behavior to safeguard against their biases.

Accomplished principals are lifelong learners who build on their strengths and identify areas for growth. They assemble a network of support and guidance by enlisting mentors, colleagues, critical friends, and other leaders from inside and outside the field of education. Through involvement in leadership and professional growth opportunities, these principals incorporate new learning into practice. They use the resources of local, state, and national professional organizations to enhance their skills.

Accomplished principals build a diverse leadership team with complementary strengths to balance their leadership. For example, in leading an organization, a principal whose strengths are conceptual would enlist and involve someone who is more detail oriented.

Reflective Strategies

From their investment in reflective practice, accomplished principals accrue benefits not only for themselves but also for the learning community. To improve their professional practice, they willingly invite, accept, and use feedback from others. These principals create systems that seek, value, and use formal and informal feedback from all who are affected by their leadership. For example, such principals may use a 360-degree evaluation approach to determine how others perceive them and then use the results to improve their practice. Accomplished principals also gather and consider data on the current condition of the organization. They equitably consider and respond to this information, linking the effectiveness of their leadership practice with the performance of the organization and making adjustments needed for their own growth and for the advancement of the learning community.

Accomplished principals are relentless in taking advantage of opportunities to reflect and to increase their professional knowledge. These principals remain current on educational research that supports their leadership; they see the interrelatedness of research in all fields to education. For example, they would read extensively on creating and cultivating a vision and mission before and while collaborating with staff in the creation of the vision and mission for the learning community.

Accomplished principals use technology as a powerful learning tool. They may participate in digital networks for communication among professional colleagues, use social networking tools for informal learning, or take part with professional colleagues in online learning communities. These principals use such learning opportunities to consistently reflect on ways to improve their practice of leadership.

Accomplished principals engage in action research as a reflective exercise. For example, in response to staff needs, they may develop a demonstration classroom to test learning strategies for themselves before providing professional learning opportunities for their teachers.

Accomplished principals reflect on current research about student learning and effective teaching practice. They make connections with what is happening in other professional fields as it relates to instructional practice. These principals adapt their leadership as they reflect on the implications embodied in the research. They know that research is useful only when theory is bridged with practice based on a particular context. They use new research to enhance, without derailing, the organization and instructional practices.

A Culture of Reflection

Accomplished principals know that constructive reflection is key to continual improvement of the culture within the learning community. They collaborate with their colleagues, network, study research, and seek experiences to enhance their practice, expand their repertoire, and deepen their knowledge. They develop the ability of staff and teachers to reflect in the moment, in the midst of action, and then to conduct deeper reflection. These principals provide regular opportunities to teachers for self and group reflection to continuously improve teaching practices. For example, they may establish professional learning communities to provide a structure for collegial reflection.

Accomplished principals establish continued growth and reflection as a priority in the learning community. For example, they may see to it that teachers have a growth plan and review it continually throughout the year to inform their practice; cadres of teachers and staff may then discuss shared areas of strengths and weaknesses. These principals model and lead constructive, non-defensive listening and response to critique, so that this essential aspect of reflection is built into the culture of the organization.

Rejuvenation and Recommitment

Because accomplished principals, like most accomplished education professionals, realize the necessity of balancing their personal and professional lives, they intentionally create opportunities to celebrate their journey of growth. For example, they set aside time for family, friends, and recreation. These principals understand the value of rejuvenation and engage in activities that allow them to renew themselves, so that they can be fully present in their work.

Standards Committee

John Bell

Coordinator, Leadership and Evaluation
Alabama State Department of Education
Montgomery, AL

Debbie Davis

Director
Arkansas Leadership Academy
Fayetteville, AR

Ann Duffy

Policy Director, Georgia Leadership
Institute for School Improvement
Roswell, GA

Jana Frieler

High School Principal
Cherry Creek Schools
Greeley, CO

Beverly Hutton

Assistant Principal
Burlington County Institute of Technology
Westhampton, NJ

Peter Martinez

Director
Urban Principal Preparation Coaching
University of Illinois, Chicago
Chicago, IL

Ellen Bernstein, NBCT

President
Albuquerque Teachers Federation (ATF)
Albuquerque, NM

Victoria Dixon-Mokeba, NBCT

Head of School and Lead Teacher
Carolina School for Inquiry
Columbia, SC

Sheila Evans, NBCT

Elementary School Principal
Edenton-Chowan Schools
Edenton, NC

Cedrick Gray

Middle School Principal
Memphis City Schools
Memphis, TN

Elaine Liftin

Executive Director
Council for Educational Change
Weston, FL

Kimberly McNeal

Elementary School Principal
Chicago Public Schools
Chicago, IL

Kathy O'Neill

Director
Learning-Centered Leadership Program
Southern Regional Educational Board
Atlanta, GA

James L. Pughsley

Former Executive Director
Darden-Curry Partnership for Leaders
in Education, University of Virginia
Charlotte, NC

Karen Remy-Anderson

High School Principal
River Ridge High School
Lacey, WA

Pamela Salazar

Associate Professor of Practice, Educational
Leadership, University of Nevada
Las Vegas, NV

Janice Sauve, NBCT

Elementary School Principal
Highland School District
Yakima, WA

Pamela Shetley

Supervisor
National Board Leadership Office
Oxon Hill, MD

Mark Thomas

High School Principal
Northview High School
Grand Rapids, MI

Rika Wilcox

Director of Organizational Learning
New Leaders for New Schools
New York, NY

Rosemarie Young

Elementary School Principal
Watson Lane Elementary School
Louisville, KY

NBPTS Committee Staff**Joan E. Auchter**

Chief Program Officer

Kaitlyn M. Mittan

Senior Specialist, Standards
and Assessment

Acknowledgements

Building on one of NBPTS' core values that every child deserves an accomplished teacher, Joseph A. Aguerrebere, President and Chief Executive Officer of NBPTS, recognized that every teacher deserves accomplished school leadership. Acting on the urgent need for effective schools where every child is an engaged and successful learner, where every teacher is accomplished, and where every parent is engaged and empowered, he is leading the National Board toward enacting the third part of the National Board mission:

To advance the quality of teaching and learning by

- Advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers.

A heartfelt thanks to Dr. Aguerrebere; these standards are a direct result of your vision and leadership.

The National Board *Accomplished Principal Standards*, First Edition, were developed by exceptional educational leaders, with educational leaders and for educational leaders. When these twenty-one carefully selected individuals with differing experiences and viewpoints gathered, the discourse was rich, diverse, and dynamic. Add to the mix an innovative process for identifying, refining, and gaining consensus on the standards through multiple five-day working sessions, and a professional learning community was created and sustained. During the large group sessions, each of you actively listened to each other, valuing and honoring each voice until you established shared interpretations of the complex role of accomplished principals. I offer my heartfelt appreciation to you individually and collectively for your insight, energy, and commitment to the process and the challenge. The results of this detailed process and the imprint of your diversity are evident in the final standards. I wish to thank three individuals who ably stepped up to lead dynamic teams throughout the process. Sheila Evans, Kathy O'Neill, and James Pughsley provided calm and steady leadership, assisting their team members as individuals to understand each others' ideas, and driving the rich discussion to strong, cogent prose. With a purposeful sense of urgency, you advanced the *Accomplished Principal Standards*.

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To each of you, please accept our deep appreciation for your outstanding contributions to the *Accomplished Principal Standards* and for establishing the complex, critical role of the principal.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Auchter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Joan Auchter

Chief Program Officer

National Board Standards for **Accomplished** **Principals**



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National Office
1525 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22209

NBPTS Processing Center
11827 Tech Com, Suite 200
San Antonio, TX 78233

Tel: (800) 228-3224 | www.nbpts.org

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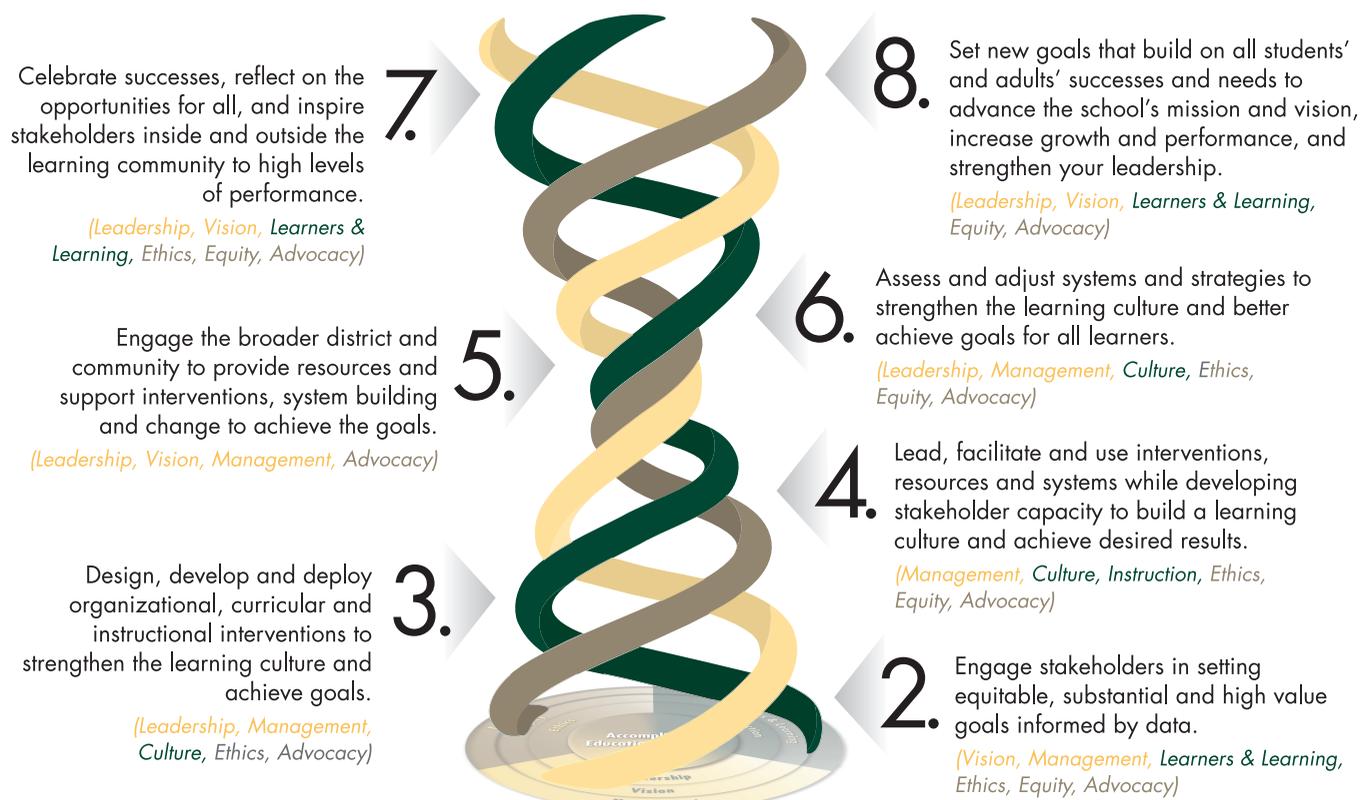
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The Architecture of Accomplished Educational Leading

The Architecture of Accomplished Educational Leading triple helix illustrates the upwardly spiraling process reflective of an accomplished educational leader's practice. The three strands portray the skills, applications and dispositions as defined in the core propositions and applied through eight stages in an integrated process.



1. Your Learning Community & Your Leadership

What is the vision/mission?
What are the goals for the learning community?
What is the context of your learning community?
Who are your stakeholders?
Where are your stakeholders in relation to the visions/mission?
What do they need or you need from them?

What are your leadership strengths?
How can you effectively lead your learning community?
How can you and your learning community achieve desired results?
(Leadership, Vision, Management, Culture, Learners & Learning, Ethics, Equity, Advocacy)

