

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium

Standards For School Leaders

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nationwide, nonprofit organization composed of the public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO seeks its members' consensus on major educational issues and expresses their view to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public. Through its structure of standing and special committees, the Council responds to a broad range of concerns about education and provides leadership on major education issues.

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Council of Chief State School Officers
State Education Assessment Center
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Dear Colleague:

For the past two years, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers, has been at work crafting model standards for school leaders. Forged from research on productive educational leadership and the wisdom of colleagues, the standards were drafted by personnel from 24 state education agencies and representatives from various professional associations. The standards present a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances that will help link leadership more forcefully to productive schools and enhanced educational outcomes. Although developed to serve a different purpose, the standards were designed to be compatible with the new National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) *Curriculum Guidelines* for school administration — as well as with the major national reports on reinventing leadership for tomorrow’s schools. As such, they represent another part of a concerted effort to enhance the skills of school leaders and to couple leadership with effective educational processes and valued outcomes.

One intent of the document is to stimulate vigorous thought and dialogue about quality educational leadership among stakeholders in the area of school administration. A second intent is to provide raw material that will help stakeholders across the education landscape (e.g., state agencies, professional associations, institutions of higher education) enhance the quality of educational leadership throughout the nation’s schools. Our work is offered, therefore, with these two goals in mind.

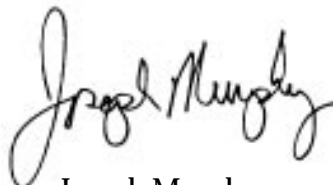
It is the desire of the Consortium to raise the bar for the practice of school leadership. Thus the standards and indicators reflect the magnitude of both the importance and the responsibility of effective school leaders.

We encourage you to heavily use this document — circulate it widely to members of the public and the profession as well as to the policy-making community. It is through this shared vision of education that school leaders will be successful and that our children will be assured of the education they will need to carry out the responsibilities of the future.

Sincerely,



Neil Shipman
Director, ISLLC



Joseph Murphy
Chair, ISLLC

Preface

Over the past quarter-century, significant changes have been reshaping our nation. At the same time, new viewpoints have redefined the struggle to restructure education for the 21st century. From these two foundations, educators and policy makers have launched many helpful initiatives to redefine the roles of formal school leaders. In this document, you see the results of one of these efforts — the work of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) to establish common standards for school leaders. In this report, we describe the portrait of leadership and the understanding of society and education that guided the work of the ISLLC team. We also provide an overview of ISLLC activity, describing the process we used to develop the standards and discussing central issues embedded in that process. Finally, we present the ISLLC standards and indicators.

Redesigning Leadership

The model of leadership standards one develops depends a good deal on how the design issue is framed. The Consortium tackled the design strategy in two ways. First, we relied heavily on the research on the linkages between educational leadership and productive schools, especially in terms of outcomes for children and youth. Second, we sought out significant trends in society and education that hold implications for emerging views of leadership — and subsequently for the standards that give meaning to those new perspectives on leadership.

An Understanding of Effective Leadership

Formal leadership in schools and school districts is a complex, multi-faceted task. The ISLLC standards honor that reality. At the same time, they acknowledge that effective leaders

often espouse different patterns of beliefs and act differently from the norm in the profession. Effective school leaders are strong educators, anchoring their work on central issues of learning and teaching and school improvement. They are moral agents and social advocates for the children and the communities they serve. Finally, they make strong connections with other people, valuing and caring for others as individuals and as members of the educational community.

The Changing Nature of Society

Looking to the larger society that envelopes schooling, the Consortium identified a handful of powerful dynamics that will likely shape the future of education and, perforce, the types of leadership required for tomorrow's schools. To begin with, our vision of education is influenced by the knowledge that the social fabric of society is changing, often in dramatic ways. On the one hand, the pattern of the fabric is being rewoven. In particular, we are becoming a more diverse society — racially, linguistically and culturally. On the other hand, the social fabric is unraveling for many children and their families. Poverty is increasing. Indexes of physical, mental, and moral well-being are declining. The stock of social capital is decreasing as well.

The perspective of the Consortium on schooling and leadership is also colored by the knowledge that the economic foundations of society are being recast as well. The shift to a post-industrial society, the advance of the global marketplace, the increasing reliance on technology, and a growing infatuation with market-based solutions to social needs pose significant new challenges for education. We believe that these challenges will require new types of leadership in schools.

An Evolving Model of Schooling

Turning to schooling itself, Consortium members distilled three central changes, all of which augur for a redefined portfolio of leadership skills for school administrators. On one level, we are seeing a renewed struggle to redefine learning and teaching to more successfully challenge and engage all youngsters in the education process. Educators are rethinking long-prevailing views of knowledge, intelligence, assessment and instruction. On a second level, we are hearing strong rumblings that community-focused and caring-centered conceptions of schooling will increasingly compete for legitimacy with more established notions of school organizations as hierarchies and bureaucracies. Finally, stakeholders external to the school building — parents, interested members of the corporate sector and leaders in the community — will increasingly play significantly enhanced roles in education.

ISLLC Initiative

The Consortium's initiative builds on research about skillful stewardship by school administrators and emerging perspectives about society and education. At one level, our work is a continuation of a century's quest to develop a deeper and more productive understanding of school leadership. At the same time, however, primarily because of the fundamental nature of the shift from an industrial to an information society, our work represents one of the two or three major transition points in that voyage.

The Consortium is not alone in its attempt to define the current era of transition in society and schooling and to capture its meaning for educational leadership. Since the 1987 publication of the *Leaders for America's Schools* by the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, all the major professional associa-

tions, both practitioner and university based, have devoted productive energy to this issue. Indeed, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) was created largely in response to this need and in an effort to generate better and more coordinated purchase on the task. Thus, the work of ISLLC is part of the long tradition of regularly upgrading the profession and, we believe, is a central pillar in the struggle to forge a vision of educational leadership for tomorrow's schools.

The ISLLC initiative began in August 1994. Fueled by the contributions of the 24 member states, a generous foundational grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, and assistance from the Danforth Foundation and the NPBEA, the program operates under the aegis of the Council of Chief State School Officers. The 24 member states are Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. In addition, the following professional associations are affiliated with ISLLC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, American Association of School Administrators, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Association of Teacher Educators, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, National Policy Board of Educational Administration, National School Boards Association, and University Council for Educational Administration.

Representatives of the member states and affiliated organizations have crafted standards and in-

icators. As noted previously, in the drafting process the Consortium team drew extensively on the research about productive leadership. We also relied heavily on the knowledge of the representatives themselves. Finally, we employed the collective wisdom of colleagues in schools and school districts, institutions of higher education, and various professional associations at both state and national levels to enrich and leaven the work throughout the development process.

Guiding Principles

At the outset of the project, it became clear that our work would be strengthened considerably if we could craft a set of overarching principles to guide our efforts. Over time we saw that these principles actually could serve two functions. First, they have acted as a touchstone to which we regularly returned to test the scope and focus of emerging products. Second, we believe that they help give meaning to the standards and indicators. Here are the seven principles that helped orient all of our work:

- Standards should reflect the centrality of student learning.
- Standards should acknowledge the changing role of the school leader.
- Standards should recognize the collaborative nature of school leadership.
- Standards should be high, upgrading the quality of the profession.
- Standards should inform performance-based systems of assessment and evaluation for school leaders.
- Standards should be integrated and coherent.

- Standards should be predicated on the concepts of access, opportunity, and empowerment for all members of the school community.

Comments on the Standards

Many strategies are being used to upgrade the quality of leadership in the educational arena. For example, institutions of higher education have done extensive work on revising preparation programs for prospective school administrators. Many states have also strengthened licensing requirements and revised procedures for approval of university-based preparation programs. The ISLLC team decided at the outset of this project, however, to focus on standards. This strategy made sense for several reasons. First, based on the work on standards in other arenas of educational reform, especially the efforts of the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), we were convinced that standards provided an especially appropriate and particularly powerful leverage point for reform. Second, we found a major void in this area of educational administration — a set of common standards remains conspicuous by its absence. Finally, we believed that the standards approach provided the best avenue to allow diverse stakeholders to drive improvement efforts along a variety of fronts — licensure, program approval and candidate assessment.

Within that framework, we began work on a common set of standards that would apply to nearly all formal leadership positions in education, not just principals. We acknowledge full well that there are differences in leadership that correspond to roles, but ISLLC members were unanimous in their belief that the central aspects of the role are the same for all school leadership positions.

While acknowledging the full range of responsibilities of school leaders, we decided to focus on those topics that formed the heart and soul of effective leadership. This decision led us in two directions. First, because we didn't want to lose the key issues in a forest of standards, we deliberately framed a parsimonious model at the standard level. Thus, we produced only six standards. Second, we continually focused on matters of learning and teaching and the creation of powerful learning environments. Not only do several standards directly highlight learning and teaching, but all the standards take on meaning to the extent that they support a learning environment. Throughout, the success of students is paramount. For example, every standard begins with the words "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ..."

Finally, a word about the framework for the indicators is in order. The design we employed

(knowledge, dispositions, and performances), is borrowed from the thoughtful work of our INTASC colleagues. While there was little debate about the importance of knowledge and performances in the framework, the inability to "assess" dispositions caused some of us a good deal of consternation at the outset of the project. As we became more enmeshed in the work, however, we discovered that the dispositions often occupied center stage. That is, because "dispositions are the proclivities that lead us in one direction rather than another within the freedom of action that we have" (Perkins, 1995, p. 275),¹ in many fundamental ways they nourish and give meaning to performance. Over time, we have grown to understand that these elements — knowledge, dispositions, and performances — belong together. We also find ourselves agreeing with Perkins (1995) that "dispositions are the soul of intelligence, without which the understanding and know-how do little good" (p. 278).

¹ David Perkins (1995), *Outsmarting I.Q.: The Emerging Science of Learnable Intelligence*. New York: The Free Press.

Standards for School Leaders

Standard 1

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.**

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- learning goals in a pluralistic society
- the principles of developing and implementing strategic plans
- systems theory
- information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies
- effective communication
- effective consensus-building and negotiation skills

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- the educability of all
- a school vision of high standards of learning
- continuous school improvement
- the inclusion of all members of the school community
- ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults
- a willingness to continuously examine one's own assumptions, beliefs, and practices
- doing the work required for high levels of personal and organization performance

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- the vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members
- the vision and mission are communicated through the use of symbols, ceremonies, stories, and similar activities
- the core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders
- the vision is developed with and among stakeholders
- the contributions of school community members to the realization of the vision are recognized and celebrated
- progress toward the vision and mission is communicated to all stakeholders
- the school community is involved in school improvement efforts
- the vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and activities
- the vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions
- an implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated
- assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals
- relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals
- barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed
- needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals
- existing resources are used in support of the school vision and goals
- the vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised

Standard 2

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.**

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- student growth and development
- applied learning theories
- applied motivational theories
- curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement
- principles of effective instruction
- measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies
- diversity and its meaning for educational programs
- adult learning and professional development models
- the change process for systems, organizations, and individuals
- the role of technology in promoting student learning and professional growth
- school cultures

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- student learning as the fundamental purpose of schooling
- the proposition that all students can learn
- the variety of ways in which students can learn
- life long learning for self and others
- professional development as an integral part of school improvement
- the benefits that diversity brings to the school community
- a safe and supportive learning environment
- preparing students to be contributing members of society

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect
- professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals
- students and staff feel valued and important
- the responsibilities and contributions of each individual are acknowledged
- barriers to student learning are identified, clarified, and addressed
- diversity is considered in developing learning experiences
- life long learning is encouraged and modeled
- there is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance
- technologies are used in teaching and learning
- student and staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated
- multiple opportunities to learn are available to all students
- the school is organized and aligned for success
- curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs are designed, implemented, evaluated, and refined
- curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies
- the school culture and climate are assessed on a regular basis
- a variety of sources of information is used to make decisions
- student learning is assessed using a variety of techniques
- multiple sources of information regarding performance are used by staff and students
- a variety of supervisory and evaluation models is employed
- pupil personnel programs are developed to meet the needs of students and their families

Standard 3

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.**

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of :

- theories and models of organizations and the principles of organizational development
- operational procedures at the school and district level
- principles and issues relating to school safety and security
- human resources management and development
- principles and issues relating to fiscal operations of school management
- principles and issues relating to school facilities and use of space
- legal issues impacting school operations
- current technologies that support management functions

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching
- taking risks to improve schools
- trusting people and their judgments
- accepting responsibility
- high-quality standards, expectations, and performances
- involving stakeholders in management processes
- a safe environment

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- knowledge of learning, teaching, and student development is used to inform management decisions
- operational procedures are designed and managed to maximize opportunities for successful learning
- emerging trends are recognized, studied, and applied as appropriate
- operational plans and procedures to achieve the vision and goals of the school are in place
- collective bargaining and other contractual agreements related to the school are effectively managed
- the school plant, equipment, and support systems operate safely, efficiently, and effectively
- time is managed to maximize attainment of organizational goals
- potential problems and opportunities are identified
- problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner
- financial, human, and material resources are aligned to the goals of schools
- the school acts entrepreneurially to support continuous improvement
- organizational systems are regularly monitored and modified as needed
- stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting schools
- responsibility is shared to maximize ownership and accountability
- effective problem-framing and problem-solving skills are used
- effective conflict resolution skills are used
- effective group-process and consensus-building skills are used
- effective communication skills are used
- there is effective use of technology to manage school operations
- fiscal resources of the school are managed responsibly, efficiently, and effectively
- a safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is created and maintained
- human resource functions support the attainment of school goals
- confidentiality and privacy of school records are maintained

Standard 4

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.**

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community
- the conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community
- community resources
- community relations and marketing strategies and processes
- successful models of school, family, business, community, government and higher education partnerships

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- schools operating as an integral part of the larger community
- collaboration and communication with families
- involvement of families and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes
- the proposition that diversity enriches the school
- families as partners in the education of their children
- the proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind
- resources of the family and community needing to be brought to bear on the education of students
- an informed public

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community is a priority
- relationships with community leaders are identified and nurtured
- information about family and community concerns, expectations, and needs is used regularly
- there is outreach to different business, religious, political, and service agencies and organizations
- credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict
- the school and community serve one another as resources
- available community resources are secured to help the school solve problems and achieve goals
- partnerships are established with area businesses, institutions of higher education, and community groups to strengthen programs and support school goals
- community youth family services are integrated with school programs
- community stakeholders are treated equitably
- diversity is recognized and valued
- effective media relations are developed and maintained
- a comprehensive program of community relations is established
- public resources and funds are used appropriately and wisely
- community collaboration is modeled for staff
- opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills are provided

Standard 5

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.**

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- the purpose of education and the role of leadership in modern society
- various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics
- the values of the diverse school community
- professional codes of ethics
- the philosophy and history of education

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- the ideal of the common good
- the principles in the Bill of Rights
- the right of every student to a free, quality education
- bringing ethical principles to the decision-making process
- subordinating one's own interest to the good of the school community
- accepting the consequences for upholding one's principles and actions
- using the influence of one's office constructively and productively in the service of all students and their families
- development of a caring school community

Performances

The administrator:

- examines personal and professional values
- demonstrates a personal and professional code of ethics
- demonstrates values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance
- serves as a role model
- accepts responsibility for school operations
- considers the impact of one's administrative practices on others
- uses the influence of the office to enhance the educational program rather than for personal gain
- treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect
- protects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff
- demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the diversity in the school community
- recognizes and respects the legitimate authority of others
- examines and considers the prevailing values of the diverse school community
- expects that others in the school community will demonstrate integrity and exercise ethical behavior
- opens the school to public scrutiny
- fulfills legal and contractual obligations
- applies laws and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately

Standard 6

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.**

Knowledge

The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- principles of representative governance that undergird the system of American schools
- the role of public education in developing and renewing a democratic society and an economically productive nation
- the law as related to education and schooling
- the political, social, cultural and economic systems and processes that impact schools
- models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts of schooling
- global issues and forces affecting teaching and learning
- the dynamics of policy development and advocacy under our democratic political system
- the importance of diversity and equity in a democratic society

Dispositions

The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- education as a key to opportunity and social mobility
- recognizing a variety of ideas, values, and cultures
- importance of a continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education
- actively participating in the political and policy-making context in the service of education
- using legal systems to protect student rights and improve student opportunities

Performances

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- the environment in which schools operate is influenced on behalf of students and their families
- communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate
- there is ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups
- the school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local, state, and federal authorities
- public policy is shaped to provide quality education for students
- lines of communication are developed with decision makers outside the school community

