

# A Common Vision of Great School Leadership

## The Colorado Principal Quality Standards

Great principals take responsibility for the success of every student in their school. While classroom teachers are vital to the success of every child they teach, it is the principal who is responsible for providing high-quality education to all students in the school.

School leadership is a demanding role requiring principals and assistant principals to demonstrate numerous essential skills. Successful principals seek to consistently develop and improve in their role, just as they ask of their teachers and students.

Identifying the complex components of high-quality school leadership is a fundamental step in supporting principals' professional growth as well as developing a fair and reliable evaluation process (both aspects of the Great Teachers and Leaders Act). The statewide Principal Quality Standards provide this shared understanding of the essentials of great school leadership—a common vision.

Just as the Teacher Quality Standards outline the knowledge and skills required of an excellent teacher, the Principal Quality Standards outline the knowledge and skills required of an excellent principal. They are the core of the principal evaluation process and offer a tool for principal self-reflection, goal setting and ongoing professional growth.

The Principal Quality Standards are foundational to providing every student with what they deserve—excellent school leaders who are consistently supported in their efforts to improve in their profession, support their teachers' professional growth and influence student learning in new and powerful ways.



*Excellent principals are responsible for the collective success of their schools, including the learning, growth, and achievement of both students and staff.*

**cde** COLORADO  
DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

For more information contact  
**CDE Educator Effectiveness**

Educator\_Effectiveness@cde.state.co.us  
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/EducatorEffectiveness>

### QUALITY STANDARD I

#### Principals demonstrate strategic leadership.

##### **ELEMENT A: Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals**

Principals collaboratively develop the vision, mission, values, expectations and goals of the school, collaboratively determine the processes used to establish these foundations, and facilitate their integration into the life of the school community.

##### **ELEMENT B: School Plan**

Principals ensure that a plan is in place that supports improved academic achievement and developmental outcomes for all students, and provides for data-based progress monitoring.

##### **ELEMENT C: Leading Change**

Principals solicit input and collaborate with staff and their school community to implement strategies for change and improvements that result in improved achievement and developmental outcomes for all students.

##### **ELEMENT D: Distributive Leadership**

Principals create and utilize processes to distribute leadership and support collaborative efforts throughout the school among teachers and administrators.

## QUALITY STANDARD II

### Principals demonstrate instructional leadership.

#### **ELEMENT A: Curriculum, Instruction, Learning, and Assessment**

Principals promote school-wide efforts to establish, implement and refine appropriate expectations for curriculum, instructional practices, assessment and use of data on student learning based on scientific research and evidence-based practices that result in student academic achievement.

#### **ELEMENT B: Instructional Time**

Principals create processes and schedules which maximize instructional, collaborative and preparation time.

#### **ELEMENT C: Implementing High-Quality Instruction**

Principals support teachers through ongoing, actionable feedback and needs-based professional development to ensure

that rigorous, relevant and evidence-based instruction and authentic learning experiences meet the needs of all students and are aligned across P-20.

#### **ELEMENT D: High Expectations for All Students**

Principals hold all staff accountable for setting and achieving rigorous performance goals for all students, and empower staff to achieve these goals across content areas.

#### **ELEMENT E: Instructional Practices**

Principals demonstrate a rich knowledge of effective instructional practices, as identified by research on best practices, in order to support and guide teachers in data-based decision making regarding effective practices to maximize student success.

## QUALITY STANDARD III

### Principals demonstrate school cultural and equity leadership.

#### **ELEMENT A: Intentional and Collaborative School Culture**

Principals articulate, model and positively reinforce a clear vision and values of the school's culture, and involve students, families and staff in creating an inclusive and welcoming climate that supports it.

#### **ELEMENT B: Commitment to the Whole Child**

Principals promote the cognitive, physical, social and emotional health, growth and skill development of every student.

#### **ELEMENT C: Equity Pedagogy**

Principals demonstrate a commitment to a diverse population of students by creating an inclusive and positive school culture,

and provide instruction in meeting the needs of diverse students, talents, experiences and challenges in support of student achievement.

#### **ELEMENT D: Efficacy, Empowerment, and a Culture of Continuous Improvement**

Principals and their leadership team foster a school culture that encourages continual improvement through reliance on research, innovation, prudent risk-taking, high expectations for all students and teachers, and a valid assessment of outcomes.

## QUALITY STANDARD IV

### Principals demonstrate human resource leadership.

#### **ELEMENT A: Professional Development/Learning Communities**

Principals ensure that the school is a professional learning community that provides opportunities for collaboration, fosters teacher learning and develops teacher leaders in a manner that is consistent with local structures, contracts, policies and strategic plans.

#### **ELEMENT B: Recruiting, Hiring, Placing, Mentoring, and Dismissal of Staff**

Principals establish and effectively manage processes and

systems that ensure a knowledgeable, high-quality, high-performing staff.

#### **ELEMENT C: Teacher and Staff Evaluation**

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

## QUALITY STANDARD V

### Principals demonstrate managerial leadership.

#### **ELEMENT A: School Resources and Budget**

Principals establish systems for marshaling all available school resources to facilitate the work that needs to be done to improve student learning, academic achievement and overall healthy development for all students.

#### **ELEMENT B: Conflict Management and Resolution**

Principals proactively and efficiently manage the complexity of human interactions and relationships, including those among and between parents/guardians, students and staff.

#### **ELEMENT C: Systematic Communication**

Principals facilitate the design and utilization of various forms of formal and informal communication with all school stakeholders.

#### **ELEMENT D: School-wide Expectations for Students and Staff**

Principals ensure that clear expectations, structures, rules and procedures are established for students and staff.

#### **ELEMENT E: Supporting Policies and Agreements**

Principals regularly update their knowledge of federal and state laws, and school district and board policies, including negotiated agreements, if applicable, and establish processes to ensure that these policies, laws and agreements are consistently met and implemented.

#### **ELEMENT F: Ensuring an Orderly and Supportive Environment**

Principals ensure that the school provides an orderly and supportive environment that fosters a climate of safety, respect, and well-being.

## QUALITY STANDARD VI

### Principals demonstrate external development leadership.

#### **ELEMENT A: Family and Community Involvement and Outreach**

Principals design and/or utilize structures and processes which result in family and community engagement, support and ownership for the school.

#### **ELEMENT B: Professional Leadership Responsibilities**

Principals strive to improve the profession by collaborating with their colleagues, school district leadership and other stakeholders to drive the development and successful implementation of initiatives that better serve students,

teachers and schools at all levels of the education system. They ensure that these initiatives are consistent with federal and state laws, school district and board policies, and negotiated agreements where applicable.

#### **ELEMENT C: Advocacy for the School**

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

## QUALITY STANDARD VII

### Principals demonstrate leadership around measures of student learning.

#### **ELEMENT A: Student Academic Achievement and Growth**

Principals take responsibility for ensuring that all students are progressing toward postsecondary and workforce readiness standards to be mastered by high school graduation. Principals prepare students for success by ensuring mastery of all Colorado Academic Standards, including 21st century skills.

#### **ELEMENT B: Student Growth and Development**

Principals take responsibility for facilitating the preparation of students with the skills, dispositions and attitudes necessary for success in work and postsecondary education, including democratic and civic participation.

#### **ELEMENT C: Use of Data**

Principals use evidence and data to evaluate the performance and practices of their schools, in order to continually improve attainment of student academic growth. They take responsibility and devise an intentional plan for ensuring that staff is knowledgeable in how to utilize evidence and data to inform instructional decision making to maximize the educational opportunities and instructional program for every child.