



# PACIFIC REGIONAL PRINCIPAL STANDARDS



## 1. Introduction

The Pacific region is in the midst of creating an aligned, standards-based education system in which Pacific children achieve at the highest levels. UNESCO and SPBEA in consultation with Pacific Heads of Education are in the process of developing standards for School Principals and Teachers. The Pacific Regional Standards for Principals will play an essential role in consolidating a standards based system in the Pacific region. Pacific children and educators will look to education leaders to guide and support them throughout the change process. Without effective principals or school leaders in general, Pacific Island countries will not realize their educational goals. Effective school leaders communicate and share leadership to engage all educators in realizing a vision for high quality teaching and improved student learning and achievement. They effect change in their schools and support others in realizing this change.

The standards are intended as a guide for principals as they continually reflect upon and improve their effectiveness as leaders throughout all of the stages of their careers. While there are many influences on a principal's development, these standards are intended to serve as an important tool for principals as they consider their growth and development as leaders. With the adoption of the Pacific Regional Standards for Principals, Pacific Island countries will clearly define the traits and skills of effective school leaders. These standards are intended to promote effective leadership among Pacific principals and to drive conversations about effective leadership and are not intended to serve as an evaluation instrument for performance management or remuneration.

The draft framework for the Pacific Regional Standards for Principals was formulated at the November 2009 workshop that was attended by UNESCO, SPBEA, USP and country representatives from Tonga, PNG, Tuvalu, Nauru, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tokelau and The Federated States of Micronesia. SPBEA was tasked to develop the principal standards further. Details are provided in sections 4 and 6.

The Principal Standards have been developed to:

- a. help schools clarify the knowledge, skills and attitudes all principals are expected to demonstrate;
- b. improve the quality and outcome of principal performance management; and
- c. provide a framework for identifying the professional development needs of principals.

The standards are interrelated and connect in principals' practice. They are not intended to show isolated knowledge and skills, and are not presented in order of importance.

## **2. Importance of Principal Standards**

The importance of the Principal Standards lies in it being a tool to enhance performance management. The principal's ability to organise people and resources to deliver high quality education to students directly impacts on the effectiveness of the school.

Research has shown that

- principals who create stimulating learning environments and establish effective relationships with their wider communities develop schools that bring out the best in students, teachers, parents and caregivers; and
- teachers who see their principals as effective instructional leaders are more satisfied with their professional role.

It is worth noting that Pacific Island countries already have in place leadership frameworks and processes for principal preparation and recruitment. SPBEA and UNESCO believe, therefore, that a regional system of principal standards would have most benefit if it sought to complement and build on these existing frameworks. As such, the proposed Regional Principal Standards is introduced to enhance performance management systems already operating within Pacific Island countries, in line with their respective strategies to develop and maintain the quality of teaching and leadership in schools.

## **3. Position Statement and Beliefs**

The Regional Principal Standards reflect a vision of principals who

- a. develop culturally sensitive, safe and productive learning environments;
- b. establish and manage structures and processes that actively engage teachers, staff and students in ongoing and collaborative professional learning opportunities;
- c. share leadership and actively identify and develop others as leaders;
- d. lead fast paced and complex changes in an increasingly complex and demanding environment, while maintaining a focus on the core purpose of schooling which is the improvement of student learning;
- e. are reflective practitioners who assume a 'learning' approach to leading schools and continuously engage in high quality professional learning to

develop and refine their knowledge and skills. As 'lead learners', they model life-long learning.

As leaders, principals use their knowledge of research-based practices to provide conceptual guidance to teachers and staff about curriculum, instruction and assessment. They promote the use of equitable practices that meet the unique learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds. As leaders in the school and greater community, principals consistently monitor and respond to the changes in the external environment. They use effective communication skills to engage stakeholders from diverse backgrounds in meaningful dialogue about the school's purpose, vision and progress toward outcomes.

The Regional Principal Standards are based on the following beliefs:

1. School leaders are committed to sharing with and learning from others in the educational community.
2. The work of principals should be guided by the highest possible ethical standards.
3. Principals model life-long learning for students, parents, families, and communities.
4. Principals are leaders and agents of change within and beyond the school community and share responsibility for educator quality, school improvement, and student achievement.
5. Principals support the use of current best practices, inquiry, and action research.
6. Principals set direction, establish priorities, and influence practices.
7. Principals need to link proactively to local, state and national policies.
8. Successful leadership and sustainability occurs when leadership roles are developed in others.
9. School improvement strategies are developed, refined, and revised based on various data sources.
10. Leadership requires the ability to create stability as well as foster change.

#### **4. Organisation and Structure of the Standards**

The standards are organized as follows:

- **Focus Areas:** the focus area is the broad category of principals' knowledge and skills;
- **Components:** the components are sub-categories under each focus area;
- **Expectations:** The expectations are specific statements of what principals should know, think and do to be effective leaders
- **Indicators:** the indicators are statements that provide evidence of the application of knowledge and skills of each expectation in practice. The indicators are observable, but not necessarily measurable, statements to serve as tools in discussion of principals' skills and knowledge.

The draft framework comprises the following three focus areas, with accompanying components:

**Focus Area I: Professional Leadership and Management**

1. Resources management
2. Leadership
  - 2.1 Shared Vision
  - 2.2 Strategic Management,
  - 2.3 Ethical leadership

**Focus Area II: Teaching and Learning**

1. Curriculum and Instruction
2. Assessment and Monitoring

**Focus Area III: Community and Partnerships**

1. Collaboration
2. Parents and Community Engagement

## **5. Development so Far**

The three focus areas and accompanying components were identified by Pacific Island representatives that were present at the Teacher and Principal Standards workshop in Nadi in Nov 2009. The details given in section 6 (on the next page) contain expectations and sample indicators for each component which have been developed jointly by SPBEA and UNESCO. These have been developed to roll-start the discussions on Principal Standards for the Pacific region. However, SPBEA and UNESCO strongly maintain the importance of stakeholder consultation in any development of a standards framework. Without a ground-up approach which incorporates the views of current professional bodies, the proposal risks being perceived as an example of system imperatives being promoted at the expense of both autonomy and teacher leaders' engagement with the moral and ethical values associated with the profession.

SPBEA and UNESCO propose the involvement of a broad range of agencies, including but not limited to:

- Principals and teacher organisations;
- university teacher education faculties;
- Ministry of Education officers;
- Education researchers;
- Parent and other community organisations.

An inclusive process would also prevent agencies or interest groups without a strong national presence, or without the capacity to influence peak decision-making groups (e.g. some subject area associations) from being marginalised.

Guiding the suggested expectations and indicators given in section 6 (on the next page) is the principle of flexibility. Education is rapidly changing, and schooling in the future may bear little resemblance to the structures of today. Effective leadership will be demonstrated in diverse and unpredictable ways. Any set of standards would need to inform school leadership as it occurs across a variety of contexts, is manifested in divergent forms, and which changes over time. The most effective framework would therefore:

- appreciate and promote local diversity;
- recognise a broad range of leaders and leadership in schools;
- be designed for adjustment and renewal over time;
- be informed by a substantial body of research linked to teaching and learning outcomes

## **6. Focus Areas, Components, Expectations and Sample Indicators**

### **Focus Area I: Professional Leadership and Management**

#### **Component 1: Resource management**

**Expectations:** Principals manage the daily operations and environment of a school through skilful use of resources (financial, human, time, materials, technology and facilities). Principals identify and allocate resources equitably to address the unique physical and mental health needs of all students, staff and parents. They promote and maintain a professional work environment by managing legal requirements and policies, supporting due process and protecting civil and human rights of all individuals. By modeling ethical behavior, principals create a climate of trust, stability and integrity in which all members of the school community are fully engaged.

##### Sample indicators

- a. Identifies and analyzes the major sources of fiscal and nonphysical resources for the school including business and community resources.
- b. Acquires and manages financial and material assets, and capital goods and services, allocating resources according to district or school priorities.
- c. Demonstrates ability to identify and organize resources to achieve curricular and instructional goals.

#### **Component 2: Leadership**

##### **2.1 Shared Vision**

**Expectations:** Principals help create a shared vision and clear goals for their schools and ensure continuous progress towards achieving their goals. Schools operate in a challenging and changing environment, requiring principals to be visionary leaders who have the ability and confidence to challenge existing structures, take action, influence situations and produce results. Principals must engage key stakeholders in the development and realization of a shared vision, based on challenging goals and high expectations, which guides and directs each member of the school community toward overall academic, social and emotional success. To be successful in this context, principals must understand the complexities of change and use strategies to lead change effectively. They must initiate and monitor change using student data and other sources of information to target and support needed improvements.

##### Sample indicators

- a. Facilitates the development and implementation of a shared vision and strategic plan for the school that places student learning at the center.
- b. Uses motivational theory to create conditions that motivate staff, students and families to achieve the school's vision
- c. Aligns instructional objectives and curricular goals with the shared vision

- d. Establish action plans to accomplish goals.
- e. Works with teachers and other stakeholders to identify school needs
- f. Articulates the school's vision, mission and priorities to the community in written and spoken communications
- g. Uses basic concepts of the change process
- h. Recognizes the importance of external influences that impact upon the school..
- i. Understands schools as political systems, relating the vision, mission, and goals to the welfare of students

## 2.2 Strategic management of the learning environment:

**Expectations:** Principals manage the operations of the school in strategic ways that maximise the use of the school's resources and promote a safe, efficient and effective learning environment. Principals plan effectively, use critical thinking and problem solving techniques, and collect and analyse data for continuous school improvement.

### Sample indicators

- a. Develops and administers policies that provide a safe school environment
- b. Establishes operational plans and processes to accomplish strategic goals
- c. Ties the daily operations of the school to school and student learning goals
- d. Develops an efficient budget planning process that is driven by district and school priorities and involves staff and community.
- e. Monitors the achievement of strategic goals and institutes intervention strategies
- f. Reports on progress of the school plan to relevant authority
- g. Analyzes the process of planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating a school budget
- h. Demonstrates techniques and organizational skills necessary to lead/manage a complex and diverse organization
- i. Develops skills necessary for the planning and implementation of change for effective student learning

## 2.3 Ethical leadership

**Expectations:** Principals act with integrity, fairness, and honesty in an ethical manner. By modeling ethical behavior, principals create a climate of trust, stability and integrity in which all members of the school community are fully engaged.

### Sample indicators

- a. Manifests a professional code of ethics and values.
- b. Makes decisions based on the moral and ethical implications of policy options and strategies
- c. Creates, models and implements a set of values for the school
- d. Develops well-reasoned educational beliefs based upon an understanding of teaching and learning
- e. Understands ethical and legal concerns educators face when using technology throughout the teaching and learning environment

- f. Develops a personal code of ethics embracing diversity, integrity, and the dignity of all people
- g. Acts in accordance with constitutional provisions, statutory standards, and regulatory applications
- h. Demonstrates ability to make ethical decisions

## **Focus Area II: Teaching and Learning**

### **Component 1: Curriculum and Instruction**

**Expectations:** Productive schools promote high levels of academic achievement for all students by promoting a rigorous curriculum that is aligned to national standards and academic priorities of the country. Principals emphasize that learning is the most important purpose of schooling. They are continually aware of the impact of culture and school practices on student achievement. Principals have extensive knowledge about curriculum, instruction and assessment and regularly collaborate with staff to improve the performance of all students. They promote the use of culturally-responsive instruction practices. Principals initiate and engage in ongoing, high quality professional learning that improves instruction. They continuously monitor and evaluate instructions and feedback to teachers, recognizing that instructional improvement is an on-going process.

#### **Sample indicators**

- a. Promotes curriculum that is aligned to national standards based upon the needs of the students, the community and the goals of the school
- b. Uses multiple sources of data to plan and assess instructional improvement
- c. Engages staff in ongoing study of current best practices
- d. Create a positive school culture for learning.
- e. Bases curricular decisions on research, applied theory, and informed practice
- f. Sets high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of all students
- g. Demands instructional content and strategies that ensures student achievement of established standards
- h. Provides instructional leadership with consideration for the community's values, goals, social needs and changing conditions
- i. Demonstrates knowledge of research on instructional effectiveness.
- j. Develops responsive and adaptive organizational cultures and learning communities in the school
- k. Creates conditions that enhance the staff's desire and willingness to focus energy on achieving educational excellence

### **Component 2: Assessment and Monitoring**

**Expectations:** Principals monitor the success of all students in the learning environment; align the curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes to promote effective student performance, and use a variety of benchmarks,



learning expectations and feedback measures to ensure accountability for all students. Principals are adept at collecting, analyzing and interpreting assessment data, which they share with stakeholders on a regular basis. They use evidences from assessment data as the basis for decision making, developing concrete learning goals and implementing the use of effective instructional practices on a school wide basis.

Sample indicators:

- a. Promotes the use of best practices for assessment, and analyse and act upon evidence on student learning to maximise learning for all students.
- b. Ensure that there is alignment among curricula outcomes, instructional practices, student needs and assessment
- c. Communicate, encourage and support the use of current educational research practices
- d. Ensure the use of differentiated instruction and assessment strategies to meet the needs of all students
- e. Promote the use of assessment *as* learning (student self assessment), *for* learning (to guide instruction), *of* learning (evaluation)
- f. Ensure the use of a variety of appropriate assessment measures to evaluate student learning and for school planning
- g. Monitors student achievement through assessment evidences and mandate intervention measures
- h. Use evidences from assessment data as the basis for decision making

### **Focus Area III: Community and Partnerships**

#### **Component 1: Collaboration**

**Expectations:** Principals establish and sustain collaborative learning and achievement of all students. High achieving schools continually improve teaching and learning through shared leadership. Principals are instrumental in the establishment and on-going development of a culture that engages staff, students and parents in improving student learning. Principals actively promote the development of leaders and leadership teams to fully utilize the skills of staff, student, parents and community members. Principals provide opportunities for all members of the school community to participate in important school decisions. Principals promote shared leadership and responsibility for student learning through the use of collaborative practices. Principals understand that shared leadership results in shared accountability for student learning and a collaborative learning culture that is sustained over time.

Sample indicators

- a. Nurtures relationships within and external to the school
- b. Promotes a collaborative learning culture
- c. Shares leadership with staff, students, parents and community members
- d. Develops and sustains leadership

## Component 2: Parents and community engagement

**Expectations:** Principals engage parents and community members in the educational process and create an environment where community resources support student learning, achievement and wellbeing. Schools are highly effective when principals understand how the dynamics of their communities influence their schools and how their schools influence the community in ways that improve student learning. Principals promote culturally responsive practices, which value and acknowledge diversity. The opinions of all stakeholders are respected and there is a commitment to involving students, parents and community members in making decisions. Principals involve family members in ways that are meaningful and directly related to student learning. Effective schools are the heart of the community and collaboration benefits both the school and the community.

### Sample indicators

- a. Addresses student and family conditions affecting learning
- b. Analyzes community and district power structures, and identifies major opinion leaders and their relationships to school goals and programs.
- c. Articulates the school's vision, mission and priorities to the community
- d. Shares leadership and decision-making with others in the community
  
- e. Develops and sustains family-school-community education partnerships, coalitions, and networks
- f. Celebrates success in the school community
  
- g. Actively engages the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success
- h. Ensures that students and families are connected to the health, human and social services they need to stay focused on learning
- i. Involves family and community in appropriate policy development, program planning, and assessment processes

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