Self-Assessment Tool for Aspiring Catholic Leaders

Click to access the reflection prompts for each area of the Ontario Leadership Framework.

Leadership Practices for Catholic Aspiring Leaders

Setting Directions
Aspiring leaders contribute to
- ✓ building a shared vision
- ✓ identifying specific, shared short-term goals, creating high expectations
- ✓ communicating the vision and goals

Classroom Indicators	Aspiring Leader in the Classroom	School Indicators	System / Community Indicators

• Establishes expectations for a safe, trusting, respectful Catholic learning environment
• Models an understanding of the diverse learning needs of all students while fostering an environment that allows them to reach their full potential
• Articulates learning and assessment goals for students
• Ensures equity of opportunity for all students to grow in their faith, social and academic lives
• Demonstrates that learning is an ongoing and collaborative effort between families, teachers and students
	How am I deepening and extending my learning in the classroom?
	What am I doing in a more meaningful way to share my practices?
		• Models commitment to the school's Christ-centered vision
		• Uses relevant data to create Catholic professional learning community goals that are aligned with initiatives in the school improvement plan
		• Leads learning teams and committees to:
		   ○ Promote Gospel values
		   ○ Establish and maintain school improvement goals
		• Facilitates team effectiveness by valuing all members and ensuring meaningful collaboration
			• Collaborates with colleagues from associate schools and boards
			• Establishes community partnerships and utilizes their expertise for staff professional development
			• Gains experience at the system level, e.g., system committees, curriculum writing teams, union leadership opportunities
			• Communicates effectively with community partners
			• Promotes and demonstrates system/board Catholic vision to the greater community

Setting Directions

Classroom	Aspiring Leader in the Classroom	School	System / Community
How do I set directions in my classroom? Before I begin to "get work done" I meet with the stakeholders in my classroom to discuss shared values, goals, and boundaries (parents using a parent handbook, ECE's EA's, other divisional teachers, and the principal) When prioritizing lessons and activities, I always return to the goals I have set for the year.	How am I deepening and extending my learning in the classroom? I focus on one very specific goal for curriculum and one that is more duty-related. For example, individual reading instruction for students and parent communication were my goals last year. Next year it will be meaning-making through read alouds and planning some sort of parent volunteer or student volunteer routine to give my students more one on one reading opportunities.	How do I set directions for the school? I always look at the data. If the school has low math scores, we need to find out what specifically is going on. After the problem is identified, we can look to the research and the collective knowledge of the teaching body to start goal setting. I encourage others to make only one or two very strong commitments to change. If we take on too much, we will get overwhelmed and default to what we have always	How do I set directions for my board and parent community? I think there is a symbiotic relationship between the board and the school. The board needs to know the school goals but the school goals will also benefit from information from different areas of focus in the board. The more we communicate our goals and our rationale for goals, the more those in the community and at the board level can understand the decisions

		done, which is not working, according to the data.	we are making and the ways in which they can be most helpful.

Building Relationships and Developing People
Aspiring leaders
- ✓ Provide support and demonstrate consideration for individual staff members
- ✓ Stimulate growth in the professional capacities of staff
- ✓ Model the school's values and practices
- ✓ Build trusting relationships with and among staff, students and parents

Classroom Indicators	Aspiring Leader in the Classroom	School Indicators	System / Community Indicators

• Respects students by providing differentiated, evidence-based instruction to meet varied needs and learning styles while promoting the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations
• Creates a positive, supportive and professional environment that treats each person with dignity and respect:
  o Communicates effectively with students
  o Encourages faith, pride and effort
  o Provides opportunities for student input and decision making in a collaborative manner
  o Resolves conflict and utilizes restorative practices with the goal of reconciliation
• Provides effective classroom management practices and applies rules in a fair, consistent and equitable manner reflective of the teachings of Jesus Christ
• Initiates meaningful contact with parents to communicate successes and areas for improvement.
	How am I deepening and extending my learning about building trusting relationships in the classroom?
	What am I doing in a more meaningful way to share my practices?
		• Develops a positive and inclusive Catholic school climate:
		  o Engages in positive interactions with all school staff
		  o Values and respects effective working relationships
		  o Recognizes in each student their God-given gifts and challenges
		• Approaches resistance with respect, listens to understand and engages in constructive problem-solving
		• Creates and sustains a Catholic professional learning community:
		  o Collaborates with all staff
		  o Demonstrates flexibility and openness to new ideas
		  o Supports staff to develop trusting, working relationships to foster change
		  o Celebrates and recognizes success
		• Supports and initiates school events and facilitates extracurricular activities while encouraging servant leadership
		• Acknowledges and recognizes the efforts and contributions of others
			• Engages and welcomes parents and community members as respected, valued partners
			• Supports Catholic school council initiatives
			• Collaborates with community partners to enhance learning and Christian service opportunities for students
			• Advocates for a caring Catholic school community uniting the home, school and parish
			• Collaborates with community and school personnel to provide students and their families with positive, seamless transitions to secondary school

Building Relationships and Developing People

Classroom	Aspiring Leader in the Classroom	School	System / Community

How do I build relationships and develop students in my classroom?	How do I build relationships in my classroom?	How do I build relationships and develop my school?	How do I build relationships and develop at the board level and parents in the community?
I begin each school year with the firm belief that my students are whole beings and have been put into my class because we belong together. I take the whole month of September to get to know them and to delight in their uniqueness. I let them learn about me as it relates to their identity and encourage students to get to know one another. I apply the most generous rationale for their behaviour and I seek to understand what they do rather than jumping to the conclusion that consequences are needed. I explicitly tell my students that I am a nice teacher and I make every effort to maintain that ideal for them. When I encounter an injustice, I interrupt it and I support my students (which is easier said than done when there are other staff around that may want me to handle various situations differently). I also tell students how much I love being their teacher and how important each of them is to me. Finally, I use instruction time as relationship-affirming time. If I can work with a student one on one for 5 minutes instead of in small groups for 20 minutes, I choose one on one time. It allows for more focused teaching and it also shows each and every student that I care about their journey as a learner.	As a Kindergarten teacher, I work with many adults. I take relationship building very seriously and I am very proactive about creating strong relationships with the adults that share the classroom with me. With my teaching partner, an ECE, I begin the year by asking what their goals are for the year, what they absolutely want to see in the classroom, and what they absolutely do not want to see. This gives me a sense of where their values lie, where we will experience conflict, and where we will be well-aligned. From there, I develop my own goals, must-haves, and deal-breakers. I share my thoughts with my teaching partner and we work together to determine how the day will flow, what we are not doing, and where we need to invest our energy.	Within the wider school community, it is important for me to be seen as someone who is trustworthy. Therefore, I work very hard to not engage in gossip or to listen to others say negative things about their colleagues. If I am unable to escape a gossiping situation, I offer counterpoints so the speaker can learn that I do not want to be part of such discussions and so that the speaker can attempt to build empathy and compassion for their colleagues rather than being dismissive. I take the time to have productive conversations with people I know who enjoy chatting and I encourage their ideas and approaches. I participate in meetings so people can get a sense of my values and so that we can connect regarding shared values and interests within the school. I also apply the rule of generosity when faced with a difficult situation involving a colleague. Whether it serves me or not, I assume the best intentions from those around me. If a conflict arises, I am swift to interrupt cordially and with the goal of preserving dignity for all parties. My consistent approach to my colleagues has helped to set the foundation for strong and trusting relationships to develop.	I maintain a consistent values-driven approach that people around me can rely on. Regardless of how "close" I am with a colleague, they know I will always speak up when injustices are presented and I will always do it in a way that attempts to keep everybody's dignity intact. I am guided by a passion for living out God's hope for us all and I rely on sound research to inform the approaches I take in this endeavour. This means that at times, I am dismissed or met with frustration because to love with abundance is often inconvenient and challenges the status quo. Nevertheless, the members of the school board who know me, know that my interests are genuine and that I have done the work to ensure my decisions are well-informed. I am an effective communicator and I bring people into my learning journey so that when I arrive at a decision, ask for assistance, question an action, or act in a way that differs from the norm, parents and board members are aware and understanding.

Developing the Organization to Support Desired Practices:
Aspiring leaders
- ✓ build collaborative cultures
- ✓ structure the organization for success
- ✓ build productive relationships with families and the community
- ✓ connect the school to the wider environment
- ✓ maintain a safe and healthy environment
- ✓ help with the allocation of resources to support the school's vision and goals

Classroom Indicators	Aspiring Leader in the Classroom	School Indicators	System / Community Indicators
• Facilitates the development of a collaborate classroom culture: ○ Utilizes a variety of groupings to build student engagement ○ Engages students in decision-making and problem-solving ○ Establishes peer mentoring programs; ○ Demonstrates perseverance and flexibility ○ Models Catholic values, continuous improvement and life-long learning • Scaffolds instruction to build on students' knowledge and skills	*How am I deepening and extending my learning about building collaborative cultures in the classroom?* *What am I doing in a more meaningful way to share my practices?*	• Actively participates in a Catholic professional learning community: ○ Engages in inquiry-based professional learning to identify and implement evidence-based instructional and assessment strategies ○ Shares resources to support student ○ achievement and success ○ Encourages the sharing of best practice through classroom and school visits ○ Provides differentiated support and professional development to meet team members' needs • Mentors new teachers and pre-service candidates • Participates in learning networks with other professional learning teams in the school.	• Communicates and engages with the home, parish and community in a regular, reflective, informative and invitational manner – e.g., inviting feedback, reporting progress, soliciting involvement, and encouraging Catholic school council to be active partners • Engages in system professional development faith formation and shares best practice • Participates in Catholic learning networks with other schools in the system and shares appropriately with colleagues • Creates and sustains mentoring relationships with system leaders

Developing the Organization to Support Desire Practices

Classroom	Aspiring Leader in the Classroom	School	System / Community
How do I develop the organization in my classroom? At the classroom level I begin by fostering authentic relationships among the adults in the room. I ask what everyone's priorities are for the year so we can work on finding common ground. I also have difficult conversations before difficult situations arise so that there is a plan in place and problems don't get exacerbated. With a positive and professional relationship modeled by adults, it is then time to turn towards	How am I deepening and extending my learning about building collaborative cultures in the classroom? I study critical friendship and am currently co-writing a book about it. The book is based on professional and educational workplaces but the central tenants of it pertain to any collaborative learning environment. The stages of a critical friendship are professional indifference, tentative trust, reliance, conviction, and	How do I develop the organization in my school? I model what I believe in, which is that good organizations need good relationships and good relationships need a foundation of trust. I am a trustworthy and dependable human and this makes me stand out to my colleagues as someone they can turn to. My academic background in critical friendship has given me over ten years of research and practice related to fostering collaborative growth in	How do I develop the organization at the board level and parents in the community? At the board level, I have co-presented a workshop about critical friendship to a leadership program. I learned a lot from this experience and have incorporated my learning into a book and a restructured workshop to address some of the misconceptions about critical friendship. With regard to parent and community

the students. With students, I do a lot of work to practice and model positive peer-to-peer relationships. We act out how to manage various scenarios, we talk about adopting different perspectives, and I explicitly teach the difference between compromise and collaboration, which was modeled as a Catholic teaching technique from my high school religion class. In compromise, both parties have to give something up. In collaboration, both parties get creative and make something new that everyone feels good about. I have spent a great deal of time laying the foundation for positive peer working relationships in grades spanning Kindergarten to Masters classes in University and every grade in between and it has always been a worthwhile endeavour. **I also do not allow students to evaluate their peers. I know this is a common practice, however, students are not trained in evaluation like teachers do. To preserve and grow their relationships, I only let peers provide positive (and specific) feedback. I take it as my job to identify an area of growth in consultation with the student that is not made public to the rest of the class.

unguarded conversations. These stages can be revisited in a cyclical manner as the critical friendship deepens.

sustainable ways. I recommend that every organization engage in professional development about critical friendship because it addresses empowerment, allyship, care, and authenticity (Brewer & Wideman-Johnston, 2023)

engagement, part of my research background is devoted to engagement versus involvement. Engagement is the goal and to do this, I communicate frequently, honestly, and effectively so that parents have a clear picture of what is happening each day at school. I am also very clear on what is still unknown or 'in process' so that parents can bring their ideas and helpful information forward. I speak positively of parent communities and I stay visible so parents feel invited to speak to me when they have a concern or an idea.

Leadership Practices for Aspiring Leaders

Improving the Instructional Program
Aspiring leaders
- ✓ Provide instructional support
- ✓ Monitor progress in student learning and school improvement

Classroom Indicators	Aspiring Leader in the Classroom	School Indicators	System / Community Indicators

• Uses data to establish student and class learning profiles:
  ○ Assesses skills, knowledge, learning styles and interests
  ○ Understands socio-economic and cultural factors that may impact learning
• Utilizes evidence-based and differentiated instructional strategies to meet student needs and abilities
• Engages students in meaningful and relevant learning activities
• Utilizes a variety of assessment strategies:
  ○ Assessment *for* learning
  ○ Assessment *as* learning
  ○ Assessment *of* learning
• Provides additional resources to help students achieve success
• Incorporates 21st century content, global perspectives, learning skills, resources and technologies
	How am I deepening and extending my learning about assessment for/as/of learning in the classroom?
	
	What am I doing in a more meaningful way to share my practices?
		• Advocates for at-risk learners:
		  ○ Utilizes in-school resource personnel to support student learning
		  ○ Plans tiered interventions – i.e., programs that are individualized, precise and guided by evidence-based practice
		• Engages in inquiry-based professional learning to inform instructional practices and to contribute to a culture of learning
		• Builds capacity by sharing and encouraging others to take on leadership roles
		• Creates a fiscally-responsible budget that supports the school improvement plan
		• Models team-work and reflective practice to sustain continuous improvement
			• Utilizes system and community support personnel to plan tiered interventions for at-risk learners
			• Engages Catholic school council in meaningful role supporting learning and achievement for students
			• Participates in learning networks to share and implement best practice and to support student achievement
			• Attends system professional development programs, encourages other to attend, and shares learnings with school staff
			• Supports community learning opportunities (e.g., field trips, cultural events)

Improving the Instructional Program

Classroom	Aspiring Leader in the Classroom	School	System / Community
How do I improve the instructional program in my classroom? In the classroom, I aim to focus on one area of growth in instruction for myself each year and I make this my priority. It may take longer for me to have a clear idea of my full instructional approach, but this has allowed me to get very good in a few areas that can then become more automatic in the classroom. This approach may not work for everyone, but I have found that going deep rather than broad has worked well for	How am I deepening and extending my learning about assessment for/as/of learning in the classroom? I approach assessment data the same way I approach research data. It is meant to be analysed from a specific perspective, and then it is important to do something with the information gathered. If I have not found the data I am looking for, I revisit my collection tool and alter it so that it does a better job of providing validity. My research background has revealed the importance of recognizing my own	How do I improve the instructional program within my school? Within the school, it is important to look at all of the data we have to create a composite understanding of what the instruction is like. EQAO data is important in some areas but I want all teachers to buy into their role of extracting, analyzing, and utilizing data in their everyday practice and to do this, we need data from a variety of sources. Everything needs to stem from the data we collect and needs to	How do I improve the instructional program at the board level and parents in the community? In order to improve instructional practice beyond the school, we need to be highly effective communicators. In my own work in the academic world, I have seen how information becomes siloed and therefore, silent. I have made it my mission to make educational academic research accessible for all stakeholders so that effective change can take place.

me. I spend the year going through research, connecting with teachers that are exceptional in this area, and trying new things in my classroom. I have found that when I take this approach, my learning spills into other areas of the curriculum and the overlapping effect improves my overall instructional practice in areas that I am not trying to focus on. I remain humble to the process and open to new ways of approaching my practice.	positionality in the data collection process and made me understand the non-neutral field that assessments can uphold. For a deeper conversation about this, we can refer to the theoretical framework by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) that underpinned my dissertation research.	return back to data in order to understand if we have made any meaningful change. When we have good data, we can move towards having better instruction. I	When people feel empowered to engage with research, they can start to incorporate sound information into the lens they use to view the education system. If parents know how important their role is to the school, and teachers learn how valuable parents are from a research perspective, important connections and relationships can form. If parents understand the information behind a school board decision, they can become more open to it even if it doesn't suit their preferences.

Leadership Practices for Aspiring Leaders

Securing Accountability
Aspiring leaders are responsible for creating conditions for student success and contributing to the effective management of the school so that everyone can focus on teaching and learning. They are accountable to students, parents, the community, supervisors and to the Board for ensuring that students benefit from a high quality education.

Classroom Indicators	Aspiring Leaders in the Classroom	School Indicators	System/Community Indicators
- Ensure a safe, positive, faith-filled learning environment - Maximizes student engagement by establishing effective classroom management practices and by protecting instructional time	**How am I deepening and extending my learning and supporting all learners in the classroom?** **What am I doing in a more meaningful way to share my practices?**	• Utilizes data to measure and report results of divisional, department and school improvement plans • Responds to individual learning needs by planning and monitoring	• Accepts constructive feedback from system reviews and incorporates suggestions in divisional / department and school improvement plans • Consistently communicates with parents to:

- Utilizes relevant data and the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations to:
  ● Inform instructional and assessment practices
  ● Improve student achievement
  ● Close achievement gaps
- Uses diagnostic, formative and summative assessment practices to accurately evaluate students Identifies and provides support for at-risk learners
- Develops annual learning plans based on:
  ● Reflective practice
  ● Sustaining continuous improvement aligned with divisional/department and school improvement plans
-Engages in ongoing communication with parents regarding student progress
		timely and tiered interventions in collaboration with school support personnel
		• Promotes and sustains student well---being and positive student behaviour in a safe and healthy learning environment
		• Models effective supervision practices and reporting responsibilities
		• Understands and implements all school and organizational policies and procedures
		• Uphold the moral and ethical teachings of the Catholic Church
			• Report student progress
			• Solve problems and celebrate successes
			• Promotes the school to strengthen relationships between the school, home, the parish and the community
			• Ensures students and parents understand the full range of pathways, programs and supports that are available

Securing Accountability

Classroom	Aspiring Leader in the Classroom	School	System / Community

How do I improve the instructional program in my classroom?	How am I deepening and extending my learning about assessment for/as/of learning in the classroom?	How do I improve the instructional program within my school?	How do I improve the instructional program at the board level and parents in the community?
I engage in academic research in my own time and I synthesize this information on YouTube so that I can learn while bringing other interested colleagues along with me in an accessible way. My background in academia has made me humble to the world of knowledge and I have the expert skillset to engage with peer-reviewed up-to-date research in the education landscape. I use this research to inform the strategies I prioritize in my classroom. To make professional growth in instruction manageable, I focus on one very specific curriculum-related goal per year and learn and practice as much as I can until I have built it in as a routine. I also intentionally refrain from strategies that either conflict with the research or are redundant because of a different activity I have chosen. This keeps my program manageable and allows me to grow in success each year.	I am deepening my learning about assessment in the classroom by staying curious about why something may be happening. I use my research background to figure out what gaps I have in my own instruction that are trickling down to the students I serve. I also spend time researching which assessment tools lend themselves best to different areas of the curriculum. For example, a key indicator of math comprehension in grade 1, 2, and 3, is whether or not a student can find number placements on a symbolic number line. Because assessment data is so valuable, I try to incorporate gathering it in many ways and at many times during the course of a day. Spending time in the early learning program gave me much deeper insights into what assessment can look like and how it can be communicated for a variety of audiences.	I am a major advocate (and researcher) of critical friendship and through taking part in regular unguarded conversations rooted in trust with a critical friend, teachers can become empowered to take the necessary steps to improve their practice. Grounded in ethics, critical friends insist that professional growth considers research and data, and accepts discomfort while growth is taking place. Critical friends promote a sense of accountability within the school because decisions are vetted and actions are reflected upon. Critical friends promote a culture of deprivatized practice so that best practices for instruction can flourish in authentic ways.	Remaining open, honest, and transparent is important to improving the instructional program at the board level and among parents. When people feel heard and the connections between their role and the goals of the school board are made, they are more apt to work together for progress. If we silo information, it appears disconnected and irrelevant to the very people we are trying to serve. Parents have a right to know what the board is planning and the board as a responsibility to connect with parents. Good leaders highlight these connections and bring people into the conversation. I spend a lot of time building rapport with families of the school I serve in and this has always served me well in improving my programming.

Next Steps for Leadership Development:

As you consider each domain described in the self-assessment tool, ask yourself to what extent you demonstrate each leadership practice. Select the most suitable response.

SETTING DIRECTIONS:

Building a Shared Vision					Identifying specific, shared short-term goals			
❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✔ 4		❏ 1	❏ 2	✔ 3	❏ 4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident		Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident

Creating high expectations					Communicating the vision and goals			
❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✔ 4		❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✔ 4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident		Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND DEVELOPING PEOPLE:

Providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members					Stimulating growth in the professional capacities of staff			
❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✔ 4		❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✔ 4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident		Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident

Modelling the school's values and practices					Building trusting relationships with and among staff, student's and parents			
❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✔ 4		❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✔ 4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident		Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident

Establishing productive working relationships with teacher federation representatives			
❏ 1	❏ 2	✔ 3	❏ 4

Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident	

DEVELOPING THE ORGANIZATION TO SUPPORT DESIRED PRACTICES:

Building collaborative cultures and distributing leadership					Structuring the organization to facilitate collaboration			
❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✓ 4		❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✓ 4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident		Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident

Building productive relationships with families and the community					Connecting the school to the wider environment			
❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✓ 4		❏ 1	❏ 2	✓ 3	❏ 4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident		Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident

Maintaining a safe and healthy environment					Allocating resources in support of the school's vision and goals			
❏ 1	❏ 2	✓ 3	❏ 4		❏ 1	❏ 2	✓ 3	❏ 4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident		Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident

IMPROVING THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM:

Staffing the instructional program					Providing instructional support			
❏ 1	❏ 2	✓ 3	❏ 4		❏ 1	✓ 2	❏ 3	❏ 4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident		Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident

Monitoring progress in student learning and school improvement					Buffering staff from distractions to their work			
❏ 1	❏ 2	✓ 3	❏ 4		❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✓ 4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident		Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident

SECURING ACCOUNTABILITY:

Building staff members' sense of internal accountability					Meeting the demands of external accountability			
❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✓ 4		❏ 1	❏ 2	❏ 3	✓ 4
Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident		Not at all evident	Somewhat evident	Evident	Very Evident

NEXT STEPS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

1. What leadership practices do I need to develop?
2. How will I know that I've developed the leadership practices that I've chosen? What evidence and results will inform me?
3. What personal leadership resources do I need to develop?
4. How will I know that I've developed the personal leadership resources that I've chosen? What evidence and results will inform me?

5. What available resources support the development of my leadership practices?
6. What specific commitments will I make?
7. Who can support me?