



Advisory

The Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) is an advisory and consultative organization composed of the CEOs of each of the 72 District School Boards in Ontario; Public, Catholic and French Language.

Effective Schools

What do I need to know about effective schools in order to promote student achievement?

Effective schools research is based on the premise that the core mission of schools is to improve learning outcomes for all students. Ontario Ministry of Education policies are based on extensive Canadian and international research and consultations which support this premise. One result of effective schools research has been an identification of “*Seven Correlates of Effective Schools*”, which are a set of indicators that Lawrence Lezotte and others have identified as being necessary for ensuring high levels of student achievement. [See Resources] The indicators are:

1. strong instructional leadership;
2. clear and focussed mission;
3. climate of high expectations for success;
4. safe and orderly environment;
5. frequent monitoring of student progress;
6. opportunity to learn and student time on task; and
7. positive home-school relationships

Two additional factors are useful to consider:

- The Ministry of Education’s *School Effectiveness Framework* [See Resources] highlights the importance of home, school and community partnerships.
- Lezotte (1991) suggests that an effective school is a caring community in which empathy is important.

There are hundreds of articles, books and research studies on effective schools and effective school leadership.

As a supervisory officer what should I do to ensure effective schools?

It is critical to recruit, develop and support school leaders and staff members who have the understanding, beliefs, and skills to achieve the core mission. When visiting schools and in meetings with school administrators, use the following examples and focused questions as effective tools to guide, support, and monitor how well students are achieving.



Recent researchers broaden the concept of instructional leadership to include all adults in the school.



1. Strong instructional leadership is evident

Ideas into Action for School and System Leaders, Bulletin # 1, Fall 2009 identifies five core capacities of effective leaders that are derived from the Ontario Leadership Framework and have been adopted as a key focus for capacity-building. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/IdeasIntoAction09.pdf>

The core leadership capacities are:

- setting goals;
- aligning resources with priorities;
- promoting collaborative learning cultures;
- using data; and
- engaging in courageous conversations.

This *Ideas into Action* document provides a clear and useful framework for identifying questions to use in conversation with the school administrative team.

Recent researchers broaden the concept of instructional leadership to include all adults in the school. In this context, look for evidence that the principal as leader creates a community of shared values in which expertise is distributed among many staff members.

2. A clearly stated and focused mission on learning for all students

Is there evidence of:

- a clear statement of mission, goals and priorities that is broadly communicated?
- staff, students and parents sharing an understanding of and a commitment to the goals, instructional and assessment priorities, programs, procedures, and practices of the school?

3. A safe, caring and orderly environment for learning

Is there evidence of:

- an equitable, collaborative, caring atmosphere that is supportive?
- respect for diversity (equity) and democratic values (character development)?
- team work and collaboration among staff?
- proactive programs and procedures that focus on building a positive working environment?
- students and staff behaving in a respectful, caring way, both in and out of the classroom?

4. An uncompromising commitment to high expectations for all students

Is there evidence of:

- teachers using a broad array of instructional strategies to reach all students?
- staff demonstrating a belief that all students can learn and succeed?
- staff having high expectations of themselves as well as their students?

5. Opportunity to learn

Is there evidence of:

- a collaborative learning community among staff who expand and share their knowledge and insights and participate in staff development?

- students participating in making decisions about goals and tasks, where appropriate?
- sufficient time on task for students to master essential skills and achieve curriculum expectations?
- a school and classroom environment conducive to student learning, individually and in groups?

6. Monitoring of progress for continuous improvement

Is there evidence of:

- frequent monitoring of progress with the goal of support and continuous improvement?
- data being collected and used to monitor progress and highlight areas requiring improvement?

7. Partnerships

Is there evidence of:

- effective partnerships that support student learning? (This can include partnerships with community agencies, post-secondary institutions, and businesses.)
- events or initiatives that involve home, school and community; that contribute to student learning; and enhance understanding of the school's priorities among parents and the community?

8. Positive home-school relationships

Is there evidence of:

- frequent communication between parents/guardians and the school?
- parents/guardians engaging in the activities of the school and their children?
- home and community coming together as partners in learning for all students?

What does the Ministry of Education say about effective schools and their impact on student learning and teacher professional growth?

Ministry direction and support related to effective schools and school leadership is defined in two major ways.

The K-12 School Effectiveness Framework: The Framework is a support for school improvement and student success. It identifies evidence-based indicators of successful practice for effective schools. The indicators, with samples of evidence, assist educators in building coherence and aligning practices across an entire school.

Based on research and practical evidence of what makes schools effective, the following components that impact student achievement have been identified:

- assessment for, as, and of learning;
- school and classroom leadership;
- student voice;
- curriculum, teaching and learning;
- programs and pathways; and
- home, school and community partnerships

RESOURCES

What is Effective Schools Research?

This two-page article describes the origins of the research in this field and the basic conclusions of the comparative research. (1996). Association for Effective Schools.

<http://www.mes.org/esr.html>

Lezotte, Lawrence, W. (1991). *Correlates of Effective Schools: First and Second Generation*. Okemos, MI: Effective Schools Products, Ltd.

<http://www.a2community.org/skyline.home/files/correlates.pdf>



RESOURCES

Ideas into Action is published by the Ministry of Education to support Ontario's school and system leaders.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/IdeasIntoAction.html>

Ideas into Action is designed to provide research insights and practical strategies for school and system leadership that are aligned with the **Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF)**.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/SOLeadershipFramework.pdf>

The insights and strategies are also aligned with the broader **Ontario Leadership Strategy (OLS)**.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/actionPlan.html>

More information about **Leadership Development** is on the Ministry website: www.ontario.ca/eduleadership

Another valuable reference is the **School Effectiveness Framework K-12**: A support for school improvement and student success.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/framework.html>

These components are key principles to review when examining board progress toward effective schools.

School Leadership: Working with an increasingly diverse body of students and a climate of high expectations and accountability requires strong leadership. In fact, research indicates that leadership is second only to classroom teaching in its influence on student achievement. Therefore, the role of the principal and the principal's administrative team in instructional leadership is critical.

For this reason, the Ontario Ministry of Education has developed a comprehensive strategy to support leadership for effective schools. The Ministry has developed a series of bulletins, *Ideas into Action*. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/IdeasIntoAction.html> The bulletins provide a summary of research and ways to translate the research into action.

- *Bulletin #1: Ideas into Action: Five Core Capacities of Effective Leaders*
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/IdeasIntoAction09.pdf>
As noted above, this bulletin identifies core capacities of effective leaders that are derived from the Ontario Leadership Framework. The bulletin provides a clear and useful framework for identifying questions to use in conversation with the administrative team.
- *Bulletin #2: Ideas into Action: Engaging in Courageous Conversations*
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/IdeasIntoAction10.pdf>
This bulletin is about the need for leaders to engage in challenging conversations to effect deep and lasting change. It discusses the need to build relational trust and establish a culture in which courageous conversations and feedback are seen as necessary for improvement.
- *Bulletin #3: Ideas into Action : Promoting Collaborative Learning Cultures*
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/IdeasIntoActionSpring.pdf>
This bulletin explores the research about collaborative learning cultures and ways school leaders can help to move from "an organization of individual learners to a true learning organization in which knowledge is shared, developed and applied and practice is deprivatized".
- *Bulletin #4: Ideas into Action: Setting Goals: The Power of Purpose*
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/IdeasIntoAction11.pdf>
This bulletin discusses how and why goals influence attitudes and behaviour. It examines the role of the leader in creating a shared sense of purpose and direction.

If as a Supervisory Officer, I require more information, what should I do?

- Visit the Ministry of Education website and use the references and researchers identified in this Advisory.
- The *International Handbook of School Effectiveness Research* [Teddlie, Charles & Reynolds, David. (2000). London: Falmer Press] provides an international and broad perspective on effective schools research with additional recommended readings.