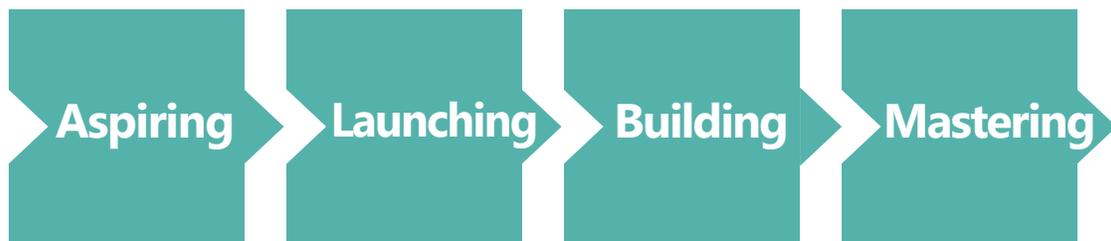
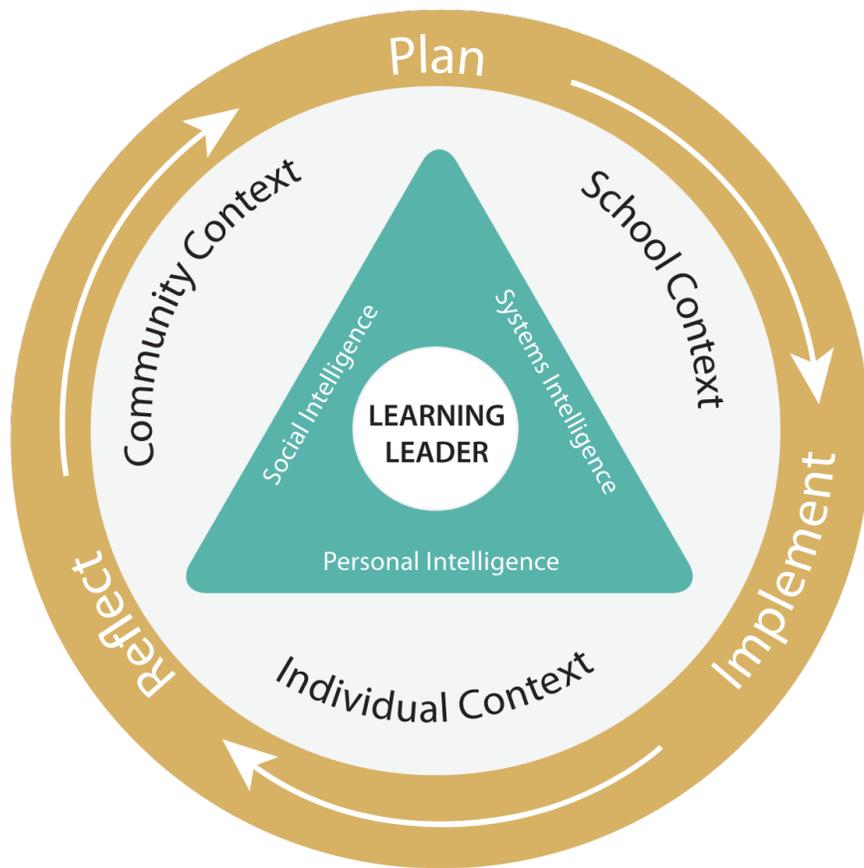


# The School Leader Continuum





## THE SCHOOL LEADER CONTINUUM

“Everything rises and falls on leadership” (Maxwell, 1997). It sounds like a cliché to say it, but it is true. Leaders cast vision and cut a path forward. Leaders make courageous decisions and take risks. Leaders inspire and motivate their followers. Leaders provide an example of service and humility. Leaders hold others accountable to guarantee the job gets done. Whether moving a nation or a family, everything rises and falls on leadership.

Like nations and families, schools require leaders, specifically principals, who possess the skills and expertise to create a place where both students and adults perform at high levels (Branch, Hanushek, and Rivkin, 2012). Schools need principals who set rigorous standards for behavior and achievement, create a safe and inviting learning environment, build

the leadership and instructional capacity of their teachers and administrative teams, ensure students receive meaningful instruction, and maintain systems for continuous school improvement (SEDL, 2012). In addition (and maybe more importantly), schools need principals who are ethical, empathetic, always learning, building relationships, innovating, and advocating for their schools. Furthermore, principals **MUST** love kids.

As alluded to, schools are complex organizations to lead, which requires a broad range of personal, social-emotional, and technical skills. Principals and their leadership team members need a system of preparation and continuous development to lead their schools effectively. In order to provide the necessary system of support, we, the members of the School Leader Collaborative (the Collaborative), created the School Leader Continuum (the Continuum) to help both principals and their leadership team members be intentional about their professional growth throughout their career. The Continuum consists of a new School Leader Paradigm, which looks at school leadership in a refreshing way by taking into account more than just the tasks principals need to accomplish. Furthermore, the Continuum offers four career phases, which provides school leaders a pathway for continuous growth and improvement.

## THE SCHOOL LEADER PARADIGM

Much of what is written about expectations for principals is a desire for them to be “instructional leaders.” This is a logical thought. However, the term “instructional leader” is ill-defined. Too often, when people think “instructional leader,” a narrow vision of a principal sitting in a classroom observing teachers comes to mind. No doubt, principals need to spend time with teachers as well as

students in classrooms, but capitalizing on opportunities to positively impact adult and student performance demands much more. Instead of thinking of principals as just “instructional leaders,” we regard principals as leaders of learning organizations (Northouse, 2010).

In order to provide a comprehensive view of principals as leaders of learning organizations, we developed the School Leader Paradigm (the Paradigm). With a “learning leader” at its center, the Paradigm takes into account not only the work principals do daily, or “systems work” as often described in leadership standards, but also what is required of principals personally and socially (Kolzow, 2013). Furthermore, leadership does not exist in a vacuum. Therefore, the Paradigm addresses the various contexts with which principals interact, including their own individual contexts, their schools’ contexts, and the contexts of their communities. Finally, a cycle of continuous improvement surrounds the entire Paradigm signifying the importance of continuous improvement for both principals and the organizations they lead.

## THE LEARNING LEADER

Leadership guru Dr. John Maxwell shared, “A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way” (Maxwell, 2010). In other words, principals must lead themselves well first in order to provide effective leadership for their schools. By establishing themselves as a learning leader, principals model the behavior they expect from both the adults and students in their learning organizations. Furthermore, principals gain credibility for their efforts by not requiring their followers to do something they are not willing to do themselves.

The Paradigm’s Intelligences detail various attributes of a learning leader, but two personal intelligence attributes deserve special attention. First, humility is a critical ingredient needed for principals, or anyone for that matter, to get better at what they do. Without a healthy dose of humility, principals risk being blindsided by their egos and missing opportunities for growth, or worse, ignoring character weaknesses. As Jim Collins challenges in his book *Good to Great*, highly effective leaders, or “Level 5” leaders as Collins describes them, should be willing to take a regular look in the mirror to

identify potential areas for improvement. (Collins, 2001).

In addition to humility, another attribute of a learning leader, which deserves distinct attention, is reflection. Oxford Dictionaries defines reflection as “serious thought or consideration” (2016). With this in mind, principals must routinely consider, among other things, their professional practice, the health of their relationships with others, and their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Whether early in the morning, late at night, or on the car ride to and from work, principals need at least a few moments of quiet, dedicated time to process, celebrate victories, work through challenges, and plan a better path forward for themselves and the organizations they lead. Coupled with humility, reflection provides a firm foundation for principals to be learning leaders who credibly guide those in their schools.

## THE INTELLIGENCES

If the School Leader Paradigm were a living organism, the Learning Leader would be the heart of the Paradigm with the Intelligences acting as the skeleton. The Intelligences help give the Paradigm shape while surrounding the leader with competencies and attributes which allow the leader to function effectively. The Intelligences are interconnected, do not act in isolation, and take into account the personal, social, and systems aspects of school leadership.

We use the term “intelligence” for the Paradigm in order to describe the ways principals need to be smart about their leadership. In addition, the term “intelligence” aligns with much of the research used to guide the design of the Paradigm, like Daniel Goleman’s work on emotional intelligence. Furthermore, intelligence implies how learning and growth need to take place for principals to become better leaders. None of the leadership competencies and attributes identified to define the intelligences are an “either you have it or you don’t” trait. Improvement is possible even if it requires intentional, incremental growth, as is often the case when breaking habitual behavior (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001).

# “Schools need principals who are ethical, empathetic, always learning, building relationships, innovating, and advocating for their schools”

While the entire School Leader Paradigm can be found in the Appendix starting on page 8, the definitions of the Intelligences and their competencies are provided below.

**Personal Intelligence** – The capacity to reason about personality and to use personality and personal information to enhance one’s thoughts, plans, and life experiences. (Mayer, 2014). The Personal Intelligence competencies include:

**Wellness:** Balances quality or state of being healthy in body and mind as a result of deliberate effort;

**Growth Mindset:** Embraces challenges; persists despite obstacles; sees effort as a path to mastery; learns from criticism; is inspired by others’ success;

**Self-Management:** Monitors and takes responsibility for one’s own behavior and well-being, personally and professionally; and

**Innovation:** Introduces new methods, novel ideas,

processes or products that are put into operation.

**Social Intelligence** – A set of interpersonal competencies that inspire others to be effective (Goleman, 2007). Social Intelligence competencies include:

**Service:** Assures that other people’s highest priority needs are being served;

**Community Building:** Instills a sense of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together;

**Capacity Building:** Employs leadership knowledge and skills necessary to enable the school to make better use of its intellectual and social capital, in order to adopt high-leverage strategies of teaching and learning; and

**Influence:** Can cause changes without directly forcing them to happen; practices skills of networking, constructive persuasion and negotiation, consultation, and coalition-building.

**Systems Intelligence** – An individual understanding of the inter-workings and leadership of complex systems within an organization. (Hämäläinen and Saarinen, 2007). Systems Intelligence competencies include:

**Mission, Vision, and Strategic Planning:** Defines the mission as the intent of the school; fosters a vision of what the school will look like at its peak performance; strategically determines the procedural path to intentionally achieve the vision;

**Operations and Management:** Utilizes a variety of methods, tools, and principles oriented toward enabling efficient and effective operation and management;

**Teaching and Learning:** Develops and supports intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each students’ academic success and well-being; and

**Cultural Responsiveness:** Promotes cooperation, collaboration, and connectedness among a community of learners while responding to diversity, need, and capacity.

When considering the Paradigm's Intelligences, a reasonable question may come to mind. Why these instead of leadership standards? It is an important question. The Intelligences are not written to replace leadership standards but to compliment them. Working side-by-side with standards like the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), the Intelligences and PSEL provide a comprehensive appraisal of what school leaders, principals in particular, should know and be able to do. While significant alignment exists between the Intelligences and PSEL, the Intelligences provide for a more comprehensive accounting of the personal and social aspects of school leadership while PSEL focuses primarily on systems work. In addition, each is created to serve different purposes. The Intelligences offer formative benchmarks for principals to continually reflect on their practice. However, PSEL provides guidance to policy makers, principal preparation providers, and districts when setting state leadership standards, creating preparation program expectations, and developing evaluation instruments. Ultimately, we as a Collaborative believe those principals who demonstrate effective leadership practice as described by the Intelligences will show positive outcomes as required by PSEL.

## CONTEXT

Leadership does not exist in a vacuum. In order to be successful, principals must effectively work within a complex web of differing personalities, motivations, political connections, individual circumstances, beliefs and opinions (Costa and Kallick, 2008; Sergiovanni, 2007). Further, principals have more than one contextual web to navigate at a time. School leaders need to be mindful of their own individual context, their schools' context, and their surrounding communities' context by continuously assessing how one effects the other and their ability to lead (Dweck, 2006).

When considering school leadership and context, there is much to ponder. However, principals should be particularly mindful of context when deciding whether to apply for and accept a leadership position. Additionally, school leaders should occasionally reflect

on whether they are best suited to remain in their current position. Every individual possesses a unique set of talents, expertise, and experiences (Kafele, 2015). When deciding whether to apply for and accept a leadership position, prospective principals should consider if their talents, expertise, and experiences are a good fit for the needs of the school and surrounding community. Further, no principal is meant to lead a school forever. Responsible leaders, who care for the organization and people they lead, should pause from time to time to assess the context of their schools, communities, and what is happening inside of them to determine if they are still well-suited to move the organization forward. Principals who make the effort to determine if they are a good fit both prior to and during their leadership tenure will save themselves and learning organizations significant heartache.

## PLAN → IMPLEMENT → REFLECT

To complete the Paradigm, we wrapped it in a cycle of continuous improvement. This cycle reinforces the notion that both leaders and the learning organizations they serve should always be improving (Fullan, 2005). For the sake of simplicity and symmetry with the rest of the Paradigm, the cycle is broken into three parts: 1) planning, 2) implementation, and 3) reflection. Planning incorporates the collection and review of data, analysis of performance evaluations, the development of actionable and measurable goals and objectives, and identification of the resources and supports necessary to meet the goals and objectives identified. Implementation implies nothing more than school leaders working with their learning organizations to make the goals and objectives a reality. Finally, school leaders and their learning organizations should reflect on their efforts in order to determine if they were successful in meeting their goals and objectives (Hayes, 2014). Additionally, they should identify what they learned from the process to inform their next improvement cycle.

“Principals must routinely consider, among other things, their professional practice, the health of their relationships with others, and their mental, emotional, and physical well-being”

## THE FOUR PHASES OF SCHOOL LEADER DEVELOPMENT

With expectations for school leaders articulated by the School Leader Paradigm, the Four Phases of School Leader Development provide logic for how school leaders should move across the continuum. Titled using action-oriented language (i.e. launching, building), the four phases denote how school leaders must maintain a state of continuous growth and development.

- **Aspiring School Leadership** – Pre-service principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders who are considering entering the profession of school leadership, are studying school

leadership in a principal preparation program, or have completed a principal preparation program but have yet to take on a formal school leadership position. These individuals, through personal and formal learning experiences, lay the foundation needed to take on a school leadership position. While technical knowledge is important, these future leaders give particular attention to the personal and social intelligences.

- **Launching School Leadership** – First and second year school leaders focused on developing relationships, building culture, setting expectations, and creating conditions for teaching and learning.
- **Building School Leadership** – School leaders in their third through fifth years who work to sustain culture, expectations, and conditions for teaching and learning. Their efforts include institutionalizing systems, which support their school’s mission, vision, and strategic plan.
- **Mastering School Leadership** – School leaders in their sixth year and beyond who stretch themselves with new understanding of school leadership’s power to shape and transform a student-centered learning environment.

Though principals and other building leaders may find themselves performing more or less effectively with some leadership competencies and attributes throughout their careers, the phases offer a pathway for school leaders to intentionally improve.

## SUMMARY

As described, we, the School Leader Collaborative (the Collaborative), developed the School Leader Continuum (the Continuum) to help both principals and their leadership team members be intentional about their professional growth throughout their careers. Brought into focus by the School Leader Paradigm and the Four Phases of School Leader Development, the Continuum provides principals and other building leaders a comprehensive view and clear path for their improvement. Additionally, association members of the Collaborative along with other professional

development providers can leverage the Continuum to create learning opportunities that are relevant and meaningful. Ultimately, we are confident the Continuum will greatly enhance school leadership resulting in higher performing learning organizations and better student outcomes.

## **ABOUT THE SCHOOL LEADER COLLABORATIVE**

The School Leader Collaborative (the Collaborative) consists of a consortium of state principal associations dedicated to supporting and sustaining the professional growth of school principals and their leadership teams. Specifically, the Collaborative enhances the collective capacity of its partner associations by building a network of shared resources, innovative best practices, and research, which supports school leaders throughout their careers. Current Collaborative associations are:

Illinois Principals Association

Indiana Association of School Principals

Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals

Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals

Association of Washington School Principals

Association of Wisconsin School Administrators

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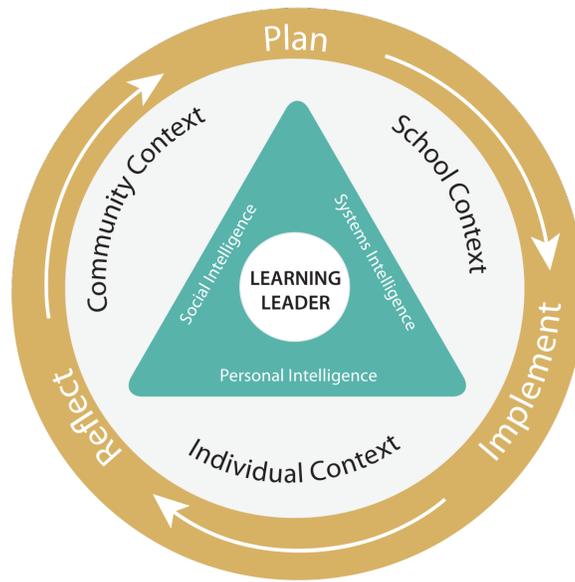
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# SCHOOL LEADER PARADIGM



Each Intelligence has four key competencies, heading the columns below. For each competency, four basic attributes are identified. The attributes provided do not represent an exhaustive list, rather those behaviors recognized as critical for school leaders to be successful. Individual leaders may identify other critical attributes depending on their context. The competencies and attributes are further defined in the pages that follow.

## PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE

Wellness	Growth Mindset	Self-Management	Innovation
Ethical Fit/Healthy Optimistic Self-aware	Humble Reflective Intentional Accountable	Organized Balanced Self-controlled Self-confident	Creative Adaptive Resilient Courageous

## SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

Service	Community Building	Capacity Building	Influence
Empathetic Trustworthy Generous Protective	Relational Collaborative Connective Conciliatory	Empowering Guiding Resourceful Facilitative	Attentive Communicative Motivational Catalytic

## SYSTEMS INTELLIGENCE

Mission/Vision Strategic Planning	Operations and Management	Teaching and Learning	Cultural Responsiveness
Analytic Strategic Articulate Visionary	Responsible Transformative Responsive Methodical	Diagnostic Knowledgeable Pedagogic Evaluative	Visible Affiliative Advocative Global

# PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE

## Definition:

The capacity to reason about personality and to use personality and personal information to enhance one's thoughts, plans, and life experiences.

Competencies	Attributes	
<b>Wellness</b> Balances quality or state of being healthy in body and mind as the result of deliberate effort.	<b>1A Ethical</b> Embraces what has been defined as right behavior and influences people through actions, principles, values and beliefs.	<b>1C Optimistic</b> Remains steadfast personally and professionally in the face of adversity; believes adversity can be overcome; looks on the positive side of situations.
	<b>1B Fit/Healthy</b> Embraces a balanced lifestyle that promotes dimensions of wellness including emotional, mental and physical.	<b>1D Self-aware</b> Recognizes and is aware of one's self, one's strengths and weaknesses, one's 'gut-level' instincts; reacts positively and appropriately to any situation.
<b>Growth Mindset</b> Embraces challenges; persists despite obstacles; sees effort as a path to mastery; learns from criticism; is inspired by others' success.	<b>2A Humble</b> Knows what he/she does not know; resists being arrogant; never underestimates competition.	<b>2C Intentional</b> Acts rather than reacts; is deliberate; recognizes every aspect of their behavior; sets personal leadership milestones.
	<b>2B Reflective</b> Thinks critically about personal behaviors, attitudes, beliefs and values.	<b>2D Accountable</b> Holds oneself to a higher standard and continuous growth; honors, stands behind, and takes ownership of agreements and decisions that one makes.
<b>Self-Management</b> Monitors and takes responsibility for one's own behavior and well-being, personally and professionally.	<b>3A Organized</b> Plans and accomplishes things in a prioritized, orderly manner.	<b>3C Self-Controlled</b> Regulates behavior to achieve goals, acts strategically, and stays calm during stress.
	<b>3B Balanced</b> Lives and leads with multiple perspectives; considers not only the organizational and financial impact of decisions, but also the personal, social and environmental impacts.	<b>3D Self-Confident</b> Aware and comfortable with personal strengths and weaknesses; celebrates others' accomplishments; seeks opportunities to learn and develop; listens to others ideas; accepts both challenges and support; empowers others to grow and lead.
<b>Innovation</b> Introduces new methods, novel ideas, processes or products that are put into operation.	<b>4A Creative</b> Solves problems or challenges in novel ways from new perspectives and seeks innovation in exploring potential options.	<b>4C Resilient</b> Strong enough to live with uncertainty and ambiguity; learns to grow through adversity.
	<b>4B Adaptive</b> Takes on the gradual but meaningful process of change, both individually and within the organization; thrives within challenging environments.	<b>4D Courageous</b> Takes chances after thoughtful estimation of the probable outcome; willing to take bold moves after careful deliberation and preparation.

# SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

## Definition:

A set of interpersonal competencies that inspire others to be effective.

Competencies	Attributes	
<b>Service</b> Assures that other people's highest priority needs are being served.	<b>1A Empathetic</b> Has the ability to recognize, value and share others' feelings.	<b>1C Generous</b> Is kind, understanding, and not selfish; is willing to give to others, including time, energy, advice and talent.
	<b>1B Trustworthy</b> Is benevolent, honest, open, reliable and competent.	<b>1D Protective</b> Focuses on the well-being of others, the community and society at large, rather than self
<b>Community Building</b> Instills a sense of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together	<b>2A Relational</b> Interacts with people in ways that fulfill their physical, psychological, social and emotional needs.	<b>2C Connective</b> Actively meets people, introduces them to each other, and creates bridges among disconnected people, resources and ideas.
	<b>2B Collaborative</b> Works cooperatively with others toward a common purpose; enables others to succeed individually while accomplishing a collective outcome.	<b>2D Conciliatory</b> Recognizes and resolves disputes by applying effective communication; uses problem-solving ability and negotiation to attain positive outcomes.
<b>Capacity Building</b> Employs leadership knowledge and skills necessary to enable the school to make better use of its intellectual and social capital, in order to adopt high-leverage strategies of teaching and learning.	<b>3A Empowering</b> Actively supports processes to help faculty and staff enhance their knowledge and skills in ways that are advantageous to their work.	<b>3C Resourceful</b> Garneres personal, building, district and community resources to achieve the vision and goals of the school.
	<b>3B Guiding</b> Acts as a trusted adviser, drawing from personal experience and expertise to offer guidance and support.	<b>3D Facilitative</b> Works to identify and eliminate impediments to staff and student success; creates conditions for positive change.
<b>Influence</b> Can cause changes without directly forcing them to happen; practices skills of networking, constructive persuasion and negotiation, consultation, and coalition-building.	<b>4A Attentive</b> Listens actively to the content and manner of others' spoken messages and determines emotional stances via verbal and non-verbal cues.	<b>4C Motivational</b> Fosters in others an internal state that rouses them to action and specific desired behaviors.
	<b>4B Communicative</b> Shares information in ways that are understood by target audiences, are relevant and timely, and that allow for feedback.	<b>4D Catalytic</b> Helps the school improve by continuously focusing on opportunities for growth, monitoring effects of internal and external influences, and fostering productive interpersonal relationships.

# SYSTEMS INTELLIGENCE

## Definition:

Individual understanding of the inter-workings and leadership of complex systems within an organization.

Competencies	Attributes	
<b>Mission, Vision, and Strategic Planning</b> Defines the mission as the intent of the school; fosters a vision of what the school will look like at its peak performance; strategically determines the procedural path to intentionally achieve the vision.	<b>1A Analytic</b> Uses knowledge, reasoning and inquiry to analyze situations and develop constructive plans for improvement.	<b>1C Articulate</b> Clearly conveys the mission, vision and direction of the school to all stakeholders, communicating priorities, intentions, and roles and responsibilities.
	<b>1B Strategic</b> Develops plans and appropriate mechanisms to achieve the school's vision and goals.	<b>1D Visionary</b> Builds a group vision as a guide for making all school decisions.
<b>Operations and Management</b> Utilizes a variety of methods, tools, and principles oriented toward enabling efficient and effective operation and management.	<b>2A Responsible</b> Demonstrates the ownership and takes the responsibility necessary for achieving desired results.	<b>2C Responsive</b> Responds to situations appropriately and constructively through effective listening, communication and actions.
	<b>2B Transformative</b> Acts as a catalyst for change by leading through inquiry, challenging the status quo, being patient and persistent, and building strong relationships.	<b>2D Methodical</b> Systematically creates constructive order from disorder, employing a variety of methods and tools as appropriate.
<b>Teaching and Learning</b> Develops and supports intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.	<b>3A Diagnostic</b> Is adept at diagnosing educational problems, counseling teachers, supervising, evaluating programs and personnel, and developing curriculum.	<b>3C Knowledgeable</b> Develops teachers' and staff members' professional knowledge, skills, and practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by understanding of professional and adult learning and development.
	<b>3B Pedagogically Supportive</b> Provides differentiated support for teachers; creates time for staff to discuss change and its implications; models a "we're all in this together" attitude; and fosters shared vision and shared purposes.	<b>3D Evaluative</b> Is able to synthesize program and performance information for the purpose of recommending improvements and/or changes.
<b>Cultural Responsiveness</b> Promotes cooperation, collaboration, and connectedness among a community of learners while responding to diversity, need, and capacity.	<b>4A Visible</b> Actively practices the role of community leader, including high visibility in the community and advocacy for community causes, leading to trust and rapport between school and community.	<b>4C Advocative</b> Develops implicit relational knowledge of the educational system through keen attention to human interest and need; actively advocates for students, teachers, and school with local, state, and federal policy makers.
	<b>4B Affiliative</b> Values people and their feelings; seeks to accomplish tasks and goals without sacrificing the needs of students and staff; emphasizes harmony and builds team resonance.	<b>4D Global</b> Recognizes the collective value of diverse social networks and the capacities that arise from these networks to accomplish goals together; views the school in the context of the broader society.

# FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

## **Illinois Principals Association**

Jason Leahy  
Executive Director  
jason@ilprincipals.org  
217-525-1383

## **Indiana Association of School Principals**

Todd Bess  
Executive Director  
tbess@iasp.org  
317-891-9900

## **Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals**

Dr. Michael Schooley  
Executive Director  
mschooley@maesp.com  
573-638-2460

## **Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals**

Phil Lewis  
Executive Director  
plewis@moassp.org  
573-445-5071

## **Association of Washington School Principals**

Gary Kipp  
Executive Director  
gary@awsp.org  
360-357-7951

## **Association of Wisconsin School Administrators**

Jim Lynch  
Executive Director  
jimlynch@awsa.org  
608-241-0300