

Leading the Implementation of Ontario's Revised Language Curriculum

Professional Learning Resource



Table of Contents

***Equity-Driven Leadership for School Improvement Planning: Implementing the 2023 Ontario Language Curriculum Grades 1-8*4**

 Introduction:.....4

 Leadership Development and Creating the Conditions for Learning:7

 Key Leadership Moves for Equity in Leadership:7

 Engaging Staff in Inquiry and Learning:8

 Evidence of Impact:8

 Leadership Reflection:8

 Conclusion:9

***Understanding the Learner* 10**

 Introduction:.....10

 Key Leadership Moves for Understanding the Learner:10

 Engaging Staff in Inquiry and Learning:11

 Evidence of Impact12

 Leadership Reflection:13

***Co-Constructing School Goals*..... 13**

 Introduction:.....13

 Key Leadership Moves for Co-constructing Goals:15

 Engaging Staff in Inquiry and Learning:18

 Evidence of Impact:18

 Leadership Reflection:19

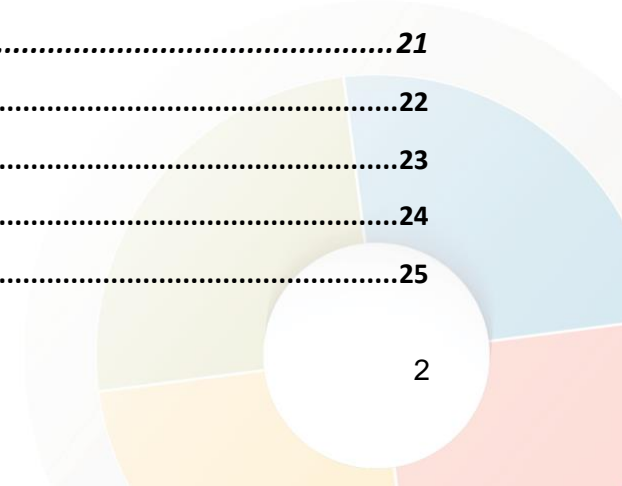
***Interpreting Data*..... 21**

 Key Leadership Moves for Interpreting Data:22

 Engaging Staff in Inquiry and Learning:23

 Evidence of Impact:24

 Leadership Reflection:25





***Responding to Data - Professional Learning/Collective Efficacy*26**

Introduction:.....26

Key Leadership Moves for Responding to Data:.....27

Engaging Staff in Inquiry and Learning:28

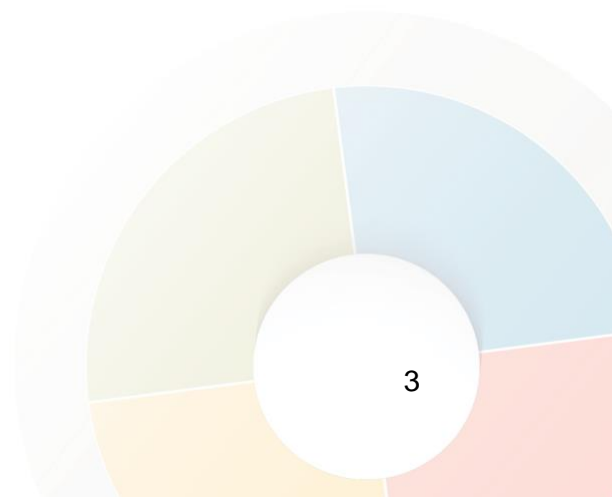
Evidence of Impact:28

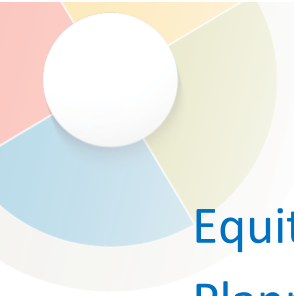
Leadership Reflection:29

References:30

Resources:30

Glossary:.....31





Equity-Driven Leadership for School Improvement Planning: Implementing the 2023 Ontario Language Curriculum Grades 1-8

Introduction:

This interactive guide, a collaborative effort with the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Catholic Principals' Leadership Development Ontario, and Principal Association Projects, is designed to support principals and vice-principals in leading the implementation of the 2023 Ontario Language Curriculum for Grades 1-8 using a school improvement planning process. This collaborative development ensures that the guide is comprehensive and reflective of the collective wisdom of the educational community.

This resource is further explored in a two-part webinar series on the CPCO and OPC websites.

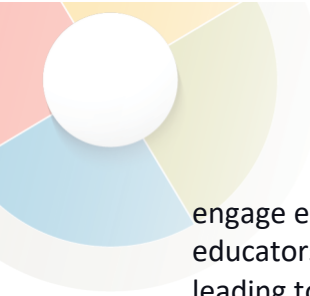
Principals and vice-principals play a pivotal role in shaping literacy outcomes by establishing and monitoring school improvement plans. Principal and vice-principal leadership is crucial in this process, which involves analyzing data, identifying urgent learning needs, setting measurable goals, and allocating resources. This process aligns with the Ministry of Education's Student Achievement Plans. A strategic, collaborative, and equity-focused approach is key to successfully developing and implementing language curriculum plans.

The Ministry of Education mandates the development of a Student Achievement Plan that emphasizes learning outcomes in core academic skills, including Language (Literacy). This guide synthesizes the critical elements of school improvement planning into four main categories:

- Understanding the Learner
- Co-constructing School Goals
- Interpreting the Data
- Responding to the Data

A school's learning plan journey begins with school teams analyzing student data and evidence of student learning. From there, goals are co-constructed, and actions are determined collaboratively. Constructing a well-paced and scaffolded plan ensures exemplary experiences for educators and students. Exemplary experiences occur when teams experience success and attribute that success to factors within their control. Through this joint work, leaders engage educators in meaningful collaboration and problem-solving, focused on instructional improvement, while building consensus and inspiring excitement. By following this process, teams can build collective efficacy, a critical factor in school success.

The school improvement planning process is grounded in an inquiry approach beyond simply asking questions. It is a comprehensive process that involves deep, transformative learning requiring time, opportunity for professional learning, and the creation of conditions that

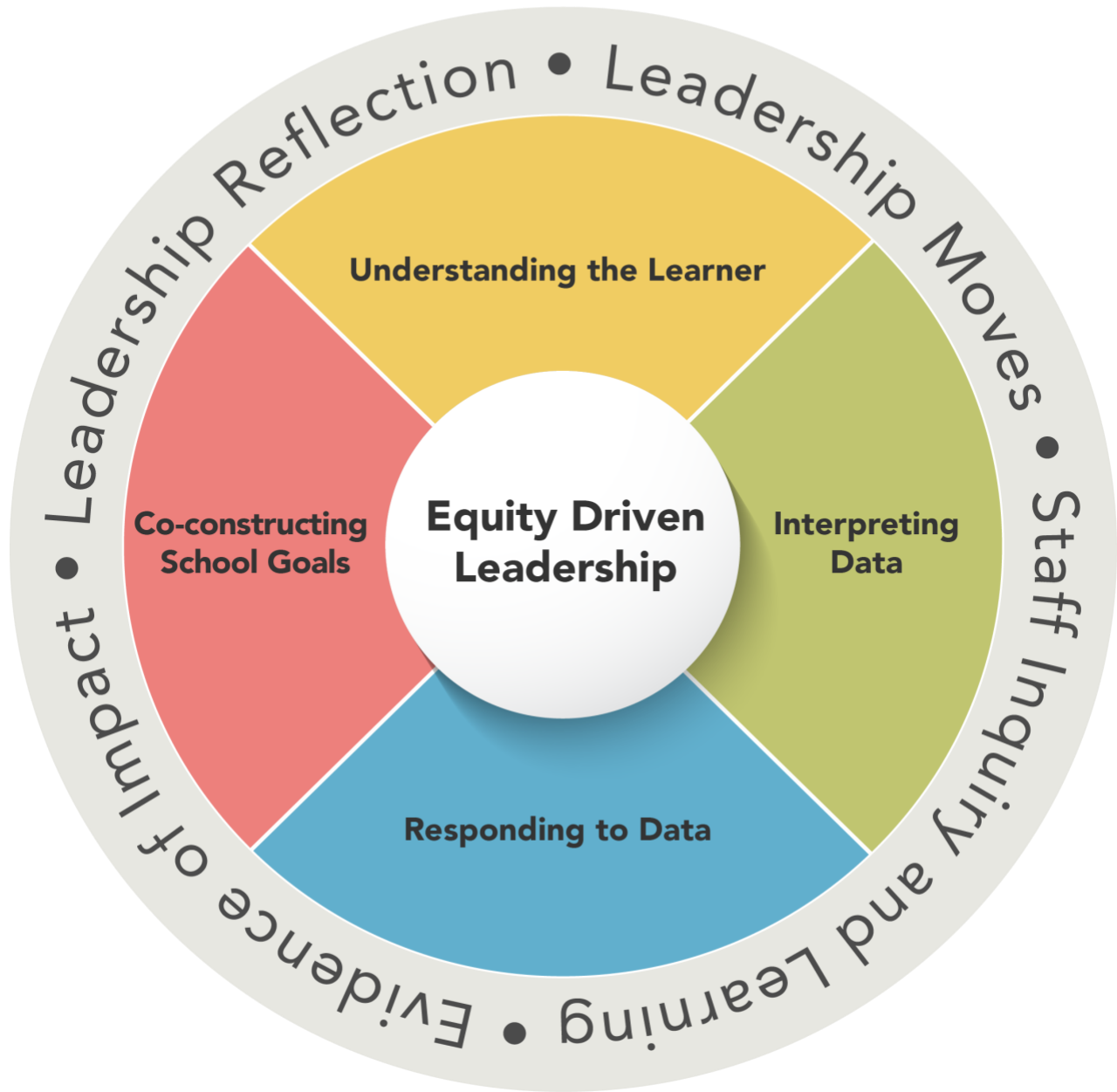


engage educators in critical thinking about their practice. This inquiry approach encourages educators to ask probing questions, gather and analyze evidence, and reflect on their practice, leading to continuous improvement and better student outcomes. As Usha James from The Critical Thinking Consortium describes, <https://tc2.ca/> a critical inquiry approach to professional learning takes time, space, and structure to help educators engage in meaningful inquiry, ensuring a continuous journey of progress and development.

The following graphic is intended to convey the iterative and cyclical nature of a critical inquiry approach. It provides a reminder that all of the leadership elements in the graphic support the development of collective efficacy. The graphic highlights the multiple entry points for this work, and it is essential to note that there is no predetermined or defined entry point. School leaders will find their entry points into this work. They will lead curriculum implementation and the school improvement planning process in a way that meets the needs of their school communities and aligns with their leadership approach and leadership values.

Ontario Language Program: School Learning and Improvement Planning Process

School Learning and Improvement Planning Process





Leadership Development and Creating the Conditions for Learning:

School leaders are encouraged to create the conditions for learning through equity-oriented leadership, which involves making decisions and taking actions that promote fairness and justice in the school environment. This approach fosters inclusive, thriving learning environments. The 2023 Ontario Language Curriculum provides an opportunity to reflect on how power, privilege, and bias have historically shaped educational practices and outcomes, especially for racialized and marginalized students. Leaders must acknowledge that existing systems may perpetuate disparities and take proactive steps to dismantle them.

Principals and vice-principals who engage in deep learning, reflection, and inquiry around equity will make lasting impacts on their school communities. This requires understanding the historical and systemic barriers that affect students, particularly Indigenous and marginalized learners. As Elena Aguilar points out in *Coaching for Equity*, "School leaders must deeply understand the impact of colonization on the public education system." This awareness should guide decisions, particularly in implementing literacy practices that honour diverse cultural narratives and challenge systemic inequities.

Key Leadership Moves for Equity in Leadership:

1. **Acknowledge Systemic Inequities:** Existing systems often reinforce disparities, especially across identities such as race, gender, and ability. As leaders, we are responsible for identifying and dismantling these inequities in literacy practices. For instance, we can ensure that the 2023 curriculum's focus on inclusive interventions addresses historical gaps in student achievement by providing additional support for students who may have been historically and currently underserved.
2. **Examine Personal and Collective Bias:** Leaders must regularly reflect on their biases and those embedded within the school community. By encouraging staff to engage in this critical reflection, literacy instruction can reflect diverse perspectives, reducing reliance on Eurocentric materials and practices.
3. **Identify and Disrupt Barriers:** Leaders should proactively remove barriers to student success by implementing inclusive and differentiated teaching methods, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Literacy practices must be accessible and equitable, particularly for historically and currently underserved students.
4. **Reallocate Resources for Equity:** Leaders must ensure that resources—whether tools, time, funding, or personnel—are distributed equitably to support each student's specific literacy needs. This includes investing in professional learning focused on anti-racism and culturally responsive teaching. For example, ensuring that all students have access to the same quality of teaching materials and technology and that teachers have equal opportunities for professional learning are crucial aspects of resource allocation.



Engaging Staff in Inquiry and Learning:

Principals and vice-principals play a crucial role in fostering an inclusive learning environment by guiding staff in:

- **Understanding Privilege:** Help staff explore how their privileged positions influence student engagement and adjust their teaching practices accordingly.
- **Embracing Diversity:** It is about encouraging staff and actively promoting a classroom culture that values diverse identities, abilities, and experiences. We must empower them to accommodate varied student needs, recognizing their crucial role in the educational process. We must foster a school culture where teachers cultivate student talents and strengths and regularly incorporate students' home languages and cultural backgrounds into literacy activities.
- **Challenging the Status Quo:** Motivate and inspire teachers to question and challenge literacy practices that sustain inequities. Please support them in exploring alternative approaches that promote equity, anti-racism, and social justice.

Engaging staff in an inquiry cycle around these themes allows for continuous reflection and growth in their teaching practices. This can be done through regular staff meetings, professional learning sessions, and collaborative planning time, where staff can discuss and reflect on their practices and how they can be more equitable and inclusive.

Evidence of Impact:

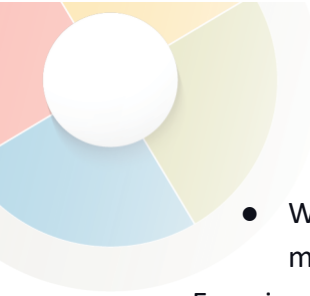
Leaders should regularly collect quantitative and qualitative data to measure the success of equity-driven literacy interventions. Key evidence includes:

- Inviting student and community voices into the teaching and learning process.
- Surveys and focus groups will gather student feedback on literacy instruction and incorporate this data into decision-making processes.
- Valuing elders and community members as knowledge-keepers ensures students' diverse cultural backgrounds are respected and honoured.

Leadership Reflection:

Principals and vice-principals continuously reflect on how their leadership practices align with equity goals. Key questions to guide reflection include:

- How do school-wide literacy practices address power, privilege, and bias?
- What progress has been made in improving literacy outcomes for underserved students?
- How are staff supported in deepening their understanding of anti-oppression education?

- 
- What actions can further center the knowledge and experiences of racialized and marginalized students?

Ensuring accountability measures are in place to assess and adjust school goals.

Conclusion:

Equity-driven leadership is essential for creating conditions for students, staff, and communities to thrive. Principals and vice-principals who reflect upon their identities and privileges can lead powerful, transformative change in their schools. This guide provides the tools and strategies needed to support school improvement planning for literacy achievement, promote equity, and ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed.



Understanding the Learner

Introduction:

School leaders have a moral imperative to transform the learning environment, enabling students, staff, and the broader community to thrive. As Elena Aguilar emphasizes in *Coaching for Equity*, this transformation focuses on the learner. Shane Safir and Jamila Dugan, in *Street Data*, stress the importance of slowing down and engaging in deep listening with school community members. We humanize data collection by shifting to focus on racialized and marginalized voices, narratives, and perspectives.

Street Data offers a powerful metaphor for the layers of data needed to understand learners within a school community truly:

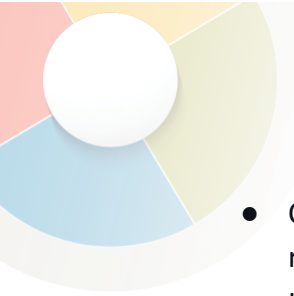
- **Satellite Data:** captures broad patterns, such as reading and writing achievement trends over time, often drawn from sources like EQAO data.
- **Map Data:** highlights specific skill gaps, as test scores focused on language conventions (e.g., universal screener).
- **Street Data:** the most often overlooked but equally critical, captures students' lived experiences, identities, and needs, providing key insights into addressing inequities. For example, conducting student literacy interviews can give this a more profound understanding.

Principals and vice-principals are encouraged to adopt culturally responsive data collection methods that take into account students' cultural backgrounds, languages, and experiences. For example, assessing reading comprehension with texts from diverse cultural perspectives ensures a more accurate reflection of students' abilities.

It is essential for school leaders to centre the school improvement planning process on equity using the four principles noted in the introduction: acknowledging system inequities, examining personal and collective bias, identifying and disrupting barriers, and reallocating resources for equity. Recognizing that schools and school districts are unique and diverse, leaders will want to reflect on which of the following examples will best support their school and community.

Key Leadership Moves for Understanding the Learner:

- **Deep Learning About Students:** To understand learners, collect bias-free data from multiple sources and use decolonized approaches to gather artifacts, stories, and observations that reflect the full diversity of student experiences. For example, leaders can implement empathy interviews with students to uncover their experiences with literacy and the school environment.


- 
- Collect qualitative data through empathy interviews with students and families from racialized and marginalized communities to gain insights into their learning experiences. Use this data to inform literacy instruction strategies that address gaps for historically and currently disadvantaged groups.
 - Work with groups of staff to determine the priority data sources and engage the staff with a deep dive into the data. Ensure that they closely examine those who are disproportionately disadvantaged and data at the margins.
 - Cultivate Unique Gifts and Talents: Recognize and nurture students' strengths and interests. An equitable approach celebrates diversity and values the contributions of all students. Leaders can conduct regular conferences to identify student strengths and interests, ensuring personalized literacy instruction.
 - Decolonizing Practices and Structures: Ensure that Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives are not just included but are central to how goals are defined and measured. Introduce Indigenous oral storytelling traditions as part of the literacy program and create opportunities for Elders to participate in classroom activities. Reading material reflects students' diversity in the classroom and Canadian and world cultures, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures.
 - Community Engagement: Leaders can establish regular community forums to ensure literacy goals reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the school community. They can also incorporate parent and community member feedback when selecting texts and literacy resources.
 - Focus on data that highlights gaps in language achievement to inform targeted interventions.

Engaging Staff in Inquiry and Learning:

Through structured dialogues, promote and foster a culture of deep listening among staff, students, and the community. Ask questions that encourage reflection on successes, challenges, and needed changes that align with the revised Ontario Grades 1-8 Language curriculum.

Teachers are vital to creating an inclusive learning environment. As a leader, guide teachers in the following areas:

- Understanding Privilege: Help teachers recognize how their position is privileged and influences their interactions with students, particularly those from racialized and marginalized groups. Do we realize our position as one of privilege and influence our interactions with students, particularly those from racialized and marginalized groups?

- 
- Embracing Diversity: Encourage teachers to build a classroom culture that values diverse identities, abilities and experiences. Support them in accommodating diverse needs and involving families in the educational process.
 - Challenging the Status Quo: Motivate and inspire teachers to question and challenge practices that sustain inequities and support them in exploring alternative approaches that promote equity, anti-racism, and social justice.
 - How do we teach and assess students based on their identities, lived experiences, and abilities?
 - Is quantitative data (observation, conversation, and product) collected to improve my understanding of students' strengths and needs?
 - Are UDL and differentiated performance and assessment tasks used to support all students in demonstrating their learning and understanding in a variety of ways?
 - How are teacher/student and student/student conferences used to engage in learning conversations with students (especially during reading instruction and throughout the writing process)?
 - How are observations and conversations used to inform the assessment and evaluation of student learning?
 - How can student work be effectively moderated to help educators understand students' strengths and needs in literacy?
 - What other questions are there about the students? What requires more learning?

Evidence of Impact

- Qualitative research recording methods, including artifacts of student learning, reflect a variety of ways to document learning using observations, conversations and products (e.g., expression and organization of ideas and information in oral, non-verbal, visual, and written forms, including digital and media forms).
- Observation checklists and empathy interviews are used to measure students' sense of belonging and safety in literacy activities.
- A clear sense of the identities of the school community permeates the school.
- Text selection, teaching and instructional strategies meet the student community's identities, abilities and lived experiences.



Leadership Reflection:

- Are historically and currently disadvantaged groups overrepresented in key areas such as office referrals and underrepresented in areas such as advanced literacy opportunities and learning materials?
- How will I continue engaging the community to ensure that school literacy goals reflect students' unique strengths and needs of the leader? Do I convey learning about power, privilege, bias and identity in my leadership style?
- How has learning about power, privilege, bias, and identity transformed the work with staff, students and the community? What additional learning do I still need? What learning is causing the most challenge for leadership?
- How will I bolster staff members' courage to engage in deep and meaningful conversations about race to enhance teacher capacity to meet students' needs?
- What is done to engage with the community to help understand the learners actively?
- What additional learning do I and the staff need to understand better the identities of the school community we serve?
- How will I continue to work with staff to understand better the school community, including its unique strengths, needs, and aspirations?

Adapted from Coaching for Equity by Elena Aguilar

Co-Constructing School Goals

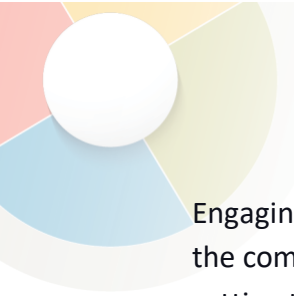
Introduction:

"Real change happens when people feel valued in the process, not just the outcome. When we respect everyone's role, we create accountability and shared purpose." – Dr. Cindy Blackstock.

As instructional leaders, principals and vice-principals prioritize personal learning, dedicating time to intentional growth to strengthen their leadership abilities. By staying curious and deeply analyzing data, leaders can better understand the community's unique needs.

When setting goals and shaping the school improvement journey, adopting the principle of Indigenous Peoples is essential: "Nothing about us, without us." This principle underscores the importance of involving those directly impacted by decisions, ensuring their voices are heard and their perspectives guide the process. Inclusive leadership builds trust and fosters more meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

While improving student learning is urgent, leaders must take the time to truly listen to the community and students, especially those whose voices are often racialized and marginalized.



Engaging school teams in co-creating school improvement goals—including students, staff, and the community—ensures that these goals reflect diverse perspectives. For instance, when setting targets for oral communication, it is crucial to ensure that all students, particularly those from underrepresented groups, have equal opportunities to participate in conversations and presentations that honour their cultural identities. This collaborative approach promotes ownership, commitment, and a shared vision for success.

By co-creating goals, the principal/vice-principal ensures that:

- **All Voices Are Heard:** Every school member can share their insights and perspectives.
- **Ownership and Commitment:** When goals are created together, there is a collective responsibility to achieve them, fostering a more substantial commitment to their realization.
- **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Diverse input leads to more comprehensive and practical strategies that address the unique needs of all students.
- **Empowered School Community:** Collaboration builds trust and strengthens relationships within the school, creating a more cohesive and motivated community.
- **Community Engagement:** Establish mechanisms for regular input from students, parents, and community members to ensure that goals are aligned with **their** needs. This active community involvement is not just beneficial but crucial for the success of the school improvement journey. Engage the community to ensure language learning goals reflect students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

By embracing these principles, school leaders can create a dynamic and responsive improvement plan that truly reflects the collective vision and dedication of the entire school team. The evidence of impact and leadership reflection e provide a solid foundation for continuous improvement, ensuring the process is on the right track.

First things first: What data could be used? How do we collect the most meaningful information about students' needs using an anti-racism lens? Principals and vice-principals must apply an anti-racism lens at every stage—from data collection to the setting and monitoring of goals—to actively challenge and dismantle systemic racism within their schools.

Principals/ vice-principals can continue to enhance their learning by working collaboratively with school staff on goal-setting using an anti-oppressive education lens. This lens involves identifying and addressing the systemic barriers that prevent students from achieving their full potential. Leaders are vital in helping staff understand and implement a framework for identifying goals. They can adapt SMART and CLEAR goal frameworks to ensure these goals align with equity and anti-oppression principles.



Equity-Centered SMART Goals:

- Specific: Ensure clear goals and target inequities, focusing on racialized and marginalized groups.
- Measurable: Use qualitative and quantitative data to track progress, including feedback from historically underrepresented voices.
- Achievable: Set realistic goals while pushing for systemic change.
- Relevant: Align goals with equity and anti-oppression priorities.
- Time-bound: Set deadlines but allow flexibility for community engagement and reflection.

For example, a specific goal could involve increasing student engagement with writing tasks that encourage personal and cultural expression, as highlighted in the curriculum's writing strand.

Equity-Centered CLEAR Goals

- Collaborative: Co-create goals with community members, ensuring diverse perspectives.
- Limited: Focus on critical areas that drive equity.
- Emotional: Connect goals to the values and lived experiences of the school and global community.
- Appreciable: Break down goals into actionable, smaller steps to maintain momentum.
- Refinable: Allow goals to evolve based on ongoing feedback and changes in the school and global environment.

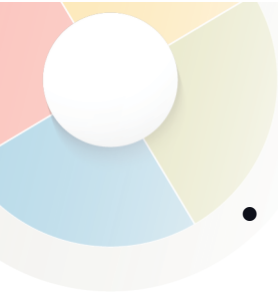
For example, collaborative goals could include working with parents and community members to develop literacy lessons that honour and incorporate students' home languages and cultural stories, aligning with the curriculum's emphasis on multilingualism.

It is essential for school leaders to centre the school improvement planning process on equity using the four principles noted in the introduction: acknowledging system inequities, examining personal and collective bias, identifying and disrupting barriers, and reallocating resources for equity. Recognizing that schools and school districts are unique and diverse, leaders will want to reflect on which of the following examples will best support their school and community.

Key Leadership Moves for Co-constructing Goals:

- Hold focus groups with students and staff to collect input for school literacy goals, ensuring diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives are considered. This process could include hosting literacy nights where parents share stories from their cultural traditions, which can later be incorporated into classroom practice.

- Lead staff members in a vision-building process where the goals for student learning are co-constructed. The process will require time working as small and full staff teams, with ample time for reflection before the goals are finalized. Provide the opportunity for staff to learn how to set goals using an anti-oppression education lens (e.g., integrating the SMART and CLEAR goal-setting processes).
- Lead staff with an anti-oppressive approach: Elevate intersectional identities. Identify and address students' intersectional identities (e.g., race, gender, language, ability) when leading staff through the goal-setting process. Consider how these identities impact students' experiences and outcomes. For instance, when setting goals for literacy, consider how a student's race or gender might influence their access to resources or their confidence in expressing themselves. Set goals to increase student engagement in literacy tasks and encourage personal and cultural expression. Progress can be measured through student reflections and analysis of writing samples.
- Organize staff, student, and community workshops to co-create a literacy vision for the school. Include time for small group discussions focused on culturally responsive literacy strategies, ensuring that every voice is represented.
- Host professional learning sessions where staff are trained in goal-setting (e.g., SMART and CLEAR goal-setting frameworks) to set literacy goals that reflect anti-oppressive education principles.
- Align goals with the Language curriculum's emphasis on fostering literacy skills that promote critical thinking and effective communication.
- Regularly check in with staff to assess how well literacy goals are being met using student surveys and focus group data. Adjust strategies based on ongoing feedback from the community.
- Co-create literacy goals with parents and students that incorporate home languages into classroom activities. For example, invite parents to participate in a multilingual storytelling event.
- Equip staff with the tools to integrate curriculum expectations into their goal-setting, particularly around developing students' language competencies.
- Ongoing Review: Set up regular check-ins to refine and adjust goals as needed. These check-ins ensure that the goals are on track and keep the staff and community informed about progress, fostering a sense of security transparency.
- Accountability for Equity: Create an accountability mechanism specifically for school goals to ensure that equitable practices permeate all aspects of the goals. This could involve regular school practices and outcomes audits to ensure they align with anti-oppression principles and the Language curriculum. Provide real examples of schools that successfully integrated SMART and CLEAR goals, focused on equity, and showed tangible outcomes.

- 
- Showcase examples that highlight successful strategies for improving literacy among diverse student populations.
 - Engage the community so language learning goals reflect students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
 - Create and share templates, checklists, and resources that effectively guide and support principals and vice-principals in using an equity-centered goal-setting framework in school improvement planning.
 - Engage school staff, students, and the community in meaningful conversations to identify and prioritize goals for the upcoming years. Collaborate with staff to better understand the school community, including its members' unique knowledge, strengths, and aspirations. Use these discussions to tailor language instruction that meets the needs of all learners, including those with diverse linguistic abilities.
 - Engage small school teams (e.g., grade/division teams) to determine/identify goals that specifically impact their students, focusing on the needs of students the system has historically and currently disadvantaged.
 - Set goals prioritizing equitable access to high-quality language instruction using differentiated instruction for all students.
 - Ensure the goal includes clear, easy-to-understand and precise language for all school community members.
 - Communicate school-wide goals that align with the language curriculum's emphasis on foundational skills, clear and organized communication, clarity, coherence, and adaptability in written and oral forms, including digital and media formats.
 - Post goals (virtually and physically) and share them with the community to reinforce transparency and encourage collective responsibility for improving language outcomes.
 - Consider how to ensure that racist ideologies do not permeate the goals that have been co-created (e.g., anti-Black racism, Anti-Indigenous racism).
 - Ensure that goals reflect the curriculum's commitment to inclusivity and respect for diverse cultural perspectives.
 - Hold meaningful conversations with school staff, students, and the community to identify and prioritize goals for the coming years.
 - In collaboration with the staff, create a plan for monitoring, sharing, and celebrating the achievement of the goals.
 - Celebrate progress in language skills, emphasizing the curriculum's goal of fostering confident and competent communicators.
 - Create and engage in an administrator network to support, enhance, and share learning.
 - Leverage networks to exchange best practices for implementing the language curriculum effectively.




Engaging Staff in Inquiry and Learning:

Through structured dialogues, promote and foster a culture of deep listening among staff, students, and the community. Ask questions that encourage reflection on successes, challenges, and needed changes that align with the revised Ontario Grades 1-8 Language curriculum.

- What culturally relevant diagnostic tools have been implemented (e.g., empathy interviews and student surveys)?
- What data has been collected, and how does it help educators better understand diverse student experiences and language needs?
- How do literacy resources and instructional strategies impact racialized and marginalized student groups?
- How will staff use student-focused qualitative data (e.g., student interviews and observations) to adjust instruction methods and improve equity?
- How will staff determine student learning needs using various culturally relevant and responsible tools, including the universal screener?
- How will staff know if the resources and learning texts suit the school goals?
- What strategies can be used to collaborate with the community, especially those historically and currently disadvantaged by the education system, to highlight their culture, strengths, and ways of knowing in achieving the school goals?
- How will staff continue to focus on and learn about the needs of students who are historically and currently disadvantaged in the education system?
- How will the data be collected, and how will it be analyzed to ensure it is through an anti-oppressive education lens?
- What will be done if the data does not show improvement and students are not learning?
- What are the most effective ways to communicate staff and student learning to the community?

Evidence of Impact:

- School improvement literacy goals are integrated into all aspects of the school environment.
- Professional dialogue is anchored upon the literacy school improvement goals.
- Students and the community are actively engaged in the school improvement goals.
- School improvement literacy goals focus on instruction, assessment, and learning environment (including knowledge from Black, Indigenous, racialized, and marginalized



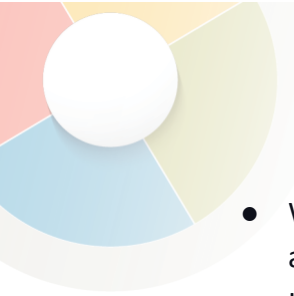
populations that reflect evidence of the local and global community), not just Euro-centric literacy teaching materials and assessments.

- There are authentic opportunities to discuss historically and currently racialized and marginalized groups in the classroom from an asset-based lens.
- Evidence of literacy learning that will affirm and heal populations that the system has historically and currently disadvantaged. For example, discuss and explore texts that elevate the contributions and achievements of Black and Indigenous people outside of Black History Month and Orange Shirt Day.
- School improvement goals reflect vital priorities in the curriculum, including foundational skills and critical literacy.
- All community members have access to the goals, and a process is in place to receive, gather, and synthesize feedback on those goals.
- Goals are revisited regularly with staff, and those goals are routinely monitored.
- Goals are monitored continuously using quantitative and qualitative data, such as observation, conversation, and product.
- Culturally relevant diagnostic tools, such as empathy interviews and student surveys, have been used to gather data that reflects diverse student experiences and language needs.
- Use of qualitative student data (e.g., student interviews and observations) to adjust instruction methods and improve equity.
- Learning needs have been determined using various culturally relevant and responsible tools, including the universal screener.
- Resources and learning texts have been reviewed to ensure they are suitable for achieving the school goals.

Leadership Reflection:

To support the leader's reflection, below are some questions that have been adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Education Capacity Building Series focused on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy November 2013 and Ontario College of Teachers Professional Advisory on Anti-Black Racism:

- How do the literacy goals reflect the voices and identities of all students?
- How are we dismantling systemic barriers to equitable language instruction?
- Are we elevating diverse cultural perspectives in classroom literacy practices?
- What does a school look, sound, and feel like when we promote reflection, honour the community, and support authentic collaboration among staff, students, and the community?
- What does a classroom look, sound, and feel like when it is inclusive and when instruction is responsive to the community?

- 
- What impacts students when we acknowledge their identities, experiences, and abilities?
 - How do we define relevant and authentic learning opportunities in the school?
 - How might we support students in making decisions about their learning that integrate who they are and what gifts they bring from their community?
 - How can we reduce dominant Euro-centric perspectives in the classroom so that contributions from the community are learned, understood, and authentically integrated into the learning environment?
 - Determine if historically and currently disadvantaged groups continue to be overrepresented in school contexts such as office referrals and special education classes.
 - Are high expectations set for all learners in the school?
 - Is there an investment and commitment in deep personal learning to fully understand the principles of anti-oppression education?
 - How is critical self-reflection and examination of position, power, and privilege used to maintain systems of oppression and colonialism, and how can that position, power, and privilege be shifted to dismantle those systems?
 - How am I continuing to model and learn from participating in conversations and research about anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism as a way to enhance a deep understanding of the topic?
 - What is being done to create a culture of belonging by inviting input on the types of resources, texts, events, and guest speakers demonstrating a commitment to anti-oppressive, decolonial pedagogical practices?
 - Are the goals outlined in the school improvement plan still correct, particularly those related to the needs of historically and currently disadvantaged students?
 - How are incidents of racism and discrimination actively being denounced when they occur in the learning environment?
 - How is the leader recognizing the impact of conscious and unconscious bias in the learning environment?
 - How is the leader actively engaging with the community to enhance pedagogical practices in the teaching and assessing of the Language curriculum?



Interpreting Data

As educator teams explore and reflect on data, it will be essential to discuss how current practice must evolve to ensure an evidence-based approach to instruction as outlined in the curriculum.

An effective Language curriculum is based on and informed by evidence-based research. In response to the recommendations in the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read inquiry report, <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-to-read-inquiry-report> the Language curriculum is designed to equip all students with the solid foundational knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their full potential. Informed by proven research, this curriculum employs evidence-based approaches to systematically and explicitly teach this knowledge and these skills. Reading and writing are emphasized in the curriculum, with a focus on language conventions necessary for clear communication; comprehension at the word, sentence, and text level when listening, reading, and viewing; and the knowledge, skills, processes, and techniques required for effective speaking, writing, and representing. Moreover, the curriculum stresses developing critical thinking skills to enable students to understand, appreciate, and evaluate texts at a deep level and connect them to the real world. These skills help students become reflective, critical, and independent learners and achieve academic goals. https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/principles&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1726480989924567&usg=AOvVaw3N_59mFiREPSgqppTyJTUu


Engage staff in a discussion/ interpretation of the data that supports a responsive approach to instruction: instruction that authentically responds to student needs as evidenced in the data. Consider the following framework, developed by Usha James and The Critical Thinking Consortium to guide this work.

Affirm: What current practices are showing a positive impact on student learning? How do we continue to affirm and expand this practice?

Adjust: What current practices need to be adjusted to ensure the needs of all learners are addressed? How will they be adjusted? How will educators determine that these changes are having a positive impact?

Adopt: What new practices outlined in the Language curriculum (that are evidence-based) must be introduced into classroom practice? How will educators determine that these changes are having a positive impact?

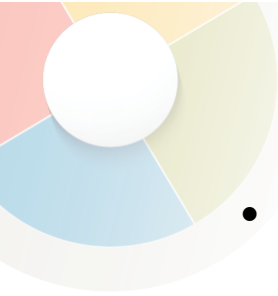
Abandon Given the Language curriculum's requirements, school/system equity goals, and current research in literacy, what practices need to be discontinued?



It is essential for school leaders to centre the school improvement planning process on equity using the four principles noted in the introduction: acknowledging system inequities, examining personal and collective bias, identifying and disrupting barriers, and reallocating resources for equity. Recognizing that schools and school districts are unique and diverse, leaders will want to reflect on which of the following examples will best support their school and community.

Key Leadership Moves for Interpreting Data:

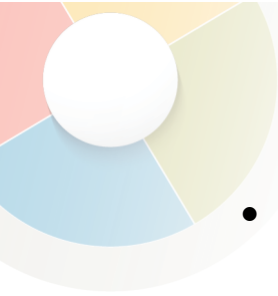
- Engage Staff in reading and reviewing the “Program Planning” section of the curriculum and gather feedback on confirmed knowledge, new learning and questions/wonderings <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/the-program-in-language>
- Review the four strands in the Language curriculum. Invite staff to discuss the connections between the strands and the need to integrate learning across the strands as described in the curriculum. <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/strands>
- Review and discuss Strand B and the two associated learning content: one that elaborates on the mandatory learning associated with Overall Expectation B2 from Grades 1 to 4 and another that describes the progression of mandatory learning associated with Overall Expectation B3 from Grades 1 to 9.
- Offer opportunities for educators to co-plan literacy lessons/activities so that instruction aligns with newly introduced requirements/content (e.g. Strand B) and includes ongoing cross-curricular, integrated learning opportunities. See the attached curriculum chart developed by Lorraine Boulos to support this work. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gy6C7HeLtDBMYJPokIndSLO9Lss48GwW/edit>
- Begin an audit of current literacy resources to determine which resources align to grade level content/skills and are relevant to the identities, abilities, interests and experiences of students; while also reflecting the diversity of students in the classroom and Canadian and world cultures, including First Nations, Inuit and Metis cultures. Note any gaps in resources and utilize the knowledge of staff/central board staff to determine next steps.
- Review and discuss PPM 1, which highlights the principles and requirements of early reading screening, protected time on foundations of language, and Tier 1, 2, and 3 instruction.
- With staff, link the curriculum Vision and Goals to the recommendations from the Right to Read inquiry report and to board policies and procedures
- With staff, review and reflect on the characteristics of successful and confident language learners as detailed in the curriculum.

- 
- Co-construct criteria for classroom environments that will foster and support these characteristics
 - Partner with families and local cultural organizations to create a library of multilingual and multicultural literacy resources that reflect the backgrounds and experiences of the student population.
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-168>
 - Plan opportunities for early and ongoing parent/guardian engagement in decisions specific to their child’s literacy needs. <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/language-guide>

Engaging Staff in Inquiry and Learning:

Through structured dialogues, promote and foster a culture of deep listening among staff, students, and the community. Ask questions that encourage reflection on successes, challenges, and needed changes that align with the revised Ontario Grades 1-8 Language curriculum.

- Where does the new curriculum introduce the newest learning? What do we need to learn? How will we engage in this learning?
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gy6C7HeLtDBMYJPokIndSLO9Lss48GwW/edit>
- What does a safe, engaging, joyful and inclusive literacy learning environment “look like” and “sound like” and “feel like” for students?
- What resources can be used to support identity-affirming classrooms? What resources will help students develop a sense of self and their unique and shared identities? What resources will help foster a deeper appreciation for the diversity of the human experience and expression?
- How do current classroom resources align to the curriculum content (e.g. Strand B)? What is needed/missing in currently available resource collection?
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gy6C7HeLtDBMYJPokIndSLO9Lss48GwW/edit>
- How do current instruction and assessment practices support oral language development and multi-modal learning?
https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/glossary&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1727313958144224&usg=AOvVaw0E1ngDx_wfI1C-KvTWsCk5
- How will large blocks of uninterrupted time for literacy learning be protected?

- 
- How will cross-curricular and integrated approaches to learning support literacy learning across all disciplines?
 - What needs to change, be modified or added to ensure oral language development and multi-modal learning is an intentional focus?
 - How will students continue to have voice and agency in their learning?
 - How will all educators facilitate translanguaging to enhance learning and ensure that first language considerations and knowledge are used to support the success of all students?
 - How will critical thinking and executive functioning be enhanced to ensure both are supported in illiteracy and planning for students with special education needs?
 - How will family and community partnerships be developed to ensure that learning is relevant and can be practiced and reinforced beyond the classroom?

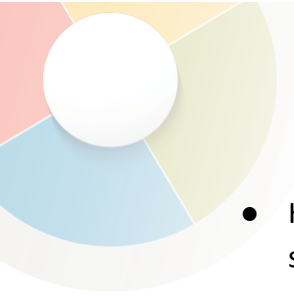
Evidence of Impact:

- Instruction is beginning to be organized, which supports the integration of the four curriculum strands. **A. Literacy Connections and Applications, B. Foundations of Language, C. Comprehension: Understanding and Responding to Texts and D. Composition: Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts**
- Protected time is provided for foundations of language instruction as outlined in PPM 168. Review and discuss PPM 168 highlighting the principles and requirements of early reading screening, protected time on foundations of language and Tier 1, 2 and 3 instruction.
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-168>
- Instruction reflects evidence based strategies/instructional practices detailed in the Language curriculum.
- Instruction is differentiated and reflects students' strengths, instructional needs and interests. <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/principles>
- Student progress is monitored, and early and ongoing assessment data are used to identify skill gaps, determine instructional next steps, and inform decisions about tiered support.
- The school provides Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction to ensure the needs of all students are met.
<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/considerations-program-planning#instructional-approaches>
- Students have access to enjoy reading a wide variety of texts.

- Classroom literacy learning environments are engaging and reflect a commitment to high expectations for all students.
- Literacy resources 'in use' are culturally relevant and responsive to students' curriculum content, lived experiences, strengths and interests.
- Educators gather a range of assessment data, both quantitative and qualitative, and use this data to inform planning and instruction.
- An asset-based approach is evident when discussing student progress/goal setting (e.g., student strengths are being leveraged to determine instructional next steps).
- Existing and potential barriers to student learning are recognized. Plans/strategies to remove and/or prevent barriers are in place in classrooms. Through the use of culturally relevant and responsive texts, students have an opportunity to develop an understanding of the contributions, lived experiences, and perspectives of a diversity of individuals and communities.
- Students are provided with ongoing opportunities to select topics/material that are identity-affirming and that foster their sense of appreciation for the diversity of human experience and expression.
- Classroom learning goals, success criteria, and descriptive feedback focus on oral language knowledge and skills and multi-modal learning.
- Students have opportunities to use their linguistic repertoire to advance learning.
- Increased student participation in class discussions and literacy tasks that reflect cultural and personal identities, highlighting the diversity of students' experiences by featuring language projects across various spaces throughout the school.
- Language lessons/tasks engage students in higher order thinking skills.
- Strand A includes embedded language lessons and cross-curricular and integrated learning experiences. Classroom schedules provide times for instruction in printing, handwriting, and word processing, as outlined in Strand D.

Leadership Reflection:

- What am I noticing about current approaches to UDL and Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 Instruction in the school? Are we reaching every student?
<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/principles>
- Am I using affirming, positive, and inclusive language to communicate my belief that all students can learn? How can I improve/enhance this aspect of my leadership?
- How am I challenging existing practices that create barriers? How am I affirming promising practices that dismantle barriers?
- Do I understand the research and evidence based strategies that serve as the foundation for the Language curriculum? What are some gaps in my own knowledge? Who can I reach out to in my existing network, Central Sta, to help fill those gaps?
<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/principles>

- 
- Have I created structures/opportunities for educators who share responsibilities for specific students to collaborate, develop/review and discuss Individual Education Plans specific to literacy?

Responding to Data - Professional Learning/Collective Efficacy

Introduction:

"When a team of individuals share the belief that through their unified efforts, they can overcome challenges and produce intended results, groups are more effective. In schools, when educators believe in their combined ability to influence student outcomes, there are significantly higher levels of academic achievement." (Hattie)

By paying attention to these considerations, you will be on the path to building collective efficacy. According to John Hattie, collective efficacy is the collective belief of teachers in their ability to affect students positively. His research indicates that **Collective Teacher Efficacy** is strongly correlated with student achievement.

When considering plans for professional learning, it is essential to leverage existing structures and build additional, responsive opportunities for collaborative staff learning and planning while ensuring that school structures, such as literacy committees represent of diverse staff strengths and experiences, leaders are modelling a culturally responsive leadership style while honouring teacher voice and agency by co-constructing professional learning content and plans alongside educators. To maximize the impact of school-based professional learning structures, consider how to engage educators in co-constructing goals that are doable and relevant to student learning needs and the next steps. Educators can co-construct professionals and school learning plan goals and collaboratively develop success criteria that apply to their practice and are student-centered. By doing so, you are setting up opportunities for educator and student mastery experiences.

With staff, consider how school planning could offer differentiated learning for educators. This may be done by division or in a manner that provides multiple entry points for educators with varying degrees of knowledge and experience. With a focus on collective efficacy at the forefront, maintain a focus on collaborative planning and co-learning.

It is essential for school leaders to centre the school improvement planning process on equity using the four principles noted in the introduction: acknowledging system inequities, examining personal and collective bias, identifying and disrupting barriers, and reallocating resources for equity. Recognizing that schools and school districts are unique and diverse, leaders will want to reflect on which of the following examples will best support their school and community.



Key Leadership Moves for Responding to Data:

- Provide guidance on navigating the online curriculum site and how/where to access information (e.g., grade references, resources, glossary and available downloads). <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language>
- Engage staff in reading and reviewing the 'Program Planning' section of the curriculum <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/the-program-in-language>
- Reflect on the Planning Considerations, Cross-curricular and Integrated Learning, Transferable Skills section of the curriculum <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/ccil&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1727313958038329&usg=AOvVaw1S7U-DUCpxQnuRlh74sRha> and gather feedback on confirmed knowledge, new learning and questions/wonderings. <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/ccil>
- Review the Ministry of Education curriculum *Key Changes* chart with staff. Collect feedback to inform next steps (areas that align with current practice and those that require new learning/a shift in practice). https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/fbd574c4-da36-0066-a0c5-849ffb2de96e/20ac5623-521f-4cae-ab2f-cbf2a3cfb3ab/Key%20Changes_Language%201-8_2023.pdf
- Bring together the school leadership team/school improvement team, or literacy team and co-construct an initial plan of action. Ensure the team includes voices from each division, special education, English Language Learners and Kindergarten. Leverage current teacher leadership and expertise, including the Teacher-librarian. Ensure the plan includes a cross-curricular approach to literacy.
- Consider how current professional learning structures (e.g., staff meetings, divisional meetings, PLCs) could be maximized to support curriculum learning and implementation.
- Discuss *Effective Early Reading Instruction: A Guide for Teachers* (<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/guide-effective-early-reading>) with all primary educators.
- With the leadership team, school improvement team, am, or literacy tea review *Language, Grades 1 to 8: A guide for parents* (gov.on.ca) and determine initial steps to engage parents/guardians/the school community.



Engaging Staff in Inquiry and Learning:


Through structured dialogues, promote and foster a culture of deep listening among staff, students, and the community. Ask questions that encourage reflection on successes, challenges, and needed changes that align with the revised Ontario Grades 1-8 Language curriculum.

- “Where” does the Language curriculum introduce the most new?
- How might professional learning goals be prioritized within achievable steps, allowing time to reflect on shifts in practice through student learning outcomes and student feedback?
- What will success ‘look like’ and ‘sound like’ for students?
- What types of learning opportunities would be most helpful for the school team to support implementation of the new curriculum?
- In what ways could educators engage in collaborative learning opportunities? What could these opportunities look like?
- How might DI, UDL, and CRR principles be utilized to support/advance educator learning?
- How will the staff's diverse expertise and knowledge be leveraged to offer varied and responsive professional learning opportunities? Who else (e.g., the central team) could support school-based learning and planning?
- How will equitable and inclusive access to educator learning be ensured? How will barriers to learning be identified and addressed?
- How will staff feedback be gathered to ensure that the professional learning content, supports, and structures are responsive to educators and their students?
- How will parents/guardians be informed of the new curriculum changes? What opportunities will be provided for families to work collaboratively with school staff as valued partners in their child’s education?

<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/language-guide>

Evidence of Impact:

- Collaborative structures (e.g., leadership, school improvement, divisional, and grade teams) are organized and have dedicated meeting time.
- Educators have been provided with opportunities to share input to inform school planning and professional learning goals.
- Initial school/classroom goals are centered on improving student experiences and learning outcomes.
- Professional learning opportunities are scheduled with initial learning goals and success criteria determined.

- 
- Expertise of current staff has been determined. Other supporting central staff have been contacted for consultation/support.
 - A collaborative culture of learning is emerging, whereby educators seek opportunities to co-plan and co-learn, demonstrate a learning stance by asking questions, begin reflecting on initial shifts in instruction and assessment, and challenge one another to consider diverse and divergent perspectives.
 - Schools engage with parents/guardians throughout the implementation of the new curriculum.
 - Professional learning includes ongoing opportunities to moderate/discuss student thinking/tasks.
 - Professional learning sessions include ongoing opportunities to hear students' voices throughout learning (e.g., literacy response feedback on their learning and student goal setting).

Leadership Reflection:

- How am I engaged in professional learning sessions as a co-learner?
- Have I fostered deep listening among staff, students, and the community through structured dialogues?
- Do I ask questions that encourage reflection on successes, challenges, and needed changes?
- Am I ensuring that school resources address inequities and that all community voices are included in decision-making?
- How am I helping teachers recognize how their social positioning influences student interactions?
- Am I effectively encouraging teachers to build a classroom culture that values diverse identities and experiences throughout every professional learning session?
- How am I supporting educators in accommodating diverse needs and involving families in the educational process throughout professional learning sessions?
- In professional learning sessions, do I effectively motivate teachers to question and challenge practices that sustain inequities and support them in exploring alternative approaches that promote equity and social justice?



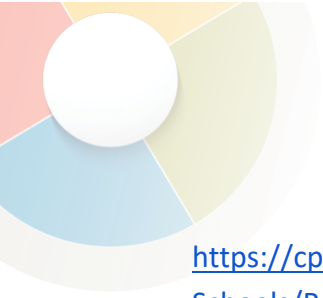
References:

- Aguilar, E. (2020). *Coaching for Equity: Conversations that Change Practice*. Jossey-Bass.
- Blackstock, C. (2019). *Spirit Bear: Echoes of the past*. First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada.
- Dei, G. J. S., James-Wilson, S. V., & Zine, J. (2000). *Inclusive Schooling: A Teacher's Companion to Removing the Margins*. Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Khalifa, M. (2018). *Culturally Responsive School Leadership*. Harvard Education Press.
- OnLit. (2024) Screening: What Principals Need to Know Key points from Policy/Program Memorandum 168 for Administrators.
<https://onlit.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Screening-What-Principals-Need-to-Know-1.pdf>
- Ontario College of Teachers. (2020). *Professional Advisory on Anti-Black Racism*.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2023). *The Ontario curriculum: Grades 1–8, language*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language>
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2013). *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Towards Equity and Inclusivity in Ontario Schools*.
- Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2022). *Right to read: Public inquiry into human rights issues affecting students with reading disabilities*. <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-to-read-inquiry-report>
- Shields, C. M., & Lewis, K. D. (2012). *Strong Districts and Their Leadership*. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Resources:

Leading the Implementation of the Language Curriculum 2023/24 Webinar 1-3, Podcast 1-3 and leadership resource

<https://www.principals.ca/en/professional-learning/leading-the-implementation-of-ontario-s-revised-language-curriculum.aspx>



<https://cpco.on.ca/CPCO/CPCO/Catholic-Leadership/Leading-Curriculum-in-Catholic-Schools/Revised-Language-Curriculum.aspx?hkey=12b06757-1f01-4e2b-a155-33d5bc13f371>

Glossary:

2023 Ontario Language Curriculum Grades 1-8 Glossary

<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/glossary>

