Standards of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice

The *Standards and Indicators of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice* is Massachusetts' framework for effective leaders. Pursuant to 603 35.04 and grounded in DESE's Educational Vision, it reflects input from educators, students, and families across Massachusetts on evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices that support *all students* to attain academic knowledge and skills, understand and value themselves and others, and engage with the world.

This framework guides the development of Massachusetts educators from preparation through employment, articulating the key knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential of all administrators in public schools in Massachusetts to disrupt patterns of inequity and well serve richly diverse student bodies with varied educational needs.

The *Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership Practice* describe effective leadership across four Standards:
- **Standard I: Instructional Leadership**
- **Standard II: Management and Operations**
- **Standard III: Family and Community Engagement**
- **Standard IV: Professional Culture**

Within each Standard are **Indicators** (e.g., I-A Curriculum) and, most specifically, **elements** (e.g., I-A-1 Curriculum Literacy). See the example below:

STANDARD I: Instructional Leadership
The education leader promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by cultivating a shared vision that makes powerful teaching and learning the central focus of schooling.

I-A: Curriculum

1. **Curriculum Literacy:** Demonstrates understanding of the characteristics and value of high-quality instructional materials and the curricula taught by educators in the building by:
   - Ensuring that all educators have access to and skillfully use high-quality instructional materials through evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, including identifying opportunities to create meaningful, relevant connections rooted in the local context.
   - Providing teachers with professional learning, feedback, and resources (e.g., models) to support implementation.
   - Engaging with the school community to identify and interrupt racism and bias in curricular materials.
   - Monitoring implementation to ensure the enacted curriculum supports and engages all students to meet and exceed high expectations.

2. **Instructional Focus:** Establishes and communicates a clear vision for curriculum and instruction that is aligned to school and district priorities and reflects high expectations for all students through the use of evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices. Ensures that instructional materials and professional learning support this vision.

The *Standards of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice*, and corresponding updated School Level Administrator Rubric, were released in June 2023.[1]

NOTE: **"All students"** represents *each and every student*, with particular focus on students who have been historically marginalized or underserved by our education systems, including but not limited to those who identify as Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and Multiracial students, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, LGBTQIA+ students, students experiencing homelessness and/or financial insecurity, and students who are undocumented.

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[1] For more information on stakeholder engagement and the updating process, see:
https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/

Standards of Effective Administrative Leadership Practice – At-a-Glance

Standard I: Instructional Leadership	Standard II: Management and Operations	Standard III: Family and Community Engagement	Standard IV: Professional Culture
A. Curriculum 1. Curriculum Literacy 2. Instructional Focus **B. Instruction** 1. High Expectations and Support 2. Engaging Instruction 3. Inclusive Instruction 4. Critical Instruction **C. Assessment and Data-Informed Decision-Making** 1. Assessment 2. Adjustments to Practice 3. Data-Informed Decision-Making 4. Sharing Progress with Students and Families **D. Evaluation** 1. Evaluation Practices **E. Student Learning** 1. Academic Student Outcomes 1. Non-academic Student Outcomes	**A. Environment** 1. School Culture and Climate 2. Operational Systems and Routines 3. Student Well-Being **B. Human Resources Management and Development** 1. Recruitment and Hiring 2. Induction, Professional Development, and Career Growth Strategies **C. Scheduling and Management Information Systems** 1. Scheduling 2. Professional Collaboration **D. Law, Ethics, and Policies** 1. Laws and Policies 2. Ethical Behavior **E. Fiscal Systems** 1. School Budget 2. Access to Resources	**A. Communication** 1. Communication with Families **B. Engagement** 1. Family Engagement 2. Community and Stakeholder Engagement **C. Sharing Responsibility** 1. Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-Being 2. Family Support **D. Family Concerns** 1. Family Concerns	**A. Shared Vision and Commitment to High Standards** 1. Shared Vision and Mission 2. School Goals 3. Collaborative Decision-Making **B. Communications** 1. Communication Skills **C. Continuous Learning** 1. Reflective Practice **D. Managing Conflict** 1. Consensus-Building 1. Response to Disagreement and Conflict Resolution

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I-B: Instruction

1. **High Expectations and Support:** Supports educators to uphold high expectations for all students to meet or exceed grade-level standards by ensuring that instructional practices across all settings and disciplines include:
   - Use of evidence-based pedagogical practices to provide equitable opportunities for grade-level learning
   - Supports, scaffolds, and tools to meet students' needs.
   - Clear criteria for success (e.g., rubrics and exemplars).
   - Reinforcement for perseverance and effort with challenging content and tasks.

2. **Engaging Instruction:** Provides professional learning, feedback, and support for educators to engage all students as active participants in their own learning of meaningful, standards-aligned and grade-appropriate content by:
   - Providing opportunities for students to make choices, explore topics and apply learning in culturally sustaining ways, and through real-world, interactive contexts.
   - Building on students' strengths, interests, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and prior knowledge to motivate learning and support students' information processing.
   - Facilitating cooperative learning with equitable student participation in discussion.
   - Integrating digital tools and educational technology that enhances learning experiences and promotes the development of digital literacy skills.

3. **Inclusive Instruction**: Provides professional learning, feedback, and resources for educators to accommodate and support individual differences in all students' learning needs, abilities, interests, and levels of readiness, including those of students with disabilities (in accordance with relevant IEPs or 504 plans), English learners and former English learners, academically advanced students, and students who have been historically marginalized, by:
   - Using appropriate inclusive practices, such as tiered supports, educational and assistive technologies, scaffolded instruction, and use of students' native language to make grade-level content accessible and affirming for all students.
   - Providing students with multiple ways to learn content and demonstrate understanding.

3. **Critical Thinking:** Provides professional learning, feedback, and support to educators to develop students' abilities to think critically, ask questions, and analyze sources, perspectives, and biases in order to deepen learning and make connections between the content and real-world problems and events (e.g., issues of identity, equity, power, and justice).

I-C: Assessment & Data-Informed Decision-Making	1. **Assessment:** Implements and monitors a balanced and coherent system for the use of a variety of formal and informal assessments, including those embedded in high-quality instructional materials, that: • Are used for specific instructional purposes, including to support teachers to understand all students' strengths and areas for growth, measure and monitor understanding throughout instruction and progress toward grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals, and actively inform instructional decisions. • Are accessible to all students by providing multiple ways and opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning, enabling students to draw from their cultural knowledge and lived experiences, and ensuring that assessment methods and instruments do not perpetuate racial, cultural, or linguistic bias. 2. **Adjustments to Practice:** Provides regular collaborative planning time and effectively supports educators to analyze disaggregated data from a wide range of assessments, as well as feedback from colleagues, students, and families, to: • Gain information about students' progress towards grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals, including trends across students or student groups. • Reflect on instruction and identify actions to reduce disparate outcomes and improve learning for all students. 3. **Data-Informed Decision Making:** Monitors and uses school-level and disaggregated data, research, and best practices to: • Reflect on strengths and gaps in instructional systems and work to continuously improve instructional practice. • Eliminate learning inequities across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability and ability, and other aspects of student identities. • Support all students to meet or exceed grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals. 4. **Sharing Progress with Students and Families:** Supports educators to collaborate with students and their families, in an accessible format and language, to: • Communicate specific, timely, and data-informed feedback on student progress towards grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals. • Identify ways to build on students' strengths and support further growth.
I-D: Evaluation	1. **Evaluation Practices:** Provides effective, timely, and meaningful supervision and evaluation in alignment with state regulations, contract provisions, and district/school improvement goals by: • Collaborating with educators to develop, monitor, and reflect on challenging, measurable, and equity-centered goals. • Providing high-quality (specific, actionable, timely) feedback based on multiple sources of evidence, including regular observations, student feedback, and student learning measures. • Ensuring accuracy and consistency in performance ratings. • Continuously reflecting on and mitigating biases that may impact judgments.
I-E: Student Learning	1. **Academic Student Outcomes:** Demonstrates expected impact on academic student outcomes based on multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement, including student progress on common assessments and statewide student growth measures where available. 2. **Non-Academic Student Outcomes:** Demonstrates expected impact on non-academic student outcomes, such as student engagement and sense of belonging, based on student feedback and local measures of engagement where available

STANDARD II: Management and Operations
Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.

II-A: Environment	1. **School Culture and Climate:** Fosters a positive, inclusive, and equitable school community by: • Building positive, caring relationships with students, family members, and staff to ensure that school community members feel valued, respected, equitably supported, and a sense of belonging in the school community. • Establishing transparent and consistent school-wide routines, policies, and systems that respect and affirm students' backgrounds, identities, and intellect. • Providing staff with relevant learning opportunities and resources to support them in developing culturally and linguistically sustaining practices and promoting a culture that affirms individual differences. • Consistently examining policies, procedures, and systems to identify and eliminate bias or systemic barriers to inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining practice, including policies and practices that reinforce systemic inequities and/or disproportionately impact student groups. 2. **Operational Systems and Routines:** Establishes operational systems, procedures, and routines that ensure a safe learning environment for all students by: • Implementing effective systems for attendance, student entry, dismissal, meals, class transitions, assemblies, and recess. • Partnering with and supporting custodial/maintenance workers, transportation staff, clerical and administrative assistants, food service workers, and other staff effectively. • Ensuring that all physical spaces are safe, accessible, welcoming, and honor and celebrate the diversity and achievements of the school community. 3. **Student Safety and Well-Being:** Provides ongoing training and supports to staff that ensure student health, safety, and well-being through: • Developing age-appropriate and culturally and linguistically sustaining social emotional competencies in students (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making). • Preventing and addressing bullying and other unsafe behaviors with timely responses and restorative practices. • Fostering and utilizing partnerships with outside agencies and organizations to address student needs in a proactive and systematic way.
II-B: Human Resources Management & Development	1. **Recruitment and Hiring:** Leads, in collaboration with stakeholders (including students, families, staff, and community members, and particularly those from historically marginalized communities), an inclusive process to: • Recruit and hire diverse and effective educators. • Examine recruitment and hiring policies and procedures to identify and eliminate bias. 2. **Induction, Professional Development, and Career Growth Strategies:** Provides educators with access to, and monitors the impact of, high quality and differentiated professional learning opportunities, including: • Comprehensive, district-aligned induction and mentoring support to novice educators. • Professional learning differentiated by educators' goals, strengths, and areas for growth. • Teacher-led professional learning and distributed leadership for effective educators.

II-C: Scheduling & Management Information Systems	**1. Scheduling:** Creates and maintains a school schedule and related systems and practices that: • Ensure equitable access to effective educators, grade-level learning, advanced coursework and elective opportunities, and tiered supports. • Prioritizes scheduling for students needing additional supports or services, such as English learners and students with disabilities. • Maximize inclusive opportunities for all students. • Allow for effective implementation of high-quality instructional materials • Maximize blocks of uninterrupted instructional time across all content areas (including traditionally non-tested grades and subjects (e.g., arts, physical education, digital literacy and computer science, STEM fields, History/Social Studies). **2. Professional Collaboration:** Establishes systems and structures, including common planning time, to support effective communication and collaboration among educators, including general education, special education, paraeducators, English learner education, and support staff, in support of shared goals for student learning.
II-D: Law, Ethics, & Policies	1. **Laws and Policies:** Understands and complies with state and federal laws and mandates, school committee policies, and collective bargaining agreements. Identifies and advocates for changes to laws, mandates, policies, and guidelines that inhibit equity. 2. **Ethical Behavior:** Adheres to the school and/or district's existing code of ethics; protects student, family, and staff confidentiality; and expects staff to do all as well.
II-E: Fiscal Systems	1. **School Budget:** Develops an equity-centered school budget that: • Reflects data-informed decision-making for improved and more equitable learning outcomes for all students. • Is informed by input from a diverse range of stakeholders (including students, families, staff, and community members, and particularly those from historically marginalized communities). • Aligns with the district's vision, mission, and goals. • Is communicated transparently to school community members 2. **Access to Resources:** Allocates and manages expenditures aligned with district/school goals and available resources to promote an equitable and culturally responsive school community and ensure equitable access to resources for staff and students, including access to high-quality instructional materials and aligned professional learning.

STANDARD III: Family and Community Engagement
Promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district.

III-A: Communication	1. **Communication With Families:** Establishes regular, two-way communication with families that: • Is culturally and linguistically sustaining and aligned with family preferences, in language(s) that families understand, and in approachable language and formats. • Shares timely information about student learning and performance.
III-B: Engagement	1. **Family Engagement:** Engages with families in an equitable and collaborative manner by: • Working with staff and families (e.g., SEPAC, ELPAC, etc.) to identify and remove barriers to all families' involvement. • Providing a variety of frequent, inclusive, and culturally and linguistically sustaining opportunities for all families to engage as partners in the school community. • Clearly communicating information about family engagement opportunities in ways that are accessible to all members of the community and that adhere to open meeting laws. 2. **Community and Stakeholder Engagement:** Establishes strategic relationships with community organizations, community members, and businesses either individually or through district initiatives and partnerships. Engages them to maximize community involvement in the school and family access to community resources.
II-C: Sharing Responsibility	1. **Collaboration on Student Learning and Well-Being:** Provides educators with professional learning, feedback, and support to partner with families on students' learning and well-being by: • Leveraging families' cultural and linguistic knowledge and expertise as assets • Engaging families in dialogue about what students are learning in the classroom and expectations for student success. • Collaboratively identifying, and seeking feedback on, strategies and resources for supporting student learning and growth in and out of school. 2. **Family Support:** Works to ensure that all families understand and have opportunities to inform district and school-based policies and resources that support student learning and well-being by: • Supporting families to engage with policies, resources, and routines such as parent teacher organizations, school-site councils, parent advisory councils (e.g., ELPAC and SEPAC), child study/intervention teams, IEP referral processes, ESL supports, and student attendance policies. • Setting clear expectations regarding how specialized support staff should partner with families in accessing support services within and outside of school, and monitors adherence to these policies.

III-D: **Family Concerns**	1. **Family Concerns:** Approaches concerns raised by family members in a timely, effective, and transparent manner by: • Ensuring accessible communication channels for families to raise concerns or advocate for change, including concerns about the administrator themselves. • Proactively seeking out family feedback on initiatives and decisions, particularly families from historically marginalized communities. • Including all appropriate stakeholders as part of the conversation. • Working to ensure accountability and reach equitable solutions in the best interest of students, including taking responsibility for their own mistakes and escalating concerns as needed. • Following up with stakeholders to articulate rationale for decisions and monitor how solutions are working for all parties.

STANDARD IV: Professional Culture
Promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff.

IV-A: **Shared Vision &** **Commitment to** **High Standards**	1. **Shared Vision and Mission:** Continuously engages staff, students, families, and community members in developing and implementing a shared, equity-oriented educational vision and school mission grounded in high expectations for achievement, community engagement, and postsecondary success for all students. 2. **School Goals:** Creates, monitors, and shares progress on focused, measurable, and equity-centered school goals aligned to the school's mission by partnering with diverse stakeholders and conducting close analyses of disaggregated data from multiple sources of evidence, including: • Measures of student learning. • Feedback from staff, students, and families. • School culture and climate data. • Classroom observation and educator evaluation data. 3. **Collaborative Decision-Making:** Plans and executes accessible, engaging, ongoing opportunities for collaboration with educators, staff, students, families, and community members that focus on matters of consequence to the school community and engage participants in thoughtful and meaningful contributions. Intentionally seeks out viewpoints from all communities represented in the school, particularly members of historically marginalized communities.
IV-B: **Communications**	1. **Communication Skills:** Uses two-way channels to communicate frequently and effectively with faculty, staff members, students, families, and community members in a manner that is culturally and linguistically responsive with a student-centered, asset-based focus.
IV-C: Continuous **Learning**	1. **Reflective Practice:** Develops a culture of continuous, data-focused, growth-oriented reflection and adjustments to practice by: • Setting expectations for educators to reflect on the effectiveness of instruction and how one's identities, biases, and practices impact student learning and well-being. • Modeling this practice relative to their own leadership.
IV-D: **Managing Conflict**	1. **Consensus Building:** Employs a variety of strategies to build consensus within the school community around critical school decisions. 2. **Response to Disagreement and Conflict Resolution:** Responds to disagreement and dissent in ways that build trust, mitigate power dynamics, and repair harm, while maintaining a commitment to decisions that are in the best interest of promoting equity and advancing student well-being.

Glossary of Terms

Academic Achievement: Attainment of academic skills and knowledge to meet or exceed grade-level standards in a comprehensive and diverse range of subjects with ability to apply competencies in relevant, real world contexts.

All Students: This rubric frequently references "all students," which represents *each and every student*, with particular focus on students who have been historically marginalized or underserved by our education systems, including but not limited to, those who identify as Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and Multiracial students, students with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQIA+ students, students experiencing homelessness and/or financial insecurity, and students who are undocumented.

Anti-racist Teacher and Leader: Believes racial groups are equals in all their differences and continually engages in self-reflective work that leads to educational policies, practices, conditions, and cultures that resist and dismantle inequities due to individual and systemic racism to advance racial equity. ([Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders](#))

Asset-Based: Asset-based approaches intentionally build on the strengths and capacities that learners bring to school, including their languages, cultures and experiences versus deficit-based thinking that views differences as weaknesses.

Bias: A disproportionate weight that may be created intentionally or unintentionally in favor of or against an idea, thing, individual, or group. ([Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders](#))

Cultural Broker: Individuals who act as bridges between schools and diverse families and collaborate with families to support the school's goals to improve student achievement ([Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals 2.0](#)).

Cultural Competence: Individuals' affirmation in their own culture and identity and respect and understanding for different cultures and identities.

Culturally Responsive Practice: Cultural responsiveness is an approach to viewing students' culture and identity (including race, ethnicity, multilingualism, and other characteristics) as assets, and creating learning experiences and environments that value and empower them. ([Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices)](#)

Culturally Relevant: Aligned with and affirming to students' cultures, backgrounds, and identities. Culturally relevant pedagogy promotes students' academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness. ([Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices)](#)

Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining: Affirming and valuing of students' cultures, prior experiences, and linguistic resources to make learning more relevant and effective, promote academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness; valuing multilingualism as an asset. ([Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices)](#)

Curricular materials are resources teachers use to facilitate sequences of learning experiences (e.g., lesson and unit plans, texts); also called adopted or written curriculum, or instructional materials. ([Curriculum Matters](#))

Curriculum: a sequence of student learning experiences teachers facilitate, may use curricular materials as a foundation; also called enacted or taught curriculum. ([Curriculum Matters](#))

Digital Literacy: The ability to use digital technology, communication tools or networks to locate, evaluate, use, and create information; the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers; and the ability to perform tasks effectively in a digital environment. Literacy includes the ability to read and interpret media, reproduce data and images through digital manipulation, and evaluate and apply new knowledge gained from digital environments ([Digital Literacy and Computer Science Framework](#)).

Equity: Placing a heightened focus on groups, particularly racial groups, experiencing disproportionate impact through the development of systems to remediate disparities in their experiences and outcomes.

Evidence-based: Practices or programs that have evidence to show that they are effective at producing results and improving outcomes when implemented as supported by valid and reliable research. (US Department of Education, Every Student Succeeds Act)

Historically Marginalized Groups: Groups and communities that systematically experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political, economic and financial) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. These groups include but are not limited to race, culture, language, LGBTQ+, gender, and ability. Significant disparities exist for marginalized people.

High-quality Instructional Materials: High-quality materials exhibit a coherent sequence of target skills and knowledge, empirical evidence of efficacy, and other characteristics such as engaging content and inclusive design. Some factors in quality are nonnegotiable, while others vary by context: for example, compatibility with a school's technology infrastructure or cultural relevance to its student population. (Curriculum Matters)

Inclusive Practices: Pursuing deliberate actions to create welcoming environments and ensure differences are actively sought and heard, and that every individual feels a sense of belonging and a role in impacting decision-making, practices, and policies.

Linguistically Responsive: Aligned with and affirming to students' and families' linguistic backgrounds and skills. This includes use of high-quality translation and interpretation, as well as translanguaging (see below). (The Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success)

Non-Academic Student Outcomes: Outcomes associated with students' capacity to understand and value self (know their own strengths, interests, and areas of growth, be self-aware, be a self-advocate, and make responsible decisions), understand and value others (understand differences and multiple perspectives, empathize with others, and build connections with peers and adults), and engage with the world (understand and think critically about local, national, and world events and societal systems; and create positive change through civic action).

Restorative Practice: A framework of processes that schools can use to prevent and address conflict and poor behavior, including, but not limited to, restorative circles, family group conferences, social and emotional learning, and informal practices such as affective questioning. Rather than implementing a program, restorative practices focus on building and maintaining healthy relationships among individuals and maintaining a sense of community. In the case of a disciplinary infraction, restorative practices allow individuals to take full responsibility for their behavior by addressing the individual(s) affected by the behavior. Through these practices, individuals come to understand how their behavior affected others, recognize that their behavior was harmful to others, move toward repairing the harm, and work on not repeating that behavior again. (National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments)

Sociopolitical Awareness: The ability to identify, analyze, and work to solve real-world problems by thinking critically and drawing conclusions about complex issues related to equity, identity, power, or bias.

Translanguaging: The process whereby multilingual speakers utilize all of their languages as an integrated communication system to learn. (The Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is intended to increase access and engagement in learning by reducing physical, cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers, and other obstacles. It includes providing learners with multiple means of engagement, representation, action and expression. (Multi-Tiered System of Support)