The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Ministry of Education and National Reconciliation

Handbook for School Leaders

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Introduction

The Handbook for School Leaders sets out direction and resources for school leaders to use in the process of improving their performance and thereby improving student achievement.

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) Leadership Framework for Principals is a foundational document that emerged from the ISL Program. The identified practices are used for the assessment tools and development plans, thereby ensuring alignment. For each practice, specific strategies for improvement are included.

Connecting the Components of School Leadership Development

The Handbook for School Leaders is one component of a comprehensive approach to leadership development. Figure 1 sets out the major components and how one is connected with another.

Figure 1: School Leadership Development Plan
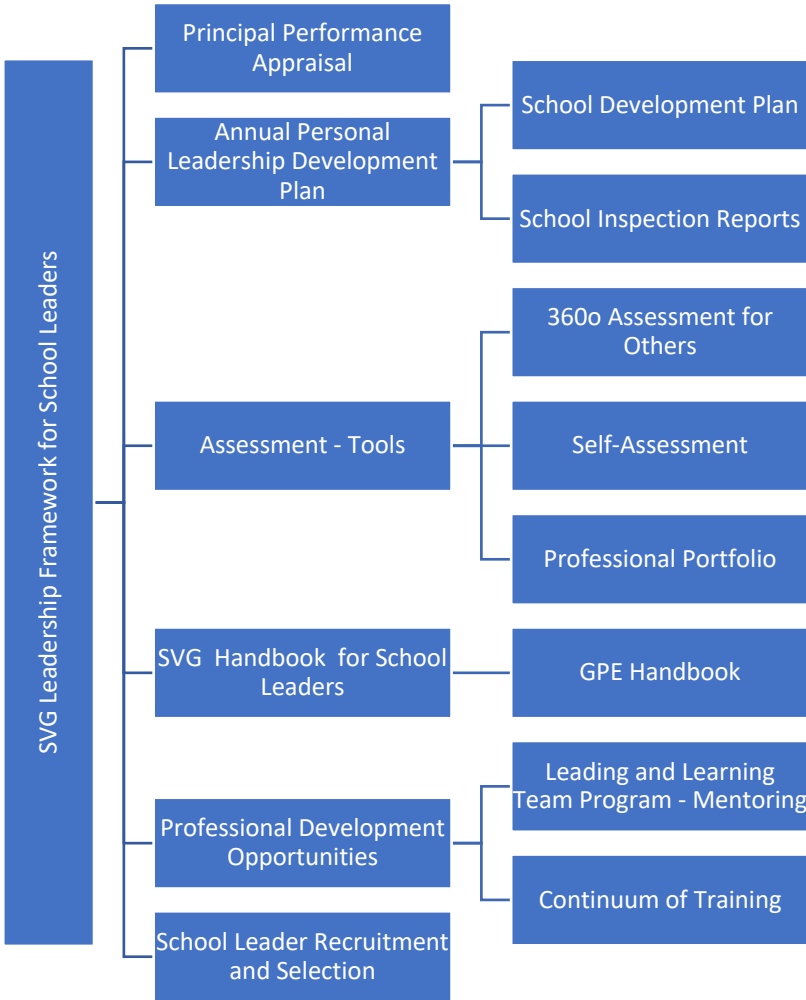
St. Vincent and the Grenadines Leadership Framework for Principals (SVGLFP)

The SVG Leadership Framework for Principals is the foundation of leadership development efforts. It emerges from the OECS (2015) standards for principals and a review of leadership frameworks for a diverse group of jurisdictions, including Ontario, Canada. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the framework components and the relationship between standards of practice, knowledge, skills, attitudes including emotional intelligence, and the unrelenting focus on improving student achievement.

Figure 1: SVGLFP Overview
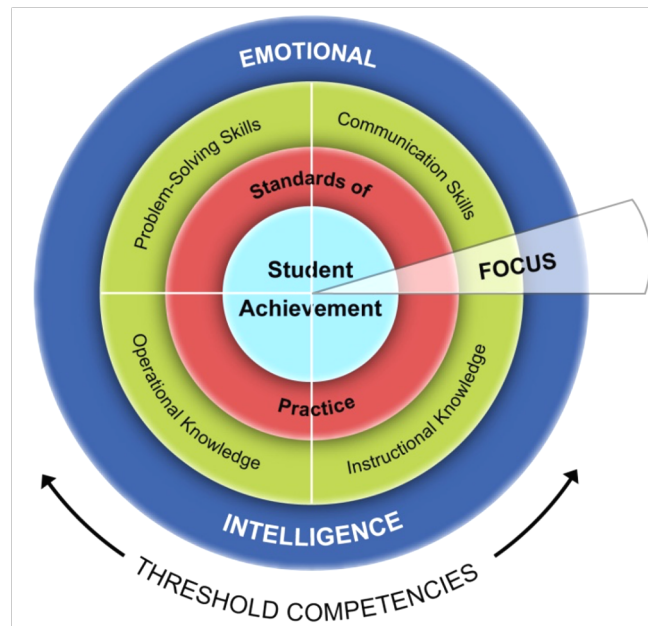
Improving student achievement is the primal focus of an effective principal. We set aside the dichotomy of management versus instructional leadership and advocate a focus on student achievement that transcends all actions as a principal.

A leadership framework promotes common language and identifies the practices, actions and competencies associated with effective leadership. It provides aspiring leaders at the school level with important insights about what they will need to learn to be successful. For those already in leadership positions, it serves as a valuable tool for self-reflection and self-assessment. The framework guides the design and implementation of professional learning for principals and supports the work of those responsible for recruiting, selecting, developing and retaining new leaders.

The OECS (2015) provides six domains (clusters) of practice for school: Self Development, Strategic Direction, Institutional Strengthening, Leading Learning, People Development, and Institutionalization of Accountability Measures. The domains are described with broad descriptions to establish the essence of the practice. The SVGLFP extends this work to include a set of leadership practices known from research to impact student achievement. Although these practices are representative of frameworks in Australia, Cayman Islands, Peru, Sweden and others, the SVGLFP draws heavily upon the Ontario Leadership

Framework – an internationally recognized framework that is grounded in extensive research (Appendix A).

Understanding the SVG Leadership Framework for Principals

Below, the Standards of Practice are set out along with key inquiry questions and strategies for improvement.

Domain 1: Self-Development

Standards of Practice

The principal is highly committed to his or her own professional growth.
• Demonstrating commitment to ongoing professional development aligned with school improvement plans.   • Demonstrating commitment to personal health and wellness   • Demonstrating a commitment to developing and modelling core institutional values through ethical and moral behaviours consistent with the Ministry expectations

Inquiry Questions

What is your WHY and how does it connect to student achievement and well-being?
Are you managing, leading or always doing both? How's that work?
How can a meaningful school-level leadership framework, collectively created to reflect the literature and international frameworks, improve your leadership practices?
What are your strengths? What are the areas requiring improvement?
How strong are my problem solving and communication skills?
How deep is my operational and instructional knowledge?
How strong is my emotional intelligence?

Strategies for Improvement

1.1 Demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional development aligned with school improvement plans.
- read current leadership literature that inform practice
- participate in leadership and teacher training including the Leading and Learning Team Program
- assemble a leadership portfolio of evidence of leadership practices related to school improvement and well being
- use performance appraisals to improve and create a personal professional learning plan based upon the results of a 360 and self-assessment
- complete and submit the annual leadership development plan to the ministry

1.2 Demonstrate commitment to personal health and wellness
- pay attention to the elements of personal wellbeing: physical, psychological, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual
- regularly review own practice, seek and value feedback, set personal targets and take responsibility for own personal development and work/life balance

1.3 Demonstrate a commitment to developing and model core institutional values through ethical and moral behaviours consistent with the Education Act

- inspire others through values-driven, reflective, and resilient leadership to create a shared and positive climate/ culture
- lead by example through self-control, self- management, honesty and maintain confidentiality
- demonstrate knowledge, empathy, reasoning, courage, and interpersonal skills

1.4 Complete the Self-Assessment for School Leaders

1.5 Complete the 360o Assessment for School Leaders

1.6 Read pages 5 – 9 of the OECS Education Leadership Handbook

- distributed, moral, transformative, and situational leadership

1.7 Explore Goleman's concept of Emotional Intelligence

- https://www.proveritas.com.au/downloads/Emotional-Intelligence-12-Elements.PDF
- reflect on your strengths and areas for growth

1.8 Read some of the Ideas into Action articles published by the Ontario Government

- https://www.education-leadership-ontario.ca/en/resources/personal-leadership-resources

Domain 2: Strategic Direction

Standards of Practice

> *The principal establishes a clear and understood vision for the school which has learning at its core and is articulated to all stakeholders.*
>
> - Building an inclusive shared vision and mission
> - Identifying SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely) goals
> - Creating high expectations
> - Communicating the vision and goals

Inquiry Questions

How might international research about effective school leadership practices for 21st century classroom teaching and learning be applied in your school setting, post COVID?

Are you and your team working hard and not yet seeing the improvements desired? How do you know?

Are you gathering the right data? What additional data will you collect?

How will a structured process improve your data conversations with others? How do you move from raw data to targeted goals?

Are your school goals objectives based or results based? Why does that matter?

What is the role of SVG large-scale assessments?

Strategies for Improvement

2.1 Building an inclusive shared vision and mission

- ensure that strategic planning reflects effective school research and takes account of the diversity, values and experience of the school and community at large
- ensure the vision and mission are clearly articulated, shared, understood, and acted upon effectively by all
- work with the school community to translate the vision into agreed objectives, specific actions, and operational plans that promote and sustain school improvement focused on teaching and learning
- encourage the development of organizational norms that value diversity, gender, equity and create an openness to change
- help staff and all stakeholders understand the relationship between the ministry's vision and the school's vision
- engage families, community, and alumni, in the school actions focused on improving outcomes for every student

2.2 Identifying SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely) goals

- gather multiple measures of data from all stakeholders to identify student and staff needs
- utilize the professional learning cycle with staff to plan, act, observe and reflect on school's goals
- utilize the Data Dialogue Template (Appendix D) to engage stakeholders in analyzing authentic data, building consensus, and setting data informed goals
- encourage staff to develop and review individual goals for professional growth, as well as, the relationship between their individual goals and the school's goals

- refer to the school's goals when engaged in decision making about school programs and directions
- develop, submit to Ministry and implement annual School Development Plans

2.3 Creating high expectations
- have high expectations for teachers, students, and themselves
- model high expectations through daily words and actions
- devote additional effort to create high expectations among staff, students, and families for the achievement of students who have traditionally struggled to be successful at school
- encourage staff to be innovative in achieving the school's vision and goals for all students
- demonstrate and articulate high expectations and set challenging targets for the whole school community
- recognize and reward excellence

2.4 Communicating the vision and goals
- use many different formal and informal opportunities to share with the stakeholders the overall vision and goals established for the school
- model the school's vision and goals in day-to-day actions and decision making
- regularly invite different stakeholder groups to assess and discuss how their work furthers the school's vision and goals

2.5 Read the OECS Education Leadership Handbook
- A Framework for Data-Based Decision Making: page 21
- Sources of Data in School: page 22
- Data Analysis: page 24
- Setting Targets: pages 25 and 26

Domain 3: Institutional Strengthening

> *The principal influences and inspires all in the school community to think about how they can improve their service to all learners.*
>
> - Building collaborative cultures and distributing leadership
> - Structuring the organization to facilitate collaboration
> - Connecting the school to the wider environment
> - Maintaining an inclusive safe and healthy environment
> - Data informed allocation resources in support of the school's vision
> - Building reciprocal productive relationships with families and the community

Inquiry Questions

How will an understanding of effective schools guide your next steps as a leader?
In a post-pandemic period, what are the key elements to address?
How is your school performing? What are the strengths? Areas for improvement?
What are the high yield areas for improvement?
How can you strengthen the 'system' to support your school and others?

Strategies for Improvement

3.1 Building collaborative cultures and distributing leadership

- enable everyone to work collaboratively, share knowledge and understanding, celebrate success and accept responsibility for outcomes
- model and foster mutual respect and trust in their own work and among those involved in collaboration
- seek clarity about goals and roles and group processes related to collaborative work
- provide adequate resources to support collaborative work
- foster open and fluent communication toward building and sustaining professional learning communities

3.2 Structuring the organization to facilitate collaboration

- provide regular opportunities and structures that build efficacy and support teachers working together on instructional improvement
- establish a system for monitoring the collaborative work
- distribute leadership and establish a structure of teams and groups that engage teachers in making decisions that affect their instructional work

3.3 Connecting the school to the wider environment

- build a collaborative learning culture within the school and actively engage with other schools to build effective learning communities
- develop and maintain connections with other expert school and district leaders, policy experts, outreach groups, organizations, and members of the educational research community

3.4 Maintaining an inclusive safe and healthy environment

- ensure the physical facility is maintained in a safe, healthy, and attractive condition

- empower staff to take a leadership role in promoting a positive school climate and modelling appropriate behaviour
- communicate standards for non-violent behaviour and uphold those standards in an equitable manner
- implement and monitor the consistent use of appropriate disciplinary practices in classrooms and throughout the school (Appendix C: Developing a Student Code of Conduct).
- in consultation with staff and students, provide opportunities to learn about processes to identify and resolve conflicts consistently, fairly and in a timely manner

3.5 Data informed allocation of resources in support of the school's vision
- manage efficient budgetary processes and ensure sustained funding is directed to the school's improvement priorities
- secure and distribute resources in ways that are closely aligned with the school's improvement priorities and instructional work

3.6 Building reciprocal productive relationships with families and the community
- create a school environment where parents/families are welcomed, respected, and valued as partners in their children's learning
- model the type of leadership that parents can trust – confident, visible, honest, inclusive, and respectful
- work with staff to reach out to families of diverse backgrounds and viewpoints to enrich the classroom experience and help provide their children with support in the home that will contribute to their success at school
- encourage staff to adopt a broad view of family engagement and encourage parents and extended family to be involved through volunteering, learning at home and decision-making.
- lead a positive, inclusive school community that supports the development of the whole child
- help connect families to the wider network of social services

3.7 Read the OECS Education Leadership Handbook
- Networks
- School and Community
- Effective Schools

Domain 4: Leading Learning

Standards of Practice

As the leader of learning, the principal is actively involved in the choice, design and implementation of the instructional program and works closely with teachers to ensure that all students are learning.
• Staffing the instructional program • Providing instructional support • Monitoring progress in student learning and school improvement • Buffering staff from distractions to their work

Inquiry Questions

What's happening with classroom Learning Walks and challenging conversations to boost teaching quality?

How does understanding diverse learning styles and instructional strategies help school professionals meet individual needs and maintain high expectations for all?

What is instructional strategy research suggesting for future highly effective schools and how does your school stack up today?

How do inquiry-based strategies are work to engage student higher order thinking and build intercultural competence and global citizenship?

Why will the application of the professional learning cycle support collaborative inquiry? What is the next step?

Strategies for Improvement

4.1 Staffing the instructional program

- recruit, select and retain teachers who have the interest and capacity to further the school's vision and goals
- provide mentoring and coaching supports for new and experienced teachers
- retain skilled teachers by providing support and time for collaboration and shared leadership
- deploy staff appropriately and manage their workload to achieve the vision and goals of the school
- build, develop and empower the school's Instructional leadership team to ensure all students engage in joyful, rigorous, and personalized learning and demonstrate high academic achievement

4.2 Providing instructional support

- focus on instructional leadership using strategic planning, change leadership and innovative practices
- coordinate what is taught across subjects and grades to avoid unnecessary overlap while providing reinforcement and extension of learning goals
- provide preparation time for teachers and create timetables for teaching that maximize time on task for students
- observe classroom instruction, provide constructive feedback, and participate with staff in instructional improvement work
- provide support and build the capacity of staff to solve classroom problems

- provide teachers with the opportunity to observe effective instructional practices among colleagues in their own school, as well as, in other schools
- ensure the school goals and learning are at the centre of strategic planning and resource management
- engage staff in school self- evaluation in collaboration with all stakeholders
- challenge underperformance at all levels and ensure effective corrective action and follow-up

4.3 Monitoring progress in student learning and school improvement
- actively oversee and monitor the instructional program
- ensure a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on students' achievement, using multiple measures of data and benchmarks to monitor progress in every child's learning
- creates a culture of challenge and support where all students can achieve success and become engaged in their own learning
- create the conditions and work with teachers to collect, review, analyze and use data effectively (time, support, partnerships with experts, a culture in which the use of data is valued)
- provide staff with professional learning focused on the importance of student assessment- for, of, and as learning and differentiated instruction
- give priority to identifying and supporting those students most in need of additional support
- examine trends in student achievement over time (one or more years), rather than just at one point in time, when analysing student learning
- integrate new and emerging technologies to ensure creativity, innovation and extend the learning experience of students
- monitor, evaluate and review classroom practice and promote improvement strategies
- produce and implement clear, evidence-based improvement plans and policies for the development of the school and its facilities
- use and integrate a range of technologies effectively and efficiently to manage the school

4.4 Buffering staff from distractions to their work
- expect high standards of behaviour and develop and enforce fair, consistent, school-wide and inclusive discipline policies
- minimize daily disruptions to classroom instructional time
- implement a systematic procedure for deciding how best to respond to initiatives from outside the school
- develop, with staff, guidelines to govern the amount of time teachers spend on non-instructional and out-of-school activities

Domain 5: People Development

Standards of Practice

The principal builds trusting relationships and develops the capacities of staff and stakeholders.
• Providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members • Stimulating growth in the professional capacities of staff • Modeling the school's values and practices • Building trusting relationships with and among staff, students, and families • Establishing productive working relationships with teacher representatives

Inquiry Questions

How do you best assess emotional and cultural intelligences in your school setting?

What are some valuable ways understanding EQ and CQ is helping high performing schools increase professional capital, collective efficacy, and school capacity?

What are the top personal leadership resources available to leaders?

Why is authentic leadership so vital to trust building and how can your learning community lean into authentic leadership to improve professional collaboration, classroom instruction, student motivation, and achievement?

Is collaboration where it needs to be in order to optimize instructional and intercultural capacity in your learning community? How can you tell?

Are your succession planning strategies effective? What else can you do?

What are some key strategies to improve student behaviour?

Strategies for Improvement

5.1 Providing support and demonstrating consideration for individual staff members
- acknowledge the responsibilities and celebrate the achievements of individuals and teams
- seek and consider staff members' opinions when initiating actions that affect their work
- build upon and respond to individual staff members' unique needs and expertise
- treat people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive school culture
- manage and organize the school environment efficiently and effectively to meet health and safety regulations
- monitor workload of others to allow an appropriate work/life balance

5.2 Stimulating growth in the professional capacities of staff
- develop and maintain procedures for staff induction, professional development, and performance review
- encourage staff to reflect on their goals, (what they are trying to achieve with students), how they are doing it and the evidence of impact
- share evidence and lead discussions about the merits of current and alternative practices
- challenge staff to continually re-examine the extent to which their practices support the learning for all students
- facilitate opportunities for staff to learn from each other
- encourage staff to develop and review their own goals for professional growth and the relationship of those goals to school goals and priorities

- encourage staff to try new practices that are consistent with both their interests and school goals
- provide all staff members with opportunities for formal and informal leadership

5.3 Modeling the school's values and practices
- are highly visible and accessible to staff, parents, students, and community
- have frequent, meaningful interactions with teachers, students, and families in order to further the school goals
- demonstrate the importance of continuous learning through visible engagement in their own professional learning
- exemplify, through their actions, the school's core values and desired practices
- develop and maintain a culture of high expectations for self and for others and take appropriate action when performance is unsatisfactory

5.4 Building trusting relationships with and among staff, students, and families
- demonstrate care and personal regard for students, staff and parents
- model responsibility, integrity, and thoroughness in carrying out tasks
- demonstrate respect for staff, students, families and the community by listening, being open to diverse ideas, and genuinely consider their value
- establish norms in the school that demonstrate appreciation for constructive debate about best practices
- require staff, students, and parents to demonstrate respect, care and personal regard for one another
- provide workshops for parents/families to learn how to support, encourage and help their student at home
- plan staff social events
- enable student voice and agency through the establishment and support of student council
- engage all stakeholders in a variety of ways; written and oral communication, social media
- intentionally reach out to and engage students (and their families) who are not attending school regularly

5.5 Establishing productive working relationships with teacher representatives
- include representatives in processes for establishing goals for school improvement
- encourage representatives to keep their members well informed about their work with principals
- encourage representatives to collaborate in determining how to implement labour contract provisions in ways that support school improvement work

5.6 Read the OECS Education Leadership Handbook
- Managing Student Behaviour
- Coaching, Teacher Leadership
- Succession Planning

5.7 Read: Teacher Performance Appraisal
https://www.ontario.ca/page/teacher-performance-appraisal-system

Domain 6: Institutionalization of Accountability Measures

Standards of Practice

> *The principal is accountable for promoting collective responsibility within the whole school community to ensure that students enjoy and benefit from a high- quality education and meet the ministry expectations.*
>
> - Building staff members' sense of internal accountability
> - Meeting the demands for external accountability

Inquiry Questions

What are the financial responsibilities of the principal?
How should budget expenditures be aligned with school improvement efforts?
How effective is your supervision of teachers and other staff?
How effective is your teacher evaluation process? What can you do differently?
How do you effectively lead a school self-evaluation?
Are students in your school achieving high standards and making steady progress? How do you know?

Strategies for Improvement

6.1 Building staff members' sense of internal accountability

- regularly engage staff in analyzing quantitative and qualitative data to assess the learning progress of students
- insist on the use of data that is of high quality, reliable, valid, collected systematically and has been subjected to collaborative interpretation
- promote collective responsibility and accountability for student achievement and well-being
- help staff make connections between school goals and ministry goals to strengthen commitment to school improvement efforts
- assess their own contributions to school achievements and consider feedback from others on their performance
- ensure individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, agreed, understood prior to the
- performance appraisal process
- ensure that performance concerns are documented and communicated to staff
- create the process for staff to actively participate in their own performance appraisal and make commitments to meet goals

6.2 Meeting the demands for external accountability

- measure and monitor teacher and leader effectiveness using evidence about changes in student achievement
- align school targets with ministry targets
- provide an accurate and transparent account of the school's performance to all school stakeholders (e.g., ministry, ministry, parents, community)
- create an organizational structure that reflects the school's values and enables management systems, structures, and processes to work effectively within legal requirements

- complete monthly ministry reports (finances resource allocation, incidents) and submit meeting deadlines
- manage the school's financial and human resources to achieve the school's educational goals and priorities
- work with the Ministry (providing information, objective advice, and support) to enable it to meet its responsibilities and deadlines
- develop and present a coherent, understandable, and accurate account of the school's performance to a range of audiences including the Ministry, the parents, and families

Personal Competencies

Problem Solving Skills

Standards

Effective Leaders:
• Resolve conflict in a fair and timely manner. • Prioritize problems based on impact on student learning • Are guided by core values and principles

Communication Skills

Standards

Effective Leaders:
• Have strong communication skills • Understand complex and reciprocal connections • Demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills

Operational Knowledge

Standards of Practice

Effective Leaders know how to:
• Foster trusting relationships with all stakeholders • Stimulate and manage the change process • Ensure a safe and orderly learning environment

Instructional Knowledge

Standards

Effective Leaders know:
• Conditions for student and staff learning • Assessment for, of and as learning • Teaching and Learning Pedagogy

Emotional Intelligence

Standards

Effective Leaders:
• Recognize own emotions and emotions of others • Demonstrate self-awareness, self-management, empathy, and strong skills in relationship building • Understand and model cultural intelligence • Demonstrate initiative, confidence, perseverance, optimism and thrives in challenging situations • Develop self and collective efficacy

Annual Personal Leadership Development Plan

The development of an Annual Personal Leadership Development Plan involves 4 stages:

> Stage 1: Complete a Self-Assessment (Appendix D: Self-Assessment Tool for School Leaders)
> Stage 2: Distribute 360o Assessments (Appendix E: 360o Assessment for School Leaders)
> Stage 3: Analyze the Data
> > Identify 3 leadership practices and 3 personal competencies that you will focus on in the development of your plan
> Stage 4: Develop the APLD Plan (Appendix F: APLD Plan)

Appendices C, D and E provide documents to support the process.

Your Principal Performance Appraisal (PPA) Process

Appendix G provides the procedure for the PPA Process.

Leading and Learning with Your Colleagues

The Leading and Learning Team Program provides school leaders with a structure and process to learn with colleagues from within their school or from other schools. Appendix H provides a summary of the program and interested leaders are encouraged to contact the School Inspection and Supervision Unit for support and the detailed plans.

Appendices (Separate attachments)

Appendix A: SVG Leadership Framework for School Leaders

Appendix B: Data Driven Dialogue Template

Appendix C: Developing a Student Code of Conduct

Appendix D: Self-Assessment Tool for School Leaders

Appendix E: 360o Assessment Tool of School Leaders

Appendix F: Annual Personal Leadership Development Plan

Appendix G: SVG PPA Procedure

Appendix H: SVG Leading and Learning Teams - Summary

Appendix I: O.E.C.S. Education Leadership Handbook 2019

Appendix J: Handbook for School Inspections

Appendix K: School Inspection Instruments