

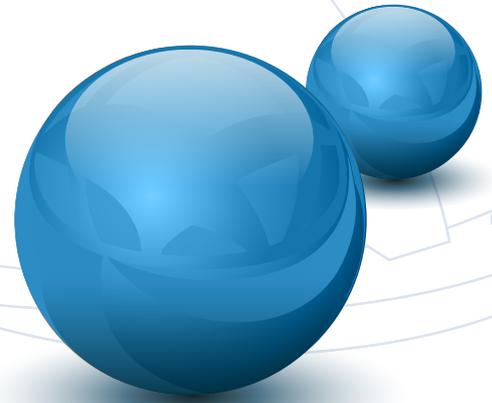


Australian Principal Certification: promoting the principal profession

**Australian
Principal
Certification**
Program



Australian Principal Certification: promoting the principal profession



Principals Australia Institute, in consultation with Australian principals and key stakeholders, is designing the Australian Principal Certification Program as recognition of a principal's demonstration of the Australian Professional Standard for Principals in action.

The development of the Australian Principal Certification Program is based on the following stages:



Designing Australian Principal Certification

- a. Using the Australian Principal Standard to define what accomplished principals know, understand and do.
- b. Emphasising the importance of ongoing professional learning and growth in the role of the principal.
- c. Highlighting the value of the principal profession through certification.

Developing portfolio initiatives

- d. Using a portfolio for the principal to provide

evidence of the Australian Principal Standard in action.

- e. Using authentic and time-efficient methods for gathering evidence in the portfolio.
- f. Building a support process for principals when developing their portfolio.

Managing quality processes

- g. Using consistent and reliable procedures for the verification of evidence of principal leadership in action.
- h. Putting quality-assurance processes in place for the verification of evidence.
- i. Ensuring transparency and accountability in the verification process.

Quality and integrity in principal certification

Principals are at a key moment in time and well-positioned to develop a national system for the certification of accomplished principals that is based on quality and integrity. A profession-wide certification system needs to provide nationally consistent methods of verifying evidence that are based on the Australian Principal Standard in action and relate to the authentic leadership of principals and the difference they make for students, teachers and schools.

The Australian Principal Certification Program is being designed and developed on the basis

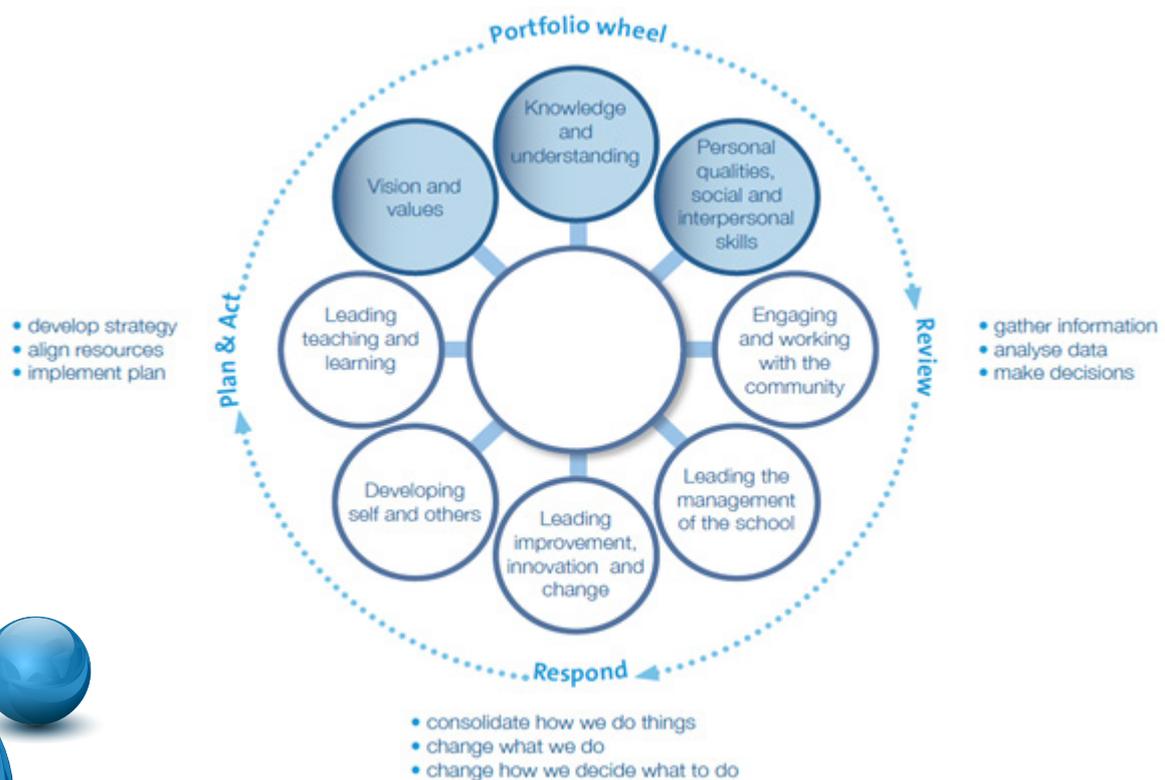
of the following crucial success factors:

- recognition that Principal Certification acknowledges the importance of the continuous professional learning journey of a principal
- recognition of the principal profession as creating and shaping its own future
- the voluntary status of Principal Certification
- the need for a portfolio platform to capture relevant, valid evidence of principal leadership in action
- the need for demonstrated validity and reliability in verifying that evidence
- the importance of quality assuring the verification process
- independence of Principals Australia Institute as the national certifying body
- recognition of Principal Certification by the community, governments and education employing authorities.

Australian Principal Standard in action

The Australian Principal Standard, describes what principals are expected to know, understand and do to achieve in their work. The Standard articulates the professional knowledge, skill and understanding that underpins effective practice and describes what is to be demonstrated to determine effective school leadership. Sykes' and Plastrik (1993) define a standard as 'a tool for rendering appropriately precise the making of judgements and decisions in a context of shared meanings and values'.

A standard in action points to how evidence of leadership practice will be gathered and how the evidence will be verified to determine whether the standard has been met. Designed by Australian principals through the consultation process, the Australian Principal Certification Program Portfolio Wheel defines the conceptual framework for the certification of accomplished principals.



The Portfolio Wheel encapsulates the three leadership requirements and five professional practices of the Australian Principal Standard around a central portfolio initiative or professional learning focus.

The Portfolio Wheel respects the Australian Principal Standard as an integrated model that exemplifies the complex and interconnected work of the principal and provides opportunity for evidence to be gathered across each of the professional practices in an integrated and cohesive way.

Alignment with the Australian Principal Standard and its core purpose will further ensure the quality and integrity of the Australian Principal Certification process.

Model of professional practice

The Australian Principal Standard “plan, act, review and respond: model of professional practice” wraps around the Portfolio Wheel in order to facilitate the steps a principal will undertake to develop a particular portfolio initiative.

Professional practices describe what effective principals do to support conditions for students to learn and for teachers to teach; the model of professional practice describes how they do it. Effective leadership requires a principal to exercise all of the professional practices in order to maximise their influence on teacher efficacy, student learning and achievement and whole school improvement.

Portfolio initiatives

The Australian Principal Certification Program will provide principals a portfolio platform to submit evidence of their leadership actions, in alignment with the Australian Principal Standard. Principals will have access to professional learning plans, coaching for critical feedback, professional learning networks, reflection journals, annotation tools, guiding questions, exemplars and support materials that outline how to identify credible, valid and relevant evidence and how to capture that evidence through the portfolio. An example portfolio initiative is set out below by way of example:

Leading and managing change is one of the core responsibilities of a principal. Demonstrate how you made a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in your school. Describe an initiative where you mobilised colleagues in your school to deal with an important need related to student learning opportunities and/or outcomes and in turn improved your professional practice and that of others. Provide quantitative and qualitative [plan, act, review, respond] evidence:

Plan	Discover	identify a need, name the initiative
	Deepen	gather and analyse data to inform a professional learning plan
Act	Develop	prepare a professional learning plan that responds to the identified need
	Drive	agilely implement and monitor the initiative
	Document	capture and annotate evidence
Review	Decipher	interpret and reflect on outcomes and document evidence seek feedback
Respond	Deliver	submit selected evidence that demonstrates the initiative led to improved professional practices and student learning outcomes

Raising the status of the principal profession through Australian Principal Certification



Principal Certification provides recognition for principals for the important and central role they play as educational leaders, providing quality student learning and quality schools. It is formal recognition that principals' leadership directly impacts on the work of teachers and the conditions for learning in schools. A rigorous, independent and highly respected Principal Certification process provides professional and public recognition of principals who demonstrate the Australian Principal Standard.

References

- Ingvarson, Dr Lawrence. (2014) Professional certification for accomplished principals – directions for Australia. Principals Australia Institute Retrieved from www.pai.edu.au/certification-research
- Sykes, G. & Plastrik, P. (1993) Standard Setting as Educational Reform. Washington: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education.

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