



OTTAWA-CARLETON  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

*Application Guide*

# Principal and Vice-Principal Selection Process



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# Introduction

This guide to the Principal and Vice-Principal Selection Process is intended to encourage and assist you in preparation for the selection process for principal and vice-principal positions at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB).

## a. Before You Apply

It is important to take the time to prepare for the selection process well in advance of the application.

For internal applicants, when making the decision to apply for a position as a principal or vice principal, you are encouraged to connect with your current supervisor(s), as noted below, who will assist you as you progress through the selection process:

- i. **Principal Candidates** — current principal and superintendent
- ii. **Vice-Principal Candidates** — current principal and superintendent

As an experienced educator, you know the mission, vision and exit outcomes of the OCDSB and the three key objectives of the 2023–2027 strategic plan. You can articulate your personal philosophies of education and describe your role in supporting student success, achievement and well-being. You are knowledgeable about district and provincial initiatives and the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF), and you have reviewed the OCDSB Principal and Vice-Principal Core Competencies.

In preparation for this role, you have reflected upon how you will address board priorities and issues that arise in the role of principal or vice-principal. You have assessed whether you are personally and professionally ready for this role. You are able to discuss your leadership practices within the context of the OLF and support this discussion with evidence from your professional career.

## b. Steps in the Selection Process

There are seven steps in the Principal/Vice-Principal selection process:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| i. Application Form                       | v. Case Study Exercise               |
| ii. Leadership Portfolio Submission       | vi. Presentation and Panel Interview |
| iii. Portfolio Review Meeting             | vii. Candidate Debriefs              |
| iv. Reference Collection and Verification |                                      |

## c. Documents

You are encouraged to visit the careers section of the OCDSB website at [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca) and review the following documents:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Principal and Vice-Principal Job Posting   | • OCDSB Principal and Vice-Principal Core Competencies |
| • Selection Process Timelines  | • Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF)                   |
| • Application Form   | • OCDSB Strategic Plan 2023–2027                       |
| • OCDSB’s Notice of Intent to Apply for the Principal / Vice - Principal Selection Process |  |

## d. Principal and Vice-Principal Core Competencies

The OCDSB has established the following core leadership competencies, allowing for better identification and development of current and future leaders in our district. These competencies will form the foundation for the OCDSB's selection processes, leadership development programs, and succession planning initiatives for principals and vice-principals, as well as other management positions at the OCDSB.

- Decision Making
- Communication
- Leading People
- Emotional Intelligence
- Ethical & Equitable Leadership
- Strategic Perspective
- Planning & Organizing
- Functional & Technical Knowledge

For more detailed information, please refer to the Principal and Vice-Principal Core Competencies posted in the careers section of the OCDSB website. Candidates will be rated on these leadership competencies with behavioural evidence from a variety of components in the selection process.

## e. Voluntary Self Identification Survey

Applicants will have the opportunity to complete a Voluntary Self Identification Survey. This data will be used to help inform the OCDSB's future recruitment practices and ensure that the P/VP Selection Process is aligned with the District's Equitable Recruitment, Hiring and Promotion Policy (P.146.HR). Applicants will be notified when the survey is available for completion.

## f. Accommodation Requirements

Persons with disabilities who need accommodations in the application or interview process should email a request to [SystemLeadershipPositions@ocdsb.ca](mailto:SystemLeadershipPositions@ocdsb.ca).

# Step 1 - Application Form

All candidates must complete the online application form provided on the OCDSB's careers website to be considered for the position of Principal or Vice-Principal. This form includes information about your current position and school, supervising principal and superintendent, contact information and leadership qualifications. Internal and external candidates will submit the same application form, however, there are a few key differences as follows:

### a. Notice of Intent to Apply Form - all applicants

As part of the application, all applicants will be required to upload the OCDSB's Notice of Intent to Apply for the Principal / Vice-Principal Selection Process. This form can be located on the OCDSB's Career Page and must be signed by your current Supervisor(s), your Principal (if applicable) and Superintendent.

This form is designed to facilitate a conversation with your current supervisor(s) surrounding your participation in the process and to give formal notice to your current Principal (if applicable) and Superintendent of your potential intent to apply for a Principal or Vice-Principal Position.

When thinking about the application process, prospective applicants should be reflecting upon previous conversations with their supervisor(s) regarding their readiness to step into a Principal or Vice-Principal position that may have been generated as part of a school visit or through the performance appraisal process.

Although this form will act as an acknowledgement, not having your current supervisor's signature on this form will not stop you from proceeding in this process. If successful through the portfolio review process, however, your current supervisor will be asked to provide a reference.

## **b. Performance Appraisal - external applicants only**

In addition to the Notice of Intent to Apply Form, external vice-principal applicants must include a copy of their most recent Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA). External principal applicants must include a copy of their most recent Principal Performance Appraisal (PPA).

If a performance appraisal is not available within the last 5 years, please submit a professional letter of reference from your current supervisor. If you have recently moved to a different school, the letter of reference may be provided by your direct supervisor within the last year. The letter of reference should be based on the revised 2013 Ontario Leadership Framework, including the Personal Leadership Resources, and the Principal and Vice-Principal Core Competencies. It will indicate your readiness to assume additional responsibilities as an instructional leader in a principal or vice-principal role, including specific details pertaining to your leadership and instructional practices.

## **Step 2 – Leadership Portfolio Submission**

You will be notified whether or not you will be advancing to the portfolio review portion of the process based on a review of your application, accompanying documents and previous performance appraisals. If you are advancing in the process, you are encouraged to enlist the support of a coach or mentor to provide guidance in developing your leadership portfolio. Your leadership portfolio must include:

- √ Resume (maximum 3 pages)
- √ Statement of Qualifications (OCT)
- √ 3 Statements of Leadership Experience (maximum 2 pages each)
  - i. Instructional Leadership
  - ii. Interpersonal Leadership
  - iii. Operational Leadership

All documentation in the leadership portfolio must be in Arial 12 font. Your leadership portfolio must be submitted by email to [SystemLeadershipPositions@ocdsb.ca](mailto:SystemLeadershipPositions@ocdsb.ca). Printed copies will not be accepted.

### **a. Resume - maximum 3 pages**

Effective resumes contain information that is relevant to the position, list the information under appropriate headings in point form, and include a chronology of relevant teaching and leadership experience. The format of the resume is at your discretion, provided it does not exceed 3 pages in Arial 12 font.

### **b. Statement of Qualifications**

A copy of your registered member information, downloaded from the Ontario College of Teachers website at [www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca) must be included. If this statement does not show the required qualifications, you must include a note explaining when and where the qualifications were completed, including the date of the practicum.

In order to apply, you must have successfully completed the following at the time of application:

- i. Principal Candidates** — Principal's Qualification Program (PQP)
- ii. Vice-Principal Candidates** — Part 1 of the Principal's Qualification Program (PQP). If you are successful in the selection process, you must complete all PQP requirements prior to your appointment date.

### **c. Statements of Leadership Experience — maximum 2 pages each**

Your statements of leadership experience should outline your leadership philosophy and practice with three specific examples where you have demonstrated the following:

- i. Instructional Leadership
- ii. Interpersonal Leadership
- iii. Operational Leadership

These statements should describe how these experiences have informed, shaped and prepared you for a principal or vice-principal role. The statements should also reflect the criteria outlined in the Ontario Leadership Framework, 2013 and the OCDSB Principal and Vice-Principal Core Competencies.

### **d. Submission Requirements**

#### **Leadership Portfolio**

Leadership portfolios must be submitted by email to [SystemLeadershipPositions@ocdsb.ca](mailto:SystemLeadershipPositions@ocdsb.ca) in accordance with the posted timelines.

The Leadership and Staff Development Team will verify that the required documents are included in the leadership portfolio and that applicants meet the minimum qualifications.

Please note that applicants who submit leadership portfolios with missing or incomplete information will be disqualified from the selection process. Additional documentation submitted, beyond what is specified as per the selection process, will not be considered.

### **e. Leadership Portfolio Evaluation**

Leadership portfolios will be evaluated by teams of superintendents and experienced principals.

## **Step 3 – Portfolio Review Meeting**

New applicants and previous applicants who did not proceed past the portfolio phase will be required to submit an updated leadership portfolio. Some returning applicants may also be required to submit an updated leadership portfolio. Therefore all candidates advancing to this stage will be notified by the Leadership and Staff Development Team, upon receipt of their application, regarding whether or not a portfolio submission is required. Portfolio meetings will be scheduled in accordance with the posted timelines.

During this meeting, assessors will ask questions to conduct a probing conversation about your resume and leadership statements. The tone of the meeting is intended to be informal and will help to inform who will proceed to the next phase of the selection process.

Following the meeting, You will be contacted by the Leadership and Staff Development Team to advise whether or not you have been selected to proceed to the next stage of the selection process. Candidates not proceeding to the next step will be offered an opportunity to attend a debriefing meeting at the conclusion of the process.

## **Step 4 – Reference Collection & Verification**

Professional references are required to verify your statements of leadership experience, demonstration of the OCDSB Principal and Vice-Principal Core Competencies, and your readiness to assume the role

of principal or vice-principal. Please select referees who can provide strong oral and written support for your application and who are familiar with your leadership experience.

Applicants who are successful in the portfolio review portion of the process will be provided the online reference form for completion. References will be reviewed by the Leadership and Staff Development Team and contacted for new applicants, and for returning applicants, who provide updated reference information.

## References

### **Principal Candidates — 6 references are required, as follows:**

- √ 2 supervisors, including your current supervisor (or within the past year if you have recently moved to a different school);
- √ 2 from community groups and parents (maximum 1 parent reference); and
- √ 2 from other staff members you have coached, influenced, led or mentored (including but not limited to teachers, early childhood educators, educational assistants, office administrators, social workers, language and literacy instructors, custodians or union-exempt employees).

### **Vice-Principal Candidates - 4 references are required, as follows:**

- √ 2 supervisors, including your current supervisor (or within the past year if you have recently moved to a different school ); and
- √ 2 from community groups, parents (maximum 1 parent reference) and other staff members you have coached, influenced, led or mentored (including but not limited to teachers, early childhood educators, educational assistants, office administrators, social workers, language and literacy instructors, custodians or union-exempt employees).

## Step 5 – Case Study Exercise

### a. Written Exercise

Candidates that were successful in the Portfolio Review portion of the process, will be invited to complete a written case study exercise. Participating candidates will receive the case study materials by email in accordance with the posted timelines and will complete the exercise outside of regular school hours.

Written submissions must be provided to the Leadership and Staff Development Team at [SystemLeadershipPositions@ocdsb.ca](mailto:SystemLeadershipPositions@ocdsb.ca) in accordance with the posted timelines.

The case study is designed to provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your decision making skills supported by critical thinking, innovation, problem solving skills and sound judgement with a district perspective. Your written communication skills will also be evaluated.

### b. Case Study Evaluation

The principal case study will be assessed by a panel of 2 superintendents and an experienced principal. The vice-principal case study will be evaluated by a panel of 2 experienced principals and a superintendent.

For this assessment, candidates will be assigned a confidential id number so the case studies can be reviewed without identifying information. In this exercise, the case studies will be reviewed anonymously and the assessor panels will not have access to candidate names when rating the core competencies.

## Step 6 – Panel Interview

The 1 hour panel interview includes the following components:

- √ Question Review (15 minutes)
- √ Presentation (15 minutes)
- √ Interview (30 minutes)

### a. Question Review

Prior to meeting with the interview panel, you will be given 15 minutes to review and prepare for the interview questions.

### b. Presentation

Please be prepared to make a short presentation (maximum 10 minutes) to the panel at the beginning of your interview using Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Slides. You may use up to 10 slides and presentation handouts are optional.

The interview panel will have an additional 5 minutes for questions.

You will be advised of the presentation topic forty-eight (48) hours in advance of your interview.

The content of your presentation will be assessed, as well as your verbal communication skills and use of technology.



### c. Interview

The interview will consist of a variety of questions and will take approximately 30 minutes. Consider the following when preparing for your interview:

- Draw upon your leadership experiences to provide specific examples;
- Include sufficient details to answer questions thoroughly;
- Refer to district policies, procedures and priorities;
- Frame your responses, where appropriate, around the OCDSB's mission, vision, exit outcomes and strategic plan;
- Use the Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) to help frame responses; and
- Demonstrate the Personal Leadership Resources of the OLF and the OCDSB Principal and Vice-Principal Core Competencies throughout your responses.

### d. Interview Panel Evaluation

- Principal Candidates** — The interview panel will be comprised of 2 superintendents and 2 experienced principals. The Associate Director of Education may also replace 1 of the superintendents for principal interviews.
- Vice-Principal Candidates** — The interview panel will be comprised of 1 superintendent (chair) and 2 experienced principals.

## Step 7 - Candidate Debriefs

Debriefing opportunities will be offered to all candidates, who participated in the process, whether or not they are successful. Debriefs will be conducted by a Superintendent, and Principal, who were present as assessors in either the Portfolio Review or Interview Portion of the process.

All candidates are encouraged to participate in the debriefing process to obtain valuable feedback regarding the portions of the process for which they participated.

# Candidate Recommendations and Placements

## a. Final Recommendations

Interview panels will make recommendations based on the results of the presentations and interviews. The Leadership and Staff Development Team will submit final recommendations to the Director's Executive Council (DEC) for approval in accordance with the posted timelines.

You will be contacted by the Leadership and Staff Development Team in accordance with the posted timelines to advise whether or not you have been selected as an intern to the eligibility list.

### Eligibility List

The Leadership and Staff Development Team maintains principal and vice-principal eligibility lists in alphabetical order for the elementary and secondary panels. Successful candidates are placed on this list and will be considered for appointment to formal leadership positions as principals or vice-principals as they become available.

Successful candidates will maintain their placement on the eligibility list for 3 years, after which time they must re-apply. The eligibility list will include successful candidates from the previous 2 years who have not yet been appointed to positions. Existing interns are considered equal to those identified as successful in a subsequent selection process.

## b. Principal and Vice-Principal Mentoring Program

First and second year principals and vice-principals are paired with mentors and will receive formal and informal learning experiences throughout the year.

The annual Principal/Vice-Principal Academy launches at the end of August with five additional sessions from September through January. Those added to the intern list, as part of the Fall selection process, will have an opportunity to participate in this program from February to June. Participation is mandatory for all new principals and vice-principals in their first year. The mentoring program includes a mix of operations and leadership training, as well as reflection and coaching.

### Principal Mentoring Program:

- i. Introduction to the Role of Principal
- ii. Managing Risk
- iii. Leading Mentally Healthy Schools
- iv. Parent and Community Engagement
- v. Leading Change

### Vice-Principal Mentoring Program:

- i. Introduction to the Role of Vice-Principal
- ii. Promoting a Safe Learning Environment
- iii. Supervision and Leadership of Staff
- iv. Improving the Instructional Program
- v. Risk Management

### **c. Appointments**

In determining principal and vice-principal placements, consideration will be given to interns' preferred school configurations, locations and schedules. However, it is important to note that final placement decisions are based on candidate suitability for the operational and leadership needs of the school.

Principal and vice-principal appointments are subject to approval by the Director's Executive Council (DEC), with notification to the Board of Trustees.

Human Resources will confirm appointments in writing and enclose a copy of the OCDSB Handbook for Principals and Vice-Principals which sets out the general terms and conditions of employment.

### **d. Probationary Period**

All new appointments are subject to a one year probationary period.



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