

Rhode Island Fast-Track Principal Internship

Reflection Tool and Tracker 2021

Introduction

“Reflective thinking turns experience into insight.” John C. Maxwell

This reflection tool is a strategically-designed guidance document for the Rhode Island Fast-Track Principal completing the required 300-hour internship. Reflection and intentional moments of metacognition are key strategies to support the application of learning as it relates to the [Rhode Island Standards for Educational Leadership](https://www.ride.ri.gov/TeachersAdministrators/Leadership.aspx#4302297-risel) (RISEL).

The aim of this tool is to accomplish the following:

* Support the user(s) to reflect on and capture evidence of their learning and application of the RISELs during their Fast-Track Principal internship.
* Elicit discussion between Fast-Track Principal mentors and mentees about current professional learning practices.
* Support the prioritization of actions to improve professional learning practices and systems.

The Importance of Reflective Practices and Metacognition

Metacognition is, put simply, the awareness of one’s own thought processes. In other words, it is the practice of thinking about thinking or identifying one’s cognitive process (Lovett, 2008). More precisely, metacognition refers to the processes used to plan, monitor, and assess one’s understanding and performance and includes a critical awareness of a) one’s thinking and learning and b) oneself as a thinker and learner (Chick, 2020).

Throughout this reflection tool, there are embedded questions and suggested activities to support metacognition in an effort to support school leaders’ abilities to transfer or adapt their learning to new contexts and tasks, which is critical when tackling adaptive challenges.

Recommended Pre-Reflection Actions

We recommend that you consider the following steps to maximize the effectiveness of this reflection and evidence gathering tool:

* **Engage multiple stakeholders.**
  + School leaders do not exist in a silo, or at least they should not. We encourage Fast-Track Principals to engage with many members of their school community to gain deeper insights, practice perspective-taking, and become more empathetic as they consider their role in supporting the continual growth of the educators and students that they will be leading and collaborating with.
* **Balance the reflection sessions between both singular professional learning activities/experiences and holistic review of leadership practices.**
  + A singular focus of reflection (e.g. efforts to support implementation of a new curriculum, professional learning on use of new technology, educator recognition, etc.) will support school leaders as they think about concrete strategies and next steps for
* **Schedule an appropriate amount of time and frequency to conduct the reflection discussion.** 
  + Set aside the necessary time (at least 60-90 minutes) for mentor and mentee to come together, understand the reflection process, identify strengths / challenges, and determine next-steps.
* **Gather available evidence before conducting the reflection.**
  + As pre-work for the session (after focus has been determined), mentee/ Fast-Track Principal should compile evidence of application of standards and questions that they would like to discuss. Evidence may vary considerably by standard, and will help to ground the conversation in actual practices and results rather than intended practices or expected results.

Conducting the Self-Reflection

* **Create or revisit norms for constructive conversations**
  + Using norms are important when seeking to build consensus around a topic like professional learning which is experienced in a variety of ways. Common norms include listening to understand, monitoring airtime, staying present throughout the meeting, and valuing honest dialogue from mentor/mentee.
* **Conduct root-cause analysis and action planning**
  + Use the prompts provided to identify high-leverage standards that can be used to improve professional learning for your school or district.
  + Use the prompts to determine who else needs to get this information, how you might present it to them, and by when this will occur.

Fast-Track Principal Reflection Tool Self-Reflection Tool

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| **Standard and Indicators** | | | |
| **Standard 1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values**  Effective educational leaders collaboratively develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and social and emotional well-being of each student.  **Effective Leaders:**   1. Collaboratively develop a mission for the district/school to promote the academic success and social and emotional well-being of each student. 2. Develop and promote a vision for the district/school, in collaboration with members of the school community, on the successful learning and development of each child and on instructional and organizational practices that promote such practices. 3. Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the district’s/ school’s culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education; high expectations and student support; equity, inclusiveness, and social justice; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement. 4. Continuously review the district’s/ school’s mission and vision and make adjustments to changing expectations and opportunities for the school, and changing needs and situations of students. 5. Develop a shared understanding of and commitment to the mission, vision, and core values within the district/school and the community. 6. Model and pursue the district’s/school’s mission, vision, and core values as fundamental in all aspects of leadership. | | | |
| **Description of Implementation Activity** | **Reflections and Next Steps** | | |
| **Date** | **Reflection on current practices** | **Notes on Possible Future Practices and Next Steps** |
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| **Standard 2. Ethics and Professional Responsibilities**  Effective educational leaders act ethically and in accordance with professional standards to promote each student’s academic success and social and emotional well-being.  **Effective Leaders:**   1. Act ethically and professionally in personal conduct, relationships with others, decision making, stewardship of the school’s resources, and all aspects of school leadership. 2. Act according to and promote the professional traits of integrity, fairness, transparency, trust, collaboration, perseverance, learning, and continuous improvement. 3. Place the needs of children at the center of all educational decision making and accept responsibility for each student’s academic and social and emotional success. 4. Safeguard and promote the values of democracy, individual freedom and responsibility, equity, social justice, community, and diversity. 5. Lead with interpersonal and communication skill, social-emotional insight, and understanding of all students’ and staff members’ backgrounds and cultures. 6. Provide moral direction for the district/school community and promote expected ethical and professional behavior among all staff and district/school community members. | | | |
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| **Standard 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness**  Effective educational leaders ensure equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and social and emotional well-being.  **Effective Leaders:**   1. Act with cultural competence and responsiveness in all interactions, decision-making, and practice and ensure that each student, staff member, and school community member is treated fairly, respectfully, and with an understanding of culture and context. 2. Recognize, respect, and employ each student’s strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning. 3. Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success. 4. Develop student policies and address student behavior in a positive, fair, and unbiased manner. 5. Confront and challenge institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, socio-economic status, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status. 6. Prepare students to live productively in and contribute to the diverse cultural contexts of a global society. 7. Consider and address matters of equity and cultural responsiveness in all aspects of leadership | | | | | | | | | |
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| **Standard 4.** Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment  Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student’s academic success and social and emotional well-being.  **Effective Leaders:**   1. Implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally responsive. 2. Align and focus systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment within and vertically across grade levels to promote student academic success, love of learning, the identities and habits of learners, and healthy sense of self. 3. Facilitate instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of student learning and development, effective pedagogy, and individual student needs. d. Ensure instructional practices that are intellectually challenging, authentic to student experiences, recognize student strengths, and are differentiated and personalized. 4. Promote and facilitate the effective use of technology in service of teaching and learning. 5. Develop and utilize multiple valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of learning and development and technical standards of measurement to monitor student progress and improve instruction. 6. Use assessment data appropriately and with technical limitations to monitor student progress and improve instruction. | | | | | | | | | |
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| **Standard 5. Community of Care and Support for Students**  Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and the social and emotional well-being of each student.  **Effective Leaders:**   1. Build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student. 2. Create and sustain a school environment in which each student is known, accepted and valued, trusted and respected, cared for, and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school community. 3. Develop and lead coherent systems of academic and social supports, services, extracurricular activities, and accommodations to meet the range of learning needs of each student. 4. Endorse and foster adult-student, student-peer, and school-community relationships that value and support academic learning and positive social and emotional development. 5. Cultivate and reinforce student engagement and leadership and positive student behavior. 6. Infuse the district’s/school’s learning environment with the cultures and languages of the community. | | | | | | | | | |
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| **Standard 6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel**  Effective educational leaders, in collaboration with stakeholders, develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.  **Effective Leaders:**   1. Recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and ensure their development into an educationally effective faculty. 2. Plan for and manage staff turnover and succession, providing opportunities for effective induction and mentoring of personnel. 3. Develop teachers’ and staff members’ professional knowledge, skills, and instructional practice through differentiated opportunities for learning and growth, guided by an understanding of adult professional learning and development of adults as professional and ongoing learners. 4. Deliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid, research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers’ and staff members’ knowledge, skills, and practice. 5. Empower and motivate teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement. 6. Develop the leadership capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and for other professionals in the district. 7. Promote the personal and professional health, well-being, and work-life balance of faculty and staff. 8. Tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement, while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. | | | |
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| **Standard 7.** **Professional Community for Teachers and Staff**  Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and social and emotional wellbeing.  **Effective Leaders:**   1. Support a workplace culture that is open, productive, caring, and trusting. 2. Develop a culture for professional staff that promotes the improvement of practice through research and effective professional learning and promotes high levels of student learning. 3. Empower and entrust teachers and staff with collective responsibility for meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student, pursuant to the mission, vision, and core values of the district/school. 4. Establish and sustain a professional culture of engagement and commitment to shared vision, goals, and objectives pertaining to the education of the whole child; high expectations for professional work; ethical and equitable practice; trust and open communication; collaboration, collective efficacy, and continuous individual and organizational learning and improvement. 5. Ensure mutual accountability among teachers and other professional staff for each student’s success and the effectiveness of the school as a whole. 6. Design and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff. 7. Provide opportunities for collaborative examination of practice, collegial feedback, and collective learning. h. Enable faculty-initiated improvement of programs and practices. | | | |
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| **Standard 8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community**  Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.  **Effective Leaders:**   1. Are approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community. 2. Create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit of students. 3. Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the district/school, students, needs, problems, challenges and accomplishments. 4. Maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the district/school. 5. Create means for the school community to partner with families to support student learning in and out of school. 6. Understand, value, and employ the community’s cultural, intellectual, and political resources to promote student learning and school empowerment. 7. Openly advocate for the district and school, and for the importance of education and student needs and priorities with families and the community. 8. Build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning. | | | |
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| **Standard 9. Operations and Management**  Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.  **Effective Leaders:**   1. Institute, manage, and monitor operations and administrative systems that promote the mission and vision of the district/ school. 2. Strategically manage staff resources, assigning and scheduling educators and staff to roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address each student’s learning needs. 3. Acquire, and manage fiscal, physical environment, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning; professional capacity; and family and community engagement. 4. Act responsibly and in an ethical manner with the district’s/ school’s monetary and nonmonetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting, spending and accounting practices. 5. Protect teachers’ and other staff members’ work and learning from disruption and create an environment where students are able to learn. 6. Employ systems to improve the quality and efficiency of operations and management. 7. Develop and maintain data and communication systems to deliver actionable information for classroom and school improvement. 8. Know, comply with, and help the district/ school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success. 9. Develop productive professional relationships with the district office staff, school staff, and the school board so as to promote effective transitions and student success. 10. Develop and administer systems for fair and equitable management of conflict among students, faculty and staff, leaders, families, and community. 11. Manage governance processes and internal and external politics toward achieving the district’s/school’s mission and vision. | | | |
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| **Standard 10. School Improvement**  Effective educational leaders, in collaboration with stakeholders, develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.  **Effective Leaders:**   1. Continuously seek to make school more effective for each student, teachers and staff, families, and the community. 2. Use methods of continuous improvement to achieve the vision, fulfill the mission, and promote the core values of the school. 3. Prepare the district/school and community for improvement, promoting readiness, an imperative for improvement, instilling mutual commitment and accountability, and developing the knowledge, skills, and motivation to succeed in improvement. 4. Employ situation ally appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental, adaptive approaches and attention to different phases of implementation. 5. Assess and develop the capacity of staff to determine the value and applicability of emerging educational trends and the findings of research for the school and its improvement 6. Adopt a system’s perspective and promote coherence among improvement efforts and all aspects of the district/school organization, programs, and services. 7. Develop technically appropriate systems of data collection, management, analysis, and use, connecting as needed to the district office and external partners for support in planning, implementation, monitoring, feedback and evaluation 8. Manage uncertainty, risk, competing initiatives, and politics of change with courage, resilience and perseverance. Openly communicate the need for the process of and outcomes of improvement efforts. 9. Develop and promote systems of shared leadership among teachers and staff for inquiry, experimentation, innovation, and initiating and implementing improvement. | | | |
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Additional Resources

**Directions:** Please reference the following questions to spur deeper discussion during your moments of reflection with your mentor.

1. [Strategic Discussions Between Supervising Administrators and Principals](https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Teachers-Administrators/Educator%20Effectiveness/Principals%20and%20CTC%20Directors/Guiding%20Questions%20-%20Supervising%20Admins%20Principals.pdf) (*Aligns to the Danielson Framework*)
2. [*The Principal 50: Critical Leadership Questions for Inspiring Schoolwide Excellence*](http://www.ascd.org/Publications/Books/Overview/The-Principal-50.aspx)
3. [*End of Year Self-Reflection Questions*](https://principal-matters.com/2017/04/21/twenty-questions-the-administrators-version/)
4. [*SCHOOL LEADER Self-Reflection Tool REFLECTING ON THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL*](https://transformingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/School-Leader-Self-Reflection-Tool_vF.pdf)

References

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* Lovett, M. C. (2008). *Teaching metacognition* [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from <http://web.uri.edu/teach/files/Metacognition-ELI.pdf> (Accessed, February 25, 2021)
* Principal Matters! [*Twenty Questions: The Administrator’s Version*](https://principal-matters.com/2017/04/21/twenty-questions-the-administrators-version/) (accessed February 25,2021)
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