Wallace Foundation State Partners Professional Learning Community

In partnership with the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Education Development Center (EDC)

Alabama Principal Leadership Development System (APLDS)

Dr. Anna Shepherd-Jones, Alabama State Department of Education

Alabama Achieves

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

The Importance of School Leadership

"Principals ***really*** matter. Indeed, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership."

(Grissom et al. , 2021)

Effective school leaders impact…

- Student achievement and growth
- School climate
- Quality of teaching and learning
- Attracting and retaining effective teachers
- School improvement efforts

(Darling-Hammond et al., 2024; Grissom et al., 2021; Leithwood et al., 2004)

Strategic investments in leadership…

- No. of eligible AL principals = 1,401
- No. of eligible AL assistant principals = 1,526
- No. of AL teachers = 50,047
- No. of AL students = 717,473

(2024-25 school year)

Purpose of the Law

The School Principal Leadership and Mentoring Act (Act 2023 - 340) was passed in June 2023 to:

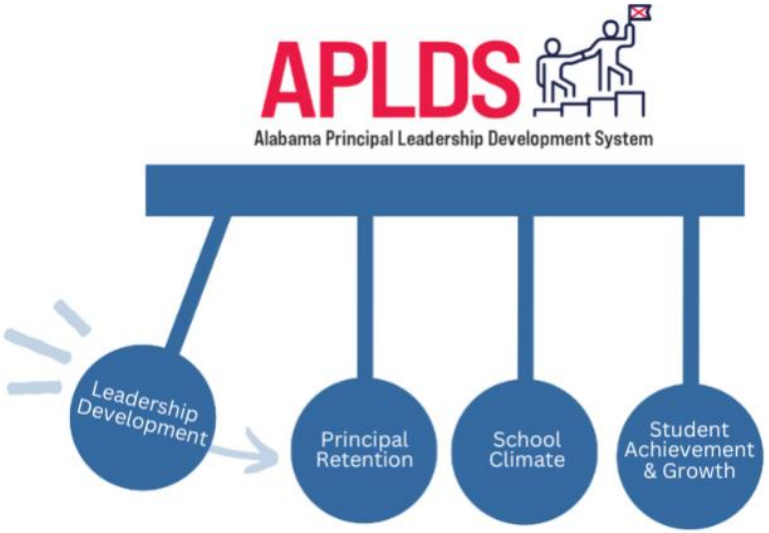
1. Create and implement the Alabama Principal Leadership Development System for public K-12 education
2. Provide for the creation and implementation of a mentoring program for new principals and a continuing professional learning program for principals and assistant principals
3. Provide annual stipends for principals and assistant principals who satisfactorily complete the program requirements of the Alabama Principal Leadership Development System

Program Goal

Increase the effectiveness of school administrators resulting in improved academic outcomes for all students

Measures of Success

- Principal retention
- School climate
- Academic achievement and growth



How to Increase Principal Effectiveness

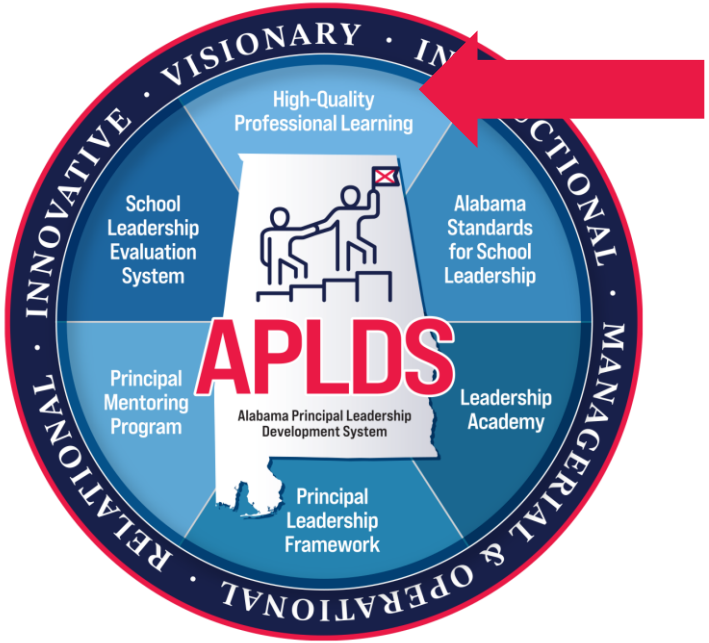
Use research about leadership skills and behaviors that are associated with better outcomes to create leader support systems

(Grissom et al. , 2021)

APLDS

Alabama Principal Leadership Development System

Program Components



- Updated standards for school administrators
- A research-based principal leadership framework aligned with the standards
- High-quality professional learning for principals and assistant principals
- Principal mentoring program for new principals
- Evaluation system for school administrators
- Year-long leadership academy for principals

Program Design Team

the group of individuals appointed to design the Alabama Principal Leadership Development System

Based on appointments from the State Superintendent of Education, Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS), School Superintendents of Alabama (SSA), Alabama Education Association (AEA), Alabama Association of School Boards (AASB), Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), A+ Education Partnership, and the Governor, the team included:

- Superintendents
- District Administrators
- Principals
- Assistant Principals
- Teachers
- School Board Members
- Higher Education Faculty
- Governor's Office Cabinet & Staff Members
- Professional Organization Members (A+ Education Partnership)

Principal Act Timeline

APLDS Evaluation System (PLP)
At Least 30 APLDS Clock Hours
New Principal Mentoring

and
APLDS Evaluation System
(entire system)

and
Alabama Leadership Academy

2023

2024-25

2027-28

2029-30

Legislation

Alabama Standards for School Leadership
Alabama Principal Leadership Framework
Alabama New Principal Mentoring Program

APLDS Evaluation System
Alabama Leadership Academy

Principal Pipeline Programs
Targeted Support

Alabama Standards for School Leadership

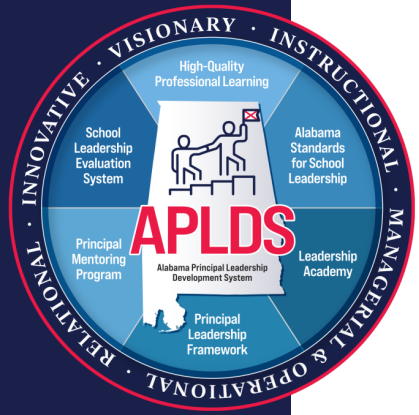
Alabama Standards for School Leadership define the nature, quality of work, and expectations that current research and best practices indicate are critical to student learning and other positive school outcomes. The Standards are organized around the 5 Domains of Principal Effectiveness with a series of indicators which elaborate the practices that are necessary to meet the Standard.

5 Domains of Principal Effectiveness

Alabama Standards for School Leadership

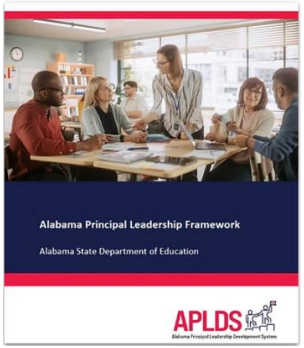
Process

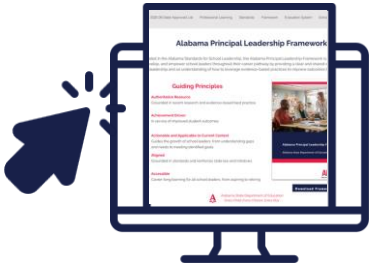
- Met with Missouri SDE, principals, and principal coaches
- Reviewed national standards and other state leadership standards, current state leadership standards, and research (e.g., Grissom et al., 2021)
- Drafted standards and opened for public hearing and comment
- Reviewed comments and finalized recommendations
- Approved by SDE leadership and state board
- Code change (Rule 290-4-3-.04)
- Built resources and facilitated sessions to understand standards
- Used standards to guide the development of other APLDS program components
- Met with ALSDE Education Certification and Alabama Association of Professors of Educational Leadership (AAPEL); EPPs are currently aligning coursework to standards



Alabama Principal Leadership Framework

- Grounded in the Alabama Standards for School Leadership
- Playbook to equip, develop, and empower school leaders throughout their career pathway
- Provides a clear and shared vision for principal leadership and an understanding of how to leverage evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for all students





AlabamaPrincipals.org

Alabama Principal Leadership Framework

Section	Definition
What do I need to know?	Key concepts a leader needs to know for successful demonstration of the indicator
What do I need to do?	Key actions and skills involved in successful demonstration of the indicator
Where am I now?	Refer to the **Continuum of Practice Descriptors** to guide self-reflection about current understanding and practice **Continuum of Practice Descriptors** Levels of performance with descriptions related to the areas addressed in the indicator • ***Emerging Leader:*** The school administrator has shown evidence of an understanding of the indicator. • ***Developing Leader:*** The school administrator has shown evidence of beginning to demonstrate the indicator. • ***Effective Leader:*** The school administrator has shown evidence of consistent progress in demonstrating the indicator. • ***Transformational Leader:*** The school administrator has shown evidence of exceeding the expectations of the indicator.
Where do I want to be?	Refer to the **Continuum of Practice Descriptors** to discuss the following with supervisors and peers: • Areas of strength and opportunities for growth • Appropriate areas of focus and goals for the school year • Progress monitoring and actionable feedback regarding performance improvement
How will I get there?	**Example Strategies** Example school administrator actions to grow understanding and practices in the areas addressed by the indicator **Example Evidence of Growth** Example work products and artifacts that demonstrate evidence of growth in performance and practice **Examples of School Administrator Supervisor Support** Example supervisor actions to support the growth of school administrators and build their leadership capacity in the areas addressed by the indicator **Example Strategies in the Appendix** Reference list of resources, tools, or protocols included in the Appendix to further support school administrator growth

Standard

Indicator

Continuum of Practice

Visionary Leadership: Indicator 1a Map

Standard 1. Visionary Leadership
Effective visionary leaders facilitate the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a shared vision that guides the learning of every student.

a) Collaboratively develops a clear, measurable, and shared vision and school improvement plan based on the needs of all students identified through multiple sources of data.

What do I need to know?

- Vision for teaching and learning
- Alabama Continuous Improvement Plan (ACIP)

What do I need to do?

- Collaboratively develop the vision for teaching and learning
- Establish a common language for discussing the vision for teaching and learning
- Collaboratively analyze multiple sources of data (student learning data, perception data, process data, demographic data) to identify critical needs
- Collaboratively develop the ACIP based on critical needs
- Ensure clear, measurable goals with specific timelines focused on critical needs

Where am I now? Where do I want to be?

An **emerging** leader *understands...*	A **developing** leader *begins to...*	An **effective** leader *consistently...*	A **transformational** leader *exceeds by...*
• The need to obtain feedback from staff to inform the development of the shared vision for teaching and learning. • The need to adopt the previous school improvement plan or create one and seek feedback.	• Communicate with staff the need to establish a common language for discussing the vision for teaching and learning. • Understand the importance of collaborative revision or development of a clear, measurable, and shared vision and school improvement plan. • Use limited data or misaligned data to inform decision making or strategic planning.	• Engages and supports staff in establishing a common language for discussing the vision for teaching and learning. • Collaboratively revises or develops a clear, measurable, and shared vision and school improvement plan based on the needs of all students identified through multiple sources of data. • Uses multiple sources of targeted and aligned data to inform decision making and strategic planning.	• Engaging a group of stakeholders with relevant and diverse perspectives to collaboratively revise and develop a clear, measurable, and shared vision and school improvement plan. • Sharing and analyzing multiple sources of relevant qualitative and quantitative data with stakeholders to inform the development of both the vision and school improvement plan with a significant impact.

How will I get there?

Moving from an ***Emerging*** to a ***Developing*** Leader	Moving from a ***Developing*** to an ***Effective*** Leader	Moving from an ***Effective*** to a ***Transformational*** Leader	Sustaining ***Transformational*** Leadership
Focus on *awareness* and *application* **Example Strategies:** • Review example visions for teaching and learning and vision-setting processes (e.g., The Wallace Foundation Principal Practices	Focus on *intentionality* and *consistency* **Example Strategies:** • Attend ACIP professional learning with school leadership team	Focus on *shared leadership* and *capacity building* **Example Strategies:** • Establish a school leadership team*(team includes members from the faculty and other stakeholder groups)	Focus on *sustainability* **Example Considerations for Continued Growth and Impact:**

APLDS
Alabama Principal Leadership Development System

Alabama Principal Leadership Framework

Example

Standard 2. Instructional Leadership

Effective instructional leaders ensure intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curricula, instruction, and assessment while facilitating productive collaboration and professional learning to drive growth and achievement for all students.

e) Analyzes and acts upon multiple sources of student, school, and district-level data to improve learning for all students, with an emphasis on closing achievement gaps.

What do I need to know?	What do I need to do?
• Academic data (standardized assessments, universal screeners, diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring, classroom formative/summative assessments) • District, school, subgroup, and student-level performance data • Problem-Solving Teams (PST)	• Examine and act upon academic data to improve tiered instruction • Support PST in efforts to address barriers to optimal learning and growth for students by identifying problems that emerge as interferences to learning and developing solutions to address interferences • Emphasize measurable goals, ongoing feedback, targeted intervention, progress monitoring, strategic decision making, and inspiring action based on academic data • Ensure documentation of PST meetings and student progress in state-approved dashboard (e.g., PowerSchool)

Where am I now? Where do I want to be?

An **emerging** leader *understands*...	A **developing** leader *begins to*...	An **effective** leader *consistently*...	A **transformational** leader *exceeds* by...
• The need to analyze multiple sources of student, school, and district-level data.	• Analyze multiple sources of student, school, and district-level data to improve learning for students.	• Analyzes and acts upon multiple sources of student, school, and district-level data to improve learning for all students, with an emphasis on closing achievement gaps.	• Empowering all staff in the analysis of multiple sources of student, school, and district level data to celebrate success and identify challenges that need to be addressed to positively impact achievement gaps. • Building the capacity of all staff to improve learning for all students by developing plans to act upon school and community factors that need to be addressed to positively impact achievement gaps.

How will I get there?			
Moving from an ***Emerging*** to a ***Developing*** Leader	Moving from a ***Developing*** to an ***Effective*** Leader	Moving from an ***Effective*** to a ***Transformational*** Leader	Sustaining ***Transformational*** Leadership
Focus on *awareness* and *application*	Focus on *intentionality* and *consistency*	Focus on *shared leadership* and *capacity building*	Focus on *sustainability*
Example Strategies: • Identify and gather academic data (e.g., AIM Student Data tile, PowerSchool Analytics & Insights) • Analyze overall academic data to identify areas that meet, exceed, or are below expectations; determine patterns within the data (e.g., similarities/ differences in grade levels, content areas, individual classes) • Determine goals for overall growth and achievement based on academic data analysis **Example Evidence of Growth:** • Documentation of data analysis (e.g., summary of findings, notes, graphs) • Written goals for overall growth and achievement	**Example Strategies:** • Analyze multiple sources of academic data at the overall, subgroup, and individual student levels; make a plan of action based on data analysis • Attend teacher team meetings around student learning data and support the use of protocols for the discussions* • Be present and provide guidance during grade level/content area and PST meetings • School teams use student learning data and instructional strategy data to design fluid instructional groupings that respond to student need • Provide teachers with resources to support their differentiated instructional planning and implementation (e.g., Differentiated Instructional Guides, AL-MTSS Accommodations Guide, ACCESS) **Example Evidence of Growth:** • Yearly PST meeting schedule, agendas, sign-in sheets, and monitoring notes • Written student learning goals for disproportionately underperforming groups and progress toward meeting goals • School master schedule reflects dedicated time for differentiated instruction (e.g., general, gifted, supplemental, special education services) • Differentiated lesson plans • Student intervention plans and progress monitoring data	**Example Strategies:** • School teams analyze multiple sources of student learning data at the school, subgroup, and individual student level to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement; growth and success are celebrated • School teams conduct an inventory of current resources and initiatives to determine whether changes need to be made to maximize student learning and close achievement gaps • School teams complete a master schedule reflection tool to identify areas for improvement and build in specific targeted time for intervention, meeting, and communication as needed (e.g., page 81, PST Guidance Manual) **Example Evidence of Growth:** • School team meeting notes of fluid instructional groupings in response to student learning data and instructional strategy data in addition to notes about how students will be supported based on needs (e.g., student action plans) • Written communication plan for celebrating growth and success* • Documentation of resource and initiative inventory • Documentation of master schedule reflection tool	**Example Considerations for Continued Growth and Impact:** • Facilitate a school/community action team to engage in the analysis of student data and align supports that can be implemented between community partners and school personnel to improve student academic and personal wellness outcomes • Collect data and evidence of transformational leadership practices • Continuously monitor data and evidence for potential problems and take immediate action accordingly (e.g., strengthen processes, implement new processes)

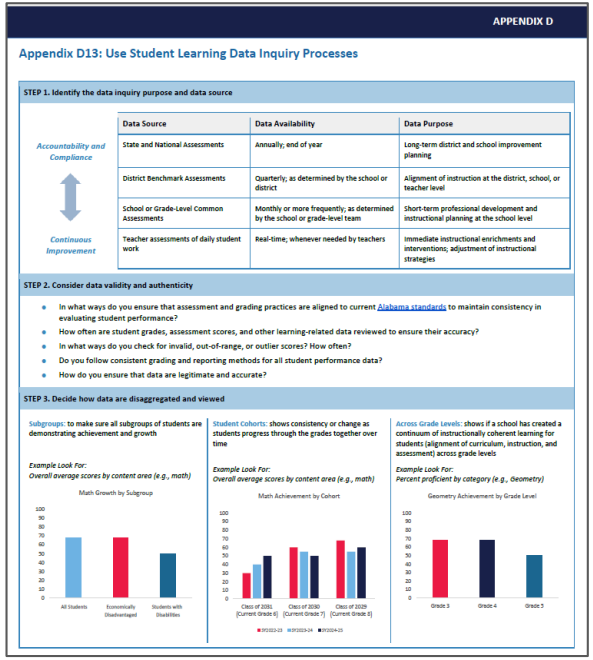
Note: Strategies with an asterisk (*) include a resource in the Appendix.

Examples of How School Administrator Supervisors Can Build Leadership Capacity

- Support the development of a common language around academic data
- Engage school administrators and teacher leaders in a districtwide data leadership team, provide district-level data, and model how to analyze and respond to data
- Engage in data discussion with school administrators about their individual building-level data and their implications and suggested responses

Example Strategies in the Appendix

Appendix D6: Develop a Communication Plan
Appendix D13: Use Student Learning Data Inquiry Protocols
Appendix D15: Manage a Multi-Tiered System of Supports



APPENDIX D

Appendix D13: Use Student Learning Data Inquiry Processes

STEP 1. Identify the data inquiry purpose and data source

Accountability and Compliance ↕ *Continuous Improvement*

Data Source	Data Availability	Data Purpose
State and National Assessments	Annually; end of year	Long-term district and school improvement planning
District Benchmark Assessments	Quarterly; as determined by the school or district	Alignment of instruction at the district, school, or teacher level
School or Grade-Level Common Assessments	Monthly or more frequently; as determined by the school or grade-level team	Short-term professional development and instructional planning at the school level
Teacher assessments of daily student work	Real-time; whenever needed by teachers	Immediate instructional enrichments and interventions; adjustment of instructional strategies

STEP 2. Consider data validity and authenticity

- In what ways do you ensure that assessment and grading practices are aligned to current Alabama standards to maintain consistency in evaluating student performance?
- How often are student grades, assessment scores, and other learning-related data reviewed to ensure their accuracy?
- In what ways do you check for invalid, out-of-range, or outlier scores? How often?
- Do you follow consistent grading and reporting methods for all student performance data?
- How do you ensure that data are legitimate and accurate?

STEP 3. Decide how data are disaggregated and viewed

Subgroups: to make sure all subgroups of students are demonstrating achievement and growth

Example Look For:
Overall average scores by content area (e.g., math)

Math Growth by Subgroup
All Students | Economically Disadvantaged | Students with Disabilities

Student Cohorts: shows consistency or change as students progress through the grades together over time

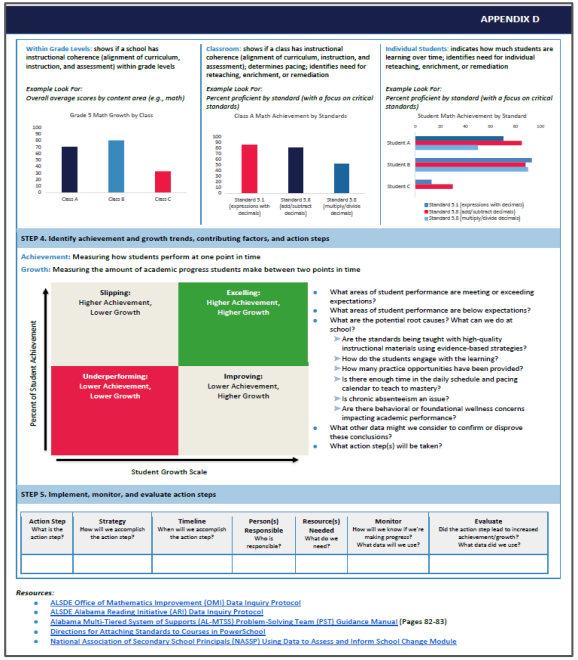
Example Look For:
Overall average scores by content area (e.g., math)

Math Achievement by Cohort
Class of 2031 (Current Grade 6) | Class of 2030 (Current Grade 7) | Class of 2029 (Current Grade 8)
SY2022-23 SY2023-24 SY2024-25

Across Grade Levels: shows if a school has created a continuum of instructionally coherent learning for students (alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment) across grade levels

Example Look For:
Percent proficient by category (e.g., Geometry)

Geometry Achievement by Grade Level
Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5



APPENDIX D

Within Grade Levels: shows if a school has instructional coherence (alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment) within grade levels

Example Look For:
Overall average scores by content area (e.g., math)

Grade 5 Math Growth by Class
Class A | Class B | Class C

Classroom: shows if a class has instructional coherence (alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment), determines pacing; identifies need for reteaching, enrichment, or remediation

Example Look For:
Percent proficient by standard (with a focus on critical standards)

Class A Math Achievement by Standards
Standard 5.1 (expressions with decimals) | Standard 5.8 (add/subtract decimals) | Standard 5.8 (multiply/divide decimals)

Individual Students: indicates how much students are learning over time; identifies need for individual reteaching, enrichment, or remediation

Example Look For:
Percent proficient by standard (with a focus on critical standards)

Student Math Achievement by Standard
Student A | Student B | Student C
Standard 5.1 (expressions with decimals)
Standard 5.8 (add/subtract decimals)
Standard 5.8 (multiply/divide decimals)

STEP 4. Identify achievement and growth trends, contributing factors, and action steps

Achievement: Measuring how students perform at one point in time
Growth: Measuring the amount of academic progress students make between two points in time

Percent of Student Achievement
Slipping: Higher Achievement, Lower Growth
Excelling: Higher Achievement, Higher Growth
Underperforming: Lower Achievement, Lower Growth
Improving: Lower Achievement, Higher Growth
Student Growth Scale

- What areas of student performance are meeting or exceeding expectations?
- What areas of student performance are below expectations?
- What are the potential root causes? What can we do at school?
  - Are the standards being taught with high-quality instructional materials using evidence-based strategies?
  - How do the students engage with the learning?
  - How many practice opportunities have been provided?
  - Is there enough time in the daily schedule and pacing calendar to teach to mastery?
  - Is chronic absenteeism an issue?
  - Are there behavioral or foundational wellness concerns impacting academic performance?
- What other data might we consider to confirm or disprove these conclusions?
- What action step(s) will be taken?

STEP 5. Implement, monitor, and evaluate action steps

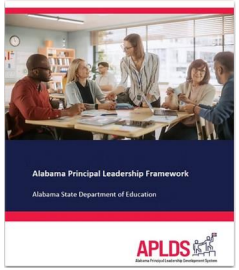
Action Step What is the action step?	Strategy How will we accomplish the action step?	Timeline When will we accomplish the action step?	Person(s) Responsible Who is responsible?	Resource(s) Needed What do we need?	Monitor How will we know if we're making progress? What data will we use?	Evaluate Did the action step lead to increased achievement/growth? What data did we use?

Resources:
- ALSDE Office of Mathematics Improvement (OMI) Data Inquiry Protocol
- ALSDE Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) Data Inquiry Protocol
- Alabama Multi-Tiered System of Supports (AL-MTSS) Problem-Solving Team (PST) Guidance Manual (Pages 82-83)
- Directions for Attaching Standards to Courses in PowerSchool
- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Using Data to Assess and Inform School Change Module

Alabama Principal Leadership Framework

ALABAMA SCHOOL CLIMATE MODEL

Based on the U.S. Department of Education School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) School Climate Model created in partnership with National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)



Appendix E
pages 119-133

Appendix E5: Alabama School Climate Survey Alignment

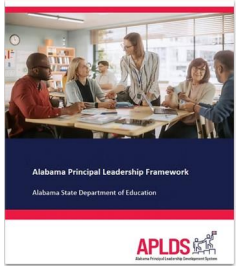
Engagement	Administrator Survey Item	Instructional Staff Survey Item	Student (Grades 5-12) Survey Item	Family Survey Item
Relationships	E1. Staff let students know when they do something well or make improvements.	E1. Staff let students know when they do something well or make improvements.	E1. My teachers let me know when I do something well or improve.	
			E2. Adults at the school are there for me when I need to talk with them.	
	E2. If a student has done something well or makes improvements, staff contact his/her parents.	E2. If a student has done something well or makes improvements, staff contact his/her parents.		E1. If my child does something well or makes improvements, I usually hear about it from the school.
	E3. If a student is absent, there is a teacher or some other adult at the school who will notice and follow up on the absence.	E3. If a student is absent, there is a teacher or some other adult at the school who will notice and follow up on the absence.	E3. If I am absent, there is a teacher or some other adult at the school who will say something and check on me.	
	E4. Staff at my school teach positive conflict resolution strategies to students.	E4. Staff at this school teach positive conflict resolution strategies to students.	E4. Students at my school get along well with each other.	

Alabama Principal Leadership Framework

Role	Use
Alabama State Department of Education *(Offices, Coaches, Staff, Task Forces, Stakeholder Teams, Legislature, etc.)*	• Establish commonly understood standards and expectations for school administrators across the state • Build connections between offices and currently existing and future legislation, guidance, and frameworks (Alabama Numeracy Act, Alabama Literacy Act, etc.) • Develop and implement the APLDS Evaluation System, Alabama Leadership Academy, and High-Quality Professional Learning opportunities for leadership development • Guide efforts to support district and school leadership in identifying, recruiting, hiring, and fostering growth of current and future employees
District Leadership *(Superintendents, CSFOs, Human Resource Leaders, Professional Learning Leaders, Board of Education Members, School Administrator Mentors/Coaches, Stakeholder Teams, etc.)*	• Establish commonly understood standards and expectations for school administrators across the district • Guide leaders to connect and lead local implementation of currently existing and future legislation, guidance, and frameworks (Alabama Numeracy Act, Alabama Literacy Act, etc.) • Align, develop, and implement professional learning opportunities and individualized one-on-one support (coaching, mentoring) offered to school administrators • Guide self-reflection practices for school administrators • Provide actionable feedback for growth and evaluation to school-level administrators • Develop, refine, and progress monitor school administrator goals and professional growth plans • Guide efforts to identify, recruit, and hire future school administrators
School Leadership *(Principals, Assistant Principals, School Leadership Teams, Teacher Leaders, etc.)*	• Establish commonly understood standards and expectations for school administrators within the school and for teacher leaders • Connect and lead school-level implementation of current and future legislation, guidance, and frameworks (Alabama Numeracy Act, Alabama Literacy Act, etc.) • Guide personal self-reflection practices from understanding gaps and needs to progress monitoring and meeting identified goals • Align, develop, and implement professional learning opportunities and individualized one-on-one support (coaching, mentoring) offered to school administrators under supervision (e.g., assistant principals), school leadership team members, and teacher leaders • Guide self-reflection practices for school administrators under supervision (e.g., assistant principals), school leadership team members, and teacher leaders • Provide actionable feedback for growth and evaluation to school administrators under supervision (e.g., assistant principals) • Develop, refine, and progress monitor goals and professional growth plans of school administrators under supervision (e.g., assistant principals), school leadership team members, and teacher leaders • Guide efforts to identify, recruit, and hire school leaders
Aspiring Leaders	• Develop an understanding of standards and expectations for school administrators • Understand school- or classroom-level implementation of currently existing and future legislation, guidance, and frameworks (Alabama Numeracy Act, Alabama Literacy Act, etc.) • Guide personal self-reflection practices and determine readiness for school administrator leadership • Develop, refine, and progress monitor personal and school leadership team goals and growth plans • Select educational opportunities for leadership and inform possible career paths
Institutes of Higher Education	• Align preparation program curricula and learning experiences to the Alabama Standards for School Leadership • Guide program development to teach aspiring leaders how to lead school-level implementation of legislation, guidance, and frameworks (Alabama Numeracy Act, Alabama Literacy Act, etc.)

Example Uses

- Establish commonly understood standards and expectations for school administrators
- Align, develop, and implement professional learning opportunities and individualized one-on-one support (coaching, mentoring) offered to school administrators
- Guide self-reflection practices for school administrators
- Provide actionable feedback for growth and evaluation to school-level administrators
- Guide efforts to identify, recruit, and hire future school administrators

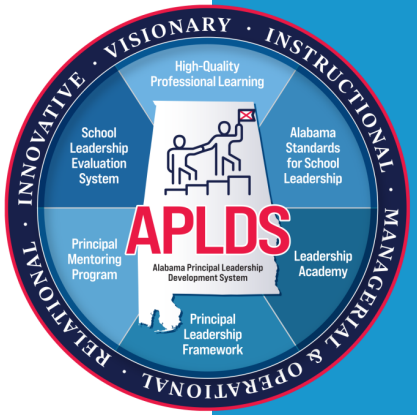


Page 3

Alabama Principal Leadership Framework

Process

- Surveyed district and school leaders in spring 2024 to identify focus areas in need of greater support
- Collaborated with other sections of the SDE to discuss alignment of initiatives, strategies, and resources
- Partnered with the Comprehensive Center Network (formerly Region 7 CC)
- Shared hard copies and website link with professional organizations, EPPs, other SDE sections, superintendents, district leaders, principals, and assistant principals
- Developed, facilitated, and approved professional learning experiences aligned with the framework
- Co-planned and facilitated with district leaders based on their priorities and needs



High-Quality Professional Learning

- Targeted school leadership development that improves the effectiveness of school administrators in elevating student achievement through professional study
- Comprehensive, sustained, job-embedded, and collaborative approach to learning
- Aligned with the Alabama Standards for School Leadership
- Aligned with the Alabama Principal Leadership Framework
- Aligned with the Alabama Standards for Professional Learning
  (adapted from the Learning Forward Standards)

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP COLLABORATIVE

Session 1 (February 2026)
Place the Ladder: The Middle Way to Instructional Leadership

Session 2 (March 2026)
Teacher Talent and Retention through Teams and Temperament

Session 3 (April 2026)
Principals as Talent Architects: Mastering Feedback, Evidence, and Adult Development

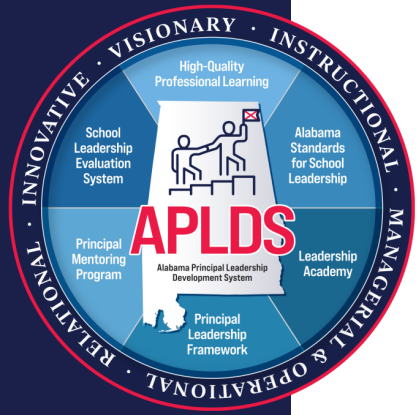
High-Quality Professional Learning

Process

- Conducted the Alabama Leadership Landscape (ALL) survey in Fall 2025 to learn about leader learning priorities and preferences (e.g., modalities, incentives) according to principals, assistant principals, and their superintendents
- Analyzed ALL survey results by professional position, years of career experience, community type (rural, suburban, urban), school type (elementary, middle, high), sense of efficacy
- Piloted cohort model with a district before statewide implementation
- Reviewed all professional learning experiences being submitted for APLDS credit
- Maintained a published list of state-approved HQPL

Next Steps

- Develop a APLDS Framework video series to build school administrator knowledge through rigorous, yet convenient asynchronous, online professional learning; content is directly aligned with the APLDS Framework's "emerging" performance level which emphasizes knowledge and understanding about administrative law and best practices
- Continue to be responsive to needs based on performance evaluation results and professional learning evaluation results (Guskey, 2026)



Alabama New Principal Mentoring Program

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools (CLAS) partner to provide all new principals in the state with one-on-one mentoring support from a trained mentor.

What it is

A long-term relationship between a new principal mentee and a trained principal mentor

Purpose

Fosters the professional, academic, or personal development of the principal mentee

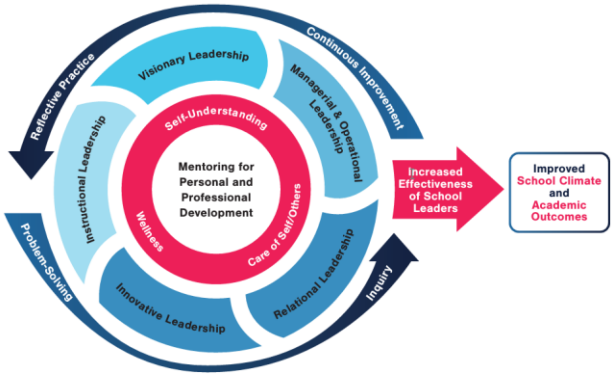
Duration

Two consecutive years for all new principals

Alabama New Principal Mentoring Program

Process

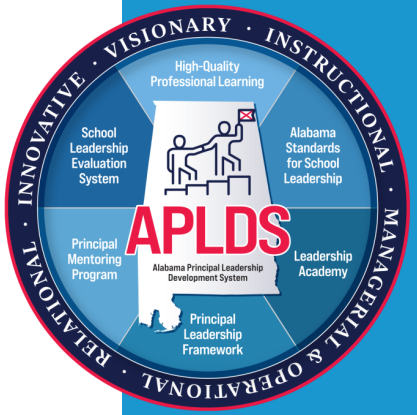
- Developed a conceptual framework that represents the overarching goals and objectives of the law, using key terminology from the law, mentoring best practices, and research from the field of principal mentoring
- Identify and hire exemplary principal mentors through a structured, multi-step approach (application phase, initial screening, rubric evaluation, interviews, reference checks)
- Identify and support new principals in partnership with district contacts



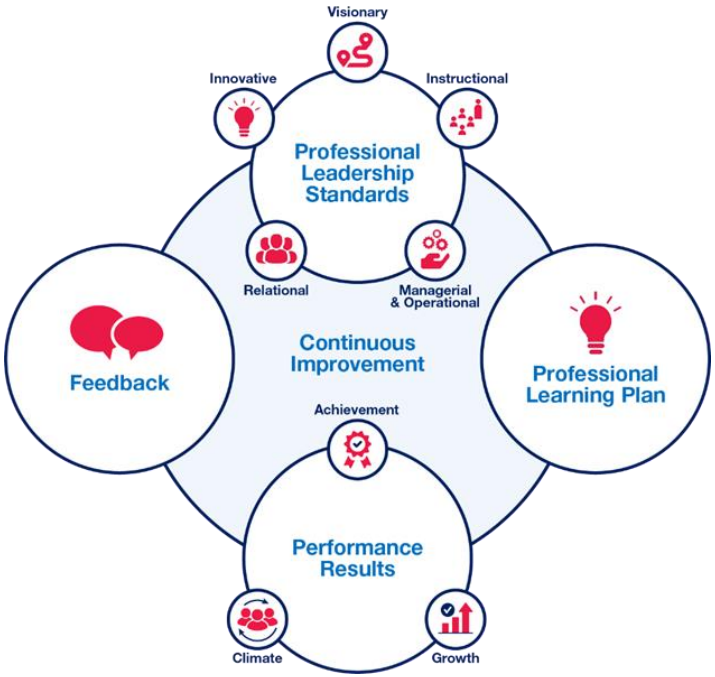
- Match mentors with first- and second-year principals
- Train mentors throughout the year
- Conduct program audits at the end of the year

Next Steps

- Implement the Alabama Leadership Academy for all principals with 3+ years of experience



Alabama Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation System



What makes an effective evaluation system?

(Clifford, June 2025, Design Team Meeting)

- Simplicity and clarity
- Aligned to professional standards
- Representative of daily work
- Fair and differentiated
- Validated so that users trust the information
- Frequent so that feedback is part of the culture and practice

Professional Learning Plan

(specified in law)

1. at least one goal for student academic growth and/or achievement
2. at least one goal for school climate
3. high-quality professional learning from the state-approved list

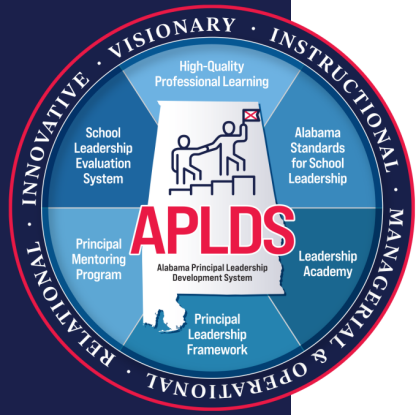
Alabama Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation System

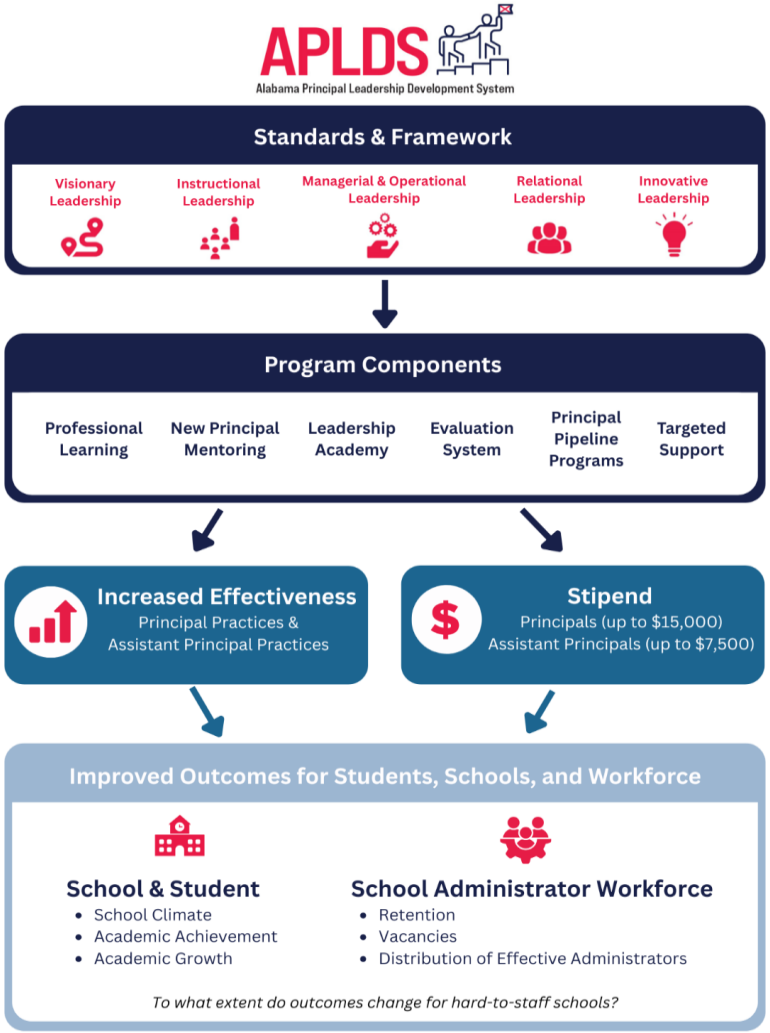
Process

- Introduced the evaluation rubric first through the Alabama Principal Leadership Framework
- Partnered with national experts being led by Dr. Matthew Clifford, WestEd Director of Education Leadership Research and Technical Assistance
- Conducted content validation study of evaluation rubrics, including a review from outside national experts
- Conducted the Alabama Leadership Landscape (ALL) survey in Fall 2025 to learn about current leadership performance evaluation practices and needs (e.g., performance feedback experiences, supervisor training) according to principals, assistant principals, and their superintendents

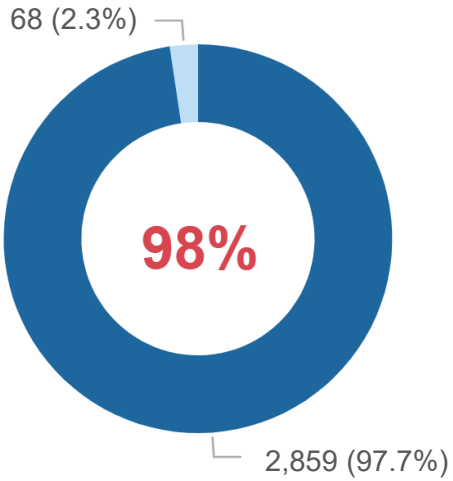
Next Steps

- Conduct a pilot study in 206-27 with a representative sample of principals, assistant principals, and their supervisors
- Scale statewide implementation in 2027-28 for all principals, assistant principals, and their supervisors



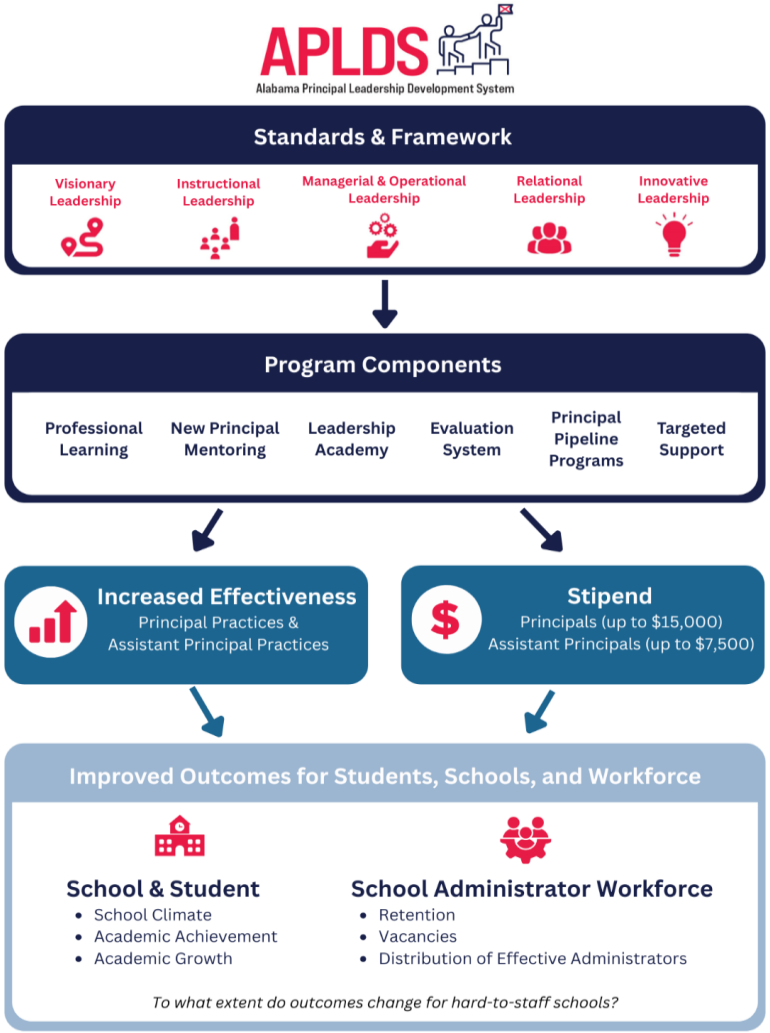


2024-25 Program Completion



2,859
Completed

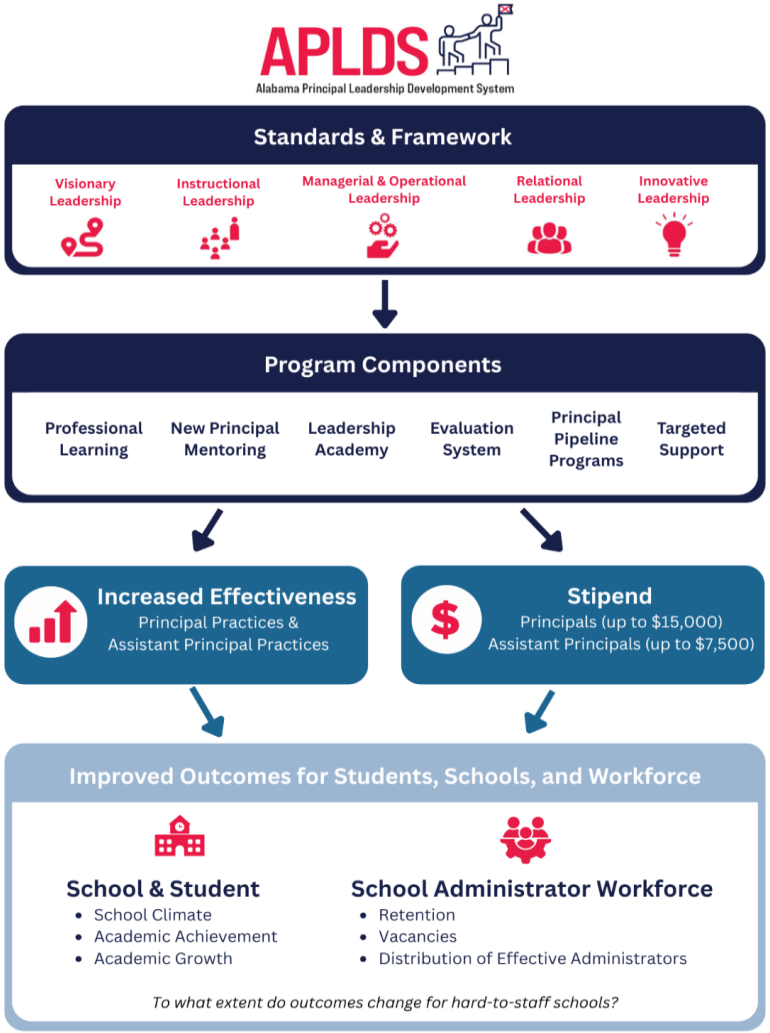
68
Not Completed



Program Evaluation Plan

1. **To what extent does the APLDS Program improve the following school and student outcomes?**
   - School climate
   - Academic achievement
   - Academic growth

2. **To what extent does the APLDS Program improve the following school administrator workforce outcomes in Alabama?**
   - Principal and assistant principal retention
   - Principal and assistant principal vacancies
   - Distribution of effective school administrators



Program Evaluation Plan

3. **To what extent is school administrator effectiveness associated with the following improved outcomes?**
   - School climate
   - Academic achievement
   - Academic growth
   - Principal and assistant principal retention

4. **To what extent are the APLDS Program components being implemented as designed?**

Alabama Principal Leadership Development System

Insights (So Far)

- It takes time! We have worked on this for over 2.5 years now.
- Share information often (e.g., memos, conferences, recordings, emails, website, FAQs, meetings) and be available when help is needed.
- Make connections to current initiatives, expectations, and structures.
- Leverage partnerships, relationships, and resources.
- Ensure consistent messaging.
- Talk with superintendents and keep them in the loop.
- Prepare a communication, implementation, and program evaluation plan.
- Create centralized data management systems at the state level (e.g., tracking leaders, measures of success, professional learning, evaluation system).
- Tailor to the unique needs of local contexts and school systems.
- Ask for feedback and make adjustments as needed.

Every child. Every chance. Every day.

Dr. Anna Shepherd-Jones (anna.jones@alsde.edu)

AlabamaPrincipals.org

Alabama Achieves

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