



LEADER LOOK FORs



Nā Hopena A‘o (HĀ) is deeply rooted in the unique culture and environment of Hawai‘i, shaping our identity as a reflection of this special place. Grounded in the Hawai‘i State Department of Education’s core values and beliefs, HĀ: BREATH fosters the holistic development of students and adults by nurturing academic excellence, character, and physical, social, and emotional well-being—empowering each learner to reach their fullest potential.

The Leader Look Fors is a coaching tool designed to help principals engage in meaningful, ongoing discussions with school leaders about their preparedness for advancing into higher leadership roles. These Look Fors serve as the cornerstone for effective leadership at the school level.

School leaders seeking admission to the Teacher Leader Academy, HICISL Vice Principal Certification Program, or HICISL Principal Certification Program are encouraged to use the Leader Look Fors in their conversations with principals. This tool supports the alignment of leadership growth areas and identifies opportunities to further develop the necessary Leadership Dispositions, Knowledge, and Skills (PDERI, 2025).

Dispositions for All School Leaders

How will Leaders build a better version of themselves?

Inherent qualities of mind and character, reflecting one’s identity, beliefs, and values:

Discussion Notes:

- Embeds the General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) in daily professional practice
- Grounded in personal/professional purpose; maintains high expectations for self and others
- Exhibits the courage and willingness to take risks and engage in what is right for students; perseveres under pressure; demonstrates grit
- Models honesty and integrity at all times; takes ownership of and responsibility for professional practice
- Demonstrates unwavering commitment to increase and support success for all students; is flexible, adaptable, and tolerates ambiguity
- Is situationally aware; demonstrates empathy and compassion for all
- Embraces equity as the foundation for their professional practice and decision-making
- Is efficacious, curious, and a continuous learner
- Is respectful, open, collaborative, and fosters trust
- Demonstrates pride in the school community and effectively communicates with all stakeholders

Hawai'i Certification Institute for School Leaders (HICISL) Vice Principal Certification Program

Vice Principal Knowledge

The theoretical understanding of leadership principles, concepts, and strategies. Knowledge encompasses the grasp of various leadership styles, communication techniques, decision-making processes, and organizational dynamics.

Standard 1: Keeping a clear focus on student learning, growth & achievement at all times.

- **Shared Vision**
 - Understands the importance of and alignment to all school initiative
- **Data Informed Decision Making**
 - Understands how to collect, analyze, and interpret data to support decisions that improve practice and student learning using an equity lens
- **Systems Thinking**
 - Understands how effective school wide systems drive school, staff, and student success and how this affects change
 - Strategic thinking
 - Understands how to align school initiatives with school goals
- **School Improvement Cycles**
 - Understands improvement cycles and the systems and practices to support this
- **Department Expectations**
 - Understands the performance expectations of the Profile of an Effective School Leader

Discussion Notes

Standard 2: Advocating, nurturing & sustaining a school culture & instructional program that is conducive to student learning & staff professional growth.

- **Systems of Support that Inspire Change that Leads to Growth and Improvement**
- **Building a Culture for Learning**
- **Instructional Leadership**
 - Mastery of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices
 - Effective Instructional practices and strategies
 - Current research and trends
 - Department/Complex non-negotiables
 - Hawai'i Adapted Framework for Teaching
- **Collaboration**
 - Understands how to facilitate and be a participant in a collaborative group
 - Understands how to use the group's dynamics to navigate conversations

Discussion Notes

Standard 3: Implements effective and efficient organization, operation, and resource systems for an optimal learning environment.

- School Campus/Facilities
 - School procedures, processes, and protocols, especially related to the safety and well being of the entire school community
- Operations
 - Understands school strengths and challenges and how to strategically address need areas
 - Basic management tasks (cafe, custodians...)
 - Basic understanding of budget
 - Understands VP is responsible for campus 24-7
- Department Procedures and Policies Related to Operating a School
 - Utilizes tri-level resources to address school community needs

Discussion Notes

Standard 4: Engaging the community in a meaningful, culturally responsive environment.

- Community Awareness
 - Strengths and needs of the community and how the school meets need areas
- Community Partnerships
 - Work with legislators
 - Build partnerships for financial assistance
 - Actively listens and engages with partners

Discussion Notes

Standard 5: Regularly examines decisions and actions while maintaining high ethical standards.

- HIDOE Code of Conduct, Profile of an Effective School Leader, and Hawai'i Adapted Framework for Teaching
 - Performance expectations as it relates to teachers, staff, and administrators
- HIDOE Leader Competencies
- Reflective Practice
 - Ongoingly reflects on decision impacts
- Uses a decision making framework which considers downstream consequences

Discussion Notes

Standard 6: Understanding, responding to & advocating the political, social, economic, legal & cultural context.

- Laws Governing Education
 - Understands legal documents - TRO, guardianship
 - SPED documentation, processes...
- Political Structures that Affect Education
 - Implications of decisions
- Social Media
 - Influences on students, families, and community
 - The school's stance on personal and school usage

Discussion Notes

Vice Principal Skills

Applications of knowledge and experience to effectively impact student and system outcomes

Standard 1: Keeping a clear focus on student learning, growth & achievement at all times.

- Shared Vision
 - Daily practice supports school vision and mission through an equity lens
 - Builds positive relationships throughout school community to promote the school's vision
 - Advocates for what is best for students
- Instructional Leadership
 - Utilizes systems and strategies to ensure continuous improvement
 - High engagement with collaborative groups working towards school improvement and student success
- Data Informed Decision Making
 - Monitors and adjusts professional practice based on data analysis
 - Creates strategic goals based on data
- Systems Thinking
 - Aligns daily practice with school improvement efforts and initiatives
 - Thinking critically and analyzes problems in order to facilitate the best solution
- Systems of Support that Inspire Change Lead to Growth and Improvement
 - Actively participates in collaborative groups that regularly seek to advocate and nurture a culture for learning that is constantly moving towards improvement
- Department Expectations
 - Professional practice aligns with Hawai'i Adapted Framework for Teaching expectations

Discussion Notes

Standard 2: Advocating, nurturing & sustaining a school culture & instructional program that is conducive to student learning & staff professional growth.

- Instructional Improvement Cycles
 - Is an active participant in the school improvement initiatives
- Instructional Leadership
 - Builds a Culture for Learning
 - Establishes systems to support learning
 - Utilizes resources to support learning
 - Is the lead learner

Discussion Notes

Standard 3: Implements effective and efficient organization, operation, and resource systems for an optimal learning environment.

- **School Campus/Facilities**
 - Participates in school procedures, processes, and protocols, especially related to the safety and well being of entire school community
 - Provides critical feedback to improve existing procedures
 - Is involved in learning opportunities outside of the classroom, ensuring school protocols are adhered to
 - Is involved in basic budget activities
- **Operations**
 - Actively participates in school initiatives that address school challenges
- **Department Procedures and Policies Related to Operating a School**
 - Actively participates in conversations to better understand expectations for the school and how to align the expectations to school initiatives
 - Embraces collective efficacy as a way to ensure an optimal learning environment for all

Discussion Notes

Standard 4: Engaging the community in a meaningful, culturally responsive environment.

- **Community Awareness**
 - Leverages the community strengths to support learning
 - Builds positive relationships with parents and community members
 - Constantly collaborates with others
- **Community Partnerships**
 - Engages in conversations involving different perspectives
- **Effective Communication**
 - Communicates clearly through oral and written means

Discussion Notes

Standard 5: Regularly examines decisions and actions while maintaining high ethical standards.

- **HIDOE Code of Conduct, Profile of an Effective School Leader, and Hawai'i Adapted Framework for Teaching**
 - Performance aligns to expectations of the above and the HIDOE Leader Competencies
- **Reflective Practice**
 - Engages in an ongoing reflective practice that impacts daily professional practice

Discussion Notes

Standard 6: Understanding, responding to & advocating the political, social, economic, legal & cultural context.

- Laws Governing Education
 - Professional practice adheres to all laws and Department expectations
- Political structures that Affect Education
 - Advocates for students and families
- Social Media
 - Models and teaches appropriate usage of social media

Discussion Notes