

Professional Standards for Principal: Desired Principal Image and Competences  
2009 Edition

Published in Japanese on June, 6th, 2009

By the Japanese Association for the Study of Educational Administration (JASEA)

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## 1. Introduction

### (1) Purpose of these standards

Today, educational reforms aiming for “establishment of schools’ initiative and autonomy” are being progressed in Japan. With its progress, solid professional competence as chief executives of school management is being required for principals more than ever. Based on such situation, JASEA is acutely aware that it is necessary to establish principalship as a profession with high degree of professionalism.

For principalship to be a profession, it is necessary to clarify the content of professional competence and establish systems of qualification/cultivation/training, etc. JASEA, as a professional researchers association of covering school management mainly, has dealt with school management to contribute to it. Specifically, we have carried out discussions on what competence is needed for principalship as a profession responsible for school management, how we should develop school staff with such competence and so on.

“Professional Standards for Principal (2009 Edition)” created by 1<sup>st</sup> Practice Promotion Committee, Professional Standards (2009 modified version) is a slight modified by 2<sup>nd</sup> Practice Promotion Committee in JASEA. “Professional Standards for Principal (2009 modified version)” presented here is designed to show a desired image of principal and required elements of professional competence for it in order to establish principalship as a profession based on the above discussions.

### (2) Desired Principal Image

Today, educational reforms with the most important keyword of “establishment of schools’ initiative and autonomy” are being progressed in Japan. In the structural reform of the progressing educational reforms, it is aimed at building a system where local governments and schools assume bigger authority and responsibility as executing actors of compulsory education. Meanwhile, social environment surrounding schools are

facing waves of very big change in each level of community, nation and international. Values and rules that were once thought as “eternal” show shaking and education itself provided at schools are relativized.

The above situation heightens the need for each school to think and execute on its own accord about goals, contents and methods of teaching, learning, and other activities even in the systems and standards defined by the nation. It strengthens each teacher’s expertise and at the same time, it increasingly requires each teacher to be engaged in education practice using its personality and creativity sufficiently. To that end, it is required for each school to become autonomous organization that can develop and conduct distinctive curriculum based on the needs of students, parents, community, and society. In other words, principals taking on management responsibility of school must realize authentic learning necessary for all students attending to their schools under various conditions of the schools and therefore perform their roles that take the lead in organizing teaching and learning so that every school staff can demonstrate inventive ideas. Such performance of their roles requires expertise different from that of teachers who are in a position to teach.

However, there is no institutional framework of pre-service professional development for principalship in Japan. Having a teaching certificate, teachers perform various roles in their schools while building their career of education practice and training as teachers and receive suggestions from supervisors, seniors and colleagues. It is a fact that most principals assume principalship as an extension of job experience as such educators.

Meanwhile, principals must perform various managerial responsibilities related to school staff, students, facilities/utilities, curriculum and etc. based on a provision of School Education Act, “Principalship governs school management and oversees school staff.” In order to respond to such responsibilities as management, it is necessary to have knowledge of laws or ordinances and trainings for that have been conducted from before. However, trainings centered on the response to such managerial responsibilities remain in the content that engrafts knowledge and sense of responsibility as heterogeneous management upon consciousness and experience built up for many years as educators, and the reality of roles and responsibilities of principalship may have continued to have ambiguity.

The reality of roles and responsibilities of principalship is indeed diverse and complicated. It can’t help having shaking and conflicted feeling endlessly between principal image as educator and principal image as manager. Having been influenced by signs of times and political background, the principal image expected by society has also

been shaking. As the system reform progresses to increase discretionary power of schools and call on each school strongly for responsibility (accountability) for quality and results of school education it is important to describe clearly what roles are needed for principalship.

Based on the above, JASEA considers that a desired principal image now should be viewed as “a leader in organizing teaching and learning”. It is to clarify course to be followed by each school now based on realistic picture of students, school staff and parents/community and lead organizing within and outside schools by using various resources and conditions held by such schools effectively aiming for quality improvement of education for every student.

Rich experience as an educator is extremely important to realize such a principal image. It is because definite insights into education backed by such experience will become the basis of ascertaining basic direction of improvement of education. Principals, however, do not practice teaching by themselves. Instead, coordinating and constructing various organizational conditions such as building a shared vision of the school, developing/organizing curriculum, professional development of school staff, or building collaborative structure and climate must be placed at the center of principal’s roles so that quality improvement of education for every student can be done. Administrative duties and method of organization management used in “School Organization Management Training” that is recommended by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and being expanded nationwide in recent years and **the teaching method currently developed at the graduate school aiming at training of a school leader** should be positioned as part of such role performance of principal.

### (3) Creation process of these standards and its positioning

The creation of these standards was done roughly in the following process. In 2004, JASEA set up “Special Committee for Development of Education Program for School Administrators” to create standards of education program for school administrators as one of its purposes. It created “Professional Standards for School Leaders (draft version)” (hereinafter referred to as old version) in March, 2006 and published it after seeking opinions from our members about it. After that, study work toward its final draft has been conducted in the “Practice Promotion Committee” newly established in June, 2006. Opinions from a chairman of the National Federation of Elementary School Principals were also given in the 2nd Practice Forum in October, 2008. These standards (2009 Edition) were created through such study work.

Since many opinions were sent from the member about the professionals standard, the member of the 2nd practice promotion committee performed exchange of opinions. For this reason, it was determined that the 2nd practice promotion committee modified a professional standards. The reason is as follows.

2<sup>nd</sup> practice promotion committee investigated the professional standards. Results of an investigation show that the cognition of a professionals standard has expanded the board of education and - teacher training center.

This Professional Standards for Principal (2009 modified version) is not drastic changing the component of the professionals standard of the first edition. The reason is because common understanding was obtained about the component of the professional standards in the results of an investigation.

In the modified version, a component was not changed, but text description was added to seven standard , and the text was added to each item. Moreover, in investigation, it turned out that explanation of the fundamental concept of a standard, practice introduction, method of a professionals standard. Then, in order to obtain an understanding of the persons concerned, an explanatory is drawn up, and a committee proposes these as the corrected version.

Based on the above background, The standards (2009 Edition and modified version) should be revised when needed hearing opinions from professional associations such as a principal association and JASEA members in the future too.

## 2. Basic framework and structure of the standards

Principal image of leading a school in organizing teaching and learning is made up of the following seven standards. Principals improve the quality of education for every student by taking the lead in organizing teaching and learning with an attempt to realize them.

### (1) Building and realizing a shared vision of school

Principals create a vision that can be shared and supported by school staff, students, parents and community, and seek its realization.

### (2) Establishing collaborative structure and climate for quality improvement of education

Principals propose and promote curriculum development to realize course instruction and student guidance, etc. that are appropriate for schools, and make structure and develop climate where school staff perform it collaboratively.

(3) Establishing collaborative structure and climate to support professional development

Principals create structure and nurture climate that support all school staff to reflect on practice and to continue professional development collaboratively.

(4) Effective utilization of various resources and risk management

Principals utilize and manage human/material/financial/informational resources effectively and efficiently to secure effective and safe learning environment based on school organization characteristics.

(5) Collaborative relationship with parents and community

Principals understand diverse interests and needs of various stakeholders of parents and community, and promote collaboration responding to those interests and needs.

(6) Ethical behavior and leadership

Principals set an example of professional ethics as chief executives as well as show leadership with deep insight backed with rich experience of education.

(7) Understanding of social/cultural context of school

Principals understand that school education and society mutually affect each other and grasp social/cultural context of public education and school in a wide perspective.

It is considered that the above interacting structure of each standard can be hypothetically described as follows. It also shows competences and its structure required for principals who lead a school in organizing teaching and learning. Also, these relation structures are described in line with the content of specific items of each standard to be presented in chapter 3.

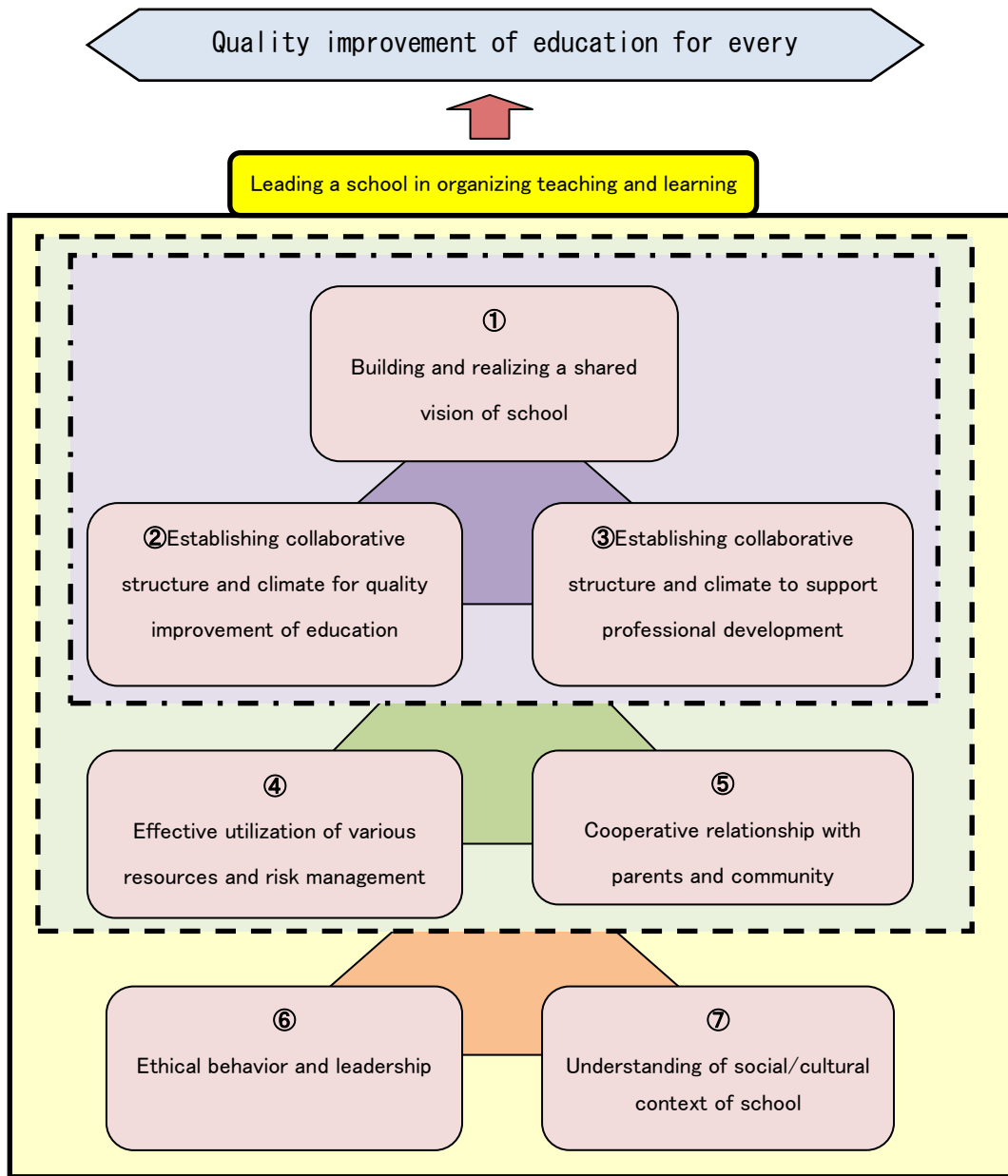


Figure. Structure of Professional Standards for Principal in Japan

### 3. Content of Standards

#### Standard 1 Building and realizing a shared vision of school

Principals create a vision that can be shared and supported by school staff, students, parents and community, and seek its realization.

##### 1) Collect information on the situation of the school

The principal collects information on the situation of the school (students' learning and life, expectations from parents and community, local environments, or school history) by using a variety of methods, and understand the current state.

##### 2) Building shared school vision as the principal

The principal describes school vision with his/her own views based on the situation and the mission of the school aimed at building shared vision.

##### 3) Building shared school vision with school officials and others

The principal builds and expresses shared vision clearly based on the situation and the mission of the school, through involvement of all school staff, student, parents, and community people.

##### 4) Develop a shared vision and Implement

The principal develops and implements curriculum and teacher training program to achieve the shared vision.

##### 5) validates and revises school vision

The principal always validates and revises the school vision.

#### Standard 2 Establishing collaborative structure and climate for quality improvement of education

Principals propose and promote curriculum development to realize course instruction and student guidance, etc. that are appropriate for schools, and make structure and develop climate where school staff perform it collaboratively.

##### 1) Responsibility for growth and the development of every student.

The principal is conscious that the school should be responsible for growth and the development of every student.

##### 2) Curriculum development based on shared vision

The principal leads the school staff in developing an appropriate curriculum based on student's situation and the Course of Study for realization of the school shared vision.

##### 3) School environment

The principal leads the school staff in building an environment all over the school

where every student can learn at ease and enthusiastically.

4) Promotion of educational practice based on a school staff's motivation

The principal promotes school staff to implement high-quality practice collaboratively and enthusiastically.

5) Nurtures climate for quality education

The principal nurtures climate where school staff can work on a new teaching method and the development of teaching materials for quality education.

Standard 3 Establishing collaborative structure and climate to support professional development

Principals create structure and nurture climate that support all school staff to reflect on practice and to continue professional development collaboratively.

1) Understanding of professional development

The principal clearly understands professional development of all school staff leads to the improvement of education for every student.

2) Understanding and support for school staff

The principal grasps individual staff's professional career and skill, and supports development of them, based on understanding of individual problems and wishes, etc.

3) Lead school staff to making shared vision

The principal leads the school staff in planning training program to press the solution of problems for the achievement of a shared vision.

4) Organize school staff to promote collaboration and reflection

The principal builds the school staff organization that can reflect by collaborating through the exchange of teaching practice.

5) Nurture school staff climate

The principal nurtures a climate established of the consideration of the collaboration, trust, fairness, and equity among school staff.

Standard 4 Effective utilization of various resources

Principals utilize and manage human/material/financial/informational resources effectively and efficiently to secure effective and safe learning environment based on school organization characteristics.

1) Analyze the realities in school situation

The principal can analyze the realities by using a variety of methods about sharing the school vision, the quality of teaching and learning, and professional development of school staff.



2) Necessary resources to achieve a shared vision

The principal thinks whether a human, material, financial, informational resource is necessary to achieve a shared vision. And he/she works outside for that and can procure a necessary resource.

3) Create activities for organization based on management cycle

The principal creates systematic activities as an organization (Plan-Do-Check-Action) to improve the quality of teaching and learning and professional development of staff by utilizing various resources.

4) Lead the activities corresponding to crisis management

The principal maintains the system of the crisis management so that school staff and students may work on teaching and learning under a safe environment.

Standard 5 Collaborative relationship with parents and community

Principals understand diverse interests and needs of various stakeholders of parents and community, and promote collaboration responding to those interests and needs.

1) Understanding the necessity for collaboration and cooperation with parents and community

The principal understands that teaching and learning at school is effectively done under a trustful and collaborative relationship with parents and community.

2) Understanding the environment of parents and community

The principal understands the home and community environment of the students from using various information resources.

3) Organize the interest and expectations in the school

The principal leads school staff in understanding interests and expectations from various people and organizations in the community to make the best use of them for quality improvement of educational.

4) Send information on shared vision and obtain the trust

The principal leads school staff in sending information on a shared vision of the school and the actual condition of teaching and learning to obtain the trust from parents and community.

5) Maintain a proper relationship with school officials and neighbors

The principal build an appropriate relationship with various people and organizations that are interested in the school, with respect and fairness.

Standard 6 Ethical behavior and leadership

Principals set an example of professional ethics as chief executives as well as show

leadership with deep insight backed with rich experience of education.

1) Professional ethics as the chief executive of a school

The principal performs the duties with a sense of mission, sincerity, fairness, and equity as a chief executive of a school which is composed of educational profession.

2) Determine communication with a school officials and students

The principal tells all people about his/her own intention giving priority to the best benefit of students clearly, based on rich educational experiences and a wide view.

3) Senses of values and cultures

The principal admits various senses of values, thought, and cultures.

4) Self-reflection and professional growth and development

The principal always make efforts to achieve professional growth as a chief executive of a school, by reflecting on his/her own official words and behaviors.

5) Legal compliance

The principal is fully aware of compliance and makes it established among school staff.

Standard 7 Understanding of social/cultural context of school

Principals understand that school education and society mutually affect each other and grasp social/cultural context of public education and school in a wide perspective.

1) Understanding of domestic and international school of education

The principal can express his/her own thoughts on modern schools with sufficient understanding of domestic and foreign trends of society, economy, politics, and culture.

2) Understanding of the constitution and related law

The principal can understand the whole of Japanese public education system, and show the ideal way of education at his/her school based on the Constitution of Japan and related law, like the Fundamental Law of Education.

3) Understanding of social, economic, political, and cultural conditions of the local government

The principal can sufficiently understand social, economic, political, and cultural conditions of the local government in which the school is established, and make the best use of them to build a shared vision of the school.

4) Understanding of educational history and thought

The principal can understand various ideas and past educational thoughts in domestic and foreign countries, and think about the ideal way of education at his/her school.

#### 4. How to use the standards and detail description book

These standards can be used as follows, according to career stage from principal candidate through incumbent principal, by various people and organizations related to school leadership development.

- 1) As the standard that a principal in the future tries to think about their own ability
- 2) As a framework of a short-term training program for principal candidates developed by school board offices or education training centers
- 3) As a framework for the development of graduate school curriculum for the purpose of pre-service training of principal
- 4) As a framework of evaluation standards for the principal's selection and adoption
- 5) As a framework of a short-term in-service training program for principals developed by school board offices or education training centers
- 6) As the standards that incumbent principals reflect on their own ability

#### 5. Agenda

JASEA should prove validity about these standards through research activities referring to a wide range of opinion from concerned. In addition, these standards should receive the evaluation from regional principals' associations and nationwide professional organizations of them. Continuously cooperate with professional organization and association, JASEA should improve these standards based on the investigation in the future.