Competencies for Deputy Principal

A review of the JMB framework of competencies for Principal and for Deputy Principals was commenced in November 2018 in the light of feedback from members of selection committees, Principals, Chairpersons of Boards of Management, Trustees representatives and the Department of Education & Skills.

During this review it was decided to redefine four of the six competencies to more explicitly include the four domains identified in the Department of Education and Skills published document, *LOOKING AT OUR SCHOOL 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools (LAOS).* This document identified two key areas or dimensions of the work of a school, namely, Teaching and Learning, and Leadership and Management. Within the dimension Leadership and Management, which is the dimension most relevant to the recruitment of Principals and Deputy Principals, four domains are identified:

> **Domain 1: Leading Learning and Teaching**
> **Domain 2: Managing the Organisation**
> **Domain 3: Leading School Development**
> **Domain 4: Developing Leadership Capacity**

The document goes on to identify *standards* under each domain, each with a set of *statements of effective practice* and *statements of highly effective practice.*

The JMB review group drew on three strands: the previous collaborative work with Principals, Deputy Principals, Chairpersons of Boards of Management and representatives of Trustees that identified the original framework; the aforementioned feedback from selection committees; and, the DES publication *LOOKING AT OUR SCHOOL 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-Primary Schools (LAOS).*

The review group identified the following key competencies, which include the domains from LAOS, as being essential for the effective performance of the role and function of a Deputy Principal in a faith school:

> A. **Leadership of a Faith School**
> B. **Promotion of a Holistic Development Culture including Leading Learning and Teaching**
> C. **Interpersonal Relationships including Developing Leadership Capacity**
> D. **Management & Administration including Managing the Organisation**
> E. **Strategic Management including Leading School Development**
> F. **Self-Awareness & Self-Management Skills**

These competencies are not listed in order of priority. It is up to each Board of Management to judge the priority given to each key competency in light of the needs of the school

A Board of Management may not necessarily accord equal weight to each of the competencies. It is essential that the selection committee know the relative importance of different competencies so that they can adjust their shortlisting and interview marking schemes accordingly.

While each of the competencies are important in their own right, the upholding of the characteristic spirit in a school carries particular weight, given:

   i.   it is a legally recognised duty of the Board of Management under the Education Act 1998 [15.2(b)] and under the Articles of Management [2(c)]; and

   ii. that a Principal's devolved functions are in accordance with the policies of the Board [Education Act 1998 (22.1, 23.2 – 3)].

It therefore follows that the upholding of characteristic spirit is a significant occupational requirement of leadership in a school as recognized under the Act. This becomes all the more important where characteristic spirit is so foundational a marker as in the case of a faith school. Thus the successful candidate will be called upon to protect, support and promote the characteristic spirit of the school as stated in core documents as recognized in the Education Act 1998. The successful candidate will therefore be expected to have a subtle understanding of what is involved here, be committed to the demands implied in such leadership and to operate in accordance with what the Board, on behalf of the Trustees, lays down as the quality of action, function and presence deemed necessary for the carrying out of the role.

Following an examination of the positive and negative behavioural indicators set out below, the Board should choose behaviour indicators which the Board believes are most relevant to the needs of their school and in which the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate his/her competence.

The Application Form should ask the candidates to set out their experience of how they have demonstrated particular aspect(s), chosen by the Board of Management, of the competence in question.

Each of the six competencies is defined in a school context below with sample relevant behavioural indicators, positive and negative. A sample of the statements of highly effective practice from *LAOS* has been included in these behavioural indicators.

A. Leadership of a Faith School
Definition: The Deputy Principal promotes the building of a school community in its religious tradition and in accordance with the values of the school's mission statement and expressed philosophy. As a significant occupational requirement of Deputy Principalship the successful candidate will be called upon to understand, protect and promote the stated characteristic spirit of the school. He/she will be committed to the demands implied in such protection and promotion. He/she will operate in accordance with the quality of action, function and presence laid down by the Board of Management on behalf of the Trustees, as necessary for the carrying out of this role.
Sample Behavioural Indicators

Positive:

- Demonstrates an understanding of Catholic education and an understanding of its specific characteristic spirit, its traditions, ethos and founding intention as expressed in core documents. The candidate must grasp how this relates to and is relevant for the lives of students and teaching staff and for the overall curriculum, culture and climate of the school.

- Demonstrates the capacity to challenges actions, behaviours and practices that do not accord with the school's Catholic ethos and ethical standards. (Domain 2).

- Demonstrates familiarity with the language, strategies and dynamics involved in leadership of a Catholic school that protects and promotes characteristic spirit.

- Demonstrates comfort, familiarity and enthusiasm around the specific characteristic spirit as laid down for this particular school in its core documents.

- Demonstrates the sincere willing dispositions necessary to protect and promote the school's Catholic ethos and has demonstrated such willing dispositions in past undertakings and achievements.

- Demonstrates the capacity to be a motivational leader of staff in relation to Catholic education and is committed to reflective practice, the ongoing professional development of staff and to the leadership role of others in this regard.

- Demonstrates an ability to foster a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student as part of our Catholic values. (Domain 1)

- Contributes to the shaping and implementation of a vision based on high expectations, for the all-round development, including appropriate academic success, for each student who is seen as a unique child of God.

- Demonstrates an ability to clearly communicate the guiding vision for the school as a Catholic school to all key partners and lead its realisation, working with the patron/ trustees and board of management. (Domain 3)

- Places faith development appropriately within the whole school planning and review process.

- Demonstrates a resolve that is tempered with moderation, flexibility and compassion around the issues and conflicts that our Catholic faith can experience in an increasingly diverse and secular society.
- Demonstrates familiarity with the legal complexities regarding human rights, religious freedom and discrimination that are part of leadership of a contemporary Catholic school.

To be more specific the Board may require some of the following:

- The successful candidate to lead prayer services and to begin each assembly with prayer.
- The successful candidate to be capable of 'homily style' inputs on significant whole-school occasions where the school speaks to itself about its vision and reflects upon its characteristic spirit and identity.
- The successful candidate be required to lead staff in accompanying the student body to liturgical events.

Negative:
- Demonstrates 'vacancy', or is 'at sea', or 'lost' or indeed presents hostility, discomfort or a distinct lack of enthusiasm when questioned about matters concerning the Catholic nature of the school.
- Presents no track record in supporting, protecting or promoting characteristic spirit or in deepening his/her knowledge of this field.
- Fails to take sufficient cognizance of the spiritual and moral values set out in core documents in presenting his/her understanding of the optimum management of the school.
- The candidate displays a lack of balance when considering matters of faith and is either immoderately fundamentalist or immoderately libertarian.
- The candidate is unaware of the complexity attending the survival and continuation of Catholic schools in an increasingly diverse and secular society.
- Is not comfortable in integrating the discourses of faith and education and shows little understanding of or sympathy for the school's expressed philosophy, faith heritage or charter.
- Shows little cognisance of the specific factors involved in being part of the leadership team of a Catholic school and has taken no steps to prepare for such a role.

B: Promotion of a Holistic Development Culture including Leading Learning and Teaching

Definition: The Deputy Principal assists the Principal in creating and promoting a culture of improvement, collaboration, innovation and creativity in learning, teaching, and assessment, managing the planning and implementation of the school curriculum. He/she fosters a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student through the formal Curriculum together with Co-Curricular and Extra Curricular subjects and activities, all of which are informed by and contribute to the school's characteristic spirit. He/she

fosters teacher professional development that enriches teachers' and students' learning, promoting the achievement of high educational outcomes.

Sample Behavioural Indicators

Positive:

- Demonstrates an understanding of the centrality of the school's characteristic spirit in the advancement of a culture of continuous school improvement
- Demonstrates an understanding and support for the achievement of high educational standards through an on-going evaluation of the school's curriculum, formal and informal (Domain 1)
- Recognises the commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic development of each student through the formal Curriculum together with Co-Curricular and Extra Curricular subjects and activities, all of which are informed by and contribute to the school's characteristic spirit. (Domain 1)
- Promotes and supports continuous professional development for all staff that is relevant to the identified needs of the school. (Domain 1)
- Establishes and supports the development of 'staff teams' in all areas of school life in support of the achievement of the school's aims and objectives
- Shows commitment to on-going evidence-based school self-evaluation for the achievement of high educational standards and demonstrates capacity in implementing strategic improvement planning in teaching and learning.
- Displays an understanding of the need to create a positive atmosphere where staff develop their teaching, learning and assessment practices to improve student learning. (Domain 1)
- Is personally familiar with what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning

- Is willing to work with other leaders in the school to develop and pursue a plan of action to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Demonstrates the ability to expect and facilitate teachers to critically analyse and evaluate their own practice. (Domain 2)
- Demonstrates the ability to promote a culture of collaborative review of teaching and learning practices and outcomes, as part of an effective professional accountability process, in an affirming and developmental manner. (Domain 2)

Negative:

- Does not demonstrate a vision for the achievement of the highest educational standards for all students
- Does not demonstrate a commitment to creating a culture of professional learning and teaching that fosters continuous improvement
- Does not provide clarity about shared objectives and goals to the school community

- Does not display personal commitment to continuous professional development in the area of teaching and learning
- Does not display active participation in organisations relevant to their teaching and/or other duties assigned
- Does not demonstrate a vision for the achievement of the highest educational standards for all students
- Does not demonstrate a belief in the value of teams and a commitment to building and working with them.
- Does not demonstrate a belief in the participation of students and parents as active stakeholders in decision making and policy development

C. Interpersonal Relationships including Developing Leadership Capacity

Definition: The Deputy Principal critiques his/her practice as leader and develops his/her understanding of effective and sustainable leadership. He/she collaboratively builds and maintains professional and respectful relationships with staff, students, parents and other support agencies, including building professional networks with other school leaders. The Deputy Principal establishes, builds and leads staff teams in all areas of school life. He/she promotes and facilitates the development of student voice, student participation, and student leadership. The Deputy Principal uses appropriate communication skills to empower staff to take on and carry out leadership roles. He/She appropriately anticipates, addresses and manages the conflictual challenges that inevitably accompany this role. The Deputy Principal also encourages and fosters the building of leadership capacity among staff in all areas of school life that support the achievement of the school's mission and vision as articulated by the Board of Management.

Sample Behavioural Indicators:

Positive:

- Demonstrates an understanding of the key relationships that exist between the Deputy Principal and the Principal, staff (teaching and non-teaching), students, parents/guardians, Department of Education and Skills personnel and other agencies, Board of Management and the Patron/Trustees.
- Works to develop a positive school culture and demonstrates the skill to deal effectively with people
- Demonstrates the ability to manage challenging and complex situations in a manner that demonstrates equity, fairness and justice (Domain 2)
- Demonstrates the ability to interact with and respect the opinions of others and values each person's contribution in an open, honest and accepting manner.
- Works with the Principal to build and maintain relationships with parents, with other schools, and the wider community.
- Sets up teams and empowers staff to take on and carry out leadership roles, thus building leadership capacity within the school.
- In conjunction with the Principal develops and implements a system to promote professional responsibility and accountability (Domain 2)
- In conjunction with the Principal sets clear objectives for all team members and provides feedback to review performance standards
- Recognises students as stakeholders, valuing their views, and promoting their involvement in the operation of the school with an active role in decision-making and policy development. (Domain 4)
- Promotes a clear understanding of change processes and manages these processes in a collaborative, flexible and sensitive manner.
- Promotes communication within the school and manages challenging and difficult situations.

- Displays an understanding of the need to encourage teamwork in all aspects of school life, to create and motivate staff teams and working groups to lead developments in key areas, and thus to build leadership capacity. (Domain 4)
- Demonstrates an ability to manage conflictual situations that arise and exhibits a professional approach in finding a resolution.
- Is resilient and able to continue with a course of action despite setbacks and maintains an optimistic approach.

Negative:
- Does not demonstrate the skill to manage key relationships.
- Uses a limited range of communication skills in dealing with other people.
- Does not deal with conflict situations in a timely or effective way.
- Does not provide clear guidelines or support to team members.
- Does not take all information into account when solving problems.
- Does not always make decisions when required or make effective decisions.
- Does not ensure that the Principal is kept informed as appropriate
- Does not consult the Principal and / or others in situations where appropriate to do so

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D: Management & Administration including Managing the Organisation
Definition: The Deputy Principal assists the Principal in managing the school's human, physical and financial resources so as to create and maintain a learning organisation, managing challenging and complex situations in a manner that demonstrates equality, fairness and justice. The Principal and Deputy Principal lead the school in on-going evaluation of the school's activities and relationships in the light of its goals as established by the Board of Management and as identified as part of School Self-Evaluation (SSE). He/she uses a range of relevant planning and organisational techniques and systems to set priorities, goals and timetables that ensure effective use of time and resources. He/she establishes an orderly, secure and healthy learning environment, and maintains it through effective communication. He/she develops and implements a system to promote professional responsibility and accountability.
Sample Behavioural Indicators:
Positive

- Displays the capacity and/or experience to manage the design, planning and implementation of the school curriculum (programmes, subjects and activities) which support the achievement of the schools goals and objectives, in line with DES requirements and arising out of SSE (Domain 1)
- Demonstrates capacity and/or experience to develop and implement systems of responsibility and accountability in all school activities and in so doing builds leadership and management capacity (Domain 2)

- Displays an understanding of the need to monitor the needs of the school in a changing educational environment and demonstrates experience and/or capacity to develop and implement plans in collaboration with the school partners to meet these changing needs (Domain 3)
- Is fully aware of his/her statutory obligations, and the importance of ensuring timely compliance with all legislative and policy requirements. (Domain 2)
- Demonstrates an understanding of the school's responsibilities for child protection and health and safety matters and displays an ability to communicate these responsibilities very effectively to the whole school community, working constructively with the relevant statutory bodies. (Domain 2)
- Displays an understanding of the need to ensure that systems and structures are in place to meet the priority needs of the school. (Domain 4)
- Demonstrates an understanding of school finances and of the importance of monitoring and managing them so that the objectives of the school can be achieved (Domain 2)
- Demonstrates a knowledge of the proper governance structures required to be in place in line with the Articles of Management, relevant legislation and good practice
- Provides evidence of managing school resources in an effective and efficient manner
- Demonstrates the ability to establish and maintain effective and efficient data recording systems for student and staff information in keeping with relevant legislation and good practice (Domain 2)
- Displays an understanding of the need to be alert to potentially challenging situations, working pre-emptively and effectively to manage them, and adopt a solution-focused approach. (Domain 2)
- Demonstrates the ability to communicate very clearly the procedures for dealing with conflict and follow them as necessary, successfully implementing and monitoring agreed solutions. (Domain 2)
- Demonstrates an ability to use relevant evaluation tools to assess the school's progress in achieving its aims and objectives and to devise plans and policies to address areas requiring improvement.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the relevant systems and policies required to foster a vibrant and safe place of learning and teaching e.g. Health & Safety, Child Protection, Pastoral Care, Code of Behaviour etc.
- He/She demonstrates an understanding of the importance of all systems and policies being reflective of the Characteristic Spirit of the school, being in keeping with relevant legislation and developed collaboratively.

Negative
- Does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the role of planning in the orderly management of the school
- Does not demonstrate an understanding of the systems and processes involved in organisational management

- Does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the role of the Deputy Principal to understand the school finances and, with the Principal, of implementing a relevant system of monitoring them
- Does not demonstrate knowledge of current legislation and statements relevant to this competency
- Does not demonstrate a relevant level of organisational and administrative experience/capacity.

E. Strategic Management including Leading School Development

Definition: The Deputy Principal demonstrates the ability to manage, lead and mediate change to respond to the evolving needs of the school and to changes in education including the legislative framework in which schools operate. This involves working with all stakeholders to communicate the characteristic spirit and guiding vision for the school and together with the Principal lead its realisation. The Deputy Principal under the direction of the Principal leads the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation and strategic planning. He/she builds and maintains relationships with parents, with other schools, and with the wider community.

Sample Behavioural Indicators:

Positive:
- Demonstrates an understanding of how to develop a strategic plan for the school in conjunction with the Principal Staff and Board of Management
- Leads the school's engagement in a continuous process of self-evaluation (Domain 3)
- Demonstrates commitment to responding to relevant legislation appropriately through policy and system development and improvement
- Demonstrates personal pedagogical excellence and applies these personal standards in creating a community of learning
- Demonstrates an understanding of how to motivate stakeholders in a process for school improvement
- Demonstrates an understanding of the long term needs of the school and a vision for working towards meeting those needs. (Domain 1)
- Demonstrates a commitment to school self-evaluation in striving to meet the needs of the students. (Domain 3)
- Demonstrates an understanding of how to develop a culture of self-evaluation among the staff. (Domain 3)
- Demonstrates a willingness and capacity to assist the Principal in developing strategies for the future and to think through the consequences of actions taken.

Negative:
- Does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements of relevant legislation.

- Does not demonstrate personal pedagogical excellence.
- Does not demonstrate the ability to manage change effectively.
- Does not demonstrate an understanding of his/her role in developing and maintaining a clear vision of the future of the school.
- Does not demonstrate a commitment to and importance of developing a culture of school self-evaluation.
- Does not demonstrate a willingness to involve relevant stakeholders in projects, policy or system development for school improvement.
- Does not review strategies or the consequences of decisions.

F. Self-Awareness & Self-Management Skills
Definition: The Deputy Principal demonstrates an awareness of his/her strengths and areas for improvement and has the capacity to manage them appropriately. The Deputy Principal receives and gives feedback; he/she models and promotes a culture of self-reflection. He/she attends to his/her own wellbeing as well as assisting others to attend to their own wellbeing. The Deputy Principal demonstrates the capacity to manage his/her own difficult emotions and is self-aware enough to know when to seek support particularly when dealing with challenging situations. He/she is able to motivate himself/herself and attend to developing his/her self-awareness and self-management skills.
Sample Behaviour Indicators:

Positive:
- Demonstrates a clear knowledge of their personal strengths and challenges and the ability to understand their impact on others.
- Recognises the importance and displays a willingness to regularly review their professional practice with the leadership team (Domain 4)
- Demonstrates a willingness to participate in review of the professional practice of other members of the leadership team (Domain 4)
- Demonstrates a willingness to promote a culture of continuous improvement with colleagues by supporting them to become reflective practitioners (Domain 1)
- Recognises the importance of attending to his/her own wellbeing as well as promoting and supporting others in looking after their own wellbeing.(Domain 4)
- Demonstrates an ability to manage emotions effectively, to respond appropriately to one's own emotions and to the emotions of others. (Domain 2)
- Has the ability to demonstrate politeness and empathy and understands the perspective of others
- Demonstrates the ability to build genuine professional relationships to build and sustain effective leadership (Domain 2)
- Demonstrates resilience
- Demonstrates a caring outlook and expresses concern in a positive and healthy way.

- Shows an ability to control and manage anger, stress, fear and frustration and adapt them to changing circumstances (Domain 4)
- Recognises the need to manage workload to ensure a sustainable work/life balance as well as that of others. (Domain 4)
- Demonstrates a willingness to engage further in relevant personal and professional self-development including leadership competencies and research. (Domain 4)
- Demonstrates an ability to self-reflect and learn more about themselves.

Negative:
- Lacks the ability to build relationships with key partners
- Does not have the ability to lead, empower and inspire others.
- Lacks self-control and resilience when faced with difficult circumstances.
- Does not consider the feelings of others before acting.
- Is a poor listener, interrupts and misses the emotions being communicated.
- Neglects their own wellbeing (Domain 4)
- Shows a lack of proportion and is not constructively solution focused when responding to pressing responsibilities and demands. (Domain 4)
- Does not demonstrates a willingness to participate in review of the professional practice of other members of the leadership team
- Does not demonstrate care and concern for others.

The Board of Management will use these competencies in amending the JMB Sample Application Form. Each Board is recommended to indicate to the Selection Committee, through the Role Profile it develops, the importance of each of the competencies in relation to each other. The Selection Committee can reflect this in its allocation of marks for the competencies at the shortlisting stage and in the allocation of time and marks for them at interview stage.