



Making the Annual Learning Plan Meaningful

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT EBOOK SERIES



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Introduction

The purpose of this e-book is to provide a starting point for principals and board teams looking for practical “real world” strategies to make the Annual Learning Plan (ALP) meaningful.

The Teaching Policy and Standards Branch wishes to thank all participants in the [ALP / TPA Regional Networking Sessions](#) and [Effective Practices Pilot Projects](#) whose engagement and contributions made the compilation of this e-book possible.

Board teams are encouraged to adapt these resources to meet the needs of their principals and teachers. Suggestions and contributions regarding additional resources are more than welcome and can be shared at: <http://mentoringmomentsning.com>

Quick Tips for Navigating

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**Internet access is required*

The value a principal demonstrates towards the ALP process is very significant; it is a reflection of his or her respect for teaching professionalism through recognition and support for a teacher’s professional development.

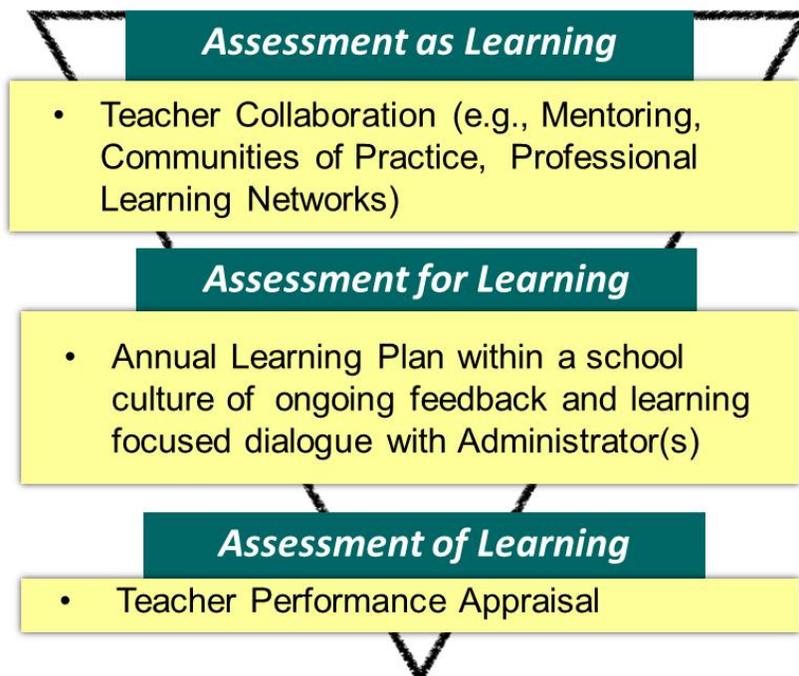
ALP / TPA Teacher Focus Group Participant

BIG IDEA #1 – THE ALP IS PART OF A COLLABORATIVE AND LEARNING FOCUSED SCHOOL CULTURE

School culture speaks to both the written and unwritten norms and how they are lived in the daily interactions between staff, students, parents, guardians and the larger school community. A school-based learning culture is critical to making the Annual Learning Plan meaningful.

Engaging teachers in conversations about teaching and learning is one of the most important roles of the principal and can have the greatest impact on student outcomes. Learning focused conversations are not limited to an annual meeting about a teacher’s ALP goals or the Pre- and Post-Observation Meetings during an appraisal year but, rather, they should occur regularly. (e.g., follow-up to a walk-through, a team or staff meeting, a professional learning community meeting or simply an informal conversation in the staff room)

The Annual Learning Plan as part of Inverting the Assessment Pyramid



By regularly engaging with teachers in discussions about teaching and learning, principals build credibility and a trusting relationship that effectively prepares both parties for the learning-focused conversations throughout the [ALP and TPA processes](#). The principal and the teacher are more likely to feel comfortable openly discussing instructional practice, goals and growth-oriented feedback if the ALP/TPA discussions are one of many learning focused conversations they engage in on an ongoing basis.

Connecting the ALP to a Collaborative School Culture – So What/Now What Ideas and Resources to Support Implementation

School Level

- The principal seeks opportunities to build professional learning networks with teachers with common learning goals. The principal fosters these collaborative networks during staff meetings, grade/division/department meetings and PA days.
- Teachers collaborate on the development of the ALP goals and strategies, and periodically discuss progress on their plan.
- Teachers use Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as a forum for ALP development.
- Principals use school-level release time to facilitate teachers in working together to develop and/or implement ALP goals and for principal/teacher meetings on the ALP.
- Principals respect the value of the teacher’s ALP by reflecting on the value of their own Principal Performance Appraisal (PPA) and principal’s Annual Growth Plan (AGP) experiences, and how they can relay the same value to teachers through their own practice.

System Level

- Superintendents model the value of the annual learning plan through their meetings/discussions with the principal about his/her AGP. Superintendents model the value of a meaningful, collaborative and growth-oriented process with the principal. Boards can provide explicit opportunities for principals to reflect on the value of their own PPA and PALP experiences, and how that same value can be relayed to teachers through their own practice.

Practical Resources



Principals Want to Know - Annual Learning Plans and Teacher Performance Appraisal



A Principal Reflects on the Value of the ALP



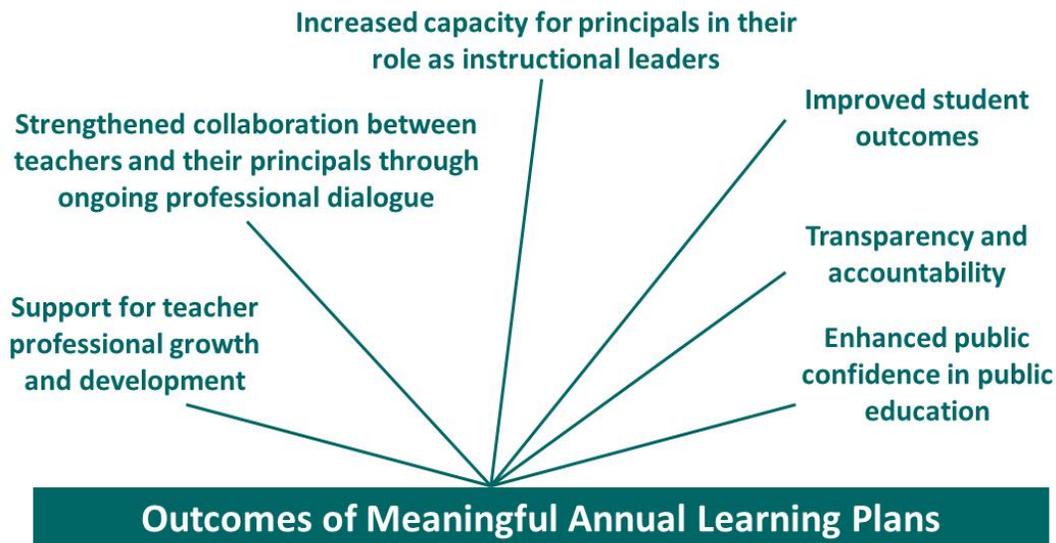
The Power of Listening

BIG IDEA #2 – THE ALP IS A LIVING DOCUMENT

In a learning culture described in Big Idea #1, the Annual Learning Plan creates an important opportunity for learning focused conversations, both formal and informal, between the principal and the teachers, around individual and collective learning goals.

This ongoing dialogue can ensure that the ALP is a teacher-authored and teacher-directed “living document”. As a living document the ALP is based on student learning needs and the authentic professional learning goals of the teacher. Within the ALP there is what Michael Fullan describes as “coherence” with school, board, and/or Ministry initiatives.

Supporting the teacher’s ALP gives principals another opportunity to create and model a collaborative working culture. The value placed on the ALP by meeting with the teacher to discuss goals and strategies, suggest resources and offer support can transform the ALP from something that sits in a filing cabinet into a living document. As a living document the ALP may well become a “messy plan” that could be modified throughout the year and impacted by progress and reflective dialogue.



Principals can further build value into the ALP as a living document by aligning professional learning and resources with the ALP learning goals of their staff. Through collaboration, principals can recognize successes, access expertise, and acknowledge and support growth and learning needs and needs as they emerge.

Ensuring the ALP is a Living Document – So What/Now What Ideas and Resources to Support Implementation

School Level

- The principal, with a team of teachers, collates ALP data into common themes and posts them in a prominent location in the principal's office and/or the staff room. The principal keeps teachers' ALP goals at the forefront when opportunities for professional learning and leadership arise. This signals to the teachers that the principal values their learning goals. The team also uses the common themes to build connections/networks amongst colleagues and to design differentiated staff learning based on the themes of learning goals.
- The principal supports teachers and their ALP goals by accessing school, board or ministry resources (e.g., PD funds, professional reading materials, release time, TLLP).
- Principals and teachers create opportunities throughout the year for staff to have conversations with each other about their learning goals and progress (e.g., learning-focused conversations in small groups at a staff meeting, team discussion at a department/division/grade meeting). The principal is involved in the collaborative and reflective discussions; principal discussions on the ALP do not always have to be one-to-one.
- Teachers reflect on their ongoing learning/goals with their principal by either meeting again at the end of the year or by closing the loop on the previous year when the teacher and principal meets to discuss the revised ALP at the beginning of the subsequent year.

System Level

- Boards, jointly with teachers and the federations, develop a list of overarching themes for the Annual Learning Plan from which the teacher selects as a general focus for the learning goal. This provides some support to the teacher to set the focus of their learning and may be used at the school or system level to analyse and collate ALP themes.
- The staff development team, a joint federation and board committee, analyses and collates the ALP themes; this data is used to set the focus of system professional learning opportunities and/or a PA day. Learning sessions are designed and facilitated by teachers, and the sessions provide for teacher choice and self-direction.
- Boards align the process of teacher requests for funding to attend professional learning to the ALP and the teacher's identified goals.

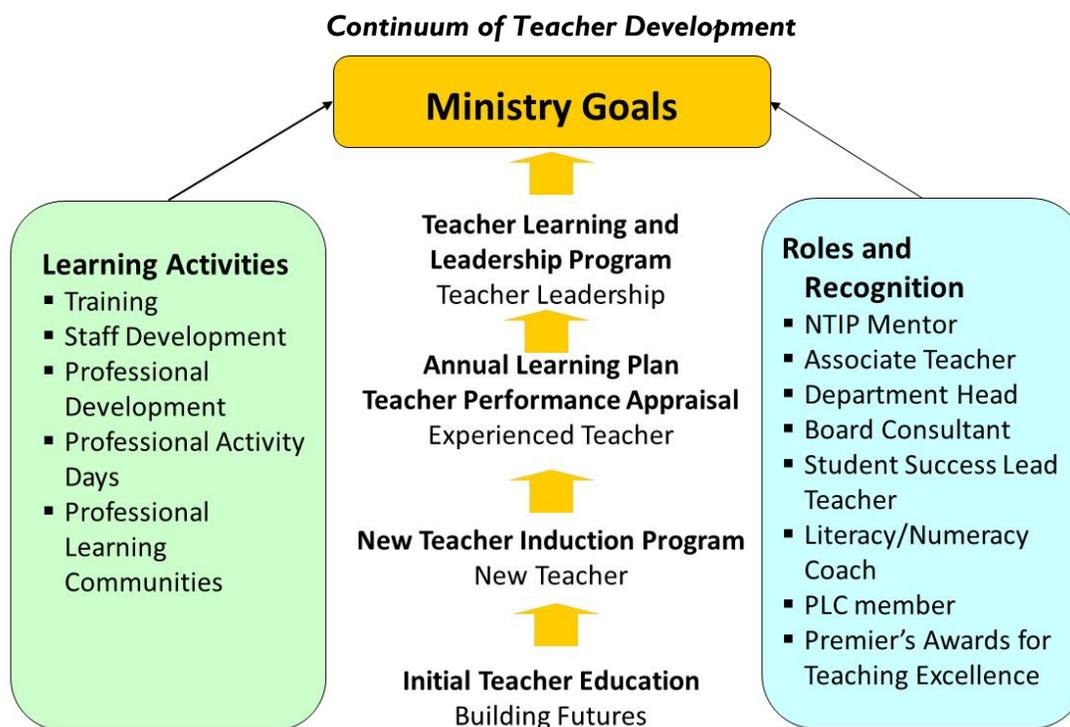
- The ALP is promoted as a living document that is teacher-authored and teacher-directed. It should be a “messy plan” that may be modified throughout the year and impacted by progress and reflective dialogue.
- To build coherence between school/board/ministry priorities and the ALP, the board revises the ALP form to include check boxes on the ALP form for the teacher to identify whether their ALP goal is connected to their most recent TPA, the School Improvement Plan, the Board Improvement Plan, a Ministry initiative or to a personal professional goal. The form also provides an opportunity for the teacher to articulate how their goals connect to student learning.

Practical Resources

	<i>Examples of completed ALPs</i>
	<i>Engaging Principals in the NTIP and TPA Process</i>
	<i>Principal Engagement Slidecast</i>
	<i>ALP / TPA Effective Practices Pilot Projects</i>
	<i>Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP)</i>
	<i>Principal Engagement Strategy Harvest of Ideas</i>

About the Teacher Development ebook Series

Making the Annual Learning Plan Meaningful is the first in a series of ebooks to be published by the Teaching Policy and Standards Branch (TPSB). Each ebook is aligned to the Continuum of Teacher Development illustrated in the diagram below and will be available for download at: <http://mentoringmoments.ning.com/group/ebooks>



Continuing the Conversation

Mentoring Moments is an online community of practice for educators across Ontario supporting teacher professional development (NTIP / TLLP / ALP & TPA). Join us to continue the learning at: <http://mentoringmomentsning.com>