



Nova Scotia Leadership Academy

Instructional Leadership Program Information

The Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Academy (NSILA) Program is offered by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in partnership with the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium. The goal of the Academy's program is to improve the capacity for school-based instructional leadership, aimed at increasing student learning and achievement in Nova Scotia public schools. The NSILA program extends over three years and leads to a Diploma in Instructional Leadership. The diploma is granted by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. It signifies that holders of the Diploma in Instructional Leadership have achieved and demonstrated competency in instructional leadership. Under the Education Act Regulations, the Instructional Leadership Program is a means for a teacher to upgrade his/her teacher certificate level.

What is Instructional Leadership?

Instructional leadership ensures that all students have ongoing access to high quality teaching and learning to achieve curriculum outcomes.

Instructional leaders demonstrate instructional leadership when they

- focus on improving the effectiveness of instruction to increase the achievement of all students
- know when, how, and why to initiate and sustain instructional change
- create a school-wide inclusive culture of high expectations for achievement and for rigor, relevance, and respect in the classroom
- ensure instructional practices are appropriate to the context and grounded in research and the authentic assessment of student learning
- close the knowing-doing gap by moving successfully from sound theory to effective practices
- are knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the implementation of the instructional program of the school

Context

The Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Academy is a provincially designed leadership program. To ensure a range of expertise and perspectives, a partnership advisory committee was struck in 2009, including representation from elementary and secondary principals, school boards, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium, post-secondary teacher education institutions, and the Department of Education.

The committee's first task was to review both the research about best instructional practices and the focus of instructional leadership initiatives across Nova Scotia, Canada, and around the world. The committee discovered that while many jurisdictions have developed programs with a broad focus on educational leadership, very few leadership programs have a laser-like focus on *instructional* leadership.

Based on these results, the Instructional Leadership Program Advisory Committee developed a comprehensive definition of instructional leadership and descriptive standards of excellence. These form the foundation for the Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Program and continue to guide program development.

Program Content

The core content of the Academy's instructional leadership program focuses on increasing knowledge, skills, and competencies around seven standards of excellence in instructional leadership.

Embedded throughout the program, as well, are opportunities for participants to develop a strong understanding of issues related to equity and diversity.

Instructional Leadership Standards

Standard I: Vision for Instruction

The **instructional leader** facilitates the development, implementation, and stewardship of a shared vision for instruction that supports learning for all.

Standard II: Leading and Managing Change

The **instructional leader** identifies and articulates the urgency for instructional improvement and is knowledgeable and strategic about change management and systems thinking.

Standard III: Collaborative Learning Culture

The **instructional leader** builds a school culture that is characterized by caring, trust, and respectful relationships that motivates teachers to engage in collaborative inquiry for instructional improvement.

Standard IV: Professional Learning

The **instructional leader** facilitates high quality and job-embedded learning for teachers based on research, best practices, and teacher development needs.

Standard V: High Quality Instruction

The **instructional leader** is knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the effective implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Standard VI: Understanding and Using Data to Improve Instruction

The **instructional leader** uses data to ensure a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on improving instruction and student achievement.

Standard VII: Positive Learning Environment

The **instructional leader** promotes the success of every student by ensuring that staff acts with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner to create and sustain an inclusive and equitable school learning environment.

Program Components

The range of methodologies and learning experiences includes

- course work
- case studies
- networking and “critical friends” experiences
- action research and reflection
- job-embedded practicum experiences
- classroom observations
- mentoring
- coaching laboratories/workshops
- application of knowledge and skills within the participant’s school

Target Audience

The Academy’s instructional leadership program is designed for all instructional leaders. Currently, participants include practicing principals, vice-principals, and board consultants and coordinators. For the next cohort, principals, vice-principals, board consultants and coordinators (whose responsibilities do NOT include the supervision of principals and vice-principals), and department heads (defined by the *Teachers’ Provincial Agreement*) are invited to apply. However, applications from principals and vice-principals will be considered first. If capacity permits, applications from consultants, coordinators, and department heads will be considered. **Please note: All applicants must be able to commit to two hours, on average, of practicum experiences each week during the span of each course. Practicum experiences vary, but all are school-based and usually involve classroom visits and conversations with teachers.** Applicants for each cohort will be selected from across the province. The selection process will consider such variables as the experiences and needs of the individuals, their interest in the program, and their demonstrated educational leadership. These selection criteria will be balanced with the need for cohort diversity.

Scheduling

The ILA program consists of six courses. Generally, classes meet every second Saturday over 12 weeks (six Saturdays per course). Participants take two courses a year, between the first week of September and the last week of April. Course 3: Coaching for Instructional and School Improvement includes a two-day summer institute, scheduled for August of Year 2, and held in the Halifax-Dartmouth area.

Location

Locations for each cohort will be determined only after all applications have been received and reviewed each spring. Every attempt will be made to ensure that travel time to and from classes is minimized to the greatest extent possible. If applicants have a question about location, please contact the program coordinator at slebel@nseic.ca for more information.

Course Hours

As part of the leadership program, each of the six courses includes 42 hours devoted to in-class learning. An equivalent amount of time is devoted to various elements of the inquiry-based practicum experiences, including classroom-based observations, data collecting and analysis, coaching experiences, networking, and action research within the participants’ schools.

Curriculum Overview

| ILP Curriculum | Critical Content | Three Year Course Schedule |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| ILP 1 Best Practices in Instruction and Assessment, Part I | Course content will include: developing an understanding of how the brain processes information, theories and principles of learning, learning styles and preferences, motivation, multiple intelligences, barriers to learning and their implications for teaching and learning, student engagement concepts and strategies, vocabulary development and concept attainment, skills and approaches for constructing understanding, literacy development across content areas, research-based instructional strategies, and how these methods connect to current learning theory. | Year 1: September–December |
| ILP 2 Best Practices in Instruction and Assessment, Part II | Building on ILP 1, course content will include: formative (assessment for) and summative (assessment of) learning, assessment research and strategies related to effective grading practices and evaluation, how to develop a balanced assessment system, and staying focused on the learner and the learning. | Year 1: January–April |
| ILP 3 Coaching for Instructional Improvement | ILP 3 is a blended learning experience that includes course work, laboratories/workshops, and practicums. A distinctive element of the Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Program is the Skilful Observational Coaching Laboratory™ workshops and the Artisan Teacher™ institute intended to help instructional leaders learn to use descriptive and specific feedback for teachers focused on their teaching talents. Participants will learn and become proficient at four coaching techniques practiced in a school setting. Practicums include practice of the coaching tools, completion of learning logs, and reflections on the coaching process. The curriculum focuses on best practice, theory, and research. ILP 3 is introduced in the two-day Artisan Teacher™ institute, scheduled for August (Year 2). This institute is held in the Halifax-Dartmouth area. | Year 2: September–January |
| ILP 4 Instructional Design: Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leadership | Course content includes a focus on culturally responsive instructional design, teaching strategies, and leadership practices. The course will examine the big ideas, essential questions, and unifying concepts in instructional design from the perspective of the culturally proficient instructional leader and teacher. It will also include an examination of effective practices for community building in the classroom and the school, lesson and unit planning through a culturally responsive and inclusive lens, and positive classroom management strategies. | Year 2: January–April |

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| <p>ILP 5 Using Data for Instructional and School Improvement</p> | <p>Building on the first four courses, participants will learn how to collect different kinds of data using multiple data sources, how to organize and disaggregate data, analyze data for instructional themes and patterns, present and communicate data findings, use data to influence instructional changes, and lead data-driven discussions for improving instruction.</p> | <p>Year 3: September–December</p> |
| <p>ILP 6 Developing a Community of Practice</p> | <p>Course content will focus on understanding the characteristics and components of professional learning communities (PLCs) and collaborative learning teams (CLTs); developing strategies for initiating, moving, and sustaining PLCs and CLTs; developing strategies for teacher learning (study groups, peer visitation, coaching, action research, networks); and developing learning plans for the school. The course will also include knowledge and skill building related to culture shaping and leadership factors that help to build professional learning communities.</p> | <p>Year 3: January–April</p> |
| <p>Final Culminating Assessment</p> | <p>Participants will be expected to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired from the six courses, their practicum experiences, coaching experiences, and their action research.</p> | <p>Year 3: April–May</p> |

Participant Assessment

Assessment of each participant’s learning and the awarding of the Diploma in Instructional Leadership are important components of the program. They not only support the attainment of high quality practices within the role of instructional leader and advance the field of leadership, they also serve to acknowledge the personal accomplishment and continued professional development of the participants.

Assessment for learning is embedded throughout the program to support participant learning and reflection. Opportunities are provided for participants to demonstrate their acquisition of concepts and competencies by applying what they have learned. Over the program, participants will develop a professional portfolio that will be used to synthesize their learning and showcase their emerging competencies. Each course will include opportunities for assessment of learning, including weekly reflections from course work and analysis of practicum data; a summary paper of learning; and a portfolio presentation. Upon the completion of the program, participants will demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and competencies they have acquired and/or refined throughout the Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Program in a summative assessment experience.

Fee Schedule and Payment Options

The cost of the Academy’s leadership program, including all course materials, is \$7110.00 (payable on a course-by-course basis of \$1185.00 for each course).

A non-refundable pre-registration fee of \$100.00 is due by June 15 of Year 1, which starts in September. The pre-registration fee is then applied to the cost of Course 1.

Payment may be made by cheque, VISA, or MasterCard. Cheques must be made payable to the Educational Leadership Consortium of Nova Scotia Ltd., 395-3 Spectacle Lake Drive, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B3B 1W8. VISA and MasterCard payments can be accepted by phone through the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium at (902) 422-3270.

The course fee will be due two weeks before the start of each course.

Course Fee Refund Policy

If participants withdraw from a course, the refund policy is as follows:

1. The \$100.00 pre-registration fee is non-refundable.
2. If participants chose to withdraw from a course within 10 days after the beginning of the first class, participants will be entitled to an 80 percent refund.
3. No refund will be granted if withdrawal from a course is 10 days past the date of the first class.

Application Process and Deadline

Online applications for the next cohort beginning in September **open on February 15**, and **close on April 15**. Principals, vice-principals, school board consultants and coordinators, and department heads (defined by the *Teachers' Provincial Agreement*) are invited to apply online at this time.

Please complete the online application form through the NSELC website.

1. Go to the NSELC website at www.nselc.ca.
2. Enter the NSILA web page by selecting "English" under The Leadership Academy logo and then select "Application Form."
3. Complete the application form and submit to NSELC by clicking "Submit."

Contact Information

For inquiries about the Nova Scotia Instructional Leadership Academy, please contact:

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