Dominica Thomson, Assistant Principal, Greenwith Primary School
Walking up to building to do this SAIEL course initially on the first day I was thinking, “Will I walk out of here wanting to be a principal, and will I walk out of here with the skills that I need that will enable me to become a principal?”

Narrator
If you are a principal, assistant principal or aspiring principal or a pre-school director, then you have a fair idea already of how your site ticks. But what makes you a good leader or would make a good leader of that site? In what development areas could you develop? How would you know? The Development Centre Program is part of the South Australian Institute for Educational Leadership (SAIEL). Through the Development Centre current and aspiring leaders have the opportunity to reflect on, assess and further develop their leadership capabilities.

Caroline Fishpool, Senior Leader, Wirreanda High School
As leaders we spend a lot of time developing others around us and for me when they announced the SAIEL program it was the first opportunity to actually put my hand up for something that was about me as a developing leader, which I think was really exciting.

Michelle Donnelly, Manager SAIEL Development Centre
So today we’re going to look at the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

Narrator
As part of the program, participants are supported to develop an individualised plan for leadership development based on the outcomes of the Development Centre’s comprehensive assessment process.

Michelle Donnelly
Identifying for them, their strengths as an individual, but also the areas for development in their journey to becoming a principal.

Michelle Donnelly
...to look at the three leadership requirements

Des Hurst, Leadership Consultant, DECD Workforce Development
This is possibly one of the first times they’ve ever actually had a structured opportunity to examine their own potential or readiness for leadership.

Bette Pontikinas, Deputy Principal, Errington Special Education Centre
On one day we were introduced to the Principal Standard in quite an explicit fashion.

Michelle Donnelly
Can anyone tell me if before today had they had a look at the Standard and really investigated how it relates to their current role?
Caroline Fishpool
I have, but today is probably the first opportunity that we’ve had to actually start spending some time looking at it in detail.

Michelle Donnelly
A lot of teachers and current aspiring principals working in the school system are really not aware of the responsibilities that they’re currently undertaking and how they align to the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

Michelle Donnelly
Now, you all do these things everyday in your own sites.

Dominica Thomson
Before SAIEL and even after the first day I was still thinking should my career path remain in teaching? I really needed to see clearly what was expected of a principal and whether I thought I fit in with that.

Des Hurst
It’s unique in the fact that we’re using psychometric tools for the first time in my experience to actually help people identify, first of all, their behaviour preferences and how these impact on their work satisfaction also on their effectiveness. Whereas in the past it’s been quite vague, now it can be quite specific. Rather than do every professional development activity that’s on the agenda you can actually select ones knowing that these are the things that I need to develop.

Narrator
When you enroll in the program you get access to AITSL 360° Reflection Tool. A behavioral assessment also provides more insights into you.

Caroline Fishpool
That was the first opportunity that I had as a senior leader to actually get genuine feedback about the five professional practice areas. It was amazing the feedback that was given to me from that, both areas that are strengths of mine but also areas that I hadn’t considered that were areas for improvement.

Des Hurst
In this activity we’re going to assess your ability to work in a team. The scenario is that you’ve got a $100,000 grant to spend in any way you choose as a group to support your site development plan.

Bette Pontikinas
So day two was amazing. I nearly pulled out before day two, because I was thinking teacher head-set but I got advised, “No, push through it and experience it and see what it’s like.”

Dominica Thomson (Role-play, Group work)
So, one thing that we could do is use the enhanced DECD improvement and accountability framework to start this off.
Michelle Donnelly
My background is in psychometric assessment. Des, his expertise as a principal for many years and his international experience has really helped us to provide for the individuals.

*Bette Pontikinas* *(Role-play, Group work)*
An area that we really want to innovate in, we want to improve in...

Caroline Fishpool
Day two is a lot of role-plays, group situations.

Bette Pontikinas
We realized we were going to be assessed quite vigorously here.

*Bette Pontikinas* *(Role-play, Difficult Conversations)*
Jason's mother feels that his results in his Science have deteriorated.

Bette Pontikinas
We had very good outcomes from that in that we were all put on the spot, basically.

*Caroline Fishpool* *(Role-play, Difficult Conversations)*
This has actually come as a little bit of a surprise to me.

Bette Pontikinas
To show what we're made of and what else we need to do, where to go to.

*Bette Pontikinas* *(Role-play, Difficult Conversations)*
He has some reasons for that, that he has put forward and she does as well. I just wanted to hear your perspective on that first.

Caroline Fishpool
It's really positive as well to actually work with people who have a very different headset to yourself as a leader.

Narrator
Although this sort of thing could be confronting, the goal is to develop a personalised and very targeted professional development plan.

Good leaders can make a big difference to their site, their staff, and also to help students to develop their full potential.

*Principal to students*
Come on fellas, what're we doing here?

Narrator
With many of the most experienced leaders set to retire over the next five years, the need for nurturing the next generation of leaders is obvious.

Des Hurst
As we walk through the feedback, of course for some it’s really enlightening and sometimes there’s some
surprises there, but others are a bit sort of amazed these tools have, “Given me this feedback that I thought only I knew!”

*Michelle Donnelly*

> You can see here that this blue circle is what we’re looking for as a well-balanced trait behaviour. The impulsive quadrant, your level of ‘risk taking’ compared to your level of ‘analyses pitfalls’ gives you a good balance between the two behaviours. Your level of ‘persistence’ and ‘experimenting’ is also really well balanced, which gives you a positive correlation to innovation.

*Dominica Thomson*

> My main role at the school is innovation and that’s good to see.

*Dominica Thomson*

My confidence grew and I started to see and reflect on things that I was already doing and able to put myself in the role of a leader and not be embarrassed about that anymore, and think, ”I can do this”, and it’s Ok to say that.

*Bette Pontikinas*

That explained to me why there were probably still aspects of leadership that I found more intense than others.

*Caroline Fishpool*

It’s given some much deeper clarification around myself as a professional and how I actually take those next steps.

*Bette Pontikinas*

You have your own package put together of how you can achieve your goal, your aspiration and your leadership goal.

*Dominica Thomson*

And that really did change my way of thinking.

*Narrator*

If you do see yourself in a principal’s office, the Development Centre covers how to integrate all those insights when applying for a position. To participate in the Development Centre you must have undertaken an aspiring leaders program or be a certified Highly Accomplished teacher, Lead teacher or AST2.

*Dominica Thomson*

I would highly recommend this course.

*Bette Pontikinas*

I think it’s also a confidence building exercise, which is great.

*Caroline Fishpool*

Absolutely, much better off for having done the SAIEL program.

*Narrator*
Some early results:
Dominica gained the confidence and knowledge to apply for a higher-level position, which she won. Bette has been inspired to undertake a Master's Degree and develop her network to achieve her future goals. Caroline now has a specific career plan and feels more assured that she will realise these goals.