NATIONAL COMPREHENSIVE CENTER
FOR **TEACHER QUALITY**

Evaluating **School Principals**

Tips & Tools

Contents

Scenario

Superintendent Jayden Walters oversees a small, high-poverty rural school district that lies approximately 35 miles away from a large urban school district in the Midwest. His district serves 1,400 students across four schools. The four principals are referred to within the district as "lifers" because each has remained within the district for at least 15 years. Teachers within the district often are "home-grown" and are equally committed to staying at their schools—the annual teacher retention rate is almost 65 percent. Some teachers note that several of the principals are resistant to change or reluctant to point out and suggest strategies for improving teachers' instruction.

Despite this dilemma, three of the four schools have exceeded their adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals since the inception of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001. Because of this success, most of the principals believe that there is no need to "rock the boat" when it comes to their administrative practices, especially since their school has met the achievement goals set forth by the state and their superintendent. Specifically, three of the four school principals think no change is needed in their leadership practices in order to keep their schools (and the district) on track with meeting local and statewide achievement goals despite evidence that subsets of their student populations (e.g., homeless or transient students and English language learners [ELLs]) have made only modest gains. More importantly, the majority of the principals see no merit in the district's desire to alter their less-than-formal evaluation practices in such a way that would force them to keep abreast of any new leadership practices. For example, current evaluation practice consists of one yearly review that is done primarily for compliance purposes. It entails one or two drop-in or unannounced observations conducted by the superintendent that last for 30 minutes each. After the observations, both parties sign a document stating that principal observation occurred. The principals often receive feedback that primarily highlights their strengths but few comments and suggestions for areas of improvement. Moreover, principals rarely are asked to review school data and discuss efforts or ideas for improving student achievement, or asked to take the time to reflect on their performance.

With all of the other pressing issues on his daily agenda, Superintendent Walters half-heartedly asks himself, "Why change a good thing?" Despite the fact that in the last three years his small rural district has seen a gradual influx in the number of minority and ELL students—such as those who speak Mandarin and Spanish—from the nearby big city, why should he bother to evaluate his principals by using more frequent, rigorous, or diverse formative and summative assessments? Currently, everything seems to be working, even though he realizes that, with the exception of one, the principals in his district are uncomfortable or reluctant to ask for help in pinpointing areas of improvement when it comes to the changing landscape of their schools and surrounding community.

Nevertheless, Walters believes that the principals need to change in order to get the most from their staff and students. A more rigorous principal evaluation not only will help the superintendent *and* his principals identify their assets and limitations, it also will help Walters target appropriate professional development to ensure that student performance remains high and find ways to further challenge all of the district's students both in and out of the classroom.

Where can Superintendent Walters start looking for high-quality models of principal performance assessment to ensure that his principals are able to evolve with their ever-changing school landscape? What should he know first before attempting to implement a more rigorous evaluation system?

Benefits

With the need to meet a set of higher accountability standards such as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards and the AYP benchmarks of the NCLB Act, for example, school principals are faced with the knowledge that they play a vital role in school effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom 2004; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003) as well as teacher retention, parent participation, and student behavior. As a result, it is important for principals to find ways to continually stay abreast of the best strategies for tackling day-to-day and long-term school issues such as acquiring and allocating resources, maintaining a clearly articulated vision that is focused on student learning, establishing trust and open lines of communication among faculty and staff, and, perhaps most importantly, providing instructional leadership.

Two valuable strategies that can be used to identify areas of improvement for individual administrators are through the use of formative and summative assessments. Formative and summative assessments for administrators serve a multitude of purposes. These assessments should be used by school districts to evaluate and assess potential areas for improvement for individual school principals in order to target professional development needs, and they should be as adaptable enough to take into account a principal's workplace contexts (e.g., urbanicity or poverty level).

There is a distinction between the purposes of a formative versus a summative assessment. To clarify, the intention behind formative assessments is to assess competency in an area that will be used to "inform [a principal's] future action … [such as] a principal's professional development plan" (Condon & Clifford, 2009, p. 1). In contrast, the function behind summative assessments is to "inform a decision about … competence, [but] there is no opportunity for remediation or development after completion" (Condon & Clifford, 2009, p. 1). One of the benefits of using formative assessment is that it allows users to get immediate feedback on areas of strength and weakness during the process and provides them with an opportunity to make midcourse changes to practices if necessary. Formative assessments often are given before summative assessments. On the contrary, summative assessment is completed primarily at the end of a specific time period (e.g., end of semester or end of year) and allows the evaluator to judge the evidence collected to determine evidence of competence, areas of improvement, and areas in need of improvement. Unfortunately, the person being evaluated can make changes in practice only for the following year, not the current year.

Both the formative and summative assessment processes can take the form of infrequent or informal evaluations as well as more formal evaluations. However, the purposes for which the results of the data are used determine if an assessment is considered formative or summative (Chappuis & Chappuis, 2007). Examples of more formal types of evaluation include development of portfolios; collections of evidenced-based, data-driven materials; and use of validated rubrics. Informal forms of assessments can consist of drop-in observations and surveys or interviews of potential stakeholders (e.g., teachers, students, parents). To be truly informative, both types of assessments should align closely with the ISLLC or other standards, for example, the Technology Standards for School Administrators, and be conducted at a minimum on an

annual basis. Examples of other benefits that may result from using formative and summative principal assessments include the following:

- **Increased accountability of principals.** Some assessments are comprehensive or use a 360-degree feedback approach, for example, whereby data are collected from interviews or surveys with teachers, parents, or students in conjunction with other data collection activities such as formal observations and reviews of key documents. If the 360-degree feedback approach is used, principals are able to receive a more complete picture of the performance of their administration and how those at the school are impacted. The 360-degree feedback approach allows principals to maintain a level of accountability to their stakeholders.

- **Assessment of good instructional leadership practices and behavior.** Assessments should serve to assess the specific behaviors and actions of a principal rather than just his or her personality traits. By focusing on behaviors associated with better learning environments, districts will be better able to identify and determine the association or link between leadership behaviors and improved teacher and/or student outcomes. For instance, according to the Wallace Foundation (2009) a "well designed assessment process could be a powerful and constructive way to identify leaders' strengths and weaknesses and encourage them to focus on the actions most likely to bring about better teaching and learning" (p. 1).

- **Provision of data that can be used to target support and professional development.** Findings collected after both the formative and summative assessments should be tied to or inform the principal's professional development plans, training, and goals. For example, if an assessment shows that a particular area of weakness consists of the infrequent use or analysis of student achievement data to inform school policy, the evaluation team members should work together to identify a range of individualized (or group) support that can be provided through coaching or mentoring, peer groups or cohorts, or targeted training workshops focused on a specific skill or content (New Schools Venture Fund, 2008).

Tips and Cautions

The following are important points that both the district and the building-level principals should remember before embarking on the use of formative and summative assessments to improve leadership practices:

- **Assessments should have explicit criteria for evaluation.** The criteria for which an administrator is evaluated should be "understandable and clearly stated, and should be based on measurable and observable metrics rather than on subjective measures in order to ensure fairness" (New Schools Venture Fund, 2008, p. 16). Moreover, feedback from the evaluator should be open and timely in order to give principals an opportunity to review the findings, and if necessary, make changes or improvements.

- **Assessments should be adaptable to the principal's position or level of experience within his or her career continuum.** The needs of a beginning administrator are different from those of a veteran administrator (Braun & Carlson, 2008; Fleck, 2008). As a result, assessments should be flexible to meet the needs of each type of administrator.

- **The content of the assessment should align with the goals or needs of the district.** Of the available assessment instruments that districts use to evaluate their principals, many have been found to vary in the topics and characteristics assessed as well as the methods used and level of specificity required (Murphy, Goldring, Cravens, Elliott, & Porter, 2007; Goldring et al., 2009). For example, if schools are struggling to meet their AYP goals, districts should consider selecting a type of assessment that will focus or allow them to assess principals in this area.

- **Assessments should be valid and reliable.** Using assessment instruments that are both rigorously and psychometrically validated impacts not only the validity and reliability of the assessments and data collected but also the legitimacy and replicability of the findings (Condon & Clifford, 2009).

- **Assessments should take into account the context of the school.** The school context affects requirements and practices of the principal. For example, is the principal dealing with the frequent challenge of poor parental involvement or primarily concerned about increasing student test scores? The type of assessment used will help to provide insight as to why administrators may assign different levels of priority to different school concerns, which, in turn, may affect their leadership style or approach (Wallace Foundation, 2009).

- **The effectiveness of the evaluation system also should be evaluated.** To ensure that assessments are valid and implemented with fidelity, district administrators should re-evaluate the effectiveness of their assessment instruments and overall process. According to a report by the Wallace Foundation (2009), most performance assessments did not occur on an annual basis until 2000. Moreover, the report's authors found variation in the frequency with which most principal assessments occurred within schools in a particular district and that assessments often were not based on a set of specific standards. Evaluators and principals should know that improvement is a continuous and ongoing process.

- **Principal assessments should connect to teacher- and student-level outcomes.** Current research already indicates that the school principal are second only to the

classroom teacher as the most important person to impact student learning and achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004). Creating an environment that is conducive to both teacher improvement and student achievement is the key goal for most school administrators and districts alike. It makes sense, therefore, to include a way to capture or a measure one or more quality indicators within an assessment, for example, through a survey, of how well (or not) a principal is able to achieve this goal and his or her impact on outcomes related to teacher and student growth as a component of the evaluation system.

Finally, when selecting an assessment, districts should consider the time needed to administer the instrument, the costs, and the ease of use or implementation.

Strategies

1. Establish a clear set of expectations and goals for the assessments.

    a. Establish *what* will be assessed.

    b. Establish *who* will help provide feedback.

    c. Establish *how* the findings of the assessments or evaluations will be used.

    d. Establish the *frequency* with which assessments will occur.

2. Use assessments that are valid and reliable and help inform principal professional development needs.

3. Link assessments to research-based standards.

4. Use multiple forms of assessment, and vary the types of data collected to obtain a holistic view of principal performance.

Resources

The following section includes resources that provide helpful information about implementing the strategies listed. Some resources highlight the rationale for a strategy or the research base that supports it; other resources provide examples of how the strategy has been implemented or practical toolkits that can assist school leaders in adopting these strategies.

Strategy 1: Establish a Clear Set of Expectations and Goals for the Assessments

Having clear expectations about the goals and purposes of the principal evaluation system is vital. Explicit and easy-to-understand goals and expectations about the assessment tools and/or process will allow for buy-in from the school administrator(s) and a transparent picture of how principal performance will be assessed as well as the types of data that will be analyzed. Moreover, the findings gleaned from this process can be used to paint a more complete picture of the principal's leadership practices, skills, and weaknesses as well as identify ways to help advance overall school improvement.

Resource 1: National Association of State Boards of Education leadership initiative

Website: http://www.nasbe.org/leadership/

This website, created by the National Association of State Boards of Education in partnership with the Wallace Foundation, provides districts, policymakers, researchers, and other individuals with multiple resources, such as links to articles or overviews of state policies related to a principal's movement within the career continuum. For example, the website provides data and information on standards for teacher leaders, mentoring and induction, licensure, assessment, evaluation, and professional development.

Resource 2: Purpose of leadership assessment in the field of education

Portin, B., Feldman, S., & Knapp, M. (2006). *Purposes, uses, and practices of leadership assessment in education.* Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/LAssess-Oct25.pdf

This report is one in a series of reports commissioned by the Wallace Foundation and developed by the University of Washington's Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy. Analyzing the latest research and using several scenarios on the assessment of leadership performance through the lens of learning-focused leadership, the report highlights the various objectives and uses of leadership assessments within local, state, and national settings.

Resource 3: Kentucky's performance review

Council of Chief State School Officers. (2010). *State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) policy & practice compendium—Part two: Examples of current policies & practices in educational leadership within specific states.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/COMPartTwo.pdf

This report summarizes the various policies and statutes enacted by the state of Kentucky that impact how educational leaders are recruited, sustained, and supported within their state, and it highlights the Kentucky's statewide performance review policy. For example, each school district is responsible for developing its own evaluation plan and procedures. The evaluation

plans must be approved by the Kentucky Department of Education and include an evaluation committee or group of individuals responsible for conducting the principal evaluation, procedures for formative and summative evaluations, and a list of performance criteria with specific standards and descriptors for each criterion.

Resource 4: South Carolina principal performance procedures/assurance form

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.). *Program for assisting, developing, and evaluating principal performance: Procedures/assurance form.* Columbia, SC: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.scteachers.org/leadership/docs/AnnualAssuranceForms1&2.pdf

This procedures and assurance form developed by the South Carolina Department of Education outlines the important activities and steps that both the evaluator and the principal must complete prior to and after the start of the principal assessment.

Resource 5. North Carolina principal evaluation process

North Carolina Public Schools. (2008). *North Carolina school executive: Principal evaluation process.* Raleigh, NC: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.ncpapa.org/forms/Evaluation%20Instrument.pdf

North Carolina Public Schools has implemented a principal evaluation program that provides a six-step process for evaluating school administrators, which includes orientation, pre-evaluation planning, meeting with the superintendent, data collection, preparation of a consolidated or comprehensive performance assessment, and follow-up meeting with the superintendent. The evaluation process also describes each party's responsibilities and includes a four-point rubric by which principals are evaluated.

Resource 6: Principal professional growth plan

Achievement First. (n.d.). *Professional growth plan: School principal.* Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.newschools.org/files/Principal-12.doc

Achievement First is a network of 17 public charter schools located in the northeastern United States (e.g., Connecticut and New York) and serving over 4,500 students as of 2009. To help keep administrators accountable, Achievement First has created Professional Growth Plan(s); the plan for school principals identifies a series of leadership "outputs" that principals are responsible for demonstrating as school leaders. Principals are assessed on categories such as Leadership of People, which includes specific measures such as "hiring and retaining great teachers" and "staff morale and attendance." The plans go further to indicate the type of data— teacher survey, observation, retention rates, or others—that should be collected and analyzed for each measure.

Substrategy 1.1: Establish *What* Will Be Assessed

Knowing what will be assessed during an evaluation—communication, collaboration, organization, planning, ability to problem solve, fiscal management, technology management, or some other area—will help increase the transparency and clarity for school principals and increase the odds of capturing elements or examples of good leadership practices as indicated by a variety of professional standards (see Strategy 3 on p. 16).

Resource 7: Leadership performance planning worksheet

NYC Leadership Academy, Inc. (2010). *Leadership performance planning worksheet.* Long Island City, NY: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/knowledge/LPPW and excerpt retrieved from http://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/files/imce_uploads/lppw_indesign2_sample_pages.pdf

In collaboration with the Wallace Foundation and state departments of education in three states (Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri), the NYC Leadership Academy developed the Leadership Performance Planning Worksheet, which is designed around 40 leadership behaviors that impact learning and instruction. Each core leadership behavior is organized around nine school leadership dimensions. Examples of the types of leadership dimensions from which school principals are assessed include the following: plans and sets goals for student performance, responds appropriately to situations, values different points of views within the organization, and reports student achievement results transparently.

Resource 8: What are principals expected to do?

Catano, N., & Stronge, J. H. (2006). What are principals expected to do? Congruence between principal evaluation and performance standards. *NASSP Bulletin, 90*(3), 221–237. Abstract retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://bul.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/90/3/221

In their content analysis of principal evaluation instruments as well as state and professional standards set for principals in several school districts, Catano and Stronge found that principals are primarily assessed in the following areas: instructional leadership, organizational management, and community relations. Findings also reveal that the instruments being used reflected state and professional standards.

Resource 9: Assessing school leaders' effectiveness

Wallace Foundation. (2009). *Assessing the effectiveness of school leaders: New directions and new processes.* New York: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.wallacefoundation.org/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/CurrentAreasofFocus/EducationLeadership/Documents/Assessing-the-Effectiveness-of-School-Leaders.pdf

In this report, researchers at the Wallace Foundation examine and discuss the aspects of principal leadership that should be assessed and how they should be assessed, as well as the limitations of current assessments. This report identifies six areas in which assessments can be improved and discusses three newly developed assessment instruments.

Resource 10: Principals technology leadership assessment

UCEA Center for the Advanced Study of Technology Leadership in Education. (2010). *Principals technology leadership assessment.* Minneapolis, MN: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://schooltechleadership.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/ptla_info_packet.pdf

Funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Center for the Advanced Study of Technology Leadership in Education (CASTLE) administers the Principals Technology Leadership Assessment (PTLA), which consists of an online survey that is designed to "assess principals' technology leadership inclinations and activities over the course of the last year" (UCEA CASTLE, 2010, p. 1). The PTLA was created and validated by the American Institutes for Research and is aligned to the International Technology in Education's National Educational Technology Standards for Administrators.

Substrategy 1.2: Establish *Who* Will Help Provide Feedback

It is important to receive multirater feedback from various stakeholder groups (e.g., teachers, staff, students, and/or parents) to ascertain the principal's performance as a school leader. Using multiple measures increases the likelihood of obtaining a 360-degree picture about potential areas for school improvement (e.g., a principal's effort to address building maintenance issues) that may not necessarily be covered in a single type of assessment instrument (e.g., observation protocol). Moreover, using multiple sources of data also provides additional context and perspectives surrounding the school learning environment from those directly impacted by it.

Resource 11: Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education

Vanderbilt University, Peabody College. (2008). *Development of the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED).* Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/x8451.xml

The Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) comprises both an online and paper-and-pencil assessment that "utilizes a multi-rater, evidence-based approach to measure the effectiveness of school leadership behaviors known to influence teacher performance and student learning" (Vanderbilt University, Peabody College, 2008). VAL-ED is designed to be completed by the principal, teachers, and the supervisor (e.g., superintendent), and the instrument is currently aligned with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. The development of VAL-ED was funded through the Wallace Foundation.

Resource 12: North Carolina teacher working conditions survey

North Carolina State Board of Education. (2002). *North Carolina's teacher working conditions initiative.* Retrieved June 22, 2010 from http://ncteachingconditions.org/faq

Since 2002, the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions survey has been administered annually to both principals and teachers throughout the state. Principals are asked a series of questions about the teacher working conditions at their respective schools and their own personal working conditions at the district level. Data from both the principal and teacher components of the survey can be used as evidence in principal evaluation or as a means of principal self-reflection on their school leadership, as well as a way to gauge progress or improvement. For example, principals can use results from the survey to help refocus on areas in need of improvement and use the feedback from the survey to set personal or school goals such as improving parent and community involvement or communication with staff. The Teacher Working Conditions survey has been expanded beyond North Carolina and is now administered in 10 other states, including Alabama, Colorado, Maine, and Maryland.

Substrategy 1.3: Establish *How* Findings of the Assessments or Evaluations Will Be Used

Assessment instruments should be valid and reliable. Furthermore, they should provide data that can inform how identified weaknesses can be addressed through professional development or other support. For example, Goldring et al. (2008) found in their review of current principal assessment instruments that almost half of all assessments failed to provide principals with clear feedback that was linked to a development plan on what they could be doing better to improve learning and teaching.

Resource 13: Saint Louis summer leadership academy

Smith-Anderson, S. (2009). *Summer leadership academy 2009–2010* [Slide presentation]. St. Louis, MO: Saint Louis Public Schools, Office of Leadership Development. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.slps.org/19621051994153557/lib/19621051994153557/2009/oct_2009/SLA%20Results%20to%20the%20Board.ppt

This summer leadership academy hosted by Saint Louis Public Schools is designed to train school principals for the purpose of attaining school improvement and improving student achievement. The leadership academy is broken into four subacademies: the Principals in Action, Autonomy Principal, Executive Coach, and Phoenix academies. Within each of these smaller academies, principals identify and reflect on specific measurable outcomes. For example, in the Autonomy Principal Academy, principals reflect on their staffing, budget, curriculum, and governance and identify specific, measurable outcomes and a process to obtain those outcomes.

Resource 14: Leading change handbook

Spiro, J. (2009). *Leading change handbook: Concepts and tools.* New York: Jody Spiro. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.wallacefoundation.org/KnowledgeCenter/KnowledgeTopics/CurrentAreasofFocus/EducationLeadership/Documents/leading-change-handbook.pdf

This handbook is designed specifically for school principals to assist them in their efforts to implement change within their schools and themselves. It offers administrators a series of tools and action steps to assist them along their journey of change. The author calls the handbook a toolkit that offers steps for "assessing and improving participants' readiness; engaging stakeholders; planning 'early wins;' minimizing resistance; using collaborative planning methods; and developing ways to bring initiatives to scale and sustain them over time" (Spiro, 2009, p. 1)).

Substrategy 1.4: Establish the *Frequency* With Which the Assessments Will Occur

Most school administrators are evaluated on an annual basis in congruence with their district contract or as mandated by their state (Portin, Feldman, & Knapp, 2006). Some researchers argue that one assessment a year is not enough to accurately evaluate a school principal. As a result, some states have begun to revise their evaluation policy timelines to increase the frequency of evaluations from yearly to each semester to quarterly, as well as prior to and after the academic school year (School Administrators of Iowa, 2006).

Resource 15: Ohio performance review policy

Ohio Legislative Service Commission. (n.d.). *Bill analysis: Am. Sub. S.B. 77. 123rd General Assembly.* Columbus, OH: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.lsc.state.oh.us/analyses/s0077-ps.pdf

When Senate Bill 77 was passed in Ohio, it strengthened the requirements and guidelines used to evaluate administrators in the state. For example, under the current law, school administrators must be evaluated annually by the superintendent. The law expands and clarifies the requirements related to the frequency of evaluations that must occur in years when the administrator's contract is up for renewal versus when it is not. In years when a contract is *not* up for renewal, principals are to be evaluated yearly as required by law. However, in years when contract renewal is required, the law mandates that school principals are to be evaluated twice during the year. As part of all evaluations, the supervisor must identify and provide written documentation of the "strengths and deficiencies" of the administrator as well as recommendations for improvement.

Resource 16: Systems approach to principal leadership performance review

School Administrators of Iowa (2006). *Principal leadership performance review: A systems approach.* Clive, IA: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.illinoisschoolleader.org/advisory_committee/documents/PrincipalEvaluation Booklet.pdf

This comprehensive model for principal evaluation was developed by the School Administrators of Iowa in partnership with the Wallace Foundation for school leaders in Iowa after the passage of Senate File 277 in 2007 by the Iowa Legislature. This system of evaluation is aligned with the six Iowa Standards for School Leaders and details how often a principal must be evaluated by providing a suggested timeline. The publication gives a description of each standard and the types of artifacts or documentation that must be collected to show evidence that a principal has (or has not) met a specific standard.

Strategy 2: Use Assessments That Are Valid and Reliable and Help Inform Principal Professional Development Needs

Assessment instruments should be valid and reliable. Furthermore, they should provide data that can inform how identified weaknesses can be addressed through professional development or other support. For example, Goldring et al. (2008) found in their review of current principal assessment instruments that almost half of all assessments failed to provide principals with clear feedback that was linked to a development plan on what they could be doing better to improve learning and teaching.

Resource 17. Measuring principal performance

Condon, C., & Clifford, M. (2009). *Measuring principal performance: How rigorous are commonly used principal performance assessment instruments?* Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.learningpt.org/pdfs/QSLBrief_2%20MeasuringPerf.pdf

The researchers for this brief conducted a scan of assessment instruments used to measure principal performance for the purpose of identifying well-developed, validated, reliable, publicly available instruments, which yielded 20 instruments. When those were reviewed against criteria for rigor, only eight were found to be psychometrically rigorous. These instruments are the VAL-ED (Porter, Murphy, Goldring, & Elliot, 2006), the Change Facilitator Questionnaire (Vandenberghe, 1988), the Diagnostic Assessment of School and Principal Effectiveness (Ebmeier, 1992), the Instructional Activity Questionnaire (Larsen, 1987), the Performance Review Analysis and Improvement System for Education (Knoop & Common, 1985), the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 2002), the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), and the Principal Profile (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986). The authors note that only two of the eight instruments were created in the last decade (2002 and 2006); the older measures may not capture the essential features of today's school principal position, which has changed in the past 10 years.

Resource 18: Association of Educational Service Agencies

Website: http://www.aesa.us/

The Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) was created to serve educational service agencies across 45 states. On the AESA website, districts can find links to their state's specific ESAs, which often are tasked with providing workshops and sessions geared to principals on a variety of topics such as how to conduct an effective evaluation or how to use student achievement data.

Strategy 3: Link Assessments to Research-Based Standards

To help determine whether the behaviors exhibited by school administrators are associated with effective leadership practices, assessment instruments should align with one or more set of professional or state-approved standards. For example, 40 states have adopted the revised 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards that describe behaviors associated with improved student achievement. Three states in particular—Iowa, Delaware, and Kentucky—have recently started using the ISLLC standards as a benchmark against which to assess administrators (Wallace Foundation, 2009).

Resource 19: ISLLC educational leadership policy standards

Council of Chief State School Officers (2008). *Educational leadership policy standards: ISLLC 2008.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/elps_isllc2008.pdf

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), an association of 24 member states managed by the Council of Chief State School Officers, developed six ISLLC standards in 1994 with the aim of providing a set of universal standards for school leaders and a framework for district administrators to gauge the presence of effective leadership practices that may (or may not) be exhibited by their school principals. The ISLLC standards were revised and updated in 2008.

Resource 20: South Carolina principal evaluation instrument

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.) *Principal evaluation instrument.* Columbia, SC: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.scteachers.org/leadership/docs/PrincipalEvaluationInstrument.doc

This principal evaluation instrument is aligned with the standards and criteria set forth by the South Carolina State Board of Education. The state currently requires principals to be evaluated once every three years. This instrument requires the evaluator to rate the principal on each standard against a three-point rating continuum that ranges from *exemplary* to *needs improvement*. Evaluators must provide documentation or evidence for their rating.

Resource 21: Green Dot Public Schools principal evaluation rubric

Green Dot Public Schools (2007). *Administrator evaluation.* Los Angeles: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.newschools.org/files/Principal-11.doc

As a nonprofit organization, Green Dot Public Schools operates 12 charter schools within the Los Angeles Unified School District. Green Dot was one of five organizations in Los Angeles to split a $60 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 2009. Green Dot principals are evaluated using the six ISLLC standards and against a series of indicators such as "The administrator has established systems and protocols for garnering teacher feedback and input on professional development, school culture, etc." (Green Dot Public Schools, 2007, p. 11). As part of the evaluation form or rubric, principals are given a score from 1 to 5 designating

areas of challenge against areas of strength as well as next steps for improvement under that specific indicator.

Resource 22: Eugene, Oregon, educational leadership improvement tool

Eugene School District 4J. (2007). *Revision of the educational leadership improvement tool: Determining visionary leadership.* Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.4j.lane.edu/instruction/gp/eli/progress_lead12-17-07

The Leadership for Educational Achievement in Districts (LEAD) team of Eugene School District 4J revised the district's educational leadership improvement tool in 2007 in order to better align it with the Oregon State Standards. The six new standards by which administrators are evaluated are Visionary Leadership, Instructional Improvement, Effective Management, Inclusive Practice, Ethical Leadership, and Socio-Political Context.

Resource 23: Connecticut administrator technology standards

Connecticut State Department of Education. (2002). *2001 Connecticut administrator technology standards.* Hartford, CT: Author. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/dtl/technology/catsv2.pdf

In collaboration with the Alliance of Regional Education Service Centers, the Connecticut State Department of Education developed six administrator technology standards that are designed specifically for superintendents, district program directors, and school principals. The standards are designed to promote "technology literacy" in administrators. For example, in Standard 1, Leadership and Vision, the aim is for "educational leaders [to] inspire a shared vision for comprehensive integration of technology and foster an environment and culture conducive to the realization of that vision" (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2002, p. 4). The other five standards are Learning and Teaching; Productivity and Professional Practice; Support, Management, and Operations; Assessment and Evaluation; and Social, Legal, and Ethical Issues.

Resource 24: Evaluation of principals by states and urban districts

Goldring, E. Cravens, X. C., Murphy, J., Elliott, S. N., Carson, B., & Porter, A., C. (2008, March). *The evaluation of principals: What and how do states and districts assess leadership?* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/Documents/pdf/LSI/AERA_EvaluationPrincipals.pdf

After completing a content analysis of 65 instruments used by districts and states across the United States to evaluate their school administrators, these researchers present their findings in a report that reveals that most of the instruments used are not informed by nor aligned with the current research-based criteria associated with effective leadership and school performance. Moreover, the authors note that "in most cases, the practices of leadership assessment lack justification and documentation in terms of the utility, psychometric properties, and accuracy of the instruments" (Goldring et al., 2008, p. 1).

Strategy 4: Use Multiple Forms of Assessments, and Vary the Types of Data Collected to Obtain a Holistic View of Principal Performance

The process by which a school administrator is evaluated should include multiple sources of data and mediums (e.g., incorporation of technology) in order to make certain that a clear picture about the administrator is captured (Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program, 2002). Examples of the types of assessments or information that should be part of the process include portfolios, surveys or interviews of stakeholders, supervisor (i.e., superintendent) reviews, school observations, principal self-assessment forms, and online or computer-based assessments.

Resource 25: Reflective tools for school and district leaders

Knapp, M. S., Copland, M. A., & Talbert, J. E. (2003). *Leading for learning: Reflective tools for school districts and leaders.* Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/LforLSummary-02-03.pdf

In 2003, the Center for the Study of Teaching Policy developed a framework geared primarily toward school and district administrators that provides a series of tools that encourage administrators to assess themselves and their schools and encourages them to think about and develop strategies that will impact improvement. The ideas and tools highlighted within the framework—which is not aligned with the ISLLC standards—were reviewed by over 300 educators, scholars, and other professionals.

Resource 26: Fairfax County, Virginia, assistant principal portfolio program

Fairfax County Public Schools. (2010). *Assistant principal portfolio program.* Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.fcps.edu/plt/Leaders/Programs/AP_Portfolio_Program.htm

This one-year program, which is designed around a grow-your-own model, aims to identify assistant principals within the Fairfax County Public School district with a minimum of two years experience who show promise and the necessary skills to eventually be promoted to school principal. As part of this program, assistant principals are required to attend workshops and sessions that teach them how to complete a personal portfolio that contains such artifacts as individual development plans, staff opinion survey results, and current evaluations.

Resource 27: Enhancing school leaders' reflective thinking and decision making

Claudet, J. (2006). A multimedia approach to enhancing school leaders' reflective thinking and decision making. *Interactive Educational Multimedia, 13*, 1–10. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.ub.es/multimedia/iem/down/c13/Multimedia_Approach.pdf

This article summarizes the development and use of a unique multimedia, computer-based tool, the Administrator Case Simulation (ACS) Multimedia Library, that is designed to impact "the professional development of school administrative leaders involved in collaborative school leadership" (Claudet, 2006, p. 1). Components of ACS are aligned with the National Policy Board for Educational Administration standards, ISLLC standards, and the Texas Standards for the Principalship. Working in partnership with school districts—in particular, principals, community members, and teachers—the designers developed a series of interactive tools that are specifically designed to "focus on providing an interactive, multimedia learning environment within which users can articulate and examine their own reflective thinking and decision making in response to school leadership dilemma situations" (Claudet, 2006, p. 6). For example, school leaders are given a CD-ROM on which they view real-life video portrayals of issues faced by school leaders under the topics Collaborative Leadership (e.g., consensus building), Equal Access (e.g., student rights), Inclusion (e.g., special education), Resistance to Change (e.g., teacher assessment and development), and Instructional Leadership (e.g., curriculum integration). As part of the next component, the Case Video Scenes Database, principals can view short scenes involving multiple, and conflicting, stakeholder perspectives on one of the leadership topic areas noted above. A "video-mark" feature allows principals to digitally mark features within the video for further reflective analysis, whereupon they also will be asked to describe how that specific scene or clip aligns to one or more administrative standards.

Resource 28: Alabama principal evaluation materials

Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program. (2002). *Principal evaluation system: Manuals, forms, and other materials.* Retrieved June 22, 2010, from http://www.alabamapepe.com/principal.htm

The Alabama Professional Education Personnel Evaluation (PEPE) program, created under a resolution by the Alabama State Board of Education, was designed initially to create a program that would systematically evaluate certified personnel in the state, including teachers and school leaders. The measurement-based, data-driven PEPE program contains an abundance of information and resources that school districts in the state can access to evaluate their school administrators. Included is a detailed manual that describes how frequently an administrator must be evaluated, who should conduct the evaluation, and what types of additional data (e.g., portfolios, artifacts) a district must collect to evaluate a school principal. Moreover, the site houses copies of multiple stakeholder surveys that can be administered to teachers, students, community members, and others to evaluate principals, as well as workbook that principals must use that provides a step-by-step process on how to analyze survey data.

Real-Life Example

Pittsburgh Urban Leadership System for Excellence

The Pittsburgh Urban Leadership System for Excellence (PULSE) is a recently implemented and totally revamped school leadership accountability system that was developed in partnership with RAND, ETS, Pittsburgh school district central office staff, principals, members of the Pittsburgh Administrators Association, steering committees, and subcommittees. The primary aim of PULSE is to recruit, train, support, evaluate, improve, and reward principals to "enable their success and the academic achievement growth of students" (Pittsburgh Public Schools, n.d., p. 4). This newly and more rigorously developed system is based on the following six components: the Pittsburgh Emerging Leaders Academy, induction for new administrators, a leadership academy, executive director mentoring and training, principal evaluation, and performance-based compensation.

In terms of the principal evaluation component, the district now uses an evaluation rubric that is aligned with the ISLLC standards and consists of 21 attributes of effective school leadership as identified by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005). Using the rubric, evaluators can now rate and place principals into one of four categories: *rudimentary, emerging, proficient,* or *accomplished*—rather than the old ratings of *satisfactory* or *unsatisfactory*. Principals within the district are now required to be evaluated twice each year—at midsemester and end of school year—and then spend two years in directed professional growth projects. The formal evaluation process consists of a principal self-assessment; executive director assessment; and the assessment of data or artifacts such as letters, test scores, and observations.

Using ratings from this principal evaluation, administrators can now earn salary increases based on the district's new pay-for-performance program. For example, PULSE links principal performance standards and specific bonuses or compensation to student growth and academic achievement gains. Principals can earn up to $2,000 annually, which then becomes a part of their base salary, if they are assessed as being proficient across the seven performance standards. In addition, administrators have the potential of earning a $10,000 bonus annually if they show "demonstrated growth in student achievement" (Pittsburgh Public Schools, n.d., p. 9).

Questions to Consider Before Implementing a Similar Evaluation System

- What would hinder your district from taking this real-life example and implementing it within your district's context?

- What adjustments would have to be made for this real-life example to be implemented in your district?

- How long would it take for those adjustments to be made?

- Who would be involved?

- How much would it cost?

- Where would the fiscal resources come from?

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