

**REL Mid-Atlantic Teacher Effectiveness Webinar Series**  
**Effective School Leaders**  
**Q&A with Eric A. Hanushek, Ph.D.**  
**October 9, 2014**

*This webinar discussed the important relationship between a school's socio-economic status, school leadership, and teacher turnover rate. Participants explored the major role of school leaders in fostering teacher effectiveness and discussed strategies they can use at the local level to increase school leader competencies. This Q&A addressed the questions participants had for Dr. Hanushek following the webinar. The [webinar recording](#) and [PowerPoint presentation](#) are also available.*

## **Questions**

### **1. By what standards can we qualify school leaders as effective?**

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards are commonly used to measure school leader effectiveness. In the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) Texas Schools Project, principal quality was examined using a value-added model to determine the effects of principals on student achievement on standardized math tests. Our work attempted to pinpoint which backgrounds and experiences matter in principal preparation and determined that training and background experiences do not seem to be linked closely to principal effectiveness.

### **2. What is the district role of a school leader? Why and how is it important to have district-level support?**

Principals have important roles to play as school leaders. They are important contributors to school effectiveness. School leaders can impact teacher retention, teacher growth, school culture, and student achievement gains, which matter in accounting for district effectiveness.

### **3. How do effective school leaders support teacher morale?**

Effective principals can impact teacher retention, teacher growth, school culture, and student achievement gains. Teachers impact the students in their class, and principals are capable of affecting all of the students of a school. As teachers are more likely to move to other districts if they work in schools with the least effective principals, principals have a role to play in keeping strong teachers and making personnel decisions.

### **4. How does a school leader attract the best and brightest teachers?**

Teachers are more likely to leave schools with the least effective principals, so effective principals impact teacher turnover and play important roles as recruiters.

### **5. How can school leaders be effective in underserved communities?**

The data from the UTD Texas Schools Project show the impact that school leaders can have on schools and student achievement. We need to take school leadership seriously in all schools and districts because the data show how much it matters. Ways to be effective in underserved communities include increasing communication, increasing parent engagement, and understanding school and community culture.

### **6. What makes research such an important tool in an educator's toolbox?**

The research from the UTD Texas Schools Project is important because it shows the role school leaders play in impacting their schools. Research proves that it is important to focus on school leadership due to the impact that school leaders have on their schools.

### **7. Compensation is frequently held up as the determinant of high attrition rates. What does research say about the primary reasons for retention and turnover?**

Research tells us that principals have a role in keeping effective teachers in their schools and making personnel decisions in their schools. Teachers are more likely to leave schools with the least effective principals.

### **8. What type of standardized tests were used in the data?**

The standardized tests used in the UTD Texas Schools Project were used in the same way as No Child Left Behind accountability tests. Texas used accountability tests before No Child Left Behind, so the tests used were the standardized math tests given to students in Texas. These tests were not always used for other measures and did not always affect student promotion or graduation.

### **9. How do these data apply to high-poverty schools, poor student behavior, and decreased family engagement?**

The important thing to note is that there are many differences in principals and effectiveness. Being a principal in a challenging school requires specific skills. If you have two equally trained and equally prepared principals, they will have different effects in different schools. We know that we need to take this seriously because of the potential impact principals can have.

### **10. Have you noticed differences between charter and private schools?**

Charter schools in Texas have improved over the last decade. In surveys, almost all respondents mention the importance of leadership in their improvement and the potential that strong leaders have to influence the development of their schools.

## Action Steps

Participants responded to the question “As a result of today’s webinar, what action steps do you plan to take?” and some of their responses are listed below.

- *Support my principal as a teacher leader.*
- *Include what I have learned in my online course on poverty.*
- *Continue to implement Instructional Rounds and SAM Project to increase our principal’s instructional leadership time & effectiveness.*
- *Share some of the information with the central leadership in the large urban district with which I work.*
- *Consider how to recognize and affirm principals.*
- *Take a closer look at the principal institutes in the Chicago area and how they prepare principals compared to their performance in their assigned or selected school.*
- *Explore more data on principal movement.*
- *Work to identify principal effectiveness at the school level; look for leading indicators in culture/behavior/survey data; explore the connection between staffing and principal effectiveness.*
- *Continue to develop myself into becoming the kind of leader who will inspire excellence on the part of my teachers and students.*
- *Research local data in order to identify best practices and enhance principal quality.*
- *Share this research with my aspiring principal cohort.*

## Additional Resources

- The Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008:  
[http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2008/Educational\\_Leadership\\_Policy\\_Standards\\_2008.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2008/Educational_Leadership_Policy_Standards_2008.pdf)
- Branch, G. F., Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (2013). School leaders matter: Measuring the impact of effective principals. *Education Next*, 13(1), 62–69. Available at:  
[http://hanushek.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Branch%2Bhanushek%2BRivkin%202013%20EdNext%2013%281%29\\_0.pdf](http://hanushek.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Branch%2Bhanushek%2BRivkin%202013%20EdNext%2013%281%29_0.pdf)
- Horng, E. L., Kalogrides, D., & Loeb, S. (2009). Principal preferences and the uneven distribution of principals across schools. (School Leadership Research Report No. 09-2). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Institute for Research on Education Policy and Practice. Available at:  
[http://stanford.edu/~sloeb/papers/Principal%20Preferences%20\(revised\).pdf](http://stanford.edu/~sloeb/papers/Principal%20Preferences%20(revised).pdf)
- Rick Hanushek’s Stanford University homepage: <http://hanushek.stanford.edu/>