District Leadership for Effective Principal Evaluation and Support

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Introduction

Research demonstrating principals' impact on student learning outcomes has fueled the shift from principals as facilities managers to an emphasis on instructional leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Principals are under increasing pressure to carry out effective instructional leadership practices, including those needed to adopt college- and career-ready standards and more comprehensive teacher evaluation approaches. To improve instructional leadership performance, districts are stepping up principal support and oversight by increasing the focus of principal supervisors on principal evaluation and school leadership support functions (Canole & Richardson, 2014; Corcoran, Casserly, Price-Baugh, Walston, Hall, & Simon, 2013; Honig, 2012, 2013; Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newton, 2010).

Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) sites, like many schools and districts nationwide, are implementing new principal evaluation systems intended to be meaningful for both accountability and leadership improvement purposes. We explore in this brief how four TIF grantees are:

1. Training principal evaluators and monitoring principal evaluations to promote rating accuracy and improved performance feedback;

2. Using principal evaluation processes and measures to support principal professional learning and performance; and

3. Providing other supports for principals to improve their leadership.

The grantees featured include Broward County School District, Miami-Dade County School District, two districts participating in the Ohio TIF project, and Denver Public Schools.

We begin with a brief review of literature about supporting principal evaluators and using evaluation to support principal development. We then provide a summary of each site's evaluation process and describe how the four sites support principal evaluators and principal performance improvement. The brief concludes with questions current and future TIF grantees should consider as they reflect on how their systems are working or plan changes to better support principal supervisors and principals in order to improve supervision and instructional leadership.

Selected Findings From Prior Studies

Like teachers or any other professional, principals' practice develops over time through experience, reflection, and support. With annual principal mobility and attrition rates hovering at 25 percent nationally, school districts are taking a fresh look at how they cultivate and manage leadership talent. Many TIF sites are beginning to rethink the role of principal supervisors in building relationships with principals, offering guidance, evaluating performance, and opening access to learning resources as central to principal supports. Just as principals are charged to serve as instructional leaders who expand teaching practice, principal supervisors are increasingly expected to support principals to improve principal practice.

Literature on principal supervisor roles mainly reflects expert opinion and some descriptive case studies.[1] From these sources, we know that principal supervisors struggle to support principals for a variety of reasons, but that the principal supervisor position holds potential for improving school leadership and retaining principals. Key findings from these studies include the following:

- Principal supervisors face multiple, competing demands from other central office duties (e.g., district-level planning and oversight meetings, employee and student dismissal proceedings) that infringe on time to evaluate and support principals.

- Responsibility for principal supervision varies widely across districts and may be split across central office departments, making coordination a challenge. Lead supervisors are typically superintendents, assistant superintendents, regional directors, or human resource directors. Other district-level staff responsible for overseeing different programs may also have input into principal accountability and support systems.

- Principal supervisors in medium and large districts often supervise large numbers of principals.

- Principal evaluation instrumentation is often outdated or superficial, with weak connections to current leadership standards or evidence of validity and reliability.

- Training and support for principal evaluation is not comprehensive or consistently applied.

- Some school districts are changing the supervisor position to support principal development and use ongoing evaluation, as opposed to monitoring compliance.

In summary, principal supervisors lack training, time, and tools to evaluate principals and provide principals job-embedded professional development (PD). However, many experts point to the potential of district-level supervisors for improving principals' practice.

Principal mentoring and coaching[2] has also received some descriptive or theoretical attention in the literature.[3] While the design and impact of mentoring and coaching programs are still not well understood, there are some indications that they too hold promise for supporting principal development despite potential challenges.

- Mentoring can help principals as they transition to new roles by providing a low-risk source of feedback, modeling, and problem-solving support.

- Some evidence from other sectors indicates that leadership coaching leads to improved leader performance.

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[1] Canole & Richardson, 2014; Condon & Clifford, 2012; Corcoran et al., 2013; Gill, 2013; Goldring et al., 2009; Honig, 2012, 2013; Honig et al., 2010; Kimball, Milanowski, & McKinney, 2009; Syed, 2014.

[2] Mentoring and coaching programs can be distinct, though coaching concepts are often applied in mentoring programs. Mentoring is typically used for new or struggling professional educators, while coaching may be used for educators across the career continuum.

[3] Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005; De Meuse, Guangrong, & Lee, 2009; Goff, Guthrie, Goldring, & Bickman, 2014; Gray, Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, no date; Page & de Haan, 2014.

However,

- Mentoring and coaching tends to be ad hoc, with limited planning, matching of principals and mentors, and mentor training.

- Mentoring and coaching programs have loose connections to important leadership competencies and may not align to district leadership standards.

- Mentoring and coaching programs require new or reallocated funding sources.

Given the relative lack of guidance available from research, we sought out TIF grantees that appeared to emphasize principal evaluator support and linking evaluation results with principal PD. We summarize information on these grantees in the next section.[4]

Site Descriptions

Broward County. Broward County Public Schools is a large school district in Florida. The district's principal evaluation system is the Broward Assessment for School Administrators (BASA), which is based on the state principal evaluation model and comprises three measures: student growth, leadership practice, and deliberate practice. Student growth is 50 percent of the principal evaluation and is measured using schoolwide value-added. Leadership practice is assessed using the Florida School Leader Assessment (FSLA). Deliberate practice includes two annual goals developed by the principal. As for other Florida districts, the model is approved by the Florida Department of Education (DOE). Broward principal supervisors focus on principal evaluation and support, are housed in the Office of School Performance and Accountability (OSPA), and are referred to as OSPA directors. The supervisor- to-principal ratio is about 1:25.

Miami-Dade County. The Miami-Dade County Public Schools is also a large Florida school district that uses a principal evaluation system based on the state model and includes measures similar to Broward's approach. In Miami-Dade, the principal supervisors are region directors. Principals are supervised by four region directors. Three of the directors are assigned schools by geographic area, and one director is assigned the most "fragile" schools. The region directors report to a region superintendent. The supervisor-to-principal ratio varies in each region, but is about 1:25.

Ohio TIF. The two Ohio school districts (Franklin and Georgetown) are small, rural districts. Both districts evaluate principals using the Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES). The Ohio Department of Education developed OPES in 2007 through a grant with the Wallace Foundation. The agency convened a group of educational stakeholders from across the state to design a model principal evaluation system aligned to the five Ohio standards for principals. The system comprises four components: principal performance on the five Ohio Principal Standards, their professional growth plan, a supervisor's formative assessment of the principal, and growth measures. Leadership practice is evaluated using a four-level scoring rubric. The superintendent in each district is the only principal evaluator.

Denver. Denver Public Schools is a large, urban district in Colorado. The Denver Public Schools principal evaluation system comprises two components: a student growth measure that emphasizes student learning improvement (50 percent) and a practice measure (50 percent) that addresses the quality of principals' practices. The system uses multiple measures to evaluate professional practice and student outcomes. With funding from Race to the Top and the Wallace Principal Pipeline initiative, Denver Public Schools has continuously made improvements to its principal evaluation system. Area superintendents supervise principals. Each area superintendent oversees 14 school principals, and the work of area superintendents is overseen by the elementary and secondary superintendents of schools.

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[4] Appendix A includes additional information on each sites' principal evaluation approach.

Supervisor Training and Support for Principal Evaluation and Feedback

Each of the districts has worked to improve principal evaluation and instructional leadership, which has increased the demands on principal evaluators.[5] Principal supervisors need to understand detailed practice rubrics, follow complex procedures, more frequently observe and measure principal practice, and provide actionable feedback based on evaluation results. This requires more intensive training and support than prior evaluation approaches. The districts included in our study provided this in two primary ways: (1) evaluation training and use of the evaluation process and guidance documents and (2) organizational supports provided by other central office units.

The vignettes below indicate that each district dedicates time and resources to supervisor training, emphasizing the following elements:

- Procedural compliance,

- Providing effective feedback,

- Leadership standards, indicators, and frameworks, and

- Student growth measures.

There were, however, differences in approaches to supervisor training. Three of the four sites first relied on state training, at least at the early stages of system implementation. Districts then augmented or replaced state training with their own approaches or with support of external partners. Some emphasize formal training to promote procedural consistency and rating accuracy. Districts such as Miami-Dade, for example, provide formal training on evaluation procedures to supervisors, which is repeated annually and scheduled to correspond with each aspect of the principal evaluation procedure. Others take a "job-embedded" approach to supervisor training (e.g., Denver), which involves regularly convening supervisors to review, discuss, and rethink principal evaluation and support.

Broward

Training. The OSPA directors received intensive training from the Florida DOE during the first two years of the new principal evaluation implementation. This training covered the research behind the Florida standards, performance indicators, evidence examples related to each performance area, scoring calibration activities, evaluation forms and processes, feedback strategies, and student growth measures. In subsequent years, the district contracted with an external partner to provide principal evaluation training on similar content.

In addition to training on the evaluation process, Broward provides other training opportunities to the OSPA directors. For example, the Director of Employee Evaluations recently took the OSPA directors through instructional/observation rounds and encouraged them to use the same language when reflecting and commenting on the rounds. The OSPA directors also do observation rounds with principals they support. During these rounds, OSPA directors examine teachers' content presentation, with an emphasis on teachers moving to higher order student questioning. The teacher evaluation framework and principal evaluation framework help anchor these walkthroughs and related discussions.

To promote consistency, the OSPA directors follow a seven-step evaluation process for each principal, which includes: (1) an orientation session in late summer; (2) pre-evaluation planning during early September, where principals submit their self-assessment and Deliberate Practice goals (which focus on a school improvement priority and a professional

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[5] New principal evaluation systems were required in each state and TIF requirements call for principal evaluation to center principal human capital management systems.

practice goal); (3) a planning meeting with the evaluator in mid-September; (4) ongoing data collection, monitoring, and feedback; (5) a mid-year progress review in January with their evaluator; (6) evidence submission to prepare for final evaluation by early May; and, (7) a final evaluation meeting between late May and the end of June. This process, and the evaluation framework, helps support principal supervisors by providing a consistent structure for the evaluation process.

Organizational supports. OSPA directors also receive regular support from the Director of Employee Evaluations and other district offices. They meet monthly with the Director of Employee Evaluations to review evaluation reports. For example, the director shares reports on feedback provided to principals, and how principals are carrying out the teacher evaluation process. The teacher evaluation process review includes examining evidence of observations, teacher ratings, and written feedback. These reviews lead to focused support. If trends suggest deficiencies in evaluation dialog, for example, principal supervisors may receive support on coaching and feedback strategies. The principal supervisors frequently have conversations among themselves to share tips and tools in supporting school leaders.

There is also an academic specialist assigned to every OSPA director. When a director goes on a school visit, he or she brings the academic specialist. The academic specialist can raise issues noted during classroom walkthroughs, such as curriculum coverage and content accuracy. This support provides content expertise and another "set of eyes" to better understand teaching and learning and to help generate deeper feedback during director and principal conversations.

Additionally, principal supervisors are supported by the Office of Service Quality, which the superintendent recently established. This office handles staff grievance concerns that previously went to the principal supervisors. The Office of Service Quality now acts as the first line of response for grievance issues, potentially resolving them before they go to the principal-supervisor level.

Miami-Dade

Training. The region directors receive training on the components of the evaluation system twice a year. One of the trainings focuses on the process, including the timeline, scoring, and coaching conversations with the principals. The other training focuses on a review of the standards. In addition to the yearly trainings, region directors receive ongoing support throughout the year from staff in the Personnel Accountability & Performance Management office.

Similar to Broward County, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools provides a School-Site Leadership Practice Guide that details the requirements of the evaluation system and includes the FSLA as well as forms related to the evaluation and the seven-step evaluation process. The process includes: (1) the district providing orientation and training, (2) principals completing a self-assessment, (3) principals developing two Deliberate Practice Professional Growth Targets and meeting with their evaluator, (4) ongoing data collection throughout the year, (5) a mid-year progress review with evaluator, (6) the evaluator preparing the performance assessment/ratings, and (7) a year-end meeting between the evaluator and the principal. The evaluation process has been developed to be a cycle of continuous reflection and improvement.

Supervisors are trained on the Deliberate Practice goal setting and rating process. Deliberate Practice ratings are determined by a comparison of proficiency from the start point of the growth target and proficiency at the end point of the target. Principals and their supervisors agree on the data to determine the proficiency comparison. when the growth targets are developed. The Deliberate Practice has four rating levels: unsatisfactory (no significant effort to work on the targets), needs improvement (evidence that some of the progress points were accomplished but not all of the targets), effective (target accomplished), and highly effective (exceeded the targets and able to share what was learned with others).

Organizational supports. Miami-Dade region directors are physically located in the same geographic area as the principals they supervise. They are not part of the Central Office. For support, region directors have administrative staff in their offices. To free up region directors to work more closely with principals, the Central Office retains the basic managerial duties (i.e., paperwork). In addition to the administrative and Central Office support directors receive, region directors support each other through a shared responsibility of data collection and observation. Region directors are each assigned principals to supervise, and each director also has an area of responsibility assigned, for example, budget, PD, or special education. Region directors will support other region directors in evaluating specific areas. Observations of principals are conducted by the principal supervisor and by the other region directors depending on the Deliberate Practice goal focus. At the end of the year, final evaluations are completed collaboratively with all of the region directors and the region superintendent.

Denver

Training. Denver Public Schools uses a mix of formal and job-embedded PD to train area superintendents, with an emphasis on creating a professional community of practice. PD is facilitated through common meeting times on Mondays and Fridays, when all area superintendents meet, and during one-on-one meetings with the elementary and the secondary school superintendents. Training is ongoing and occurs through the execution of the principal evaluation system. Formal PD includes workshops on principal evaluation procedures or other topics of interest such as overviews of the emerging state-level principal evaluation system.

Denver engages internal and external consultants to provide formal training. Area superintendents, however, experience more informal PD in the form of book discussions, co- ratings of principal performance that engage them in discussions of interpretation of the rubrics and performance evidence, data reviews, and supervisory conversations with the elementary and the secondary school superintendents. The area superintendents learn from each other, through the principal evaluation process, and are engaged with their supervisors in rethinking and redesigning the principal evaluation system.

In Denver Public Schools, supervisors are provided REFLEX principal observation tools to collect evidence on principals' communication with teachers. REFLEX is a formal observation protocol that requires supervisors to script conversations and rate principal performance against competencies. Principal supervisors were introduced to the REFLEX observation tool through a mix of PD that included (a) book discussions, (b) formal training, (c) video-based scoring, and (d) informal coaching and support by assistant superintendents. The video-based scoring, according to the assistant superintendent, occurred over a two-day period of formal PD, which included video-based scoring calibration. While REFLEX is considered part of the performance evaluation process, its most important feature is in generating conversation about leadership practice improvement among supervisors and principals.

Organizational supports. Elementary and secondary school superintendents directly support area superintendents. Denver Public Schools' technology office also supports area superintendents by providing school-level performance information and human resources information, which is used to inform principal evaluation discussions. The Denver Public Schools human resources office also provides procedural supports for principal evaluation.

An important organizational support focuses on area superintendents' time. Denver Public Schools has recently reorganized area superintendents' time to provide (1) more in-school contact with principals and (2) weekly dis-

trict-level meetings to discuss principal performance and school progress. With more in-school contact hours, area superintendents are able to conduct multiple observations and school walkthroughs, and coach principals to improve practice. With a consolidated schedule, area superintendents meet as a team at the beginning and end of each week, and this common meeting time is used for PD.

With support from the Wallace Foundation, Denver Public Schools has reshaped the principal supervisor position, beginning with the number of principals assigned to each supervisor and the way supervisor time is scheduled. Through consolidation of PD contracts, the district realized a financial savings that allowed for hiring of new area superintendents, thus reducing the principal to supervisor ratio to 14:1. The lower supervisory ratio supports more frequent exchanges between principals and supervisors and increases the frequency of school walkthroughs and observations.

Now principal supervisors are expected to be in schools between Tuesday and Thursday, working with principals and staff. On Mondays and Fridays, supervisors have district-level meetings. The shift in the weekly schedule created supervision routines, conversation among supervisors, and opportunities for collaborative learning. Each Friday, for example, principal supervisors meet with assistant superintendents to discuss schools and engage in meetings, which include formal and informal PD.

Ohio TIF 3: Franklin and Georgetown School Districts

Training: Principal supervisors in Ohio are required to complete a state-sponsored training and certification program. The Buckeye Association of School Administrators provides two-day, regional training. The training encompasses all parts of the OPES system. It includes practice on the following elements: observing, working with written scenarios, aligning evidence to the standards, accurately completing required paperwork, and holistic scoring of principal practice measures. It also provides some training on coaching. A Web-based test provided by the National Institute of Excellence (NIET) is required after training completion. The test consists of 20 questions, which are based on video-taped observations and also cover how artifacts align to the evaluation standards. Currently, approximately 90 percent pass on their first attempt. Those who fail must review training materials online and are given an opportunity to retest. Credentials are active for two years. Re-calibration is offered online, and passing a corresponding test is required every two years. Supervisors without certification or with expired credentials are not able to enter data into Ohio's electronic data system.

In addition, supervisors are trained on how to conduct a post-observation conference with their principals. There are four post-observation conferencing steps. The steps entail (1) an introduction/greeting to ask about principal perceptions for the event, (2) a reinforcing statement, (3) a suggestion for refinement, and (4) a discussion of evidence tied to the rating. Supervisors are trained to prepare for the post-observation conference by developing at least three reflective questions related to the principal's area of reinforcement and three questions they would like to ask the principal for refinement. These areas come from the observation and the collection of evidence provided.

The system clearly delineates the roles and responsibilities of principals and evaluators to ensure consistent implementation. Principals are expected to attend conferences with their evaluator to establish and review their goals and objectives, develop action plans, collect evidence, and reflect on their progress for continued improvement. Evaluators are expected to host conferences with their principals; review goals, action plans, and evidence; conduct observations; provide timely and actionable feedback; and complete a summative evaluation prior to making contract recommendations.

Organizational supports. Superintendents receive support through Ohio TIF partners, Battelle for Kids (BFK) and the Ohio Appalachian Collaborative. In the early stages of TIF 3, superintendents and principals in the TIF districts were offered training on coaching and on the OPES and Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) processes

before other Ohio districts. BFK offers a variety of workshops and ongoing training for district administrators. One of BFK's successful efforts has been to provide virtual and in-person opportunities for administrators to come together to collaborate on a variety of issues such as high-growth practices, implementation of new student academic standards, reallocation of district resources to meet their most pressing challenges, data coaching, and educator effectiveness. Another BFK effort is Connect for Success. Connect for Success trains administrators on ways to support the professional growth of their principals and teachers. BFK also offers training on data coaching.

Connecting Evaluations to Principal Leadership Learning Opportunities

In addition to evaluating principal performance, supervisors support principal professional growth planning. We expected that each district would have a principal professional growth planning process in place because TIF guidelines set expectations for using evaluation results to inform principal professional development.

Each of the four sites met this priority by creating individual principal PD plans informed by self-assessments and performance dialog. Learning opportunities within principal evaluation systems involve both the process of going through the evaluation and reflecting on results from the evaluation measures. In our four sites, leadership learning opportunities are evident in initial goal setting, feedback and coaching during the evaluation cycle, performance management planning, and connecting principals to PD based on the evaluation resultsAlthough the districts do not appear to link evaluation ratings to formal professional development, each site embraces performance evaluation as a way to shape ongoing principal growth and use the process and results to inform professional learning. Further, all respondents spoke of coaching roles that principal supervisors play both within and outside of the principal evaluation context.

Broward

Goal setting. At the start of each year, Broward principals engage in a self-assessment and goal- setting process. They use the BASA rubric and school improvement plan (SIP) to help identify areas of leadership to support school goals as well as professional goals. These goals are formally documented in the Deliberate Practice form and help guide evaluation activities. Soon after the goal development stage, principals and OSPA directors meet to review the self-assessment and Deliberate Practice goals as well as plan for the evaluation year.

In addition to personal and school-related goals, the planning discussions offer the opportunity for OSPA directors and principals to discuss connections between the goals, principal performance indicators (the BASA indicators), and district priorities. For example, the district has identified four priority areas: (1) professional learning communities, (2) response to intervention, (3) relationships, and (4) scaling up best practices. For each priority, the district identified related BASA indicators. These indicators help guide principals and BASA directors to expected performance demonstrating leadership effectiveness in implementing the district priorities.

Feedback and coaching. OSPA directors are expected to provide ongoing feedback and coaching to principals. These opportunities are structured into the seven-step evaluation process. As part of the evaluation process, OSPA directors conduct frequent school visits. Although there are three minimum required observations, most principals are visited more often. Additionally, OSPA directors interact with principals during monthly cadre meetings and at leadership training sessions. These meetings also offer opportunities for the directors to observe principals inter- acting with peers and engaging in PD activities. Both allow context for additional coaching and feedback.

Feedback is provided mostly through verbal conversations. When OSPA directors note serious concerns, they will generate a memo and take action to plan for changes and document progress. OSPA directors strive to be coaches. Their preference is to keep conversations formative and ongoing and to not feel like they must document every discussion. This is fed by their common understanding that it is "OK to fail." Leadership necessarily takes risks, and there are supports available for leaders to do so.

Overall, the process of engaging in goal setting and frequent conversations is a major shift from Broward's prior principal evaluation approach. The previous system was characterized as having limited interaction, but fairly extensive written narratives about performance. The current approach is less rigid and represents an ongoing performance management cycle. Individual principals are continuously assessing their work and discussing their progress with peers and OSPA directors during school visits, cadre meetings, and leadership training.

Links to performance management and PD. In addition to the more immediate feedback from OSPA directors and principals on performance in relation to the BASA indicators, evaluation results also inform PD decisions. The Broward Office of Talent Development reviews principal evaluation results, and the OSPA directors and Director of Employee Evaluations will discuss trends. If a principal is persistently struggling with an indicator, proficiency area, or domain, he/she may be provided a mentor or, if persistently deficient, placed on a plan of improvement.

PD is linked to the BASA indicators. For example, if principals struggle with establishing consistent and meaningful professional learning opportunities for faculty (one of the BASA indicators), then PD may be suggested for an individual principal. If it is a concern for others, OSPA directors may offer PD on facilitating and leading professional learning during a monthly cadre meeting, which represents school-based opportunities for leadership development and support.

Miami-Dade

Goal setting. Principals annually set two growth targets for the Deliberate Practice part of the Leadership Practice measure. One of the goals is a school growth target. It is based on school data and context and aligns with the SIP and the district strategic plan. The other goal is a personal instructional leadership growth target. It is based on previous evaluation feedback and school performance data and aligns to the SIP and the district strategic plan. Principals and their region director meet in the beginning of the year to discuss the two growth targets. They meet again at mid-year to review progress and at the end of the year to discuss outcomes and next steps. The growth targets are required to include indications of progress. Observations of the principal take place related to the targets throughout the year.

Feedback. The evaluation process requires "specific and actionable feedback" to the principal throughout the year "as evidence and observations are obtained." Supervisors conduct formal observations related to the two growth targets set by the principal and conduct unannounced learning walks with the principal related to issues relevant to the particular school's SIP. In both cases, supervisors and principals have discussions to clarify school priorities and issues the principal is addressing to meet the priorities.

Links to performance management and PD. Principals participate in a "scaled" leadership program. It is called scaled PD because each year builds on the previous year's content. It is a required, monthly, targeted PD pro- gram for all principals and assistant principals. District goals and district data, including evaluation results and data from a leadership needs assessment, drive the PD. The PD program is provided regionally throughout the district because of the large district size. Additional PD offered must align with the four domains of the FSLA and the district improvement plan. Supervisors can recommend PD for principals at any point in the year based on evaluation data.

Ohio TIF 3

Goal setting. The OPES model recommends that principals develop at a minimum two goals each year aligned to two of the five standards. Franklin and Georgetown each have their own process for goal development.

Franklin. At the beginning of each year, Franklin principals engage in a self-assessment, which is optional in the OPES, but required by the superintendent. Principals then develop a Professional Growth Plan. The Growth Plan includes goals based on feedback from previous evaluations and student learning data and that align with the five Ohio principal standards and with district and school goals. Goals can be short or long term and are written using SMART criteria (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound). Growth plans also list the supports principals need for their continued growth and development. The goal development process is designed to be reflective.

Georgetown. In Georgetown, like in Franklin, principals are required to use the OPES self-assessment. They are also responsible for writing two goals for their growth plan at the beginning of each school year. The goals developed by the principal are considered guidelines for principal practice. The superintendent can either accept them as the principal wrote them or suggest others depending on his impression of principal or building needs.

Feedback and coaching.

Franklin. Franklin principals are required to store evidence on goal progress in tabbed binders according to the Ohio principal standards. Principals meet with their superintendent in January and March to discuss progress on goals. Before these meetings, the superintendent reviews the collected evidence. These discussions are lengthy and provide time to reflect on the goals and for the superintendent to provide formative feedback. Notes from the conversations are stored in the state's online evaluation data system, eTPES.

Principals receive at least two to four observations a year. Observations occur in several venues, including accompanying the principal on a classroom walkthrough, in a professional learning community meeting, in a building leadership team meeting, during a pre- or a post-conference with a teacher who is being evaluated, in a staff meeting, or in a parent meeting. Observations must be at least 30 minutes. Supervisors provide feedback from the observations at the post-observation conference. Post-observation conferences must take place within seven workdays of the observation. As discussed above, superintendents receive training in the four key elements of a post-conference and are encouraged to thoroughly prepare. In addition to the feedback provided after observations, informal and formal coaching occurs regularly.

Georgetown. Twice per year, in January and at the end of March, the superintendent provides formative feedback on goal progress and professional practice and enters the information in eTPES. Additionally, the superintendent meets with each principal monthly. The monthly meetings focus on data and the principal's two goals. Throughout the year, the superintendent conducts at least two formal observations of the principals and is frequently in schools to provide feedback and resources as needed.

Links to performance management and PD.

Franklin. The principal evaluation system informs PD in the district. In the beginning of grant implementation, all staff, including principals, received training on data interpretation, including value-added and student learning objectives. Recent PD has been on formative instructional practice and assessment for learning. Principals attend trainings with their teachers. In cases where additional PD is needed, based on evaluation results, district administrators hold retreats and targeted monthly meetings around district and building needs. In addition, principals attend the BFK Leadership Academy and the Regional Educational Service Center trainings. Principals are also strongly encouraged to attend trainings if they have a particular educational interest or an area of practice in need of refinement.

Georgetown. In Georgetown, PD links to the former year's evaluation results. Principals often meet with the superintendent after school is dismissed for the summer to begin identifying which areas they need to focus on for the following school year. PD is related to the yearly goals principals develop. One of the goals is centered on improving student growth, and one is related to professional practice. As a result, some PD relates to content areas, and some relates to developing leadership skills.

Denver

Goal setting. Denver Public Schools has sought to embed into its culture the use of performance data to improve leadership, teaching, and learning. Principal supervisors and assistant superintendents use principal performance assessment evidence and school data to facilitate principal goal setting and PD planning. Performance evaluation results and school-level data are maintained in a centralized district database that supervisors routinely access. Goal setting and PD planning occur at the beginning of each academic year and are revisited and adjusted throughout the year.

Feedback and coaching. Denver Public Schools' supervisors use multiple measures to collect evidence on principal performance and have made informal performance feedback a part of their routine. Ongoing, informal conversations about performance are expected between principals and supervisors during each week and school visit, regardless of principals' level of experience. Supervisors tend to visit new principals' schools more than other schools, and, therefore, provide new principals more informal feedback.

The district does not document all feedback given to principals during the academic year because doing so could inhibit trust between the supervisor and principal. Memos are rarely written about principal performance during the academic year. Formal performance evaluation meetings at the beginning, mid-year, and end of the year document principal progress and chart improvements, and principals meet with district-level staff to discuss school progress. Prior to formal evaluation meetings, the assistant superintendents review each written performance evaluation and meet with supervisors. According to the assistant superintendent, formal performance evaluation ratings should not be a surprise to principals because they are receiving consistent input throughout the school year.

Other Supports for Principal Leadership

In addition to performance evaluation feedback, we explored the extent to which the districts had other formal leadership supports, such as school improvement planning, mentoring, and coaching. Supports provided varied among the sites. While some had formal mentoring and coaching programs, others were less formal. We highlight examples from two of the sites with formal programs.

Broward

School Improvement Plans. In Broward, each school is required to create and post on its website an SIP that focuses on improving student achievement. The SIP format addresses questions such as, "How can we improve learning and get graduation to 100 percent?" The SIPs follow a basic template and require school leaders to identify top-performing schools with similar demographics and identify their improvement strategies. Then, leaders articulate strategies they will apply to address their specific school context and student achievement data. SIPs are intended to be "living" documents, serving as reference points during faculty meetings and as a transparent signal to the school community about school goals, strategies, and expected outcomes.

The deliberate practice component of BASA also ties to Broward's SIP. Principals come up with indicators aligned to their SIP and matched with implementation rubrics to track their practice in relation to the SIP goal.

Mentoring/coaching. Mentoring and coaching are available district wide. Broward uses an informal process to connect principals with peers as needed. However, first-year principals are assigned an experienced principal who is available to help support them as a mentor. First-year principals are also assigned a coach. Additionally, the OSPA directors work closely with new principals and provide coaching support. Mentors and coaches support principals in different facets of leadership. For example, they may share classroom observation strategies to help make them more purposive and help principals craft feedback to teachers.

As part of its TIF program, Broward County created a principal career continuum, including principal mentors, principal coaches, and principal peer reviewers. These positions both help principals in TIF schools as well as the OSPA director in supporting coaching, mentoring, and evaluation to improve leadership performance. To qualify for any of these roles, principals must have a minimum of three to five years of experience (depending on the role) and receive a rating of effective or highly effective on their evaluation. Other requirements include demonstrating the ability to improve student achievement as well as demonstrating adult leadership experience, such as serving as a mentor in the first-year principal support program or the district leadership pipeline program. TIF principals also have two mentors matched at the school level. The TIF director selects the mentors, coaches, and peer evaluators. See Figure 1 for more information about these roles and related training.

The evaluation process also encourages principals to collaborate and coach with other leaders in different schools. For example, to receive a highly effective rating on certain indicators, principals must show that they have worked with other principals or successfully transferred a process or strategy from their school to another school.

Miami-Dade

Mentoring and coaching. Coaching is provided to all new principals as part of their leadership induction. Coaching takes place on two half-days a month. Coaches are highly effective, experienced, retired principals. Coaching focus is typically determined by the coach and the principal. The type of school a principal is assigned to (i.e., magnet or struggling neighborhood school) also factors into determining coaching supports.

Principals are also assigned a mentor principal. These relationships are less formal than those with the coaches. The content and structure of the mentoring relationship is determined by the principal and the mentor. The district is currently developing a formalized mentor program that will include mentor training.

Figure 1: Broward TIF Principal Career Continuum Roles and Training

Principal Mentor 5 positions $2,000 stipends	Principal Coach 2 positions $3,500 stipends	Principal Peer Reviewer 1 position $5,000 stipend
Roles and Expectations		
Maintain current principal position	Maintain current principal position	Full-time peer reviewer for 25 TIF principals
Mentor up to two novice principals (who have two to three years' experience)	Develop and deliver training for the teacher evaluation system	Lead school administrator teams in calibrating observation skills and related feedback
Build trusting relationships	Coach, co-observe, and help with inter-rater agreement	Conduct school reviews
Help identify and support best practices	Assist principals in making connections between Florida standards and the instructional framework	Identify discrepancies between goals and current state and facilitate solutions
Provide timely, constructive feedback	Maintain confidentiality	Collect and analyze data to identify specific strategies to improve teacher professional growth
Assist with resource identification	Help identify and support best practices	Identify resources and professional learning opportunities to improve parent involvement
Support the development and implementation of the Deliberate Practice component of BASA	Help principals analyze teacher and student data to inform instructional improvement	Review principals' BASA results and provide feedback
Assist with school processes and procedures	Document activities	Assist with OSPA director succession planning
Document activities		
Training		
Teacher evaluator credential	Coaching for instructional rounds	Complete all mentor and coach course
New Teacher Center three-day foundations course	Inter-rater reliability	Engage in training with OSPA directors
	New Teacher Center three-day foundational course	

Source: Broward County School District, Office of Talent Development

Summary of Findings

Although principal performance evaluation holds potential to measure and improve principal performance, prior research suggests principal evaluation has not realized this potential. TIF provided organizations with resources and requirements to rapidly improve performance evaluation as a first step to addressing comprehensive educator talent management. This brief highlights a number of examples of how districts are implementing principal evaluation and supporting principal supervisors and principals. Overall, we found that:

- The new principal evaluation systems are more complex and demanding than previous approaches. New approaches offer the possibility of greater accuracy, fairness, and focus on important leadership practices. According to our contacts, new evaluation systems will meet their potential only if supervisors are well trained and can implement new tools with fidelity.

- All sites include principal supervisor training and support, but their approaches differ. Several emphasize formalized supervisor PD, such as workshops or meetings, to inform supervisors about evaluation procedures and support the fidelity of performance evaluation implementation. Other organizations rely on state training and use informal PD approaches, such as co-design and co-rating of performance, to train supervisors.

- Grantees recognize that support for principal evaluators needs to go beyond introductory training on process and measures. Grantees provide a variety of organizational supports to improve the developmental potential of evaluations. Broward provides academic specialists to evaluators to help them observe and give feedback on instructional issues. In Miami-Dade, the central office reduced the paperwork burden on principal evaluators (region directors) and has them share responsibility for data collection and observation in their areas of specialty. Denver reduced the principal-to-supervisor ratio to allow for more frequent exchanges between principals and supervisors and a higher frequency of school walkthroughs and observations. Additionally, Denver principal supervisors receive regular academic and human resource data reports for their school.

- Grantees are connecting evaluation processes and results to more formal professional learning. In most cases, this takes the form of goal setting and continuous improvement cycles. However, district offices also review evaluation results to identify patterns in ratings that may suggest needed PD. One district linked evaluation to SIPs; Broward included the deliberate practice component of its evaluation system in SIPs. Principals come up with practice improvement indicators aligned to their SIP and use them to track their practice in relation to the SIP goal.

- To better connect principals to their supervisors, large districts are beginning to reduce the supervisor-to-principal ratio. Some districts also regrouped principals into school-bands or cadres, with supervisors holding relevant prior experience assigned to support those cadres.

- Some grantees supplemented evaluation with mentoring and coaching. In Broward, mentors are available for all new principals, and TIF principals have access to coaches as well as mentors. Miami-Dade deploys experienced, retired principals. In Georgetown, the close relationship between the superintendent and principals allows the superintendent to take on an informal mentoring role.

Key questions for TIF grantees, districts and states

Based on our interactions with the four TIF grantees, we next raise a number of questions for current and future TIF grantees to consider as they reflect on or revise principal supervisor training and support for principal evaluation and related leadership improvement systems. The following questions certainly apply to other districts and states as they consider their principal evaluation and support structures.[6]

For district-level administrators and others who are rethinking principal evaluation, we provide the following questions for consideration and conversation:

- How effective is supervisor training in fostering common understanding of principal evaluation standards, frameworks, and measures? What can be done to develop a common understanding?

- What evidence of validity and reliability exists for the adopted measures, and how are you monitoring these measurement qualities during system implementation?

- When multiple staff are responsible for evaluating principals, how are you promoting consistency, such as finding time for them to talk regularly about how they collect evidence, interpret the rubric, and provide feedback?

- How well are other requirements and accountability measures aligned with the principal evaluation system? For example, do school walkthroughs by central office staff and SIPs send different messages to principals about performance expectations?

- How are principal supervisors motivated or held accountable for setting goals and providing actionable feedback?

- How many hours per week are principal supervisors talking with principals about their personal leadership practices? Do principals think that they need more or less time with supervisors?

- To what extent do principals receive actionable feedback to improve their practices?

- Do principals have access to high-quality PD that ties to their professional growth goals?

- Are specific PD opportunities available that address the most important skills or competencies underlying key dimensions of the practice rubric?

- To what extent is your principal evaluation system being implemented with fidelity for all principals? How do you monitor and address any variation in fidelity?

- How will new principal evaluation training, ongoing supervisor support, and principal professional development be sustained?

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[6] For additional information on resources and tools related to principal supervision and support, see the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, which is available at https://www.k-12leadership.org/, and The Wallace Foundation's work on school leadership, which is available at http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/pages/default.aspx.

Our brief examination of research literature and practice in the field raises the following empirical questions, which may be addressed through research or evaluation:

- How effective is supervisor PD for supporting improved district-level and school-level leadership?

- Given financial constraints, what is the most appropriate supervisor-to-principal ratio that allows for reliable principal evaluation and useful performance feedback?

- What is the cost-effectiveness of lowering supervisor-to-principal ratio compared to other potential principal PD and accountability approaches?

- How should coaching and mentoring play into principal support? Is it sufficient for supervisors to provide principals with coaching through the principal evaluation system?

- Should districts provide supervisors with training on coaching? How does coaching and mentoring support principal performance on the leadership competencies?

Conclusion

If principal evaluation is to meet its promise to improve leadership practice, states and districts need to approach performance evaluation with this goal in mind. The work begins with superintendents, assistant superintendents, and others who evaluate and support principals. They need to see the potential of evaluation to improve practice by providing both information about individual principal development needs and a venue to set goals for improvement and provide feedback, with the time and training to act accordingly. The TIF grantees presented here recognize the value of goal setting and performance feedback and the critical importance of training principal evaluators on new, more developmental evaluation systems. They also recognize that principal talent management cannot be improved without rethinking district-level services and the principal supervisor position. Just as experts are encouraging princi- pals to be instructional leaders who support teacher growth, the focus of grantee central offices is shifting from "com- pliance management" to school and principal support. The organizations featured in this brief are rethinking principal super- vision and identifying improvements to better support principal instructional leadership.

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Appendix A: Principal Evaluation System Summaries

Broward

Principal Evaluation Framework

Broward Assessment for School Administrators (BASA), based on Florida School Leader Assessment (FSLA).

FSLA developed using work of Reeves, Hattie, Marzano, and Robinson. It aligns with Florida Principal Leadership Standards.

There are 4 domains with 10 proficiency areas and 45 indicators of performance.

Practice Measures

Leadership Practice Score (50%, which includes):

- BASA Proficiency Score - (45%)
- A Deliberate Practice measure - (5%), which is based on two goals:
  - A student achievement goal from the school's improvement plan.
  - A personal professional practice goal related to the BASA self-evaluation

Outcomes Measures

Student Growth Measures Score (50%):

- Schoolwide value-added score determined by the FL Department of Education for schools with state-tested grades/subjects.
- Local growth measure for other schools.

Process

Seven-step process:

- District provides orientation and training on BASA.
- Self-assessment.
- Develop Deliberate Practice Professional Growth Targets - meet with evaluator.
- Data collection - ongoing throughout the year.
- Mid-year progress review with evaluator.
- Evaluator prepares performance assessment/ratings.
- Year-end meeting with evaluator.

Ratings

Proficiency area ratings along a 4-level continuum of highly effective, effective, needs improvement, or unsatisfactory are consolidated into domain ratings. Domain ratings are consolidated using weights to calculate BASA score. Each domain is similarly scored on the 4-level continuum.

The BASA practice measure weights:

- Domain 1: Student Achievement: 20%.
- Domain 2: Instructional Leadership: 40%
- Domain 3:Organizational Leadership: 20%.
- Domain 4: Professional and Ethical Behavior: 20%.

Leadership Practice and school growth scores are combined for an overall rating along the 4-level continuum of highly effective, effective, needs improvement, or unsatisfactory BROWARD

Denver

Principal Evaluation Framework

The principal framework articulates standards and indicators for principal performance. Supervisors and principals use the framework as the primary evaluation tool and integrate observation results with other information to score principal practice.

Practice Measures

Practice measures are based on principal observations, school walkthroughs, and artifact collections.

Principal observations are formalized, using the REFLEX observation protocol.

Walkthroughs are conducted by principal supervisors using a structured, focused protocol.

The district is considering how to use 360-degree survey results to evaluate principals. Teachers and supervisors provide input on the quality of principal practice through the Collaborate 360-degree survey.

Outcomes Measures

Denver Public Schools assesses school improvement according to multiple variables, including student learning improvement. These data are included in principal performance assessments.

Process

The LEAD timeline begins in January and ends in December.

The Professional Growth Plan includes goals aligning with the school's overall goals.

Mid-Cycle Conversations occur in May/June to discuss goal progress.

Throughout the year supervisors observe the principal, and evidence is collected, including a teacher perception survey and a parent satisfaction survey.

At the end of the year, there is a Final Ratings Conversation to review progress on the PGP, discuss the final rating, and develop a new PGP.

Ratings

Supervisors rate principals on 11 professional practice indicators in the School Leadership Framework.

The supervisor reviews evidence and assigns each indicator a rating. Each of the 11 professional practice indicator scores are then averaged to produce a professional practice rating.

The professional practice rating is combined with the student growth rating (each weighs 50%) to determine a final evaluation rating.

The student growth rating is a school's academic growth on the School Performance Framework.

Ratings for each category are: not meeting, approaching, effective, and distinguished.

Miami-Dade

Principal Evaluation Framework

Florida School Leader Assessment (FSLA).

FSLA is based on Reeves framework and aligns with Florida Principal Leadership Standards.

FSLA consists of four domains, 10 proficiency areas, and 45 indicators.

Practice Measures

(50%):

- FSLA Proficiency Score - (80% of the 50%) based on the state model, Florida School Leader Assessment (FSLA).
- A Deliberate Practice measure - (20% of the 50%) two Deliberate Practice Professional Growth Targets are required annually. The two goals must focus on:
  - An issue that addresses a strategic school-reform need related to student learning.
  - An issue related to research, evaluation, and information services relevant to instructional leadership.

Outcomes Measures

Measure (50%):

Schoolwide value-added score determined by the FL Department of Education

Process

Orientation and training on Florida Principal Leadership Standards.

Self-assessment.

Develop Deliberate Practice Professional Growth Targets - meet with evaluator.

Data collection - ongoing throughout the year.

Mid-year progress review with evaluator.

Evaluator prepares performance assessment/ratings.

Year-end meeting with evaluator.

Ratings

Highly effective, effective, needs improvement, or unsatisfactory.

Proficiency area ratings are consolidated into domain ratings and domain ratings are consolidates using FSLA weights to calculate FSLA score.

The FSLA practice measure weights:

- Domain 1: Student Achievement: 20%.
- Domain 2: Instructional Leadership: 40%.
- Domain 3:Organizational Leadership: 20%.
- Domain 4: Professional and Ethical Behavior: 20%.

Ohio

Principal Evaluation Framework

Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES) adopted in 2008 by the State Board of Education. Based on the Ohio Standards for Principals that includes 5 standards and 22 elements.

Practice Measures

Performance on Standards (50%).

Student Growth Measures (50%). Student Growth is based on multiple measures that must include value-added scores where available. Local school boards may also administer assessments chosen from the Ohio Department of Education's assessment list where value-added scores are not available, or school learning objectives (SLOs) are based on local tests and state criteria.

Outcomes Measures

Student Growth Measures (50%). Schoolwide score, but could be based on multiple measures. Schoolwide scores are provided in grades 3-8 on state scores and assessments. Other measures apply at other grade-level buildings.

Process

Principals self-assess using the standards, then create a professional growth plan with identified goals.

Principal-supervisor planning conference follows to reach agreement on goals and evidence collection and timeline for completion.

Two 30-minute (minimum) observations required and may occur in variety of settings; periodic building walkthroughs also conducted.

Mid-year conference includes coaching and feedback based on evidence.

Evaluator prepares a formal written Summative Report, based on measures of practice (50%) with the student growth data (50%).

Measures are combined in a holistic rating, and the evaluator submits the rating in eTPES (Ohio's electronic Teacher and Principal Evaluation System), which is then submitted to the state.

Ratings

The four final evaluation ratings are accomplished, skilled, developing, or ineffective.

Normally, areas of reinforcement and refinement are listed to serve as a base for the next evaluation.