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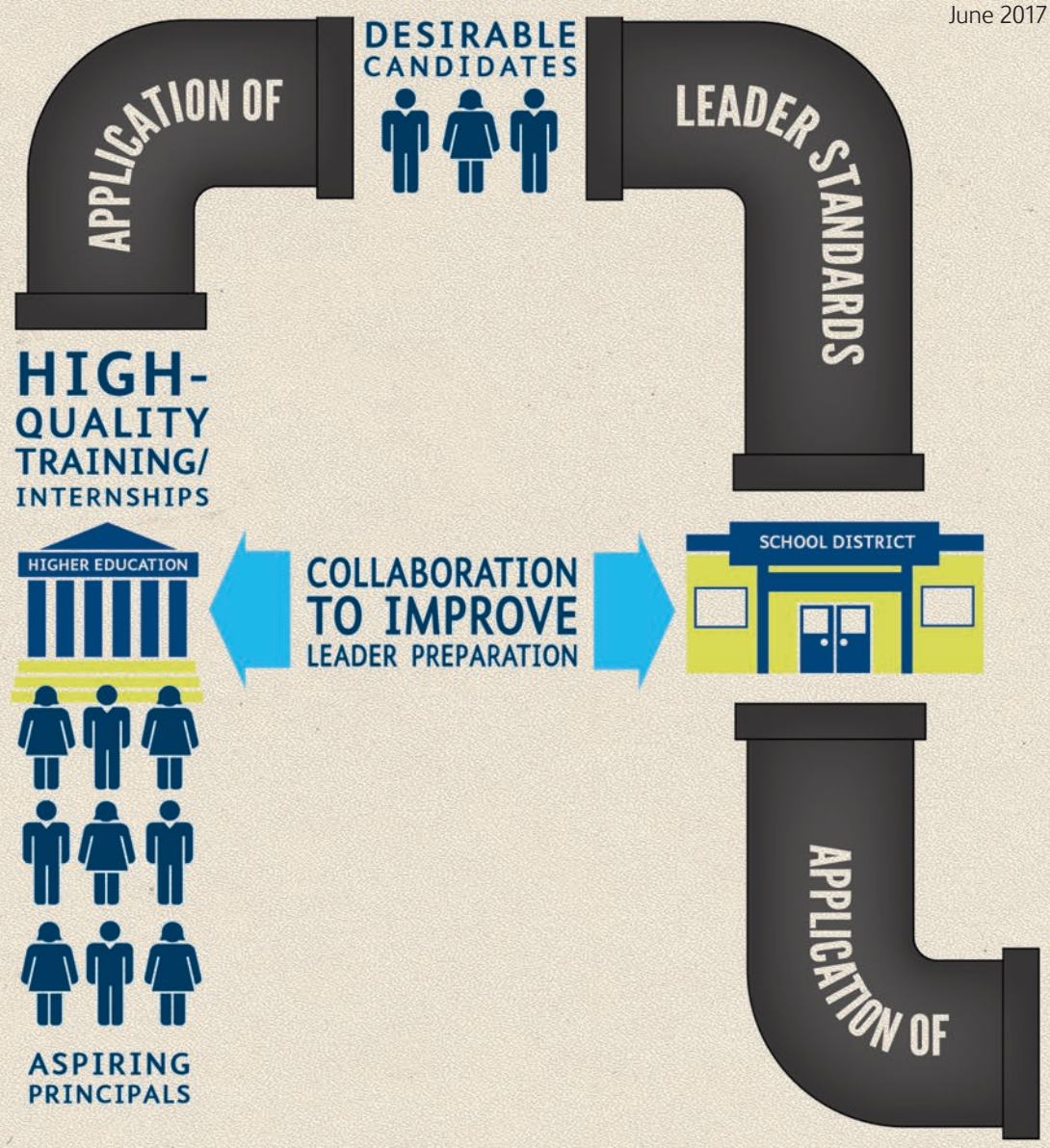

BUILDING PRINCIPAL PIPELINES

A JOB THAT URBAN DISTRICTS CAN DO

This Wallace Perspective, originally published in 2016 and updated in 2017, was produced as part of a commitment by The Wallace Foundation to develop and share information and ideas about school leadership. The report, which was written by Wallace Editor Pamela Mendels, represents the collective views of program, research and evaluation, communications, and editorial staff members at Wallace.

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Facing page: Bob Bender, principal of P.S. 11 in New York City and a graduate of the NYC Leadership Academy, meets with members of his staff.
P. 16: the Massachusetts Capitol.

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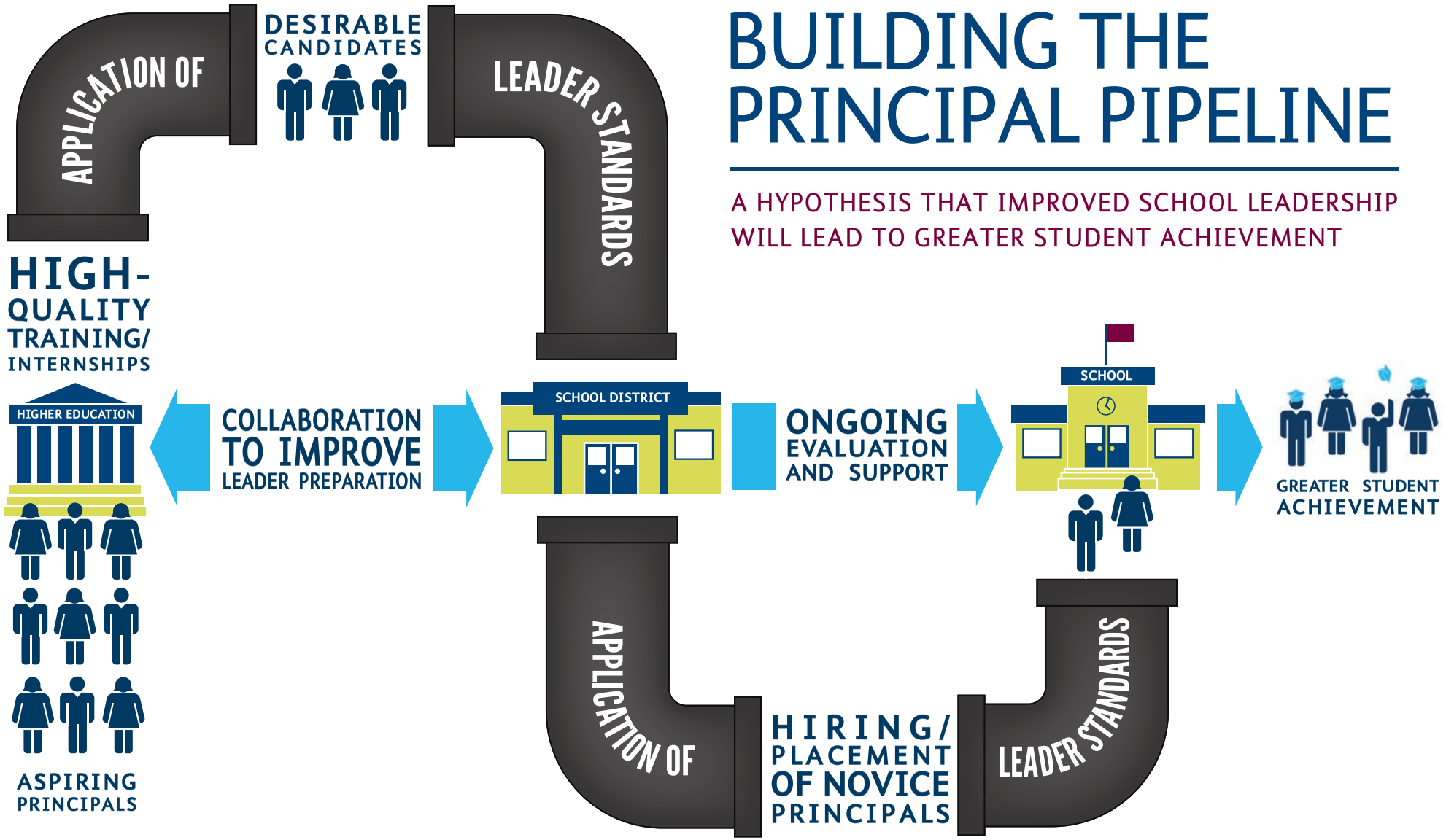
BUILDING PRINCIPAL PIPELINES

A JOB THAT URBAN DISTRICTS CAN DO

BUILDING THE PRINCIPAL PIPELINE

A HYPOTHESIS THAT IMPROVED SCHOOL LEADERSHIP WILL LEAD TO GREATER STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



In 2011, The Wallace Foundation launched an effort to test whether six urban districts could put in place the key parts of a strong principal pipeline to produce a large corps of effective school leaders. By 2016, it was clear that they could. A study to be published in 2018 will assess the pipelines' impact on schools and students.

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BUILDING PRINCIPAL PIPELINES: A JOB THAT URBAN DISTRICTS CAN DO

School district officials have faced the urgent task in recent years of ensuring that all schools benefit from sure-footed leadership that focuses on improving instruction, but how can districts develop a pipeline of effective school principals? Research about a Wallace Foundation initiative in six large school districts offers insights that may provide districts with a way forward at a relatively affordable cost. A study of the initiative's implementation finds that it is possible for districts to put in place the four key parts of a strong principal pipeline: apt standards for principals, high-quality pre-service training, rigorous hiring procedures, and tightly aligned on-the-job performance evaluation and support. Moreover, building a pipeline can produce swift benefits, including principal job standards that foster a districtwide understanding of what constitutes effective leadership for local schools, a possible greater compatibility between principals and the schools to which they are assigned, and performance evaluations designed not only to measure what's important but also to help principals succeed at their very tough jobs. At the same time, the research makes clear that some elements of the pipeline are particularly complex undertakings. For example, fixing what many see as a crucial aspect of principal training – providing candidates with meaningful, practical experience in the form of internships or residencies – can be expensive and involved.

Janice Harris (in blue sweater), a principal supervisor in Washington, D.C., observes a class at Hyde-Addison Elementary School.

Principals can make a big difference in the quality of the education public school students receive. That statement is not just a platitude. Research over the past decade or so has established that school leadership is second only to teaching among school-related influences on student learning, accounting for about one-quarter of total school effects.[1] Studies point to why this is true, detailing how able principals become "multipliers of effective teaching," in the words of one author.[2] More-effective schools not only hire better teachers, they also have teachers who improve at a faster clip – and principal practices may well contribute to these benefits, according to a RAND Corp. round-up of research on principals. That report also cites research indicating that teacher turnover is lower in schools led by strong principals.[3] Effective principals especially matter to troubled schools. Researchers have found "virtually no documented instances" of a school turnaround in the absence of an adept school leader.[4]

Given all this, school district officials have faced an urgent task in recent years: ensuring that all schools, not just a lucky few, benefit from sure-footed leadership by professionals who – in contrast to the principal-as-building-manager of previous decades – know how to focus on instruction and improve it. The question boils down to this: How can districts develop a sturdy and well-filled pipeline of great school principals?

Research about a Wallace Foundation school leadership initiative is providing answers that may offer districts a way forward. Most important, the research found that it is possible for districts to put in place the four key parts of a strong principal pipeline: apt standards for principals, high-quality pre-service training, rigorous hiring procedures, and tightly aligned on-the-job performance evaluation and support. Moreover, the research finds that pipelines can produce several swift benefits for districts and principals alike. These include principal job

1 Kenneth Leithwood, Karen Seashore Louis, Stephen Anderson and Kyla Wahlstrom, *Review of Research: How Leadership Influences Student Learning*, University of Minnesota and University of Toronto, 2004, 5.

2 Paul Manna, *Developing Excellent School Principals to Advance Teaching and Learning: Considerations for State Policy*, The Wallace Foundation, 2015, 8.

3 Rebecca Herman, Susan M. Gates et al., *School Leadership Interventions Under the Every Student Succeeds Act: Evidence Review, Updated and Expanded*, Rand Corporation, 2016, 3.

4 Leithwood et al.,5.

Each district had a strong record of using school leadership in its reform agenda.

standards that foster a districtwide understanding of what constitutes effective leadership for local schools, a possible greater compatibility between principals and the schools to which they are assigned, and performance evaluations designed not only to measure what's important but also to help principals succeed at their very tough jobs.

The research also makes clear, however, that some pieces of the pipeline are harder to construct than others. Adopting new leader standards, for example, is far less complicated than improving preservice training of principals; although upgrading district-run programs to train aspiring school leaders can be directly (and swiftly) managed by districts, trying to improve training at universities is a long-term undertaking, with still unproven results. Furthermore, districts have yet to fully succeed at setting up meaningful on-the-job internships for large numbers of future principals, something districts must get right if all aspiring leaders are to receive the hands-on experiences considered vital to their preparation.[5]

These insights come from an ongoing evaluation of the Principal Pipeline Initiative, an $85-million venture launched by Wallace in 2011. The effort involves six large school districts serving from about 90,000 to more than one million students, many of them from low-income communities. Before joining the initiative, each of these districts had a strong record of promoting school leadership to advance its reform agenda.[6] Wallace funded their efforts over five years to develop a large pool of high-quality principals and is gathering lessons from this for the field nationwide. The districts are: Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C.; Denver; Gwinnett County (outside Atlanta); Hillsborough County, Fla. (Tampa); New York City; and Prince George's County, Md., (outside Washington, D.C.).

The initiative's implementation has been chronicled in five Wallace-commissioned reports by the Policy Studies Associates research firm, with the final installment, *Building a Stronger Principalship (Vol. 5): The Principal Pipeline Initiative in Action,* published in October 2016.[7] In addition, a Wallace-commissioned cost study, by the RAND Corp., explores both pipeline expenditures and the other resources involved in the districts' pipeline work. The major conclusion of that report, published in June 2017, is that the average cost of building and operating pipelines for the Pipeline districts has been modest, amounting to $5.6 million yearly, or about $31,000 per principal. This is less than one-half of one percent of total annual expenditures for the districts, whose yearly operating budgets range from roughly $1 billion to $25 billion.[8]

One crucial piece of the Principal Pipeline Initiative puzzle is still missing. An examination of the

5 Linda Darling-Hammond, Michelle LaPointe, Debra Meyerson and Margaret Terry Orr, *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons From Exemplary Leadership Development Programs (Executive Summary)*, Stanford, 2007, 6.

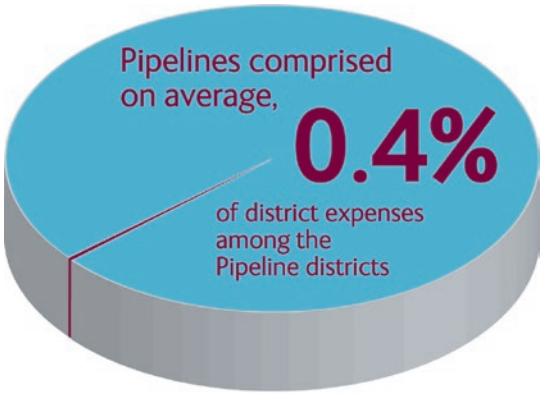
6 The Wallace Foundation, "Request for Proposals: Building a Better Principal Pipeline to Boost Student Achievement, a Wallace Demonstration Project With Districts and Principal Training Programs," 2011, 7.

7 The findings are based on a variety of evidence-gathering methods, including interviews with district leaders and surveys of new principals and assistant principals (APs). See http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/Building-a-Stronger-Principalship.aspx for the complete series.

8 Julia H. Kaufman, Susan M. Gates, Melody Harvey, Yan Wang and Mark Barrett, *What It Takes to Operate and Maintain Principal Pipelines: Costs and Other Resources*, Rand Corp., 2017, xvi. The average figure excludes expenditures from New York City because cost data there on two pipeline components were unavailable.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DISTRICTS INTERESTED IN BUILDING PRINCIPAL PIPELINES

- The idea undergirding pipeline development is that effective school leadership can be a strong lever for district change.
- Developing standards is a powerful first step in the work, ensuring that the entire rest of the pipeline – pre-service training, hiring, on-the-job evaluation and support – has strong underpinnings and that all concerned in the district speak a common language on school leadership matters.
- Changes to hiring procedures can produce swift, early wins, including possible better matching of job candidate to school.
- Principal evaluation can be changed from an annual compliance exercise to a mechanism for principal improvement, an approach that both district leaders in the six pipeline districts and the principals themselves welcomed.
- Reshaping evaluation and on-the-job support likely entails reshaping the principal supervisor's job, too, so that it focuses on helping principals improve. This change may require a district to hire more supervisors and train them to focus on instructional leadership.
- If resource or other constraints prevent the development of a full leader tracking system for now, assembling accurate records of individuals' accomplishments and careers is a way to begin.
- District leaders and managers can act as talent scouts, spotting teacher leaders, literacy and math coaches, and others with leadership promise and then directing them to strong pre-service preparation programs.



pipelines' impact on schools and students, also by RAND, is scheduled for publication in 2018.

Much activity continues at the six pipeline sites. Indeed, it's likely that the districts, which received their final funding from Wallace in 2016, will be adding to, tinkering with and making fixes to their pipelines for a long time. That's because of how the districts have approached much of their work since the initiative's outset. Instead of rolling out a set of fixed plans at once, they opted to introduce a number of important changes, such as new principal performance evaluations, as pilots that they could learn from and then improve. District leaders regard the pipelines as a work in progress, according to the implementation study, and the refining goes on.[9]

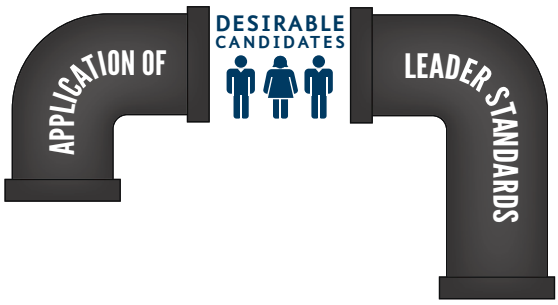
9 Brenda J. Turnbull, Leslie M. Anderson, Derek L. Riley, Jaclyn R. MacFarlane and Daniel K. Aladjem, *Building a Stronger Principalship (Vol. 5): The Principal Pipeline Initiative in Action*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., vii. The report is available at: http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/Building-a-Stronger-Principalship.aspx

INITIATIVE BASICS

Building on substantial evidence from more than a decade of Wallace school leadership efforts, the initiative funded the districts to develop and link the pipeline pieces that research and field work suggested were essential to shaping effective school leadership districtwide:

- Standards, or job descriptions, that spell out what principals need to know and do, and that undergird principal training, hiring, evaluation and support;
- Pre-service training that equips enrollees with the knowledge and skills districts need and is given by providers with selective admissions policies;
- Hiring procedures that consider only well-qualified professionals for jobs and make strong matches between candidate and school;
- On-the-job evaluation and support that are linked to one another and that serve to help principals, especially novices, improve – particularly in bolstering instruction.

KEY FINDINGS



THE SURPRISING POWER OF STANDARDS

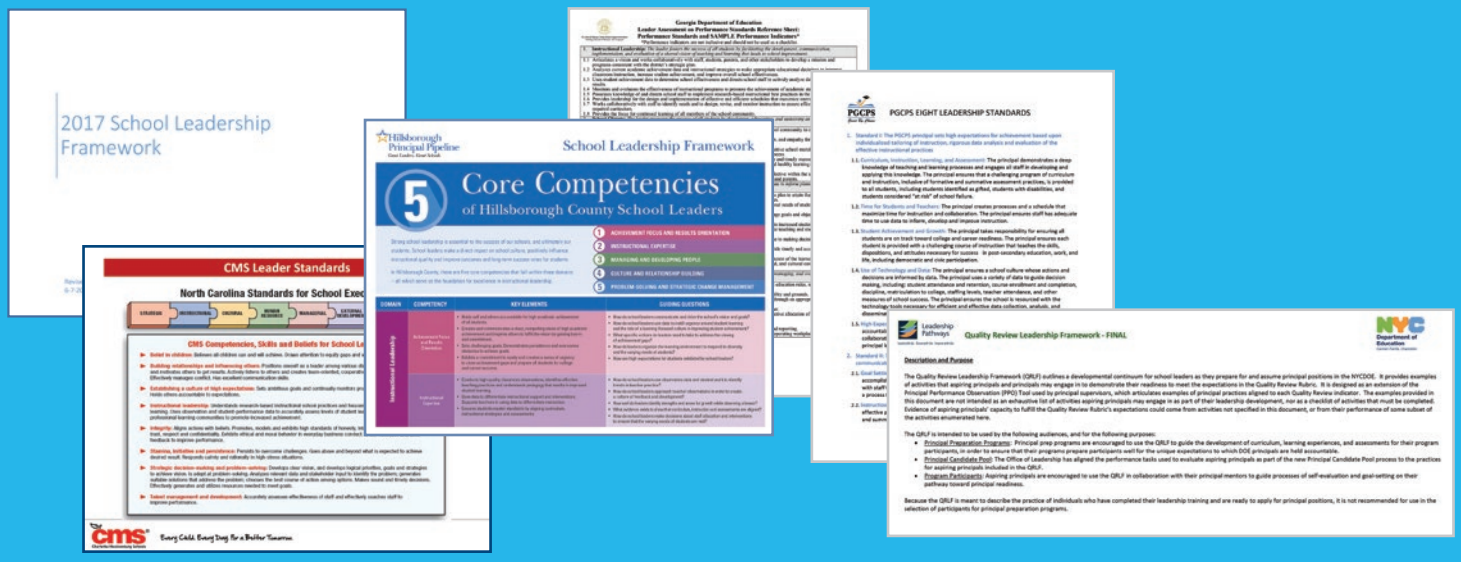
A SEEMINGLY MUNDANE ACTIVITY – figuring out what effective principals do and then committing this to paper – proved of singular importance to the districts. It brought sharp new thought and clarity to the description of the principal's job and how it relates to district priorities.

Each district had standards in place before the initiative got underway, but they often lacked "specificity and clout," failing to detail clearly what districts expected of their school leaders.[10] The revised standards incorporated the mandates of the states in which the districts were located, but were put together with local needs and circumstances in mind, often through committees that gathered the input of those who knew the job well. Depending on the district, these might include principal supervisors, chief academic officers, experts from pre-service training programs, consultants, representatives of teachers' and administrators' unions – and, notably, principals and assistant principals themselves.[11]

The result was a set of standards that proved essential, guiding all aspects of the pipelines' construction: what aspiring principals should be taught, which criteria should be used for assessing job candidates, and how sitting principals should be evaluated and assisted. One district, for example, formed an "alignment committee," whose purpose was to ensure that the content of district-run principal and assistant principal preparation

10 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 9.

11 Brenda J. Turnbull, Derek L. Riley, Erikson R. Arcaira, Leslie M. Anderson and Jaclyn R. MacFarlane, *Building a Stronger Principalship (Vol.1): Six Districts Begin the Principal Pipeline Initiative*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2013, 11-14.



> The standards clarified what principals should do and how this relates to district priorities.

programs revolved around the standards and did so in a rational sequence.[12]

Furthermore, the standards did not stand still. Describing them as "living documents in use," the implementation study researchers emphasize that the standards were frequently revisited and revised, when, for example, performance evaluations pointed to gaps or ambiguities in standards' language.[13] It's worth noting, too, that the districts placed a premium on simplicity and whittled the standards' documents down to essentials for greater user-friendliness.[14] Each of the districts was able to pare its list to 10 or fewer standards. Most documents then put flesh on the standards by describing what skills they necessitated or how they were demonstrated. One district, for example, listed "instructional leadership" as a standard, then specified that this standard was shown in part through the ability of a principal to help teachers "perfect their craft."[15]

Costs. Putting apt and usable standards in place was by far the least expensive of the four pipeline components, costing the districts an average of about $90,000 yearly, or $292 per district principal, according to the cost study. The price tag, which included periodic revisions of the standards, was "remarkably inexpensive," the study notes, for such a "powerful tool."[16]

Above: Each of the six school districts in the Principal Pipeline Initiative developed new standards for principals and committed them to writing in the documents shown.

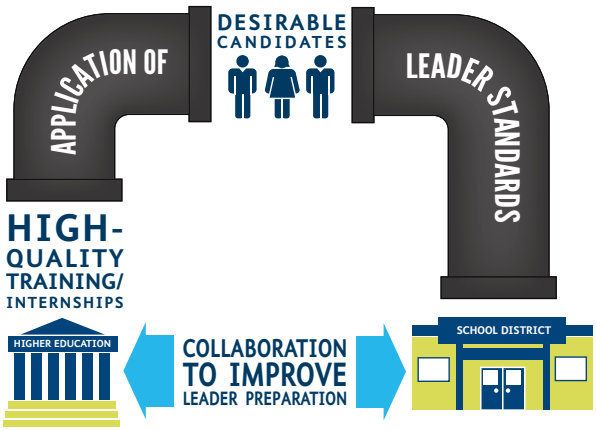
12 Brenda J. Turnbull, Derek L. Riley and Jaclyn R. MacFarlane, *Building a Stronger Principalship (Vol. 3): Districts Taking Charge of the Principal Pipeline*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2015, 20; Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 10.

13 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 9-11.

14 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 1*, 13.

15 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 3*, 18-19.

16 Kaufman, et al., 38-39..



PRE-SERVICE PREPARATION: LONG, COMPLEX WORK TO GET IT ALL RIGHT

THE DISTRICTS WORKED ON TWO FRONTS to improve pre-service principal training so it was in sync with district needs:

- Strengthening their own and external preparation programs, especially those offered by universities, which confer the advanced degrees that are prerequisites for principal licensing in most states;

- Pushing for greater program selectivity.

Improving Pre-Service Preparation

The districts devoted much energy to cultivating their own programs, that is, district-provided training that in most cases piggy-backed on preparation offered by universities or alternative providers. They succeeded in expanding and improving these home-grown efforts through activities including introducing programs for sitting assistant principals who showed principalship potential, providing mentoring to enrollees, incorporating residencies or other clinical experiences into the programs, and revamping the curriculum to focus on the competencies in the leader standards.[17]

Upgrading university programs was considered important in part because of research suggesting that university training might ultimately prove more stable than district programs subject to shifting local education priorities and finances.[18] This work moved at a considerably slower pace, however, than improving in-house preparation programs. All the districts engaged in some way with universities, forming or strengthening partnerships with institutions that were open both to change and to district views on leadership skills and their proper cultivation.[19] Several districts also took first steps in sharing with universities aggregate information on how the programs' graduates were faring – information that, it was hoped, the universities could use to gauge typical graduates' strengths and weaknesses and then adjust programming accordingly.[20] The partnerships developed over the years, so that by 2015, four years after the initiative began, each district had working relationships with at least five outside pre-service preparation programs, most of them universities, according to district reports to Wallace.

The Principal Pipeline districts also faced a consideration that may have swayed them to focus less intently on university work during the initiative's early years. They wanted to provide enough principals by 2015 to allow for the RAND impact study, which is testing the initiative hypothesis that a well-built pipeline can lead to improved student achievement and/or other benefits. Thus, districts may have opted to concentrate on the relatively swift changes they could make to their own training rather than tackle university change.[21]

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17 Brenda J. Turnbull, Derek L. Riley and Jaclyn R. MacFarlane, *Building a Stronger Principalship (Vol. 2): Cultivating Talent Through a Principal Pipeline*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2013, 18-27.

18 Margaret Terry Orr, Cheryl King and Michelle LaPointe, *Districts Developing Leaders: Lessons on Consumer Actions and Program Approaches From Eight Urban Districts*, Education Development Center, Inc., 2010, 5.

19 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 17.

20 Jennifer Gill, *Chock Full of Data: How School Districts Are Building Leader Tracking Systems to Support Principal Pipelines*, The Wallace Foundation, 2016, 6.

21 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 2*, 36.

Aspiring principals enrolled in an NYC Leadership Academy program discuss their individual leadership styles.

Even without a research deadline to contend with, districts that want to engage with universities or other outside program providers have to be prepared to encounter matters over which they have little control. One is that institutions may have interests that are at odds with a district's desire for customized training, including "developing their own programs, meeting state or other accreditation requirements, and serving multiple districts."[22] Then there is the question of money. A university that chooses to replace lower- with higher-quality training faces the real possibility that the upgraded program will admit fewer students and thereby reduce university revenues.[23] Finally, the development of partnerships takes time, a limited commodity among the busy senior professionals needed to forge closer ties between districts and universities or other providers.[24]

Improving Recruiting and Admissions

Recruiting and admissions, on the other hand, have proved over the course of the initiative to be areas where districts can exercise some direct influence over external programs. The pipeline districts enlisted principals, principal supervisors, district curriculum officials and others as talent scouts to spot supervisees with leadership potential and then nudge them along the principal career path. One technique was invitation-only events. Districts would ask those with promise to attend pre-service program recruiting fairs or information sessions.[25] Districts also found ways to steer principal-aspirants to better programs. Visitors to what became a popular page on one district's website, for example, found a list of partner and district preparation programs, all vetted for quality, along with a common application form.[26] The intent of these efforts was to seed programs with educators who had shown an interest in and aptitude for the principalship. One reason this is so important is that nationwide a number of pre-service training programs attract many enrollees who do not intend to pursue the principalship. What they are interested in is a credential that makes them eligible for other types of district posts, such

22 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 2*, 63.

23 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 2*, 57.

24 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 2*, 61.

25 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 2*, 23; Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 18.

26 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 18.

AN INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE UNIVERSITY PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS

UPGRADING PRE-SERVICE PRINCIPAL TRAINING AT UNIVERSITIES was among the most difficult aspects of building strong principal pipelines. A five-year, $47 million initiative announced by The Wallace Foundation in early 2016 seeks to find solutions. The University Principal Preparation Initiative is funding the redesign of seven university-based prep programs, all in states with policies supportive of high-quality principal training. Independent research is expected to explore questions such as how universities can develop and implement better training and how they can form mutually beneficial partnerships with the school districts that hire their graduates.

as department chair, curriculum developer and dean of instruction, or a salary bump that districts often give to holders of advanced degrees.

It's too early to determine the full impact of the districts' pre-service efforts, in large part because the median span of time between a candidate's beginning pre-service training and becoming a principal across the Pipeline districts was six years, averaged across districts. (In its original initiative design, Wallace had underestimated the typical amount of time it takes, perhaps influenced by the emergence in the earlier part of the millennium of alternative programs that provided leadership training for promising educators and placed them in principal slots immediately upon graduation.) A study of the first four years of initiative implementation, then, could provide only an unfinished portrait of the effort to revamp programming and its results for principals.[27]

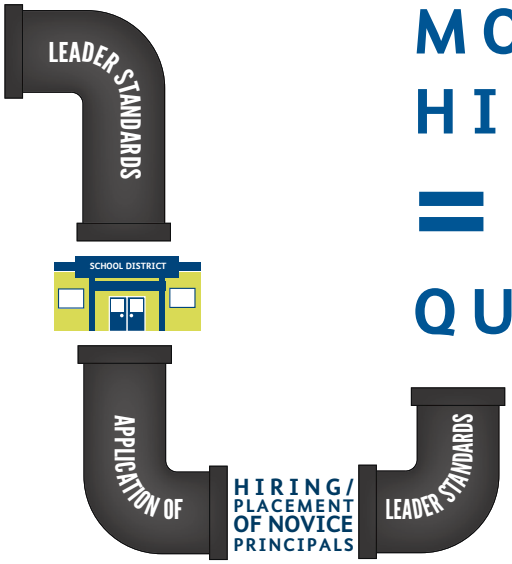
The study did, however, shed light on one thorny aspect of improving principal preparation overall, whether in-house or external. Fixing what many see as the weakest link in principal training – providing candidates with meaningful, practical experience in the form of internships or residencies – can be expensive and involved. Finding a suitable mentor principal, who can give the right guidance to an intern and offer him or her something other than administrative make-work, is one problem. Another is figuring out how to pay for and fill the job of an AP or other would-be leader who is fulfilling an internship requirement that can last as long as a year. Districts were just beginning to work on solutions, such as training and funding principals who assume mentorship roles, and giving a current employee seeking new experience (say, a teacher leader) the opportunity to fill in for someone absent on an internship [28]

Costs. Pre-service training was one of the more expensive aspects of the pipeline, coming in at about $2.9 million on average annually for the districts, or $9,386 per principal. Given the expense of residencies or internships, it should come as little surprise that providing these clinical experiences was a major driver of the cost. Districts without residency programs paid on average $5,168 per district principal for pre-service training efforts, while districts with them paid more than double that, $13,604. It's worth noting, however, that steering promising candidates into leadership training proved a low-budget item. The total annual cost for recruitment of pre-service candidates was $203 per district principal, less than the development of standards.[29]

27 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 20.

28 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 2*, 30-36; Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 22-23.

29 Kaufman et al., 35-45.



MORE RIGOROUS HIRING = QUICK RESULTS

PRINCIPAL HIRING IN THE DISTRICTS CHANGED RAPIDLY and for the better. One thing that helped was the introduction of new procedures to assess candidates according to objective data, including evidence that they were well poised to do the principal's job and were a good fit for a school with an opening.[30]

This was no mean feat. Early in the initiative, district leaders told researchers that they considered "a haphazard pattern of career progression" to be a "central problem" in strengthening the caliber of principals. How bad was the situation? In too many cases, "individuals without notable leadership talents could acquire administrator certification, develop their networks and win appointment to school leadership positions, while others with more potential might be overlooked or not even try to move up."[31]

All the districts worked to upend this by building on hiring reform they had previously begun or introducing whole new measures. One common activity was the rollout of more telling tests of a candidate's potential, namely practical demonstrations of ability. An applicant could be asked, for example, to view a video of a classroom lesson and then provide written or oral feedback to the teacher depicted, or to play the role of a principal who had to respond to an angry parent. District officials welcomed these simulations, with one commenting that role-play surfaced "a lot that we would not see in a normal interview."[32]

Another innovation was the development of "leader tracking systems," computerized folders of information about job candidates. The systems set out to give those responsible for hiring a detailed, at-your-fingertips way to learn about candidates' experience, performance and assessed competencies, everything from the hopefuls' educational backgrounds to their language skills, ratings from supervisors and the measured achievement of students they had overseen.[33] This enabled decision-makers to easily locate candidates with the right set of skills for the job opening – experience with particular grade levels or English language learner instruction, say.[34] Among other things, the systems are helping to bring new faces to the districts' attention. One principal supervisor reported, for example, that a system search had unearthed an unknown but prime candidate for a high-needs school. "We're a large district and I had never heard of this lady," she said. "It was the first time I put all my confidence in the placement tool and she has been a tremendous success."[35]

30 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 25.

31 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 3*, 9.

32 Turnbull et al., *Vol.3*, 44-45.

33 Turnbull et al., *Vol.3*, 50; Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 28-29.

34 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 28.

35 Leslie M. Anderson, Brenda J. Turnbull and Erikson R. Arcaira, *Leader Tracking Systems: Turning Data Into Information for School Leadership*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2017, 13.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STATES

The primary responsibility for building principal pipelines belongs to school districts. This hardly means, however, that states should consider themselves bystanders. In fact, states could play a major role in encouraging the development of pipelines.

That's because states have considerable clout when it comes to promoting more effective school leadership. Their powers include licensing principals, overseeing programs that train future school leaders, and approving degree programs at institutions of higher education. A number of studies have suggested, moreover, that states could assert these powers more aggressively to improve pre-service training, hiring, and performance evaluation and support – each a key pipeline element.[1]

In addition to flexing their regulatory muscle, states could avail themselves of two other powers: the bully pulpit and the purse. For the former, high-ranking state officials could use their visibility to promote better school leadership and spread the word about pipelines, their elements and their benefits as well as what pipeline construction entails. For the latter, states could help districts shoulder the financial burden of important pipeline features, such as mentoring or internships for aspiring school leaders.[2]

There are at least two good reasons why states might consider undertaking this work.

First, state action could help ensure that smaller districts are able to cultivate school leadership to the same degree as larger districts. That a disparity exists is clear from a RAND Corp. national survey in which large-district principals reported receiving more on-the-job supports than smaller-district principals.[3] It's also clear that states can take steps to help close the gap. In recent years, they have, for example, supported academies that provide on-the-job training for principals statewide and that prepare future principals for work in rural districts.[4]

Second, the purpose of pipelines is to cultivate high-quality school leadership, and states over the past decade or so have launched a slew of initiatives that need just that to succeed. "Teaching to new academic standards, evaluating teachers through in-person observations, and using data to direct the various aspects of a school's daily activities – state leaders have crafted policies and regulations across these areas and will be relying on school principals to help make them work," political scientist Paul Manna wrote in a 2015

1 Linda Darling-Hammond, Michelle LaPointe, Debra Meyerson and Margaret Terry Orr, *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons From Exemplary Leadership Development Programs (Executive Summary)*, Stanford, 2007; Jacquelyn Davis, *Improving University Principal Preparation Programs: Five Themes From the Field*, The Wallace Foundation, 2016; Gina Ikemoto, Matthew Kelemen, Michelle Young and Pamela Tucker, *Improving State Evaluation of Principal Preparation Programs*, New Leaders, University Council for Educational Administration, 2016; Paul Manna, *Developing Excellent School Principals to Advance Teaching and Learning: Considerations for State Policy*, The Wallace Foundation, 2015.

2 Darling-Hammond et al., *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World*, 17, 19.

3 William R. Johnston, Julia H. Kaufman and Lindsey E. Thompson, *Support for Instructional Leadership: Supervision, Mentoring, and Professional Development for U.S. School Leaders: Findings From the American School Leader Panel*, RAND Corporation, 2016, 1.

4 Manna, *Developing Excellent School Principals to Advance Teaching and Learning*, 28-29.

Wallace Foundation-commissioned report, adding: "Without effective principals executing these initiatives with care, they will have little chance of success and, as a result, likely will fail to gain the confidence of teachers, parents, and students."[5]

Now may be an especially opportune moment for states to consider assuming a bigger role in promoting principal pipelines. Why? The Every Student Succeeds Act, otherwise known by its initials, ESSA.

The law, which provides the largest pot of federal funding for public schools in the United States, was passed in late 2015 in part in reaction to its predecessor, No Child Left Behind, which many felt had tipped too much direct authority over education to Washington, D.C. ESSA devolves power, giving states new control over their allotted federal Pre-K-12 dollars and, therefore, related education policies and practices.

At the same time, ESSA offers new possibilities for funding school leadership efforts. For example, states may now use an additional 3 percent of the funding they receive under Title II of the law for state-level activities for principals and other school leaders. Also, states – not just districts – are now eligible to compete for grants from Title II's School Leader Recruitment and Support fund (formerly the School Leadership program) to improve the recruitment, preparation, support and retention of principals and other school leaders in high-needs schools.

ESSA also continues important school leadership opportunities for states that have emerged in federal education funding only in recent years. For example, states may pay for performance incentives for principals and other school leaders through a Title II source now called the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund, formerly the Teacher Incentive Fund (known by the initials TIF).

In addition – and this is especially significant – numerous activities to promote better school leadership appear to be backed by research strong enough to meet the law's new evidence requirements, according to a separate study by RAND. ESSA's research mandates are complicated, and different ESSA programs require different degrees of evidence strength. What's important is that RAND found a research base for a number of activities under each of the four key pipeline elements. Furthermore, the RAND study shows that certain types of principal preparation and professional development activities are supported by research sufficiently strong to make them eligible for funding under the ESSA section with the toughest evidence requirements, the Title I School Improvement Funds program, a major funding pool (authorized annually) targeted at the lowest-performing schools.

The bottom line is that state leaders who want to see effective principals in schools throughout their districts may find this an auspicious time to fund pipeline efforts.

5 Manna, 22. Manna cited Marc S. Tucker and Judy B. Codding, eds., *The Principal Challenge: Leading and Managing Schools in an Era of Accountability*, Jossey-Bass, 2002.

Below is a sampling of action states can consider taking:

Standards

- Make sure state principal standards are up to date, especially in light of the 2015 revision of the national model formerly known as the "ISLLC standards," now called the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders.[6]
- Make these standards readily available, along with job descriptions and other materials based on them.
- Encourage districts to adapt the state standards to their own needs and circumstances.
- Become familiar with the new, first-time national model standards for principal supervisors, and explore whether the state should develop supervisor standards of its own.[7]

Pre-Service Training

- Use the state's program accreditation power so that university or other programs improve and reflect what principals today need to know and do.
- Support key features of school leader preparation that may be difficult for districts to fully fund on their own, such as on-the-job internships by principals-in-training.
- Provide full or partial scholarships to promising aspiring principals.

Hiring

- Make sure licensing requirements are clear and connected to the realities of the principal's job today.
- Help districts develop data systems on job candidates.

Evaluation/On-the-Job Support

- Ensure that state-mandated performance evaluation is fair, measures what principals need to know and do, and helps shape support for principals.
- In states with licensing renewal, develop renewal that helps principals burnish the skills most important to their job and aids districts in shaping effective professional development.
- Help districts pay to train personnel in new evaluation procedures and to provide novice principals with effective mentors.

6 National Policy Board for Educational Administration, *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*, National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015. These standards were revised with Wallace support.

7 Council of Chief State School Officers, *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015*, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015. These standards were developed with Wallace support.

NOVICE PRINCIPALS REPORTING AN "EXCELLENT" FIT OF THEIR SKILLS, EXPERIENCES, AND INTERESTS WITH THE NEEDS OF THEIR SCHOOL, BY DISTRICT AND COHORT*

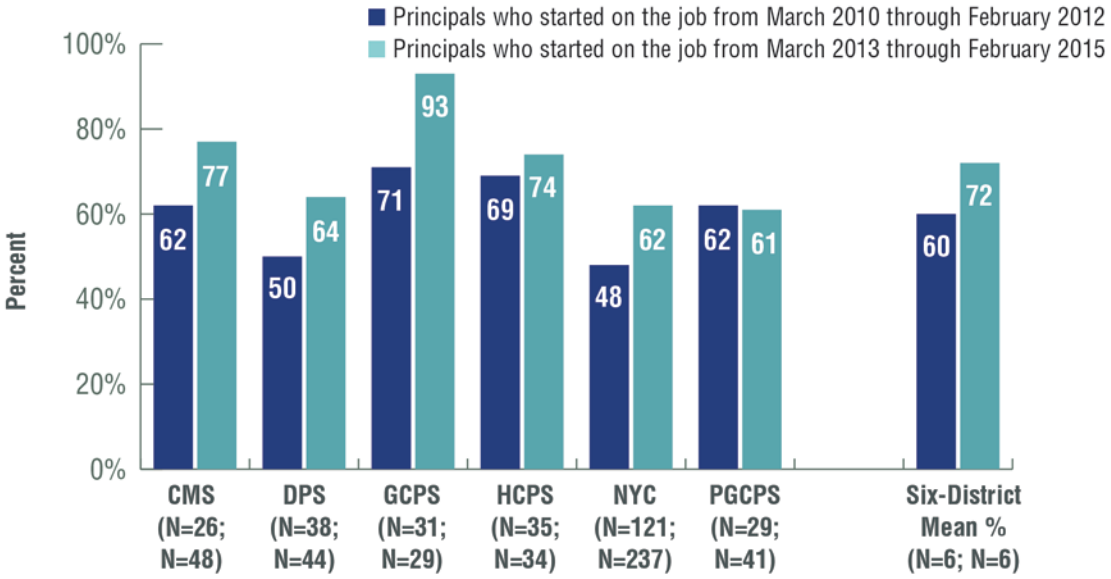


EXHIBIT READS: The percent of principals who characterized the fit between their skills, experiences, and interests and the needs of the school where they are principal as "excellent" was 62 percent for principals who started on the job from March 2010 through Feb. 2012 and 77 percent for principals who started on the job from March 2013 through Feb. 2015 in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

*Chart from *Building a Stronger Principalship (Vol. 5): The Principal Pipeline Initiative in Action*, 33.

In addition, the districts enhanced or introduced mechanisms to screen candidates before they could be considered for jobs. In two districts, for example, only those who had emerged from selective in-house training programs were eligible. Elsewhere, districts created hiring pools from which candidates already scrutinized for competence had to be drawn.[36]

Finally, the districts launched careful vacancy forecasting and succession planning, such as procedures to pinpoint likely openings a year before they occurred, then announce and fill them well ahead of time.[37]

All this work produced benefits. District leaders showed "a noticeable sense of excitement" about the new hiring processes, reporting that they were especially impressed with the knowledge of instruction among the most recent crops of novice principals, defined as those who had been on the job three years or fewer.[38] Perhaps most important, the surveys found a possible correlation between the new hiring procedures and better job placements. In surveys, newer principals were more likely than those hired just a few years earlier to report an "excellent" match between the needs of their schools and their own skills, experiences and interests – perhaps a harbinger of success on the job.[39]

Additionally, a preliminary analysis from RAND found that in three of the Pipeline districts the percentage of newly hired principals who continued to serve after two years increased "substantially."[40]

36 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 29.

37 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 26.

38 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 30, 34.

39 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 32.

40 Kaufman et al., xi.

Tricia McManus (standing), assistant superintendent of educational leadership and professional development for Hillsborough County Public Schools, helps local school officials practice using the district's leader tracking system.

The hiring and other pipeline changes, then, may hold promise for reducing unwanted turnover and the considerable cost it sometimes incurs. [41]

Not that these benefits came without effort. Although the districts were able to introduce the hiring practices with dispatch, implementing them placed new demands on district employees.[42] In particular, "carrying out performance assessments required substantial time on the part of raters and hiring managers, raising questions about sustainability," one report noted. "As the new systems started up, districts leaned on staff in ways that could lead to burnout or detract from other responsibilities."[43] Developing the data systems, too, required an investment in time. A typical example was a district that needed three years to untangle the complexities of pulling together needed information from a variety of district data systems.[44]

Finally, the new procedures did not answer all needs. Districts reported lingering difficulty in finding suitable candidates for high schools as well as both high-needs and affluent schools. In addition, the districts had yet to devise ways to adequately screen candidates for a crucial job attribute: highly developed interpersonal skills. Despite being well prepared in other ways, new principals sometimes proved weak in what leaders in one district described as "emotional intelligence" and what leaders in another called "micro-political skills." As one district leader described it, in their passion and eagerness to make change, some new principals "are coming in with a sledgehammer…. They don't realize – it's personal leadership skills…"[45]

Costs. The impact of the new hiring and placement procedures amounted to "quick wins," in the words of the implementation study.[46] Therefore, it's notable that these activities accounted for only a small-ish slice – 9 percent – of total pipeline expenditures, costing the initiative districts on average about $476,000 annually or $2,894 per district principal.[47]

41 Kaufman et al., 84.

42 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 33.

43 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 3*, 45.

44 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 34.

45 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 3*, 52; Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 34.

46 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 29.

47 These figures exclude the cost of developing and operating leader tracking systems, which have uses beyond hiring and placement, including forecasting principal vacancies, determining the right enrollment size of district-run principal training programs, and giving feedback to university programs on placement rates of their graduates. The RAND cost study found that the districts spent on average about $400,000 yearly, or $1,990 per principal, on the systems. Kaufman et al., 34, 51, 59.

ALIGNING EVALUATION WITH SUPPORT

DISTRICT LEADERS WANTED MORE OF THEIR NEW PRINCIPALS TO STAY ON THE JOB AND SUCCEED. This prompted a rethinking of how principals, especially novices, were both evaluated and supported. Rather than an exercise in weeding out principals – a counterproductive move especially for districts concerned about high rates of principal turnover – performance evaluation, the reasoning went, should be the vehicle for understanding a principal's strengths and shortcomings, especially in boosting instruction. Support provided through mentors, professional development and, newly, principal supervisors would then seek in large part to address the weaknesses uncovered.[48]

Evaluation: An Ongoing Conversation About Working Toward Goals

All the districts had to comply with state and federal mandates for principal evaluation. Among other things, this entailed rating principals according to how they carried out their job essentials, called "professional practice," and how their students were doing, measured by "student growth."[49] Five of the districts were located in states that also called for weighting ratings, with the result that student growth accounted for anywhere from 40 percent to 70 percent of a principal's overall evaluation score. In all six districts, student performance on state tests figured into the student growth measurement, but the districts chose a variety of other factors to add to the mix, from student performance on local tests to growth among the lowest-performing students; to attendance rates and comparisons with similarly situated schools.[50]

As for professional practice: The districts made sure that their assessments reflected their new principal standards, so novice principals were being gauged according to the same set of skills stressed in their training and hiring, most notably in instructional leadership.[51]

Districts also set out to make principal evaluation a different animal from the formal, once-or-twice-a-year ritual typical of teacher performance reviews across the nation. The idea was for the person doing the evaluating, the principal's supervisor, to get to know the principal well and to observe and work with the school leader throughout the school year. One principal discussed how this

48 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 37-38.

49 Leslie M. Anderson and Brenda J. Turnbull, *Building a Stronger Principalship (Vol. 4): Evaluating and Supporting Principals*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2016, 10.

50 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 20-21.

51 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 15.

played out, describing his evaluation as "an ongoing conversation all the time about what are your goals, how are you working toward those goals, and are you making progress or not."[52]

The reaction to the evaluations was surprisingly positive. Close to 60 percent of new principals agreed to a "great" or "considerable" extent that the assessments provided results that were worth the effort, with another 27 percent saying the results were "somewhat" worth the effort. In other words, the vast majority considered the evaluations worthwhile. The principals gave similarly high ratings on other indicators, including the evaluations' fairness, accuracy in reflecting principal performance, and usefulness in informing principal work.[53] These responses present an eye-opening contrast to what studies have found about earlier generations of principal evaluation: that they "often lacked clear performance expectations or standards" and "failed to focus on the appropriate leadership competencies," and that principals found "limited usefulness" in them for professional learning.[54]

52 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 36; Turnbull et al. *Vol. 5*, 43.

53 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 35.

54 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 16; Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 41.

PRINCIPALS EVALUATED IN 2013-14 WHO AGREED THAT THEIR DISTRICT'S EVALUATION SYSTEM WAS ACCURATE AND FAIR, PROVIDED CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE, AND WAS USEFUL AND WORTHWHILE* N(W)=300

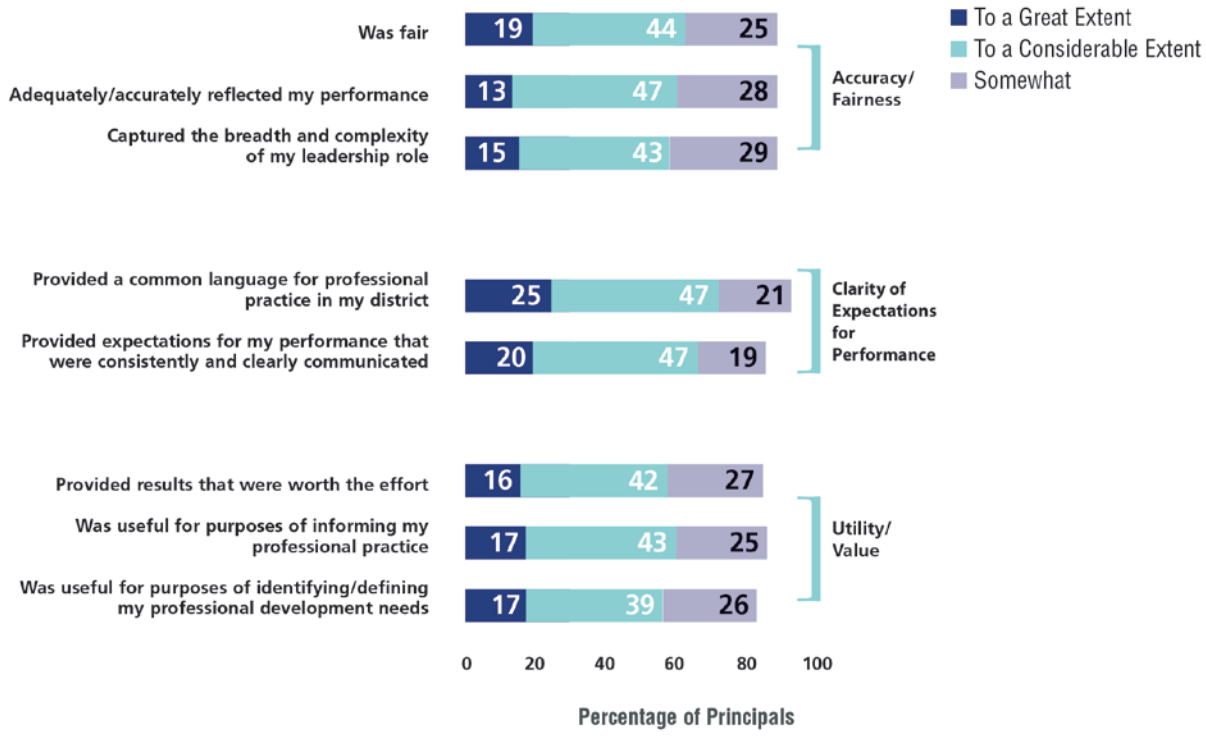


EXHIBIT READS: Eighty-eight percent of novice principals who were evaluated in 2013-14 agreed their district's evaluation system was fair, saying they agreed at least "somewhat" with the statement. The other responses, not shown in the exhibit, were "not at all" and "minimally."

*Chart from *Building a Stronger Principalship (Vol. 4): The Principal Pipeline Initiative in Action*, 35.

Principal Elizabeth Namba (L) of Hyde-Addison Elementary School in Washington, D.C., and instructional coach Rachel Cerlen chat with Janice Harris (in blue sweater), a principal supervisor.

Supports: A Trio

The companion to evaluation was support, with the districts opting to provide their principals with three types of assistance: mentoring, professional development and, in a big departure from usual district practice, guidance from principal supervisors. In making this trio available, the districts distinguished themselves from the norm. A 2015 RAND survey of principals nationally found less than one third (32 percent) reporting that their districts provided the full triad.[55] In addition, while 90 percent of first-year and 74 percent of second-year Pipeline Initiative principals reported having a mentor, the figures were smaller for roughly comparable districts in the national survey: 82 percent of large-district principals said their districts required mentoring for first-years and 52 percent for second-years.[56]

Mentoring, it should be noted, remained the support that new school leaders in the Pipeline districts valued the most. In focus groups, novice principals used words like "cheerleader" and "lifesaver" to describe their mentors, whose coaching provided "day-to-day, hands-on support that principals said was vital to their immediate survival."[57]

New Supports Bring a New Kind of Principal Supervisor

The districts sought to give the principal supervisor job a bit of a makeover. Why? Principals, like other professionals, respond to the signals and instructions they receive from their managers, and in the case of principal supervisors, these signals have historically stressed compliance with regulations at least as much as effectiveness in improving student learning. To put the emphasis on instructional leadership, the districts worked to shift some supervisory focus toward helping principals develop their muscle, especially in improving instruction – and away from handling operations and ensuring compliance with regulations.

Most of the districts concluded that this change would be impossible without reducing the num-

55 William R. Johnston, Julia H. Kaufman and Lindsey E. Thompson, *Support for Instructional Leadership: Supervision, Mentoring, and Professional Development for U.S.* School *Leaders: Findings From the American School Leader Panel*, RAND Corporation, 2016, 6.

56 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 44, and Johnston et al., *Support for Instructional Leadership*, 10.

57 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, v, 46.

BOOSTING THE POWER OF PRINCIPAL SUPPORT

THE PRINCIPAL PIPELINE INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION STUDY and other recent research offer two intriguing clues about how districts might enhance support for principals. One is that mentoring appears to invigorate other forms of principal aid. In the Pipeline surveys, mentored principals were likelier than others to give high ratings to the help they received from both their supervisors and professional development.[1] The other is that school leaders believe they get a lot out of discussions that concentrate on teaching and learning. In the RAND Corporation national survey of principals, respondents said they valued both mentoring and support from supervisors far more when it focused "to a great extent" on instruction.[2]

1 Leslie M. Anderson and Brenda J. Turnbull, *Building a Stronger Principalship (Vol. 4): Evaluating and Supporting Principals*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2016, 46.

2 William R. Johnston, Julia H. Kaufman and Lindsey E. Thompson, *Support for Instructional Leadership: Supervision, Mentoring, and Professional Development for U.S. School Leaders: Findings From the American School Leader Panel*, RAND Corporation, 2016, 8.

ber of principals their supervisors oversaw. This was in keeping with research that found that principal supervisors in large urban districts typically are responsible for an average of 24 schools, when a reasonable load for supervision involving more than compliance check-offs would be closer to half that figure.[58] The upshot was that the districts either hired additional supervisors or otherwise reduced the supervisory workload, so principals received more attention from their manager, especially about improving instruction.

The districts also trained the supervisors in such matters as how to give feedback and how to structure school visits.[59] Whether this training would ultimately foster the new capabilities demanded of supervisors who had begun the job when it focused on compliance and operations is an open question. One examination of an effort to change the supervisor's position found that a number of sitting supervisors had to be replaced with those whose skills were more in line with the newly defined job.[60]

The changed supervisor position meant that new principals began seeing much more of their managers. One principal said his supervisor took part in everything from faculty meetings to grade-level planning sessions and had succeeded in bringing a helpful "focus on what's the data, what's our story, what are we doing well and what are we doing not so well and how can we refine those practices."[61]

Surprisingly, the implementation study researchers saw little evidence of tension between the supervisor's role as support provider and role as evaluator.[62] The graphic on page 24 shows the

58 Amanda Corcoran, Michael Casserly, Ricki Price-Baugh, Denise Walston, Robin Hall and Candace Simon, *Rethinking Leadership: The Changing Role of Principal Supervisors*, Council of the Great City Schools, 2013, 29; Jennifer Gill, *Make Room for the Principal Supervisors*, The Wallace Foundation, 2013, 4.

59 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 40-41.

60 Amy Saltzman, *The Power of Principal Supervisors: How Two Districts Are Remaking an Old Role*, The Wallace Foundation, 2016, 8. This article looks at two districts in a separate Wallace effort focusing on principal supervisors.

61 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 42; Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 44.

62 Turnbull et al., *Vol.5*, 44.

DIFFERENCES IN PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE SUPPORT THEY RECEIVED FROM THEIR SUPERVISOR/EVALUATOR AND MENTOR/COACH IN 2013-14 VERSUS 2014-15*

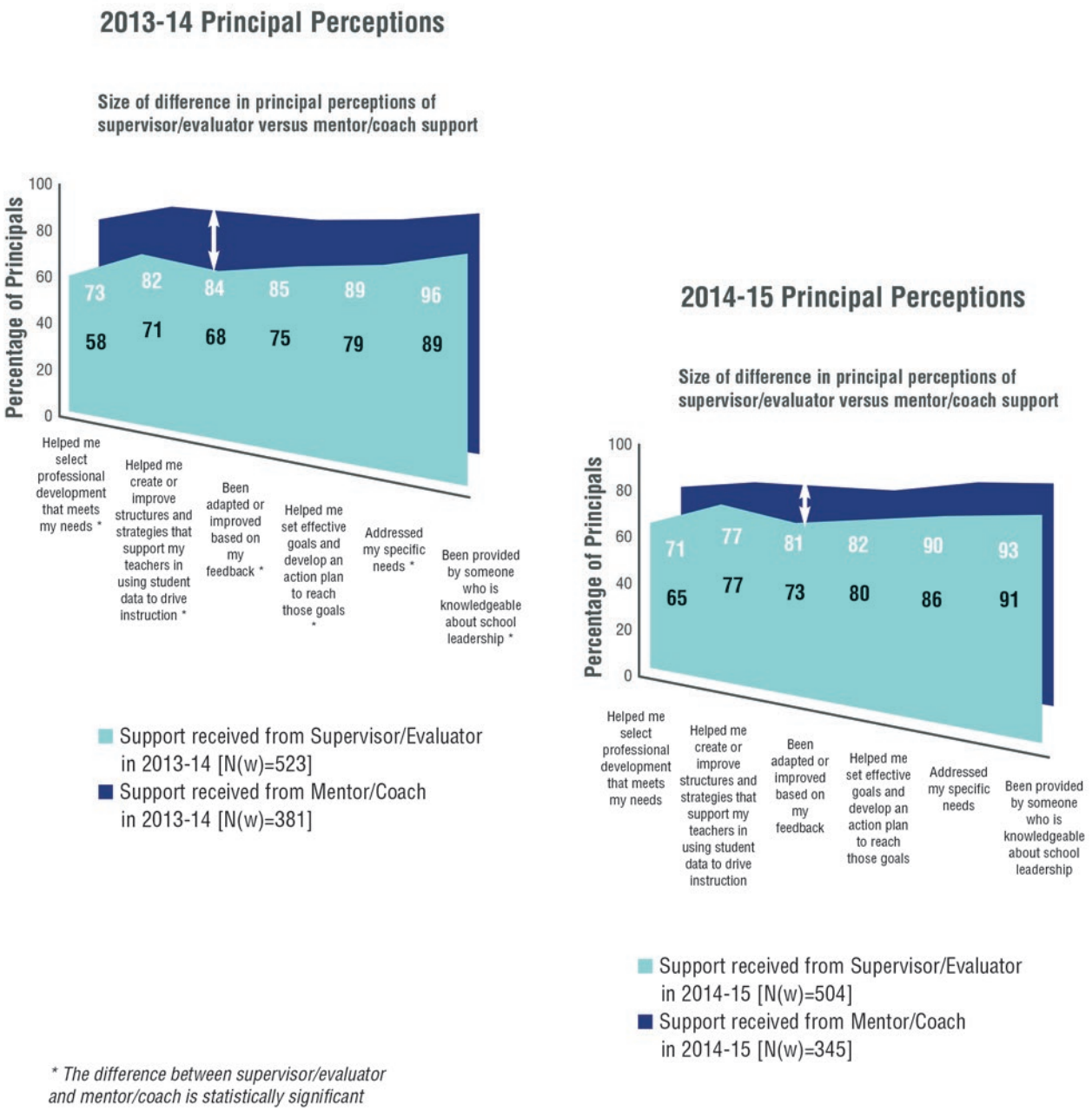


Exhibit reads: In 2013-14, 73 percent of novice principals who agreed that their mentor/coach had helped them select professional development that meets their needs compared with 58 percent who agreed that their supervisors supported them in this way, which was a difference of 15 percentage points. In 2014-15, the difference between principals who agreed that their mentor/coach versus their supervisor/evaluator helped them select professional development that met their needs had dropped to six percentage points.

*Chart from *Building a Stronger Principalship (Vol. 4): Evaluating and Supporting Principals*, 43.

Principals consistently reported that professional development lagged behind mentoring and supervision in helpfulness.

ways in which supervisors were increasingly functioning like coaches or mentors.

All these changes hit home. Surveys found that novice principals appreciated the new shape of the supervisor's job. Indeed, as time went on they began to consider the support they received from their supervisors almost as valuable as the support they received from their mentors in areas ranging from selecting professional development to setting and working toward goals.[63]

Perhaps most telling, the hoped-for linkage between evaluation and support seemed to be taking place. For example, 86 percent of novice principals whose evaluations indicated that they needed to burnish their instructional leadership capabilities reported receiving help in this area.[64]

Continuing Work

Despite their progress, the districts had work ahead of them. District leaders wrestled, for example, with whether evaluations should hold all principals to the same expectations regardless of whether they were newcomers to the job or headed high-poverty schools.[65]

In focus groups in each district, principals suggested that administrative burdens continued to eat away at the time supervisors could devote to all their individual schools. Several expressed concern about their supervisors' instructional capabilities, suggesting that in some cases the principals knew more than their managers. And even though researchers found little conflict between the supervisor's support and evaluation responsibilities, some principals wondered how much they could trust their bosses with information about their needs.[66]

Professional development (PD) was a clear weak spot; principals consistently reported that it lagged behind mentoring and supervisory support in helpfulness. More than 40 percent of surveyed school leaders, for example, "strongly agreed" that mentors or supervisors had aided them in responding to pressing issues in their schools – almost double the figure for PD.[67] In focus groups, principals were apt to describe PD as focused on compliance and organized with groups, not individuals, in mind.[68] The knot districts needed to untie was how to provide principals with timely PD tailored to their individual needs.

Costs. Accounting for almost half of total pipeline costs, on-the-job evaluation and support proved by far the most expensive parts of the pipeline. They cost the initiative districts an annual average of $13,956 per district principal (about $2.7 million yearly), with the bulk of the expenditure

63 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 44.

64 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 39.

65 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 17-18.

66 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 44.

67 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 48.

68 Anderson and Turnbull, *Vol. 4*, 47; Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 47.

> A process of piloting and continuous improvement allowed districts to spot and correct unanticipated problems.

going to principal supports including mentoring (about $1,500 per district principal), professional development and the efforts of principal supervisors.[69]

If the overall price tag seems high, a look at spending on something roughly akin – teacher professional development – offers context. A 2015 study cited by RAND in its cost report found school districts spending between $10,000 and $26,000 per teacher annually on PD, fully 5 to 10 percent of overall district expenditures. In contrast, total pipeline costs for the initiative districts – that is, principal evaluation and support (including principal PD) plus all the other pipeline components – came to .04 percent of the participating districts' annual expenditures.[70] Readers should note that the PD figure includes the costs of the teachers' time, whereas the expenditures for on-the-job support of the principals in the pipeline study excludes the principals' time.

A Place in the Pipeline for the AP?

Most of the districts' novice principals – more than two-thirds of those surveyed – came from the assistant principal ranks, so the districts began to grapple with how to make that post a proving ground as well as an apprenticeship for the top slot, while ensuring that the essential functions of APs, especially in tending to large-school operations, got done.[71] During the initiative, district leaders began to ponder, among other things, how to prepare and support new APs, how best to evaluate them, and how to develop alternative career paths for those not selected to become principals. Two districts had training programs in place for APs aspiring to advance; five districts rolled out the principal standards for the APs, too, while making clear that the expected level of proficiency for the AP was not the same as for principals; and four districts introduced mentoring or other on-the-job supports for new APs.[72]

Still, few thought that what the districts had in place sufficed. One difficulty was ensuring that APs could build their skills at instructional leadership or at least keep skills developed earlier from withering. This was a tough act to pull off. After all, APs are not just seat-warmers. Their work is vital to smooth school operations. Districts began to address the problem, by giving APs leadership projects, for example, but few felt that a full solution was at hand.[73]

Another problem stemmed from numbers. There are more APs who hope to become principals than there are jobs available. In three annual surveys conducted between 2013 and 2015, 81 percent

69 Kaufman et al., 34, 54, 58.

70 The authors cite a 2015 study by the New Teacher Project. Kaufman et al., 56.

71 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 49-54.

72 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 50-51.

73 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 52-54.

to 86 percent of novice assistant principals in the districts reported that they had applied for a principalship or intended to do so.[74] To get a rough idea of their chances at clinching the job, one could consider this estimate: Nationally there are about five APs for every principal vacancy.[75] Furthermore, not every AP who wants to become a principal is qualified for the job.

That numerous aspirants would likely never get to sit in the principal's seat meant that districts had to anticipate some disappointment in the ranks, get into the business of managing expectations, and think about jobs other than the principalship to which they could direct APs. Setting up talent pools or other screens to the principalship was one help. So was occasional blunt talk. At a well-attended "So You Want to Be an Administrator" information session in one district, for example, the speaker made clear that each member of the large audience was likely sitting next to a job competitor.[76] Finally, a number of districts were in the early stages of figuring out what alternative career opportunities might appeal to APs.[77]

At this point, districts face more questions than answers as to how to make the AP position a proper stepping stone to the principalship. It could be, researchers say, that districts will "need to follow a similar path to the one they have thus far taken in making system-level improvements in their principal pipelines." [78]

Douglas Anthony, of Prince George's County Public Schools, engages in discussion with Ricki Price-Baugh, of the Council of the Great City Schools, at a gathering of the Pipeline districts.

74 Turnbull et al., *Vol 5*, 49. Annual percentage breakdown provided to Wallace by Policy Studies Associates.

75 Estimate provided to Wallace by Policy Studies Associates. Estimate derived from the National Center for Education Statistics' 2011-2012 SASS (Schools and Staffing Survey) Principal Survey and the 2012-2013 SASS Principal Follow-Up Survey.

76 Turnbull et al., *Vol 5*, 19.

77 Turnbull et al., *Vol 5*, 54.

78 Turnbull et al., *Vol 5*, 54.

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THE BUILDING CONTINUES: PILOTING, REFINING, IMPROVING

Establishing a pipeline whose function is to produce an ample, steady supply of high-quality school leaders has required five years of thought and effort in the six districts, and their work continues. A number of pipeline pieces – strengthening non-district principal training, bolstering professional development and rethinking the assistant principal's job, for example – are in their early stages of construction. Other pipeline features need refining, including tweaking new hiring procedures so they don't overly tax those who do the work and ensuring that every principal supervisor can spend the amount of time in schools that the recrafted job calls for.

Nonetheless, what all six districts have shown is that it is possible for a school district to put in place the four key components of a principal pipeline and, further, see rapid progress in areas like hiring. The districts carried out the kinds of policies and practices called for by the initiative "to a striking extent," the implementation study researchers write.[79] In other words, they succeeded in constructing important and consequential aspects of a principal pipeline – suggesting that other districts can take on this work, too. Additionally, the districts discovered that two relatively low-cost pipeline components – strong leader standards and rigorous hiring procedures – can have a big impact.

Moreover, the Pipeline effort has helped the school districts keep a sharp focus on the connection between school leadership and district priorities. Take Denver, which in 2014 launched a district plan whose overarching goal is that at least 80 percent of local students attend a high-performing school by 2020.[80] The plan details five strategies for meeting this objective – and one is leadership. In addition, carrying out the leadership strategy requires, among other things, that the district "develop strong pipelines for leader-

79 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, ii.

OPPORTUNITY COSTS AND POTENTIAL FOR SAVINGS

Almost half – 44 percent – of pipeline costs came from personnel time, according to the RAND pipeline expenditure study.[1] That brings the reality of "opportunity cost" into play for any district considering building and running a pipeline. The time that a principal spends screening candidates for a talent pool; the time a principal supervisor spends working one-on-one with a principal; the time a superintendent spends helping to revise principal standards are all hours lost to other arguably valuable activities.

On the other hand, districts may be paying a lot by failing to build and run strong principal pipelines. "Often overlooked are the costs that districts (not to mention teachers and students) bear when they have to replace principals in quick succession or make do with inadequate leaders," the RAND cost researchers write.[2] Pipelines may, over time, prove to be a cost saver, if they succeed in cutting principal turnover, as well as if – by putting more effective school leaders at a school's helm – they succeed in reducing teacher turnover and other costs.[3]

1 Julia H. Kaufman, Susan M. Gates, Melody Harvey, Yan Wang and Mark Barrett, *What It Takes to Operate and Maintain Principal Pipelines: Costs and Other Resources,* Rand Corp., 2017, 66.

2 Kaufman et al., 1.

3 Kaufman et al., ix.

ship, including internal cultivation, school leader preparation programs and focused mentorship."[80]

If the Pipeline effort holds lessons about what districts can do to try to strengthen school leadership, it also provides insight into how to go about this work. The six districts may not have known it at the time, but in a number of instances they engaged in what might loosely be called "continuous improvement."[81] They introduced changes, saw what worked and what didn't, and then made adjustments, being especially attentive if activities from one pipeline component brought to light flaws in another. The districts edited their principal standards, for example, when evaluations and hiring procedures surfaced ambiguities or omissions, such as a lack of emphasis in one district's initial standards on the principal's role in support for English language learners.[82] This approach worked to the districts' advantage, the researchers say. "For any new pipeline component, a process of piloting and continuous improvement gave a needed opportunity to spot and correct unanticipated problems," according to the implementation study.[83]

At the same time, "continuous improvement" means there is always work left to do. "No district leader characterized any part of the pipeline design as completed and unchangeable," the implementation study researchers say. "Instead, [the districts] continued to refine their systems to incorporate new knowledge, fix flaws and address new issues."[84] The districts accomplished much, and the building goes on.

80 Denver Public Schools, "Denver Public Schools Launches Updated Denver Plan," Aug. 19, 2014; Denver Public Schools, *Denver Plan 2020: Every Child Succeeds*, Denver Public Schools, 2014, 7.

81 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 61.

82 nTurnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 10.

83 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, 61.

84 Turnbull et al., *Vol. 5*, vii.

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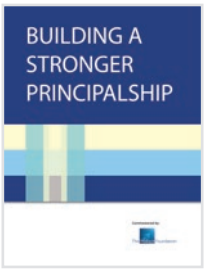
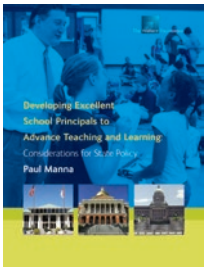


Building a Stronger Principalship
By Brenda Turnbull et al., Policy Studies Associates, 2013-2016.

A series of five reports documents the implementation of The Wallace Foundation's Principal Pipeline Initiative, with lessons from six school districts that are seeking to strengthen the training of future principals, as well as how they are hired, evaluated and supported on the job.



Chock Full of Data: How School Districts are Building Leader Tracking Systems to Support Principal Pipelines
By Jennifer Gill, The Wallace Foundation, 2016.

A Wallace Story From the Field describes how six districts have developed data systems to help them better train, hire and support school principals.

Developing Excellent School Principals to Advance Teaching and Learning: Considerations for State Policy
By Paul Manna, The Wallace Foundation, 2015.

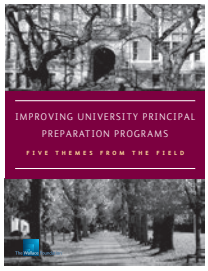
There's no one recipe for improving state policy on school leadership, but a set of considerations about matters including principal licensing and training-program accreditation can help policymakers think through what's right for their state.

Districts Matter: Cultivating the Principals Urban Schools Need
By Lee Mitgang, The Wallace Foundation, 2013.

This Wallace Perspective describes key steps that school districts can take to improve school leadership.

How Leadership Influences Student Learning
By Kenneth Leithwood, Karen Seashore Louis, Stephen Anderson and Kyla Wahlstrom, University of Minnesota and University of Toronto, 2004.

Leadership is second only to teaching among school influences on student success, and its impact is greatest in schools with the greatest need, according to this landmark examination of the evidence about school leadership.

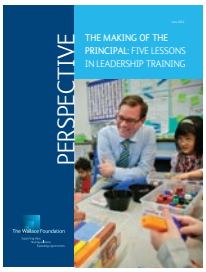


Improving University Principal Preparation Programs: Five Themes From the Field
By Jacquelyn Davis, The Wallace Foundation, 2016.

This report examines how university programs that prepare the nation's future school principals are perceived, the barriers to their improvement and the state's role in encouraging program upgrades.

Leader Tracking Systems: Turning Data Into Information for School Leadership
By Leslie M. Anderson, Brenda J. Turnbull and Erikson R. Arcaira, Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2017.

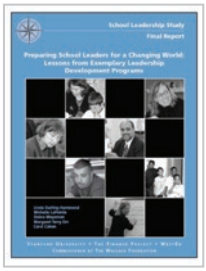
A look at data systems to improve school leadership offers "hard-won insights" from six school districts building these systems for everything from principal hiring to principal training.



The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training

By Lee Mitgang, The Wallace Foundation, 2012.

This Wallace Perspective describes essential steps in improving training for both future principals and those new to the job.



The Power of Principal Supervisors: How Two Districts Are Remaking an Old Role

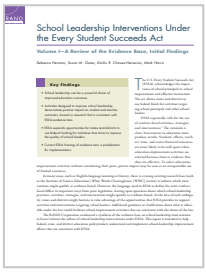
Amy Saltzman (report) and WNET (video), The Wallace Foundation, 2016.

A Wallace Story From the Field and a WNET video describe how two school districts are reshaping the job of the principal supervisor to focus on supporting principals.

Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs

Linda Darling-Hammond, Michelle LaPointe, Debra Meyerson and Margaret Orr, Stanford University, 2007.

A groundbreaking report provides case studies and practical guidelines to help district and state policymakers reinvent how principals are prepared for their jobs.



Rethinking Leadership: The Changing Role of Principal Supervisors

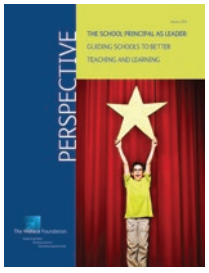
By Amanda Corcoran, Michael Casserly, Ricki Price-Baugh, Denise Walston, Robin Hall and Candace Simon, Council of the Great City Schools, 2013.

How can school districts ensure that principal supervisors are able to help principals meet the demands of their jobs? This report provides some early answers.

School Leadership Interventions Under the Every Student Succeeds Act: Evidence Review, Updated and Expanded

By Rebecca Herman, Susan M. Gates, Emilio Chavez-Herrerias and Mark Harris, RAND Corp., 2016.

The Every Student Succeeds Act opens new possibilities for federal support of efforts to improve school leadership, while laying out evidence standards that the efforts need to meet to qualify for certain funding programs.



The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning

Written and published by The Wallace Foundation, 2013.

This Wallace Perspective describes the characteristics of effective school principals and identifies five practices key to their work.

Support for Instructional Leadership: Supervision, Mentoring, and Professional Development for U.S. School Leaders: Findings From the American School Leader Panel

By William R. Johnston, Julia H. Kaufman and Lindsey E. Thompson, RAND Corp., 2016.

A survey finds that school principals generally receive some on-the-job supports, but not a full trio of supervision, mentoring and professional development.

What It Takes to Operate and Maintain Principal Pipelines: Costs and Other Resources

By Julia H. Kaufman, Susan M. Gates, Melody Harvey, Yan Wang and Mark Barrett, RAND Corporation, 2017.

This first-of-its-kind RAND study offers insights into the costs for large school districts of building and running principal pipelines.

The Wallace Foundation is a national philanthropy that seeks to improve learning and enrichment for disadvantaged children and foster the vitality of the arts for everyone.

Wallace has five major initiatives under way:

- School leadership: Strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement.
- Afterschool: Helping selected cities make good afterschool programs available to many more children.
- Arts education: Expanding arts learning opportunities for children and teens.
- Summer and expanded learning: Better understanding the impact of high-quality summer learning programs on disadvantaged children, and enriching and expanding the school day in ways that benefit students.
- Audience development for the arts: Making the arts a part of many more people's lives by working with art organizations to broaden, deepen and diversify audiences.

Find out more at www.wallacefoundation.org.

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