



GEORGE W. BUSH
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PRINCIPAL RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION GUIDEBOOK

*THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
DISTRICT COHORT*

DECEMBER
2019



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Introduction

This guidebook is the second in a series created by the George W. Bush Institute as part of its School Leadership District Cohort, an initiative designed to support school districts seeking to improve how they attract, support, and retain effective school leaders. This guidebook focuses on **principal recruitment and selection**, which is one of several components of Principal Talent Management (PTM) that school districts can leverage to support effective school leadership. Other components of the Bush Institute's [PTM Framework](#) include Pipeline Development, Professional Learning, Principal Supervision, Performance Evaluation, Compensation and Incentives, and Working Environment. Future guidebooks in this series will address other components of the framework.

Why focus on principal recruitment and selection?

Principals “can be powerful multipliers of effective teaching” when they are effective instructional leaders, talent developers, and culture builders.¹ While states typically certify enough principals each year to fill vacancies, some school districts report having a lack of quality candidates.² When districts focus on strong principal recruitment and selection, they encourage more people to enter the pipeline and more effectively identify talented candidates with the right skills and expertise that are a good match for schools’ needs, as well as ones who are aligned to the districts priorities.

What are strong practices in principal recruitment and selection?

The George W. Bush Institute has distilled prior learning from research and practice into four key areas of principal recruitment and selection:

1. Planning: The district plans for vacancies they will need to fill;
2. Recruitment: The district effectively recruits high-quality applicants;
3. Selection: The screening and selection process is rigorous and well-defined; and
4. Alignment and Continuous Planning: The recruitment and selection process aligns with state or district research-based performance standards or competencies, as well as with other district talent management systems, such as principal evaluation. The district uses continuous improvement practices to update the recruitment and selection system regularly.

What process did the Bush Institute use to identify findings and make recommendations?

Recruitment and selection is one component of the Bush Institute’s Principal Talent Management Framework, built in part through a rigorous research review conducted in partnership with the American Institutes for Research (AIR).³ This review used What Works Clearinghouse standards as the criteria for identifying studies with rigorous research designs and evidence of causal relationships, focusing on two key outcomes of PTM: the extent to which certain policies and practices lead to improved student achievement and principal retention. The Bush Institute team then gathered research-based examples from published studies and collected artifacts from districts who had been the subjects of empirical study. The team also conducted interviews of experts to gather their tools and recommendations for implementation. Finally, the Bush Institute is learning through its partnership with four districts: Austin Independent School District (ISD), TX; Chesterfield County Public Schools, VA; Fort Worth ISD, TX; and Granite School District, UT. A draft version of this report was vetted by expert external reviewers.

¹ Manna (2015); Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom (2004).

² Malkus, Hoyer & Sparks (2015).

³ For a detailed description of how the Bush Institute gathered evidence and vetted findings through an iterative review process see <https://gwbcenter.imgix.net/Resources/gwbi-principal-talent-management-lit-review.pdf>.

How is this guidebook designed to support district leaders?

This guidebook will help district leaders build common understanding of strong practices and identify strategies for improvement. It is organized into the following three sections:

1. *Key Components* — For each of the four areas of recruitment and selection listed above, this guidebook:
 - Provides a **definition**;
 - Describes **problematic (yet common) practice**;
 - Describes **strong practice**; and
 - Offers **next steps** for moving from problematic to strong practice.
2. *Districts to Watch* — examples of districts implementing the key strong practices; and
3. *Learn More* — links to appendices with additional resources

Key Component #1: Planning

This section:

- Provides a **definition** of “planning”;
- Describes **problematic (yet common) practice** related to planning;
- Describes **strong practice** related to planning; and
- Offers **next steps** for moving from problematic to strong practices related to planning.

Definition of “Planning”

For the purposes of this guidebook, “planning” for recruitment and selection involves:

- **Vacancy forecasting**—a process whereby district leadership uses data and information to predict which principals may be leaving at the end of the next year or over the next several years due to retirement, promotion, or other voluntary or involuntary decisions to leave the position or district (i.e., Based on the data, our district may need to replace up to 10% of our principals this year and 17% next year.);
- **Pipeline analysis**—a process whereby district leadership uses data and information to better understand current talents in the district who may one day be successful principals. This understanding includes a realistic idea of how much and which kind of training future talent may need to be successful, as well as any gaps in talent currently in the district; and
- **Establishing timelines** for recruitment and selection that are early enough in the school year to be effective.

Problematic (Yet Common) Practice Related to Planning

Districts often only forecast vacancies that are due to retirements but do not forecast past that. They rarely project how many principal positions will become vacant over the next two to five years, instead only focusing on the next school year. Individuals do most of the forecasting (e.g., someone in human resources or a principal supervisor), as opposed to having a system and/or process for forecasting. Therefore, projections are not shared across district departments and district staff do not collaborate on plans for addressing vacancies. For example, a principal supervisor may know that he or she will be losing two principals in the next year, but there are few supports from human resources or other departments to start the recruitment process.

Districts rarely analyze their pipelines to project general or specific needs (such as Bilingual, Title I experience, turnaround experience, or English–language learners) in relation to a local supply of qualified candidates available to apply for vacancies. They may know of one or two high performers who may be good future principals, but they may be unable to explain why or determine what kind of school may be a good fit for them. Their efforts tend to be reactive; for example, they begin a search after a principal announces his or her decision to leave. This leads to late identification of vacancies and posting of positions. District leaders then scramble over the summer months to find candidates, after the strongest candidates have already made decisions and commitments elsewhere for the following year.

Strong Practice Related to Planning

School districts with strong principal recruitment and selection processes deliberately and explicitly plan for vacancies they will need to fill by forecasting vacancies, analyzing the leadership pipeline, and beginning recruitment and selection processes early in the school year.

Vacancy Forecasts: Who May Be Leaving

School districts create vacancy forecasts by analyzing the historical data of its current principals. District leaders use these projections to better anticipate principals who may be leaving the district and recruit candidates with needed experience in district-run preparation programs. In addition, districts can use historical data to determine an approximate number of principals who leave for reasons other than retirement.

Four categories need to be analyzed in vacancy forecasting:

1. Retirements: The district can look at data on the age and years of service of its current principals to predict who may retire in the next few years.
2. Voluntary Leavers: Each year, a certain number of principals will leave the district for personal reasons—they may go to another district, they may leave the education field, or they may choose to do something else. While this cannot be avoided, the district can ensure that conversations around leaving happen as soon as possible. Many times, principal supervisors are in the best position to initiate these conversations as early as possible as part of goal setting and career planning meetings.
3. Involuntary Leavers: District office leadership should start talking early and often about principals who may be struggling in their roles and the extent to which they may need to be replaced. Doing so ensures that appropriate supports are given as soon as they are needed, and it helps the district understand where potential future openings may arise.
4. Growth: Over time, district populations change. The district can and should monitor those changes. As schools grow or new schools open, the district should plan as proactively as possible on how to staff those growing or new schools.

As an example, in Gwinnett County Public Schools, the cabinet meets each year to examine the projected number of expected principal vacancies for the next five years. In 2004, district leaders realized that more than 60 new principals would need to be hired between 2007 and 2010. This projection was based on both a spike in the number of principals eligible for retirement and an expected continuation of growth in student enrollment that would lead to needs for new schools. Figure 1 depicts more recent data that the district used to compare expected vacancies relative to expectations for ready candidates.⁴

4 See the Bush Institute's case study at http://bushcenter.imgix.net/legacy/gwbi_gwinnett_county_public_schools_report.pdf.

Figure 1. Expected Principal Vacancies 2013-17 in Gwinnett County

Expected Vacancies Due To Retirement						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total 5 Yr
ES	4	2	1	5	6	18
MS	1	1	1	2	1	6
HS	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total	5	3	2	7	10	27

Total Expected Vacancies						
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total 5 Yr
ES	6	6	5	9	10	35
MS	2	2	2	3	2	12
HS	0	1	1	1	4	7
Total	7	9	8	13	16	54

Total Pool & Readiness			
	Now	Soon	Total
ES	7	6	13
MS	7	2	9
HS	7	3	10
Total	21	11	32

Ready candidate surplus/(deficit) relative to vacancies					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
ES	1	2	-3	-12	-22
MS	5	5	3	0	-3
HS	7	9	8	7	3
Total	14	15	7	-6	-22

In this case, the data make clear that Gwinnett County Public Schools will have to consider strategies to address a pending shortage of ready elementary principals in 2016 and 2017.

Principal supervisors play a key role in vacancy forecasting. They can have conversations about career planning with the principals they are supervising, since this may help them understand the types of vacancies they may have during the next school year. One caution, however, is to ensure that the information principal supervisors receive is used appropriately. These types of conversations require a high degree of trust that can easily be broken.

Treating Former Employees as Alumni

The goal of any good talent management system is to keep the most talented employees in their roles for as long as possible. However, losing good talent cannot be avoided. Some organizations look at these talented “leavers” in a positive light. For example, Teach for America (TFA) has created an exclusive alumni group for its former corp members.⁵ Included in their ranks are well known charter school leaders like Chris Barbic and Tom Torkelson, as well as district leaders such as Kaya Henderson. Their alumni have gone on to lead schools, create nonprofits, work in higher education, run for political office, and other important roles. All the while, TFA has kept in touch with these leaders and offered additional support. TFA corps alumni get certain continuing–education benefits from TFA higher–education partners, like application fee waivers and tuition discounts. TFA also provides events and leadership development opportunities to its alumni.

Several benefits are derived from keeping a good relationship with employees, including principals, who leave the district. First, it helps create a culture that makes it okay to leave. Staff are willing to turn in their resignations sooner rather than later, which helps with planning. Also, top talent may

5 For more details, see the Teach for America website at <https://www.teachforamerica.org/life-as-an-alum>.

be on their way to stepping into great leadership roles in other districts or organizations, which could provide future collaboration opportunities. In addition, they can be fantastic cheerleaders and supporters for the work that is being done in the district, even when they are in their new roles.

An employee alumni program does not need to be as sophisticated as the TFA one in order to accomplish this. Some organizations start with sending a simple quarterly or even annual newsletter to former employees that gives them key updates and highlights the organization's recent successes. Small steps letting your employees know that it is okay to leave and that you want to keep a good relationship with them when they leave can help pave the way for planning.

Pipeline Analysis: Who is on Your Bench?

Districts with strong recruitment and selection processes analyze the pipeline by collecting information about how many principal-ready candidates are already in their pool and how many they project will be in the pool based on enrollments in leadership preparation programs. They also assess the quality of the pipeline by reviewing multiple historical data points about the quality of applicants and by gathering qualitative data from district leaders. For example, they might examine prior candidate scores on leadership competencies to better understand pipeline strengths and weaknesses or determine which preparation programs trained high performers. The Urban Schools Human Capital Academy recommends the strategies outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Quick Wins for Building a Quality Pool of Principals⁶

Analyze the District's Track Record on School Leader Applicants
<p>Track all of the principal and assistant principal vacancies over the past three years and determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of applicants for each vacancy • The number selected for the interview • The interview scores (or average) of the applicants who interviewed • The diversity of the applicant pool for each vacancy • The number of vacancies that had to be re-advertised due to lack of number or quality of candidates • The number and quality of candidates produced by each pathway (university programs, alternative programs, etc.) • The number of new principals leading high needs schools vs. low needs schools
Schedule an Analytic Discussion with Supervisors of Principals
<p>Track all of the principal and assistant principal vacancies over the past three years and determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of applicants for each vacancy • The number selected for the interview • The interview scores (or average) of the applicants who interviewed • The diversity of the applicant pool for each vacancy • The number of vacancies that had to be re-advertised due to lack of number or quality of candidates • The number and quality of candidates produced by each pathway (university programs, alternative programs, etc.) • The number of new principals leading high needs schools vs. low needs schools

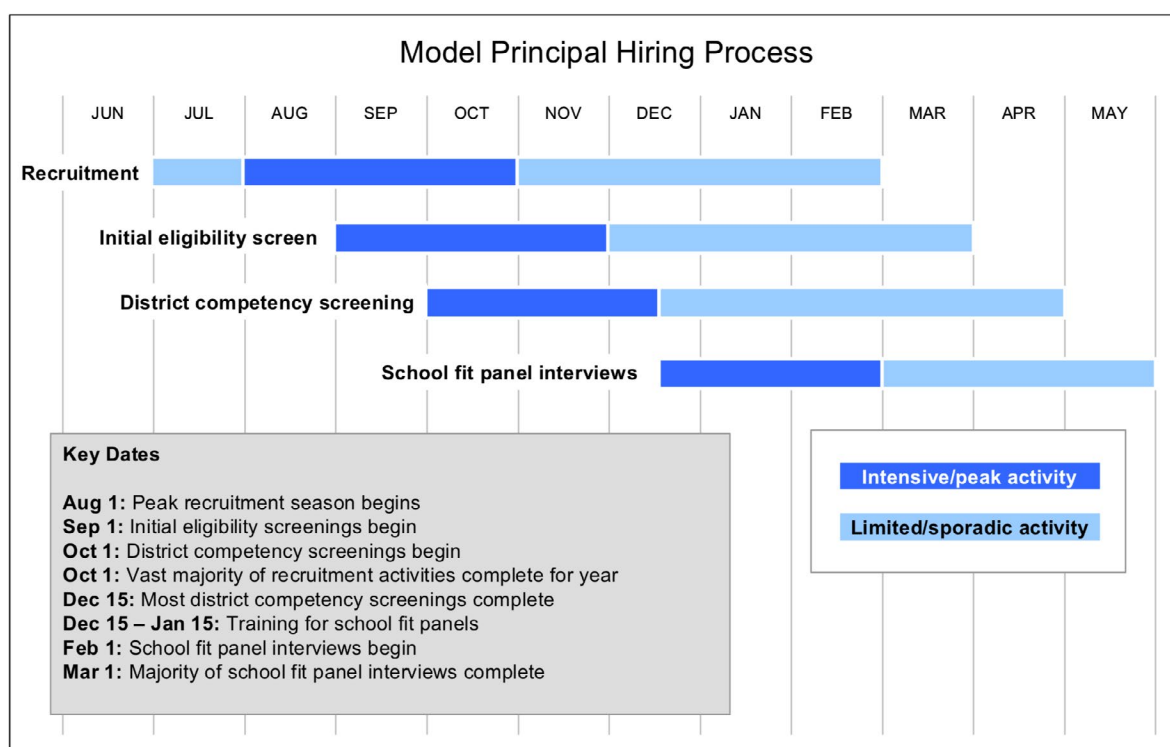
Districts can use information gathered from district records and supervisor perceptions to identify areas of need and plan strategies to address those needs accordingly.

⁶ Note: Adapted from Urban Schools Human Capital Academy (2017). *Quick wins building quality pool principals*. Reprinted with permission.

Efficient Timelines: Recruiting the Best Talent

Districts with strong recruitment and selection processes plan ahead via timelines so vacancies can be posted with sufficient time for a thorough and rigorous selection process. The New Teacher Project (TNTP) recommends the following timeline to capture the highest-quality candidates:

Figure 3. TNTP Recommended Timeline for Principal Recruitment and Selection⁷



In order to identify vacancies for this timeline, district leaders need to create a culture in which principals who are nearing retirement feel encouraged to communicate their intended departures — even if tentative — allowing district enough time to recruit and hire replacements before the retiring principals depart. This is true for principals who are leaving for reasons other than retirement as well. Districts may even choose to implement an incentive that makes principals more eager to announce their plans to leave the district as early as possible, so that the vacancy forecasts are even more reliable.

Next Steps Related to Vacancy Planning: Moving from Problematic to Strong practice

Districts can take the following first steps to become more strategic and explicit in planning for vacancies. While these steps are insufficient for strong practice, they can be quick wins that move the district in the right direction.

- **Assess** your district's current Vacancy Planning process to see if any revisions are necessary. Review the steps you take, and if those steps are part of a system or are led mostly by proactive individuals.

⁷ Note: Adapted from The New Teacher Project (2006). *Improved principal hiring*. Reprinted with permission.

Table 1. Assess your Practice Related to Planning

To what extent do you agree...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My district has a process or system for vacancy forecasting that includes more than just looking at who may retire at the end of the year.				
My district has estimates of principal vacancies for the next three to five years.				
My district has a process or system for regularly assessing the quality of the candidate pool by looking at multiple historical data points.				
My district uses an efficient timeline that allows for recruitment and selection, such that we are able to make offers early in the process, before top talent has accepted positions elsewhere.				
Note areas where your district has strong practice related to planning for recruitment and selection of principals and discuss with your team:	Note areas where your district may need to improve how they plan for recruitment and selection of principals and discuss with your team:			

- Make sure the **right people** in the district are involved in planning:
 - Ask supervisors to **systematically talk to principals about their future plans** as part of the performance evaluation conversation. This conversation can be a natural place to surface principals' career aspirations — whether they be promotion into the central office or retirement. The conversation can also identify school leaders or teacher leaders who could be developed into strong candidates to fill open positions.
 - Ask the Human Resources department to **calculate the number of principals eligible for retirement** in each of the next five years. Update this information annually.
 - Ask cabinet members to **identify contextual and policy issues that might affect principal vacancies** over the next five years. Consider issues that affect decisions for current principals to stay or leave, as well as issues that affect support of new principals. Issues might include: shifts in compensation/benefit structures, opening and closing of schools, licensure requirements, and preparation program changes that would lead to more or fewer graduates.
- Analyze average turnover for the past five years—is it consistent? Is there variation? Do you expect the average to change? Update this information annually.
- Analyze the district's track record on school leader applicants.

Key Component #2: Recruitment

This section:

- Provides a **definition** of “recruitment”;
- Describes **problematic (yet common) practice** related to recruitment;
- Describes **strong practice** related to recruitment; and
- Offers **next steps** for moving from problematic to strong practice related to recruitment.

Definition of “Recruitment”

Recruitment involves efforts to systematically generate interest in principalships and encourage promising candidates to apply to pipeline programs. Recruitment also involves efforts to generate interest for particular school leadership vacancies. For purposes of this guidebook, “recruitment” involves:

- **Pipeline Recruitment:** Recruitment begins before individuals enter principal preparation programs. Districts can help by spreading the word about quality internal and external programs, including messaging about the importance of school leadership. District leaders can also help program providers identify high-potential candidates by systematically recommending individuals or providing data that helps program target their recruitment efforts.
- **Vacancy Recruitment:** Recruiting for particular principal position openings involves spreading the word about vacancies to a wide audience. By casting a wide net, districts increase their chances of finding high-quality applicants in their pool. Districts can use various online and in-person strategies to advertise openings. It also involves identifying high-potential individuals who are likely to be high-quality applicants and encouraging them to apply.
- **Hard-to-Staff Position Recruitment:** Strategies depend on the characteristics that are needed for a particular population. For example, in hiring for a school that serves a 90% English–Language Learner (ELL) population, the district would likely want to target individuals who have ELL backgrounds.

Problematic (Yet Common) Practice Related to Recruitment

Districts often engage in passive recruitment strategies such as posting an open position on their website. In some cases, they announce the posting in a newsletter, or maybe share the posting to a regional educational service agency. While individuals within the district might forward the posting to individuals and encourage them to apply, there is no organizational strategy and plan to make sure targeted recruiting happens. The Fordham Foundation used the image in Figure 4 to describe common district practice related to principal recruitment.

Figure 4. Common Recruitment Practice⁸



When districts recruit, they tend to target criteria that are outdated and not supported by evidence. For example, most districts require a state licensure based on traditional administrative certificates are earned through completion of traditional education leadership programs in traditional institutions of higher education.⁹ While licensure is a minimum basic requirement, much like a clear background check, additional screening measures are needed to assess the qualifications of a person entering the pool of potential future principals.

Some districts also engage in informal recruitment in which a motivated district leader reaches out to specific individuals and encourages them to apply. For example, the director of leadership development might know many of the principals in a district and reach out to them to recommend candidates for positions or preparation programs. This can lead to bias. A 2014 report by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute explains additional problems with an unsystematic approach:

This method [informal recruitment] has merit...but it is not ideal for at least two reasons. First, it hinges on the insightfulness and motivation of supervisors. A sitting principal, regional superintendent, or human resources officer with an eye toward leadership development may encourage a particularly promising teacher or assistant principal to take the next step, yet an equally strong candidate with less interested or alert supervisors may go unnoticed and never apply. There is no way to know how many high-potential leaders simply did not pursue leadership positions, or left educational altogether because they were not spotted and encouraged to pursue new responsibilities. Second, high-potential candidates may get lost in the churn as administrators and central office personnel come and go...Absent a systematic process that applies a consistent rule or rubric to identify talent, a number of high-potential candidates may be overlooked..." (Doyle & Locke, 2014, p.17-18).

⁸ Note: Adapted from Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2014). *Lacking Leaders Infographic*. Reprinted with permission.

⁹ Doyle & Locke (2014), p. 17-18.

Few districts systematically and actively recruit candidates external to the district. When they do recruit externally, the strategies are often limited to posting the job vacancies and spreading the word through job fairs, conferences, and professional and social networks.¹⁰ They rarely research and target specific individuals to apply.

Districts often do not understand the role they play as the consumer for principal preparation programs. They do not advocate for changes in the curriculum or other program elements so that candidates are better prepared for the students and teachers in the district.

Finally, some districts do not understand the important role principals play in developing and recruiting future talented principals. In fact, in some districts, principals are incentivized to “keep quiet” about talent they have on their campus so they do not lose talented teachers and teacher leaders to principal roles, which stifles the principal pipeline.

Strong Practice Related to Recruitment

Districts with strong principal recruitment and selection processes are deliberate in identifying and encouraging high-quality candidates to apply — they do not wait for top talent to find them.

System to Identify Internal Talent


The districts identify internal talent in its system aligned with the needs of a particular vacancy. It does this systematically to eliminate bias; for example, by using a leader tracking system that tracks the expertise and experience of all relevant individuals in the system so that it can find and tap all qualified candidates. The districts might use their systems to identify individuals with expertise in topics such as turnaround schools, Title I, English–Language Learners, Special Education, or school themes. While encouraging everyone to apply, the districts makes extra effort to ensure participants with desired experience and expertise apply.

Hillsborough County Public Schools use its leader tracking system to identify high-potential applicants. District leaders can search the system for individuals with certain types of experience, education, or credentials.¹¹ Figure 5 provides an example of output from the schools’ data tracking system.

¹⁰ Doyle & Locke (2014).

¹¹ See Anderson, Turnbull & Arcaira (2017) for more information on leader tracking systems.

Figure 5. Leader Profile Report from Hillsborough Leader Tracking System¹²




Hillsborough Principal Pipeline
Great Leaders, Great Schools

Leader Profile Report
Principal Pipeline


Report No:
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Lawson ID:		Current Primary Role:	Asst Principal, Elem
Gender:	F	School Type:	ES
Race/Ethnicity:	Black	Current Assignment:	
		Hired Under New Standards?	Yes



Future Leaders Academy → Assistant Principal Induction Program → Experienced Assistant Principal → Preparing New Principals Program → Principal Induction Program → Experienced Principal

Credential:



Exp. Date: 5/17/21

Experience

Level 1 Work Assignment	School Assignment	Start Date	End Date
Asst Principal, Elem		Aug 6, 2018	
Res Tchr, Site, Math		Jul 1, 2017	Aug 5, 2018
Res Tchr, Site, Math		Jul 15, 2015	Jun 30, 2017

*Please Note: Work history before Jan 1, 2005 is not currently available.

Education

Institution	Date	Degree	Specialization
OTHER SCH:University of Louisiana at Mon 12-10-2016	12/2016	PHD	Curriculum & Instruction
OTHER SCH:High Point University 05-05-2005	05/2005	MASTERS	Ed. Admin/Leadership, General
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY	12/2000	BACHELORS	Elementary Teacher Ed

Certifications

Description	Certification Number	Valid From	Valid To
Elementary Education (K-6)	1013/K	Jul 1, 2015	Jun 30, 2020

Leader Tracking Systems¹³

Some districts across the country are developing “Leader Tracking Systems” (LTSs). These are electronic tools that collect data on both current and potential future principals. This data is displayed in ways that help districts plan for future vacancies.

Types of data that may be included are items like what educational institutions prepared at, what degrees/certifications they hold, what trainings they have attended, what positions they’ve held, including the school context, whether they are bilingual, etc. It can also track outcome data associated with an individual, such as student achievement results or climate surveys.

When this data is used effectively and appropriately, it can help districts understand their current and future pipelines. They can know how many certified principals they have who are not in the principal roles and what kinds of strengths and competencies they have in the pipeline. This could help in planning for and possibly training future principals.

This data also helps to match the right principal to the right school. Instead of randomly placing the next qualified principal into the next open role, districts can use the data in an LTS to find a qualified principal who also has the skills, background, and strengths necessary to meet a particular school’s needs.

LTSs are not easy to develop, but they can be useful tools in the recruitment and selection process.

¹² Note: Adapted from Hillsborough County Public Schools (2018). *Principal recruitment and selection* (Unpublished webinar). Reprinted with permission.

¹³ Anderson, Turnbull & Arcaira (2017).

Principal Preparation Programs

The district carefully considers the role of principal preparation programs in recruiting future principals who are ready to lead schools. This includes identifying preparation programs that provide the curriculum and residency experiences participants will need to be successful school leaders in the district. Sharing data between the program and the district and vice versa is one way to monitor this. The district carefully tracks which preparation program each principal graduated from to determine which program(s) may be providing the best candidates and recruit applicants from those programs accordingly.

Some districts have their own internal preparation program or supports. Districts actively recruit through these programs, particularly when they are providing the right supports.

Strategies for Outreach

The district plans and executes strategies for spreading the word about vacancies to a wide audience and for encouraging high-potential candidates to apply. The district leverages internal and external networks to advertise vacancies. On an ongoing basis, the district develops and maintains professional networks that may serve as sources for candidates or provide recommendations of candidates—particularly for candidates that may serve well in hard-to-staff areas. The district notifies people in these networks when vacancies are posted. Open positions are formally advertised through professional associations, institutes of higher education, social media, and internet-based employment services. The district partners with other organizations who can help it advertise vacancies to the populations they want to recruit. Figure 6 lists recruitment strategies recommended by Public Impact.

Figure 6. Recruitment Action Steps Recommended by Public Impact's Recruitment Action Planner¹⁴

1. Identify Hiring Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Pre-plan—recruitment team reads this planner & related tools. Identify owners and timelines for each step.B. Determine whether to use applicant pool process to pre-screen applicants before exact hiring needs are known.C. Identify types of positions to fill and estimate numbers needed, & special qualifications (for example, subject expertise), with principal supervisors.D. Set goals for diversity.E. Plan launch date for recruitment efforts.
2. Prepare for Outreach
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Prepare descriptions for all job postings.B. Prepare application materials; link from webpage.C. Craft key recruitment messages.D. Develop talking points for recruiters & principals to deliver a clear, concise, consistent message.E. Prepare recruiting web page.F. Prepare recruitment brochure to link online and share at job fairs and other events.G. Prepare and post FAQ page.H. Determine specific recruitment tasks for schools/principals/principal supervisors (see below); communicate all recruitment efforts & coordinate with their efforts, providing them with district recruitment resources.

¹⁴ Note: Adapted from Public Impact (2018). *Recruitment action planner*. Reprinted with permission.

- I. Plan targeted personal and in-person outreach
 1. Ask for referrals from principal supervisors, principals, teachers—past professional contacts whom they want as colleagues; contact.
 2. Ask supervisors, principals and teachers to use their social media & other connections to recruit candidates.
 3. Identify & recruit high-performing assistant principals. Ask them to recommend high-performing colleagues, too.
 4. Contact local education schools for alumni recommendations & connections with high-performing graduates.
 5. Identify & contact potentially high-performing school leaders. Identify strong leaders in neighboring districts. Ask them to recommend high-performing colleagues, too.
 6. Recruit at relevant conferences—those attracting high-performers with experience similar to the criteria for which you are hiring.
 7. Organize representatives to speak at nearby leadership preparation programs.
 8. Post positions on educator preparation program job boards for current students & alumni—in your region & nationally.
 9. Post positions where you can reach people who are underrepresented in your educator force, keeping your diversity goals in mind.
 10. Attend state, local, & other job fairs.
- J. Plan online advertising and outreach
 1. Post positions prominently on website home and jobs pages. Include PDF brochure link, application, videos, etc.
 2. Post on your website news page or news feed.
 3. Blog about job openings.
 4. Send e-blast to staff, parents & others who are on your district & school email dissemination lists.
 5. Search national resume databases.
 6. Advertise on job search websites. Check search engines for ones with the most hits/applicants.
 7. Post often & consistently about jobs on all current social media.
 8. Pay for digital advertising on local news websites or boosted posts, if necessary.
 9. Host webinars to share details. Use contact information (shared to join webinar) to follow up with participants.
 10. Post on selective program job pages.
 11. Seek local media coverage. Ask about free job listings on radio, TV, local papers, job organizations. Write an op-ed, sharing leader/teacher/student stories.
 12. Advertise in publications (online & print) for educators, local & national.
 13. Post at physical locations nearby: local colleges; possibly religious institutions, recreation centers, community centers.
 14. Coordinate with local and state unions to spread the word in person, newsletters, online.

3. Begin Active Recruitment and Outreach

- A. Ensure follow-through on targeted outreach plan in Step 2.
- B. Continue to communicate & coordinate all efforts with principal supervisors.
- C. See Step 1 to ensure adherence & outreach to meeting hiring goals for diversity.
- D. Use analytics to evaluate your efforts to determine best uses of your time (such as how applicants found your job postings, which postings or literature got the most views, or what tweets go the best response).

Equity in Recruitment

The district makes sure its candidate pool is diverse in terms of professional background, race, gender, and other demographics. First, it eliminates barriers that might discourage potential talent. One way the district can do this is by conducting an audit on the hiring process, looking for anything that might discourage any group of people to apply. Second, the district ensures that efforts to target individual recruitment are systematic rather than reliant on the perceptions of a single person or a very small group of people. For example, the systematic nature of one district's recruitment efforts for their aspiring principal program as follows:

Besides soliciting referrals, [talent managers] review teacher performance data to identify top classroom performers. Then they personally reach out to those individuals by phone and email, inviting them to information sessions and events and encouraging them to apply to the program. Such an orderly process does not hinge on the drive or institutional memory of a single individual, require managers to know everyone in the district, or even need a large budget to implement; rather, the district has developed protocols and procedures that specific staff members are responsible for implementing. Consequently, outstanding candidates are less apt to fall through the cracks.¹⁵

Finally, the district is open-minded about the types of individuals whom it believes can achieve success as school leaders and encourages interest from applicants of all backgrounds. District leaders push back against assertions that a school community would never accept candidates of a particular background or race. For example, when faced with school of predominately Spanish speaking students, the district employs multiple strategies to increase the number of Spanish-speaking candidates in the pool without discouraging other candidates from applying.

The Current Principal's Role in Recruitment

The district understands the important role the current principal plays in developing and recruiting future talent—recruitment for the principal role begins well before candidates enter a principal preparation program. The district is clear to principals that part of their job responsibility is to develop future leaders. Some districts even tie this to a principal's evaluation, and principals achieve high marks in this area when their staff is promoted into other roles within the district. Also, districts train principals on what competencies and skills to seek in future talent so that they are able to tap and recommend a diverse set of candidates from their campuses to apply for principal roles.

Next Steps: Moving from Problematic to Strong Practice Related to Recruitment

Districts can take the following first steps to strengthen recruitment practice. While these steps are insufficient for strong practice, they can be quick wins that move the district in the right direction.

- **Assess** your district's current recruitment process to see if any revisions are necessary. Review the steps you take, and if those steps are part of a system or led mostly by proactive individuals.

¹⁵ Doyle & Locke (2014).

Table 2. Assess your Practice Related to Recruitment

To what extent do you agree...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My district has a system or systematic process for identifying internal talent.				
My district carefully monitors where principals are trained, and knows which preparation programs tend to prepare the best candidates for our district.				
My district has multiple strategies for spreading the word about vacancies in a way that encourages high-potential applicants to apply.				
My district has strategies to ensure that the candidate pool for the principalship is diverse in terms of professional background, race, gender, and other demographics.				
My district understands the importance of the principal role in developing and retaining future talent and communicates this in a fair way to all current principals.				
Note areas where your district has strong practice related to recruitment of principals and discuss with your team:	Note areas where your district may need to improve how they plan for recruitment and selection of principals and discuss with your team:			

- Partner with **principal preparation programs** to recruit high-performing teachers into those programs.
- If the district has an internal principal preparation program, consider embedding **assessments** that yield data that informs recruitment and selection into the preparation program.
- Audit the district's current outreach. Create new **outreach opportunities** through online and in-person strategies to increase general awareness of open positions.
 - Review the district's website page where applicants go to apply for jobs. Make these pages attractive to high-potential applicants. Consider comparing the district website to employers outside of education (e.g., Apple Corporation, Google, etc.). Are there ways you could improve your first impression for many applicants?
- For each position, **target recruiting towards high-potential applicants** by naming their characteristics and identifying strategies to notify them about the position.
- Create a **leader tracking system** that allows you to identify internal talent who you can encourage to apply for particular positions.
- Create a "common definition" of an effective principal that helps current principals know what skills and competencies to look for in future leaders.
- Make equity and diversity a priority. Conduct an audit of the recruitment and selection process to search for ways to increase fairness, transparency, and diversity. Ensure everyone inside and outside the district understands this is a priority.

Key Component #3: Selection Process

This section:

- Provides a **definition** of “selection process”;
- Describes **problematic (yet common) practice** related to the selection process;
- Describes **strong practice** related to the selection process; and
- Offers **next steps** for moving from problematic to strong practice related to the selection process.

Definition of “Selection Process”

The selection process includes the series of steps used to assess candidates once they have expressed interest. For the purposes of this guidebook, the “selection process” involves:

- A process to assess a candidate’s **basic qualifications**, such as criminal background checks, ensuring that the candidate has the appropriate credentials, etc.
- A process to assess whether a candidate has the appropriate **competencies and skills** to be a successful principal in the district. Sometimes, candidates apply to a **candidate pool** for initial screening.
- A process to assess **qualifications and fit** for a particular position. Candidates must be members of the candidate pool to be considered for particular positions.

Problematic (Yet Common) Practice vs. Strong Practice Related to the Selection Process

Most districts have selection processes that involve screening for basic qualifications, as well as interviews conducted by multiple stakeholders. In some cases, however, the process is not based on clear and commonly understood selection criteria. At times, there are not even common interview questions. As a result, stakeholders involved in the process apply their own criteria, which may or may not be aligned with evidence-based characteristics of effective leadership.

Even when districts adopt research-based criteria for the selection of principals, they often do not have specific rubrics or selection tools that allow the selection committee to assess for those criteria.¹⁶

Districts tend to over-rely on interviews to assess competencies.¹⁷ Performance assessments are used to a minimal extent (e.g., a writing prompt or a case-based interview question). As a result, the process does not yield strong or consistent measures of the selection criteria.

The selection process in many districts is inefficient. Instead of having a pool of vetted, qualified candidates to pull from when an opening occurs, the screening process starts at the beginning for each opening. Sometimes, a candidate will be vetted multiple times by multiple hiring managers. This slows down the selection process, which can result in the loss of the best candidates to other districts.

¹⁶ Doyle, D., & Locke, G. (2014).

¹⁷ Doyle & Locke (2014).

Finally, in too many districts, the process lacks transparency. Applicants and other members of the process lack clarity on how various voices are considered and how decisions are made. Given that many districts historically select principals based on “who you know,” it is not surprising that many applicants continue to be skeptical about fairness when transparency is lacking.

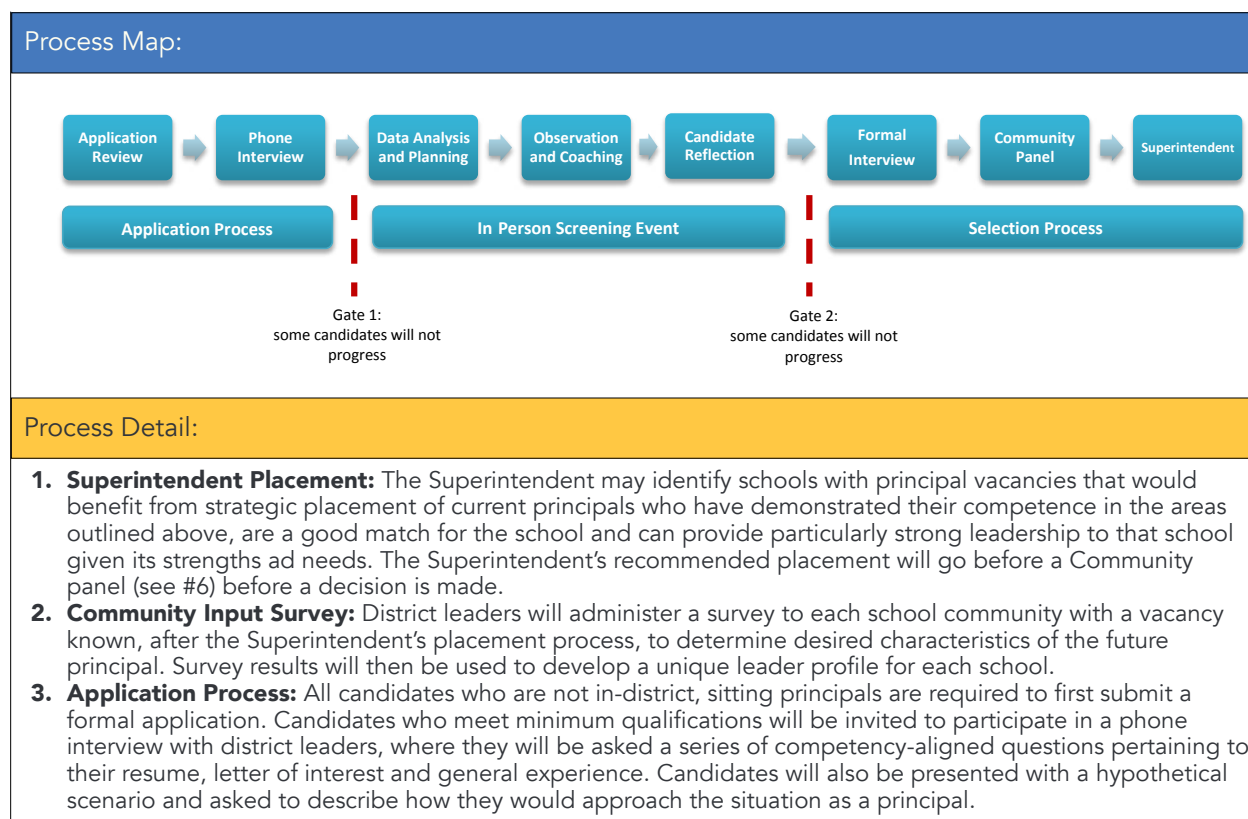
Strong Practice Related to the Selection Process

School districts with strong principal recruitment and selection processes prioritize transparency and rigor in order to get the best possible principals leading the right schools. They work to have efficient and fair processes to select the best candidates in a timely manner.

Process Description

The principal selection process in strong districts is efficient and is planned early enough in the year that the district does not lose out on top talent. Districts with strong selection processes clearly and transparently define each step of the selection process. The process is formal and systematic, and each step is documented. The role and authority of individuals and stakeholders involved in the process is clear. Figure 7 provides an example of a clearly defined selection process from Madison Metropolitan School District.

Figure 7. Madison Metropolitan School District Selection Process¹⁸



18 Note: Adapted from Madison Metropolitan School District (2018). *Principal Selection Guide* (Unpublished document).

- 4. In-person Screening Event:** Select candidates will then be invited to participate in an in-person screening event. This event includes a series of performance exercises designed to measure the candidate's competencies. It will also include a debrief, which gives candidates an opportunity to consider their response throughout the activities and provide other pertinent information.
- 5. Formal Interview:** Candidates who advance past the in-person screening event are considered to be part of a verified pool of principal candidates. An internal interview led by Chief of Schools will use the leadership profiles to identify 2-3 candidates that have strong potential to meet the unique needs of each school.
- 6. Community Panel:** The Community Panel will be selected by the School-based Leadership Team and will comprise of staff, parents, teachers, and community members who will provide the Superintendent with a summary of perceived strengths and areas of growth for each candidate. During these meetings, stakeholders will ask the candidates competency aligned questions to better understand their skills and experiences, especially in prioritized areas.
- 7. Superintendent Selection:** The Superintendent will make a final selection and forward her recommendations to the Board of Education for approval. The Superintendent will communicate the results of the selection process to the school community.

Principal Candidate Pool

Strong districts often screen individuals in a candidate pool. Candidates typically must be selected from the candidate pool before they can apply for a particular principal position. Minimum criteria are established and made transparent. Figure 8 includes descriptions of the principal candidate pool selection processes from three districts.

Figure 8. Descriptions of Candidate Pools

New York City Department of Education ¹⁹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Principal Candidate Pool screening process involves participation in an assessment series. The redesigned PCP process ensures that screening activities reflect the current role of principals in NYC. Series are aligned with the expectations for Instructional Program and School Culture and Equity Leadership which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person professional development sessions that give candidates opportunities to demonstrate individual thinking and skills, AND Time-bound online assessments based on leadership expectations
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools ²⁰
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steps to join our Principal Talent Pool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application – An online application including a structured resume, detailed letter of interest, and recommendations. Applications must contain all required information and will be screened using a rubric. Virtual Interview – A short online interview. You will need access to a computer or tablet with a camera to complete this interview. More information is provided when you are invited to participate. Screening Event – This is a half-day, in person event consisting of several activities including a role play, in-basket exercise, school data review, and a teacher observation. More information is provided when you are invited to participate. Required Application Documentation: (available at the website listed above) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter of Interest Structured Resume Two CMS Recommendation Forms Summative End-of-Year Evaluation Licensure Documentation

¹⁹ Note: Adapted from New York City Department of Education (n.d.). *Principal candidate pool FAQ* (Unpublished document).

²⁰ Note: Adapted from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (n.d.) *Assistant Principal and Principal Talent Pool* (Unpublished document).

Denver Public Schools²¹

- Step 1. Online Application
 - A principal's license is not required to apply
 - Resume
 - One (1) letter of recommendation
 - Cover letter
- Step 2. Phone Interview – If selected, you will be emailed by an interviewer to set up a 20- 30-minute phone interview
 - You do not need to have anything specific in front of you
 - Behavior-based interviewing skills
- Step 3. In-Person Interview
 - The interview will consist of a group activity around budget, a classroom observation and debrief, a data task, a parent role-play, and a Q&A interview
 - Suggested reading materials: DPS School Leadership Framework and LEAP Framework for Effective Teaching
 - Clearly be able to define your vision for school leadership


Performance-Based Assessments

Strong districts require that candidates demonstrate qualifications via a variety of rigorous assessments, including authentic performance assessments. The assessments are aligned with the school leadership framework and the candidate profile, and might include scenarios, presentations, writing prompts, portfolios, and interviews. A specific type of job interview called a “behavioral event interview” (BEI) can be particularly helpful for assessing school turnaround leaders, because it can assess how a leader might respond in a situation they have not encountered in the past. The Darden–Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education (PLE) has identified a BEI model for competencies that directly links to improved student achievement.²² Performance-based assessments may be used during this phase to gain entry into the applicant pool or after, as part of the selection process for a particular position. Competency assessments recommended by The New Teacher Project are listed in Figure 9.

²¹ Note: Adapted from Denver Public Schools (n.d.) *Principal Application Process* (Unpublished document).

²² Hitt (2015).

Figure 9. Competency Assessments Recommended by The New Teacher Project²³

	BEST PRACTICES: Competency Assessments
	<p>Interview Questions that Tap into Candidates' True Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Questions should be focused to address specific competencies. For example, the following questions measure skills in Instructional Management and Instructional Expertise.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What does good teaching look like? Mediocre teaching? Poor teaching? How would you work with each? ○ What do you think is the best way to prepare students for reaching proficiency on our state standardized test, especially those who are not currently meeting this challenge? Cite any relevant research you have read. • <i>Creative questions that require the candidate to think in the moment by responding to a scenario or describing specific strategies for success can probe for competencies much more effectively than questions that one can predictably encounter in any job interview.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Every day when you come into your office in the morning, you have 30 emails waiting in your inbox. How would you prioritize them without losing too much of your day dealing with email? ○ What techniques do you use in developing a rapport with colleagues? With staff? With parents? With students? • <i>Questions should allow a candidate from any pipeline to demonstrate his/her competencies.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outline an inclusion program for special education and second language learners. ○ Your school has inadequate resources and you determine that your students need more. What do you do? <p>Performance Assessments that Require Candidates to Respond to Realistic School Scenarios</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>School walk-throughs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In Western District 2, candidates visit a school and individually observe four different class sessions for 10 minutes each. Candidates then have 15 minutes to think about what they saw and consider three questions: "What did you see?" "What directions do you see for improvements?" and "How would you get the school moving in these directions?" They present their answers in a 15-minute interview with the district's selectors, who have also observed the classrooms and had the opportunity to analyze them. • <i>Evaluation of videotaped classroom sessions</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In Western District 1, candidates are asked to watch a 20-minute videotaped classroom session, after which they are asked to evaluate the quality of instruction. The candidates then role-play giving feedback to the "teacher", role-played by one of the selectors. • <i>Role-playing</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In addition to the role-play between principal and teacher described above, candidates in Western District 1 take part in a second role-play between principal and parent and a third role play between principal and regional superintendent. The three role-plays, administered in succession, test a candidate's ability to communicate with a variety of stakeholders and to deal with conflict and stress. • <i>Response to a case study</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In Western District 1, candidates are given 40 minutes to read a case study of a school facing many challenges, and review student achievement and attendance data, disaggregated by gender and race. Candidates analyze the state of the school and discuss their analyses with other candidates while being observed by selectors. • <i>Writing exercises</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Northeast Program asks candidates to write a sample letter to parents encouraging them to send their children to a new after-school tutoring program. This on-the-spot writing assignment assesses a candidate's written communication skills, as well as their relational and community-building competence.

Procedures to Ensure Fairness and Focus on Criteria

Districts with strong selection processes use a blind review of initial applications. For example, they eliminate names and other nonvital information to reduce bias. The American Institutes for Research recommends convening a search committee of five to seven people and heading it with a committee chair:²⁴

²³ Note: Adapted from The New Teacher Project (2006). Reprinted with permission.

²⁴ Clifford, M. (2012).

The committee chair is responsible for ensuring that members understand selection criteria and consistently review applications. One way to ensure reliability in the committee is to have members rate a mock application and discuss their decisions...The chair also should be sure that search committee raters have no conflicts of interest. During application review, all committee members should have the same information about each candidate, use the same rating form, and submit responses independently...For interviews, the search committee should create and review five to ten questions that align with hiring priorities and professional standards. Question responses should be recorded, and interviewees should independently rate candidate performance (p. 9).

School Fit

Districts with strong selection processes start by understanding and defining the specific needs of a school. Some districts create a candidate profile for each vacancy that summarizes the characteristics of a “perfect principal” for that particular school. District leaders create the profile by working with the school community to map the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. They also systematically consider whether and how the role—and the individual in the role—might need to be different than the prior situation.

Figure 10 provides an example of a school-specific posting by Denver Public Schools (DPS). The posting is organized to align to general selection criteria in DPS but also clarifies specific ways in which those criteria relate to a Montessori school.

Figure 10. Vacancy Posting for Denison Montessori School in Denver

Essential Functions and Objectives:
<p>To provide overall direction and leadership of a DPS Montessori Elementary School, Denison Montessori in southwest Denver.</p> <p>Denison has deep roots in the southwest Denver community. For over 30 years, Denison has been providing authentic Montessori education to ethnically, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse students within the Denver Public Schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster with fidelity a fully implemented public Montessori pre-k through 6th grade elementary program with a lens towards equity and social justice. • Insure that all classrooms have a complete set of Montessori materials with trained teachers who understand that a fully implemented Montessori classroom can and should meet (or exceed) District/ State expectations. • Lead a staff of administrative, certificated and classified personnel with a focus on Montessori formal training and access to ongoing Montessori professional development, with the goal of developing/ maintaining a strong, diverse pipeline of future Montessori teachers and leaders. • Cultivate effective relationships with all constituents including students, families, faculty, staff, community members, and key stakeholders, in order to collaboratively work in support of the school’s mission and vision. • Create a socially conscious student experience that values grace and courtesy in a culturally responsive manner. • Instructional Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster a school wide record keeping system that allows teachers to evaluate student internalization of skills for the purpose of lesson planning and to assist in analyzing classroom and school wide qualitative and quantitative data. • Evaluate staff using District Frameworks with an eye towards aligning feedback to Montessori principles in order to improve Montessori practice.

- **Operational Leadership**
 - Plan, prepare and administer the school's budget in order to keep the Montessori program viable and sustainable, including funding for training, professional development and student support services that support the whole child.
 - Insure the building, grounds and classrooms are safe, beautiful, welcoming and consistent with the expectations of a thoughtful and intentional Montessori prepared environment.
 - Work with and support parents, various individuals, agencies and organizations in the community, and the Collaborative School Committee (CSC) to develop a Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) that includes high and achievable goals while weaving in Montessori strategies as strategies for improvement.
 - Develop a schedule that honors the uninterrupted work cycle while meeting the needs of teacher planning.
 - Create and monitor an enrollment and staffing plan that honors Montessori principals regarding class size, while meeting the needs of a diverse student population.
 - Manage building operations, including: staff assignment of paraprofessionals, facilities staff, and other designated personnel; maintains inventory of materials, equipment and supplies; inspects buildings and grounds for safety and hazards; and recommends alterations to and general improvement of facilities.
 - Attend and participate in various meetings, and takes a leadership role on designated district committees, as required or requested.
 - Ensure for the proper maintenance, accuracy, completeness, confidentiality and security of all data/ records, including: personnel evaluations; monthly payroll; weekly census report and semi-annual report on attendance and enrollment; approval of requisitions for supplies and repairs; State reports on pupils and teachers; accident and athletic injury reports; reference and transcript requests; expulsions, suspensions, and court cases; statistical, evaluation, and test reports; drop-out studies; and instruction and organization surveys and reports.
 - Initiate or respond to internal and external inquiries or requests for information, as directed.
- **Education & Experience**
 - Master's degree with appropriate specialization such as elementary school/secondary education, administration, curriculum, instruction, and guidance is preferred.
 - Montessori training, or willingness to pursue in the first 12 months
 - Five (5) to seven (7) years of actual experience as an educator.
 - Demonstrated effective and diplomatic oral and written communication skills.
 - Bilingual skills in Spanish preferred.
- **Licensure & Certification**
 - A current, valid State of Colorado Type D Certificate Endorsed Principal, or a Colorado Principal License, or authorization.
 - Valid Colorado Driver's License, appropriate insurance coverage and acceptable driving record for the past three years.
- **Knowledge & Other Qualifications**
 - Demonstrated knowledge of DPS Human Resource and other departmental policies.
 - Ability to recognize and resolve conflicts or potentially controversial situations through diplomacy.

Strong selection processes include opportunities to assess candidates on school-specific needs. The district or school adapts protocols and assessments to strategically gather information about candidates relative to school needs. Strong districts often assign a diverse group of school representatives (e.g., teachers, parents, community members, and sometimes students) to conduct interviews to determine candidates' fit with the candidate profile for their school. District leaders consider input from this stakeholder group and conduct their own assessment of fit before approving a hire.

For example, the New York City Department of Education requires that a school-based committee interviews each candidate considered for a principal position in that school. The committee discusses the merits of each applicant interviewed and each member completes rating sheets for all candidates, which are submitted to the hiring manager (the principal supervisor). The committee members include:

- Four to seven parents;
- One designee of Superintendent (chairperson);
- Two teacher union member representatives;
- One school support staff member representative;

- One supervisor from the school or another school in the same community district; and
- One designee of an intermediary organization, as appropriate.²⁵

Next Steps: Moving from Problematic to Strong Practice Related to the Selection Process

Districts can take the following first steps to strengthen their selection process. While these steps are insufficient for strong practice, they can be quick wins that move the district in the right direction.

- **Assess** your district's current selection process to see if any revisions are necessary. Review the steps you take, and if those steps are part of a system or led mostly by proactive individuals.

Table 3. Assess your Practice Related to Selection Process

To what extent do you agree...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My district's selection process is timely and efficient enough to attract top talent.				
Each step of my district's selection process is clearly and transparently defined.				
Candidates are screened into a candidate pool before they can apply for a particular position.				
My district requires candidates to demonstrate qualifications on a variety of rigorous assessments, including authentic performance assessments.				
My district examines fit between candidates and the specific needs of the school they are applying to lead.				
Note areas where your district has strong practice related to the selection process for principals and discuss with your team:	Note areas where your district may need to improve the selection process for principals and discuss with your team:			

- Clarify the selection process and **make it transparent** by posting it on your external website.
- Incorporate **performance-based assessments** into screening and/or selection processes.
- Create **protocols and rubrics aligned to your school leadership framework** to guide consistency in how interviewees conduct the interviews and provide feedback on candidates.

²⁵ Note: Adapted from New York City Department of Education (2019). *Regulation governing the selection, assignment and appointment of principals and assistant principals* (Unpublished).

Key Component #4: Alignment and Continuous Improvement

This section:

- Provides a **definition** of “alignment” and “continuous improvement”;
- Describes **problematic (yet common) practice** related to alignment and continuous improvement;
- Describes **strong practice** related to aligning recruitment and selection to the broader talent management systems, as well as monitoring for continuous improvement; and
- Offers **next steps** for moving from problematic to strong practice related to alignment and continuous improvement.

Definition of “Alignment” and “Continuous Improvement”

For the purposes of this guidebook, “alignment” for recruitment and selection involves:

- Alignment to **state or district research-based performance standards or competencies**;
- Alignment to **other principal talent management components**, such as pipeline development, performance evaluation, and professional learning

“Continuous improvement” of recruitment and selection involves:

- **Monitoring implementation** of recruitment and selection strategies; and
- **Identifying upgrades** needed for future rounds of recruitment and selection

Problematic (Yet Common) Practice Related to Alignment and Continuous Improvement

Districts often create and conduct recruitment and selection processes in silos. Separate individuals might draft job descriptions, interview questions, selection assignments, and recruitment materials. Each individual has their own notion of the type of person the district is attempting to recruit and hire, and they tailor tools and materials accordingly. Similarly, individuals conducting the interviews often have different beliefs about the dispositions and competencies that they are seeking in a principal candidate — both generally and related to a particular school. For example, one interviewer might prioritize a candidate’s ability to provide feedback to teachers about instruction, while another interviewer might prioritize a candidate’s ability to engage parents and community. Without alignment on the attributes being sought, the results of the selection process are dependent on the views and interpretations of individuals conducting the selection interviews and activities.

Districts also often fail to monitor implementation of recruitment and selection strategies. For example, they may more heavily recruit for vacancies by advertising through partner organizations and systematically encouraging high-potential candidates to apply, but, then they fail to track whether these strategies were actually carried out, as well as whether more high-potential candidates actually applied. Without these data, districts struggle to know whether particular strategies should be continued or whether new or different strategies are needed.

Strong Practice Related to Alignment and Continuous Improvement

School Leadership Framework

Districts with strong alignments and continuous improvement have school leadership frameworks that clearly define skills and knowledge of effective principals.²⁶ All strategies for recruitment and selection are closely aligned with the frameworks. For example, the selection process explicitly identifies competencies from the school leadership framework that will be assessed and uses competency definitions from the framework to inform tool development and how candidate interview responses and assignments are assessed.

For example, the Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) recruitment and selection process is closely linked to the HCPS School Leader Competency Rubric, which provides a comprehensive and consistent definition of what it means to be a successful school principal in the district and an effective instructional leader. Not only does this rubric describe what an effective principal looks like in HCPS, it also maps performance of each of the key elements over the course of a principal's career. The rubric also details expectations throughout all stages of school leadership—from an aspiring principal to an experienced principal.

Districts that have a school leadership framework can more easily align all components of their principal talent management. Aspiring and sitting school leaders develop a clear understanding of effective leadership when the same set of competencies are used to guide their pipeline development, selection, professional learning, and evaluation. A clear vision of effective leadership provides clear signals to school leaders on how they should prioritize and improve their practice over time.

Continuous Improvement of Recruitment and Selection

Strong districts also engage in continuous improvement. They continuously assess their recruitment and selection practices relative to strong practices and identify opportunities for improvement. They also monitor implementation of their recruitment and selection processes to determine whether they are being implemented as intended and having the desired effect. For example, if they identify new strategies to recruit applicants with particular skills (e.g., bilingual programs), then they examine their data to determine whether the strategies actually resulted in a larger pool of candidates with bilingual skills. They reflect to determine strategies that worked or didn't work and make adjustments accordingly. Strong districts work to improve effectiveness and efficiency of their recruitment and selection strategies.

Next Steps: Moving from Problematic to Strong Practice Related to Alignment and Continuous Improvement

Districts can take the following first steps to strengthen their alignment and continuous improvement of recruitment and selection. While these steps are insufficient for strong practice, they can be quick wins that move the district in the right direction.

- **Assess** your district's current alignment and continuous improvement efforts to see if any revisions are necessary. Review the steps you take, and if those steps are part of a system or led mostly by proactive individuals.

²⁶ For a detailed description of school leadership frameworks, including best practices and examples, see the Principal Performance Evaluation Guidebook at <https://gwbcenter.imgix.net/Publications/Resources/GWBI-Principal-Performance-Guidebook.pdf>.

Table 4. Assess your Practice Related to Alignment and Continuous Improvement

To what extent do you agree...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My district has a common vision of effective school leadership (e.g., a school leadership framework).				
My district's recruitment strategies are aligned to a common vision of effective school leadership (e.g., a school leadership framework).				
My district's selection processes are aligned to a common vision of effective school leadership (e.g., a school leadership framework).				
My district monitors implementation of recruitment and selection processes.				
My district systematically reflects and identifies improvements for recruitment and selection.				
Note areas where your district has strong practice related to alignment and continuous improvement and discuss with your team:	Note areas where your district may need to improve alignment and continuous improvement and discuss with your team:			

- **Align selection processes** to your district's school leadership framework.
- Use the reflection questions in this guidebook to **assess your district's recruitment and selection processes** relative to strong practices.

Districts to Watch

The following districts are illustrative examples of the strong practices in action. In both cases, the districts utilize a series of leadership preparation programs as a strategy for both recruiting people into the pipeline, as well as a strategy for assessing their leadership practice to inform selection decisions. Focusing on pipeline development is a systemic approach. Both districts developed their pipeline strategy seeded with grant money over time in collaboration with partners. While the strategy was a big lift, both districts have found pipeline development to be an effective strategy for addressing recruitment and selection and have been able to sustain the work past initial grant funding. While the next steps presented throughout this report provide districts with doable immediate actions, these districts provide a vision for a comprehensive approach that districts can work towards overtime.

- Hillsborough County Public Schools
- Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools

Hillsborough County Public Schools

Path to the Principalship

Both internal and external candidates can apply for entry into the Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) Principal Pipeline, which is the HCPS candidate pool and training program for leadership positions. They must have an Educational Leadership Certification (principal license in Florida) and at least three years of teaching experience. Both internal and external candidates enter the HCPS Administrative Selection Process. Along with an application form, each candidate must submit his or her most recent evaluation, two references, and a completed essay. From those who apply, selected candidates are invited to a 90-minute interview, which includes competency-based exercises. Successful candidates are then placed in a pool of potential future principals. Typically, it takes several years from entry into the pool until a candidate actually applies for a principal position in HCPS.

Once in the pool, candidates take the following steps:

- **Attend Future Leaders Academy (FLA).** All candidates, both internal and external, must go through the Future Leaders Academy, a six-month preparation program. FLA course content can also be found online for those who do not live near the district.
- **Apply to Assistant Principal Position.** Once candidates successfully complete the FLA, they can then apply for an assistant principal position. All assistant principals receive a carefully selected mentor and two years of professional development.
- **Attend Preparing New Principals (PNP) Program.** After three successful years in the assistant principal role, a candidate can then apply for the PNP, which provides an additional two years of training. Thus, a candidate is in the assistant position role for a minimum of five years before moving onto the next phase.
- **Apply for Principal Position.** Once candidates finish the PNP, they are eligible to apply for a principal position.

Collecting Data to Improve Recruitment and Selection: Leader Tracking System

HCPS's leader tracking systems collect longitudinal data on potential school leaders that include: previous experience (both type of role and length), certification, detailed preparation information, performance evaluation data, and data about participation in professional development. This system allows HCPS to:

- **Improve the principal candidate pool.** The district can systematically review candidates' credentials, experiences, and training and proactively determine those who are best qualified to become a principal. The district can also tailor professional development to meet the needs of aspiring leaders and to prepare leaders for schools that will soon have openings.
- **Better match candidates to schools.** When principal positions open up, the district can make well-informed decisions on the school that a qualified aspiring leader should be placed in based on that candidate's experiences and training.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) partners with several local preparation programs to provide several different options for proceeding through the pipeline. Each program offers different delivery formats such as a summer intensive, more than one internship, and a trimester (versus semester) format.

Figure 11. Local Preparation Program Partners²⁷

Leaders for Tomorrow:

This is a program aimed at current CMS teachers or certified employees who aspire to become executive school leaders in high-needs CMS schools. Administered by Winthrop University, potential leaders complete a 36-credit-hour accredited Master of education in Educational Leadership degree and are qualified to receive a state certification. Courses are a combination of face-to-face and web-based instruction, and are delivered by Winthrop faculty in collaboration with CMS leaders. The program includes 6 semesters of coursework with a full one-year internship experience embedded prior to the completion of the program.

School Executive Leadership Academy (SELA) at Queens University:

A partnership between the McColl School of Business and the Cato School of Education, this innovative 14-month licensure program is designed to arm potential school executives with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead change in our school. SELA participants will be eligible to receive the NC school administration license and may earn graduate credit hours towards a Master of School Administration, Master of Business Administration, Master of Science in Organization Development or Master of Science in Executive Coaching degree.

UNC Charlotte Aspiring High School Principals Program:

The program offers three strands, depending on the participants' status, beginning CMS high school principals who already hold the NC school administration license and a master's degree; qualified teachers or those in non-administration positions who already have a master's degree but need their school administration license; teachers who need the full Master of School Administration degree. The problem-based and action-learning curriculum simulates the tactical challenges faced by high school principals and offers support tailored to participants' unique learning styles and leadership development needs.

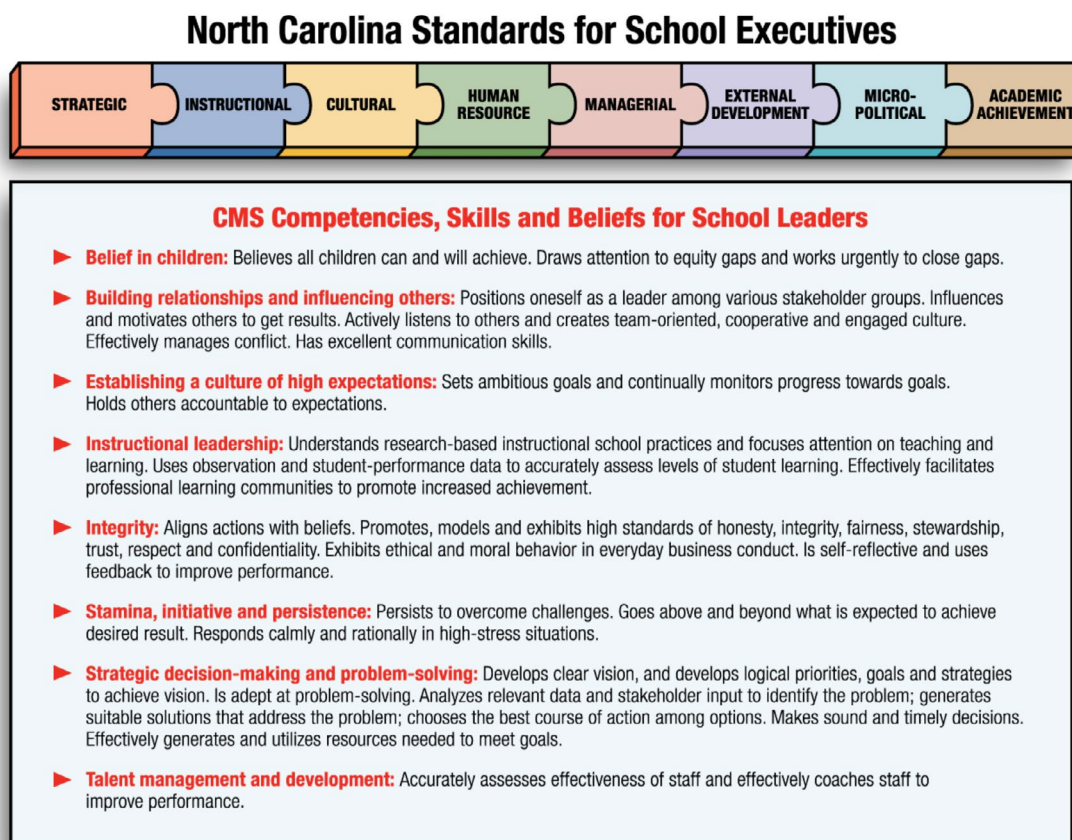
Educational Leadership Programs at Wingate University:

Wingate University offers a 37-semester hour Master of Arts in Education in Educational Leadership program and a 22-semester hour Add-on Licensure Program in School Administration K-12. These programs focus on the seven NC Standards for School Executives, including strategic leadership, instructional leadership, cultural leadership, human resource leadership, managerial leadership, external development leadership, and micropolitical leadership. Future leaders take part in standards-based projects and learning experiences that are often taught by practitioners from local district central offices.

²⁷ Note: Adapted from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (n.d.) *Principal Pipeline Initiative: the path to principalship starts here*. Retrieved November 27, 2018 from <https://principalpipeline.cms.k12.nc.us/pages/prepare.aspx>. Reprinted with permission.

CMS ensures that principal candidates have the necessary knowledge and skills by working with their preparation providers to ensure that each program—despite differences in structure—is aligned to CMS’s school leadership competency framework. The framework is aligned to state standards and is also used for selection criteria and performance evaluation.

Figure 12. North Carolina School Leadership Framework²⁸



28 Note: Adapted from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (n.d.) *Principal Pipeline Initiative: What constitutes an effective school leader?* Retrieved November 27, 2018 from <https://principalpipeline.cms.k12.nc.us/pages/define.aspx>. Reprinted with permission.

Learn More

This guidebook on principal recruitment and selection is designed to be a resource for district leaders who want to improve their practice in these areas. It suggests that districts should focus on three areas: 1) planning for vacancies; 2) recruiting high-quality applicants; and 3) utilizing a rigorous and well-defined selection process. These components are interrelated and must be addressed coherently to maximize the impact of improvements in any one area. In addition, principal recruitment and selection should be guided by the district's school leadership framework and be linked to other principal talent management areas, such as: Pipeline Development, Professional Learning, Supervision, Evaluation, Compensation and Incentives, and Working Environment.

In addition to what we have highlighted in this guidebook, we have also included several appendices for your reference. These include:

- **Appendix A:** Summary of Strong Practices in Principal Recruitment and Selection—one-page summary of strong practices for each component of principal recruitment and selection.
- **Appendix B:** Additional Resources for Recruitment and Selection—recommended resources designed specifically to support district leaders working to improve principal recruitment and selection, as well as an annotated bibliography.
- **Appendix C:** Recruitment Strategies—examples of strategies that two districts have used to recruit applicants for principal vacancies.
- **Appendix D:** Selection Strategies—examples of process steps that two districts have used to select principal candidates.

Appendix A: Summary of Strong practices in Principal Recruitment and Selection

The George W. Bush Institute has distilled prior learning from research and practice into four key areas of principal recruitment and selection:

1. The **district plans for vacancies** they will need to fill, addressing both where and why;
2. The **district effectively recruits and screens high-quality applicants**;
3. The **district has a rigorous and well-defined selection process**; and
4. The **district aligns and continuously improves recruitment and selection strategies**.

This appendix elaborates on each of the four strong practices.

The district plans for vacancies they will need to fill, addressing both where and why:

- **Vacancy Forecasts:** The district creates vacancy forecasts by analyzing historical data, including ages and the years of service of its current principals. District leaders use these projections to better anticipate principal retirements and target recruiting of candidates with needed experience into district-run preparation programs.
- **Pipeline Analysis:** Districts with strong recruitment and selection processes examine the pipeline by collecting information about how many principal-ready candidates are already in their pool and how many they project will be in the pool based on enrollments in leadership preparation programs. They also assess the quality of the pipeline by reviewing historical data about the quality of applicants and by gathering qualitative data from district leaders.
- **Efficient Timelines:** Districts with strong recruitment and selection processes plan ahead on timelines so that vacancies can be posted with sufficient time for a thorough and rigorous selection process to occur.

The district effectively recruits and screens high-quality applicants:

- **System to Identify Internal Talent:** The district aligns talent in its system with the needs of a particular vacancy. It does this systematically to eliminate bias, for example, by using a leader tracking system that tracks the expertise and experience of all relevant individuals in the system so that it can find and tap all qualified candidates. For instance, it might use the system to identify individuals with expertise in topics such as turnaround schools, Title I, English Language Learners, Special Education, or school themes. While encouraging everyone to apply, the district makes extra effort to ensure participants with the desired experience and expertise apply.
- **Preparation Programs:** The district carefully considers the role of preparation programs in recruiting future principals who are ready to lead schools. This includes identifying preparation programs that provide the curriculum and residency experiences participants will need to be successful school leaders in the district. Sharing data between the program and the district and vice versa is one way to monitor this. The district carefully tracks which preparation program each principal graduated from to determine which program(s) may be providing the best candidates and recruits applicants from those programs accordingly.
- **Strategies for Outreach:** The district plans and executes strategies for spreading the word about vacancies to a wide audience and for encouraging high-potential candidates to apply. The district leverages internal and external networks to advertise vacancies. On an ongoing basis, the district develops and maintains professional networks that may serve as sources for candidates or provide recommendations of candidates. The district notifies people in these networks when vacancies

are posted. Open positions are formally advertised through professional associations, institutes of higher education, social media, and internet-based employment services. The district partners with other organizations who can help it advertise vacancies to the populations they want to recruit.

- **Equity in Recruitment:** The district makes sure its candidate pool is diverse in terms of professional background, race, gender, and other demographics. First, it eliminates barriers that might discourage potential talent. Second, the district ensures that efforts to target individual recruitment are systematic rather than reliant on the perceptions of a single person or a very small group of people. Finally, the district is open-minded about the types of individuals whom it believes can achieve success as school leaders and encourages interest from applicants of all backgrounds.

The district has a rigorous and well-defined selection process:

- **Process Description:** Districts with strong selection processes clearly and transparently define each step of the selection process. The process is formal and systematic, and each step is documented. The role and authority of individuals and stakeholders involved in the process are clear.
- **Principal Candidate Pool:** Districts with strong selection processes often screen individuals in a candidate pool. Candidates typically must be selected from the candidate pool before they can apply for a particular principal position. Minimum criteria are established and made transparent.
- **Performance-Based Assessments:** Districts with strong selection processes require that candidates demonstrate qualifications via a variety of rigorous assessments, including authentic performance assessments. The assessments are aligned with the school leadership framework and the candidate profile and might include scenarios, presentations, writing prompts, portfolios, or interviews.
- **Procedures to Ensure Fairness and Focus on Criteria:** Districts with strong selection processes use a blind review of initial applications. For example, they eliminate names and other nonvital information to reduce bias.
- **School Fit:** Districts with strong selection processes start by understanding and defining the specific needs of a school. Some districts create a candidate profile for each vacancy that summarizes the characteristics of a “perfect principal” for that particular school. District leaders create the profile by working with the school community to map the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. They also systematically consider whether and how the role—and the individual in the role—might need to be different than the prior situation.

The district aligns and continuously improves recruitment and selection strategies:

- **School Leadership Framework:** Districts with strong alignment have a school leadership framework that clearly defines skills and knowledge of effective principals. All strategies for recruitment and selection are closely aligned with the framework. The district also uses the school leadership framework to align all components of principal talent management, especially including Pipeline Development, Recruitment and Selection, Professional Learning, Principal Supervision, and Performance Evaluation.
- **Continuous Improvement of Recruitment and Selection:** Districts with strong selection processes also engage in continuous improvement. They continuously assess their recruitment and selection practices relative to strong practices and identify opportunities for improvement. They also monitor implementation of their recruitment and selection processes to determine whether they are being implemented as intended and having the desired effect. They reflect to determine strategies that worked or didn’t work and make adjustments accordingly.

Appendix B: Additional Resources for Recruitment and Selection

This appendix contains resources that provide additional explanations, examples, and tools that your district may find useful as it develops a common definition of effective recruitment and selection and works to create and implement strategies that improve recruitment and selection for your principals. The five documents listed under “Key Resources” are recommended reading for everyone doing this work. The “Annotated Bibliography” offers additional resources, many of which greatly informed the ideas presented in the guidebook.

Key Resources

These resources are only a sample; each district cohort team has an advisor who can help you identify additional resources, depending on your needs.

Title: [Executive Summary of the Principal Puzzle Pieces](#)

Source: Urban Schools Human Capital Academy

Publication Year: 2017

Description: Human Resources (HR) plays a critical role in ensuring a highly effective principal leads every school. This two-page summary outlines the key “puzzle pieces” of work on which Human Resource teams must focus to support a district’s efforts to improve and sustain principal quality. While not explicitly stated, the work below can be applied to improving the quality of the assistant principal role as well.

Title: [A New Approach to Principal Preparation: Innovative Programs Share Their Practices and Lessons Learned](#)

Source: Rainwater Leadership Alliance

Publication Year: 2010

Description: This report by the Rainwater Leadership Alliance compiles detailed information and examples from promising principal preparation programs on their approaches to recruitment, selection, training, ongoing support, and continuous support. The book includes appendices with detailed examples of strategies for building the candidate pool and selection processes.

Title: [Improved Principal Hiring: The New Teacher Project’s Findings and Recommendations for Urban Schools](#)

Source: The New Teacher Project

Publication Year: 2006

Description: The New Teacher Project (TNP), with support from The Broad Foundation, investigated the methods urban school districts use to recruit, select, and hire principals. This working paper presents the basic findings of that investigation, along with recommendations for how urban districts and schools can build model recruitment, screening, selection, and hiring processes to obtain quality principals. Specifically, this working paper seeks to answer the following: 1) What obstacles do urban schools and districts face in hiring principals? 2) How is principal quality affected as a result? 3) What viable solutions exist to overcoming obstacles in order to hire quality principals?

Title: [Hiring Quality School Leaders: Challenges and Emerging Practices](#)

Source: American Institutes for Research (AIR)

Publication Year: 2012

Description: Choosing an effective school principal is one of the most significant decisions a superintendent or school board can make, as new leadership can propel a district to better meet its goals. In this issue brief, AIR staff review the research and summarize the challenges facing school superintendents and hiring committees when identifying and selecting candidates. The paper also identifies emerging hiring practices.

Title: [Leader Tracking Systems: Turning Data into Information for School Leadership](#)

Source: Policy Studies Associates & The Wallace Foundation

Publication Year: 2017

Description: A look at data systems to improve school leadership offers “hard-won insights” gathered from six school districts that are building these systems to assist in the following areas: 1) forecasting principal vacancies, 2) determining the optimal enrollment size of district-run principal training programs, 3) monitoring the diversity of the hiring pool, and 4) giving feedback to university programs on placement rates of their graduates, potentially leading to programming improvements.

Title: [Quick Wins for Building a Quality Pool of Principals](#)

Source: Urban Schools Human Capital Academy (USHCA)

Publication Year: 2017

Description: This two-page guide from USHCA is intended for staffing teams, HR partners, and principal supervisors. It outlines five strategies that can be implemented as “quick wins” for building a quality pool of principals. The five strategies include:

1. Recruit External Principal and Assistant Principal Candidates
2. Analyze the Teacher Turnover Rate by Principal
3. Compile a List of Teacher Leaders
4. Analyze the District’s Track Record on School Leader Applicants
5. Schedule an Analytic Discussion with Supervisors of Principals

[Annotated Bibliography](#)

Anderson, L.M., Turnbull, B.J. & Arcaira, E.R. (2017). *Leader tracking systems: Turning data into information for school leadership*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Leader-Tracking-Systems-Turning-Data-Into-Information-for-School-Leadership.pdf>.

School districts are awash with data on matters ranging from the education and career experiences of employees to the demographics and performance of schools. By compiling such data within a single online system, six large school districts are seeking to unleash the power of information to build a bigger corps of effective principals and assistant principals, according to this report. The districts are part of The Wallace Foundation’s Principal Pipeline Initiative to improve school leader training, hiring, evaluation and on-the-job support. The data systems they have developed since 2011—known as “leader tracking systems”—have proved particularly useful in school leader hiring. Among other things, they have enabled administrators to unearth strong candidates who otherwise might not have been on hiring radar screens, to more easily make good matches between school needs and job candidates

and to remove some bias from hiring decisions. The data systems are helping, too, in areas including forecasting principal vacancies, determining the right enrollment size of district-run principal training programs, monitoring the diversity of the hiring pool, and giving feedback to university programs on placement rates of their graduates, which could lead to programming improvements. Based on the districts' experiences, the report offers a number of "hard-won insights" into how to develop leader tracking systems. These include forming a development team headed by a single person with project management experience and working initially with data already in hand rather than gathering new data.

Clifford, M. (2012). *Hiring quality school leaders: Challenges and emerging practices (revised)*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Hiring_Quality_School_Leaders_0.pdf.

Leadership transitions provide opportunities for organizational growth and development. In the field of education, choosing an effective school principal is one of the most significant decisions a superintendent or school board can make, as new leadership can propel a district forward in meeting its goals. Principals are responsible for setting school improvement agendas and teacher workplace conditions and ensuring that the school performs in accordance with state/national policies and community expectations. However, many school districts report that recruiting and selecting new school principals is challenging. This brief describes the challenges that school superintendents and hiring committees face when trying to hire a school principal by drawing upon research. In addition, the brief offers practical, emerging practices that school superintendents and hiring committees have implemented to address challenges.

Doyle, D., & Locke, G. (2014). *Lacking leaders: The challenges of principal recruitment, selection, and placement*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Retrieved from <http://edex.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/publication/pdfs/Lacking-Leaders-The-Challenges-of-Principal-Recruitment-Selection-and-Placement-Final.pdf>.

Principals are vitally important. But ever-rising accountability standards, limited authority over key decisions, and mediocre pay make the job more and more demanding and less and less attractive to talented leaders. At a time when schools need high-quality leaders more than ever, the grueling nature of the job makes it a tough sell, and principals tend to come and go. But are school systems doing all they can to meet these challenges head-on? Or are some making a difficult recruitment and selection job impossible through bureaucratic procedures, unrealistic calendars, too little outreach, and inappropriate placements? How can districts hire many more talented leaders and place them where they're most needed? This report unveils some of the mystery behind principal hiring by taking an in-depth look at practices in five urban districts. To do this, the authors interviewed district staff and newly hired principals, surveyed principal candidates, and analyzed a range of qualitative and quantitative data related to districts' hiring practices. The authors offer six recommendations to any district looking to improve their recruiting procedures: 1) Make the job a lot more appealing; 2) Pay great leaders what they are worth; 3) Take an active approach to principal recruitment; 4) Evaluate candidates against the competencies and skills that successful principals are known to possess; 5) Design the placement process to match schools' needs with candidates' strengths; and 6) Continually evaluate hiring efforts. An appendix presents the methodology used in this study. [The foreword to this report was written by Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Amber M. Northern.]

Hitt, D.H. (2015). "What it takes" for a turnaround: Principal competencies that matter for student achievement: A guide to thoughtfully identifying and supporting turnaround leaders. Center on School Turnaround at WestEd & University of Virginia Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education. San Francisco: WestEd. Retrieved from https://centeronschoolturnaround.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/CenteronSchoolTurnaround_What_It_Takes.pdf.

Over the last eight years, the University of Virginia Partnership for Leaders in Education has partnered with over 50 districts and state education agencies across the country to embark on high-level change at the state, district, and school levels through the use of leader competencies. In this guide, we call upon our practice-based experience, expertise, and insight to provide both technical assistance and thought leadership to districts and systems involved in "school turnaround." Specifically, we discuss the behavioral event interview (BEI) and turnaround leader competencies, and we explain how each of these can support the turnaround endeavor.

Leithwood, K., Louis, K.S., Anderson, S. & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/how-leadership-influences-student-learning.aspx>.

Leadership is second only to teaching among in-school influences on student success, and its impact is greatest in schools with the greatest needs, according to this landmark examination of the evidence on school leadership. Decades of research, the authors suggest, support the notion that those who seek to improve schools should focus not just on teachers but also on principals and administrators. School leaders should, among other things, be able to set clear direction, establish high expectations, and develop talent in their schools to fully support teaching and learning. Drawing on both detailed case studies and large-scale quantitative analysis, the authors show that the majority of school variables, considered individually, have at most a small impact on learning. The real payoff comes when individual variables combine to reach critical mass. Creating the conditions under which that can occur—such as a positive school culture combined with appropriate professional development for teachers—is the job of the principal. The study finds that taken together, direct and indirect effects of school leadership account for about a quarter of total school effects. The authors further suggest that success in the absence of leadership is difficult. The researchers found "virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader."

Malkus, N., Ralph, J., Hoyer, K.M. & Sparks, D. (2015). *Teaching vacancies and difficult-to-staff teaching positions in public schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015065.pdf>.

This brief investigates teaching vacancies and difficult-to-staff teaching positions (i.e., positions for which the principals reported that it was very difficult to fill a vacancy or that they could not fill a vacancy in a specific subject area) in public schools in four school years (1999–2000, 2003–04, 2007–08, and 2011–12).

Manna, P. (2015). *Developing excellent school principals to advance teaching and learning: Considerations for state policy*. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/developing-excellent-school-principals.aspx>.

School principals are "invaluable multipliers of teaching and learning in the nation's schools," according to this report by political scientist Paul Manna, but to date it's been unclear what state policymakers could do to boost their effectiveness. Drawing from sources including the experiences of states that have focused on developing stronger principal policy, this report aims to fill that gap by offering guidance in

the form of three sets of considerations for those who want to take action.

- The first is an appraisal of the principal's current status on the list of state priorities and the rationale for placing the principal higher on the agenda, such as the fact that principals can have a powerful effect on the classroom.
- The second is an examination of six policy levers that states can pull:
 - Adopting principal leadership standards into state law and regulation;
 - Recruiting aspiring principals into the profession;
 - Approving and overseeing principal preparation programs;
 - Licensing new and veteran principals;
 - Supporting principals' growth with professional development; and
 - Evaluating principals.
- The third is an assessment of four important contextual matters for the state: its web of institutions responsible education governance and the interaction among them; its diversity of urban, suburban and rural locales; its capacity, along with the capacities of its communities, to carry out new policies; and its mandates already affecting principals.

The report emphasizes that every state faces a unique blend of educational, political and financial circumstances and that, therefore, each state's approach should fit its needs and particularities. "There is not a cookbook recipe for policy development or implementation that will work equally well in all states," it says. "State and local adaptations will be necessary. Still, there are some useful places for all states to start, regardless of their current conditions."

Mendels, P. (2012). Principals in the pipeline: Districts construct a framework to develop school leadership. *Journal of Staff Development*, 33(3), 5. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Principals-in-the-Pipeline.pdf>.

A diverse school district hugging the eastern border of Washington, D.C., Prince George's County, has introduced rigorous hiring methods and other practices to boost the quality of leadership in its 198 schools. In so doing, the district has also earned a spot among the pioneers in efforts nationally to ensure that public schools are led by the best principals possible. "We think the most critical interaction in schools is between the teacher and the student, but second to that is leadership in the building," says Douglas Anthony, director of human capital management for the county. Prince George's County is one of six school districts taking part in a six-year \$75 million initiative to establish strong principal "pipelines." The key idea behind the initiative is that obtaining effective principals requires four essential elements: principal standards, high-quality training, selective hiring, and a combination of solid on-the-job support and performance evaluation, especially for new hires. These may seem like common sense elements but until recently, leadership was an afterthought for most districts and, as a consequence, important pipeline elements were either insufficient or missing altogether. Now, several factors are changing the old scenario. One is government policy. Another factor is research. These factors combined have educators and policymakers looking intently at what they can do to promote school leadership.

The New Teacher Project. (2006). *Improved principal hiring: The New Teacher Project's findings and recommendations for urban schools*. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from <https://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP-ImprovedPrincipalHiring-Final.pdf>.

Building on the success of its 2003 study, "Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High-Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms," The New Teacher Project (TNTP), with support from The Broad Foundation,

investigated the methods that urban school districts use to recruit, select, and hire principals. This working paper presents the basic findings of that investigation along with recommendations for how urban districts and schools can build model recruitment, screening, selection, and hiring processes to obtain quality principals. Specifically, this working paper seeks to answer the following: 1) What obstacles do urban schools and districts face in hiring principals? 2) How is principal quality affected as a result? 3) What viable solutions exist to overcoming obstacles in order to hire quality principals?

To better understand urban school districts' principal recruitment, selection, and hiring practices, TNTP conducted an extensive literature review of the relevant research. In the area of principal selection processes, they additionally conducted interviews and made observations of seven school districts, two university-based leadership programs, and four district-affiliated or national school leadership programs. In the area of principal recruitment and hiring, they investigated the phenomena described in literature by conducting resume reviews, surveys, and interviews with district staff in three urban districts, one each in the eastern, mid-atlantic, and southern regions of the United States. Three primary findings confirmed beliefs about principal hiring long suspected by those in the field of education and unearthed obstacles not before extensively addressed: 1) There is a shortage of high-quality principal candidates available to urban schools; 2) Urban districts appear not to be selecting the best candidates from this limited pool; and 3) Late vacancy notifications and administrative inefficiencies result in the loss of applicants and in a less effective selection process. It is hoped that urban school districts will use these findings and recommendations in combination with established leadership competency models as a starting point to improve their school leader recruitment, selection, and hiring processes, and to fill critical gaps with quality principals in the years ahead.

Public Impact (2018). *Recruitment action planner for districts*. Chapel Hill, NC: Author.

This four-step Recruitment Action Planner for Districts walks districts through the key recruiting steps. Each step includes actions and linked tools, which are also available below. The planner also explains details and considerations for the key steps. The major recruiting steps covered include: 1) identify the hiring need; 2) prepare for outreach; 3) begin active recruitment and outreach; and 4) support schools' recruitment.

Appendix C: Recruitment Strategies

This appendix provides examples of strategies districts have used to recruit applicants for principal vacancies. The Bush Institute does not recommend any particular strategies but are listing these below as ideas upon which to build.

Charlotte–Mecklenburg Public Schools

Recruitment Strategies

- Partner University Recruitment Events (district representative visits classes once a year)
 - Wingate
 - Winthrop
 - Queens
 - University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- North Carolina Association of School Administrators Conference
 - Attended and hosted an information booth
 - Contacted participants for webinar via their email list
- Advertisements through Social Media
 - Facebook
 - LinkedIn
 - Instagram

Des Moines Public Schools

The following information was extracted from the district’s recruitment plan, which covers background, targets, and recruitment strategies for teachers and administrators.

Advertising

Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) advertises open positions on TEACH IOWA and on the Des Moines Public School website. In addition, Des Moines Public Schools will utilize college publications, both in state and out of state to publish a vacancy. Open positions will be advertised using social media tools such as DM Twitter and DM Facebook. When necessary, publication on a national level through educational publications and organized will be used. Partnering with nearby states to advertise positions available in Des Moines Public Schools will also occur.

Recruitment Tools

Des Moines Public Schools have several recruiting tools to help promote employment in Des Moines Public Schools.

- Full display, including seating, display panels, video, and online registration
- Printed materials for varying audiences
- Online registration tools
- DMPS branding items
- Involvement with local community organizations
- Involvement with colleges and universities both in the state of Iowa and outside the state of Iowa.

Recruitment Activities for School Administration

Des Moines Public Schools will utilize professional organizations and external recruitment opportunities to seek highly qualified administrators to serve DMPS. The Human Resource Team will establish and nurture a network of promising educators. DMPS will also utilize an internal pipeline of aspiring principals who are serving at various levels of leadership and aspiring to serve as a principal. Close and collaborative relationships with colleges and universities and high-quality teacher and leadership programs both within the State of Iowa and outside the State of Iowa will be a focus for external recruiting.

Appendix D: Selection Processes

This appendix provides examples of process steps that districts have used to select principal candidates. The Bush Institute does not recommend any particular selection processes so long as they reflect strong practices outlined in the recruitment and selection guidebook.

Des Moines Public Schools

Screening

- **Application Review:** Ten weeks before conducting phone-screening interviews, a review of all applications and application materials shall be reviewed by an appointed leadership team.
- **Phone Screenings:** Eight weeks before conducting select interviews, applicants who have met the job-specific criteria for the vacant leadership position through the formal application review process shall be contacted for a phone-screening interview.
- **Interview Select:** Six weeks before conducting select interviews, applicants who have demonstrated essential skills and qualifications to the specific job description and for a specific leadership position through the phone-screening interview, shall be invited to attend an interview select appointment.

Formal Interview Process

- **Interview Process:** Candidates who have demonstrated essential skills and qualifications specific to the job description through the application review process and the phone-screening process shall participate in the formal interview process. The formal interview process shall consist of three required components: the questioning segment, the performance task, and the writing assessment. The formal interview process shall begin six to eight months after the vacancy has been announced.

Final Selection Process

- **Selection of Candidate:** After the formal interview process has concluded, committee members serving on the formal interview team shall conduct a selection process using process tools aligned to the job description.
- **Selection Announcement:** The superintendent of schools with the chief schools officer shall publicly announce the recommendation for leadership.
- **Board Approval:** The superintendent of schools shall recommend to the board of education, the formal hiring of an applicant for the leadership position.

Principal Talent Pool Process

1. **Application:** An online application, including a structured résumé, detailed letter of interest, and recommendations. Applications must contain all required information and will be screened using a rubric.
2. **Virtual Interview:** A short online interview. You will need access to a computer or a tablet with a camera to complete this interview. More information will be provided when you are invited to participate.
3. **Screening Event:** This is a half-day in-person event consisting of several activities, including a role play, an in-basket exercise, a school data-review, and a teacher observation. More information is provided when you are invited to participate.

Position Application Process

1. **Letter of interest** that includes your response to specific guiding questions
2. **Structured résumé** that provides information about your work and leadership experiences, accomplishments, and results
3. **Two completed CMS recommendation forms** that provide feedback on your demonstration of the competencies, skills, and beliefs being measured in the talent pool selection process.
 - One of these recommendations should be from a current supervisor and one should be from a previous supervisor. These are not confidential recommendations.
 - Print or email a copy of the recommendation form to each supervisor and ask him/her to return the completed form to you. Once you receive the complete recommendation forms, you should attach them to your application when prompted.
 - If you are applying for the Principal Talent Pool, these recommendations should be from a principal or equivalent. If you are applying for the Assistant Principal Talent Pool, your current supervisor recommendation form must be from your current principal or equivalent level. It is acceptable for your former supervisor recommendation form to be from a principal, assistant principal, or equivalent level.
4. **Summative end-of-year performance evaluation from 2017-18** or acceptable alternatives (in order of preference) include:
 - Letter from supervisor regarding performance, including a reason why formal evaluation is not available
 - Alternative formal evaluation
 - 2016–17 summative evaluation
5. **Licensure documentation**
 - For external candidates who are already licensed: State license AND degree–conferred transcript of a principal preparation program, if license is out of state
 - For internal and external candidates not yet licensed: Unofficial transcript that shows an anticipated completion or a letter from a program executive director indicating completion of a principal preparation program by close of current selection window.





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