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PRINCIPAL PREPARATION GUIDEBOOK

*THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
INITIATIVE*

DECEMBER
2020



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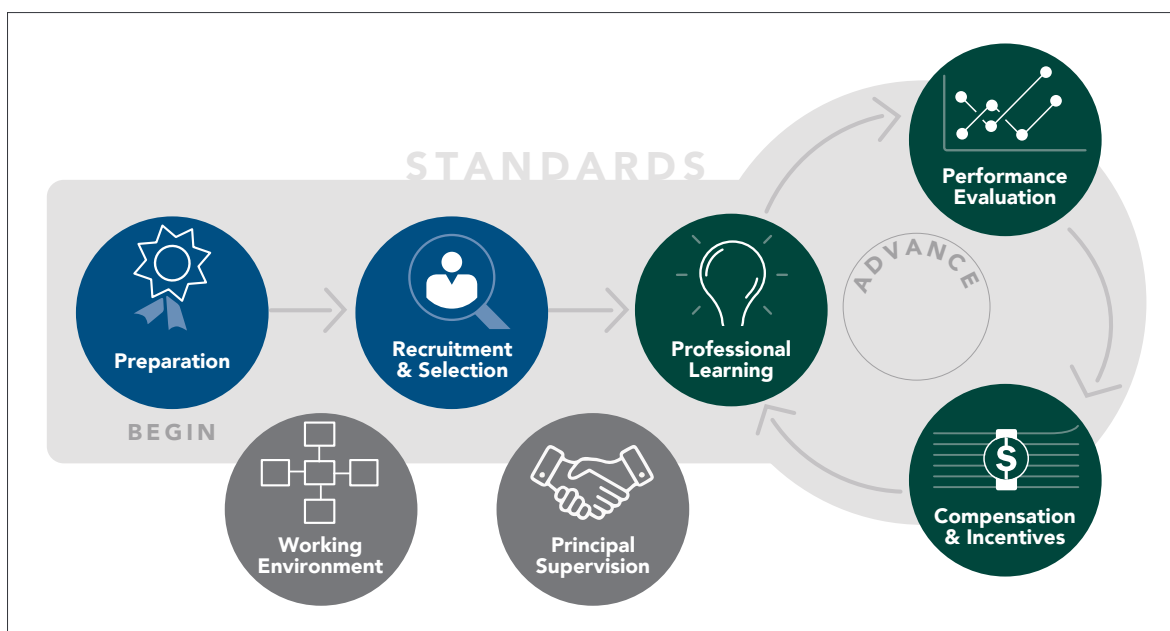
Introduction

Principals play a critical role in school improvement and student success.¹ They ensure that the school culture, instructional programming, staffing, and systems effectively support every student in achieving at high levels. Principals transform classroom pockets of excellence into schoolwide systems of effective practice.

Not surprisingly then, research has shown that districts who implement comprehensive strategies to improve principal leadership can have widespread positive effects on principals, schools, and teacher practice. What is more, these district strategies can constitute a feasible and cost-effective approach to improving student achievement.²

The George W. Bush Institute’s School Leadership Initiative (SLI) is working with a cohort of four districts to improve how they prepare, recruit, support, and retain principals. This guidebook, which focuses on Principal Preparation, is the fourth in a series. Each guidebook addresses one or more components of the Bush Institute’s Principal Talent Management (PTM) framework. As shown in Figure 1, the framework components include: Principal Preparation, Principal Recruitment and Selection, Principal Supervision, Principal Professional Learning, Principal Performance Evaluation, Principal Compensation and Incentives, and the Working Environment for Principals.³ No one sequence is right for addressing these components. However, all SLI cohort districts have found it helpful to start with establishing leadership standards, which define the knowledge and skills expected of principals in that district.⁴

Figure 1. Principal Talent Management (PTM) Framework



1 Grissom, Kalogrides, & Loeb (2015).
2 Gates, Baird, Master, & Chavez-Herrerias (2019).
3 For more information on the School Leadership Initiative and to access additional resources—including the PTM framework and guidebooks on Principal Recruitment and Selection, Principal Learning and Supervision, and Principal Performance Evaluation—see the initiative’s website at <https://www.bushcenter.org/explore-our-work/developing-leaders/school-leadership-initiative.html>.
4 For more information on how to create leadership standards, see discussion of school leadership frameworks on p. 3–9 of the Principal Performance Evaluation Guidebook.

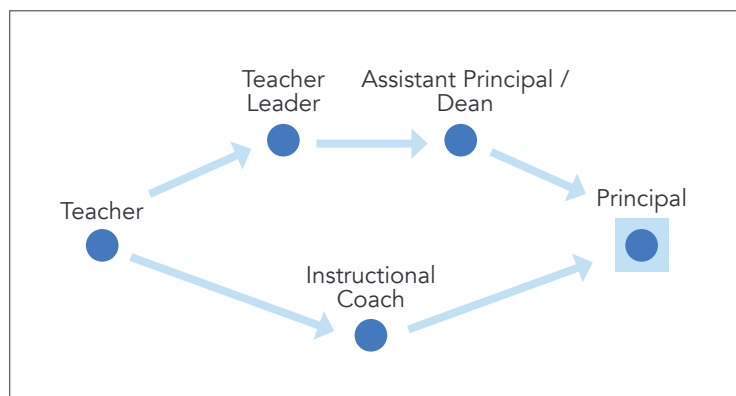
This guidebook focuses on **principal preparation**, referring to the identification and development of people who may become principals.

The majority of district leaders are dissatisfied with the pool of candidates for principal positions,⁵ and many new principals feel unready to lead schools.⁶ Even after a full course of preparation that often ends in certification or licensure, new principals frequently are not equipped for the challenges and the opportunities they face at school.⁷ On the other hand, a strong preparation experience can enable principals to have measurable impacts on student learning.⁸

The literature on principal preparation has historically focused on stand-alone aspiring principal preparation programs that individuals tend to complete right before or during an assistant principalship.⁹ This guidebook draws on emerging research and lessons from the field that suggest new principals are better prepared when their districts provide them with job-embedded opportunities to develop leadership skills throughout their career trajectory, beginning as teacher leaders.¹⁰

Roles such as those of teacher leader, instructional coach, assistant principal, or dean are all training grounds for emerging principals. As shown in Figure 2, there are multiple routes to the principalship. We refer to these as “principal preparation pathways.”

Figure 2. Typical Principal Preparation Pathways



Not everyone who is on a principal preparation pathway aspires to be a principal. It is important for talented educators to fill all the roles noted, and districts are wise to keep talented teachers in the classroom. But for those individuals who aspire to be principals, effective preparation deliberately and incrementally grows their leadership through authentic learning opportunities that set them up for success.

5 Gates, Kaufman, Doan, Tuma, & Kim (2020).

6 George W. Bush Institute (2016).

7 Browne-Ferrigno (2003).

8 Gates, Baird, Doss, Hamilton, Opper, Master, Tuma, Vuollo, & Zaber (2019); Corcoran, Schwartz, & Weinstein (2009).

9 George W. Bush Institute (2020).

10 For example, in a U.S. Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) implementation study of the New Leaders program, Gates and colleagues (2019) attribute stronger impact on student outcomes over time to a programmatic shift towards developing leaders earlier on the path to principalships.

This Principal Preparation Guidebook provides concrete guidance on “how” to effectively prepare a strong pool of candidates for principal positions by sharing lessons learned from districts that have invested heavily in PTM. Since the examples draw from districts with student enrollments of 20,000 to 200,000, the recommendations will be the most relevant for districts of similar sizes. For districts of smaller size, some recommendations will be more relevant at regional levels.

What are strong practices in principal preparation?

The George W. Bush Institute has distilled prior evidence from research and practice into four key components of principal preparation designed to improve the quality of the principal candidate pool and increase the likelihood of candidate success once candidates are hired as principals.

Strong districts enact the following strong practices:

Create a Career Pathway

1. Define key leadership roles in the preparation pathway;
2. Intentionally recruit diverse and talented individuals into the preparation pathway; and
3. Deliberately expose assistant principals to the full range of experiences they’ll likely need as principals.

Partner with External Program Providers

4. Understand what external programs exist;
5. Collaborate with external providers to improve the quality and alignment of existing programs to district needs and priorities; and
6. Encourage external providers to offer new programs (if relevant).

Offer High-Quality Internal Leadership Development Experiences

7. Offer learning opportunities for each step of the preparation pathway;
8. Emphasize stretch assignments and coaching instead of sit-and-get workshops;
9. Offer a high-quality residency experience to aspiring principals; and
10. Align objectives across programs and to the district’s school leadership framework.

Use Data to Inform Decisions

11. Use a data system to track information about individuals at each step of the preparation pathway; and
12. Measure success of external programs and internal experiences with outcome data.

What process did the George W. Bush Institute use to identify strong practices and make recommendations?

Principal preparation addresses one component of the Bush Institute’s larger Principal Talent Management framework. The first version of the framework was drafted in 2016 based on a rigorous research review conducted in partnership with the American Institutes for Research (AIR).¹¹ This review used What Works Clearinghouse standards as the criteria for identifying studies with rigorous research designs and evidence of causal relationships with two key outcomes of PTM: principal retention and improved student achievement.

¹¹ For a detailed description of how the George W. Bush Institute gathered evidence and vetted findings through an iterative review process, see the George W. Bush Institute (2016).

The Bush Institute team then gathered research-based examples from published descriptive studies and collected artifacts from districts who had been the subjects of empirical studies. The team also conducted interviews of experts to gather information about their tools and recommendations for implementation. The Bush Institute used this information, as well as research published after 2016 to update the [PTM framework](#) in 2020. The original framework had a component on principal preparation that emphasized aspiring principal preparation programs, because this was the area on which the most research had been conducted at the time. The updated framework expanded the principal preparation component to address emerging research and lessons from the field regarding the importance of teacher leadership and the opportunity to learn leadership through job-embedded experiences along a multistep career pathway to a principalship.

Finally, this guidebook incorporates lessons the Bush Institute is learning through its partnership with four districts: Austin Independent School District (AISD), TX; Chesterfield County Public Schools (CCPS), VA; Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD), TX; and Granite School District (GSD), UT. Expert external reviewers vetted a draft version of this report.

How is this guidebook designed to support districts?

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

1. *Key Components* — The guidebook uses four component areas to organize 12 strong practices. Each strong practice section includes:
 - Description of problematic practices. Based on our experience, problematic practices are common in districts that are just beginning to improve their principal preparation (the target audience of this guidebook). Explicitly naming problematic practices helps these beginning districts identify and acknowledge problems they want to address;
 - Further details of the strong practices. This section includes a definition of the practices and offers concrete examples that bring them to life. The examples are often based on research on and case studies of districts who have done extensive work in principal preparation; and
 - Steps for getting started. We have found that districts are often overwhelmed by the cross-district collaboration required to implement strong practices. When possible, we offer examples of how School Leadership Initiative Cohort districts “got the ball rolling.”
2. *Districts to Watch* — This section provides examples of two districts that are implementing strong practices. While many districts throughout the country are demonstrating strong practices, these two cases help illustrate coherence and synergy across the practices.
3. *Learn More* — This section contains links to appendices, including a summary of the strong practices; an annotated bibliography; and a tool protocol for identifying teacher leader roles and quality internal leadership development opportunities.

Key Component: Create a Career Pathway

A career pathway is a set of roles that provide incremental opportunities for increased leadership responsibility from the classroom to the principalship. For example, a preparation pathway might include a part-time teacher leader role (e.g., department- or grade-level lead), a full-time teacher leader role (e.g., instructional coach), a junior school administrator role (e.g., assistant principal or dean), or a senior school administrator role (e.g., principal). Each of these roles is thoughtfully designed to build upon the previous one. For instance, an individual in an assistant principal role would have opportunities to lead instruction and not to just enforce discipline and manage operations. Three strong practices are aligned with developing a career pathway, each of which is described below.

Strong Practice #1: Define key leadership roles in the preparation pathway

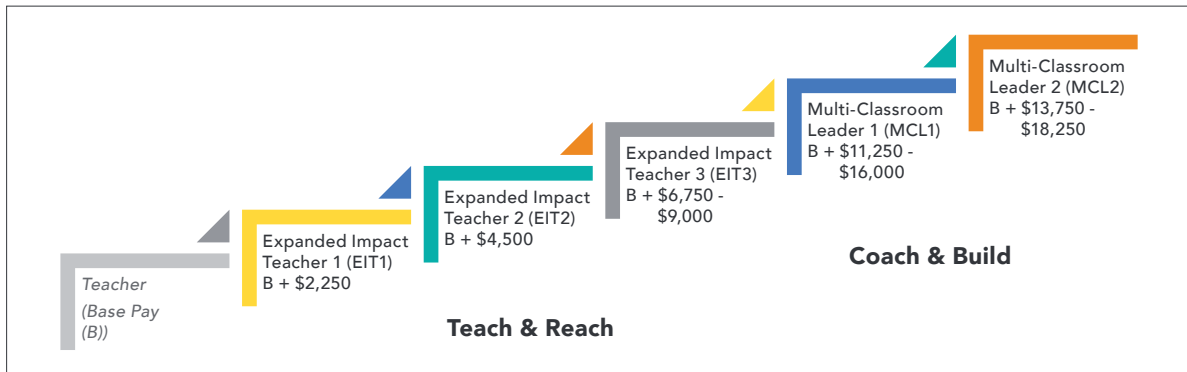
Problematic Practice: Principal preparation is challenging for districts that lack formal roles that reflect incremental levels of leadership beyond classroom teacher, assistant principal, and principal. In cases where full-time classroom teachers move straight into assistant principal or principal roles, individuals lacking formal experience in managing adults suddenly become responsible for overseeing 30 or more instructional and noninstructional staff. The steep learning curve can lead to burnout and a large percentage of new principals leaving.

Strong Practice: The district clearly outlines a series of roles that define a career pathway leading to the principalship role. Ideally, compensation is tied to the job levels in the pathway—but creating new positions and providing additional resources are not always necessary. This set of experiences provides potential principals with opportunities to incrementally grow their leadership skills over time, particularly skills that are related to leading and providing feedback to adults (which are difficult to develop in stand-alone programs or without job-embedded practice). Such an approach gives potential principals an opportunity to reflect and practice techniques that improve the quality of their feedback and relationship-building skills in particular.

Many districts have informal roles such as grade-level team leads, department chairs, and instructional coaches. Strong districts make these roles explicit with official titles accompanied by job descriptions. They align pay scales to reflect increased responsibility and encourage teachers to seek promotions. They also explicitly value experience along the career pathway when making principal-hiring decisions.

For example, Figure 3 shows five levels of teacher leader positions Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools (CMS) created that reflect incremental responsibilities and pay.

Figure 3. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Advanced Roles for Teacher Leaders¹²



Expanded Impact Teacher 1: Under the supervision and support of school leadership or a Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL), the Expanded Impact Teacher 1 (EIT1) expands their reach to impact more students by accomplishing 1-2 formal instructional leadership responsibilities above that of a typical teacher position, listed in the Essential Duties section below. The EIT1 is responsible for planning, preparing and delivering instruction and monitoring student progress to determine instructional needs. The EIT1 works closely and collaboratively with a team of teachers and other staff members to review student progress and change instruction to ensure high-progress and enriched learning for every child. *Note: Coaching other teachers is not an option in this role.*

Expanded Impact Teacher 2: Under the supervision and support of school leadership or a Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL), the Expanded Impact Teacher 2 (EIT2) expands their reach to impact more students by accomplishing 2-3 formal instructional leadership responsibilities above that of a typical teacher position, listed in the Essential Duties section below. The EIT2 is responsible for planning, preparing and delivering instruction and monitoring student progress to determine instructional needs. The EIT2 works closely and collaboratively with a team of teachers and other staff members to review student progress and change instruction to ensure high-progress and enriched learning for every child. *Note: This position can coach 1 other teacher if reasonable release time is provided.*

Expanded Impact Teacher 3: Under the supervision and support of school leadership or a Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL), the Expanded Impact Teacher 3 (EIT3) expands their reach to impact more students by accomplishing 3-4 formal instructional leadership responsibilities above that of a typical teacher position, listed in the Essential Duties section below. The EIT3 is responsible for planning, preparing and delivering instruction and monitoring student progress to determine instructional needs. The EIT3 works closely and collaboratively with a team of teachers and other staff to review student progress and change instruction to ensure high-progress and enriched learning for every child. *Note: This position can coach 2 other teachers if a reasonable time is provided, but must teach at least 50% of the day.*

Multi-Classroom Leader Teacher 1: The Multi-Classroom Leader 1 (MCL1) is expected to intensively coach 3-6 teachers on their caseload, and teach students through various models. The MCL1 is also responsible for leading a team of teachers and other support staff responsible for multiple classrooms, as well as teaching students within the team to meet the principal's standards of excellence. MCL1s establish each team member's roles and goals at least annually, determine how students spend time and organize teaching roles to fit each teacher's strengths, content knowledge, and professional development goals. The MCL1 organizes the team to review student progress and change instruction to ensure high-progress learning for every child. The MCL1 works collaboratively with their team, using the team's new ideas and innovations that the MCL1 agrees may improve learning. The MCL1 is accountable for learning and development of all the teachers and students on their caseload and team. The MCL1 must be given a healthy balance of teaching/coaching time so they can perform all instructional responsibilities that are expected. MCL1s also provide feedback to the principal in choosing, evaluating and developing the team.

¹² Note: Adapted from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Teacher Leadership website accessed September 30, 2020, at <https://sites.google.com/cms.k12.nc.us/cms-successbydesign>.

Multi-Classroom Leader Teacher 2: The Multi-Classroom Leader 2 (MCL2) is expected to intensively coach 7-10 teachers on their caseload and teach students through various models. The MCL2 is also responsible for leading a team of teachers and other support staff responsible for multiple classrooms as well as teaching students within the team to meet the principal's standards of excellence. They establish each team member's roles and goals at least annually, determine how students spend time and organize teaching roles to fit each teacher's strengths, content knowledge, and professional development goals. The MCL2 organizes the team to review student progress and change instruction to ensure high-progress learning for every child. MCL2s work collaboratively with the team, using new ideas and innovations that the MCL2 agrees may improve learning. The MCL2 is accountable for the learning and development of all the teachers and students on his/her caseload and team. The MCL2 must be given a healthy balance of teaching/coaching time, so that they can perform all instructional responsibilities that are expected. They also provide feedback to the principal in choosing, evaluating and developing the team.

Getting Started: Districts are unlikely to build preparation pathways overnight, but many districts can take smaller steps to move towards doing so and implementing subsequent strong practices.

For example, district leaders in Granite School District began defining their preparation pathway by considering strengths from which they could build. They identified three teacher leader positions that already existed in all of their schools: (1) Student Support Leaders led a team of teachers in examining the needs of individual students and in identifying strategies to incorporate into their individualized learning plans, (2) Instructional Leadership Team members participated in a team that worked with the principal to identify schoolwide instructional programs and strategies, and (3) Professional Learning Community Leaders led a group of teachers—often at a grade level but also sometimes schoolwide—in learning about effective implementation of the district's instructional framework, the Granite Way. (See Appendix C for a protocol similar to the one used to guide Granite's process.)

Granite leaders have also identified possible next steps. For example, they decided they might create official descriptions of these roles and signal that they are desirable experiences for anyone applying to leadership programs or full-time leadership roles, such as instructional coaches. Further down the road, they intend to consider offering professional learning experiences, such as training on leading effective meetings, designed specifically for these roles.

Strong Practice #2: Intentionally recruit diverse and talented individuals into the preparation pathway

Problematic Practice: Principal preparation is less effective in producing a strong candidate pool when districts rely on self-selection and do not proactively recruit individuals into the preparation pathway. Sometimes, district recruitment is limited to online posts of teacher leader positions and/or sending blanket emails to announce new positions or professional development opportunities. In these cases, individuals primarily self-select to apply for these opportunities. As a result, the strongest possible candidates do not necessarily apply. For example, a school serving a large English-language learner population might not receive any applicants for an open instructional coach position with a strong background in teaching English-language learners, even though qualified candidates exist among the teaching staff.

Ad hoc or informal recruitment efforts can be problematic when district administrators rely on their networks to fill spots. Without an intentional approach, these efforts may be based on bias and/or privilege.

Strong Practice: District leaders intentionally recruit diverse and talented individuals to enter the preparation pathway. They target their recruiting strategies, as well as encourage universities to diversify the participants in their leadership development program. These efforts create larger and more diverse principal candidate pools.

Districts identify background experiences that are frequently needed in their schools, such as experience with particular student populations (e.g., Special Education, English-language learners) or school types (e.g., rural schools, K-12 schools, charter schools, etc.). They also search their personnel databases to identify individuals who match their needs and target recruitment efforts towards them. The district targets recruitment to explicitly encourage diversity (e.g., race, gender, etc.) in the qualified applicant pool. Finally, they identify talent by looking across the performance of all possible applicants and using a process that reduces bias to identify high-potential talent deserving of targeted recruitment.

Strong districts reach out individually to high-potential candidates in the qualified applicant pool and encourage them to apply. The individualized recruiting can encourage people to enter the pool who would not have otherwise considered the opportunity. For example, in the words of Daniel de los Reyes, a principal at Darwin Elementary School in Chicago Public Schools,

"I started my career in the Chicago Public Schools as a community relations representative at Tonti Elementary. ... if it wasn't for a couple of key individuals recognizing the worth and potential that laid within me, I never would've been an administrator."¹³

Targeted recruiting results in an applicant pool that is more diverse, more talented, and more aligned with district needs. However—for recruiting to be fair—these practices must be based on data (e.g., a database of potential candidate qualifications) and on a predefined set of criteria (e.g., who counts as a high-quality applicant). Without a systematic approach to recruitment, shoulder tapping can easily be influenced by cronyism and bias.

Getting Started: Districts who want to improve how they recruit people into preparation pathways can start by investigating whether evidence of bias exists in their current system. For example, district leaders in Austin asked the district's Department of Research and Evaluation to run reports about the characteristics of assistant principal applicants. The data revealed that a disproportionate number of minorities did not pass the initial screening process for the aspiring assistant principal assessment center. An equity and diversity team reviewed the process and identified possible sources of bias and updated the process accordingly.

The district is planning additional improvements, such as updates to its recruitment and selection platform. These efforts have also helped to signal to potential applicants that the district values diversity, which in turn helps it to recruit more diverse and talented individuals into the preparation pathway.

13 Note: Chicago Public Schools website accessed on July 9, 2020, at <https://lead.cps.edu/stories/daniel-de-los-reyes/>.

Strong Practice #3: Deliberately expose assistant principals to the full range of experiences they'll likely need as principals

Problematic Practice: Principal preparation can be challenging when districts focus their assistant principal positions on a limited set of responsibilities, such as monitoring discipline and administrative issues. For example, as the role of principal has evolved to focus more on instructional leadership, principals sometimes delegate noninstructional leadership tasks to their assistant principals to free up their time to be in classrooms providing feedback to teachers. Such noninstructional focus for assistant principals can result in: (1) assistant principals being selected into principalships with dated or limited experience related to instructional leadership, or (2) assistant principals who want principalships finding themselves passed over as districts prefer candidates from more instructionally focused roles such as instructional coaches.

Strong Practice: When a district intends for assistant principal positions to be part of its preparation pathway, it ensures assistant principals have opportunities to develop a full range of skills they would need to be principals—if that is their career aspiration. In particular, the district ensures that all assistant principals have opportunities to lead both adults and instructional systems. For example, many strong districts assign assistant principals to observe and provide feedback to a subset of teachers, including conducting their performance evaluations, when union contracts allow. They also expect principals to provide guidance and feedback to assistant principals to help them improve these skills over time.¹⁴ See Figure 4 for an example of how the assistant principal role is defined in Denver Public Schools.

Figure 4. Denver Public Schools' Definition of Assistant Principal Role¹⁵

Assistant principals support their school's principal with the overall direction and leadership of the school. This includes:

- Leading instruction by supporting teachers in growth and development.
- Aligning people, time, and money to drive student achievement.
- Applying staff performance management systems to build an effective school culture.
- Advocating for members of the school community and engaging with family and community members.

Getting Started: If a district's practice is problematic in this area, several concrete steps could be taken to move towards strong practice. For example, district leaders in Fort Worth first updated the assistant principal job description and selection process. Now, the responsibilities listed in the assistant principal job description explicitly note that the role is focused on instructional leadership.

The selection process currently requires job candidates to complete performance tasks aligned with those responsibilities. For example, one selection activity states, "As a new Assistant Principal for FWISD, you will be tasked with improving and monitoring instruction in the classroom. Please read and review the following scenario and provide your strategies to support and/or document this teacher." Candidates are given a description of a scenario in which classroom observations and teacher comments raise concerns. The activity asks candidates to explain how they would handle the situation and to provide reasoning for their decisions.

¹⁴ See Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (2014) for more examples of how districts have defined assistant principal and principal roles in ways that support the development of assistant principal leadership skills.

¹⁵ Note: Denver Public Schools website accessed on July 9, 2020, at <https://careers.dpsk12.org/lead/lead-in-dps/>.

Fort Worth leaders also intend to provide additional professional development to sitting assistant principals and to encourage their principals to cultivate the instructional leadership capacity of their assistant principals.

Next Steps for Creating a Preparation Pathway

District leaders can take the following first steps to improve their district's preparation pathway. 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 practices on each of the strong practices listed above. Examine the following evidence:
 - o Job descriptions used when vacancies are posted;
 - o Human resources' website language;
 - o Recruiting materials;
 - o Selection materials; and
 - o Data about applicant demographics and how they progress through selection processes.
- Consider existing teacher leadership roles (e.g., instructional coach, department chair, teacher mentor) and identify tweaks that could be made to the roles to build candidates' skills toward the next role in the preparation pathway.
- To the extent that your district already has multiple positions that serve as steppingstones toward a principalship, make that pathway an explicit selling point in teacher-recruiting materials.
- Create a list of criteria (e.g., Spanish speaking, high school experience, etc.) that should be used to target recruitment into the preparation pathway.

Key Component: Partner with External Program Providers

External program providers offer school leadership development programs. The most common programs are aspiring principal preparation programs, but other programs might include teacher leader or instructional coach certification programs. Typical external providers include local or online colleges and universities, nonprofits, and/or regional professional development collaboratives (often funded by the state). These entities offer a wide range of services, such as stand-alone workshops, cohort-based programs, and school-based programs in which trainers and/or coaches conduct training onsite for school staff, etc. Some programs are degree- or certificate-granting programs. Fee structures also vary. Sometimes, participants pay for their own training; other times, the district or school is willing to pay some or all of the cost.

Strong Practice #4: Understand what external programs exist

Problematic Practice: Principal preparation is less effective when district leaders lack awareness of what school leadership development programs are offered in their regions or which programs trained their sitting principals. Sometimes, district leaders know a program exists, but they do not know basics about the program such as time commitments, eligibility criteria, or what leadership skills they target. District leaders can lack awareness of the quality of the programs. For example, they might not know how local leadership development programs stack up against the best practices of rigorous selection, hands-on coursework, residency experiences, and coaching. They might also have little to no sense of whether graduates of particular programs perform better in principalships. Therefore, districts are unable to point individuals towards these programs or to preference graduates of particular programs during the principal-selection process.

Strong Practice: A strong district is aware of leadership development programs that external providers offer and compiles this information to make it easily accessible to emerging principals. The district continuously monitors the quality of external programs, and district leaders can speak to the pros and cons of various programs so they are able to provide counsel regarding best fits for a particular individual or situation.

For example, as shown in Figure 5, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has created a list of all available leadership development opportunities. In fact, district leaders have not only developed their own awareness of external providers, but also they have compiled that information into a useful format for staff. Interested individuals can search the opportunities according to: role (e.g., classroom teacher, department manager, instructional specialist, assistant principal, principal, etc.); interest area (improving my practice, leading my peers, preparing for my next role, or shaping policy); and competency (influencing others, fostering trusting relationships, strategies and drives for results, and adapting and showing resilience). The program descriptions include: the provider organization, the duration, the application window, eligibility criteria, an overview, and links to learn more. The description also notes which CPS sponsored-programs target historically underrepresented groups and include a stipend.

Figure 5. Searchable List of External Leadership Development Opportunities in Chicago¹⁶

Getting Started: Districts who are not already familiar with the external leadership development programs that serve staff in their preparation pathway start by collecting some basic information. For example, district leaders in Austin began by compiling a list of the institutions that had trained their sitting principals. They also gathered information from educators currently in the preparation pathway in an effort to identify programs that Austin’s aspiring leaders use. Through this process, the district discovered that many of their principals had received their training in online schools.

As next steps, the district plans to gather more information about the programs that are most involved in training their principals. If some programs are more aligned to district needs than others, they will encourage candidates to consider the more-aligned programs.

¹⁶ Note: Chicago Public Schools website accessed on July 9, 2020, at <https://lead.cps.edu/opportunities/>.

Strong Practice #5: Collaborate with external providers to improve the quality and alignment of existing programs to district needs and priorities

Problematic Practice: Preparation programs are more effective when district and program providers collaboratively partner on the programs' design and implementation (see the description of strong practice). But some districts are not even aware of their agency when it concerns working with external providers. They take the programs as givens and sometimes, pay for programs that they know lack alignment to their leadership competencies because "it is the best option available" or it "checks a box."

For example, one district in our school leadership cohort knew it wanted to build the skills of its assistant principals to provide teachers feedback on instruction, yet paid substantial money for a cohort of 30 assistant principals to attend a training session that didn't even address that topic. The district selected the training session since it was the only locally available training targeted towards that role group. This district did not consider exercising its consumer power to request adaptations to the training.

A similar problematic practice is districts paying for programs that are completely misaligned with best practice for adult learning, such as leadership development programs, courses, and workshops that are delivered predominantly via a traditional classroom setting that includes teacher lectures, assigned readings, and writing assignments.

Sometimes, external programs want to assign more real-life tasks, such as leading a teacher team meeting but cannot because the district does not actively remove roadblocks to ensure that participants have sufficient autonomy to conduct the assignments in a school setting. This represents a missed opportunity for the district to partner with these programs to provide the conditions that enable more practice-based and therefore, more successful learning.

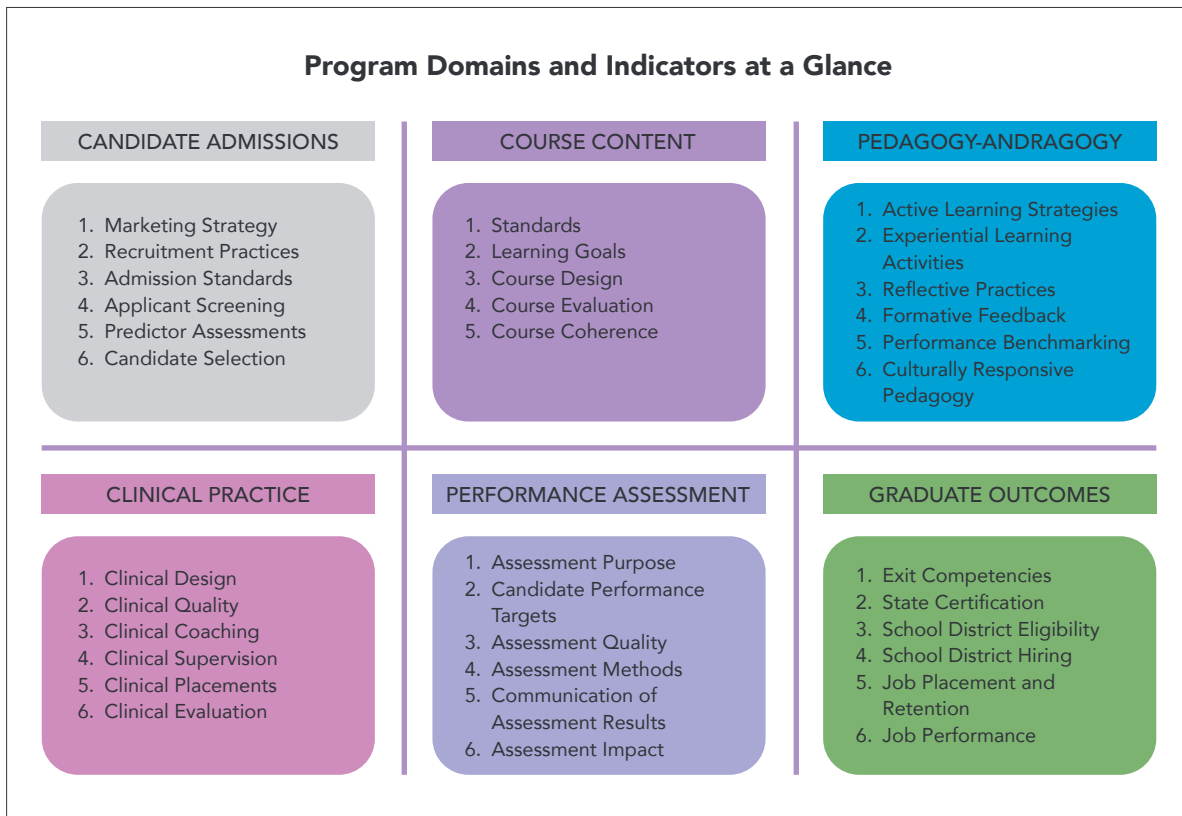
Strong Practice: Strong districts create genuine collaborative partnerships with external providers. At minimum, they leverage their consumer power to encourage external providers to improve their programs' quality and align them with the districts' specific needs. They proactively notify external providers of the criteria the district uses to select and evaluate principals. Strong districts regularly review and provide input on partner programs' syllabi. They also provide feedback to external providers when they notice graduates of particular programs demonstrating patterns in the strengths and weaknesses related to the school leadership framework.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, for example, worked collaboratively with each of its external providers to examine data and identify ways that both the district and the external providers could better support the success of program participants. Charlotte used the Quality Measures toolkit that the Education Development Corporation (EDC) created to guide the improvement process. The toolkit (see Figure 6) provides a framework, rubrics, and recommended processes to guide self-study and continuous improvement of principal preparation programs.

Two district leaders convened meetings with each provider and invited recent program graduates to attend and contribute to the review process. The group collaboratively assessed the program on each component within the rubric and identified strengths and weaknesses in the form of gaps and duplications. The graduates were particularly helpful in providing evidence to inform the assessment and in suggesting modifications that providers could easily make to address gaps and duplications.

Partnerships of state education agencies, school districts, and training providers across the country have successfully used the EDC's tools. Through these partnerships, training providers gain valuable insights regarding expectations of districts for what their school leaders glean from leadership development programs. The districts also benefit because they can influence several elements of program design, including candidate recruitment and selection, course content and pedagogy, internship placements, performance assessments, and clinical supervision.

Figure 6. Domains and Indicators in the EDC's Quality Measures Toolkit¹⁷



Getting Started: District leaders in Chesterfield County Public Schools already had a strong partnership with the University of Virginia (UVA) but wanted to work more collaboratively with other providers of principal preparation programs in the area. District leaders began by initiating a meeting with each of the local providers who offered programs for aspiring principals. They gave the programs an overview of the district context and priorities. During the meetings, district leaders reviewed the district's new school leadership framework, leadership-selection process, and principal-evaluation process.

While the meetings were a simple step, Chesterfield also influenced the UVA program in particular. The district partnered with UVA in the design of the program, placed individuals into internship roles, and district leaders taught some courses. As a result, participants in this revamped program have found the training to be extremely relevant relative to other programs.

¹⁷ Note: King, C. (2018), p.8. Reprinted with permission. For more information, see the Education Development Corporation website at <https://www.edc.org/quality-measures%E2%84%A2-center-program-assessment-and-technical-assistance>.

Strong Practice #6: Encourage external providers to offer new programs (if relevant)

Problematic Practice: Principal candidates are not sufficiently prepared when there are gaps in program availabilities. For example, no programs are offered to sitting assistant principals in some districts. District leaders may not even be aware of these gaps because they have not reviewed whether such programs exist for each level and need within their leadership pathway. Candidates are promoted directly from one role to the next and undergo “baptism by fire” to learn their new role. As a result, they are not set up for success and often, they burn out, leading to high attrition.

Strong Practice: Strong districts are not only aware of existing external providers and the preparation programs they offer (see Strong Practice #7), but also they proactively work with external providers to establish new programs that address unmet needs. In some cases, these partnerships lead to new programs for particular role groups; in other cases, they lead to preparation programs that focus on particular content needs, such as leading turnaround schools. For example, Hillsborough County Public Schools partnered with two external partners to create programs (described in Figure 7) for aspiring and experienced leaders that address the specific needs of turnaround schools.

Figure 7. Hillsborough County Public Schools’ External Partnerships to Address Unmet Needs¹⁸

Educational Leadership Master’s Degree with High-Need Schools Emphasis	Partnership with the University of Tampa to train a diverse cohort of experienced teachers to aggressively prepare to lead in a high-need school. Each course includes a specific focus on the complex nature of leadership in high-need schools.
Educational Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership with Emphasis on Leadership in Turnaround Schools	Partnership with the University of Southern Florida to train a diverse cohort of experienced leaders who have completed Hillsborough’s Preparing New Principals program.

Next Steps for Partnering with External Providers

Districts can take the following next steps to improve partnerships with external providers of preparation programs. 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 practices on each of the strong practices for partnering with external providers. Examine the following evidence:
 - Data that identifies which external leadership programs licensed sitting principals;
 - Data that identifies external leadership programs that emerging leaders in your district are currently enrolled in; and
 - Formal agreement documents for partnerships with external providers.
- Create a list of all programs currently offered by external providers in your region.

¹⁸ Note: For more information, see the Hillsborough County Public Schools website accessed on July 9, 2020, at <https://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/doc/list/turnaround-leadership-pathways/advanced-degrees/229-1300/>.

- Assign one person in the district to become an expert on the external programs. This person would be responsible for researching details about program eligibility, time commitment, program components, and learning objectives. Broadcast this person's role as an accessible resource to principals and principal supervisors as they try to create professional learning plans for individuals in the leadership pathway. Or have them create a resource sheet that they distribute to relevant stakeholders.
- Schedule a meeting with external providers that train significant portions of your principal applicant pool. Gather information about their preparation programs, provide guidance on what your selection process will seek from candidates, and identify possible ways to collaborate towards mutual benefit.

Key Component: Offer High-Quality Internal Leadership Development Experiences

While external providers can play an important role, it is critical that the district deliberately provides quality leadership development to emerging principals, including through the provision of formal and informal leadership development opportunities. Professional learning experiences should be offered at each step of the preparation pathway to cover the full set of knowledge and skills needed for the principalship. Experiences should be aligned with the district's school leadership framework and the needs of a diverse talent pool. High-quality experiences focus on hands-on learning, such as stretch assignments and include a residency experience for principal preparation programs in particular.

Strong Practice #7: Offer learning opportunities for each step of the preparation pathway

Problematic Practice: Principal preparation can be challenging when districts rely on a single aspiring principal preparation program without providing explicit leadership development opportunities for everyone in the preparation pathway to the principalship (e.g., teacher leaders, assistant principals). Even when opportunities are offered, they do not contribute to principal preparation if the scope is too narrowly focused on their current work without opportunities to build skills for future roles.

Strong Practice: The district offers development opportunities at every step of the preparation pathway. These opportunities include multiple structured programs and/or informal opportunities, not just one formal program for aspiring principals. For example, Figure 8 outlines four separate programs that Hillsborough County Public Schools offer to individuals who are in different stages of the preparation pathway. Districts do not necessarily have to provide such programs internally; see the External Providers section of this guide for more information. Strong medium- to large-sized districts do, however, typically have a dedicated person responsible for overseeing leadership opportunities for emerging leaders.

Figure 8. Learning Opportunities for Emerging Principals in Hillsborough County Public Schools¹⁹



Getting Started: District leaders in Fort Worth noticed that the district typically has more than enough staff members applying to be assistant principals, but many applicants are not ready for the role. Leaders wanted to see more applicants with experience in observing and providing feedback to teachers.

Since many applicants in the pool were instructional coaches, the district decided to offer a five-day Coaching for Excellence Institute for all sitting instructional coaches. The institute focused on foundational skills for instructional coaching, such as the district's instructional framework, literacy framework, assessment system, and learning platform. The training also covered the district's coaching cycle, adopted from the New Teacher Center. A significant portion of the training addressed how to lead adults, including relationship building and how to conduct effective observations and provide useful

¹⁹ Note: For more information, see the Hillsborough County Public School website accessed on July 9, 2020, at <https://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/departments/142/leadership-development/about/>.

feedback. District leaders hope the institute will not only improve instructional coaching across schools but also that it will yield higher-quality assistant principal applicants.

Strong Practice #8: Emphasize stretch assignments and coaching instead of sit-and-get workshops

Problematic Practice: Principal preparation is hindered when leadership development programs for teacher leaders and assistant principals lack opportunities for job-embedded practice. It is problematic when they primarily use stand-and-deliver techniques with few hands-on assignments, and sometimes, even those are low quality. For example, participants might attend workshops after school or on weekends during which they view PowerPoint presentations and participate in classroom dialogue whose content is similar to that of traditional university-based classes. These delivery techniques do not reflect research on adult learning, including the importance of practicing real-life situations.

Strong Practice: In addition to formal programs—and perhaps more importantly—the district offers job-embedded learning opportunities. These are typically stretch assignments coupled with coaching to informally support development.²⁰ Stretch assignments are work assignments that provide a challenge relative to expected roles and responsibilities.

For example, a principal might arrange for a strong classroom teacher to lead a team meeting to review student-progress data and prioritize interventions. During the team meeting, the principal might coach the teacher by helping them to prepare, observing the session, and providing feedback afterwards. The teacher has an opportunity to lead that meeting for the principal once or twice before moving into a team lead position that requires them to lead weekly meetings of adults. Emerging leaders can be tasked with stretch assignments by their principal or by a leadership development program. See Figure 9 for examples of job-embedded learning opportunities assigned by leadership development programs in Hillsborough that are designed for teacher leaders (who aspire to become assistant principals) and for participants in its principal preparation program.

Figure 9. Hillsborough County Public Schools' Job-Embedded Learning Opportunities²¹

<p>Future Leaders Academy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting and reviewing data from an area related to student learning that needs to be analyzed and forming an action plan. • Completing walk-throughs with administrators to discuss the instructional practices observed using the competency rubric. • Reviewing the school safety plan and leading a school safety drill. • Describing their school culture and one strategy that could be implemented to improve that school culture. • Attending a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) meeting, writing a summary of meeting outcomes and sharing them with the person responsible for MTSS or the principal at their school.
<p>Preparing New Principals Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a schoolwide Professional Development Plan. • Pulling together a hiring team to design interview questions and rubrics. • Facilitating one of the monthly leadership team meetings at their school, including creating the agenda, leading the meeting and conducting follow-up.

²⁰ The 70/20/10 Rule for Leadership Development defines three types of learning opportunities and recommends that they should be emphasized according to a 70/20/10 ratio, with 70 percent from challenging assignments, 20 percent from people (usually through coaching), and 10 percent through courses and reading. For more information, see Rabin (2013). Blended Learning for Leadership: The CCL Approach.

²¹ Note: For more information, see the Hillsborough County Public Schools website accessed on July 9, 2020, at <https://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/departments/142/leadership-development/about/>.

Getting Started: Districts that primarily rely on workshops to provide leadership development can start by identifying a few easy-to-implement stretch assignments that could be given to individuals in the principal preparation pathway. For example, district leaders in the Granite School District began by providing teachers with opportunities to lead teams, such as professional learning communities and student support teams.

As a next step, the district also plans to ask principals to coach their assistant principals and other school leaders to cultivate their leadership skills. In Granite, principal supervisors currently provide leadership coaching to principals that includes recognizing areas that need improvement, identifying next steps to implement in practice, and then following up. The principals will use that same approach with their teams.

Strong Practice #9: Offer a high-quality residency experience to aspiring principals

Problematic Practice: Principal preparation is hindered when aspiring principal preparation programs do not offer a high-quality residency experience. Even when an external provider designs a high-quality residency experience, the district can undermine the residency experience, if it fails to help identify strong placement sites where candidates can obtain sustained opportunities to practice leading in real-life contexts with real-life challenges and consequences.

Problems occur when district leaders lack creativity in embedding high-quality residency experiences into existing roles or when they cannot find funding for additional roles. It is also problematic when aspiring principals have inconsistent residency experiences across the placements, because the residency experiences are not guided by a set of competencies or requisite experiences.

Residencies also fail to support principal preparation when residency-site principals view their residents as another “set of hands” and assign them administrative tasks. Finally, it is problematic when residents do not receive feedback from the residency-site principal or from program staff that helps them improve their skills.

Strong Practice: Strong districts actively partner with the providers of principal preparation programs to ensure a high-quality residency experience for aspiring principals who participate in such programs. Strong districts ensure the residency experience is affordable and logistically feasible for program participants by funding add-on resident positions in schools or by restructuring existing roles. For example, some districts convert assistant principal roles into similar roles with different titles, such as “associate principal,” “dean,” or “resident” and staff these positions with aspiring principals who participate in principal preparation programs.

Strong districts also partner with external providers to design the residency experience to be high quality. According to the University Council of Educational Leadership, criteria of a “clinically rich internship” include: deliberate structure, fieldwork that is tightly integrated with curriculum, engagement in core school leadership responsibilities, supervision by an expert veteran, exposure to multiple sites and/or diverse populations, and requires 300+ hours of field-based experience.²²

Similar to medical residencies, these experiences give residents hands-on training and interactions with real teachers and students to practice communication, decision making, and creating and facilitating

²² Anderson & Reynolds (2015).

processes. Residency-site principals provide residents with increasing levels of responsibilities and autonomy, as well as opportunities for reflection and feedback. The residency experience is aligned to the district's school leadership framework, with assignments that are explicitly designed to practice and assess particular competencies in the framework. Figure 10 outlines characteristics of effective residencies as defined by the New York City Leadership Academy, a principal preparation program that districts across the country have utilized.

Figure 10. Essential Elements for Principal Residencies²³

Element 1: Leadership Standards

Candidate performance expectations are written in behavioral terms to reflect candidates' future job responsibilities and national standards. Leadership competencies anchor the entire preparation program, including candidate assignment or "match" to the residency school and mentor, curriculum, advancement, and evaluation.

Element 2: Differentiated Advancement

Each principal candidate has an individualized learning plan that reflects his/her strengths and weaknesses, as determined by selection and performance assessment information that moves candidates from guided learning and practice to more substantive leadership responsibilities. Principal candidate learning experiences scaffold skill and identity development, allowing candidates to learn content, experiment with leadership practice, and learn from mistakes. Formative assessment and feedback based on observation of candidate performance in the residency guide and accelerate candidate growth and development.

Element 3: Community Immersion

During the residency, principal candidates learn through immersion in two communities simultaneously. One is the professional community cultivated among the cohort of candidates in the preparation program. The second is the school community, where immersion includes participation in sustained, substantive, job-embedded learning experiences with opportunities for schoolwide decision making and assuming responsibility for authentic leadership work.

Element 4: Inquiry Learning

Individual candidate and candidate cohort learning is organized around cycles of inquiry, action, and reflection on the impact of leadership on students, staff, schools, and communities, with a primary focus on the schools in which immersion experiences occur.

Element 5: Regional Planning and Collaboration

Preparation program planning and collaboration occur through a formalized partnership among preparation program faculty and staff, district representatives, K-12 educators, principal associations, and other stakeholders. The success of this collaboration relies on clearly defined decision-making authority and considers how well the program meets regional leadership workforce talent needs. Curriculum, instruction, mentoring, and assessment decisions are informed by all partners, who share responsibility for ensuring candidates have rigorous, meaningful, and consistent learning experiences.

Element 6: Staff Selection and Development

All program faculty members, including mentor principals who support in-school residency experiences, demonstrate the requisite knowledge and skills to support candidates effectively. Intentional selection, training, and evaluation processes for facilitators, mentor principals, and coaches are in place and reflect the experience and skills needed to facilitate candidate learning, with an emphasis on participant assessment and feedback. Program leaders match principal candidates carefully with the mentors, coaches, and residency sites that are best positioned to meet their specific learning needs.

Element 7: Accountability

The program maintains systems and processes to collect, analyze, and maintain longitudinal data on candidate perspectives on program quality, candidate progress, and candidate performance and retention after graduation for the purposes of monitoring and improving program coherence with standards consistency across implementation contexts over time and continuous program improvement.

23 Note: Clifford & Chambers (2016). Reprinted with permission.

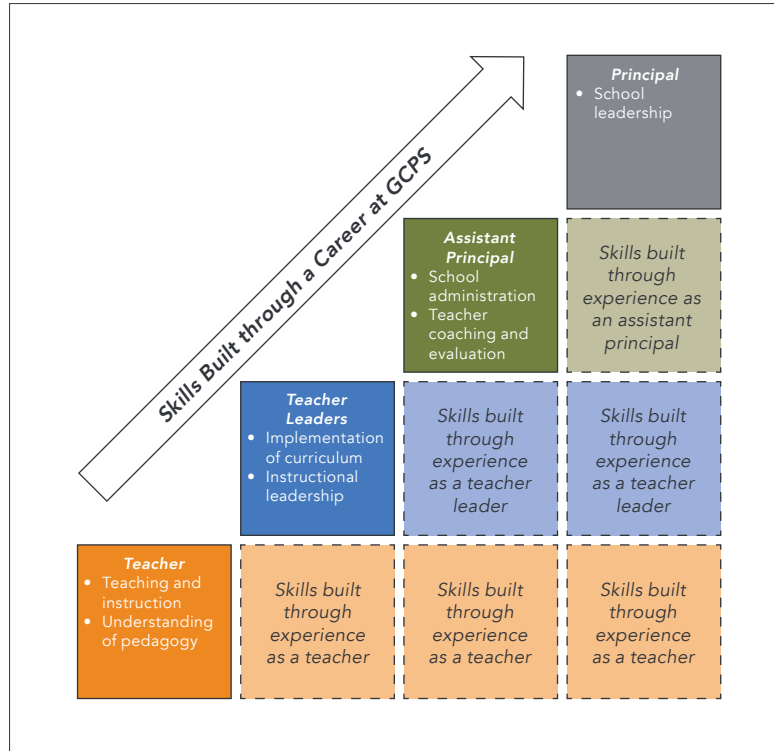
Strong Practice #10: Align objectives across programs and to the district's school leadership framework

Problematic Practice: Principal preparation programs are not effective in creating a robust principal candidate pool when they are not aligned to the district's school leadership framework. This lack of alignment can happen when the training reflects the opinions of individual program designer(s), without attention to the needs of participants and/or the district. Lack of alignment to a school leadership framework also leads to lack of coherence across different programs in the principal preparation continuum (e.g., for teacher leaders vs. assistant principals). These principal preparation programs are often designed in silos, leading to content gaps or duplications.

Strong Practice: The district's leadership development continuum coherently addresses knowledge and skills over time. Strong districts have a set of programs with learning objectives that are developmental and reflect an appropriate learning progression. They have entrance and exit criteria for each program and build coherence across programs by requiring them to align to a school leadership framework that defines the full set of knowledge and skills expected of school leaders.

Even when programs are developed by different entities (e.g., internal departments and/or various external partners), the district coordinates with them to limit gaps or redundancies in content focus. For example, they encourage programs to address different competencies or to scaffold the level of complexity so that participants experience new learning opportunities over the course of multiple programs. Districts gather data to understand how well these programs are delivering the necessary knowledge and skills. Figure 11 shows Gwinnett County Public Schools' vision for how school leaders build their skills over time, as they take on increased responsibility and participate in a series of leadership development programs over the course of their careers.

Figure 11. Gwinnett County Public Schools' Progression of Leadership Development²⁴



Next Steps for Providing Professional Learning Opportunities

Districts can take the following next steps to improve professional learning opportunities that they offer to individuals in their leadership pathways. 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 practices on each of the strong practices for providing professional learning opportunities. Examine the following evidence:
 - o Program descriptions and stated objectives; and
 - o District website pages that describe professional learning opportunities.
- Create a menu of stretch assignments that could be offered to each role group to grow their skills towards the next step in the leadership pathway. Encourage use of the menu in setting goals for individual professional learning plans for individuals in the pathway.
- Create a document that identifies which leadership competencies (from your district's school leadership framework) are addressed in each district-led leadership development program for emerging principals. Identify gaps and redundancies.
- Identify 2–3 skills that could be stronger among those in your applicant pool. Identify possible learning opportunities the district could offer to cultivate those skills.

²⁴ The George W. Bush Institute (2015). Reprinted with permission.

- Encourage program designers to review their delivery methods and challenge them to incorporate more opportunities to practice skills in real-life settings (if there is a heavy emphasis on sit-and-get).
- Establish criteria for effective professional learning opportunities and assess programs against those criteria.

Key Component: Use Data to Inform Decisions

Strong districts use data-tracking systems to gather information about emerging principals and analyze it to continuously improve preparation strategies. The system to capture and organize data might be as simple as an Excel spreadsheet or a more complicated human resources software program. The data-tracking systems also allow for easy analysis of data so the district understands how many people are in the preparation pathway and their qualifications. That way, the district can use this information to make the principal preparation pathway more robust. Ideally, a district has a data-tracking system that tracks information for the full leadership pathway, including information about principals, principal supervisors, and district leaders.²⁵ This guidebook focuses on how to create and use a data-tracking system to improve principal preparation in particular. Collective information can guide district leaders in informed decision making.

Strong Practice #II: Use a data system to track information about individuals at each step of the preparation pathway

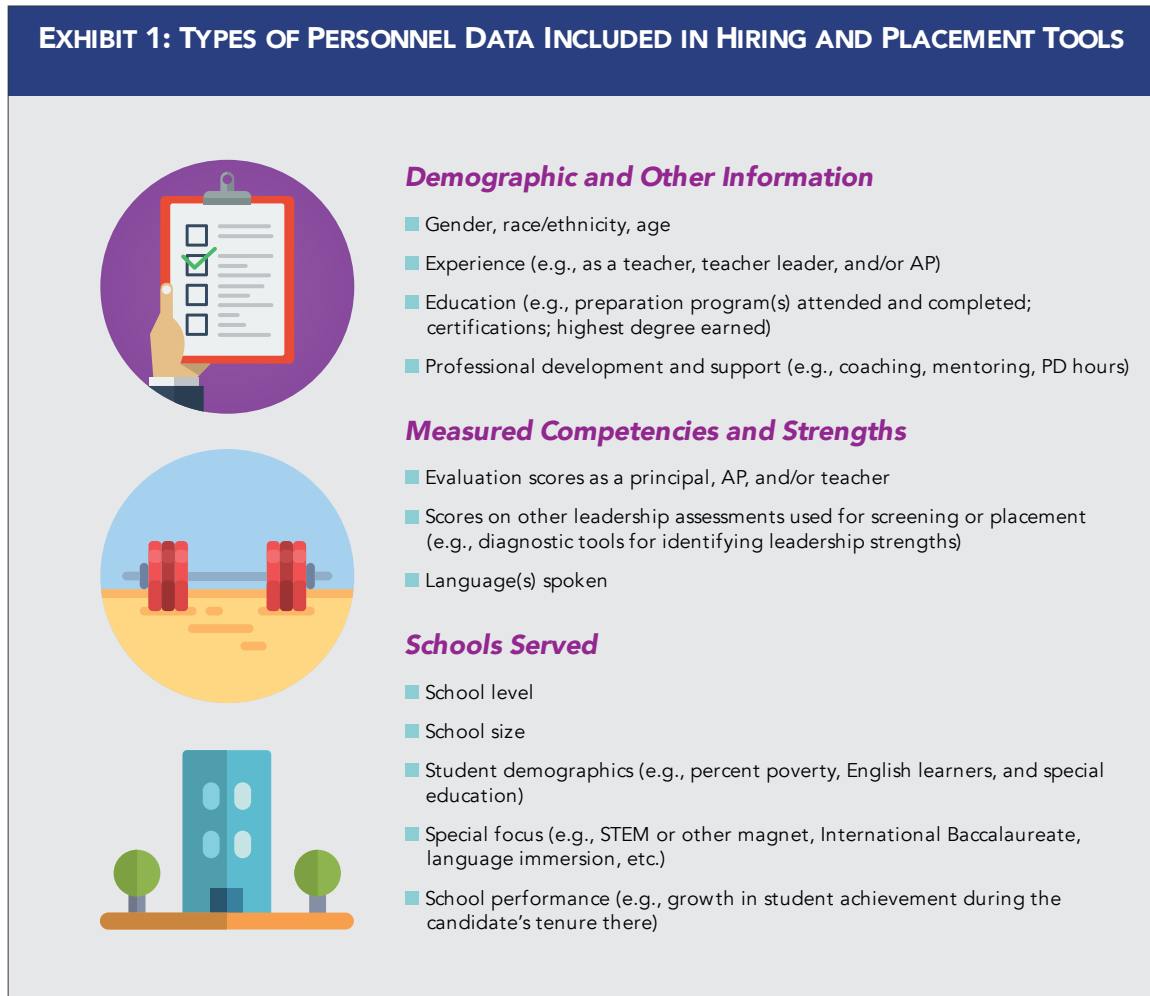
Problematic Practice: District leaders can struggle to make informed decisions about preparation strategies when they lack basic information about individuals who are in the preparation pathway. For example, leaders may not know how many (and who) of their current teaching force are qualified for an assistant principal position, which hinders their ability to recruit for the position. Sometimes, they discover at the last minute that their bench is too small, leading them to make exceptions and hire individuals who lack desired qualifications. In other cases, their bench is too big, which can frustrate talented leaders who aren't given opportunities. They continue to spend significant resources funding individuals enrolled in principal preparation programs, even though they already have a large number of qualified applicants waiting for principalships to open.

Strong Practice: Strong districts know how many people are in the preparation pathway. If the bench is thin relative to projected needs, it proactively widens the pathway by offering more professional learning opportunities and proactively recruiting people into the pathway. If the bench is clogged, it focuses more deliberately on selection processes to ensure the strong fit of a high-quality candidate for each open position. Strong districts project needs (e.g., they will need Spanish speakers, high school experience, etc.) and communicate these needs to internal and external leadership development programs to inform their recruitment and selection. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools created a formula to search its database and identify high-potential leadership candidates who have necessary qualifications and have demonstrated success in their roles according to performance evaluation data. The district proactively contacts these individuals and encourages them to enter the leader talent pool (see Strong Practice #3).

See Figure 12 for examples of the types of data that are useful to include in leader-tracking systems, according to a study of districts that partnered with The Wallace Foundation.

²⁵ Note: See Anderson, Turnbull, & Arcaira (2017) for additional details.

Figure 12. Types of Personnel Data Included in Leader-Tracking Systems²⁶



Strong Practice #12: Measure success of external programs and internal experiences with outcome data

Problematic Practice: Districts cannot use data to inform continuous improvement of preparation programs and experiences if they do not track and then examine outcomes by program. For example, without data tracking, they can't notice if a particular program affects higher placement and retention rates than others. They may continue to subsidize tuition for personnel to attend a particular program, not realizing they are not receiving a decent return on their investments. During the selection process, they treat all training programs as equals, because they do not have evidence about which program graduates have had more success in their district.

²⁶ Note: Adapted from Anderson, Turnbull, & Arcaira (2017). Reprinted with permission.

Strong Practice: Strong districts collect and analyze outcomes by program. In particular, they look at placement rates, retention rates, and performance evaluation data aggregated by programs. When they notice patterns, they gather more information to understand what differences in the programs might be driving the results. In doing so, they become aware of data limitations and subsequently, are careful not to draw unwarranted conclusions. They share findings from their analysis back with the providers of preparation programs to inform their continuous improvement.

Figure 13 lists recommendations from the University Council on Education Administration and New Leaders regarding the types of outcome metrics that are useful to track so principal preparation programs may be evaluated and improved. Typically, districts and providers need to share data to calculate these outcome metrics.

Figure 13. Outcome Metrics Useful for Evaluating and Improving Principal Preparation Programs²⁷

Placement Rate	Percentage of graduates hired as school leaders within three years of graduation
Retention Rate	Percentage of cumulative graduates retained as school leaders for three or more years
Leadership Effectiveness Rate	Percentage of graduates rated effective or above based on teacher and/or leadership effectiveness ratings. (An alternative measure could be percentage of graduates with positive evaluations of leadership practice as assessed by 360-degree surveys)
School Climate	Percentage of graduates placed as principals with improved measures of school climate after two years of leadership (Typically measured by teacher and/or student surveys)
Teacher Quality	Percentage of graduates placed as principals with improved measures of teacher effectiveness in their school after two years of leadership
Student Achievement Outcomes	Percentage of graduates placed as principals with positive gains in student achievement measures after three years of leading a school in their state (if valid and reliable data are available)
Noncognitive Student Outcomes	Percentage of graduates placed as principals with improved measures of noncognitive student outcomes (discipline, attendance, safety, parent ratings) after two years of leadership

²⁷ Note: Adapted from the University Council for Educational Administration and New Leaders (2016). Reprinted with permission.

Next Steps for Creating Data-Tracking Systems

Districts can take the following next steps to improve data tracking. While these steps are insufficient for strong practice, they can be quick wins that move the district in the right direction.

- Determine where your current data lives, who manages it, and who has access;
- If missing, add the following fields to personnel data files:
 - o Education leadership license [Y/N]; name of institution that awarded license/degree; and
 - o Currently enrolled in education leadership program [Y/N]; name of institution or program.
- Compile data into one place by autopopulating (or manually updating, if necessary) a spreadsheet or database.
- Form a diverse stakeholder group that includes instructional, talent management, and technical perspectives to meet regularly for the purpose of continuously improving the quality of data;
 - o Have a stakeholder group determine what the data tells them, as well as what it does not. Only collect pertinent, accurate data to ensure quality and confidence.
- Create a document that sorts principals by the preparation program they attended. Note the percent of principals trained by each program. To the extent you have the data, explore questions such as:
 - o Which programs trained the most recent hires?;
 - o Which programs have the highest retention rates/longest tenures?;
 - o Are there any patterns in performance evaluation data by program?; and
 - o Do certain types of programs tend to have graduates placed in certain types of schools?
- Create a process to interpret the data and use it for decision making, such as a series of data review meetings scheduled with each provider to discuss data and identify implications.

Districts to Watch

Throughout the report, we have offered vignettes and artifacts to illustrate each strong practice. In this section, we describe two districts that have addressed multiple practices. These cases illustrate how the practices can be implemented in ways that are mutually reinforcing and build coherence. The two districts include:

- Prince George’s County Public Schools: Focus on Assistant Principals
- Long Beach Unified School District: Comprehensive and Cohesive Support for Leadership Development

Prince George’s County Public Schools: Focus on Assistant Principals

Prince George’s County was one of six districts that participated in The Wallace Foundation’s Principal Pipeline Initiative from 2011 to 2016. As part of the initiative, the district realized that it had several assistant principals who assumed they would be promoted into principalships, but the district was not explicitly thinking about its assistant principals as a bench for principalships and therefore, was not deliberately growing their skills.

The district created three leadership development programs that were explicitly focused on assistant principals. It worked with the National Institute of School Leadership to create a program for experienced assistant principals called the Aspiring Leaders Program for Student Success. The district also built out a year-long induction program for incoming assistant principals and a resident principal preparation program. Figure 14 provides additional details for the three programs.

Figure 14. Development Programs for Assistant Principals in Prince George’s County Public Schools²⁸

<p>Assistant Principal Induction Program</p>	<p>Description: Supports first-year Assistant Principals Eligibility: Mandatory for all new Assistant Principals Overview: Year-long program, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly training program aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders • An assigned coach who is a former PGCPs administrator with a solid track record of performance and has a skill set to support the career needs based on their assigned protégé’s skill-assessment indicators • Assignment to a wrap-around leadership development team (LDT) consisting of a Supervising Principal and a Leadership Development Coach
<p>Aspiring Leaders Program for Student Success</p>	<p>Description: Leadership program for Assistant Principals who aspire to become principals. ALPSS guides a cohort of leaders through face-to-face sessions, shadowing, and mentoring opportunities to prepare them to become PGCPs school leaders. Eligibility: Current PGCPs AP for minimum of 3 years; Framework for Teaching certification; no unsatisfactory evaluations; recommendations from current Principals and Instructional Director; ability to commit to program requirements; and Admin II certification by start of program is preferred. Overview: 8-month formal program aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). Through a combination of face-to-face sessions and mentoring opportunities, participants are led through sessions that focus on organizational and leadership strategies that will prepare them to be effective PGCPs school leaders. In addition, PGCPs continues to offer support to the ALPSS cohorts after the formal program concludes in various formats. Requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend on-time and actively participate in ten modules throughout the year • Complete any pre- and post-session assignments completely and in a timely manner • Present end-of-year 30-60-90 day entry plan to members of Executive Leadership • Participate in practicum experiences to apply lessons learned • Build and maintain a relationship with an assigned mentor • Abide by established cohort norms • Apply for a principalship
<p>Resident Principal Preparation Program</p>	<p>Description: A year-long residency in which the candidate works directly with a school principal to prepare them for Principalship. Eligibility: Current PGCPs assistant principal; background of three years or more of successful teaching experience; credentials must include current MSDE Administrator II certification; submission of 2 references. Overview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal and intern collectively identify a list of skills interns should possess once internship is completed • Resident principal shadows daily functions of the school from lens of the principal • Resident principal assumes role of principal, responsible for all the instructional and managerial duties • Supervising principal is placed in short series of leadership development activities outside of the school setting to enhance their level of engagement and understanding of systemic functions at the central office level. • Resident principal creates an ePortfolio to demonstrate learning and journal experiences that were encountered. • Supervising principal conducts formal evaluation of Resident Principal. • Leadership Development Team provides resident with coaching and support in preparing for a principalship.

28 Note: Adapted from Prince George’s County Public Schools website accessed on July 15, 2020, at <https://www.pgcpss.org/leadership/>.

The district also encouraged its principals to cultivate leadership of their assistant principals. They were encouraged to work with their assistant principals to set individual learning goals related to specific leadership competencies. They identified specific responsibilities through which the assistant principals would practice those competencies with support and feedback provided by the principals. See Figure 15 for an example that was documented in a set of case studies published by the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement.

Figure 15. Real-Life Opportunities to Practice Leadership and Receive Feedback²⁹

Principal Covington, principal of Samuel Ogle Middle School, worked with his two assistant principals to create professional development goals for them that also addressed a school improvement goal: to improve the instructional practices of three teachers who were rated as struggling on their evaluation.

Principal Covington coached his assistant principals in a plan of action that included observing the teachers in the classroom and providing them with feedback. He regularly modeled instructional teacher conversations for the APs. The principal led the assistant principals to conduct weekly reflections and review lesson plans of the assigned teachers. The assistant principals were required as part of their work with teachers to check for the parent contact logs of the teachers and conduct book studies with the teachers.

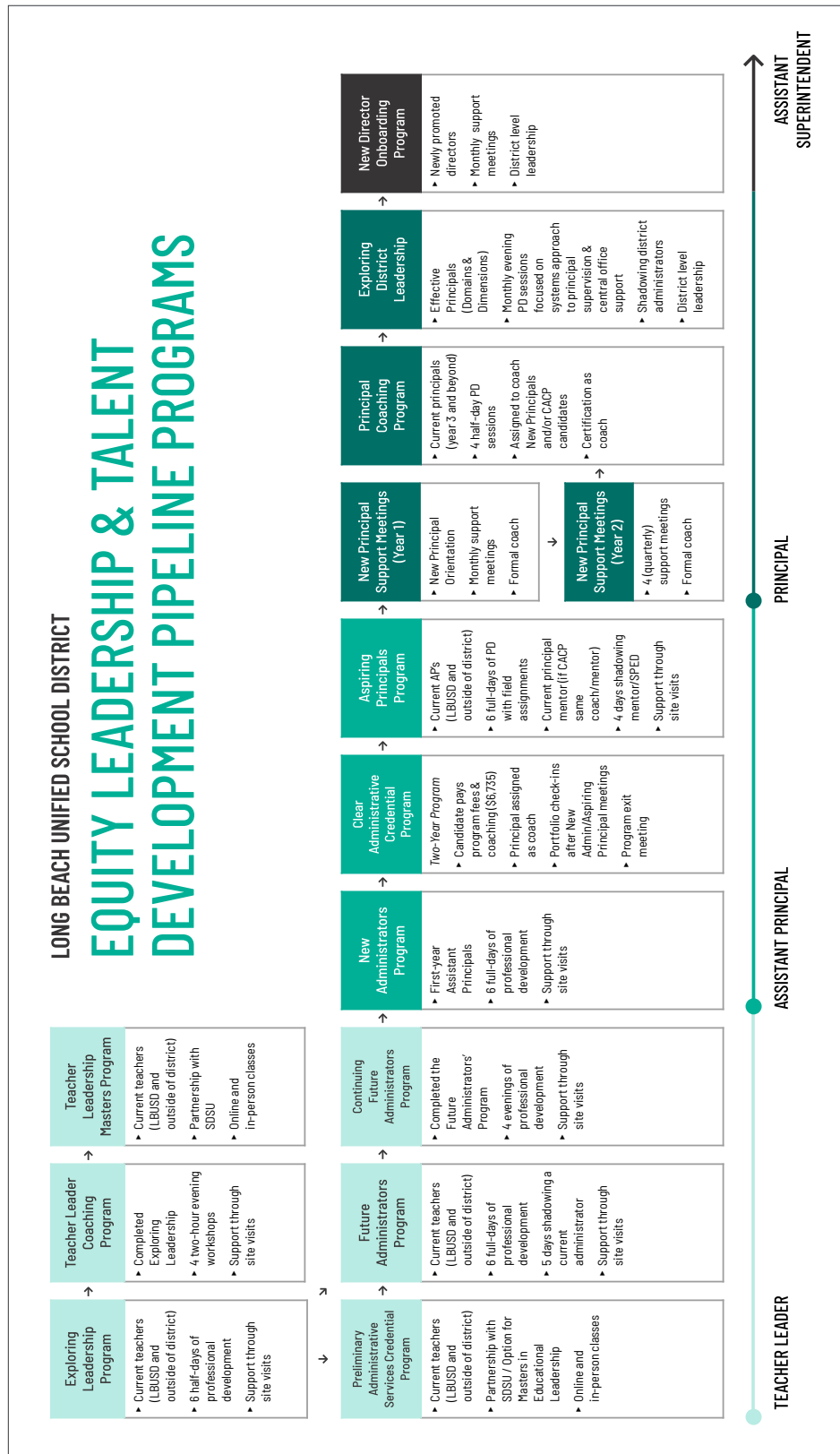
The process provided many opportunities for discourse between Principal Covington and his assistant principals in providing feedback. More importantly for this project, the opportunities for the principal to monitor the development of the APs through this process were greatly increased.

Long Beach Unified School District: Comprehensive and Cohesive Support for Leadership Development Throughout the Pathway

In Long Beach Unified School District, the preparation pathway is embedded within a larger leadership pathway consisting of 14 programs that develop leadership along a career pathway spanning from classroom teachers to assistant superintendents. Nine of the 14 programs depicted in Figure 16 focus on the pathway leading up to a principalship.

²⁹ Note: Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (2014). Reprinted with permission.

Figure 16. Leadership Development Programs Aligned to the Career Pathway in Long Beach Unified School District³⁰



30 Note: Adapted from Long Beach Unified School District website accessed on July 9, 2020, at https://www.lbschools.net/Departments/Leadership_Development/leadership_dev.cfm.

The programs leading up to a principalship include:

- **The Exploring Leadership Program** provides professional development to candidates who are interested in pursuing leadership opportunities at their school site. The program aligns with the pipeline work of the Equity Leadership & Talent Development (ELTD) Office to consistently develop a steady stream of teacher leaders who are current in district philosophy and practice.
- **Preliminary Admin Services Credential Program** - LBUSD and San Diego State University (SDSU) have partnered to prepare candidates for the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential and/or a Master's in PK-12 Educational Leadership. The credential only option is available for those who already hold a Master's Degree. The MA in PK-12 Educational Leadership requires students to complete coursework required for the administrative credential, plus nine additional units related to research and the completion of an action research project. Courses are taught by LBUSD Faculty and SDSU Professors, and are a hybrid of on-site and on-line classes. All on-site classes will be held at the LBUSD Teacher Resource Center.
- **Teacher Leader Coaching Program** expands upon the work of the Exploring Leadership Program to provide professional development to experienced teachers who are committed to supporting equity for all students in order to close the achievement gap. Support includes professional development workshops with a focus on peer coaching and facilitating site team collaboration, along with site visits by ELTD staff. The goal of the program is to consistently develop a steady stream of teacher leaders who are current in district philosophy and practice. The ideal candidate serves in a formal leadership role and has successfully completed the Exploring Leadership Program.
- **Future Administrators** is designed for proven teacher-leaders who wish to prepare themselves for a career in administration. Selected candidates will participate in a series of workshops and mentoring beginning in early Fall through late Spring, and upon successful completion, may be eligible for assistant principal or related leadership positions. Interested candidates for the current school year should preview the Future Administrators tab for more information about the application / selection process.
- **Continuing Future Administrators** provides additional training to candidates who have completed the Future Administrators' Program. The program builds on the pipeline work of the ELTD Office to consistently develop a steady stream of future administrators who are current in district philosophy and practice.
- **Clear Administrative Credential Program** is for current district administrators who need to clear their Preliminary Administrative Services Credential (formerly known as Tier II). It includes a program of coaching and professional development designed to meet state requirements.
- **New Administrators** includes all first year assistant principals, who simultaneously participate in the Clear Administrative Induction Credential Program. New Administrators will attend a series of professional development workshops designed to provide a firm foundation in current administrative practice and district philosophy.
- **Aspiring Principals Program** including all Year 2 and/or Year 3 assistant principals should contact the office of ELTD to enroll. The Aspiring Principals' Program prepares candidates for the principalship.
- **New Principal Support Program** includes monthly support meetings. First year principals meet monthly and second year principals meet every other month throughout the school year.
- **Transitioning Principals** participate in a Change of Principal workshop primarily conducted throughout the summer season.
- **Coaches Program** includes professional development and support meetings yearly. Coaches are assigned to support Clear Administrative Induction Credential candidates and New Principals. Support meetings for coaches are scheduled throughout the year.
- **Exploring District Leadership** continues the pipeline work of the ELTD Office to prepare a steady stream of principals who are current in district philosophy and practice for Central Office positions.
- **New Director Onboarding Program** continues the pipeline work of the ELTD Office to support new directors in their day-to-day work of principal supervision and support.

Besides these formal programs, individuals in the preparation pathway are continuously supported by the district's coaching culture. This coaching culture began with an initiative to provide coaching for new principals during their first two years on the job. The coaching methods were formalized into an approach that was used to train principals in support of principal-to-principal coaching.

Eventually, all principals, principal supervisors, and most central office leaders complete a comprehensive coaching development program that guides their day-to-day work. This coaching methodology is also embedded into all formal leadership development programs. As participants engage in the programs, they are coached and therefore, observe modeling of coaching practices they are expected to use as they progress through the preparation pathway.

The leadership development office oversees a formal coaching program for all third-year principals and provides ongoing development for coaches (such as triads) that supports continuous improvement. The coaching strategy is deliberate and consistent. End-of-year surveys have shown that 95 percent of coaches value having a coach who is a current administrator in the system and agree that the pairings were a good fit.³¹

Long Beach Unified School District believes coaching of leadership practice in real-life settings coupled with the formal programs has been critical to its success in principal retention and improved student outcomes.

³¹ Baker & An (2019).

Learn More

This guidebook on principal preparation is designed to be a resource for district leaders who want to improve how they develop potential principals in the preparation pathway. It suggests that districts should focus on four components: (1) creating a preparation pathway, (2) partnering with external program providers, (3) offering high-quality internal leadership development experiences, and (4) using data to inform decisions.

These interrelated components must be addressed coherently to maximize the impact of improvements in any one area. In addition, development on the preparation pathway should be guided by the district's school leadership framework and be linked to other PTM areas, such as: Recruitment and Selection, 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 Preparation**—one-page summary of strong practices for each of the four components of principal preparation.
- **Appendix B: Additional Resources for Principal Preparation**—recommended resources designed specifically to support district leaders working to improve principal preparation, as well as an annotated bibliography.
- **Appendix C: Protocol for Identifying Preparation Pathway Roles and Learning Opportunities**—a set of questions that prompts district leaders to identify existing preparation pathway roles and possible leadership learning opportunities, consider how to make existing preparation pathway roles more formalized positions, and provide professional learning opportunities targeted to each role.

Appendix A: Summary of Strong Practices in Principal Preparation

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

Create a Career Pathway

- 1. Define key leadership roles in the preparation pathway.** The district clearly outlines a series of roles that define a preparation pathway leading to a principalship. Ideally, compensations are tied to the various job levels in the preparation pathway—but new positions and additional resources are not always necessary.

This set of experiences provides potential principals with opportunities to incrementally grow their leadership skills over time, particularly skills that are related to leading and providing feedback to adults (which are difficult to develop in stand-alone programs or without job-embedded practice). This approach gives potential principals opportunity to reflect and practice techniques that improve the quality of their feedback and relationship-building skills.

Many districts have informal roles, such as grade-level team leads, department chairs, and instructional coaches. Strong districts make these roles explicit with official titles and job descriptions. They align pay scales to reflect increased responsibility and encourage teachers to seek promotions. They also value experience along the preparation pathway when making principal-hiring decisions.

- 2. Intentionally recruit diverse and talented individuals into the preparation pathway.** District leaders intentionally recruit diverse and talented individuals to enter the preparation pathway. They target their recruiting, as well as encourage universities to diversify their leadership development program participants. These efforts create a larger and more diverse principal candidate pool.

Of course, all individuals in this pool must be assessed fairly during the hiring process to ensure the most qualified individuals are selected. District leaders use data and other strategies to prevent bias and to enable them to target a diverse set of talented individuals. Districts identify background experiences that are frequently needed in their schools, such as experience with particular student populations (e.g., Special Education, English-language learners) or school types (e.g., rural schools, K-12 schools, charter schools, etc.). They also search their personnel databases to identify individuals who match their needs and target recruitment efforts towards them. The district targets recruitment to explicitly encourage diversity (e.g., race, gender, etc.) in the qualified applicant pool.

Finally, they identify talent by reviewing the performance of all possible applicants and using a process that reduces bias to identify high-potential talent deserving of targeted recruitment. Strong districts reach out individually to high-potential candidates in the qualified applicant pool and encourage them to apply. This outreach is done in a systematic fashion to prevent bias. The individualized recruiting can encourage people to enter the pool who would not have otherwise.

- 3. Deliberately expose assistant principals to the full range of experiences they'll likely need as principals.** When the district intends for assistant principal positions to be part of the preparation pathway, it ensures assistant principals have opportunities to develop a full range of skills they would need to be principals—if that is their career aspiration. In particular, the district ensures that all assistant principals have opportunities to lead adults and instructional systems. For example, many strong districts assign assistant principals to observe and provide feedback to a subset of teachers, including conducting their performance evaluations when union contracts allow. They also expect principals to provide guidance and feedback to assistant principals to help them improve these skills over time.

Partner with External Program Providers

- 4. Understand what external programs exist.** The district is aware of programs that external providers offer and compiles this information to make it easily accessible to potential principals. The district continuously monitors the quality of external programs and district leaders can speak to the pros and cons of various programs so that they can provide counsel regarding best fit for a particular individual or situation.
- 5. Collaborate with external providers to improve the quality and alignment of existing programs to district needs and priorities.** Strong districts create collaborative partnerships with external providers. At minimum, they leverage their consumer power to encourage external providers to improve the quality and alignment of external programs with district needs. They proactively notify external providers of the criteria the district uses to select and evaluate principals. Strong districts regularly review and provide input on the partner program syllabi. They also provide feedback to providers when they notice graduates of particular programs demonstrating patterns in the strengths and weaknesses related to the school leadership framework.
- 6. Encourage external providers to offer new programs (if relevant).** Strong districts are not only aware of existing external providers and the programs they offer (see Strong Practice #7), but also they proactively work with external providers to establish new program content to address unmet needs or duplications. In some cases, these partnerships lead to new programs for particular role groups; in other cases, they lead to program content that focuses on particular content needs such as leading turnaround schools.

Offer High-Quality Internal Leadership Development Experiences

- 7. Offer learning opportunities for each step of the preparation pathway.** The district offers development opportunities at every step of the principal preparation pathway. These opportunities include multiple structured programs and/or opportunities, not just ones for aspiring principals. Districts do not necessarily have to provide the programs internally; see the External Providers section of this guide for more information. Medium- to large-sized districts do, however, typically have a dedicated person responsible for overseeing leadership opportunities for emerging leaders.
- 8. Emphasize stretch assignments and coaching instead of sit-and-get workshops.** In addition to formal programs—and perhaps more importantly—the district offers job-embedded learning opportunities. Typically, these are stretch assignments coupled with coaching to informally support leadership development. Stretch assignments are work assignments that provide a challenge relative to expected roles and responsibilities. For example, the principal arranges for a strong classroom teacher to lead a team meeting to review student progress data and prioritize interventions. The principal might coach the teacher by helping them to prepare, observing the session, and providing feedback afterwards. The teacher has an opportunity to lead that meeting for the principal once or twice before moving into a team lead position that requires them to lead weekly meetings of adults. Emerging leaders can be tasked with stretch assignments by their principal or by a leadership development program.
- 9. Offer a high-quality residency experience to aspiring principals.** Strong districts actively partner with preparation program providers to ensure a high-quality residency experience for aspiring principals. Strong districts help make the residency experience affordable and logistically feasible for program participants by funding add-on resident positions in schools or by restructuring existing roles. For example, some districts convert assistant principal roles into similar roles with different titles, such as “associate principal,” “dean,” or “resident” and staff these positions with aspiring principals who are participants in preparation programs.

Strong districts also partner with external providers to design the residency experience to be high quality. According to the University Council of Educational Leadership, criteria of a “clinically rich internship” include: deliberate structure, fieldwork that is tightly integrated with curriculum, engagement in core leadership responsibilities, supervision by an expert veteran, exposure to multiple sites and/or diverse populations, and 300+ hours of field-based experience. Similar to medical residencies, these experiences give residents hands-on training and interactions with real teachers and students to practice communication, decision making, and creating and facilitating processes. Residency-site principals provide residents with increasing levels of responsibilities and autonomy, as well as opportunities for reflection and feedback. The residency experience is aligned to the district’s school leadership framework, with assignments that are explicitly designed to practice and assess particular competencies from the framework.

10. Align objectives across programs and to the district’s school leadership framework.

The district’s school leadership development program continuum coherently addresses the acquisition of knowledge and skills over time. Strong districts have a set of programs with learning objectives that are developmental and reflect an appropriate learning progression. They have entrance and exit criteria for each program and build coherence across programs by requiring them to align to a school leadership framework that defines the full set of knowledge and skills expected of school leaders. Even when programs are developed by different entities (e.g., internal departments and/or various external partners), they coordinate to limit gaps and redundancies in content focus. For example, they encourage programs to address different competencies or to scaffold the level of complexity so that participants experience new learning opportunities over the course of multiple programs. Districts gather data to understand how well these programs provide participants with the necessary knowledge and skills.

Use Data to Inform Decisions

11. Use a data system to track information about individuals at each step of the preparation pathway.

Strong districts know how many people are in their preparation pathways. If the bench is thin relative to priorities and projected needs, the districts proactively widen their preparation pathways by offering more professional learning opportunities and proactively recruiting people into their preparation pathways. If the bench is clogged, they focus more deliberately on selection processes to ensure strong fits of high-quality candidates for each open position. Strong districts project needs (e.g., they will need Spanish speakers, high school experience, etc.) and communicate these needs to internal and external leadership development programs to inform their recruitment and selection.

12. Measure success of external programs and internal experiences with outcome data.

Strong districts collect and analyze outcomes by program. In particular, they examine placement rates, retention rates, and performance evaluation data aggregated by programs. When they notice patterns, they gather more information to understand what differences in the programs might be driving the results. In doing so, they are aware of data limitations and are careful not to draw unwarranted conclusions. They share findings from their analyses with the program providers to inform continuous improvement of the programs.

Appendix B: Additional Resources for Principal Preparation

This appendix contains resources that provide additional explanations, examples, and tools that your district may find useful as it works to improve principal preparation. 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 for Principal Preparation

Title: The principal pipeline initiative in action

Authors: Turnbull, Anderson, Riley, MacFarlane, & Aladjem; Policy Studies Associations, Inc.

Date: October 2016

Retrieved from: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Building-a-Stronger-Principalship-Vol-5-The-Principal-Pipeline-Initiative-in-Action.pdf>

Description: In 2011, six large school districts each set out, with support from The Wallace Foundation, to develop a large corps of highly qualified school principals. After five years, according to this report, they have much to show for their efforts, having succeeded in putting into place four key components of a pipeline to the principalship:

- Standards that specify what principals need to know and do and that undergird principal training, hiring, and on-the-job evaluation and support;
- Stronger preservice training;
- More selective and rigorous hiring procedures; and
- On-the-job evaluation and support designed to help novice principals perform well, especially in improving instruction.

The report is the last in a series of studies examining the implementation of Wallace’s Principal Pipeline Initiative. It finds that “to a striking extent” all six districts carried out the kinds of policies and practices called for by the effort. Benefits to the districts included a new and clearer districtwide understanding of what a principal’s job entails, a possible better fit between new principals and the schools to which they were assigned, and the introduction of performance evaluations that principals considered fair and constructive.

Title: Cultivating leadership: Case studies in developing assistant principals project group 3

Author: Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement

Date: September 2014

Retrieved from: http://2wh2pdomc1q415tdl40khdki.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Group-3-Cultivating_Leadership_FINAL_10_19_2014-2.pdf

Description: This report compiles case studies of how principals develop assistant principals. It was prepared for principals, by principals. Principals asked, “How would we show other principals how to coach an assistant principal to meet the needs of the assistant principal’s growth and to meet the needs of our schools?”

Title: The making of the principal: Five lessons in leadership training

Authors: Lee Mitgang; The Wallace Foundation

Date: June 2012

Retrieved from: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/The-Making-of-the-Principal-Five-Lessons-in-Leadership-Training.pdf>

Description: For more than a decade, The Wallace Foundation has worked with states and districts to develop and test ways to improve school leadership in order to promote better teaching and learning. Improving the often-weak training of principals has been central to that work. Drawing on new research and lessons from the field, this report updates a 2008 Wallace report, *Becoming a Leader: Preparing Principals for Today's Schools*. It takes a fresh look at the continuing progress and lingering challenges of providing every school with leaders who have the necessary preparation to help all children succeed as learners.

Annotated Bibliography

Anderson, E., & Reynolds, A. L. (2015). *A policymaker's guide: Research-based policy for principal preparation program approval and licensure*. Charlottesville, VA: University Council for Educational Administration. Retrieved from <http://3fl71l2qoj4l3y6ep2tqpwra.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/UCEA-State-Policy-Report-website-version-Nov2015-v2.pdf>

This University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) guide is meant to provide policymakers and researchers with a rich resource for exploring high-leverage, research-based policies for principal preparation and licensure and ensure they are present in each state's policy. This UCEA guide examines current policy from primary sources across all 50 states and the District of Columbia for principal preparation and candidate licensure.

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, Inc. 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.

Baker, J. A., & An, K. D. (2019). *School Administrator: Coaching as a way of being*. Arlington County, VA: The School Superintendents Association. Retrieved from <http://my.aasa.org/AASA/Resources/SAMag/2019/Sep19/Baker-An.aspx>

In Long Beach, CA, leadership development means distinct programs for aspiring central-office administrators, as well as principals and teachers.

Bierly, C., & Shy, E. (2013). *Building pathways: How to develop the next generation of transformational school leaders*. Bain & Company. Retrieved from <https://www.bain.com/insights/building-pathways-to-school-leadership>

This information brief explains how schools can develop an effective end-to-end model for identifying, encouraging, and developing the best leaders over time. It emphasizes the need to cultivate an active pipeline of well-trained candidates with the skills needed to transform schools from within the school's existing classrooms, rather than waiting to conduct a search when a leadership opening presents itself. It also identifies five persistent roadblocks to this type of ongoing development, as well as "a roadmap for change" to address them.

Bottoms, G., O'Neill, K., Fry, B., & Hill, D. (2003). *Good principals are the key to successful schools: Six strategies to prepare more good principals*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/six-strategies-to-prepare-more-good-principals.aspx>

This report defines six strategies that state and district leaders can employ to secure an ample supply of highly qualified school principals. The six strategies were drawn from research and direct experience in helping schools, universities, and state agencies rethink and redesign educational leadership programs. The six strategies are as follows: (1) Single out high performers; (2) recalibrate preparation programs; (3) emphasize real-world training; (4) link principal licensure to performance; (5) move accomplished teachers into school leadership positions; and (6) use state academies to cultivate leadership teams in middle-tier schools. For each strategy the report addresses five questions: What is the proposed strategy? What are the issues? Where do states now stand? What are some promising practices? and What can states do? The report concludes that each state should choose its best forum, based on the six proposed strategies to train, recruit, and retain effective school principals.

Browne-Ferrigno, T. (2003). *Becoming a principal: Role conception, initial socialization, role-identity transformation, purposeful engagement*. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(4), 468–503. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/44832149_Becoming_a_Principal_Role_Conception_Initial_Socialization_Role-Identity_Transformation_Purposeful_Engagement

This article presents findings from an exploratory study that described and analyzed the professional growth of 18 educational practitioners while participating in a principal preparation cohort program. The goal of the study was to add understanding to the nature of transformations that occur as teachers prepare to become school principals, and thus, researcher propositions guided the design and focus of this yearlong investigation. Analysis of the exploratory case study data suggests four major themes influencing practitioners' growth toward becoming principals: (a) role conceptualization of the principalship, (b) initial socialization into a new community of practice, (c) role-identity transformation, and (d) purposeful engagement based on career aspirations.

Cheney, G. R., Davis, J., Garrett, K., & Holleran, J. (2010). *A new approach to principal preparation: Innovative programs share their practices and lessons learned*. Fort Worth, TX: Rainwater Leadership Alliance. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c34bf6e365f0227097ac2f3/t/5dcc7207ee8cf64091512d26/1573679627841/A+New+Approach+to+Principal+Preparation.pdf>

This report from the Rainwater Leadership Alliance uses case studies from nine highly effective principal training programs to outline six features of the programs: develop a principal competency framework, build a candidate pool, select candidates, train and develop fellows, support principals, and evaluate program throughout.

Clifford, M., & Chambers, D. (2016). *Ready to lead: Designing residencies for better principal preparation*. New York City, NY: NYC Leadership Academy. Retrieved from <https://www.air.org/resource/ready-lead-designing-residencies-better-principal-preparation>

School-based residencies are an essential component of principal preparation programs and the future success of aspiring principals. Residencies engage participants in hands-on, job-embedded experiences that ensure that they learn, practice, and reflect on the skills needed to step into the role of principal. This report shares insights into the qualities of well-designed residency programs. This publication is intended for policymakers, school districts, and preparation programs seeking to build and sustain high-quality residencies.

Collins, F. A. (2016). *Getting it right: Designing principal preparation programs that meet district needs for improving low-performing schools*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board. Retrieved from <https://www.sreb.org/publication/getting-it-right>

A grant from the School Leadership Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education during 2008–14 provided the opportunities and resources for the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to bring together its cutting-edge knowledge base, field experience, and substantial bank of publications and training materials in the closely related fields of school improvement and school leader preparation and development. SREB applied them systematically to create and implement the Florida Leadership Academy for Schools of Innovation and Improvement (FLASII). SREB's partners in developing and implementing FLASII included the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), the University of North Florida, and five high-need school districts that demographically represented urban, suburban, and rural student populations. This publication shares the two SREB principal preparation models that evolved from FLASII development and implementation activities: (1) a modified university master's degree program designed to prepare aspiring principals to implement a continuous school-improvement process in schools where they will become leaders and (2) a model for preparing assistant principals, teacher leaders, and district office staff aspiring to become principals with the special skill sets required for turning around chronically low-performing schools.

Corcoran, S.P., Schwartz, A.E., & Weinstein, M. (2009). *The New York City Aspiring Principals Program: A school-level evaluation*. New York City, NY: New York University, Institute for Education and Social Policy. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/new-york-city-aspiring-principals-program.aspx>

In 2003, New York City embarked on a unique experiment to increase its pool of qualified school administrators. Through the creation of the Leadership Academy, the district asserted significantly

greater responsibility for training and developing its own school leaders. Today, the Leadership Academy works with hundreds of principals annually and its Aspiring Principals Program (APP) graduates are currently responsible for 15 percent of the city's schools. This report represents the first systematic comparison of student outcomes in schools led by APP graduates after three years to those in comparable schools led by other new principals. They found that APP principals were placed in schools that are demographically and academically distinct from schools led by other new principals. APP principals were more likely to be placed in schools that were low performing and trending downward. Controlling for preexisting differences in these schools, they found that APP schools improved apace with the city in English Language Arts, while comparison schools fell behind the citywide average. By the third year, the differences in these schools' trajectories become statistically significant. In math, both groups' scores improved over time, but they found no statistically significant difference in these schools' gains.

Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., Meyerson, D., Orr, M. T., & Cohen, C. (2007). *Preparing school leaders for a changing world: Lessons from exemplary leadership development programs—Final Report*. Stanford, CA, and Washington, DC: Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute and The Finance Project. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/preparing-school-leaders.aspx>

Commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, this study examines eight exemplary pre- and in-service principal development programs. The programs were chosen both because they provide evidence of strong outcomes in preparing school leaders and because—in combination—they represent a variety of approaches with respect to their designs, policy contexts, and the nature of partnerships between universities and school districts. Preservice preparation programs were sponsored by four universities: Bank Street College, Delta State University, the University of Connecticut, and the University of San Diego working with the San Diego City Schools. In-service programs were sponsored by the Hartford (CT) School District, Jefferson County (KY) Public Schools (which included a pre-service component), Region 1 in New York City, and the San Diego City Schools. In several cases, pre- and in-service programs create a continuum of coherent learning opportunities for school leaders. To understand how the programs operate and how they are funded, the authors interviewed program faculty and administrators, participants and graduates, district personnel, and other stakeholders; reviewed program documents; and observed meetings, courses, and workshops. Findings include: (1) Exemplary programs can produce leaders who engage in effective practices; (2) Exemplary pre- and in-service development programs share common features; (3) Program success is influenced by leadership, partnerships, and financial supports; and (4) State and district policies influence program designs and outcomes.

Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., & Meyerson, D. (2005). *Review of research—School Leadership Study: Developing successful principals*. Stanford, CA, and Washington, DC: Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, and The Finance Project. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/developing-successful-principals.aspx>

Many in the educational field consider principal preparation programs weak. In this report, the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute and The Finance Project survey research on features of effective leadership preparation and call for a closer look at how programs are financed and operated. The report was commissioned by The Wallace Foundation.

Davis, S. H., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2012). *Innovative principal preparation programs: What works and how we know*. Planning and Changing, 43(1/2), 25–45. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ977545.pdf>

This article provides an overview of the contexts, the key features, and the evidentiary data—the criteria regarding candidates to engage in administrative work—for five innovative principal preparation programs. Short case studies and cross-case analysis of the sample programs are used to provide thorough descriptions. The five programs in fact share many characteristics and design structures that warrant close consideration, given each program’s specifically measured success.

Fry, B., Bottoms, G., & O’Neill, K. (2005). *The principal internship: How can we get it right?* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board. Retrieved from <https://www.sreb.org/publication/principal-internship>

This report presents the results of the Southern Regional Education Board’s survey to measure the quality of internships provided to aspiring principals in university leadership programs in the Southern states. The survey probed the extent to which principal interns are required to observe, participate in, and lead activities that focus on improving curriculum, instruction, and student achievement. The report addresses the lack of opportunities aspiring school leaders have to engage in instructional leadership preparation and the wide disconnect between the work of today’s principals and the internship experiences provided and recommends actions for improvement in the programs.

Fry, B., O’Neill, K., & Bottoms, G. et al. (2006). *Schools can’t wait: Accelerating the redesign of university principal preparation programs*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/schools-cant-wait-university-principal-preparation.aspx>

Arguing that states have displayed “a lack of urgency” in pressing universities to improve how they train future principals, this Southern Regional Education Board report gives mediocre grades to 22 universities—while also offering an action plan for states to pick up the pace.

Gates, S. M., Baird, M. D., Doss, C. J., Hamilton, L. S., Opper, I. M., Master, B.K., Tuma, A. P., Vuollo, M., & Zaber, M. A. (2019). *Preparing school leaders for success: Evaluation of New Leaders’ Aspiring Principals program, 2012–2017*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2812.html

A growing body of research points to the ways in which principals influence teachers, classrooms, and, ultimately, student achievement. New Leaders aims to prepare transformational school leaders by partnering with districts and charter schools to offer rigorous, research-based training for aspiring principals. The Aspiring Principals program is New Leaders’ signature program and has three core features: selective recruitment and admission, training and endorsement, and support for principals early in their tenure. This report is a follow-up to the 2014 evaluation of New Leaders’ Aspiring Principals program. Focusing on the revised program, which was first implemented in 2012, the authors present evidence of the effectiveness of the revised Aspiring Principals program and share lessons that can inform principal-preparation policy and practice. To assess the effect of New Leaders’ Aspiring Principals program, researchers analyzed whether schools and students led by graduates of the program outperformed comparison schools and students in the same district, focusing on student achievement and principal retention. They also examined program graduate placement and satisfaction with the Aspiring Principals program.

Gates, S. M., Baird, M. D., Master, B. K., & Chavez-Herrerias, E. R. (2019). *Principal pipelines: A feasible, affordable, and effective way for districts to improve schools*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2666.html

From 2011 to 2016, The Wallace Foundation, through its Principal Pipeline Initiative (PPI), provided funding and technical assistance to support six large school districts in their efforts to put in place systematic processes for the strategic management of school leaders. The purpose was to examine whether a comprehensive principal pipeline would be more effective than business-as-usual approaches to the preparation and management of school leaders. The term *principal pipeline* is shorthand for the range of talent management activities that fall within a school district's scope of responsibility when it comes to school leaders, including leader standards, preservice preparation opportunities for assistant principals and principals, selective hiring and placement, and on-the-job induction, evaluation, and support. This report documents what the PPI districts were able to accomplish, describing the implementation of the PPI and its effects on student achievement, other school outcomes, and principal retention. The authors found that all six PPI districts were able to implement comprehensive pipelines, and they did so in different ways. The PPI had positive effects on a wide range of outcomes that school districts care about, and evidence of these positive effects was widespread. The authors also found that the work is affordable: It cost a PPI district about \$42 per pupil per year, or less than 0.5 percent of the district's budget in each school year, to operate and enhance its principal pipeline. The authors conclude that districts looking for ways to enhance school outcomes and improve the retention of newly placed principals should be encouraged by the experiences of PPI districts. The findings of this study suggest that when districts focused attention on activities related to principal pipelines, then principals, schools, and students benefited.

Gates, S. M., Hamilton, L. S., Martorell, P., Burkhauser, S., Heaton, P., Pierson, A., ... & Gu, K. (2014). *Preparing principals to raise student achievement: Implementation and effects of the New Leaders Program in ten districts*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR500/RR507/RAND_RR507.pdf

New Leaders is a nonprofit organization with a mission to ensure high academic achievement for all students by developing outstanding school leaders to serve in urban schools. Its premise is that a combination of preparation and improved working conditions for principals, especially greater autonomy, would lead to improved student outcomes. Its approach involves both preparing principals and partnering with school districts and charter management organizations (CMOs) to improve the conditions in which its highly trained principals work. As part of the partnerships, New Leaders agrees to provide carefully selected and trained principals who can be placed in schools that need principals and to provide coaching and other support after those principals are placed. The districts and CMOs agree to establish working conditions that support rather than hinder the principals' efforts to improve student outcomes. This report describes how the New Leaders Program was implemented in partner districts, and it provides evidence of the effect that New Leaders has on student achievement.

Gates, S. M., Kaufman, J. H., Doan, S., Tuma, A. P., & Kim, D. (2020). *Taking stock of principal pipelines: What public school districts report doing and what they want to do to improve school leadership*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Taking-Stock-of-Principal-Pipelines.pdf>

The authors share new findings about the presence and potential importance of principal pipeline activities for preparing, hiring, supporting, and evaluating school leaders as reported by administrators from a national sample of school districts across the United States. The research on which this report is

based was prompted by positive findings in a recent evaluation of the Principal Pipeline Initiative (PPI) conducted by the RAND Corporation and Policy Studies Associates. The PPI, launched by The Wallace Foundation in 2011, supported six large public school districts in implementing comprehensive, strategic efforts intended to improve the quality of school leaders over a five-year period. Overall, the vast majority of the authors' interview participants across districts reported that their district views principals as important and engages in some pipeline activities. That said, only about half of district respondents reported that they are satisfied with their current pool of principals. Interviewees reported some of the pipeline activities to be far more prevalent than others. In addition, the report's data suggest variation in what principal pipelines look like in different district contexts. The variation in prevalence of specific pipeline activities reported by the interviewees suggests that there are opportunities for districts to learn from one another. Responses from officials in small districts suggested some potential differences between small and large districts in the way principals are supervised and supported; the authors found these differences to be worthy of further exploration in future research.

George W. Bush Institute (2020). *A framework for principal talent management*. Dallas, TX:

Author. Retrieved from <https://gwbcenter.imgix.net/Publications/Resources/gwbi-ptm-framework-feb2020.pdf>

The George W. Bush Institute partnered with the American Institutes for Research to develop the Principal Talent Management Framework in 2016. This 2020 update is a practitioner's guide that provides districts and policymakers guidance on policies for attracting, supporting, and retaining effective principals—and describes the extent of the evidence supporting these policies. The framework also highlights districts that are implementing examples of these promising talent management strategies.

George W. Bush Institute (2015). *Gwinnett County Public Schools: A systemic approach to scaling effective school leadership*. Dallas, TX: Author. Retrieved from http://bushcenter.imgix.net/legacy/gwbi_gwinnett_county_public_schools_report.pdf

This case study highlights the efforts of Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) to create an intentionally systemic school leadership strategy to improve its schools and raise student achievement. What makes the Gwinnett school leadership case particularly interesting is the fact that the district has taken a wholly comprehensive and multipronged approach to school leadership that includes: (1) making school leadership a strategic priority, (2) creating the conditions that enable school leaders to be successful in their roles by driving school and student success, and (3) developing a robust leadership pipeline. These individual building blocks are components of a comprehensive leadership development strategy developed by GCPS. Their integration as part of a comprehensive district strategy and vision for change is a unique and powerful example of a district investing in effective school leadership to improve student achievement. This case study is intended to illustrate how essential school leadership is as a driver of student achievement and shares GCPS' policies and practices that lead to highly effective school leadership.

George W. Bush Institute & American Institutes for Research. (2016a). *Principal talent management according to the evidence: A review of the literature*. Dallas, TX: Author. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED587185.pdf>

In recognition of the importance of effective school leadership, many states and districts have implemented policies and programs that aim to improve their capacity to attract and retain great principals. Too often though, these policies and practices do not combine to form a coherent system that ensures effective leadership development. To be successful, these efforts require a comprehensive,

systematic approach to principal talent management (PTM) that encompasses the entire continuum of a principal's career: preparation, recruitment, and selection; professional learning; performance evaluation; and compensation and incentives. This literature review aims to provide district leaders with an understanding of the research and best evidence regarding the components of effective PTM systems. Based on the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards as the criteria for identifying studies with rigorous research designs and evidence of causal relationships, the review focuses on two key outcomes of PTM systems and components: (1) the extent to which certain policies and practices lead to improved student achievement and (2) principal retention. The review also highlights gaps in the existing research and offers recommendations for district leaders, policymakers, education-focused researchers, and funders of education leadership research, policy, and practice.

George W. Bush Institute & American Institutes for Research. (2016b). *Developing leaders: The importance—and the challenges—of evaluating principal preparation programs*. Dallas, TX: Author. Retrieved from <https://gwbcenetr.imgix.net/Resources/gwbi-importance-of-evaluating-principal-prep.pdf>

Principals play a critical role in establishing a school's climate and culture and in selecting and developing teachers, among other roles. Although there may be little disagreement that good principals make a difference, what is less clear is how to systematically prepare good principals. In partnership with the George W. Bush Institute, the American Institutes for Research looked to connect information about program graduates to student outcomes. Specifically, this study evaluated the impact of five programs on student achievement.

George W. Bush Institute & American Institutes for Research. (2016c). *Following the leaders: An analysis of graduate effectiveness from five principal preparation programs*. Dallas, TX: Author. Retrieved from <https://gwbcenetr.imgix.net/Resources/gwbi-grad-effectiveness-principal-prep.pdf>

In partnership with the George W. Bush Institute, the American Institutes for Research sought to connect information about program graduates to student outcomes. Specifically, this study evaluated the impact of five programs on student achievement. Key findings included: (1) Districts and preparation programs lacked high-quality data on principal characteristics and placements; (2) Selected program graduates had generally positive perceptions of program coursework and hands-on experiences, but they had mixed perceptions of district supports and ongoing supports from their programs; (3) We found little consistent evidence that student achievement in schools program graduates led is better (or worse) than student achievement in similar schools graduates of other programs led; and (4) Significant variation occurred in effectiveness among principals from selected and other programs. Taken together, these findings suggest that focusing on how to reduce variation in the performance of graduates through training, selection, or other means or how to systematize or better tailor supports may be the keys to success in preparing effective school leaders.

Grissom, J. A., Kalogrides, D., & Loeb, S. (2015). *Using student test scores to measure principal performance*. *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 37(1), 3–28. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/0162373714523831>

Expansion of the use of student test score data to measure teacher performance has fueled recent policy interest in using those data to measure the effects of school administrators as well. However, little research has considered the capacity of student performance data to uncover principal effects.

Filling this gap, this article identifies multiple conceptual approaches for capturing the contributions of principals to student test score growth, develops empirical models to reflect these approaches, examines the properties of these models, and compares the results of the models empirically using data from a large urban school district. The article then assesses the degree to which the estimates from each model are consistent with measures of principal performance that come from sources other than student test scores, such as school district evaluations. The results show that choice of model is substantively important for assessment. While some models identify principal effects as large as 0.18 standard deviations in math and 0.12 in reading, others find effects as low as 0.05 (math) or 0.03 (reading) for the same principals. We also find that the most conceptually unappealing models, which overattribute school effects to principals, align more closely with nontest measures than do approaches that more convincingly separate the effects of the principal from the effects of other school inputs.

Hart, H. M., Spote, S. E., Ponisciak, S. M., Stevens, W. D., & Cambronne, A. (2008). *Teacher and principal leadership in Chicago: Ongoing analyses of preparation programs*. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute. Retrieved from <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/teacher-and-principal-leadership-chicago-ongoing-analyses-preparation-programs>

This is the third report by the Consortium on Chicago School Research (CCSR) that examines leadership development programs supported by The Chicago Public Education Fund for Chicago public school principals and teachers. This current study, like the previous two, is not a comprehensive program evaluation. It is more descriptive in nature, providing insights into a series of discrete questions posed by The Fund. They drew on a range of existing quantitative data resources, including Chicago Public Schools' personnel and test score data and their biannual survey of teachers and principals to augment data sources already available to The Fund. The report examined the Chicago's National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and the district's three main programs for principal preparation—Leadership and Urban Network for Chicago (LAUNCH), New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS), and the University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC) Urban Education Leadership.

Hess, F. M., & Kelly, A. P. (2005). *Learning to lead? What gets taught in principal-preparation programs*. Cambridge, MA: Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED485999>

Today, school principals are asked to lead in a new world marked by unprecedented responsibilities, challenges, and managerial opportunities. Are principal preparation programs equipping their charges for this new role? The authors examined the content of instruction at a stratified sample of the nation's principal preparation programs, including the programs training the most candidates, the programs regarded as the most prestigious, and more typical programs. Fifty-six programs were surveyed and at least four "core" course syllabi were collected from 31 that met the standards, permitting systematic coding for a total of 210 syllabi. The syllabi yielded 2,424 total course weeks. Some of the key findings include: Just 2% of 2,424 course weeks addressed accountability in the context of school management or school improvement and less than 5% included instruction on managing school improvement via data, technology, or empirical research; 11% of course weeks dealt with instructional management issues like curriculum development, pedagogy, classroom management, and learning theory; and 1% of course weeks dealt with school public relations and small business skills, while less than 1% addressed parental or school board relations.

Kaufman, J. H., Gates, S. M., Harvey, M., Wang, Y., & Barrett, M. K. (2017). *What it takes to operate and maintain principal pipelines*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2078.html

Effective school leadership has tremendous potential to improve outcomes for students and promote excellence in schools. Indeed, a high-quality leader in just one school can potentially improve the performance of dozens of teachers and hundreds (even thousands) of students. However, despite their demonstrated potential, efforts to improve the quality of school leadership can be a tough sell for districts and states. In an era of serious resource constraints, states and districts often feel pressure to spend money directly on students or teachers. Limited information about the costs of initiatives targeting school leadership compounds these pressures and precludes districts from embarking on this work. But poor school leadership could also have a high cost. Often overlooked are the costs that districts bear when they have to repeatedly replace principals. Furthermore, the ongoing costs of poor leadership—for example, higher teacher turnover, worsening school climate conditions, and declines in student achievement—are less visible but are arguably more significant than the cost of replacing school leaders.

King, C. (2018). *Quality Measures™ principal preparation program self-study toolkit: For use in developing, assessing, and improving principal preparation programs (10th ed.)*. Waltham, MA: Education Development Center, Inc. Retrieved from <https://www.edc.org/quality-measures-principal-preparation-program-self-study-toolkit-10th-edition>

This 10th-edition toolkit was developed for use in states and districts taking part in Wallace Foundation-funded efforts to improve school leadership. It includes rubrics on candidate admissions, course content, pedagogy-andragogy, clinical practice, performance assessment, and graduate performance outcomes and was designed to help principal preparation programs assess the quality of the training offered.

Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., Meyerson, D., & Orr, M. T. (2007). *Preparing school leaders for a changing world: Lessons from exemplary leadership development programs*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/preparing-school-leaders.aspx>

In 2003, with funding from The Wallace Foundation, a national team of researchers organized by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute and The Finance Project examined a set of exemplary pre- and in-service professional development programs for principals, along with the policy contexts in which they operate. The purpose of the study was to identify effective ways of developing strong school leaders—leaders equipped to create effective learning environments for America’s diverse students. Eight programs offering evidence of innovative practices and strong effects on principal learning were selected based on expert interviews, a review of the research, and initial research on a much larger sample of programs. To understand local contexts, the researchers selected programs with several cohorts of graduates working in a concentrated region. The programs were chosen both because they provided evidence of strong outcomes in preparing school leaders, and because—in combination—they represented a variety of designs, policy contexts, and partnership strategies. Preservice programs were sponsored by four universities: Bank Street College (NY), Delta State University (MS), the University of Connecticut, and the University of San Diego working with the San Diego Unified School District. In-service programs were sponsored by the Hartford (CT) School District, Jefferson County (KY) Public Schools (which includes a preservice component), Region 1 in New York City, and San Diego Unified School District. In several cases, pre- and in-service programs created a continuum of coherent learning opportunities for school leaders. To understand how the programs operate and how they are funded,

the researchers interviewed program faculty and administrators, participants and graduates, district personnel, and other stakeholders. Case studies combining qualitative and survey data provided a comprehensive analysis of each program within its regional and state contexts, including the costs of implementing each program model and the funding sources it uses.

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

Principals who are strong, effective, responsive leaders help to inspire and enhance the abilities of their teachers and other school staff to do excellent work. Such principals also tend to retain great teachers and create opportunities for them to take on new leadership roles. This leads to the following key question: What can state policymakers do to help ensure that schools have excellent principals who advance teaching and learning for all students? The answer: Quite a bit, actually. The research informing this report identifies three crucial areas leaders across all states can usefully consider as they seek answers to this key question: (1) State policy agendas that address school principals, along with other priorities; (2) State policy levers available to state leaders as they attempt to identify and train aspiring principals and support those already on the job; and (3) the contextual factors within states and local communities that affect how state policies or initiatives for principals are likely to unfold in practice. 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.

Mendels, P. (2016). *Building principal pipelines: A job that urban districts can do*. New York City, NY: The Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Perspective-Building-Principal-Pipelines.pdf>

School district officials have faced the urgent task in recent years of ensuring that all schools, not just a lucky few, benefit from sure-footed leadership by professionals who know how to focus on instruction and improve it. The question boils down to this: How can districts develop a pipeline of great school principals? Research about a Wallace Foundation school leadership initiative provides insights that may offer districts a way forward, as described in this Wallace Perspective. Most importantly, the research finds that it is possible for districts to put in place the four key parts of a strong principal pipeline: (1) apt standards for principals, (2) high-quality preservice training, (3) rigorous hiring procedures, and (4) tightly aligned on-the-job performance evaluation and support. Moreover, commencing to build a pipeline can produce several swift benefits for districts and principals alike. These include principal job standards that foster a districtwide understanding of what constitutes effective leadership for local schools, a possible greater compatibility between principals and the schools to which they are assigned, and performance evaluations designed not only to measure what's important but also to help principals succeed at their very tough jobs. At the same time, the research makes clear that some elements of the pipeline are harder to construct than others. For example, it's simpler for districts to upgrade their own training programs for aspiring principals than it is to work with universities to improve university-based programs. This perspective offers a set of considerations for districts interested in building principal pipelines, as well as for states that want to help localities in this work. This publication draws from a number of sources but chiefly from an independent evaluation of the implementation of Wallace's Principal Pipeline Initiative, an \$85 million venture launched by Wallace in 2011 and underway in six large school districts.

New Leaders and University Council for Educational Administration (2016). *SEP³ Toolkit: State evaluation of principal preparation programs*. Author: New York City, NY, and East Lansing, MI. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56bcc72f2fe1319aac3877f7/t/56d7210037013bbd8255b7ab/1456939275049/SEP3+Toolkit0302.pdf>

The State Evaluation of Principal Preparation Programs Toolkit (SEP³ toolkit) offers guidance and recommendations on how states can improve principal preparation by increasing the depth and rigor of their preparation evaluation process, thus enabling them to accurately assess quality, promote program improvement, and intervene when performance is not satisfactory. The report also reviews contextual factors that states should consider when adapting the recommendations to local conditions and includes supplementary resources and tools to help states carry out the work. Together, these materials will allow states to undertake an informed and sophisticated approach to the complex work of improving principal preparation.

New York City Leadership Academy (2014). *Taking charge of principal preparation: A Guide to the NYC Leadership Academy's Aspiring Principals Program*. New York City, NY: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/resources/taking-charge-of-principal-preparation/>

To strengthen their efforts, principal preparation programs should consider training their students to meet clear standards for principal performance, tailoring curricula to district needs, and responding to feedback from alumni. That's the guidance delivered in a report from the New York City Leadership Academy, which has trained numerous principals now leading New York City public schools—and helped prepare many other school leaders in districts around the country. The report offers an in-depth look at the approach to training taken by the leadership academy and offers recommendations on how others can replicate its successes.

Orr, M. T. (2012). *When districts drive leadership preparation partnerships: Lessons from six urban district initiatives*. *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*. 9(3), 3–17. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Lessons-from-Six-Urban-District-Initiatives.pdf>

This article is a cross-case analysis drawing on case study research conducted in 2009-2010 on six leadership preparation programs and their district-university affiliation, using research on consumer action and interorganizational relationships to understand their relationships in developing leadership preparation programs. The six urban districts were encouraged, through foundation support, to become active consumers and directly influence the quality and nature of preparation that met their leadership needs. How districts became more active consumers, the different ways in which they engaged local universities, and structures needed to support their shared programs and relationships are described. Their strategies and challenges can be instructive in guiding districts and universities on how to best support and sustain such programs.

Appendix C: Protocol for Identifying Preparation Pathway Roles and Learning Opportunities

This appendix provides a protocol that district leaders can use to identify existing preparation pathway roles and learning opportunities, possibly formalizing or adding roles, and perhaps providing formal leadership development opportunities for both existing roles and potential roles.

Part I: Inventory positions that already exist

- (1) In the first column, list principal preparation pathway roles that already exist in your district. List any formal or informal role that has greater leadership responsibility than a full-time teacher but has less than that for a school principal. Examples might include an instructional coach, an assistant principal, a grade-level team lead, and a leadership team member.
- (2) In the second column, note whether the role is formal or informal. A formal role has an official title and is recognized by the district's human resources department.
- (3) In the third column, write the official job description for the role. If there is no official job description, write "Not applicable (NA)."

Existing Preparation Pathway Role	Formal or Informal?	Job Description

Part 2: Identify quick wins

Take stock of the evidence you compiled in Part 1. With your team members, reflect on:

- (1) Should existing informal roles be changed into formal ones?
- (2) Should job descriptions be written for roles that lack them?
- (3) Should job descriptions be edited to emphasize critical leadership skills needed for the role?

Part 3: Consider new positions

Consider the number of steps in your preparation pathway and reflect on whether there are additional roles you should create to provide more incremental opportunities for leadership development. If so, name the roles and compose job descriptions.

Potential Preparation Pathway Role	Formal or Informal?	Job Description

Part 4: Consider learning opportunities

- (1) In the first column, list all the existing and potential preparation pathway roles.
- (2) In the second column, list learning opportunities targeted towards individuals in the role. Focus on opportunities that help individuals grow leadership skills they need in their current roles or might need in any future preparation pathway roles.
- (3) In the third column, list learning opportunities you could create for each role group to grow their leadership skills.

Existing & Potential Preparation Pathway Role	Existing Learning Opportunities	Possible Learning Opportunities





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