

Building on the Principal Support Framework: District Self-Assessment and Planning Template

This planning tool builds on the Principal Support Framework (PSF), which captures the best thinking of educators and other staff in the Partnership Sites to Empower Effective Teaching, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, on how to best support and develop principals as instructional leaders. The following template leads you through the key ideas in each of the framework's three action areas and helps you to:

- assess how well you currently support your principals as instructional leaders in each area,
- identify evidence to support your assessment, and
- prioritize your next steps in each action area.

The template asks you to assess how completely each key idea statement describes the current reality in your district, from **Not at all**, (“Our current reality looks nothing like this”) through **Somewhat** (“Our current reality resembles this in part”) to **Fully** (“This statement accurately and completely describes our current reality”). Before you make your rating for each key idea, it will be most helpful if you spend some time reviewing the evidence for where you stand in your district, using the “possible evidence” from the PSF as a guide. The template will also prompt you to briefly state the evidence that backs up your rating. If you need additional room for your thoughts, you may want to capture them in a separate document.

COMPLETING THE TEMPLATE: This document is designed as a fillable PDF form. You can either print it out and fill it in by hand or complete it electronically in Adobe Acrobat. To fill it in electronically, make sure you have opened the document in Acrobat. (You can review and modify the document in Preview, but you will not be able to save any changes you make.) In Acrobat, move your cursor over the checkboxes in each section and click in the appropriate box. To type in responses to the questions, click in the open space below the question and a text entry box will appear for your answer. You may save your responses by saving the completed template in Acrobat. Once the document has been completed and saved, you can print it from either Acrobat or Preview.

District Self-Assessment and Planning Template for Principal Support

ACTION AREA 1 **A Shared Vision of Principals as Instructional Leaders**

The school system has defined, clearly and in detail, what it expects principals to do as the instructional leaders of their schools, and it selects and evaluates principals based primarily on whether they can successfully execute those practices.

KEY IDEA 1. District leaders have a shared agreement on instructional leadership.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Principals and central office leaders have developed an agreed-upon understanding of the successful practices of instructional leaders, including the overall management of human capital in their schools.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What’s our evidence that we have shared agreement on instructional leadership?
(E.g., written consensus documents; leaders’ ability to articulate agreed understanding; principals’ ability to state practices for which they are accountable; other)

ACTION AREA 1, Continued

KEY IDEA 2. Leadership practice is evidence-based.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The agreed-upon understanding of successful instructional leadership practices is based on evidence of what improves teaching and learning, either through an analysis of the practices of successful principals in the school system and/or a review of the current research on instructional leadership.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What evidence about teaching and learning are we using to support our consensus understanding?
(E.g., research reviews, analysis of schools where our teachers are improving as a result of principal practice)

KEY IDEA 3. A shared understanding of instructional leadership drives day-to-day work.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

This understanding of the successful practices of instructional leaders drives the day-to-day work of principals.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence for our claims about principals' day-to-day work?
(E.g., a review of principals' calendars)

ACTION AREA 1, Continued

KEY IDEA 4. A shared understanding of instructional leadership drives the hiring process.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Principal recruitment, screening, and selection, including written position descriptions, place primary emphasis on choosing principals who demonstrate the successful practices.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all

Somewhat

Fully

What specific tasks are we requiring during principal hiring to ensure alignment with our consensus on instructional leadership? (E.g., requiring principals to observe classroom practice, role-play conversation with a teacher, deliver a mock professional development session, etc.)

KEY IDEA 5. A shared understanding of instructional leadership drives evaluation.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Principal coaching, mentoring, and evaluation are aligned with the skills expected of principals as instructional leaders.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all

Somewhat

Fully

What's our evidence that our coaching, mentoring, and evaluation are aligned with the skills we expect of principals as instructional leaders? (E.g., evaluation system that puts primary emphasis on instructional leadership and evaluates principals based on evidence of successful practice, etc.)

ACTION AREA 1, Continued

KEY IDEA 6. A shared understanding of instructional leadership drives professional development.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Principals and their supervisors use evaluation rubrics to reflect on principals' practices and to develop professional growth goals.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that our evaluation system is promoting principal/supervisor reflection and professional growth? (E.g, learning plans are developed for each principal based on the successful instructional leadership practices included in the evaluation rubric, etc.)

KEY IDEA 7. District/charter management organization and school leaders focus on continuous improvement in their practice.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The school system engages in continuous measurement, reflection, and improvement to evolve its understanding of successful instructional leadership practices over time.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that we are continually improving our understanding of successful instructional leadership practices over time? (E.g., central office leaders use data gathered on instructional leadership practice to drive ongoing coaching and professional development for individuals and groups, etc.)

Next Steps for Action Area 1

Looking at our current position in each of the key ideas above, where do we stand in this action area? Where is our work most developed? Least?

Given our current position, what are the right next steps for us in this action area? Why?

How will we prioritize our next steps over the coming year? Which steps will we carry out:

1. Over the next 3 months?
2. 3-6 months from now?
3. 6-12 months from now?

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ACTION AREA 2 System of Support for Developing Principals as Instructional Leaders

The school system has created a system of supports for principals, at the forefront of which are dedicated central office leaders—“Instructional Leadership Directors” (ILDs)¹—who are responsible for helping principals grow as instructional leaders.

KEY IDEAS

KEY IDEA 1. The school system hires Instructional Leadership Directors (ILDs) with proven ability.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?	
Instructional Leadership Director selection places primary emphasis on proven ability to help principals improve on the school system’s agreed-upon practices of instructional leaders through a coaching and teaching stance.	To what extent does this statement describe our current reality? Not at all Somewhat Fully
What’s our evidence that we are selecting Instructional Leadership Directors based on proven ability to help principals in these ways? (E.g., as part of the hiring process, candidates demonstrate their ability to develop principals using principal case studies, developing and modeling the use of tools, and creating plans of support for principals, etc.)	

¹Honig et al define ILDs as executive-level staff who spend as close as possible to 100% of their time helping principals grow as instructional leaders, by working with principals one-on-one and in principal networks. (Honig, M.I., Copland, M.A., Rainey, L., Lorton, J.A., & Newton, M. (2010, April). Central office transformation for district-wide teaching and learning improvement. A report to the Wallace Foundation. Seattle, WA: The Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.)

ACTION AREA 2, Continued

KEY IDEA 2. Instructional Leadership Directors focus on developing principals.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The day-to-day work of Instructional Leadership Directors is to provide support to principals.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that Instructional Leadership Directors' primary job is to provide support to principals? (E.g., job descriptions that focus primarily on the development of principals as instructional leaders and effective managers of human capital; calendars reflecting that at least 80% of Instructional Leadership Directors' time is spent planning, executing and reflecting on professional development and coaching for principals; other)

KEY IDEA 3. Instructional Leadership Directors differentiate support for principals.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Instructional Leadership Directors provide differentiated support to principals based on principals' individual needs as well as the strengths and needs of the schools.

Additional coordinated supports are in place for novice and struggling principals.

To what extent do these statements describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that Instructional Leadership Directors are providing differentiated support and that additional coordinated supports are in place for novice and struggling principals? (E.g., principals' professional growth plans reflecting their unique needs; principal induction program for new principals; coaches and mentors for novice and struggling principals, other)

ACTION AREA 2, Continued

KEY IDEA 4. Central office leaders lead principal networks.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Instructional Leadership Directors lead networks for principal learning that provide principals with opportunities to learn from each other and to solve shared problems of practice collaboratively.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that principals have opportunities to learn from each other and to solve shared problems of practice collaboratively through networks? (E.g., principals stating that some of their key learning comes from colleagues in their network; technology enabling them to communicate online and to share digitally, other)

KEY IDEA 5. Instructional Leadership Directors collaborate with other central office departments on principal professional development.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

All central office staff who provide professional development to principals do so in coordination with one another, based upon the Instructional Leadership Directors' and principals' articulation of principals' needs.

Principals have formal opportunities to provide input into planning professional learning that will help them improve as instructional leaders.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that central office professional development staff work is coordinated based on principals' needs, with principals' input? (E.g., regular staff coordination meetings; regular principal/ Instructional Leadership Director committee meetings to provide input, etc.)

ACTION AREA 2, Continued

KEY IDEA 6. Central office provides support for Instructional Leadership Directors.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Instructional Leadership Directors receive consistent and systematic professional development to perform the functions of an Instructional Leadership Director.

Instructional Leadership Directors' job responsibilities and their span of control (number of principals per Instructional Leadership Director) allow them to meet the differentiated needs of principals.

To what extent do these statements describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that Instructional Leadership Directors receive consistent and systematic professional development and that they are able to meet the differentiated needs of principals? (E.g., Instructional Leadership Directors meet regularly to discuss problems of practice; get regular coaching for differentiated needs; other)

KEY IDEA 7. Central office evaluates Instructional Leadership Directors on principals' growth and performance.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The evaluation of Instructional Leadership Directors is chiefly based on the quality of support they provide to principals and on measured growth in principal performance.

Instructional Leadership directors are evaluated in part on growth in teacher effectiveness and student outcomes.

To what extent do these statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that Instructional Leadership Directors are evaluated on the quality of their principal support, measured growth in principal performance, growth in teacher effectiveness and student outcomes? (E.g., evaluation uses measures of successful leadership practices for both principals and Instructional Leadership Directors; includes rubrics for growth in student outcomes and growth in teaching effectiveness; other.)

ACTION AREA 2, Continued

KEY IDEA 8. Central office leaders are held accountable for growth in principals' instructional leadership skills.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

All central office staff who provide professional development to principals are held accountable for the improvement of principals' instructional leadership knowledge and skills.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that central office professional development staff are being held accountable for principals' improvement? (E.g., surveys showing that principals believe they are getting the supports they need to improve their practice, etc.)

Next Steps for Action Area 2

Looking at our current position in each of the key ideas above, where do we stand in this action area? Where is our work most developed? Least?

Given our current position, what are the right next steps for us in this action area? Why?

How will we prioritize our next steps over the coming year? Which steps will we carry out:

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ACTION AREA 3

Making it Possible for Principals to Be Instructional Leaders

The school system has made it possible for instructional leadership to be the primary job of principals.

KEY IDEA 1. School staffing patterns and principals' span of control facilitate the principals' instructional work.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

School staffing and principals' span of control provide time and support for principals to focus on instructional leadership as their primary job function.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that school staffing and principals' span of control allow them to focus on instructional leadership? (E.g., student enrollment thresholds for hiring additional administrative school staff have been lowered; dedicated school staff support day-to-day operations, enabling principals to focus on instruction; other)

ACTION AREA 3, Continued

KEY IDEA 2. The system protects principals' time.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Central office leaders limit requirements for principals to be away from their schools during the school day and during teacher professional development time.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that principals are able to remain in their schools during the school day and during teacher professional development time? (E.g., principals' calendars indicate that they leave their school no more than one day per month for non-instructional school system activities; central office leaders work with principals to help them identify things they can "let go of;" other)

KEY IDEA 3. Central office functions as a service center for schools.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Central office staff members have clear expectations for providing strategic and timely support to principals in the areas of curriculum, human resources, budgeting, operations, and public relations

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What's our evidence that we have clear expectations for central office staff support to principals? (E.g., principal support team helps principals handle personnel issues efficiently; central office gives schools ready access to data systems and infrastructure; written curriculum is aligned to standards; all instructional initiatives aligned to make implementation easier; other)

ACTION AREA 3, Continued

KEY IDEA 4. Central office provides customized support to schools.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Central office units are organized to provide customized support to clusters of schools to enable principals to address operational issues (sometimes called a “case management approach”) efficiently.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What’s our evidence that central office units are providing customized operational /case management support to principals? (E.g., district’s research, data and evaluation unit supports principal/school reflections on school performance as it relates to improvement goals; departments such as Human Resources assign case managers to provide strategic support to individual schools; other)

KEY IDEA 5. Teacher leaders serve as partners with principals.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The school system invests in teacher leaders as partners for principals.

To what extent does this statement describe our current reality?

Not at all Somewhat Fully

What’s our evidence that the school system is investing in teacher leaders? (E.g., dedicated time for teacher leaders to observe and provide feedback to colleagues and to meet regularly with principal and principal’s assistant; training structures for assistant principals, administrative assistants, teacher leaders; partnership with staff on recruitment, development, and retention; other)

Next Steps for Action Area 3

Looking at our current position in each of the key ideas above, where do we stand in this action area? Where is our work most developed? Least?

Given our current position, what are the right next steps for us in this action area? Why?

How will we prioritize our next steps over the coming year? Which steps will we carry out:

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