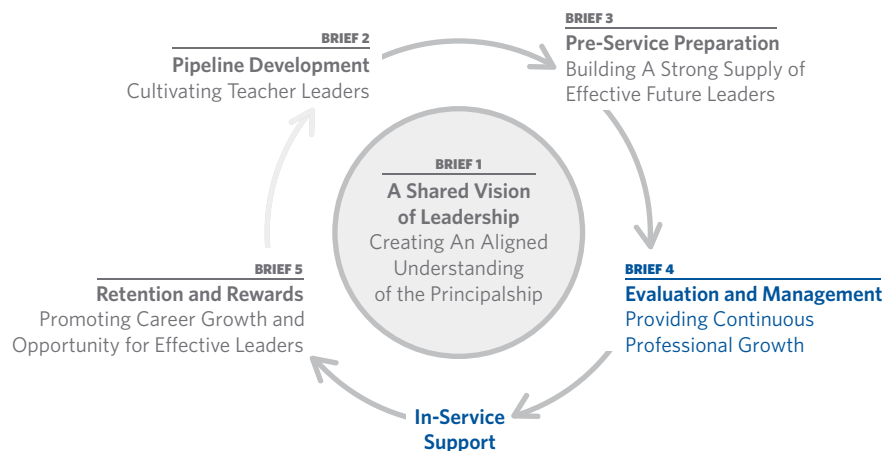


EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT: CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Accounting for a quarter of a school's impact on student achievement, principals are the leverage point for education reform and the primary drivers of school improvement. School leaders have a greater influence on all students than teachers and are the best long-term investment in effective teaching at scale.



THE CHALLENGE: FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE DIFFERENCES IN PRINCIPAL PRACTICE AND PROVIDE TAILORED SUPPORT

Despite the recent push to design and adopt educator evaluation systems, many states and local educational agencies (LEAs) have focused primarily on teacher evaluations and lack the appropriate attention to design and implementation of school leader evaluations and aligned professional development. And, since principals are responsible for carrying out teacher evaluations, investments in principal capacity pay dividends on successful implementation of teacher evaluation and support systems.

Robust measures of principal effectiveness are needed to inform improvements in principal preparation programs, tailor recruitment and placement strategies, and monitor job performance and development opportunities. Yet some states and LEAs still lack robust evaluation systems that accurately and consistently differentiate principal performance based on a pattern of effectiveness over time.¹ In many places professional development is still not connected to specific principal growth areas or aligned with the latest research on adult learning. Despite new evidence that principals play a critical role in developing teachers to improve classroom instruction, principals continue to spend only 8 to 17 percent of their time on essential instructional leadership activities.² Principals need continued development and support for the efficient and effective use of their time.

One factor that may drive this cycle is the ineffective use of federal resources to support educator development. According to data from the Center for American Progress, there is little evidence that Title II funds are being used well.³ Further, only a small margin of these funds are spent on principal effectiveness activities. In a representative sample of 800 LEAs, just four percent of Title II funds were reportedly spent on professional development for administrators compared to 40 percent for teachers and paraprofessionals.⁴ The balance of funds was spent on reducing class size (31 percent), recruiting top talent, and retaining great educators. While there are fewer principals than teachers, the current investment in principals fails to recognize a principal's impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

1 | CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL GROWTH: EFFECTIVELY EVALUATING AND DEVELOPING SCHOOL LEADERS

Additionally, principal managers—such as superintendents and assistant superintendents—are often not equipped to observe principal practice and provide actionable feedback and support aligned to evaluation results. Many managers lack sufficient time to focus on principal evaluation given their myriad other responsibilities or large caseload of principals to manage.⁵

For more information on principal evaluation and support—specifically our recommendations for Principle 3 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility—please see New Leaders’ publication entitled *Driving Alignment and Implementation: The Role of the Principals in ESEA Flexibility*. New Leaders believes that states should provide their LEAs with a model evaluation and support system. To support states’ and LEAs’ focus on implementation, we also developed an open-source evaluation framework, rubric, and training plan—the *Principal Evaluation Handbook*.

THE SOLUTION: HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND DIFFERENTIATED SUPPORT FOR CURRENT LEADERS

In order to raise expectations for the current principal corps, federal policymakers should:

- **Increase the connection between principal evaluation and continuous professional growth;**
- **Use evaluation results for principal development and distribution;**
- **Raise expectations for the current principal corps;**
- **Redefine expectations for principal managers; and**
- **Align school accountability with educator evaluations.**

INCREASE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

1 | Require the development and implementation of principal evaluations. Principals require a cycle of evaluation and support that recognizes important differences between their role and the role of a teacher. States and LEAs must do more to raise expectations, identify needs for improvement, and develop current principals through evaluation and support systems that measure leadership practice (the actions that principals take to drive increased student achievement, including all three of the critical roles described in the introduction) and student academic outcomes.

There are a number of vehicles federal policymakers can use to create or encourage effective leadership policies. Throughout this series we will describe an ideal policy and then suggest potential vehicles policymakers could use to pursue that policy.

Authorizing Statute

The legislative branch can amend current laws—such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) or the Higher Education Act (HEA)—or pass new laws to establish programs and authorize federal spending levels.

Appropriations Priorities

The legislative branch can set aside federal funds for a specific use and fund priority programs.

Regulations

The executive branch can initiate a rulemaking process based on existing legislative language through an executive authority or regulatory agency.

Executive Actions

The executive branch can provide guidance and technical assistance on problems of practice. And it can (along with the legislative branch) elevate concepts through the bully pulpit.

Vehicle:

- **Amend** ESEA to require as a condition of receiving Title I funds that states ensure all LEAs that receive subgrants develop and implement (or just implement if the state is developing a model system) an evaluation and support system that: 1) is used for continual improvement; 2) meaningfully differentiates principals by multiple levels of performance;⁶ 3) uses multiple measures in determining performance levels, including student academic outcomes (as a significant factor) and professional practice; 4) evaluates principals on an annual basis; 5) provides clear, timely, and useful feedback aligned to professional development; 6) is used to inform personnel decisions; and 7) is developed with stakeholder input. When it comes to using student academic outcomes, we believe evaluation systems should put a particular emphasis on individual student growth and, at the secondary-level, high school graduation rates so as not to penalize educators going into our highest-need schools. Evaluation systems should also include other student academic outcomes, including attainment and gap-closing measures. States could also consider additional outcome measures such as rates of taking advanced-level coursework and grade completion so long as student academic growth and graduation rates have a predominant focus among the student academic outcomes. *(Note: While many states have developed new principal evaluation and support systems through the U.S. Department of Education’s ESEA flexibility initiative, we believe ESEA reauthorization should require all states to design and implement robust systems that evaluate principals and encourage ongoing professional growth through tailored support and development activities).*

2 | Support high-quality implementation of evaluation and support systems. In addition to spending time on design and development, states and LEAs need to spend just as much, if not more, time on high-quality implementation of principal evaluation and support systems. To date, more energy has been spent on implementing teacher evaluations. Focusing formula funds on principal systems is critical to both building legitimacy for teacher evaluations and ensuring they are implemented successfully. In addition to improving the use of formula funds, federal policymakers should also make investments in competitive funding to support promising practices that can inform more effective uses of formula funds moving forward.

Vehicles:

- **Amend**, through authorizing statute or through **appropriations** language, Title II of ESEA to increase the state-level reservation of Title II-A and set aside at least half of the reservation specifically for principal effectiveness activities, including the implementation of principal evaluation and support systems.
- **Amend**, through authorizing statute or through **appropriations** language, Title II-A of ESEA to set aside a portion of funds for national activities, including funding for competitive grants to states and LEAs with cutting-edge, evidence-based strategies to improve principal evaluation and support.
- **Amend** ESEA Title II to focus funds on more effective activities such as differentiated approaches to principal professional learning and building LEA capacity and alignment to implement new evaluation and support systems.
- Closely **monitor** the required development—and implementation—of principal evaluation and support systems in ESEA flexibility and Race to the Top (RTT), including the role of the principal manager in carrying out these evaluations. Set the expectation that states demonstrate their evaluation system is effectively differentiating principals through validation checks, such as reporting a comparison of aggregated summative evaluation results and their correlation with student outcomes over several years. Ask states to create a plan for improvement in areas where evaluation results do not map to student growth.

- **Amend** ESEA or other statues to create or extend competitions (like those administered by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES)) that fund development of high-quality, open-source tools for assessing principal practice (e.g., 360° survey instruments, principal manager observational tools, and online evaluation instruments) and outcome measures (e.g., valid and consistent student growth measures). Consider hosting a repository for such tools.
- **Convene** RTT grantees, states that received ESEA flexibility, and other states in order to share best practices regarding principal evaluation and support as well as discuss lessons on high-quality implementation. States grappling with similar implementation challenges can form communities of practice.

USE EVALUATION RESULTS FOR PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOR ENSURING STRONG LEADERSHIP SYSTEM-WIDE

3 | Closely tie principal support to needs identified through evaluation. Ensure that development opportunities are habitual, timely, and specific to principal needs identified by the evaluation.

Vehicle(s):

- Provide **technical assistance** that highlights state and LEA models for using currently authorized ESEA Title II funding more effectively for principal professional development and for training principals on how to be strong talent managers, including implementation of new teacher evaluation and support systems.
- Increase **funding** for and initiate a **rulemaking** process on the **School Leadership program (SLP)** (Title II of ESEA). Focus the increased funding on effective models of supporting school leaders in the field. Require grantees to collect data on effective professional development practices in order to build a research base that informs future reauthorizations. *(Note: SLP is a competitive grant program that currently funds high-need LEAs to support the recruitment, training, and retention of school leaders).*
- **Monitor** the progress of states and LEAs by tracking spending on principal effectiveness as distinct from teacher effectiveness. By collecting data on how states and LEAs spend their Title II funds separately on both teachers and principals, policymakers can encourage practitioners to reflect on the best use of funds and to collect important data to inform future policies.
- Provide **technical assistance** on how states can use the current statutory authority to limit LEA use of Title II funds to activities that have been shown, through scientifically based research, to improve student achievement.
- **Amend** the Higher Education Act (HEA) to competitively fund institutions of higher education (IHEs) and non-profits to partner with LEAs to provide differentiated professional development based on evaluation data.

4 | Ensure that high-need schools have great leaders. Our schools in most need should benefit from strategies to attract and retain great talent and a pipeline that will continue delivering great educators. Much can be done at the state and local levels, including building a pipeline of great leaders, providing incentives (such as strategic staffing models that allow principals to bring a team of talented educators into schools with them), sharing messages that encourage great principals to seek out the neediest schools, and making tough personnel decisions based on evaluation results. At the federal level, policymakers can gather data and incent states to take action.

Vehicle:

- **Amend** ESEA Title I to ensure that poor and minority students are not in schools lead by ineffective principals at higher rates than other children. Similar to the current comparability requirement for teachers, require states to report LEA-level data on the distribution of effective and highly effective principals and make plans to address inequitable distribution where it exists. (*Note: ESEA flexibility allows states to use effectiveness data to meet the current law requirement for teachers, but no equivalent requirement currently exists for principals.*)

RAISE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE CURRENT PRINCIPAL CORPS

5 | Define a sustainable principal role. As in other professions, principals are being asked to do more with less. In order to focus principals on the most important aspects of the job—instructional leadership, talent management, and culture building—federal policymakers need to find ways to incent states and LEAs to distribute other operational responsibilities.

Vehicle:

- **Invest** in innovative state and LEA strategies for matching principal capacity to the new role by reducing administrative workloads or operational requirements. For example, states might propose to leverage the international model of letting highly-effective principals manage a number of schools, include peer evaluation as part of teacher evaluations, or implement a School Administration Manager (SAM) project⁷ to reduce certain operational requirements allowing the principal to focus on other important duties.

6 | Distributed leadership. Discussed more fully in the briefs entitled “Pipeline Development: Cultivating Teacher Leaders” and “Retention and Rewards: Promoting Career Advancement for Effective Leaders,” one strategy for making the principal role more sustainable and effective is distributing leadership responsibilities among a school-based leadership team. Research has also shown that this technique improves teacher effectiveness and retention.⁸

Vehicle:

- **Amend** ESEA to allow states and LEAs to use Title II funds to develop the teacher leader and assistant principal roles and provide career ladders and other opportunities for effective educators to practice adult leadership skills and serve on a leadership team that supports the school principal.

REDEFINE EXPECTATIONS FOR PRINCIPAL MANAGERS

7 | **Redefine expectations for principal managers from a compliance monitoring approach to a supportive model.** Superintendents and other direct principal managers need to know what good principal practice looks like and how those competencies are described in the state or LEA's leadership standards and evaluation rubrics. They also need training on using the evaluation model and tools for both accountability and support, including giving good feedback for professional growth and feedback that helps principals know how they measure up against the standards of practice. Finally, principal managers need to understand how to integrate various data sources (including survey data and student achievement data) into a comprehensive assessment of a principal's effectiveness.

Vehicles:

- **Amend** ESEA to shift the focus and make an explicit use of Title II funds for training LEA leaders to conduct principal evaluations and undertaking aligned performance management activities, such as setting clear goals, conducting school site visits, providing strong coaching and formative feedback, and identifying opportunities for individualized principal growth and development.
- Encourage states and LEAs to redefine the role of the principal and principal manager to align with new expectations, including revising leadership standards, job descriptions, hiring practices, training modules, and evaluation processes. Provide **guidance** on ESEA Title II that encourages LEAs to reflect on the caseload of principals each manager is expected to oversee in order to provide sufficient time for supervision, evaluation, and support. Ask LEAs to report on the principal manager to principal ratio and ask LEAs to describe in their state plan how they will ensure principals get the support they need if the ratio is above a reasonable amount.
- **Amend** ESEA to pilot new approaches to principal manager evaluations, including an evaluation of the principal manager's role in supporting principal development for the implementation of critical initiatives, such as increasing instructional rigor for new college- and career-ready standards and implementing new teacher evaluation and support systems.

ALIGN SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY WITH EDUCATOR EVALUATIONS

8 | **Align educator evaluations with other reform goals.** Given the many demands of a principal's time, ensure incentives are aligned to encourage principals to focus on the most important actions.

Vehicle:

- **Amend** Title I of ESEA to focus state accountability systems on the outcomes that matter most: school-level attainment (reaching a designated goal), growth for individual students (making progress toward a goal), and gap closing (making faster progress toward a goal for lower-performing students). At the secondary level, it is important to look at other measures like graduation rates. Amend Title II of ESEA to require state-developed evaluation and support system parameters (either statewide systems that LEAs adopt or adapted LEA systems that meet the state requirements) that focus teachers and principals on pushing for the same outcomes. For example, require that annual school performance targets for a principal in his or her evaluation are the same as (or aligned to) the Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs) for that school. For more information, please see New Leaders' publication entitled *Driving Alignment and Implementation: The Role of the Principals in ESEA Flexibility*.

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