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EVALUATING PRINCIPALS: CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Purpose

To provide an overview of the principal evaluation research, the current state of principal evaluation, key elements and considerations for state policymakers in designing evaluation, and state policy levers to improve principal evaluation.

Relevant experience

- Evaluation research expertise in leadership preparation program effectiveness, focusing on principal practices and school improvement outcomes
- Workgroup member of the NYS Cohesive Leadership System, which proposed a principal evaluation model
- Member of the NYS Taskforce on Teacher and Principal Effectiveness, focusing on evaluation design principles for principal evaluation
- Consultant on principal evaluation to various states and to the National Board Certification for Educational Leaders
- Contributor to review of research undergirding the 2008 ISLLC standards

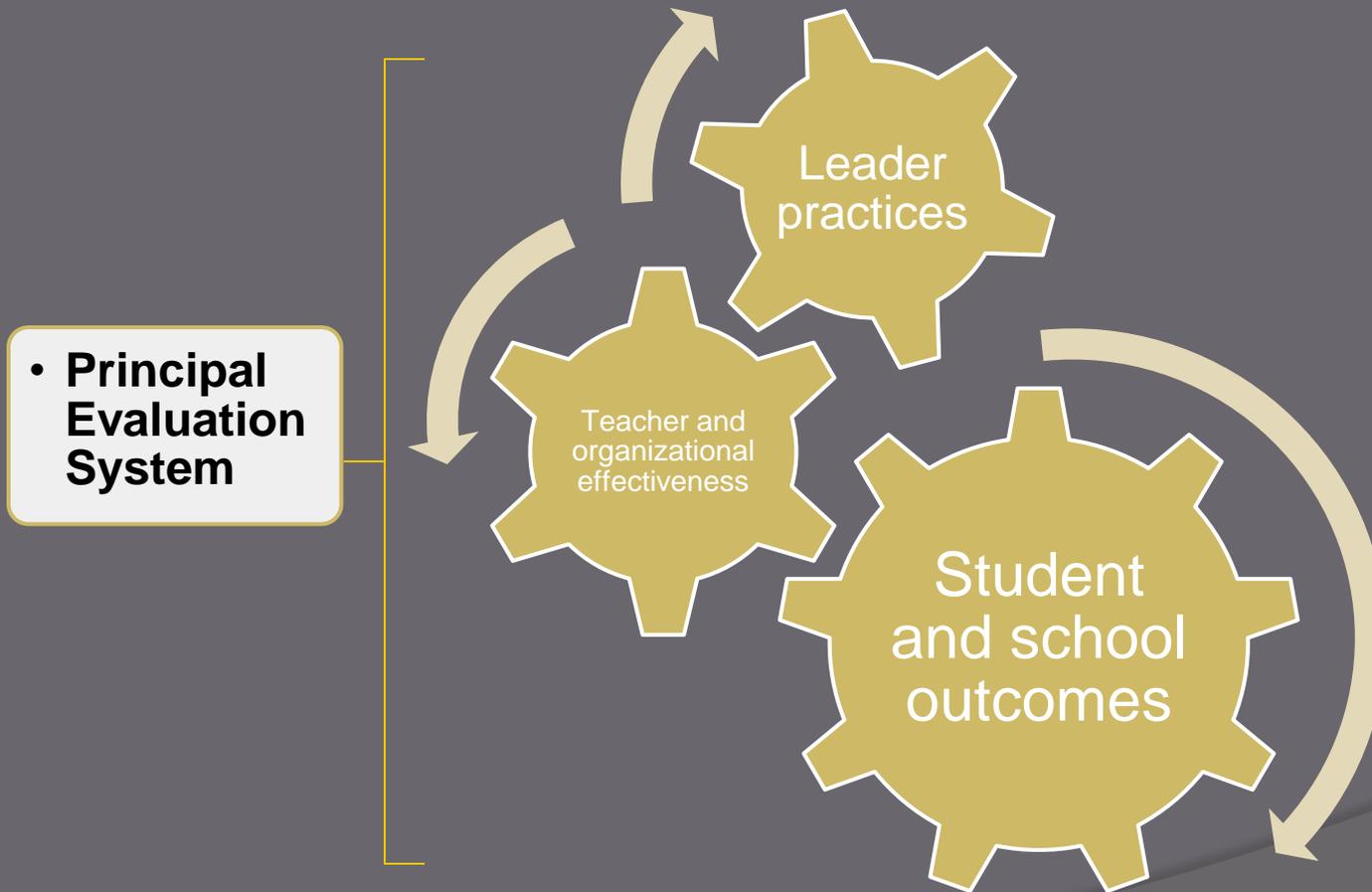
Policy context

- Converging research on the centrality and influence of effective leadership practices
- Insufficient progress on improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap
- Evidence that greater policy and practice alignment and coherence improves student outcome
- Federal, state and local policies that foster greater focus, coherence, and accountability by targeting teachers and leaders:
 - Proposals for reauthorization of ESEA
 - Race to the Top grants and related state legislation
 - Other federal grant programs

Research on conventional practice for principal evaluation

- Wide variation in principal evaluation scope, instruments and practices
- Few psychometrically rigorous evaluation rubrics or rating systems
- Movement away from assessing leadership traits to assessing outcomes of leadership practices
- Movement toward use of national or other research-based standards
- Increased attention to the relationship between leadership practices and student achievement, as well as the influence of context

Theory of action of principal evaluation as a lever of change



Essential elements of principal evaluation or assessment system determine:

- Who is assessed
- The purposes of assessment
- What is assessed
- What sources of evidence are used
- How the assessment is conducted
- How evidence is valued
- Psychometric qualities
- Evaluation of the system's effectiveness

Considerations of who is assessed

- ⦿ How “principal” is defined
- ⦿ Whether to include other school building leaders, such as assistant principals
- ⦿ Whether to include school district leaders and administrators
- ⦿ Whether to differentiate based on years of experience, length of time in current building assignment, and levels of responsibility

Purposes of the evaluation

- Summative—for consequential decisions pertaining to continued employment, tenure, promotion, and supplemental compensation
- Formative—for leadership development and professional growth
- Organizational change—for focus, direction and accountability

Evaluation systems differ based on which purposes are incorporated

What is assessed?



What is measured about principal practice?



Source: ISLLC standards for educational leadership

Teacher and organizational capacity and effectiveness

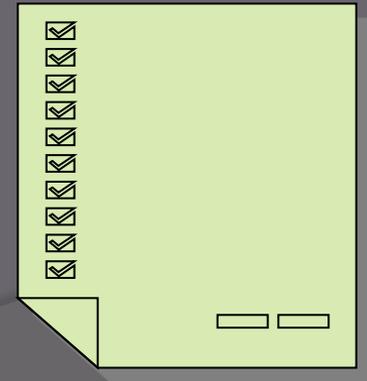
- ⦿ Leader influence on student achievement is through their influence on:
 - Vision and direction
 - Teacher capacity and effectiveness
 - Organizational conditions, capacity and effectiveness
- ⦿ Improved school culture, community engagement and working conditions
- ⦿ Leader pursuit of school wide improvement goals

Student and other outcomes

- Student achievement progress
- Progress on other student outcomes, such as graduation rates and reduced dropout rates
- Progress on other broader school effectiveness goals, such as improved learning for ELLs and special education students

What evidence is collected?

- Observations
- Documentation
- Principal reports
- Perceptions of actions and behaviors
- Perceptions of working conditions, school climate
- Student performance data



Whose judgments?

- Principal
- Subordinate staff (teachers,
- Other professionals, support staff)
- Peers (other principals)
- Supervisors (central office and superintendent)
- Students
- Families
- Community partners



Considerations in selecting types of evidence to include

- ⦿ What aspects of principal practice can be observed or documented? Of teacher and school effects of principal practices?
- ⦿ How much of the evaluation is based on direct observation of principal practice? Of teacher and school effects of principal practices?
- ⦿ Where can multiple sources of evidence be combined (e.g. portfolios and supervisor judgment) to assess aspects of principal practice, and to assess teacher and school effects?

How the evaluation or assessment conducted

- Planning and preparation
- Frequency of review and feedback
- Degree of collaboration between the principal and supervisors on setting goals, determining the evidence to be used and criteria for assessment, and support during the year to help accomplish goal attainment
- Feedback process and follow up
- Appeals process
- Improvement opportunities

When measures are made and how interpreted?

- How often is measurement made?
 - Initial-interim-final? or
 - Annual only?



- How are results interpreted?
 - What is used to make judgments? Rubrics and rating forms?
 - Are results disaggregated?
 - Who makes the judgments in reviewing the evidence?



How evidence is valued?

- Have a scoring system that reflects the purposes of the evaluation and classifies principals based on the evidence (for consequential decisions) and provides direction (for professional development)
- Evaluating individual types and sources of evidence, such as through rubrics or rating scales based on standards of practice
- Assigning values to individual sources of evidence
- Determining the value and weighting of multiple types and sources of evidence when combined
- Assigning values to the total body of evidence for purposes of consequential decisions and direction setting for professional learning and development
- Determining who can do the final evaluation of evidence to classifies principals and provide direction

Principal Score Card (*Milanowski, 2009*)

Dimension	Rating	Weight	Score
Development	3	20%	.60
Behavior	4	20	.80
Intermediate outcomes	3	30	.90
School outcomes	2	30	.60
Total			2.90

Psychometric considerations

◎ Validity

- what is measured
- how measures are made
- how measures are interpreted
- Whether measures are related (concurrent)
- Whether measures are predictive of outcomes

◎ Reliability of measures and measurement



Evaluating the evaluation system

- ⦿ New field
- ⦿ Untested tools
- ⦿ Untested rubrics
- ⦿ Very few valid and reliable evaluation tools that are aligned to national standards (e.g. VAL-Ed)
- ⦿ Lack of concurrent validity
- ⦿ Need to tight up implementation effectiveness
- ⦿ Feedback on the implicit theory of action

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