

Missing Out on Strong School Leaders? A Survey of Principal Hiring and Support in Washington State

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Introduction

Over the last decade, Washington State has launched a slew of ambitious education initiatives, including the state’s new teacher evaluation system, the Common Core State Standards, revised graduation requirements, and new school performance measures (see Box 1). These reforms have important implications for the state’s principals and their work: from managing teacher performance, driving academic improvement, and leading instruction, to implementing new standards and assessments, being a principal in the Evergreen State is no longer just about dealing with “buses, boilers, and books.”¹ Whether or not Washington can deliver on these ambitious reforms will depend on many things, but mostly on the people districts hire into the principalship and the supports they have on the job.

Given the high stakes surrounding the principalship today, district and state leaders need to pay closer attention to how they are hiring and supporting principals and how to do both better. As a place to start, this report aims to provide a better understanding of districts’ current practices. The data is drawn from a survey of principals and superintendents to find out how Washington’s districts currently hire and support principals (see Box 2).

Although surveys have limitations, what we heard from superintendents and principals provides valuable food for thought for the state’s education leaders—highlighting reasons for optimism but also areas of concern.

More specifically:

- Although districts are looking for principals who can improve student achievement and school performance, many aren’t as strategic as they could be when it comes to hiring. Our surveys showed that many districts hire principals late into the summer, they fail to ask principals to demonstrate their instructional observation skills in the hiring process, they underinvest in principal recruitment, and they leave the cultivation of future leaders to chance.
- Despite all of the pressure that principals face today, a majority of Washington’s principals view their work positively.
 - But principals also say that they need more help to succeed, especially when it comes to using teacher evaluations to make decisions about teacher professional development and employment. Strong majorities say the new reforms have improved

their conversations with teachers about instruction and are an improvement over the old system, but fewer say the new evaluation reforms help them counsel out struggling teachers.

- Principals also say they are less confident in the very skills that districts say are in short supply: leading a “turnaround school,” closing the achievement gap, and managing teacher performance.
- They also say their heavy workload, inadequate resources, and their limited authority to dismiss staff and control their budgets interferes with their effectiveness.

The challenge for school districts in Washington State is to build on the enthusiasm of its current workforce while also taking a much more strategic and deliberate approach to identify and support school leaders so they can deliver on the state’s ambitious policy goals.

Box 1: A Big Policy Shift: Washington’s New Teacher Evaluation System

Washington State’s new teacher and principal evaluation reforms were implemented statewide for the 2013–14 school year. The reforms, called the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP), moved the state from a two-tiered evaluation system (satisfactory versus unsatisfactory) to a four-tiered system and introduced new evaluation criteria focused on effective practice and student learning. The new policy requires districts to eventually use evaluation results to drive human resource decisions, including layoffs and dismissals. Washington’s educators, especially teachers, report that principals need more training to successfully implement these reforms.² In prior surveys, principals themselves said they needed more information and training on how to translate the evaluation reforms into reality.³ It’s less clear from prior surveys what types of support principals need to carry out this work or, more broadly, how they view their profession in light of all of this change.

1. The Wallace Foundation, *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning* (New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation, 2013), 6.

2. Jeanne Harmon, *Using Teacher and Principal Evaluations to Inform Human Resource Decisions* (Olympia, WA: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2013).

3. Melissa Brown-Sims et al., *Washington’s 2012 State of the State Educator Survey Report: Summary of Key Findings for Principals* (Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research, 2013).

Superintendent Survey Results

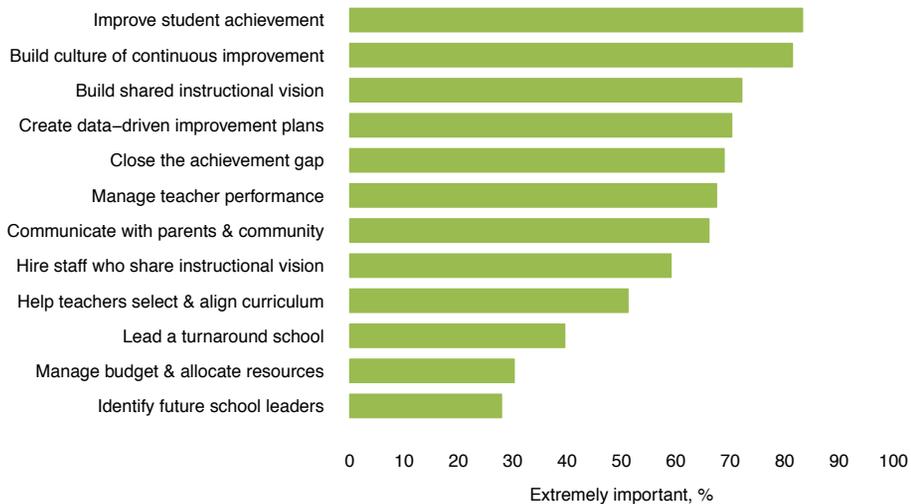
Finding 1. School districts want principals who can improve student achievement, but many districts don't hire their principals strategically.

Given that building an effective principal workforce begins with the hiring process, we wanted to know what Washington's superintendents are looking for in principal candidates and how they go about selecting whom to hire.

Superintendents want principals who can improve student achievement, but hiring turnaround leaders is a lower priority.

Superintendents say they look for principal candidates who can deliver on improving student achievement and can lead instruction, characteristics that are well aligned with the state's policy priorities. As Figure 1 shows, superintendents say the top three leadership skills that they look for in candidates are their ability to improve overall student achievement (85 percent), to build a culture of continuous improvement for staff and students (83 percent), and to build a shared vision of instruction across the school (73 percent). Superintendents say they care less about a candidate's ability to turn around a chronically low-performing school (41 percent), to manage school budgets and allocate resources (31 percent), and to identify and mentor future leaders among current teachers (29 percent). As the next results show, many of the skills that appear to be relatively lower priorities for superintendents are the ones they also say are in shortest supply.

Figure 1. What Leadership Abilities Do Superintendents Look For in Candidates?



Box 2. How We Did the Survey

In the summer of 2013, we sent surveys to a random sample of principals and to the entire population of superintendents in Washington State. For the principal survey, we asked principals about how they view the profession, their work, and state policy. For the superintendent survey, we asked superintendents about how they hire principals and what they think about the quality of their applicants and their current principal corps. We received robust responses for both surveys: 423 principals responded (63 percent), and 215 superintendents responded (78 percent). Since we contacted every superintendent in the state, there is no sampling error for our superintendent results, but given the random sample we used for the survey of principals, those results have a margin of error of about +/- 3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. We also conducted a series of follow-up focus groups with 32 principals across the state.

WHO ANSWERED THE PRINCIPAL SURVEY?

Principals

| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Female (%) | 49.4 |
| Caucasian (%) | 90.5 |
| Has MA (%) | 95.6 |
| Age (in years) | 49.5 |
| Experience (in years) | 19.9 |
| Salary (\$) | 105,716.00 |

District locale of Principals

| | |
|----------|------|
| Urban | 35.7 |
| Suburban | 38.2 |
| Town | 11.8 |
| Rural | 14.3 |

Superintendents say game-changing principals are in short supply.

When asked to reflect on the quality of their candidates and of their current principals, superintendents say that leaders who can improve student achievement in low-performing schools are in short supply. Among candidates, the biggest shortages are in those who can lead a turnaround school (improve a chronically low-performing school) (55 percent), close the achievement gap (52 percent), and manage teacher performance (47 percent). Superintendents say their current workforce has similar shortcomings. These results are worrisome for a state that wants every student to graduate ready for career, college, and life.⁴

Many districts hire school leaders late and are unsatisfied with the results.

We asked superintendents about two things: the timing of principal hires, and how they assess candidates during the hiring process.⁵ We learned that district timelines vary widely, but more than a quarter of districts are hiring only a month or two before school begins. This late hiring may be causing these districts to lose valuable leaders to other districts. The survey does not tell us why districts hire late, but other studies of teacher hiring suggest some

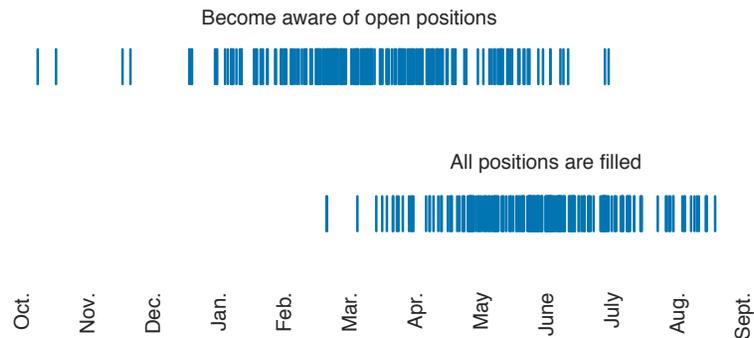
likely candidates: notification and transfer requirements, budget timelines, and outdated human resource systems.⁶

In Figure 2, the top hash marks show the month in which school districts said they typically start their hiring process (when they first become aware of any open principal positions) and the bottom hash marks show when districts report typically having all of their principal positions filled. Each hash mark represents an individual district.

As Figure 2 shows, the most common month to begin the hiring process is March and the most common month for ending it is June. But district timelines vary widely: for example, a handful of districts say they typically learn about vacancies in the fall, while others often don't hear about vacancies until the summer. Some districts report having all of their vacancies filled before May, but over a quarter (28 percent) of districts say they are filling principal positions into July and August.

These late-summer hires could cause districts to lose principal applicants to their faster-moving competitors, as is the case in late teacher hiring, or hinder or prevent principals' participation in teacher hiring.⁷ While we don't have data on either of these specific problems, the survey data do show that slow-moving districts receive fewer applicants per open position and are more likely to be unsatisfied with the quality of their applicant pools and their incumbent principals than fast-moving districts, even when we take district size, student characteristics, and district location into account. For instance, districts that don't fill all of their open principal positions until July or later receive about 4.6 fewer applications per open position than districts that complete their hiring processes earlier (12.4 compared to 17.0 applications). The results also suggest that the fastest-moving districts tend to be located in the state's suburban areas; the slowest-moving districts are located in rural areas.

Figure 2. When Do Districts Hire Principals?



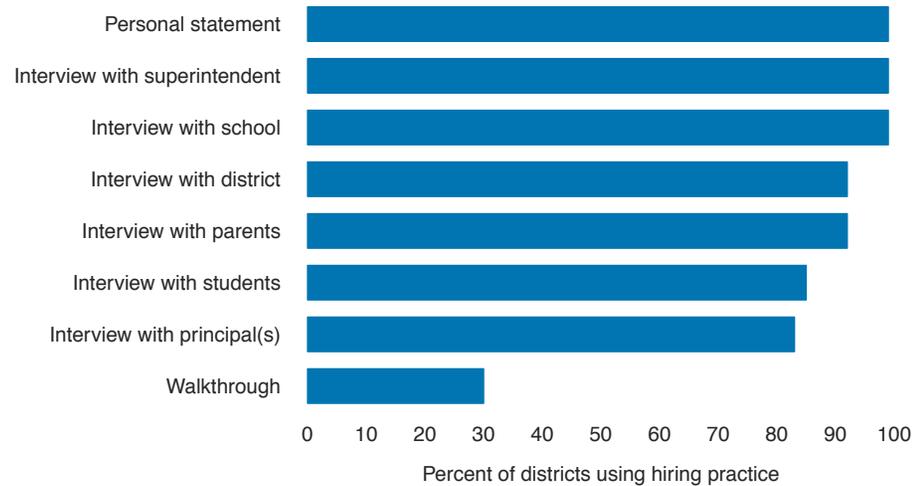
4. See the [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's vision statement](#)

5. We focused on timing and candidate assessment because research on teacher hiring suggests that school districts often approach timing and candidate assessment in ways that can negatively impact school staffing. For example, delays in teacher hiring can make it difficult for districts to attract quality teacher applicants. See Jessica Levin and Meredith Quinn, *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High-Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms* (Brooklyn, NY: The New Teacher Project, 2003). And information-poor hiring processes can be a problem for matching teachers to schools and retaining them. See Edward Liu and Susan Moore Johnson, "New Teachers' Experiences of Hiring: Late, Rushed, and Information-Poor," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (August 2006), 324-360.

6. Levin and Quinn, *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High-Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms*.

7. Ibid.

Figure 3. How Do Districts Assess Principal Candidates?

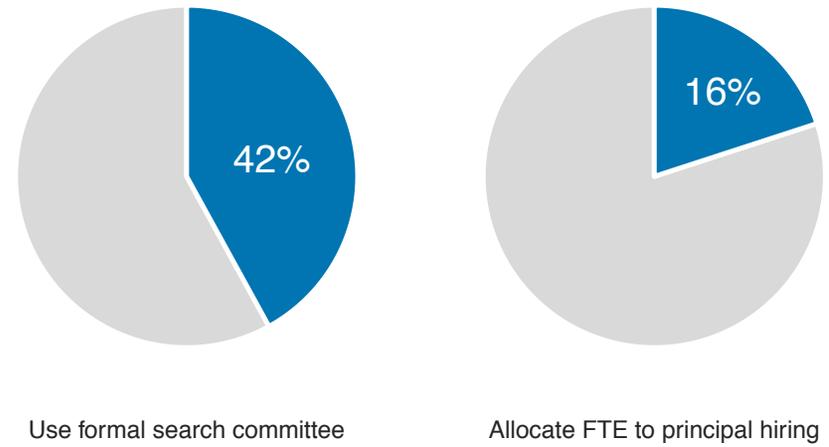


Districts rarely assess for instructional leadership and performance management demonstrations during screening.

When we asked superintendents about the methods they used to assess candidates, their responses suggest that districts involve a wide range of stakeholders during the principal selection process, but often miss important opportunities to assess instructional leadership. As Figure 3 shows, strong majorities of superintendents say they have principal candidates interview with the superintendent (99 percent), school-level staff (99 percent), district-level staff (93 percent), parents (92 percent), students (85 percent), and other principals (83 percent). In addition to interviews, the vast majority of districts also collect personal statements about leadership from candidates. By involving a wide range of stakeholders in the hiring process, school districts appear to be creating good opportunities for candidates and the district to exchange information and form more accurate impressions of one another.

Principals in follow-up focus groups told us that they preferred more demanding hiring experiences to quick-and-dirty ones (one principal said that being offered a job after a brief interview was a “red flag”). Similarly, in our principal survey, principals said conducting a classroom observation or school “walkthrough” as part of the hiring process was a useful opportunity for them to show their leadership potential (65 percent). However, only about 30 percent of principals reported actually completing a walkthrough when they were hired. Overall, when it comes to candidate assessment, districts seem to involve a broader array of stakeholders when they hire principals than when they hire teachers. However, districts appear to under-utilize work samples (e.g., walkthroughs) to assess candidates, which can provide useful information not only about how principals

Figure 4. Many Districts Don't Invest in Formal Hiring Structures



interact with others in a work situation but also about their capacity to assess instruction and provide constructive feedback—skills that state policy increasingly demands.

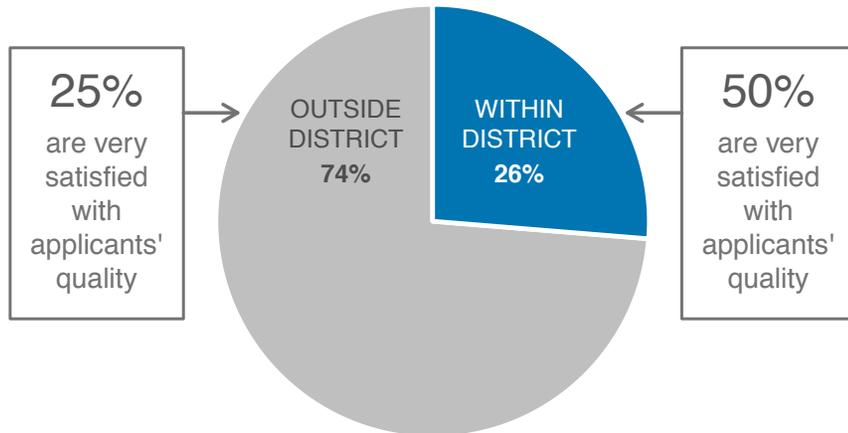
Many districts underinvest in hiring and are unhappy with the outcome.

As Figure 4 shows, less than half of districts report using a formal search committee when they hire principals and even fewer—less than a fifth—report allocating staff or staff time to principal recruitment and hiring. The districts that invest less in hiring receive fewer applicants. This is true regardless of district size and location. When we control for district size, student characteristics, and district location, districts that underinvest in these formal structures also say they receive fewer applicants per open position (15 versus 19) and are less satisfied with their current principal workforce.

Superintendents don't prioritize talent scouting.

Most superintendents say they don't look for a candidate's ability to develop and mentor future leaders when making hiring decisions (only 30 percent say they want candidates who can identify and mentor leaders). They don't see this talent in their candidate pool (40 percent identify a shortage of candidates with this skill), and almost half of superintendents think that the majority of their current principals are not strong mentors of future leaders (44 percent). Further evidence that districts might not be tapping internal candidates as much as they could be comes from the fact that about three-quarters of districts say that the majority of their applicants come from outside of their district.

Figure 5. Talent Scouting Low on the Radar



Other results suggest that internal candidates could be an important, overlooked source of talent. Figure 5 shows that about half (46 percent) of superintendents who report that the majority of their candidates come from within the district (from current principals, assistant principals, or teachers) say they are very satisfied with their applicant pool (88 percent are somewhat or very satisfied). By contrast, only a quarter (25 percent) of superintendents who report that the majority of their candidates come from outside the district are very satisfied with their applicant pool (81 percent are somewhat or very satisfied).

Principal Survey Results

Finding 2. Principals are positive about their work, but need more support to succeed

Principals are positive about their job and confident about their abilities.

The results from the superintendent survey described in the previous section suggest that school districts are missing critical opportunities when it comes to hiring principals. In this section we present results from our principal survey to gauge how principals view their work and what they need in order to better succeed. Overall, we found that principals have a positive view of the principalship and their own abilities, but they aren't satisfied with the support they're getting from their districts.

Despite the many demands they face, Washington's principals are positive about their profession. A strong majority (82 percent) told us that if they could do it all over again, they would still become a principal. An equally high number (81 percent) told us they are satisfied or very satisfied with their job.⁸ Slightly fewer agreed that the advantages of being a principal outweigh the disadvantages, but still most (76 percent) believe the good outweighs the bad when it comes to school leadership.

This positive view of the profession is widespread across the state's principal workforce. Strong majorities of elementary (83 percent), middle (82 percent),

Box 3. Leadership Tasks

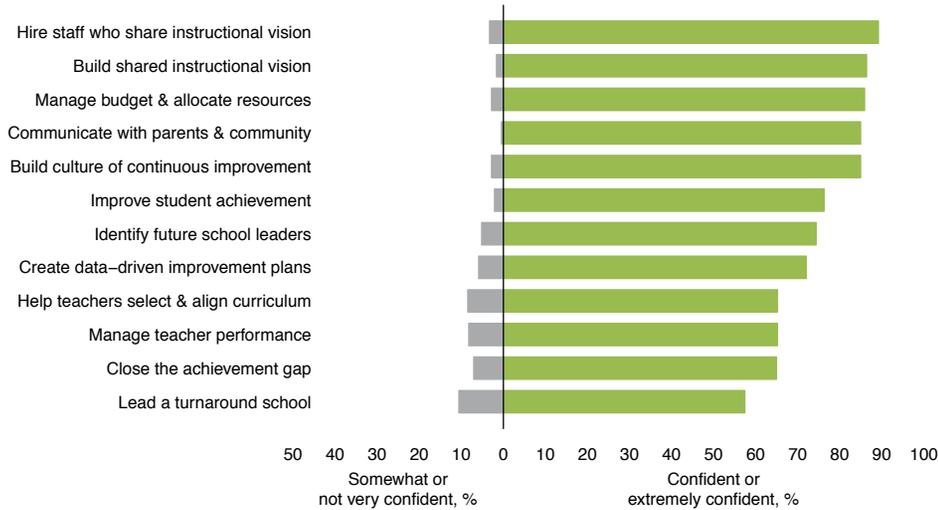
Most of the tasks in the survey mirror the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) leadership framework's eight criteria for leadership:

- **Creating a Culture:** Creating a culture that promotes the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning for students and staff
- **Ensuring School Safety:** Providing for school safety
- **Planning with Data:** Leading the development, implementation, and evaluation of a data-driven plan for increasing student achievement including the use of multiple student data elements
- **Aligning Curriculum:** Assisting instructional staff with alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with state and local district learning goals
- **Improving Instruction:** Monitoring, assisting, and evaluating effective instruction and assessment practices
- **Managing Resources:** Managing both staff and fiscal resources to support student achievement and legal responsibilities
- **Engaging Communities:** Partnering with the school community to promote student learning
- **Closing the Gap:** Demonstrating commitment to closing the achievement gap

SOURCE: [The AWSP Leadership Framework to Support Principal Development, Version 2.0](#). Association of Washington School Principals

8. Interestingly, MetLife's most recent national survey (2012) of teachers and principals suggests that, nationwide, principals' job satisfaction has declined in recent years. The MetLife survey found that around 59% of principals are very satisfied with their jobs (down from 68% in 2008). See MetLife, Inc., *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership* (2012) (New York, NY: MetLife, Inc., 2012). It is hard to say how these figures compare with our results because the two surveys use different scales. Our survey used a 7-point Likert scale of satisfaction while the MetLife survey used a 5-point scale (so some of the "very satisfied" respondents in the national survey are likely captured in our "satisfied" category). Unlike the MetLife survey, we don't have measures of satisfaction over time, so we can't speak to whether people's satisfaction with their jobs is trending down, up, or staying the same.

Figure 6. Principals Are Confident in Their Effectiveness



and high school (81 percent) principals are satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs. And although principals leading schools with the highest concentrations of students from low-income households are slightly less satisfied with their jobs compared to principals in the most advantaged schools, it's not by much: 78 percent versus 84 percent.⁹ Even across years of experience, job satisfaction is fairly consistent: 81 percent of principals with three or fewer years of experience and 80 percent of principals with more than three years of experience are satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs.

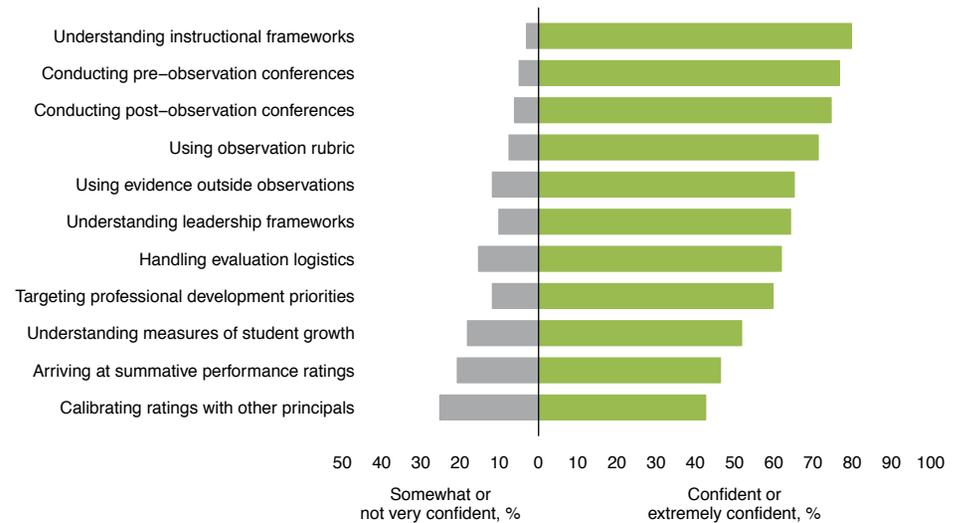
Washington's principals are also very confident in their own leadership abilities. When asked how confident they were in their ability to carry out a range of leadership tasks effectively (see the tasks in Box 3), the results show high confidence levels across the board.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of principals who were “confident” or “extremely confident” (green bar) in their ability to effectively carry out the tasks listed on the left side of the figure and the percentage who were “somewhat confident” or “not very confident” (gray bar).¹⁰ As Figure 6 shows, for every task, a majority of principals say they are confident or extremely confident in their effectiveness as a leader. For example, 90 percent of principals are confident or extremely confident in their ability to hire staff that shares an instructional vision. Strong majorities are confident in their ability to build a shared instructional vision (87 percent), manage their budgets and

allocate resources (86 percent), communicate with parents and the community (77 percent), and build a culture of continuous improvement (86 percent).

If Figure 6 suggests any areas in which principals are somewhat less confident, they are around managing performance and improvement. Although still strong majorities, principals are less confident when it comes to helping teachers select and align curriculum to state standards (66 percent), managing teacher performance (65 percent), closing the achievement gap (66 percent), and leading a turnaround school (58 percent), which the survey defined as “improving a chronically low-performing school.” These areas of lesser confidence are cause for concern given their tight connection with implementing the state’s new evaluation and accountability systems. The last three areas are also the same ones that superintendents identify as being in shortest supply.

Figure 7. Principals Are Confident About Evaluation Skills



9. Percentages here compare principals in the bottom and top quartiles of schools enrolling students who are eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch.

10. The green and gray totals do not equal 100% because the figure leaves off principals in the middle category, “moderately confident.”

Principals are confident in conducting evaluations, but are less sure about using them to make decisions about staffing and training.

Figure 7 is similar to Figure 6, but it focuses on tasks related to implementing the state’s new evaluation reforms. The list on the left now includes tasks such as “understanding instructional frameworks” and “using an observation rubric.” Again, the results show that principals have a lot of confidence in their abilities. Eighty percent say they are confident or extremely confident in their understanding of their district’s instructional framework (e.g., Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching, the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model, or the Center for Educational Leadership’s 5 Dimensions of Teaching and Learning); strong majorities are also confident about their ability to conduct conferences with teachers before (77 percent) and after (75 percent) observations.

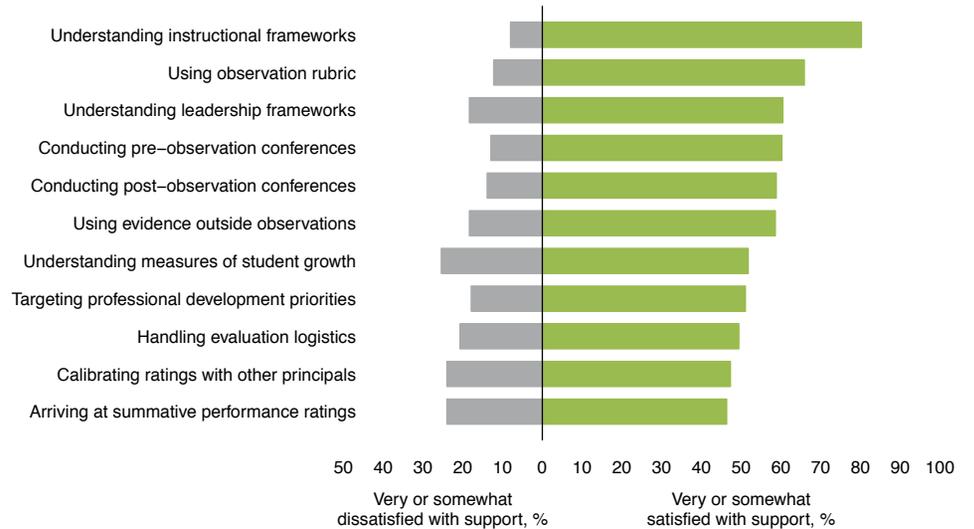
If principals are less confident in any area, it appears to be arriving at summative evaluations of teacher performance. Compared to the other tasks on the list, principals are less confident when it comes to understanding the measure of student growth (52 percent), arriving at summative performance ratings (47 percent), and calibrating ratings with other principals (43 percent). Some professional development providers have told us that this result shows that principals struggle with the technical task of translating complex scoring

rubrics into summative scores. But in focus groups, some principals told us that their uncertainty about summative evaluations was tied to their worries about creating conflict with their teachers. More than one principal said that she did not want to be the first principal sued in the state over an evaluation-based dismissal. Either way, the results suggest principals feel they have less expertise about arriving at summative judgments of teacher performance than they do about instructional frameworks or conducting conferences with teachers. Even so, principals overall view the state’s new evaluation reforms as a big improvement over the old system, as Box 4 shows.

Despite their positive views, principals also say that they need more help to successfully implement evaluation reform: 55 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they needed more TPEP support than their district was currently providing; 58 percent said implementing TPEP requires too much of their time.

| Box 4. Positive Views of the Washington State Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project (TPEP) | |
|---|------------|
| Percentage of principals who strongly agree or agree that TPEP... | |
| <i>Helps me have better conversations with teachers about instruction</i> | 84 percent |
| <i>Is an improvement over the old system</i> | 80 percent |
| <i>Helps me provide targeted professional development</i> | 68 percent |
| <i>Will have an effect on principal and teacher quality in my district</i> | 66 percent |

Figure 8. Principals Least Satisfied With Support in Areas Where They Are Less Confident

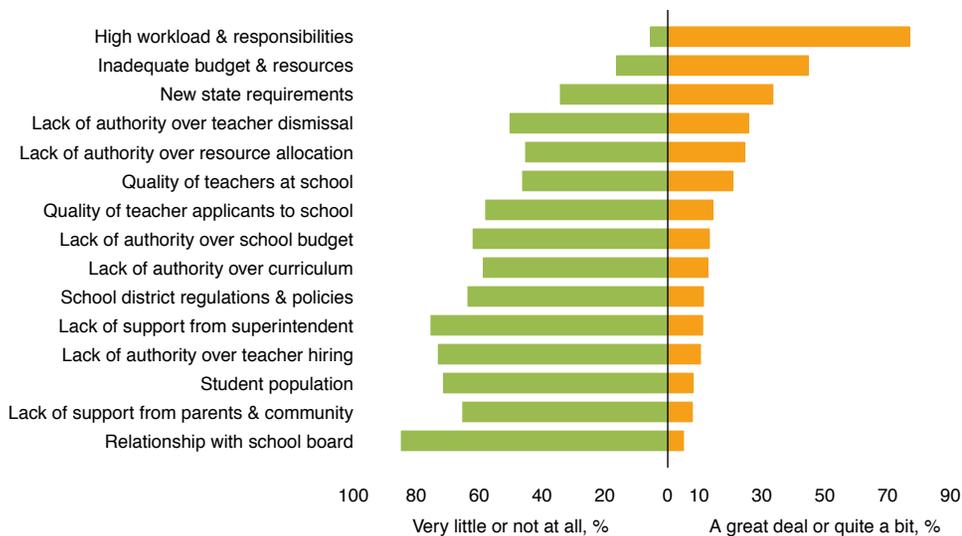


Districts are not doing enough to help principals use evaluations to make decisions.

Principals say they are the least satisfied with the support they are getting from their districts in the very areas of practice that challenge them the most. Figure 8 shows the same list of evaluation-related tasks shown in Figure 7, but this time the bars show the percentage of principals who say they are “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the support their district provides them in the area (green bar), and those who are “somewhat dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” (gray bar).¹¹

The bottom of Figure 8 lists some key activities that principals earlier reported having less confidence about: arriving at summative performance ratings and calibrating ratings with other principals (principals are also less satisfied with the support they are getting around using evaluations to target professional development priorities). Taken together, the results suggest that principals may need more help using evaluation results in decisionmaking in addition to the support they need in how to conduct evaluations.

Figure 9. What Gets in the Way of Effectiveness?



High workload, resources, and constraints on autonomy get in the way of being effective.

Finally, we asked principals what gets in the way of their effectiveness overall. In response, principals pointed to their workload, a lack of resources, and regulations, as shown in Figure 9.

Far and away, principals cited a high workload and their responsibilities (77 percent) as the number one barrier to their effectiveness. Principals in follow-up focus groups say they struggle with wanting to lead on everything, as opposed to delegating work and decisionmaking to other leaders in the school. The next most-cited barriers were inadequate budget and resources (45 percent), new state requirements including Common Core and TPEP (34 percent), a lack of authority over teacher dismissal (26 percent), and a lack of authority over resource allocation, including staff assignments (25 percent). Far fewer principals cited a lack of authority over hiring as a barrier to effectiveness (10 percent).

The fact that principals cited a lack of authority over teacher dismissal as a barrier to effectiveness is somewhat surprising, given that the state’s new evaluation reforms ostensibly provide principals more leverage over managing teachers and their performance. However, principals in focus groups told us that dismissing a poor teacher under the new system was perceived as more challenging than it was under the old system, in part because of the increased information demands and multiple steps included in the system. In fact, only 35 percent of principals agree or strongly agree that the new system helps them counsel out struggling teachers.

11. As in Figure 4, the green and gray totals do not equal 100% because the figure leaves off principals in the middle category, “moderately confident.”

Conclusion

Washington State’s superintendents say that the state has a shortage of school leaders who can improve chronically low-performing schools, close the achievement gap, and manage teacher performance. What could districts do to find and support leaders who can meet these demands?

Our survey of the way that districts currently hire and support principals suggests that districts should consider:

- Identifying and removing barriers to hiring principals earlier.** Many districts hire principals late. Districts need to find out if the same issues that delay teacher hiring, or some other set of barriers, are at play here, and revamp their hiring approach so that they can hire more principals in the spring instead of in August. This is especially true for rural districts where late hiring is more common.
- Aligning human resource strategies to find and hire strong principals.** Some districts appear to be underinvesting in human resource functions and strategies that prioritize leadership talent. Doing better requires that districts first clarify what they are looking for when it comes to principals and then invest in an aligned system of human resource practices that can find, hire, and deploy candidates who meet those needs. Once they know what they are looking for (e.g., referring to AWSP’s leadership framework), districts can demand that preparation programs address those priorities, carefully recruit and hire candidates for the desired skills and attitudes, and use training and evaluation practices to reinforce the district’s leadership priorities.
- Using screening practices that reflect the current demands of the job.** The survey results suggest that districts can do more to create information-rich hiring processes when they screen candidates. Instead of relying on interviews and written statements alone, districts might also require all finalist candidates to do a school walkthrough or some other performance task. In Denver, for example, all candidates visit a school and conduct a “learning walk,” then create a professional development plan for the school. In other districts, like Prince George’s County, Maryland, candidates must analyze videos of instruction or discuss a data scenario.¹²
- Prioritizing talent scouting and building a leadership bench.** Washington’s districts currently place a relatively low priority on bench building. To do more to identify and cultivate future leaders, districts should begin thinking about building a multi-year internal preparation pipeline. For example, districts might collect more systematic data on potential leaders by identifying teachers who have been admitted into any of the district’s preferred training programs and tracking their experiences and accomplishments.¹³ Or districts might challenge each incumbent principal to start developing one to two promising teachers or administrators in their school as potential school leaders, giving them real-world opportunities to practice leadership. Districts could also create a small future leader cohort to develop and train those who commit to come back to the district once they have completed their leadership preparation program.
- Developing principal capacity for using evaluations to inform management decisions.** Districts need to do more to ensure principals have training and support for using teacher evaluations to inform decisions about professional development and staffing. Districts might do this by providing principals with opportunities to role-play difficult conversations with adults. If districts are serious about the role that principals play as talent managers, they also need to look for ways to free up principals from other time-consuming work (as principals say, districts need to take some work “off their plate”).
- Giving principals more authority over resource management and staffing.** Principals in the survey said that a lack of authority in a few key areas interferes with their effectiveness. Districts interested in expanding principal autonomy might start with a small pilot program developed with a sub-group of principals who can help the district identify the specific kinds of empowerment they want and need (for example, making more decisions about purchasing professional development or materials).

12. For more examples, see Brenda J. Turnbull et al., *Six Districts Begin the Principal Pipeline Initiative* (New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

13. Ibid.

- **Supporting school structures and positions that distribute leadership demands beyond individual principals.** Given the demands of leading a school today, it is evident that principals cannot go it alone. Districts can help principals lead by providing formal supports for more distributed models of leadership; for example, creating formal teacher leader roles or release time for teachers to support strong school teams, allowing other administrators to conduct evaluations, or providing training to principals about how to identify high-priority work and use delegation to grow and keep ambitious teacher leaders.

As we noted at the beginning of this report, school principals today face a different job than they did even a decade ago. As Washington State moves on to the next phase of its ambitious education initiatives—with Common Core and principal evaluations coming into full swing—the state’s principalship will face even more challenges and become even more pivotal. To help them meet those challenges, superintendents need to take a more strategic and deliberate approach to identify, develop, and support school leaders who can translate these policy ambitions into meaningful action and change.

Acknowledgments

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