

## Introduction

Leadership matters. Principals are the primary drivers of school improvement and the best long-term investment to ensure effective teaching and learning at scale. Research has shown that, on average, a principal accounts for 25 percent of a school's total impact on student achievement<sup>1</sup> and an above-average principal (at the 84th percentile) can improve student achievement by as much as an additional 20 percentage points as compared to an average principal (at the 50th percentile).<sup>2</sup> Principals are central to State efforts to implement new college and career-ready standards, execute teacher evaluation and support systems and turn around low-performing schools. These reforms require principals to do their work differently, allocate their time in new ways and learn new skills. Many school leaders are overwhelmed by new expectations.<sup>3</sup> Limited school leadership capacity is posing a real challenge to States in meeting educational goals since principals are the centerpiece of high-quality State policy implementation. There are four reasons for this reality—many States: (1) have an outdated vision of the principal role; (2) have not yet

<sup>1</sup> Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. New York, NY: Wallace Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Based on a meta-analysis of nearly 70 different studies from over three decades of research which reviewed correlations between leadership actions (based on teacher surveys of principal behaviors) and student achievement. Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

<sup>3</sup> Clifford, M. & Ross, S. (2012). *Rethinking Principal Evaluation: A New Paradigm Informed by Research and Practice*. Washington, DC: National Association of Elementary School Principals and National Association of Secondary School Principals.

recognized the balance of new school leader responsibilities in State policies and programs, leaving far too much on principals' plates for one person to do well; (3) do not currently provide high-quality professional development and support; and (4) design policies that rely on principals for implementation without their input.

As States continue to implement these reforms, they can create conditions for success by prioritizing school leadership. This brief is divided into four sections that address actions States may take in response to the four challenges outlined above:

- **Section I – The Principal Role:** State policies prioritize school leaders' roles as instructional leaders and talent managers.
- **Section II – Distributed Leadership:** State policies promote models of shared leadership that enable principals to spend their time on the most important activities and build a pipeline of future leaders.
- **Section III – Principal Management and Support:** State policies encourage better and more targeted professional learning and support for school leaders, including from those who supervise principals.
- **Section IV – Principal Engagement:** State policies are improved through ongoing engagement with the principals who are responsible for implementing reforms.

This brief identifies some of the most important actions States can take to support principals. State actions can take many forms—direct and indirect—so policymakers may reflect on the political climate

in the State to determine which type of influence will be most effective. Embedded throughout the brief are links to more information and case studies from leading States. The brief also includes self-assessment rubrics,<sup>4</sup> which can be used by States to prioritize areas of focus.

School districts also play an important role in developing principal capacity. Districts work directly with principals, and they are more heavily involved in hiring, promoting and training principals than State agencies. This brief includes several strategies that call for States and districts to collaborate when addressing principal capacity challenges. These collaborative strategies are presented *green italic text* so that they can be easily identified. For more information about the role of districts in building principal capacity, please refer to *Great Principals at Scale*, a recent report published by New Leaders.

## Section I – The Principal Role Challenge

No longer are school leaders building managers whose primary responsibilities are in school operations instead of instruction. Today’s principals are charged with raising academic achievement for all students in their buildings by improving teacher effectiveness. Several studies have shown that teacher effectiveness is the most important school-based factor influencing achievement.<sup>5</sup> Principals are critical to improving teacher practice across the school building and addressing other challenges that persist in schools. However, the average principal spends just 18 percent of his or her time on instructional leadership and just three percent on talent management.<sup>6</sup> School systems

<sup>4</sup>The self-assessment rubrics have been pulled from the *State Policy and Practice Alignment Tool*, which is designed to help States assess the effectiveness of their policies and practices in supporting principal capacity.

<sup>5</sup>Gordon, R., Kane, T. J., & Staiger, D. O. (2006). *Identifying Effective Teachers Using Performance on the Job*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

<sup>6</sup>Murphy, J., Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (2013). "Leading Via Teacher Evaluation: The Case of the Missing Clothes?" *Educational Researcher* 42.6: 349-54.

often compound this problem by requiring principals to expend time on non-instructional tasks arising from compliance exercises or outdated policies. As a result, principals are not able to focus on the leadership activities that research has shown are correlated with increased student achievement.<sup>7</sup> To help principals implement rigorous college- and career-ready standards and new evaluation and support systems for teachers, States can help districts prioritize the principal’s role as instructional leader and talent manager.

### State Actions

States can create conditions to address this challenge:

**Condition 1 | Create or update leadership standards to emphasize the activities principals should prioritize, including instructional leadership and talent management.**

- *Reflect on the most important school leadership standards and provide guidance to districts and principals on ways to prioritize key skills and practices, such as identifying “power” leadership standards to signal that instructional leadership and talent management are a principal’s most important responsibilities. Align priority skills and practices with current reforms underway.*
- Provide guidance on leadership practices that can be shared with other staff to enable principals to better prioritize their time and focus on what matters most. (Please see the next section for more detail.)
- Develop and implement a statewide training plan for principals, principal managers, heads of preparation programs and anyone else who oversees principals to cultivate a shared understanding of the leadership standards and reinforce expectations.

<sup>7</sup>Ikemoto, G., Taliaferro, L., Fenton, B., & Davis, J. (2014). *Great Principals At Scale: Creating District Conditions That Enable All Principals to Be Effective*. New Leaders and The George W. Bush Institute.

## Condition 2 | Redefine the role of the principal, including corresponding human capital policies and aligning the new policies to leadership standards that emphasize the activities principals should prioritize.

- Provide model job descriptions and selection criteria for principals aligned with the leadership standards.
- Develop a hiring resource guide and tools for districts aligned with the State's vision of effective school leadership that enable districts to identify effective leaders for each school.
- Design and develop a model principal evaluation and support system that emphasizes leadership actions for improving teacher practice and student achievement, highlight districts that are finding success using the State model and acknowledge districts testing innovative locally-developed approaches.
- *Ensure that State personnel laws and policies enable principals to manage human capital effectively and encourage districts to provide principals with the authority and support to appropriately staff teaching and leadership roles in a manner that meets school needs.*

## Condition 3 | Communicate the leadership practices that offer the greatest potential for improving teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

- Ask State superintendents to convey the importance of principals in carrying out reforms aimed at improving teaching and learning.

- Emphasize a principal's role as instructional leader and talent manager in State-level communications. In particular, reinforce this message in all communications related to the principal evaluation and support system so both principals and their managers see these priority skills consistently.
- Provide model professional development (such as instructional videos) for improving principals' knowledge and skills related to college- and career-ready instruction and effective talent and time management.
- *Convene networks or communities of practice across districts focused on key leadership topics so principals can learn from one another as they strengthen priority skills to carry out reforms.*

## Activity

Assess your State on the conditions that support redefining the principal's role by rating implementation effectiveness using the following rubric. For each condition statement, indicate whether your State is "basic" or "innovating," citing evidence for your rating. Then, identify the appropriate quadrant within the urgency-impact matrix by rating the degree to which each condition requires timely attention (urgency) and the degree to which each condition is expected to help your State meet its goals for improving principal capacity (impact).

Principal Role Definition							
Condition	Implementation Effectiveness			Urgency x Impact Rating			
	Basic	Innovating	Rating and Evidence				
Create or update leadership standards to emphasize the activities principals should prioritize, such as instructional leadership and talent management.	Principals know and understand the leadership standards.	In addition to basic practice, districts embed the State leadership standards in their expectations, and principals use the standards to prioritize their time and build capacity and skills for improving teacher effectiveness and outcomes for students.		Urgency	High		
				Low			
					Low	High	
				Impact			
Redefine the role of the principal, including corresponding human capital policies, and align the new policies to leadership standards that emphasize the activities principals should prioritize.	State-level model principal evaluation and support system is aligned with the new leadership standards.	In addition to basic practice, district human capital policies and practices, such as job descriptions, recruitment practices, interview techniques and selection tools, are aligned with the State leadership standards and principals have staffing authority.		Urgency	High		
				Low			
					Low	High	
				Impact			
Clearly communicate which leadership practices offer the greatest potential for improving teacher effectiveness and student achievement.	Messages are integrated across reform efforts, and principals are clear about priorities.	In addition to basic practice, State has developed guidance and tools on how principals can implement integrated reforms, such as protocols for using data to evaluate teachers and monitor standards implementation. Principals use the recommended tools to focus on the most effective practices.		Urgency	High		
				Low			
					Low	High	
				Impact			

## State Examples

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) overhauled its leadership standards in 2011. The new Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) provide a strong example of how a State focused its standards to emphasize State priorities and communicated its rollout. The TILS allow TDOE and school districts to align school leader selection, preparation, licensure, evaluation and professional development. TDOE designed TILS to set high standards for effective leadership based upon research and best practice, support leaders to reach those standards and empower districts to build a network of exceptional instructional leaders who get results.

Colorado has six leadership standards that reflect the State's expectations for principals: (1) strategic leadership; (2) instructional leadership; (3) school culture and equity leadership; (4) human resources leadership; (5) managerial leadership; and (6) external development leadership. As part of the State model for principal evaluation, the Colorado Department of Education allows districts the flexibility to weigh standards differently to signal which have more value in meeting local student learning goals. These options allow local communities to prioritize standards based on local context and needs for principals.



[Click here for more information and resources related to the principal role.](#)

## Section II – Distributed Leadership

### Challenge

Principals are critical to the success of reforms, but they cannot lead meaningful change alone. Without proper supports, many principals burn out from doing too much for too long or as a result of mounting frustration at having to do too many things just good enough without ever realizing strong results. Effective principals manage all of their duties well and focus their time on what matters most by delegating responsibilities and cultivating leadership

among their staff. Distributing leadership expands the capacity of principals by sharing responsibilities among a leadership team that can support certain school functions, such as overseeing grade-level and content team meetings and professional development, conducting observations or managing school operations. This important talent management strategy makes the principal role more doable in the short term and more attractive, effective and sustainable in the long term, while providing educators interested in pursuing school leadership positions with opportunities to hone their leadership skills.

### State Actions

States can create conditions to address this challenge:

**Condition 1 | Encourage the development of leadership teams, which include effective teachers, to support the instructional leadership and talent management work of principals.**

- Develop guidance and model trainings for principals on how to identify the right members for a leadership team, form the team and help it function well.
- Create model teacher leader roles that extend the reach of effective educators and provide them with opportunities to develop leadership skills by supporting peers in their school building and throughout the system.
- *Provide technical assistance to districts on designing the teacher leader role to support principals with instructional leadership activities.*

**Condition 2 | Create opportunities for teacher leaders and administrators to serve as certified observers and evaluators in the teacher evaluation process.**

- *Remove regulatory barriers that prevent teachers from taking on additional leadership responsibilities such as licensure requirements that prevent non-administrators from conducting the observations.*

- Train and certify all staff responsible for observations to provide specific feedback related to instructional strategies aligned to college- and career-ready expectations for students.

**Condition 3 | Create opportunities for teacher leaders and administrators to serve as certified observers and evaluators in the teacher evaluation process.**

- *Convene networks or communities of practice for school and district leaders and their leadership teams to share training, tools, resources and promising practices that support the implementation of reforms.*

- *Encourage districts to convene principals and their leadership teams to plan, organize and develop supports for their schools' instructional improvement strategies.*

- Provide models of career pathways and differentiated compensation systems that reward effective teachers who remain in the classroom and take on additional responsibilities. Such models can provide additional compensation to teachers with a record of raising student achievement in exchange for expanding their reach with students or other teachers.

Distributed Leadership							
Condition	Implementation Effectiveness			Urgency x Impact Rating			
	Basic	Innovating	Rating and Evidence				
Encourage the development of leadership teams, which include effective teachers (as identified by evaluation results and adult leadership potential), to support the instructional leadership and talent management work of principals.	Principals know and understand the leadership standards.	In addition to basic practice, districts embed the State leadership standards in their expectations, and principals use the standards to prioritize their time and build capacity and skills for improving teacher effectiveness and outcomes for students.		Urgency	High		
					Low		
						Low	High
					Impact		
Create options and training opportunities for teacher leaders and administrators to serve as certified observers and/or evaluators in the teacher evaluation process.	School and district administrators are trained and certified to evaluate teachers.	In addition to basic practice, teacher leaders are trained and certified to conduct formal observations of teachers and are currently serving as peer evaluators.		Urgency	High		
					Low		
						Low	High
					Impact		
Support integrated approaches and flexible staffing models that allow principals to distribute operations or other responsibilities across a leadership team.	Principals have guidance and training on how to delegate responsibility and access to tools that support integration of design and implementation of reform efforts, such as technology solutions for conducting evaluations.	In addition to basic practice, district and school practices support flexible school staffing models and alternative school models, such as hiring or repurposing administrative staff for business or operational duties.		Urgency	High		
					Low		
						Low	High
					Impact		

## State Examples

In 2010, Louisiana engaged distributed leadership teams when the State convened nearly 2,000 teachers, principals and district staff from every school in the State to plan and organize for the transition to Common Core State Standards. The State also uses a District Support Toolbox and Teacher Support Toolbox to keep the field apprised of implementation progress, disseminate resources and supports and share strategies for improving instructional practices.

Tennessee, Colorado and Rhode Island provide flexibility on who can conduct teacher evaluations provided that prospective evaluators take a State-approved evaluation training program. In Tennessee, principals, assistant principals and instructional leaders are trained on the observation protocol and certified annually by passing a test. In Rhode Island, principals and assistant principals are the primary evaluators, but “complementary evaluators” (for example, department heads, curriculum coordinators or peer teachers) may be part of the evaluation team at the district’s discretion and if they receive training. Ohio also allows districts to use peer evaluators. In 2012, the State trained teachers alongside administrators as it certified a large pool of evaluators to implement its new evaluation system. Colorado requires that any person who conducts an evaluation of school licensed personnel must hold an administrators license or complete a State-approved evaluation training program.

Moreover, Colorado encourages the use of school operations managers through the Innovation School Model Act, which allows schools to obtain waivers from district policies, State policies and collective bargaining agreement provisions. Schools earn waivers by adopting time management innovations related to school staffing, faculty recruitment, preparation, professional development, evaluation, compensation, and school governance.



[Click here for more information and resources related to distributed leadership.](#)

## Section III – Principal Learning and Management

### Challenges

Principals need professional development and support to help teachers and students transition to new evaluation systems and college- and career-ready standards. Principals, like teachers, need targeted support and feedback on their performances to improve their professional practices and ensure results for their teachers and students. Investing in principal managers is critical to ensuring that principals receive the support they need so that reforms are successful. In a representative sample of 800 local educational agencies (LEAs), just four percent of Title II, Part A funds were spent on professional development for administrators, compared to 40 percent for teachers and paraprofessionals.<sup>8</sup> When it comes to education spending at the State level, teacher support is the most common categorical program and principal training is the least common.<sup>9</sup> While there are fewer principals than teachers, the current level of investment in principals is disproportionate to a principal’s impact on teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

### State Actions

States can create conditions to address this challenge:

**Condition 1 | Design a strategy for providing professional development opportunities and other supports to principals.**

- Promote job-embedded professional development for principals by sharing models of excellence from district-developed professional development plans. *Build the capacity of districts to provide job-embedded professional development by convening district leaders to share best practices and learn from one another.*

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Education. *LEA and SEA Uses of Title II, Part A Funds.*

<sup>9</sup> Smith, J., Gasarian, H., Perry, N., & Capinpin, F. (2013). *Categorical Funds: The Intersection of School Finance and Governance.* Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.

- *Convene networks or communities of practice across districts for principals to learn from one another. Consider having high-performing principals moderate these networks, pairing principals with peers who have similar needs or having principals receive professional development from a master principal.*
- *Encourage districts to use the cohort model to group principals with similar career paths and challenges.<sup>10</sup> For example, if a subset of schools is dealing with a common challenge, the principals from those schools could meet to solve the problem together. For smaller districts, States can support cross-district networks of support groups.*

### Condition 2 | Build the capacity of principals by redefining the expectations for principal supervisors.

- Ensure that job descriptions and expectations for principal supervisors support the instructional goals of principals. Create descriptions of the responsibilities that are specific to principal management so that they can be inserted into other job descriptions – for example, for a superintendent that oversees the principals in his or her district among other responsibilities. Set the expectation that, in their interactions with principals, supervisors operate with a sense of urgency and accountability for student outcomes.
- *Create model professional development modules and videos for principal supervisors regarding the broader rollout of the principal evaluation and support system. The modules should build principal supervisors' capacity to manage talent and improve instruction so that the evaluation system is used to improve professional practice rather than treated as a compliance exercise. After the first round of observations and the mid-year review, bring principal supervisors back together in regional groups to ensure they are evaluating principals in a consistent manner.*

<sup>10</sup>Note: This type of grouping does not substitute for professional development targeted at principals at certain points in their careers, such as induction for novice principals.

### Condition 3 | Ensure that expectations of principals related to compliance are streamlined and clearly related to their most important responsibilities.

- Organize State Department of Education staff to coordinate service to principals. Consider identifying a point person for principal effectiveness activities who is charged with ensuring principals (and the district leaders who support them) are not inundated with duplicative requests or a large volume of information at the same time.
- Create a timeline that integrates activities related to the rollout of new standards and assessments and educator evaluation and support milestones. Work to identify opportunities to combine activities, remove duplicative items and ensure the pace and progression of each new reform is consistent. To ensure all stakeholders are aware of requirements, share the integrated timeline through webinars, regional meetings and site visits.
- *Help districts spend Federal Title II, Part A funds earmarked for principal professional development by enforcing existing requirements that professional development be connected to local needs.<sup>11</sup> Help districts focus on funding activities that are research-based and likely to improve student achievement, such as professional learning opportunities linked to educators' evaluation data.*

### Activity

Assess your State on the conditions that support principal learning and management by rating implementation effectiveness using the following rubric. See directions for completing the rubric on page 2.

<sup>11</sup>To receive Title II, Part A funds, districts must conduct "an assessment of local needs for professional development and hiring" (ESEA §2122(c)) and submit an application to the State education agency based on that needs assessment and describing the activities the district will use Title II funds to support (ESEA §2122(a)).

## Principal Professional Learning and Management

Condition	Implementation Effectiveness			Urgency x Impact Rating		
	Basic	Innovating	Rating and Evidence			
Design and develop a strategy for providing professional development opportunities and other supports to principals.	Principals have access to training and guidance on how to become effective instructional leaders and talent managers.	In addition to basic practice, districts have protocols to identify where principals may need additional tools, training and support and respond by differentiating professional learning opportunities.		Urgency	High	
					Low	
					Low	High
					Impact	
Build the capacity of principals by redefining the expectations for principal supervisors.	Principal observation and evaluation tools have been created and are easy to use and support conversations with principals to help them improve their practice.	In addition to basic practice, principal observation and evaluation tools are rolled out in a manner that prepares principal supervisors to use them effectively; districts have consistent expectations that principal supervisors (whether superintendents or other senior district staff) support principals by providing frequent, actionable feedback and differentiating individual support to address identified principal needs; and the use of the tools is monitored over time.		Urgency	High	
					Low	
					Low	High
					Impact	
Ensure that compliance responsibilities and expectations of principals are streamlined and clearly related to their most important responsibilities.	Districts are encouraged to minimize compliance activities and central office communications. For example, districts streamline paperwork requirements and allow flexible systems for implementing reforms.	In addition to basic practice, State and district staff members are oriented to help principals be more effective and efficient (for example, grouping common requests of principals and modeling personalized support methods).		Urgency	High	
					Low	
					Low	High
					Impact	

## State Examples

Tennessee developed an online Common Core Leadership Course (which formed some of the content for an in-person “Leadership 101” course) for principals, assistant principals and district supervisors. The course gave an overview of the standards, offered professional development ideas for school staff and provided the opportunity to collaborate with peers on how to implement standards.

Rhode Island created a set of online modules to train principals on a variety of topics related to teacher evaluation and support. The modules are shown during in-person sessions and ensure that the State communicates consistent and accurate information that evaluators need to evaluate teachers effectively. Because the modules are online, principals can use the videos with their staff upon returning to their school buildings.

Kentucky put together “Year-At-A-Glance” calendars for superintendents, principals and teachers. The calendars include monthly tasks and evaluation milestones. Twice a week, the State also hosts online “office hours” during which officials are on hand to answer educators’ questions. Finally, the State developed a number of professional learning modules, including “Professional Learning for Peer Observers,” which the State developed with its partner, Kentucky Educational Television.

The Ohio Student Progress Portal Website provides a variety of tools and solutions to educators in Ohio to improve teacher effectiveness and student growth. The portal includes online professional learning courses to build principal capacity, such as case studies and videos about formative instructional practices, the use of value added data to improve student growth and information about Race to the Top programs.

In 2014, Colorado invited districts to apply for State funding for an educator effectiveness liaison position to coordinate and support the implementation of new evaluation and support systems. The funds will support various administrative costs associated with an educator effectiveness liaison, such as salary,

release time, travel time and some programmatic costs, including implementation of an action plan to improve the skills of school leaders in the district. The liaison will work with State staff and a cohort of educator effectiveness liaisons from other districts to increase his or her coaching skills and in turn work with principals or other school leaders in the district on strengthening their evaluation, observation and feedback skills. Each liaison will build local capacity to implement high-quality educator evaluation and support systems through a variety of methods, such as providing principal professional development or one-on-one coaching on best practices for conducting teacher observations and providing actionable feedback.



[Click here for more information and resources related to principal learning and management.](#)

## Section IV – Principal Engagement

### Challenge

Principals have shared concerns that new reforms “are happening to me instead of with me.” Even when States or school districts solicit feedback from educators about new reforms, educators feel that they are being asked for their input to lend credibility to policies rather than to help develop or improve them.<sup>12</sup> Engaging educators in policy development and continuous improvement ensures that policy is practice-based and that principals will be committed to reforms they helped shape. As described in *Engaging Educators: A Reform Support Network Guide for States and Districts*, there are four domains of educator engagement that establish the teacher or school leader as an active subject: “I know,” “I apply,”

<sup>12</sup> Reform Support Network. *From “Inform” to “Inspire”: A Framework for Communications and Engagement*. U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/framework-communications-engagement.pdf>

“I participate” and “I lead.” States can strengthen key reform strategies by engaging principals in the design and improvement of reform policies.<sup>13</sup>

## State Actions

States can create conditions to address this challenge:

### Condition 1 | Build comprehensive systems to collect data, leverage feedback loops and support continuous improvement.

- Build a system that collects data on implementation and allows the State to change policies based on that data. Ensure that feedback loops deliver timely information to refine policies and permit course corrections when rolling out new policies.
- Align the data collection system with communication plans. For example, during focus groups, collect testimonials from school and district leaders and share their success stories with stakeholders across the State.

### Condition 2 | Gather information on educators’ experiences with new evaluation systems, college- and career-ready standards and aligned assessments.

- Leverage a variety of data collection techniques—surveys, evaluation protocols, interviews, site visits, focus groups and advisory committees—to capture qualitative information and organize that information for transparent use in improving State policies.
- Find or create opportunities to get a diversity of perspectives. For example, when building a principal advisory committee, select for diversity in terms of the location and type of schools

represented (urban, suburban, rural; elementary, middle, secondary; charter, non-charter) as well as the individual characteristics of the principals (gender, race/ethnicity, experience).

- When collecting qualitative data during focus groups, prepare facilitators and participants to ask probing questions and share actionable feedback. For example, create a toolkit that includes sample invitations, agendas, meeting protocols, guiding questions and session surveys. Make sure to follow up with educators so they understand how their input is being used to refine and improve policies. Also, ensure participants are adequately prepared for rich discussion. For example, create guidance or tips for principals on how to identify examples of policies in action and talk about their experiences in a way that resonates with policymakers.
- Make principal feedback and engagement visible. For example, when planning focus groups, consider partnering with principals’ unions to publicize the event and invite participants. Also, if you ask principals for their feedback, take time to follow up with them and explain how their feedback is being used.
- Engage principals not only in providing feedback, but throughout the implementation of reforms. In particular, principals can be helpful when designing professional learning (for both their peers and teachers), guidance and other supports.

## Activity

Assess your State on the conditions that support principal engagement by rating implementation effectiveness using the following rubric. See directions for completing the rubric on page 2 .

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

Principal Engagement					
Condition	Implementation Effectiveness			Urgency x Impact Rating	
	Basic	Innovating	Rating and Evidence		
Build comprehensive systems to collect data, implement feedback loops and support continuous improvement.	Systems are set up to gather consistent information on implementation without creating additional burden for districts and schools related data collection.	States have evidence that data is being used to improve practices, such as modifications made to teacher evaluation rubrics based on the experience of practitioners, and communicate these improvements transparently to the stakeholder groups that informed their development.		Urgency	
				High	
				Low	
					Low High
					Impact
Gather information on the educator experience.	Structures and processes exist to solicit feedback from educators.	Structures and processes enable States to intentionally gather quantitative and qualitative information that reflects a diversity of principal perspectives. Principals have been prepared to share robust feedback and have a clear understanding of how their input is used to inform improvements to policies and practices.		Urgency	
				High	
				Low	
					Low High
					Impact

## State Examples

In 2002, the Office of the Governor in North Carolina partnered with the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission and the New Teacher Center to develop the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Survey. The TELL survey asked all educators in the State about working conditions in their schools; the State used survey results to incorporate educators' voices into policy decisions. Since its launch in North Carolina, 18 additional States and several school districts, organizations and initiatives have administered the TELL Survey to more than 840,000 educators to inform policies and implementation.

In Tennessee, Governor Haslam asked the State Collaborative on Reforming Education to conduct an independent review of the State's implementation of teacher evaluations. The collaborative held nine roundtables in urban, suburban and rural settings; conducted an online survey of all teachers and principals in the State; interviewed educators overseeing the four approved teacher evaluation models, formed an Educator Work Team that included 22 teachers, principals and district leaders; and received feedback from educators through other networks and organizations as well as from the general public. TDOE used feedback from roundtable sessions to revise the evaluation system the following year and clearly communicated that revisions were based, in part, on stakeholder input.



[Click here for more information and resources related to principal engagement.](#)

## Conclusion

Principals are at the center of most new State-level system reforms. Strong principals not only lead the implementation of these reform efforts in their school buildings, they also lead the professional development and support for their teachers to bring about improvements in teacher practices and increase student success in their classrooms. Reform efforts are significantly stronger when States prioritize and support the pivotal role that principals play in their successful implementation. When States cultivate the instructional leadership and talent management skills of their school leaders, support them through distributed leadership models, provide them with high-quality professional learning opportunities and engage them in the design and refinement of reforms, States can accelerate student learning and achievement.

As States change their own policies and practices, they can also help change the way districts support and hold school leaders accountable. Recognizing the critical role districts play in supporting leadership, States can engender supportive local conditions by shifting their own culture and their interactions with districts.

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