



# 360 Degree Leadership: Evaluating Minnesota Principals

**A COLLABORATIVE REPORT FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE VIVA PROJECT  
MINNESOTA TEACHERS IDEA EXCHANGE**

**Prepared for:** Governor Mark Dayton

**Prepared by:** Members of The VIVA Project Minnesota Teachers Idea Exchange Writing Collaborative  
on behalf of their peers in The VIVA Project Minnesota Teachers Idea Exchange

**Delivered:** February 22, 2012

**Abstract & Summation:** Classroom teachers and instructional personnel in public schools across Minnesota spent hundreds of hours considering the ways a principal should support both students and teachers and how those efforts can best be measured. Empowered by cutting-edge technology, these teaching professionals shared hundreds of ideas. Then, a small group of their colleagues distilled those ideas into 10 recommendations for ensuring principals are good managers and strong instructional leaders who can create the positive school climate needed to ensure student success.

**Partners:** Education Minnesota President Tom Dooher and Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius

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## THE VIVA PROJECT OF MINNESOTA

# Introduction



The VIVA (Voice Ideas Vision Action) Project of Minnesota asked instructional personnel—classroom teachers, librarians, technology resource specialists and others from across the state—to share their voice, their ideas, and their classroom experience about what a good principal does and how to measure those things. This Idea Exchange occurred during a pivotal time in Minnesota as the state grapples with implementing a principal evaluation system.

The online Idea Exchange, made possible by a Web-based technology operated by The VIVA Project, was open to any Minnesota public school instructional professional who wished to join the conversation for two weeks, from January 2–16, 2012.

### The VIVA Project Minnesota Teachers Idea Exchange was conducted in three phases:

During **Phase I**, all Minnesota public school teachers were invited to share their ideas in answer to the question:

*“Every year teachers face new requirements, curriculums or ‘public wisdom’ about what should be happening in their classroom. What are the four or five most important ways a principal should support both students and teachers? How can those be measured?”*

In response, more than 500 members posted 129 ideas and exchanged hundreds of comments with one another during a short-term moderated discussion.

During **Phase II**, a group of 12 thought leaders—whose active participation in Phase I was clear in terms of both of quantity and quality—were invited to join The VIVA Project Minnesota Teachers Writing Collaborative. Their assignment: Take the ideas presented during Phase I and distill them into discrete, workable recommendations about how to measure the attributes of a good principal.

**Phase III** of the process will begin when the members of The VIVA Project Minnesota Teachers Writing Collaborative meet with Governor Mark Dayton and Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius to deliver their report and discuss their recommendations.

*continued...*



We believe in the inspiration that grows from pragmatic experience and in the power of individual voices to make big change. VIVA teachers are an example of that power in action. We are inspired by their example and grateful for their positive contribution to the strength of our public schools and America's democratic process. Many thanks to the Minnesota VIVA teacher leaders: **Donna Drescher, Brionna Harder, Julie Miller-Hays, Kim Hill, Beth Hillerns, Dave Johnson, Glenn Morehouse Olson, Bruce Richards, Mary Cathryn Ricker, Carrie Robotcek, Miranda Schornack** and **Wade Sutton**, whose bios are listed at the end of this report. The innumerable hours these teachers spent grappling with big ideas and small details made this work possible.

We wish to thank our partners in this endeavor, Education Commissioner **Brenda Cassellius** and Education Minnesota President **Tom Dooher**.

The VIVA Minnesota Teachers Idea Exchange would not be possible without support from the **Bush Foundation** and the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**.



## THE VIVA PROJECT OF MINNESOTA

# Executive Summary

Minnesota's lawmakers are embarking on a plan to evaluate principal effectiveness. Teachers, as major stakeholders in the success of a school district, value effective principal leadership. To recruit and maintain effective principals, it is necessary to have an effective principal evaluation protocol that ensures a positive school climate, collaborative relationships among all stakeholders and professional practices based on best practices for all students.

Principals are the leading members of a highly trained team dedicated to ensuring the best outcomes for students. The best teams function in unity. One key step toward schools that ensure student success is a principal evaluation system that is inclusive, informed, transparent and collaborative.

This proposed evaluation process involves all critical stakeholders, includes consistent and reliable data from within the school environment and from an outside perspective, and ensures targeted, professional growth support.

These recommendations focus on five core areas that build good leaders and foster student achievement: instructional leadership, building a positive school climate, fiscal and labor management, quality of collaboration and leadership, and striving for equity.

### Recommendations included in this report:

**All stakeholders—parents, students, staff, community—need to be involved in a principal's evaluation to ensure a well-founded evaluation of principals.** The addition of stakeholders' voices helps create a transparent system within an environment of collaboration. The multiple perspectives protect the process from bias and can provide school leaders with insights they may not otherwise have.

**There should be a three-track approach to principal evaluation that uses both on-site and off-site evaluations to ensure a full picture of principal effectiveness.** Differentiating the evaluation process for new principals, veteran principals, and principals recommended for remediation builds a culture of continuous improvement, professional respect, and transparency from the top down. On-site evaluation allows for immediate and salient feedback, and supports the district's leadership structure to achieve its own consistency and goals. Off-site evaluation establishes clear and consistent high standards for leadership throughout the state.

**Design a strong support system for struggling principals.** This can take many forms, including a system of mentor principals chosen from the ranks of highly effective current and retired principals, outside consultants, a supportive cohort of other struggling principals, and the opportunity to spend time shadowing highly effective principals.

**Measure all parts of a principal's performance.** This includes a principal's ability to set clear instructional goals, his or her ability to create a positive school climate, operate and manage an educational system focused on effective instruction and student achievement, build leadership among the staff and teachers, and ensure all students—regardless of race, socioeconomic status or educational competency—can succeed.



## THE VIVA PROJECT OF MINNESOTA

# Index of Actionable Ideas



Index

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### RECOMMENDATION 1

Involve All Stakeholders to Ensure a Well-Founded Evaluation of Principals

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### RECOMMENDATION 2

Adopt a Three-Track Approach to Principal Evaluation

---

### RECOMMENDATION 3

Use Both On-Site and Off-Site Evaluations to Ensure a Full Picture of Principal Effectiveness

---

### RECOMMENDATION 4

Align Invested Groups' Preference for Resources Used for Off-Site Evaluation

---

### RECOMMENDATION 5

Create a Mentorship Program to Support Struggling Principals

---

### RECOMMENDATION 6

Measure a Principal's Ability to Set Clear Instructional Goals That Professionally Support Teachers and Impact Student Achievement

---

### RECOMMENDATION 7

Define and Measure Principal Effectiveness to Create a Positive School Climate to Establish a Thriving Learning Culture

---

### RECOMMENDATION 8

Measure a Principal's Skills to Effectively Operate and Manage an Educational System Focused on Effective Instruction and Student Achievement

---

### RECOMMENDATION 9

Measure the Principal's Ability to Build Leadership, Shared Understanding and Unity Among Staff

---

### RECOMMENDATION 10

Measure a Principal's Ability to Lead the Way in Developing Racial, Cultural, Socioeconomic and Educational Competencies That Transcend Differences

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## Evaluation Process



We believe that in order for Minnesota's Principal Evaluation System to be thoroughly effective, there must be inclusive methods for measurement coupled with transparency and accountability.

**This should consist of three main parts:**

- 1) a regular review process that actively involves all stakeholders;
- 2) consistent on-site evaluations with periodic off-site evaluations; and
- 3) remediation supports for principals who are rated less than proficient, to ensure their success.

These three components will help develop a dynamic system that encourages the most effective and professional principals are mentored to even greater proficiency. We also believe that periodic off-site evaluation opens the possibility for more accurate data gathering and greater insight, which in turn would facilitate further research and recommendations for effective school leadership and staff. In short, evaluation by an outside source and remediation for ineffective principals will help create this system for change and improvement.

In light of the above considerations, we make the following recommendations for the overall structure of the evaluation process (starting on the next page).



## RECOMMENDATION 1

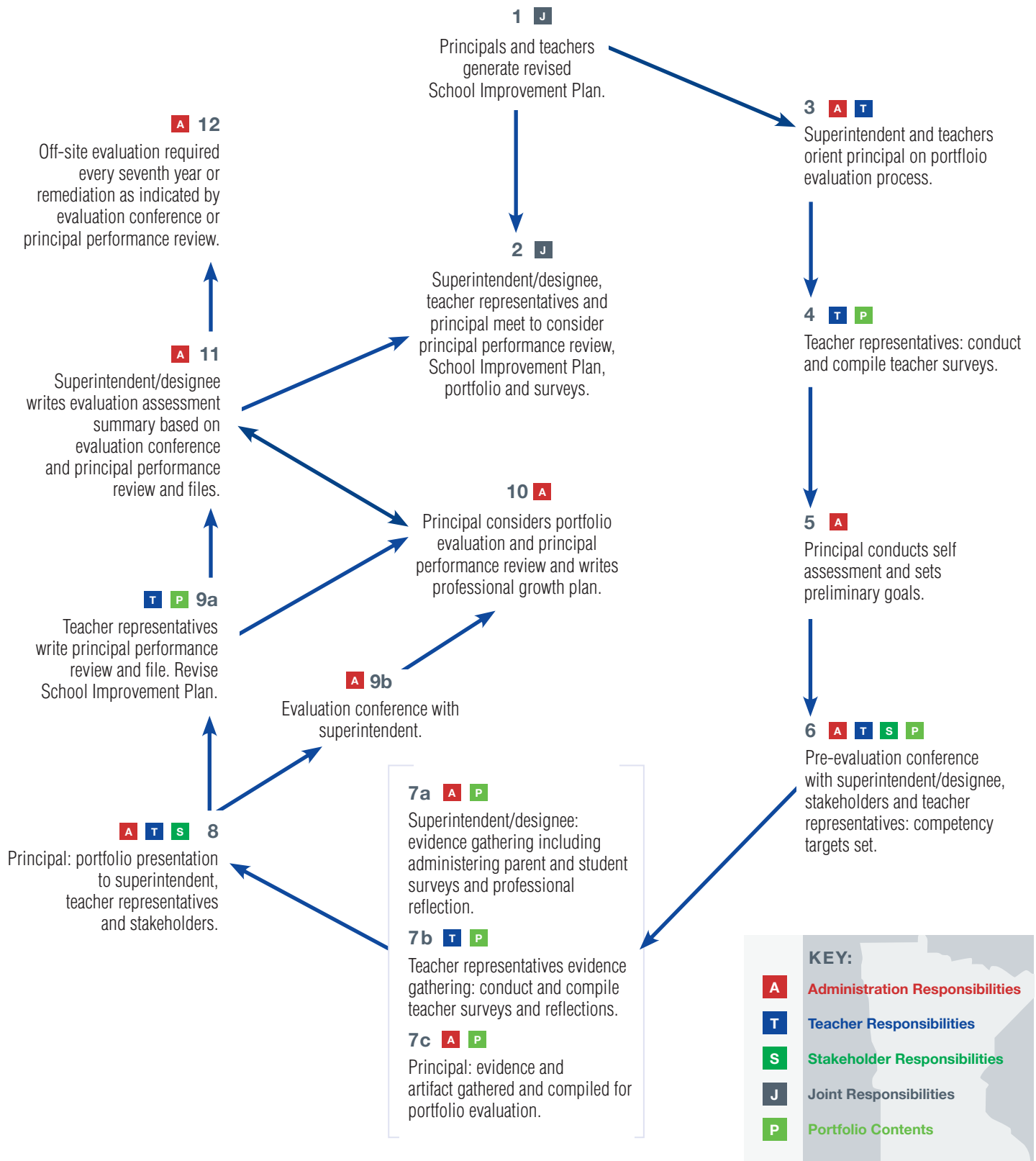
### Involve All Stakeholders to Ensure a Well-Founded Evaluation of Principals

A quality principal increases the success of a school by creating a positive climate of learning and growth for students, staff and parents. The principal does this collaboratively by building leadership capacity in others and communicating a strong, unified vision for everyone to support. Because of this intensely collaborative role, a strong principal evaluation system would include input from multiple stakeholders.

The diagram on the next page shows our recommended evaluation cycle with brief explanations of each step. It begins with an inclusive planning and goal session and ends with a growth plan and written performance review. This cycle has been adapted from the competencies laid out in the Evaluation of Minnesota's School Principals developed by the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA), the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP), the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) and the Board of School Administrators (BOSA). The most significant adaptations involve input, communication and feedback.

This new cycle ensures that all stakeholders have a voice in the evaluation. The addition of stakeholders' voices helps create a transparent system within an environment of collaboration. The multiple perspectives protect the process from bias and can provide school leaders with insights they may not otherwise have.

## Inclusive Principal Evaluation Process Flowchart





## Inclusive Principal Evaluation Process

### EXPLANATION FOR STEPS:

1

1. Internal, on-site evaluation process begins with principal/teacher planning session.
2. On-site evaluation process begins with a review of prior years' data. This includes exit interviews with teachers, staff, parents and students.
3. All parties involved in the evaluation process are oriented on their responsibilities.
4. Teachers designate representatives in the on-site evaluation process and conduct the first survey of the teaching staff.
5. After meeting with staff and supervisor, the principal outlines his or her objectives and goals for the year. Tools for this include evaluations from previous years, reviews, and the most current teacher survey.
6. Principal meets with superintendent, teacher representatives and stakeholders to communicate preliminary goals, and set competency targets.
- 7a. Superintendent gathers evidence throughout the year, including surveys completed by a valid sampling of the parents and students served by the school. (These can be administered at parent/teacher conferences, after each IEP meeting, or when a student stops attending the school.)
- 7b. In the spring, teachers conduct a second survey of education staff. All teachers who leave the employ of the school will complete an exit survey that includes evaluation of the principal's performance.
- 7c. Throughout the year, the principal gathers evidence and artifacts in line with competency targets set by the team and his or her role in the School Improvement Plan.
8. The principal uses this opportunity to review the successes and deficits of the year's performance with staff and stakeholders.
- 9a. Teachers offer their feedback on the principal's report. This review is filed with the Evaluation Assessment Summary and given to the principal to aid in writing a Professional Growth Plan. In response to the input from the Portfolio Presentation and surveys, teachers also revise the School Improvement Plan and make recommendations for on-site or off-site evaluation track plans.
- 9b. Superintendent meets privately with the principal to review overall performance, considering input from teachers, parents and students.
10. Principal prepares a Personal Growth Plan and begins implementing that plan.
11. The superintendent/designee writes a review of the principal's performance and files it. Based on the Portfolio Evaluation, the Principal Performance Review, the surveys, and the Evaluation Conference, the superintendent recommends to the school board either continuing the on-site evaluation process or early remediation.
12. Principal and school are reviewed off-site every seven years. If a principal's performance is found to be consistently unsatisfactory by the surveys, the Principal Performance Review, or the superintendent, the applicable remediation options or off-site evaluation will be accessed by the district prior to the seventh year.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

### Adopt a Three-Track Approach to Principal Evaluation

The core competencies outlined in the Evaluation of Minnesota's School Principals developed by MASA, MESPA, MASSP and BOSA are thorough and rigorous, and followed by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). We believe that the evaluation process itself must be developed to be of equal quality and rigor. The chart that follows contains our recommendation for a process that would build a culture of continuous improvement, professional respect and transparency from the top down. Master educators and administrators pursue observation, feedback, collaborative review and professional mentorship in a quest to improve overall performance. We recommend the following three-track, seven-year timeline for an inclusive evaluation cycle that includes on-site and off-site evaluation, and a remediation track.

#### Principal Evaluation and Remediation Timelines:

	New Principal	Remediation Track Timeline	Veteran Principal*
<b>Year 1</b>	Mentorship and evaluation		On-site evaluation
<b>Year 2</b>	Mentorship and evaluation		On-site portfolio evaluation
<b>Year 3</b>	Mentorship and evaluation		On-site portfolio evaluation
<b>Year 4</b>	On-site evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly meeting with principal mentor</li> <li>80 hours shadowing principals who are rated accomplished or higher</li> <li>20 hours of observation by principal mentor</li> <li>Recommendation by mentor filed</li> </ul>	On-site portfolio evaluation, (off-site agent from MDE included in evaluation process)
<b>Year 5</b>	On-site evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly meetings with principal mentor</li> <li>50 hours shadowing principals who are rated accomplished or higher</li> <li>15 hours of observation by principal mentor</li> <li>Recommendation by mentor filed</li> </ul>	On-site portfolio evaluation
<b>Year 6</b>	On-site evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly meetings with principal mentor</li> <li>50 hours shadowing principals who are rated accomplished or higher</li> <li>15 hours of observation by principal mentor</li> <li>Recommendation by mentor filed</li> </ul>	On-site portfolio evaluation
<b>Year 7</b>	Off-site evaluation <b>Passing score:</b> principal begins veteran principal evaluation <b>Not passing:</b> principal begins remediation cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Off-site evaluation</li> <li>Recommendation filed</li> </ul>	Off-site evaluation <b>Passing:</b> principal continues veteran evaluation cycle <b>Not Passing:</b> principal begins remediation cycle

\*All current principals enter evaluation process at year seven.



### RECOMMENDATION 3

## Use Both On-Site and Off-Site Evaluations to Ensure a Full Picture of Principal Effectiveness

A principal evaluation cycle that includes continuous on-site evaluation/feedback and periodic off-site evaluations is essential for growth. It will ensure that evaluation takes into account local conditions and supports improvement. On-site evaluation allows for immediate and salient feedback, and supports the district's leadership structure to achieve its own consistency and goals. Off-site evaluation establishes clear and consistent high standards for leadership throughout the state. It provides an opportunity for quality principals to share their accomplishments, skills and strategies. Off-site evaluation also will allow for better data collection on quality school administration so patterns of effectiveness can be implemented on a wide scale.



## RECOMMENDATION 4

### Align Invested Groups' Preference for Resources Used for Off-Site Evaluation

School districts and individual schools have unique challenges that call for flexibility to tailor an off-site evaluation or remedial process to individual needs. We recommend that the vested groups (superintendent, educators and stakeholders) come to consensus for the direction they want the off-site evaluation to take. This encourages unity and assures that the needs identified are addressed.

While there are several options available for these reviews, we believe the most comprehensive and consistent system would be based on best practices in the National Board Portfolio Certification.

- **National Board Portfolio Certification for Principals.** (Currently in the process of being developed for principals.) Candidates who achieve National Board Certification have met high standards through study, expert evaluation, self-assessment and peer review. Since 1987, this process has proven effective for other educators and is now being developed specifically to aid those teachers who have chosen to become principals.
- **“Licensure Via Portfolio.”** This process from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) could be adapted for off-site review.
- **Principal Performance Assessment.** The Teachers Performance Assessment (TPA) currently in development could be adapted by MDE to assess principals through portfolio assessment similar to those of the National Boards.

## RECOMMENDATION 5

### Create a Mentorship Program to Support Struggling Principals

It is possible for all schools to have an excellent principal with strong leadership abilities. To achieve this goal, there must be a positive yet strong response to support principals who are identified as having areas in need of extensive improvement. We believe that an effective system of remediation will make this achievement possible. **For principals rated less than proficient, the opportunities for growth include the following:**

- **A cohort experience.** Principals who are given unsatisfactory ratings would be placed in a cohort. Monthly cohort meetings the first year would provide a venue for group communications from MDE (or another relevant organization), and allow members to share their challenges and successes with one another. We believe this social, supportive environment among colleagues will increase the positivity of their experience.
- **A carefully selected mentor.** Mentors should be either sitting or recently retired principals who have been previously rated as accomplished or distinguished and have agreed to be mentors. Mentors also might be university instructors who teach in a principal/superintendent licensure program. This would allow them to see the product of the education they are providing and assess the effectiveness of the programs they run, allowing them to make their own policy changes as a result. A district also may find it important to choose a mentor with the experience necessary to address gender or racial inequality among students or within the authority structure. The final decision as to who to choose as a mentor would be based on identified deficiencies, mentor availability and superintendent/off-site resource recommendation. For mentors to truly invest in their mentees and compel change, mentors need to be paid and trained to encourage thoughtful reflection and practices that will lead to successfully independent school leaders. Both mentors and mentees need to know the clear goals of a mentorship program and its quality expectations. They should be encouraged to connect virtually as well as face-to-face. To determine effectiveness of the mentor/mentee relationship, both parties should evaluate their participation in, and success of, the program. This would encourage self-reflection and accountability, and allow the state to gather data that could be used to refine an effective principal mentor program.
- **A specialized educational consultant.** This mentor would be chosen based on expertise needed by the principal as indicated by superintendent evaluation, principal performance review and school stakeholder input to ensure relevant and current input is addressed.



- **Principal shadowing.** Principals targeted for improvement should spend a significant amount of time shadowing highly rated principals. As they observe, principals should focus on the areas most in need of improvement as determined with their mentor based on their evaluation. While principals will learn a great deal from shadowing colleagues in a school similar to their own, they also can learn a lot from a cross-setting shadowing experience.

### **Why we believe this will work:**

While a high-quality mentorship program is no small investment, we believe that such an investment would lead to a higher number of outstanding principals in Minnesota schools. A high-quality mentorship program has benefits for mentors and mentees, and should continue for at least two years.

This model will work because it includes feedback from teachers and the superintendent within the site and district where the principal is serving. It also allows for participation of an unbiased third party to help govern the evaluation system, such as a mentor.



## Instructional Leadership

### RECOMMENDATION 6

#### **Measure a Principal's Ability to Set Clear Instructional Goals That Professionally Support Teachers and Impact Student Achievement**

An essential component to an effective school is a principal who is an insightful and articulate instructional leader. As the instructional leader, the principal provides a vision of academic success for all students, and impacts the improvement of instructional practice and the effectiveness of all staff. The principal also has a critical role in encouraging and cultivating teacher leaders.

An effective principal is an active participant in the education process and leads by modeling best practices in staff development. This means he or she should be a reflective goal setter who is knowledgeable in educational research and demonstrates current best practice through staff development. This could include, but is not limited to, differentiated staff development, support of collaborative action research teams that are data-driven and student-focused, using innovative technology that engages students and more. In turn, this leader must support best instructional practices, develop a vision for implementing innovative practices across the school, be able to assess the rigor of current curriculum materials and review the potential effectiveness of proposed curriculum materials, perform objective teacher observations, provide constructive feedback, and guide educators in creating and following their own professional development plans.

Effective principals...	Demonstrated by
...articulate academic successes for all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IEP data</li> <li>• testing data</li> </ul>
...articulate a vision for academic success for all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Improvement Plan</li> <li>• parent and staff surveys</li> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> <li>• testing data</li> </ul>
...focus on positive solutions and foster a culture that can bring about needed and effective change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff surveys</li> </ul>
...set schoolwide educational goals and objectives with stakeholder input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Improvement Plan</li> <li>• parent and staff surveys</li> <li>• testing data</li> <li>• IEP data</li> </ul>
...set personal professional goals aligned with the district's School Improvement Plan and connected to student achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal professional goals</li> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> </ul>
...practice and model self-reflection through goal setting, personal action plans, timelines and action research that impacts instructional practice and student achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> <li>• SMART goals and results</li> <li>• School Improvement Plan</li> <li>• testing data</li> </ul>
...evaluate formative and summative student data to guide professional development needs of staff to impact student achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff development plan</li> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> <li>• testing data</li> <li>• IEP data</li> </ul>
...demonstrate a solid knowledge of effective instructional practices, strategies and resources needed for an engaging classroom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teacher observation reports</li> <li>• guest teaching or team teaching</li> </ul>
...value long-term research-based instructional practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff development plan</li> </ul>
...practice knowledge of effective curriculum selection and the ability to guide staff toward the design of engaging learning activities that impact student achievement, using standards as a guide for selecting and designing curricula.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explanation of curriculum selection</li> <li>• testing data</li> <li>• survey results from all stakeholders</li> </ul>
...participate in an ongoing observation cycle (to be observed and monitored in a similar fashion to teachers) in a variety of settings: staff meetings, training sessions, in-services and student activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• goal setting and reflection</li> <li>• observer checklists</li> </ul>
...encourage, cultivate and respect teacher leaders and the collaborative process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teacher surveys</li> <li>• building schedules</li> <li>• Professional Learning Community (PLC) goals and explanations</li> </ul>
...mentor, or provide mentors for staff members in their personal professional strengths, with professional career goals in mind (not just annual goals).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mentorship handbook explaining mentor/mentee program for staff</li> <li>• explanation of goal-setting process for staff</li> </ul>
...strengthen the skills, competencies and abilities of staff by listening to all stakeholders and considering their input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teacher surveys</li> <li>• parent surveys</li> <li>• student surveys</li> </ul>





### **Why we believe this will work:**

Choosing appropriate instructional goals and supporting implementation in the classroom through professional development and effective feedback translate directly to student achievement outcomes.

Therefore, instructional strength of methods, technology and curricula offered to students must be a priority of the principal.

Principals who have years of experience and a strong knowledge of instructional theory and practice are able to articulate instructional priorities and develop instructional knowledge and skill among their staff. They also are able to draw on extensive experience to more fairly and effectively evaluate teachers whose primary duty is to provide sound instruction.

Instructional leaders who demonstrate the above qualities are able to facilitate high-quality instruction in every classroom and enable teachers to tailor their instruction to make it the most effective for their particular students.

When principals have a clear vision and communicate that effectively to their staff, parents and students, the school community can work together to set and achieve goals related to student achievement. Strong School Improvement Plans and staff development help everyone to reach the goals.

### **A note about test scores and the principal evaluation process:**

Education policy makers across the country increasingly rely on students' standardized test scores to determine whether teachers are making the grade. We understand the need for data. We use data every day in our classrooms to determine whether students are making progress and if they have mastered the content. As a school's instructional leader, a principal must know how to read, understand and interpret data as a part of his/her role as an instructional leader. Therefore, we included testing data as one measurement of principal effectiveness in four of the areas above. However, we consider testing data to be a much broader measure than simply standardized test scores. Having said that, because a principal is an invested member of the instructional team who shares responsibility for the performance of students, we believe that if a given measure of student performance is ultimately used to evaluate teachers in Minnesota, the same measure should be reflected in a principal's evaluation. Equal treatment for teachers and administrators in this regard will promote collaboration and trust; anything less will erode working relationships and decrease positive student outcomes.



## Positive School Climate

### RECOMMENDATION 7

#### Define and Measure a Principal's Effectiveness in Creating a Positive School Climate to Establish a Thriving Learning Culture

The work of education takes a team effort on the part of students, families, teachers, staff, union leaders, business partners and community members, all led by a strong principal. In order for our students to reach their highest potential and become active, contributing members of our society, this team of stakeholders must strive together to create positive, stable, supportive, respectful, caring and professional relationships, and a healthful school climate. Effective administrators are able to create a climate that portrays a sense of community and academic purpose that is clear to anyone who walks into the building. Over time, the climate becomes the culture of the school.

Understanding the importance of feedback and collaboration with the members of the team in order to achieve improved outcomes and experiences for all learners, a principal must both lead and model this effort. A principal who works alongside, and supports, teachers and other stakeholders is key to maintaining this healthful climate. There is no shortage of evidence to show the quality of leadership in a building has a direct impact on student achievement, staffing stability and the effectiveness of teachers to best serve their students. When approaching relationships from a perspective of respect, trust and partnership, students and teachers feel valued, supported and inspired.

Effective principals...	Demonstrated by
...build trust with staff to ensure a caring and effective culture of educators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff survey</li> <li>• exit survey</li> </ul>
...show empathy and the ability to address issues from different perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff survey</li> <li>• exit survey</li> </ul>
...work collaboratively with staff to transform the environment into a positive, vibrant learning community for all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff survey</li> <li>• exit survey</li> </ul>
...are approachable and accessible by staff, students, parents and community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, parent and student surveys</li> <li>• participation in open houses, family nights and community events</li> </ul>
...value integrity and are fair and ethical.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, parent and student surveys</li> </ul>
...set high appropriate expectations for all learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, parent and student surveys</li> </ul>
...create and maintain a safe and caring learning environment that is welcoming to students, staff and community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, parent and student surveys</li> <li>• portfolio reflection</li> </ul>
...provide time to communicate with staff individually, allowing staff to communicate while she/he listens respectfully.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff surveys</li> </ul>
...nurture a collaborative relationship between staff, parents and students when conflicts arise, while fostering and valuing the relationship between individuals and working to create a safe environment to address issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, parent and student surveys</li> </ul>
...address disciplinary issues ethically, honestly and with the stakeholders' best interests, and with an understanding of the impacts any action may have on the stakeholders, their family or educational community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, parent and student survey</li> </ul>
...are highly visible in the school common areas (bus duty, cafeteria, hallways) and classrooms. This allows the principal opportunities to build relationships with students thereby promoting and modeling positive interaction, essential connections and a meaningful learning community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, parent and student surveys</li> </ul>



### **Why we believe this will work:**

A positive, welcoming environment paves the way for collaboration, innovation, high productivity and success. Schools need to be safe and respectful places that can serve as a focal point for a successful community. The principal has a key role in creating and maintaining this environment alongside the educational staff, not only to benefit the students who are in the building daily, but to welcome parents and other community members. Ensuring a healthful, respectful and productive school climate serves as the foundation upon which effective educational practices, staffing stability and improved student outcomes occur.

With the use of student, staff and parent surveys, evaluators and principals will be able to recognize patterns of behavior, attitudes, shared perceptions and the projected image of the educational leader and educational organization. An increased awareness of these perceptions will lead to the continuation of successful practices and positive change within the educational system.

## Management

### RECOMMENDATION 8

## Measure a Principal's Skills to Effectively Operate and Manage an Educational System Focused on Effective Instruction and Student Achievement

It is essential that principals effectively manage their time, personnel and financial resources so that schools can focus on meeting student needs. There are a number of contractual and legal obligations schools must meet. Proficient school leaders will have systems in place to deal with these obligations and other managerial issues, including schedules, budgets and workplace procedures. The capable leader will efficiently and fairly deal with these practical matters in a way that allows everyone in the building to work productively and maximize student achievement.

Effective principals...	Demonstrated by
...make decisions in a timely manner, based on available information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>superintendent evaluation</li> </ul>
...act as a facilitator and active listener to best employ conflict resolution and problem-solving strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>superintendent evaluation</li> <li>staff surveys</li> </ul>
...communicate clearly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>student, staff and parent surveys</li> </ul>
...effectively implement work plans, hold productive meetings and training sessions, and meet deadlines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Improvement Plan</li> <li>staff development plan</li> <li>staff surveys</li> <li>district timelines</li> </ul>
...follow policies and procedures, and act in accordance with standards, school policies, laws, code of ethics and negotiated contracts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>staff, student and parent surveys</li> <li>school financial information</li> <li>superintendent evaluation</li> </ul>
...are proactive in addressing contractual or legal obligations in a timely manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>superintendent evaluation</li> <li>teacher surveys</li> <li>union leader input</li> </ul>
...provide leadership through collaborating in the development of mutual expectations, procedures for working together and formulating district policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>staff surveys</li> </ul>

### Why we believe this will work:

An effective educational system needs leadership that monitors and adjusts the daily processes in order to meet the goals of effective instruction and student learning. Skillful principals see the overall vision and help support the components necessary to accomplish goals.



## Collaboration and Leadership Development

### RECOMMENDATION 9

#### **Measure the Principal's Ability to Build Leadership, Shared Understanding and Unity Among Staff**

Effective principals develop shared leadership through identifying strengths of staff members. They are able to nurture leadership in others and develop opportunities for collaboration among educators through identifying strengths and virtues among staff members. This happens as principals observe staff in action. By providing opportunities for collaboration and for ongoing professional growth that stretch teachers' skills and understanding about best practices, principals encourage and allow individuals to develop professional leadership and unity among staff. By providing specific feedback based on observations, principals can further develop the instructional skills of staff. The partnership that principals and staff develop is a great influence on how staff chooses to demonstrate their own personal leadership. The end result is the development of a school full of teachers who are focused on best practices to increase the learning of all students.

Our recommendation is that principals provide opportunities for educators to collaborate within the workday so that they may learn from one another as they break away from the confines of their classrooms. Educators want principals who can creatively make opportunities to share knowledge so that all staff might develop leadership skills and implement best practices.

Effective principals...	Demonstrated by
...stretch educators' knowledge and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• data collection about staff strengths</li> <li>• staff-led professional development on best practices</li> </ul>
...facilitate the sharing of knowledge and skills in a collaborative environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regular staff PLC time</li> <li>• team evaluation with teacher</li> <li>• staff development</li> <li>• building a schedule designed for collaboration</li> </ul>
...pursue technology tools and training that enables their effective use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Improvement Plan</li> <li>• knowledge of school financial information</li> <li>• teacher surveys</li> </ul>
...recognize and promote strong instructional practices and student interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, student and parent surveys</li> <li>• school discipline policy</li> </ul>
...formally observe teachers, provide effective feedback and engage staff in reflective conversation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff surveys</li> </ul>
...informally observe teachers and provide feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff surveys</li> <li>• walk-through checklist</li> </ul>
...embody and encourage professionalism, respect and trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff, student and parent surveys</li> <li>• portfolio reflection</li> <li>• off-site evaluations</li> </ul>
...utilize shared decision-making when appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff surveys</li> <li>• teacher and parent feedback</li> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> </ul>
...recognize and praise efforts and successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• student and staff surveys</li> </ul>

### Why we believe this will work:

The ability of an educational leader to foster mutual collaboration, emotional support, personal growth and synergy of efforts among staff will lead to empowered teachers and collective responsibility for student learning. The result of this leadership skill being modeled and applied will challenge individual staff members to take on roles of leadership within their areas of expertise. Through the implementation of collaboration and sharing of best practice, both research based and action implementation, students benefit through innovative best practice.



## Consciousness of Equity

### RECOMMENDATION 10

#### **Measure a Principal's Ability to Lead the Way in Developing Racial, Cultural, Socioeconomic and Educational Competencies That Transcend Differences**

As leaders in education, principals need to have a clear understanding of equity in serving all students. Equity is defined as fair, not necessarily equal. An example to illustrate the difference between equity and equality is that equality is when everyone is given a pair of glasses; equity is when everyone who needs glasses is given a pair with the right prescription. Our leaders must embrace the obvious inequity in our schools and work to move all educators past accepting that equity is recognizing and supporting differences in culture. Instead, our leaders must work to recognize bias/racism and adjust the system to make it equitable for all.

It is fair that all students receive effective assessments of their academic needs and measures of progress. It is also fair to expect that all students receive the best possible instruction to help them meet the desired outcomes and academic goals. Staff needs to be offered opportunities to build awareness of diverse backgrounds that students bring with them to school. Principals are able to impact staff consciousness of various cultures, value systems and beliefs through appropriate professional development experiences. Without this frame of reference, there is an inadequate understanding of the impact culture and background have on school and learning. School systems are currently set up to reflect mainstream, white, middle-class values. School staff must acknowledge their own place in this system and how it impacts others. School leaders must embrace these ideas and move schools toward a more equitable education system that allows all students to thrive.



Effective principals...	Demonstrated by
...guide all staff members to use data to measure student achievement and to develop needed interventions to close identified opportunity gaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff professional development</li> <li>• summative assessment scores</li> <li>• PLC groups</li> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> <li>• off-site review</li> </ul>
...have a long-term plan for monitoring progress and evaluating progress of all students and communicate this to staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff surveys</li> <li>• student surveys</li> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> </ul>
...allow sufficient time for professional conversations and collaborative implementation of needed interventions for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PLC group agendas and minutes</li> <li>• team teaching and observations</li> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> </ul>
...honor the need for all students to be challenged to make progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Improvement Plan</li> </ul>
...are aware of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and educate staff on the related factors that impact student achievement and parental involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• student survey</li> <li>• parent survey</li> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> </ul>
...are aware of biases and are willing to facilitate conversations about societal privilege by possessing the necessary vocabulary and research surrounding prejudice in schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff professional development</li> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> </ul>
...foster a system of equity in schools by attending to issues of inequity, including but not limited to race, gender, age, sexual preference and cognitive ability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• portfolio reflections</li> </ul>
...facilitate implementation of curriculum that is multicultural, gender fair and disability aware, and provide opportunities to celebrate diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff surveys</li> <li>• parent surveys</li> <li>• student surveys</li> </ul>

### Why we believe this will work:

Equity-conscious principals will help reset our current system by emphasizing the value of all groups in our schools. This supports all educators to evaluate more closely the instructional and relational practices needed to best support and serve each learner. Portfolio reflections encourage school principals to carefully consider all the issues related to equity at that site. Survey feedback from stakeholders inform how the principal's actions demonstrate an equitable approach to serving all groups at that site.



## CONCLUSION

# 360 Degree Leadership: Evaluating Minnesota Principals

The principals of our schools perform a vital and complex role in the lives of students. They need to provide instructional leadership, manage schedules, budgets and contracts, as well as maintain strong communication with parents, staff and community members. They must keep up with educational policy and research on best instructional practice. They must do all of this while accelerating student achievement. No principal can do this alone.

We want to build unity between administrators and teachers. We want to learn from master teachers who have been chosen to become principals. Teachers and principals are, by nature, lifelong learners. Both principals and teachers serve with a passion for engaging students in the development of self through acquiring knowledge and skills and strengthening dispositions leading to successful engagement in the wider community. As teachers, we recognize the importance of having an effective and fair evaluation protocol to aid self-reflection and strengthen one's professional practice. This is true for all educators, from educational support professionals to superintendents.

Principals, as others engaging in the work of education, deserve to have an authentic, thorough and fair evaluation protocol. This process should be based on multiple measures collected via engagement of multiple stakeholders. Opening the evaluations of principals to teachers and other stakeholders will allow principals to see themselves in the mirror of our experience. The quantitative and qualitative data collected through surveys, observations and principal reflections would allow a principal to improve his or her practice, enhance staff relationships, strengthen the climate within a school and, ultimately, improve student learning.

Education is a continual cycle of planning, implementing, assessing and reflecting. While noticeably absent in the current evaluation system, feedback from stakeholders is essential in this process so that we can all work toward a better future for our students.



## APPENDIX A

### Principal Evaluation Surveys

A key component of principal evaluation is a series of surveys that collects input from each group of educational stakeholders (teachers, staff, parents, students and local union leaders). We envision surveying all stakeholders on a continuous basis, with the data evaluated and discussed with representatives of each group, along with the principal and district administration.

While the stake teachers, staff, students and parents have in a school is clear, it might be less obvious why local union leaders should have a voice in principal evaluation. As the confidant of teachers and staff who fear reprisal or lack of response from site administrators, union leaders are more likely to hear those concerns. In addition, their position as outside observers of school climate and professional relationships gives union leaders the ability to offer important feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of a principal's relationship to staff and ability to improve school climate.

#### In addition to the surveys, we recommend the state consider:

- Periodic focus groups conducted by trained facilitators which would be effective tools to gain a deeper perspective from all stakeholders.
- Exit surveys to be completed by students and families as they withdraw from the school, and by teachers and staff who leave the school.

The following questions relate to the core areas covered in this report. These questions are being recommended for teacher surveys. It is also recommended that surveys are prepared at the local level for other stakeholder groups, although developing those questions is outside the scope of our work here.

#### Survey core areas:

- Instructional leadership
- Positive school climate
- Management
- Collaboration and leadership development
- Consciousness of equity

#### The survey results will be measured on a five-point Likert scale with the following ratings:

**5** – Strongly Agree    **4** – Agree    **3** – Neutral    **2** – Disagree    **1** – Strongly Disagree





## I. Instructional Leadership

**A principal:** Sets high standards for the professional practice of instruction and assessment that result in high achievement and accountability for all learners; is knowledgeable about best curriculum and instruction as well as emerging education practices; constantly refreshes this knowledge through ongoing professional development; uses information, including student performance assessment data, to create structures within the school that hold all learners to the highest standards; enables teachers to teach at their best, and students to learn at their utmost; and shapes a vision of academic success for all students that is based on high standards and promotes top achievement for all students.

- \_\_\_ 1. Articulates a clear vision for academic success for all students.
- \_\_\_ 2. Focuses on positive, realistic solutions that can bring about needed and effective change.
- \_\_\_ 3. Fosters an instructional climate in the school that supports effective change.
- \_\_\_ 4. Sets site goals and objectives with staff input.
- \_\_\_ 5. Shares personal professional goals with the staff that are aligned with the district's School Improvement Plan and is connected to student achievement.
- \_\_\_ 6. Models the practice of self-reflection by making staff aware of how goal setting and action plans impact instructional practice and student achievement, and shares throughout the school year in a reflective manner what is working and what is not working.
- \_\_\_ 7. Is actively involved in the evaluation of formative and summative student data in order to value and guide professional development needs of the staff.
- \_\_\_ 8. Demonstrates a solid knowledge of effective instructional practices and strategies or needed resources to assist staff in developing engaging classrooms.
- \_\_\_ 9. Values long-term research-based instructional practices.
- \_\_\_ 10. Exemplifies knowledge of effective curriculum selection.
- \_\_\_ 11. Encourages, cultivates and respects teacher leaders and the collaborative process in developing more effective instructors.
- \_\_\_ 12. Values the mentoring of staff in their professional goals.
- \_\_\_ 13. Listens to the staff and considers their input valuable to improving instructional practices at the site.
- \_\_\_ 14. Seeks to strengthen the skills, competencies and abilities of staff by listening to all stakeholders and focusing on effective instruction and positive impact on student achievement.





## II. Positive School Climate

**A principal:** Creates a climate hospitable to education; cultivates leadership in others; designs structures and processes that result in community engagement, support and ownership; understands the school community within the social and political context of the broader community; and proactively creates opportunities for parents/guardians, community, members and business representatives to be involved in and show support for the community's schools.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Fosters caring, respectful, trust-based, collaborative professional relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Inspires, motivates and provides opportunities for me to improve my practice based on high and clear standards for my students, my work and my profession.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Actively and effectively seeks to support me in my work with students, families and colleagues.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Promotes authentic and productive collaboration with the union.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Encourages teachers to respectfully question established policies and/or practices without fear of retaliation or exclusion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Consistently communicates directly with teachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Consistently, actively and effectively engages in the learning environment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Treats all teachers, regardless of color, gender or professional opinion, equally and fairly across educational disciplines.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Supports teachers' classroom management and discipline efforts to maintain an effective learning environment for students.

## III. Management

**A principal:** Effectively manages his/her time, personnel and financial resources so the school can focus on meeting student needs; meets contractual and legal obligations; deals with these practical matters in an efficient and fair way that allows everyone in the building to work productively and maximize student achievement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Develops, adjusts and implements policy to meet local, state and federal requirements and constitutional provisions, standards and regulatory applications.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Demonstrates understanding of and models community value systems, ethics and moral leadership.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Demonstrates an understanding and application of the Minnesota Board of School Administrators Code of Ethics for Administrators.





- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Develops and implements policies and procedures for safe and secure educational environments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Demonstrates the ability to formulate safety and security plans, including an articulated emergency chain of command, safety procedures required by law, law enforcement assistance, communication with the public and evacuation procedures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Identifies areas of vulnerability associated with school buses, buildings and grounds, and formulates a plan to take corrective action.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Develops plans that connect every student with a school adult, eliminate bullying and profiling, and implement recommended threat assessment procedures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Acts in accordance with district, site, and contractual standards and policies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Demonstrates authentic caring, empathy and accountability toward the staff and their work.

#### **IV. Collaboration and Leadership Development**

**A principal:** Creates conditions that result in the shared creation of the school's vision, mission and goals; creates a climate of intellectual inquiry and informed opinions that challenge the school community to continually seek positive change, and develops strategic pathways to reach core values and beliefs.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Provides staff development opportunities that stretch knowledge and best practice skills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Recognizes the skills that are present in staff and extends opportunities for staff to lead one another in best practice implementation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Uses a research-based method of professional collaboration that focuses on a system of interventions to ensure progress in student achievement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Builds shared leadership opportunities by recognizing strong practices and promoting the use of collaboration among staff to capitalize on best practice leading to higher student achievement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Effectively gives feedback on instructional practice and strategies that enhance professional development following formal and informal observations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Models good judgment, communicates explanations for decisions and uses shared decision-making appropriately.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Collaborates with teachers to examine student and school data to measure student learning and growth, identify achievement gaps and develops strategic interventions that improve learning and close identified gaps.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Supports the need for quality, collaborative job-embedded staff learning experiences that are guided by data and research, planned by staff and based on the school's needs.

## V. Consciousness of Equity

**A principal:** Understands the important role of culture, socioeconomic status and other differences as a contributor to student and school success; honors the positive traditions, artifacts, symbols, values and norms of the school and community; connects those traditions to the school's individual and collective goals; and helps build a strong and positive sense of community in the school.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Understands how issues surrounding equity affect the school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Creates and monitors a positive learning environment for all students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Treats students and their families with respect that reflects his/her understanding of a student's background.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Understands how his/her biases impact decisions affecting all learners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Serves as a spokesperson for the welfare of all learners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Facilitates conversations surrounding equity by demonstrating the vocabulary and knowledge needed to sufficiently support the conversation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Engages in regular conversations about racial/economic disparity and other differences of students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Actively and immediately addresses issues of racial/economic disparity in school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Inspires others to face their own biases by leading by example.



## APPENDIX B

### Recommendation for Future Consideration

**Must a Principal Have Classroom Experience?** While it is beyond the scope of these recommendations for evaluating sitting principals, we thoroughly discussed whether it is critical for an effective principal to have first spent several years as a successful teacher. Some of us feel strongly that principals should have at least seven years of instructional experience in the classroom. Others have experienced quality leadership from principals who previously served as school psychologists or social workers.

While we were not able to come to consensus on the experience most likely to result in an effective principal, it does seem evident that professional experience in the field of education for more than three years is critical for developing an overall sense of the need for quality, proactive administrative leadership in our schools. As teachers, we believe that the wisdom instilled by that experience as a teacher is key to being an effective principal in all areas of the job. At a minimum, we suggest administrators should have three years of educational experience before pursuing coursework to become a principal and seven years experience to be able to apply for a principal position.

**Must that educational experience be in the classroom as an instructor?** Not all of us believe that it must. But the overriding concern for all teachers in this writing collaborative is that a principal applicant has an experience base that provides the context to understand what is needed to effectively instruct and engage students in the classroom. If a principal lacks this, as a form of remediation, he or she may need more time as an instructor in a classroom connecting with students.

As teachers, we also believe effective principals are educators who therefore must continue professional development in instructional strategies. It is valuable for principals to work with students in some capacity to demonstrate their ability to understand and implement best practice teaching techniques with staff members with whom they work. This requirement could be shaped by hours spent back in the classroom to allow principals to maintain a connection to the role of teacher and model effective instruction and learning. Principals also may team teach with teachers or other service providers to implement action research in the area of effective instructional strategies.





## SOURCES

### Reference to National Board Certification for Principals:

[http://www.nbpts.org/products\\_and\\_services/national\\_board\\_certifica](http://www.nbpts.org/products_and_services/national_board_certifica)

### Resources for Remedial Track Section:

Davis, S.; Darling-Hammond, L.; LaPointe, M.; & Meyerson, D. (2005). *School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals* (Review of Research). Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.

The Education Alliance at Brown University & National Association of Elementary School Principals. (2003). *Making the Case for Principal Mentoring*. Providence, RI: Brown University.

Wallace Foundation. (2007). *Getting Principal Mentoring Right: Lessons from the Field*.

## THE VIVA PROJECT

### Minnesota Teachers Writing Collaborative

Bios



**DONNA DRESCHER** coordinates and teaches in the English as a Second Language program for Blue Earth Area schools. She previously taught English language learner students in Wisconsin. She earned her bachelor's degree from Crown College with teaching certifications in early childhood, kindergarten, and elementary grades, a master's of education and reading specialist degrees at Viterbo College, and ESL certification from Lakeland College. She trains other teachers in reading comprehension instruction and beginning reading instruction. She serves the Blue Earth Area educators as a TALL Advocate and as the local EA president, stressing the value of teachers as leaders and learners.



**BRIONNA HARDER** is a social studies teacher and the first vice president of the Teachers Chapter of Minneapolis Federation of Teachers and ESPs Local 59. With a passion for teaching civics and government, she has taught grades 9 through 12 in a variety of social studies courses and is currently the IB Diploma Programme Coordinator for Patrick Henry High School in Minneapolis. Throughout her 13-year career, Brionna has been involved in a number of leadership opportunities in her school, union and district, motivated by a undying belief in the power of public education, the purpose of the teaching profession and the potential of young people preparing for their future in a democratic society.



**KIM HILL** has been teaching for 30 years. She has been a National Board Certified teacher since 1997 and has a BS in Elementary Education, MS in Experiential Education and is a licensed K–12 reading teacher. Hill has had experience teaching in both elementary and middle school. She spends her days teaching reading to a very energetic group of sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Her greatest joy is to see the light bulb go off when one of her students “gets it.”



**BETH HILLERNS** teaches Title I at East Central Elementary School near Sandstone, MN. She has taught for the past 10 years in urban, suburban, and rural schools in Texas and Minnesota. In addition to Title I, Beth has taught elementary Spanish, middle school math, and first and fourth grades. She also served three years on the Board of Directors of New Spirit School in St. Paul. Beth is currently pursuing her Master's in Literacy Education at Hamline University in St. Paul.

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**DAVE JOHNSON** has been an educator in regular, special, and higher education for the last 25+ years. His main educational endeavors have been in elementary special education working with SLD, EBD, ASD, and practically all special needs areas within the K–12 system since 1987, in both ND and Minnesota. He has undergraduate degrees from UND, in Business and Public Administration (1981); Moorhead State University, Elementary Education (1986); Minot State University, Masters in SLD (1988) and Certification in EBD. Dave has been involved in teacher union leadership, anti-bullying efforts, special education issues. He really loves what he has done, is doing, and will do in the future.



**JULIE MILLER-HAYS** has been a Special Education Teacher for 27 years and in Special Education for 39 years. She has worked in Minneapolis and Anoka School Districts. Julie has taught grades K–12, in the areas of EBD, ASD, DCD, and SLD and she has started programs serving at-risk students. She has worked with the U of M and the United Nations to set up Special Education Programs Internationally. Julie has spoken at the Town Hall Forum at Westminster Presbyterian Church on behalf homeless Young Adults. Julie has been married for 21 years and has 3 teenage sons, one of whom was formerly homeless.



**GLENN MOREHOUSE OLSON** teaches journalism, theater, writing, and literature at St. Francis High School. She came to teaching after a career as a theater communications specialist working in public and media relations for diverse arts organizations in the Twin Cities area, including the famed Guthrie Theater and Penumbra Theatre. She was awarded the Dow Jones Special Recognition Adviser Award in 2007 and received the JEA Rising Star Award for 2007-2008. She currently serves as an advisory member for Kent State University's Center for Scholastic Journalism, is a member of the JEA Press Rights Commission, and serves on the board for MN Thespians.



**BRUCE RICHARDS** is a 21 year educator. He has experience as a second, fourth, multi-age, and sixth grade teacher. His most recent assignment is as an instructional coach. He has worked with more than 200 elementary teachers in the Osseo Area School District for the past 3 years on individual professional growth. Bruce is an aspiring administrator who is focused on professional collaboration, creativity and innovative practice. The idea of implementing a growth model for administrators and teachers to use to enhance and implement best practices excites Bruce and provides a mission and vision for learning something new every day.

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**MARY CATHRYN RICKER** is a middle school English teacher and president of the St. Paul Federation of Teachers. Since graduating from the University of St. Thomas in 1992, Ricker has taught in Minnesota, Washington, and South Korea. She is nationally board certified in Early Adolescent English/language arts and was a semi-finalist for the NEA Award for Teaching Excellence. Ricker serves on the board of the St. Paul Public Schools Foundation, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Education Minnesota Foundation for Teaching & Learning, TakeAction Minnesota, the Governing Board for Education Minnesota and the K-12 Program & Policy Council for the American Federation of Teachers.



**CARRIE ROBATCEK** is a teacher with 20 years of experience in public education. She received her B.S. in Elementary Education from St. Cloud State University, a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from St. Mary's University, and specialized science training at Hamline University. She is currently an elementary teacher in the ROCOR School District, has held many leadership roles, is an active volunteer in her community, and is currently the president for her local. Her goals are to provide quality education and wellness for every child in her classroom, advocate for public education, and work for positive reform.



**MIRANDA L. SCHORNACK** has taught in Chile, at St. Cloud State University, and in Minnesota public schools in St. Paul, Owatonna, and Long Prairie. She has a master's degree in Teaching English as a Second Language and a K-12 teaching license in ESL. Her areas of interest in the field of education are the interfaces between leadership, policy, curriculum, and instruction.



**WADE SUTTON** is a 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade English educator at Indus School in Birchdale, Minnesota. He began teaching in a private school in Mexico and has since taught in public school for 6 years. He has taught Spanish and was an adjunct faculty instructor at Rainy River Community College. Wade has initiated collaborative educational programs including a college-prep research program to the University of Minnesota and "Voices of Northern Minnesota," a series of political forums his students organize and moderate for state representative and state senate candidates. He lives in International Falls, Minnesota, with his wife, Pamela, and their four children.

## New Voice Strategies

**New Voice Strategies**, an Illinois nonprofit corporation, operates the VIVA (Voice Ideas Vision Action) Project. The VIVA Project is the creation of a group of seasoned, passionate advocacy professionals who believe in the power and wisdom of individual citizens in the public arena. VIVA taps into the power of technology to bring together individuals with a passion for finding practical solutions to complex problems and gives them a new way to build consensus around ideas for change. Through our web-enabled platforms, we create opportunities for people with expertise earned by training and day-to-day work experience to collaborate, exchange ideas and influence public policy. Our first online collaborations—we call them Idea Exchanges—launched in September 2010. These Idea Exchanges engage classroom teachers directly in one of the most important discussions our country is having now: the future of American public schools. The VIVA Idea Exchange is powered by SocialSphere proprietary collaboration technology, ARENA™.

### Board of Directors

**JILL BASS** taught in the Chicago and New York City public schools for 14 years. She has a master's in instructional leadership from the University of Illinois at Chicago and has been a professional developer, curriculum writer, educational consultant, and instructional coach. She is currently director of the Mikva Challenge's National Center for Action Civics, overseeing curriculum development and teacher training.

**MATTHEW BREWER** is an associate with the law firm of Bartlt, Beck, Herman, Palanhar & Scott, LLC. He is a graduate of Stanford University, where he served as student body president, earned his JD from Yale University and MBA from Harvard University.

**ELIZABETH EVANS**, founding CEO, is a recognized national leader in building unconventional alliances and bringing innovative approaches to solving difficult policy problems. For the last decade, her work has focused on education reform, and she has spent her career promoting the interests of children. She was executive director of the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS), where she was the chief architect of a successful statewide campaign that culminated with Illinois being the first state in the nation to enact comprehensive charter law reforms in 2009. Before joining INCS, Elizabeth was part of the Illinois Facilities Fund leadership team, where her responsibilities focused on Illinois government relations, communications, and advocacy.

Elizabeth also worked at the Civic Committee of The Commercial Club of Chicago and was a political organizer in Washington, DC and Michigan. She practiced law from 1990 to 1998 for the US Securities and Exchange Commission Enforcement Division and as a staff attorney in the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

**KIPLUND "KIP" KOLKMEIER** is of counsel to the Political Law and Government Relations practice groups of Perkins, Coie, LLC & Kolkmeier Consulting. His legal practice focuses on state legislative lobbying in Illinois, corporate and governmental ethics issues, administrative rulemaking and executive agency lobbying, PAC management, state and federal campaign finance issues, and association management. He previously was a partner at the following law firms: Sidley & Austin, Altheimer & Gray, and Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon.

**ASHLEY WARLICK** teaches elementary school in the Cambridge, MA Public Schools. She has a concentration in teaching students with special needs and brings a strong interest in the arts to her work. She serves on the Board of Directors of her school's affiliated nonprofit organization, which brings urgently needed resources to the students at the school.



