Strengthening Educational Leader Supports

OHIO PRINCIPAL WORKGROUP

A REPORT PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Ohio | Department of Education

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Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

There is little doubt that quality leadership is essential to the success of any organization. As the Ohio Department of Education works together with education stakeholders to strengthen pre-kindergarten through grade 12 education, it is important to focus on strategies supporting principals' continuous improvement and journeys to excellence. The Department, in partnership with the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators and the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators, identified individuals throughout the state to participate in a community of practice, or workgroup of advisors. This workgroup examined what we can do in Ohio to support high-quality leadership practices aimed at addressing the needs of each student. The majority of the invited advisors were administrators at various stages of their careers, in diverse school typologies and at elementary, middle and high schools. In addition, principal supervisors, state support team members and faculty from higher education principal preparation programs participated. The invited stakeholders worked to provide advice to strengthen K-12 educational leader supports for sustaining and/or improving principal excellence.

After assessing the current state of the principalship, the network of advisors concluded there are many existing effective principals, as well as quality supports in our state. But many of these supports remain untapped. The advisors (or workgroup) identified principals' needs throughout the continuum of their careers and then recommended professional learning deemed "best practices" and/or "evidence-based" that would address those identified needs and gaps. The advisors then outlined strategies for addressing gaps with recommendations for professional development opportunities and additional support structures.

THE PROCESS

During a period of three months, the principal workgroup met to examine the supports available to help Ohio principals. They first identified the demands of fulfilling the principal's role, where barriers to effectiveness exist, as well as what gaps occur between job demands and available supports. The group also offered recommendations as possible solutions to address these gaps.

The principal workgroup identified five areas Ohio can use to map a route for improving principal effectiveness:
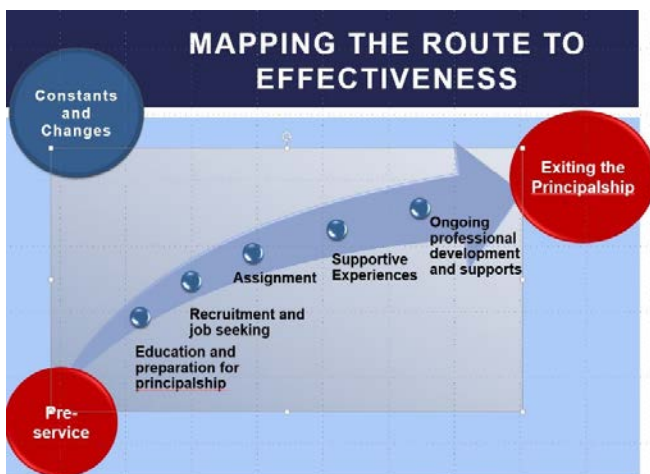
- Education and preparation for serving in the principal role;
- Recruitment and job seeking;
- Assignment;
- Supportive experiences;
- Ongoing professional development and supports.

Within that framework, the principal workgroup identified areas of concern, reviewed pertinent research for those targeted areas of focus and generated possible solutions as well as action steps to address a pathway toward effectiveness.

The workgroup's recommendations for further actions focus on the following areas:

Institutions of Higher Education
- Develop and maintain universal admission criteria and selection tools;
- Develop and implement effective internship practices;
- Offer relevant training, courses and ongoing professional development by instructors with appropriate expertise.

The Ohio Department of Education
- Redefine the role of the principal through revision of *The Ohio Standards for Principals;*
- Develop effective human capital management tools and practices such as those that empower and support employees to meet organizational goals, support recruitment and retention efforts to secure top talent and ensure equitable access to excellent educators;
- Enhance and promote *The Principal Toolkit* resources and train principals in the use of these resources;
- Establish a direct program contact at the Ohio Department of Education for principals and leaders to reach out to when they need support;
- Establish and support mentoring and coaching programs, as well as networks and partnerships with other professional colleagues;
- Offer training on pertinent topics;
- Allocate funds for supporting principal initiatives.

Partnerships with Local Districts, Organizations and State Agencies
- Establish and support mentoring and coaching programs in partnership with other educational organizations;
- Establish structures for leadership opportunities and create a pipeline for identifying potential principals;
- Partner with local districts to address the social-emotional needs of students;
- Offer relevant training, courses and ongoing professional development by instructors with appropriate expertise.

Introduction

"Research has established some important facts about the role of the principal in public K-12 education. Leadership is second only to teaching among school-related influences on student success. Its impact is greatest in schools with the greatest needs. Principals strongly shape the conditions for high-quality teaching. They are the prime factor in determining whether teachers stay in high-needs schools. For policymakers, this all means that the effectiveness of principals is vital to the effectiveness of our nation's public schools, especially those serving the children with the fewest advantages in life.

Principals who are strong, effective, responsive leaders help to inspire and enhance the abilities of their teachers and other school staff to do excellent work. Such principals also tend to retain great teachers and create opportunities for them to take on new leadership roles. In short, principals, through their actions, can be powerful multipliers of effective teaching and leadership practices in schools. And those practices can contribute much to the success of the nation's students. This leads to the following key question:

What can state policymakers do to help ensure that schools have excellent principals who advance teaching and learning for all students?"

– Wallace Foundation, 2015, Developing Excellent School Principals to Advance Teaching and Learning: Considerations for State Policy – Paul Manna

Figure 1.

Working as a principal is a demanding, but highly rewarding experience. The Department and the Ohio associations for elementary and secondary school administrators formed an advisory group to meet and discuss what is working well for Ohio principals and what is not working well. Stakeholders included highly effective Ohio principals and personnel who support principals from institutions of higher education, professional organizations, the state of Ohio and local school districts. The advisory group began by studying the supports available to Ohio principals, as well as the demands and barriers placed upon them that impact their ability to effectively complete required responsibilities.

The key stakeholders first reflected on particularly rewarding experiences they had while serving as principals or in positions of support to principals. As stakeholders shared their experiences, common themes emerged centering on helping individual or groups of students, initiating some sort of project (such as a grant or opening a school), fostering relationships and supporting others. (For a full listing of these reflections, see the Appendix.)

The group's consensus was that despite the demands and barriers confronting principals, they are having many positive and successful experiences in Ohio's schools.

Supports

The stakeholders identified and categorized supports or factors that helped principals in successfully fulfilling the requirements of their positions (Table 1). While some supports come from internal or innate personality traits (a principal's personal work skills), others supports come from external sources such as relationships with others who encourage and mentor the principal. The most common external supports emerge from professional organizations, the local school district, the community and professional development opportunities. Table 1 represents a non-exhaustive list of such supports.

Table 1.

Career Stage	Supports Available
Pre-service educators	Relationships
	Experiences
	Partnerships
	Research
Beginning principals (less than three years of experience as a principal)	Family
	Love of children
	Celebrating and expecting success
	Ability to learn and grow
Experienced principals	Faith, family, balance
	Personal work skills, traits, habits
	Professional organizations
	Effective district supports
	Professional development opportunities
Those supporting principals (higher education, state and local support personnel)	Personal traits
	Relationships
	District support
	Professional organizations
	Community support
	Financial support

Demands and Barriers

At times, the demands upon principals can become overwhelming and create barriers to effectiveness that are hard to overcome, particularly where limited effective supports are available. As noted in Table 2, demands range from lack of supports and mentors, to burdens on time, resources and expertise.

Table 2.

Career Stage	Demands and Barriers
Pre-service educators	Reluctance to change
	Keeping up with changes (legislative, district, etc.)
	Lack of time: to meet all demands and expectations of the training
	Institutional demands and existing cultures may not align with pre-service training
	A lack of instructor on-the-job expertise

Beginning principals (less than three years of experience as a principal)	Lack of support (central office, parents, etc.)
	Lack of experience, knowledge
	Emotional and other needs of students
	Lack of quality mentorships
	Additional duties assigned
Experienced principals	Lack of time: to meet all the demands of the position
	State testing of students and the demands of test preparation and actual testing
	Ohio Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems (task completion)
	Lack of parental support
	Paperwork
	Personal demands
	Organizational politics (which may include strategies that people use to gain advantage, personally or for a cause they support)
	Managing crisis incidents and unexpected events
	Lack of support from central office
	Constraints of union or contract that limit creativity or innovation
	Building and district culture that may not be aligned with personal beliefs
	Lack of resources
Those supporting principals (higher education, state and local support personnel)	Constant communications
	Meeting compliance and district policy requirements
	Providing professional development
	Job turnover of those supporting principals within a district
	Tyranny of the urgent (a crisis demanding immediate attention)
	Traumatized students
	Technology
	Personal life demands exist and may limit ability to support others
	Lack of resources
	Time constraints
	Constraints of union contract may not allow another (or outside) leader to work directly in certain situations
	Lack of statewide supports

The stakeholders reviewed various and numerous current research (see References) and held discussions focused on finding possible gaps in the supports offered to principals. The group worked to address the essential question: **What can Ohio do to support principals where gaps exist between available supports and the demands or barriers to effectiveness in their positions?** After discussions and examination of research, the group determined that categories offered in the report What Districts Know — and Need to Know — About Their Principals (George W. Bush Institute and American Institutes for Research, February 2016) provided a framework for categorizing the group's responses. An overview of categories appears in Figure 2:

- Education and Preparation for Principals;
- Recruitment and Job-Seeking;
- Assignment;
- Supportive Experiences;
- Ongoing Professional Development and Supports.

Figure 2.

WHAT DISTRICTS KNOW — AND NEED TO KNOW — ABOUT THEIR PRINCIPALS
George W. Bush Institute and American Institutes for Research, February 2016

Better Prepared Principals. When school districts know where their most and least effective principals come from, they can work to improve their supply of great principals. Districts that wish to consider partnerships with the institutions that train their principals cannot do so without systematic data on where principals were prepared. Key statistics like effectiveness ratings, student growth scores or retention of principals that graduated from a given institution could offer insight into the strengths and challenges of a preparation program. Other indicators could be useful as well, such as changes in school climate and culture, teacher effectiveness and growth, retention of staff under specific principals, or parent engagement and satisfaction survey results. Districts could use this information to support program partnership and development decisions. (This category has been named **Education and Preparation for Principals** by the workgroup.)

Improved Recruitment. More detailed data on principal education and training could prove even more powerful when combined with additional information on principal background characteristics, such as the level of selectivity of a principal's undergraduate and graduate institution, grade point average or certification exam scores. Districts could then explore the extent to which these qualifications are associated with principal effectiveness or other outcomes within their systems. Armed with a better understanding of what types of principal experiences and qualifications are associated with principal effectiveness or other outcomes, districts might require principals to have certain leadership experience as a teacher, teacher leader or assistant principal before transitioning into the principal role. Districts might also purposefully recruit teachers and other educators with specific experience profiles into leadership development tracks. (This category has been named **Recruitment and Job Seeking** by the workgroup.)

More Strategic Placement. Better research on the extent to which specific types of experience or qualifications improve outcomes in particular settings may lead districts to discover that some characteristics or qualifications are more or less important in the placement process for different schools. In addition, school districts can work to place a candidate with certain leadership experiences in a school that has a matching need. For example, if a district has an opening at a school in a turnaround situation, then it would be helpful to know if any of the principal candidates for that school had teacher leadership or other experiences in a turnaround situation. (This category has been named **Assignment** by the workgroup.)

Well-developed School Leaders. The absence of complete or accurate data on principals' in-service learning and development may make it difficult to assess the success of initiatives to strengthen leadership. Districts invest thousands and sometimes millions of dollars in professional development or leadership training programs, often with little evidence of whether these efforts yield the intended results. With better data on which principals participate in which programs or initiatives, districts can track whether participants yield better outcomes such as improved evaluation effectiveness scores or improved student learning gains. (This category has been named **On-going Professional Development and Supports** by the workgroup.)

Enhanced Retention and Succession Planning. When districts know how many principals leave each year — and why — they can improve their retention policies and practices, and they can better plan for future vacancies by ensuring they have a pool of well-prepared candidates ready to take on the principal role. In addition, it is critical that districts know which principals are most effective so that they can create targeted retention plans to keep those principals in their schools for as long as possible. (This category has been named **Supportive Experiences** by the workgroup.)

CONCLUSION
We know principals are an important lever to improving student achievement and schools overall. If districts want to increase the number of great principals in their schools, then they must collect and analyze data to help them understand where the best leaders are trained, when a leader may need additional support and resources, and how to keep the best leaders in the district.

Gaps in and Identified Needs of Supports Afforded to Principals and Possible Solutions

EDUCATION AND PREPARATION FOR PRINCIPALSHIP

Ohio can help promote the quality of principal preparation programs and provide information to potential principal candidates so that strong programs will prepare the candidates to become excellent principals.

Licensing can provide Ohio with some control over allowing high-quality leaders into the profession and preventing others from becoming principals in public schools. Aspects of licensing that need improvement are the use of aligned pre-service and state standards at the institutes of higher education, as well as the granting of licensure to candidates for specific job assignments.

The principal workgroup sets forth an analysis of existing gaps in principal education and preparation. Ohio should address these gaps to help principals meet the demands of their positions.

Gaps and identified needs in education and preparation include:
- Inadequate on-the-job internship training as part of preparation programs;
- Need for increased screening for applicable skills among principal candidates;
- Need for training and education that realistically and accurately depicts principal responsibilities, including those related to meeting the needs of students with disabilities and conducting the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System.
- Inadequate exposure of pre-service candidates to a variety of school environments, making them better prepared for certain assignments.

Principal preparation may seem "out of sync" with accountability demands (principals are held accountable to accomplish particular goals and tasks at the local and state level). Research demonstrates that leadership is learned through studying key concepts and skills used by effective leaders, observing good models and by one's own trial and error.

Suggestions for Implementation and Action Steps

1. Establish uniform minimum guidelines for admission to principal licensure programs by developing and refining admission criteria.
   a. Promote collaboration among principal licensure stakeholder groups (such as institutions of higher education, the Ohio Department of Education, local districts) to determine consensus of criteria for admission to licensure programs.
   b. Establish uniform baseline or minimum admission requirements.
   c. Create and refine a principal interview tool (evidence- and research-based) for enrollment in a principal licensure program. Include selection criteria that define traits needed for success as principals.
   d. Focus on *Ohio's Standards for Principals* and use universal state standards in principal selection criteria.

2. Create model, uniformly structured, meaningful principal internships, including diverse learning experiences (such as experiences in special education requirements, central office, data analysis and curriculum).
   a. Determine internship requirements.
   b. Determine structure of internship (such as pairing with local and/or statewide mentors).
   c. Expose candidates to internships in diverse settings, ensuring appropriate level of depth:
      i. Urban, suburban, rural;
      ii. Various socio-economic levels;
      iii. Exposure to varied cultures.

d.　Define the relationship between universities and local school districts.
　　　　e.　Provide authentic, job-embedded experiences.

3.　Provide training and instruction experiences at the pre-service level in pertinent topics such as:
- Serving special populations and meeting the needs of all students (including those who are gifted, English language learners, in special education programs, have mental health needs or who are from economically disadvantaged homes, etc.);
- Conducting effective discipline (staff and student);
- Developing leadership skills (individual and team activities, including practice using the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System);
- Using social media;

　　　　a.　Establish virtual training for pre-service principals to practice necessary skills as defined in the Ohio Standards for Principals.
　　　　b.　Credential pre-service principals in the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES).
　　　　c.　Offer instruction to pre-service principals (conducted by current or recent principals as adjunct faculty rather than instructors without administration experience).
　　　　d.　Continue an exit interview process from graduate programs for continuous program improvement purposes; provide feedback for improvement to preparation programs.

Possible Barriers Needing to be Addressed
- **Principal standards from multiple groups and organizations needing alignment:** Institutions of higher education, professional organizations supporting principals, and the Educator Standards Board (in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Education) utilize different standards and guidelines, thus perpetuating different expectations of a principal;
- **Qualifications of university personnel:** University personnel may lack current, pertinent qualifications that meet the demands and expectations needed by today's leaders. It would be beneficial to have experienced, successful principal practitioners as university instructors;
- **Timing, funding:** Institutions of higher education will require time and resources to make the recommended changes and successfully implement those changes;
- **Geography possibly limiting access to resources and personnel:** Across the state of Ohio, disparities exist regarding access to a variety of university opportunities. There also exist limited opportunities for internships across diverse settings;
- **Limited existence of peer-to-peer networks and cohorts:** Currently, professional organizations and higher education institutions are not offering structured peer-to-peer support networks for principals.

RECRUITMENT AND JOB SEEKING
Even though recruitment and hiring are primarily local school district functions, Ohio may be able to offer incentives to which aspiring principals and school districts will respond. Effective incentives could influence recruitment practices and the pool of potential principal candidates.

Identified gaps and identified needs for recruiting and job seeking including:
- Additional screening tools for schools and districts to support proper placement, evaluation and assignment;
- Uniform "onboarding" activities and supports at the local level;
- Sufficient time for principals to acclimate to their assigned building before being evaluated and improved mechanisms for evaluating whether a principal is successful in a particular assignment;
- Equitable access across the state to quality preparation programs;

To support recruitment efforts, there is a need to compensate leaders effectively; facilitate coordination between local school districts and preparation programs; forecast anticipated principal vacancies and direct

recruitment toward meeting specific needs. When recruiting and retaining leaders for specific areas, the focus should include examining school culture, planning professional development, and providing technical support for mentoring.

Suggestions for Implementation and Action Steps
1. Clarify and update the role of principal.
   a. Review, update and revise principal standards to make them more precise and concise. Use the current *Ohio Standards for Principals* and standards from the National Policy Board for Educational Administration as starting points and incorporate skills such as equity and social justice.
   b. Implement the use of the newly created principal standards at various levels (pre-service educators at higher education institutions, local districts and statewide).

2. Develop selection tools to identify characteristics needed to be successful in the role of principal.
   a. Select or develop a tool(s) to screen potential principals for promising attributes and capabilities (for example, a rubric or continuum).
   b. Offer training in the use of screening tools to those involved in the selection process.

3. Develop or refine succession planning tools.
   a. Formalize statewide resources for local administrators to use when developing intentional succession plans.
   b. Provide training in the use of the resources.
   c. Provide leadership opportunities for teachers to support succession planning (teacher leader endorsement).

4. Plan strategic practices and supports.
   a. Research and investigate research-based human capital management practices for principals.
   b. Develop tools to assist principals with effective human capital management and provide supports to districts to ensure they have effective recruitment, assignment and ongoing supports for principals.
   c. Train individuals in the use of human capital management tools to aid in the identification and recruitment of quality principals.

5. Establish partnerships to support potential principal hiring pipeline.
   a. Establish partnerships among local school districts, educational service centers, professional organizations and area institutions of higher education to identify potential principal candidates.
   b. Connect potential candidates with possible job opening networks.

Possible Barriers Needing to be Addressed
- **Time:** The implementation of recommendations will require time and effort. Partnerships for the completion of these recommendations will require time from personnel. Existing demands on personnel still are in place and may require different thinking, re-assignment or additional personnel.
- **Funding:** Funding will be needed to complete the revision of standards and provide training on the newly created standards. Funding will also be needed to research, develop and disseminate human capital management tools.
- **Organizational Politics:** Organizational politics exist and are associated with the use of influence tactics to improve personal or organizational interests. These interests may be disrupted as changes are implemented.
- **Geography:** Across Ohio, disparities exist regarding availability of candidates seeking the principalship.

ASSIGNMENT

Strategic assignment of principals to their jobs is needed. Better research on the extent to which specific types of experience or qualifications improve outcomes in particular settings may lead districts to discover that some characteristics or qualifications are more or less important in the placement process for different schools. It is important to think about "fit" – so that a person's skills and abilities meet the needs and demands of the position.

Identified gaps and needs for the assignment area include:
- Need for more screening tools when recruiting individuals for the principalship and assessing their fit for assignment to a particular school;
- A need to establish a "pipeline for potential principals"; that is, a reliable candidate pool of potential leaders designed with intentionality for identifying these future leaders and placing them appropriately.

The principal workgroup members reviewed research from The Wallace Foundation and its work in establishing principal pipelines in six urban school districts in 2011. Members found that this research identified how important it is to establish a "principal pipeline" that helps schools develop a larger corps of effective school principals to meet district needs.

The Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Initiative
Strategies:
- Engaging top-level district leaders in succession planning and placement discussions.
- Introducing systematic, data-informed procedures for hiring, including performance assessments such as role playing and school data review.
- Building new data systems to track experience, performance and assessed competencies of principals and aspiring principals for the purpose of placement.
- Incorporating additional selection stages, including hiring pools and pre-service program selection and performance.

Challenges:
- Using performance assessments in the hiring process and developing related data systems requires significant investments of staff time.
- Selecting principal candidates with strong interpersonal skills is hard, because such skills are difficult to measure during the hiring process.

Successes:
- Novice principals reported that the hiring process gave them useful feedback;
- Over time, more novice principals reported an "excellent" fit between the needs of their schools and their skills, experiences and interests;
- District leaders applauded novice principals' strong knowledge of instruction.

Roughly half of U.S. states have, for the first time, mandated mentoring for newly hired principals. The workgroup felt that this mandate is an important direction being taken by states.

Suggestions for Implementation and Action Steps
1. Provide districts with tools to help in hiring principals who are appropriate for job assignments that respond to specific building needs.
   a. Research and investigate human capital management placement practices.
   b. Utilize data systems to track experience, performance and assessed competencies of principals and aspiring principals.
   c. Incorporate additional selection stages, including hiring pools and pre-service program selection and performance tools that evaluate pre-service principal candidates' performance.
   d. Provide tools and trainings on hiring practices.

2. Establish partnerships among local school districts, support organizations and area institutions of higher education that keep course content relevant and support "onboarding" of principals.
3. Provide incentives to veteran principals and proven turnaround leaders for providing a continuum of support to other principals who need assistance. For example, an experienced principal could co-lead a low-performing school on a short-term basis as needed.

Possible Barriers Needing to be Addressed
- **Current higher education structures:** Ingrained procedures and willingness to change
- **Funding:** Funding will be needed to research, develop and disseminate human capital management tools; support mentoring and coaching programs; and to provide incentives to veteran principals as they support novice principals.
- **Time:** The implementation of recommendations will require time and effort. Partnerships for the completion of these recommendations will also require time from personnel. Existing demands on personnel are still in place and may require different thinking, re-assignment or additional personnel. Release time for coaches and coaching sessions will place a burden on schedules.
- **Geography and availability of personnel to serve as coaches:** Across Ohio, disparities exist regarding availability of available mentors to novice principals.

SUPPORTIVE EXPERIENCES

The principal workgroup identified many experiences and characteristics that may support the state's principals in their work. Many of these supports are internal (such as personal traits, relationships) that districts can encourage through their hiring practices and local activities. But the principal workgroup set forth the following analysis of existing gaps in external supports that may be addressed statewide.

Identified gaps and identified needs in the supportive experiences area include:
- Adequate communication and decision-making at all levels. Without adequate information, principals may not know the rationale for decisions but may make assumptions as they attempt to explain situations to their staff members.
- Mentoring relationship opportunities for all principals at different stages of their careers. After establishing that mentoring is highly supportive and important, the workgroup also recognized that defining high-quality mentorship is difficult. The fact that a principal is experienced and successful does not guarantee that he or she will be a good mentor. A prior Ohio mentoring program was not sustained because it was grant-based, expected too much time out of the building and incorporated assigned mentors who did not always follow through on assignments, activities or expectations.)
- An induction program for beginning principals.
- Capacity supports, such as teacher leaders and assistant principals, to assist with the increasing demands and responsibilities placed on principals;
- Support offered by educational service centers, especially in smaller districts.

Suggestions for Implementation and Action Steps
1. Establish a mentoring and coaching program supported by the Ohio Department of Education for principals across all career stages.
   a. Examine previously implemented programs and make necessary refinements to develop a statewide mentoring and coaching model.
   b. Require participation in the program for beginning principals or other principals identified as needing support.
   c. Focus the program on the benefits of a two- to three-year mentoring and coaching experience for beginning principals, rather than making mentorship a condition of licensure.
   d. Develop definitions of effective mentorship and coaching.
   e. Establish criteria for mentor and coach selection.

f. Recruit potential mentors and coaches.
g. Develop and implement a training program.
h. Create a system for mentor and coach assignments that includes a rotation schedule to ensure sustainability.
i. Identify high-quality mentors and coaches who have successful experience in similar situations, as well as the time and flexibility to work with beginning principals and principals at various career stages.
j. Following a training program, provide in-district and out-of-district mentors through a partnership with the Ohio Department of Education, higher education institutions, associations and local districts.
k. Establish peer support networks for on-going mentoring and coaching of principals in all career stages.
l. Provide support for one-on-one coaching; develop a shared platform for structured conversations.

2. Enhance and promote the Ohio Department of Education's *Principal's Toolkit* as a useful resource for principals in all career stages.
    a. Review resources currently available in the *Principal's Toolkit*.
    b. Perform gap analysis to determine if tools should be deleted, revised or added.
    c. Develop additional needed tools and eliminate unnecessary tools.
    d. Provide training on use of tools.

3. Establish a contact person at the Ohio Department of Education to focus on supporting principals and assisting school districts with various activities and/or requirements.
    a. Utilizing the Department contact, develop a statewide system to provide principals with information and training using a blended delivery approach of both face-to-face and online options. The system would involve organizations such as educational service centers, state support teams and professional organizations.

4. Redefine strategies for principals like distributive leadership and management models that tap the skills of other leaders, such as deans of students, teacher leaders, social workers and school counselors.

Possible Barriers Needing Addressed
- **Recruitment of high-quality mentors and coaches:** Mentors and coaches may not be available due to geography, time and willingness to commit to mentorships.
- **Constraints of union or contract:** An assigned building leader may experience constraints from a bargaining agreement that may not allow another (or outside) leader to work directly in certain situations. Such building leaders may need to develop memoranda of understanding.
- **Funding and resources:** Mentorship programs need to be developed to support effective mentorship. Often, time and money limit the availability of the mentor and the mentee to participate in effective coaching opportunities.

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORTS
With each new policy initiative, technological advance or demographic shift, school principals frequently find that they need additional training to help them lead their schools well. Without investment in ongoing professional development, major state and local initiatives — crafted in state legislatures, boards of education and state education agencies — are likely to fail.

Identified gaps and needs in ongoing professional development and supports:
- Training on running a multi-faceted organization effectively;
- Need for increased student support services in areas such as mental health and social supports for families;
- Allowing flexibility with funding and resources, including time, delegation of duties and assignments to allow the individual to have continual learning with peers and colleagues;

- Training for teachers and leaders in strategies for addressing gaps in student achievement and performance.

Isolated professional learning can lead to fragmented implementation and minimal impact. To have effective professional development and supports for principals, districts and buildings must align their missions and visions and support them through continuous professional development.

In Ohio, districts, rather than individual schools, control most resources available for professional development. Principals, however, need autonomy and authority over training decisions because they affect the building's performance, for which principals are held accountable. Professional development should be individualized to building and personal needs.

**Suggestions for Implementation and Action Steps**
1. Provide ongoing professional development for principals in all stages of their careers and differentiate course content based on individual needs.
   a. Provide collaborative opportunities for professional development for all principals within their regions and across the state on topics that include, but are not limited to:
      i. Closing the achievement gap;
      ii. Use of data;
      iii. Supporting and coaching teachers and teacher teams in improving instruction;
      iv. Running a multi-faceted organization;
      v. Other research-based topics (shaping a vision; creating a positive climate; cultivating leadership in others; improving instruction; and managing people, data and processes).
2. Include principals in the planning and allocation of resources to support building-based professional development needs.
   a. Release state and federal funds allocated through the state CCIP directly to buildings rather than to districts based upon specific building needs.
3. Assist principals in learning how to develop effective building-community partnerships that serve students' social-emotional needs.
   a. Enhance principals' skills in establishing community-school partnership networks including, but not limited to, mental health agencies and community organizations.

Possible Barriers Needing Addressed
- **Lack of visioning:** District leaders should build all strategies upon a continuous improvement model. They need to see the planning process as an important, necessary tactic that will incorporate organizational politics and compliance issues.
- **Culture, territory issues and coordination of efforts:** Organizational politics exist and are associated with the use of influence tactics to improve personal or organizational interests. These interests may be disrupted as changes are implemented**.**
- **Time:** An effective professional development program requires time for both developing and participating in classes. The time spent in these opportunities may take the principal away from the demands of the job. It will be important to prioritize and find alternative means for offering ongoing training and support.
- **Funding:** Effective professional development will require funding. It will be important to prioritize and find resources or alternative means for offering ongoing training for professional development.
- **Limited existence of peer-to-peer networks and cohorts:** Currently, professional organizations and institutions of higher education are not offering structured peer-to-peer support networks for principals.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Unanswered Questions

The workgroup's recommendations call for Ohio's agencies and organizations to take further actions focusing on support for our state's principals.
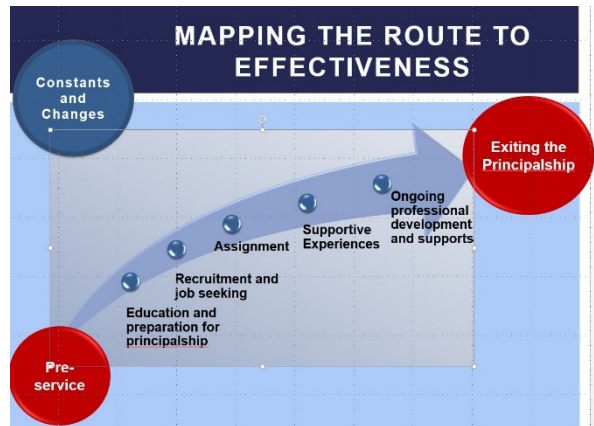
Institutions of Higher Education
- Develop and maintain universal admission criteria and selection tools;
- Develop and implement effective internship practices;
- Offer relevant trainings, course content and ongoing professional development by appropriate instructors with expertise.

Ohio Department of Education
- Redefine the role of the principal through revision of the *Ohio Standards for Principals;*
- Develop effective human capital tools and practices;
- Enhance and promote the Principal's Toolkit resources and train principals in the use of these resources;
- Establish program contact(s) at the Ohio Department of Education;
- Establish and support mentoring and coaching programs and networks in partnership with other entities;
- Offer training on pertinent topics;
- Allocate funds for supporting principal initiatives.

Partnerships with Local Districts, Organizations and State Agencies
- Establish and support mentoring and coaching programs in partnership with other entities;
- Establish structures for leadership opportunities and creation of a pipeline for identifying potential principals;
- Partner with local districts to address the social-emotional needs of students.
- Offer relevant trainings, course content and ongoing professional development by appropriate instructors with expertise.

To support the continued success of principals, the principal workgroup functioned as an advisory panel to identify areas needing attention. A few questions remain regarding the implementation of the recommendations.

1. What is a reasonable timeline for implementation of recommendations?
2. How will Ohio implement recommendations requiring funding?
3. How can Ohio ensure implementation at the local level?
4. How will we measure the effectiveness of recommendations implemented?
5. How will the job of principal become more manageable?
6. How will we convey that the role of principal is important and that most principals are highly effective, even though the job is quite demanding?

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Appendix

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
We extend special thanks to members of the Principal Workgroup for the efforts and expertise they provided in creating these recommendations.

Name	Role/ Title	Organization
Angie Adrean	Principal	Worthington Kilbourne High School, Worthington Schools
Diane Agnes	Principal	Woodward Park Middle School, Columbus City Schools
Betsy Apolito	Director	Region 10 State Support Team, Montgomery County Educational Service Center
Ken Baker	Executive Director	Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators
Julie Davis	Executive Director	Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators
Kevin Draper	Assistant Director	Office of Educator Effectiveness, Ohio Department of Education
Carolyn Everidge-Frey	Director	Office of Educator Effectiveness, Ohio Department of Education
Daniel Graves	Executive Director	Columbus City Schools
Jill Grubb	Associate Director	Office of Educator Effectiveness, Ohio Department of Education
Brenda Haas	Associate Vice Chancellor of P-16 Initiatives	Ohio Department of Higher Education
Kathy Harper	Project Facilitator	Assistant Superintendent, Greene County Educational Service Center
Cindy Hartman	Faculty	Educational Administration, Ohio University
Keith Horner	Superintendent	Wapakoneta City Schools
Mark Jones	Associate Executive Director	Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators
Stephanie Klingshirn	Principal	Mississiniwa Elementary, Mississinawa Valley
Cheryl Krohn	Center Strategic Administrator	Ohio Department of Education
Gretchen Liggens	Principal	Walton School, Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Jessica Mercerhill	Senior Director	Educator Preparation, Ohio Department of Higher Education

Name	Role/ Title	Organization
Dustin Miller	Principal	Dublin Jerome High School, Dublin City Schools
Alexandra Nannicola	Principal	Champion Central Elementary School, Champion Schools
James Nichols	Principal	Indian Hill Primary, Indian Hill Exempted Village School District
Brian Pohl	Principal	New Bremen High School, New Bremen Schools
Heather Powell	Principal	Williamsburg High School, Williamsburg Schools
Sara Roseberry	Principal	Hardin Houston Elementary, Hardin Houston Local Schools
Janet Routzong	Principal	Whetstone High School, Columbus City Schools
Sam Scavella	Principal	Glenville High School, Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Jeff Schiller	Assistant Principal	Center Elementary, Mayfield Schools
Jennifer Schwanke	Principal	Indian Run Elementary, Dublin Schools
Julia Simmerer	Senior Executive Director	Center for the Teaching Profession, Ohio Department of Education
David Stewart	Deputy Superintendent	South-Western City Schools
Jaime Stewart	Assistant Principal	Dublin Coffman High School, Dublin Schools
Jennifer Vargo	Principal	Broadleigh Elementary, Columbus City Schools
Pamela Wilson	Research Associate	Ohio University
Sajit Zachariah	Dean	College of Education and Human Services, Cleveland State University
Ted Zigler	Faculty	Ohio Dominican University

Identified Rewarding Experiences

As part of the process of examining supports provided, as well as demands and barriers placed on Ohio principals, the key stakeholders began by reflecting on a particularly rewarding experience in their careers to date, whether the experience occurred during their time as principals or while serving in a role supporting principals. They shared these experiences with the group of stakeholders:

- Opening a new school, hiring a whole staff and having a chance to set culture of the building.

- Watching the **support** of students and staff when we lost one of our own.

- Helping Natasha graduate.

- While working on a grant, I sat with the principal while she talked about her desires for her school. Then we designed a project to help meet one of her goals.

- My biggest moment so far has been creating a sensory room in our building and developing the purchase order and supports to go with it.

- Next year's staff meeting, we'll start with positives.

- Transformation from: "Those kids don't belong in here" to "They are all my kids."

- Receiving **recognition** at the state and national level for the **accomplishments** we have made in our building.

- Relationships – having a mentor principal who let me try things. I have a great mentor now. Developing creative solutions to solve problems, help children, coach and mentor teachers. Mentors and relationships help in developing school cultures that are effective for student learning.

- My favorite time as an administrator was during my time as an assistant principal. The principal set time aside monthly for big ideas…We had courageous conversations about topics that included a food pantry and staff daycare.

- Principals engaging in and sharing their appreciation for a professional learning opportunity that was created for them.

- Building relationships (partnerships), students, staff, parents, administrators and communities.

- Reaching new heights.

- Coaching new staff (experienced and inexperienced) to find their untapped strengths. Utilizing them inside and outside the classroom to improve the education/culture of our school.

- Developing the strengths of others led to restructuring a building.

- Vulnerability, having time to build genuine relationships with students, staff, families and other principals, celebrating watching others succeed.

- Seeing teachers and assistant principals develop into leaders.

- Along with my staff, provided opportunities for young men and women to earn a high school diploma and a certificate as a nurse aide.

- My favorite thing is my custodian saying, "If there is one thing I can say about you, is you get our students the help they need."

- I was told by the current principal that everything she has accomplished was only possible due to the foundation that I began when I was there.

- Helping building administrators in the day-to-day challenges of their jobs. Participating in the mentoring of beginning administrators.

- Best ever was the interaction with kids, building a principal licensure program, helping to start a school faculty, participating in the Ohio Council of Professors of Educational Administration.

- Joined Facebook a year ago, (student testimonials, info, stories and relationships).

- Creating a team that focuses on kids, creating team that works well together, creating a team that focuses on their own principal growth.

- After being selected to open a third new middle school, I was able to build a cohesive "new" staff from teachers pulled out of the two existing (and often *competing*) middle schools in the district.

- When I took all of the things I've learned about being a principal and turned it into a book on mentoring new principals and teachers. It was published this fall by ASCD.

- Principals advisory council, coffee shop, student voice, social media safety, positive digital footprint, dean of students position, become assistant principals in our district every year.

- Gave educational technology support to principal, had good relations with local superintendents.

- Experience with elementary, assigned responsibility to lead a three-building closure and consolidation to become one school. It took one year of planning, shared leadership and teamwork. After six years assigned to the high school, I was able to reconnect and celebrate these students and their accomplishments.

AREA: EDUCATION AND PREPARATION

GROUP SUMMARY:
1. As candidates are working on their professional principal administrator license, they should have required and supported on-the-job internship training.
2. Not enough vetting and direction of individuals with skills applicable to the job exists.
3. We need training and education that presents an accurate depiction of the realities of being a principal, including state requirements such as the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System and special education.
4. Exposure of the pre-service candidate to a variety of school environments is currently limited, making the candidate ill-prepared for certain assignments.

RESEARCH (as summarized by the workgroup):

Principal preparation programs are "out of sync" with accountability demands:
- Fewer than one-third focus on mission.
- Fewer than one-fourth focus on instruction.
- Fewer than one-third focus on assessments.
- Fewer than one-half focus on change.
- Fewer than one-fourth focus on organizing time.
- Fewer than 15 percent focus on literacy.

Educators learn leadership by studying key concepts and skills used by effective leaders. They also learn it by observing good models and through their own trial and error. Internship experiences may be weak, but principals may gain experience in leading during their internships.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	ACTION STEPS	POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO ADDRESS
Establish uniform guidelines for admission to principal licensure programs.	Develop and/or refine admission criteria: • Collaborate to determine consensus of criteria (higher education, the Department, local districts). • Establish baseline or minimum admission requirements. • Create and/or refine principal perceiver interview tool for enrollment in principal licensure programs. • Use universal principal state standards in selection criteria.	• Union Contracts. • Geography. • Time, Funding. • Qualifications of university personnel. • Principal standards from multiple groups/organizations exist; standards need to be aligned.

Require internship with a uniform structure including diverse experiences (such as experiences in special education requirements, central office, data analysis, curriculum, etc.)	Determine internship requirements:
	• Determine structure of internship
	• Define relationship between university and local school districts.
	• Provide release time for participation in authentic, job-embedded experiences.
	• Require diverse internships:
	   ○ In urban, suburban and rural settings;
	   ○ With various socio-economic populations;
	   ○ With populations representing varied cultures.	

Provide training and instructional experiences at the pre-service level on pertinent topics such as: • Serving special populations and meeting the needs of students (those who are gifted or English	Offer instruction in pertinent topics: • Establish virtual training for principals to practice necessary skills. • Credential pre-service principals in Ohio Teacher Evaluation System.	

language learners, as well as those with special education plans or mental health concerns). • Effective discipline (staff and student). • Leadership (individual and team). • Use of social media.	• Offer instruction delivered by current or former principals to pre-service principals. Conduct exit interviews from those completing graduate programs.	

AREA: RECRUITMENT AND JOB SEEKING

GROUP SUMMARY:

1. We need additional screening tools when recruiting individuals for principal positions.
2. It would be helpful to have a pipeline of potential principals. We should be intentional about identifying potential future leaders.
3. We think the role of principal should be seen as a "calling," not as just a "next step" in a career path.

RESEARCH (as summarized by the workgroup):

- Facilitate coordination between local school districts and preparation programs in the recruitment of aspiring principals.
- Forecast anticipated principal vacancies to help direct recruitment toward meeting specific needs.
- Compensate leaders effectively.
- When recruiting and retaining leaders (specific to rural areas), focus should include school culture, benefits, professional development and technical support for mentoring.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	ACTION STEPS	POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO ADDRESS
Redefine the role of principal	• Review, redefine and revise principal standards. • Implement the use of the newly created principal standards at various levels (higher education settings, local districts and at state-level organizations.	Time
Identify characteristics needed to be successful in the role of principal	• Select or develop a tool(s) to screen potential principals (for example, rubric or continuum). • Offer training in the use of screening tools.	Funding
Development or refinement of succession planning tools	• Formalize statewide resources for local administrators' use when developing an intentional succession plan. • Provide training in the use of the resources.	
Plan strategically in hiring practices	• Research and investigate research-based human resource management practices (such as Battelle for Kids – Human Capital information and others). • Develop tools to assist in human resource management. • Train individuals in the use of human resource management tools to aide in the identification and recruitment of principals.	Politics
Establish partnerships to support principal pipeline	• Establish partnerships between local school districts, educational service centers and area institutions of higher education to identify potential principal candidates.	Geography

AREA: ASSIGNMENT

GROUP SUMMARY:
We need:
1. Additional screening tools for proper placement, evaluation and employment.
2. "Onboarding" activities and supports at the local level.
3. An adequate acclimation time to evaluate assignment of the principal.
4. To address the equity and geography gaps in principal training and availability.

RESEARCH (as summarized by the workgroup):
- Principal training does not keep pace with the evolving role of principal.
- Assistant principals are often assigned managerial tasks, have limited instructional leadership practice and are not prepared to serve as principals.
- Roughly half of U.S. states have, for the first time, mandated mentoring for newly hired principals.
- Six large urban districts added mentors or principal supervisors and studied the effects over a four-year period; the principal pipeline information follows.

A principal pipeline initiative focused on the following strategies:
- Engaged top-level district leaders in succession planning and placement discussions.
- Introduced systematic data-informed procedures for hiring, including performance assessments such as role playing and school data review.
- Built new individual-level data systems to track experience, performance, and assessed competencies of principals and aspiring principals.
- Incorporated additional selection stages, including hiring pools, pre-service program selection and performance.

The principal pipeline initiative identified some challenges:
- Using performance assessments in the hiring process and developing and using individual-level data systems require significant investments of staff time.
- Selecting principal candidates with strong interpersonal skills is hard, because such skills are difficult to measure during the hiring process.

The principal pipeline experiences successes:
- Novice principals reported that the hiring process gave them useful feedback.
- Over time, more novice principals reported an "excellent" fit between the needs of their schools and their skills, experiences and interests.
- District leaders applauded novice principals' strong knowledge of instruction.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	ACTION STEPS	POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO ADDRESS
Plan strategically in placing principals in job assignments	• Research and investigate human resource management placement practices. • Utilize data systems to track experience, performance and assessed competencies of principals and aspiring principals. • Incorporate additional selection stages, including hiring pools and pre-service program selection and performance tools.	• Availability of personnel to serve as coaches • Geography • Time • Funding • Willingness to change • Current Higher Education structures
Create a mandated, statewide (mentoring) coaching program across all principal career stages.	• Establish principal coaching program. • Establish criteria for coach selection. • Identify high-quality coaches. • Provide necessary coaching training. • Establish leadership academies to support collaboration and learning.	

	• Provide support at the local level for professional development and coaching opportunities (time, funding, etc.)	
Establish partnerships to support "on-boarding" of principals	• Establish partnerships among local school districts and area institutions of higher education to keep course content relevant.	

AREA: SUPPORTIVE EXPERIENCES

GROUP SUMMARY:
1. We need improvement of communication and decision-making at all levels.
2. Without adequate information, educators may not know the rationale for decisions as they explain decisions to staff and thus may make assumptions that are not as accurate as possible.
3. We need mentoring relationship opportunities for all principals for different career stages.
4. An induction program for beginning principals would be helpful.
5. Principals are not receiving additional supports such as teacher leaders or assistant principals to help them with the increasing demands of their positions.
6. Educational service centers need to provide support, especially in smaller districts.

RESEARCH (as summarized by the workgroup):
- Defining high quality mentorship is difficult.
- The fact that a principal is experienced and successful does not guarantee that he or she will be a good mentor.
- Previous Ohio mentoring programs were grant-based and not sustainable. These programs expected too much time out of the building. Assigned mentors did not always follow through on assignments, activities and expectations.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	ACTION STEPS	POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO ADDRESS
Establish an Ohio Department of Education-supported mentoring program.	• Revive and revise the Ohio Entry Year Program/ Beginning Principal Mentoring Program • Examine the prior programs and make necessary refinements to develop a statewide mentoring and coaching model. • Focus the program on a two-to three year experience focused on mentoring and coaching rather than connecting it with licensure. • Establish criteria for mentor or coach selection. • Recruit potential mentors and coaches. • Develop and implement a training program. • Create a system for mentor and coach assignment rotation for sustainability.	• • • Recruitment of high-quality mentors and coaches Potential conflicts with collective bargaining agreements Funding and resources
Improve the Department's Principal's Toolkit so it is useful to principals in all career stages.	Revise the Department's Principal's Toolkit: • Review resources; • Perform gap analysis;	

	• Develop additional needed tools; • Eliminate unnecessary tools; • Provide training on use of tools.	
Establish a Department contact who focuses on supporting the recruitment and assignment of principals and their professional development.	As directed by the Department: • Develop statewide system to provide principals with information, initiatives and training through blended delivery methods combining face-to-face and online components. Include educational service centers, state support teams and professional organizations in the system.	
Create incentives for higher education to provide low-cost professional development experiences for principals.	Higher education: • Shift focus of training to creating better building leaders (rather than obtaining additional licensure such as an administrator – superintendent license). • Partner with local school districts and the Department to ensure effective programs meet the needs of principals.	

AREA: ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORTS

GROUP SUMMARY:
1. Make high-quality mentoring relationships available for all principals for different stages of their careers.
2. Include consistent, ongoing collegial check-ins that focus on providing support and not just on school accountability.
3. Training on running a multi-faceted organization effectively has been absent; fill this gap.
4. We need an increase in student support services (ex., mental health and social supports for families).
5. To support continued learning, allow flexibility with funding and human resources (including time, relegation of duties and assignments to other educators to allow the principal time for continued learning opportunities with peers and colleagues).
6. We need training for teachers and leaders in strategies for addressing gaps in student achievement and performance.

RESEARCH (as summarized by the workgroup):
- Most states continue to support isolated professional learning that leads to fragmentation of efforts and impact.
- District and building mission and vision are aligned and supported through continuous professional development.
- Districts, rather than the schools, control most of resources for professional development. Principals, however, need autonomy and authority over training affecting building performance, for which they are held accountable.
- Professional development should be individualized to building and personal needs.
- Key priorities for professional development are:
  - Shaping a vision;
  - Creating a positive climate;
  - Cultivating leadership in others;
  - Improving instruction;
  - Managing people, data and processes.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	ACTION STEPS	POSSIBLE BARRIERS TO ADDRESS
Develop and implement a principal mentoring program that addresses the needs of the beginning principal.	Establish effective mentorship program: - Develop a definition of effective mentorship. - Identify high-quality mentors who have successful experiences in similar situations, as well as the time and flexibility to work with beginning principals. - As mentors are trained, provide in-district and out-of-district mentors through a partnership with the Department, higher education institutions, associations and local districts. - Establish peer networks. - Provide support for one-on-one coaching; develop an audit tool for structured	- Funding - Time - Culture, territory issues, coordination of efforts - Address politics, compliance issues: district leadership should see processes as necessary, not hoops to jump through - All strategies should be built upon a continuous improvement model.

	conversations.

Provide ongoing professional development for principals in all stages of their careers and differentiate based on individual needs.	• Provide opportunities for principals to collaborate within their regions and statewide; topics to include (but are not limited to):
	  o Closing the achievement gap;
	  o Use of data;
	  o Supporting teachers and teacher teams;
	  o Running a multi-faceted organization.
	• Include research-based topics such as shaping a vision; creating a positive climate; cultivating leadership in others; improving instruction; and managing people, data, processes.

Provide flexibility with resources and funding to support building-based professional development needs.	• Use state and federal funds allocated to buildings based upon building needs (not necessarily tied to school improvement status).

Provide support for building-community partnerships to support student social-emotional needs.	• Establish community-school partnership networks including, but not limited to:
	  o Mental health agencies;
	  o Community organizations;
	  o Other organizations.

Principal Workgroup Supplement:
## Recommendations Supported by Research

OHIO PRINCIPAL WORKGROUP

PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Principal Task Force Recommendations

The Principal Workgroup made recommendations spanning the life cycle of a principal. The recommendations align with research on best practices for assuring healthy pipelines of qualified leaders, policies for retaining those leaders throughout their professional careers, and approaches for engaging with critical stakeholders to assure successful outcomes for schools and students.
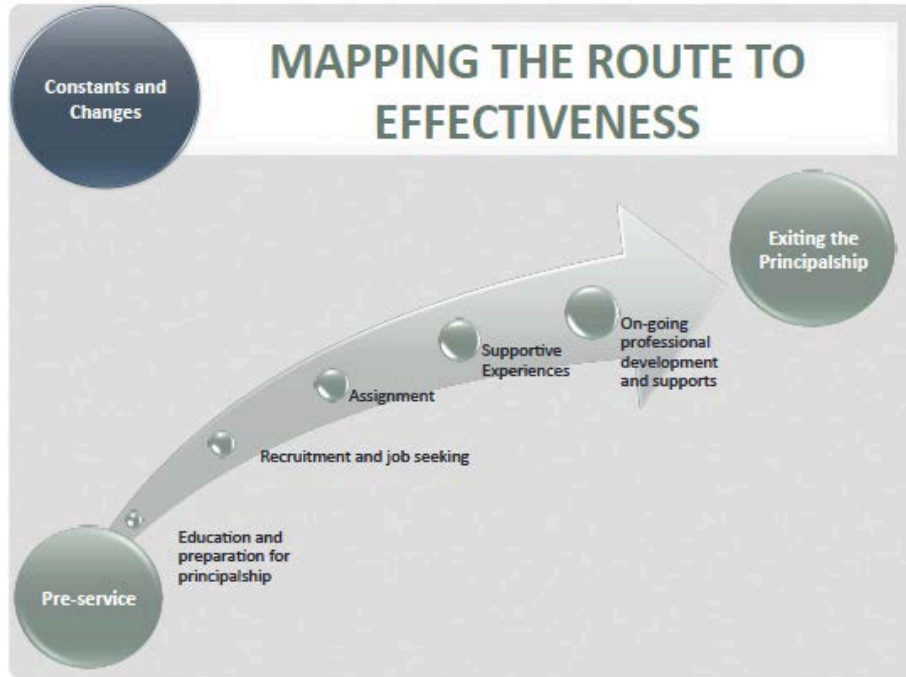
The Ohio Blue Ribbon Panel on Principal Preparation convened in 2012 to examine our state's principal preparation process. Panel members identified the following components they considered essential in their final report:

> "…Effective preparation programs are a continuum of experiences, not an isolated event. The body of research points to common elements/essential components of quality preparation programs:
> 1) Research-based instruction;
> 2) Curricular coherence;
> 3) Adult learning theory;
> 4) Problem-based instruction;
> 5) Experience in authentic contexts and internships;
> 6) Use of cohorts;
> 7) Utilization of mentors;
> 8) Emphasis on instructional leadership;
> 9) Change management; and
> 10) Organizational development.

These considerations remain relevant and parallel the recommendations provided below. A comparison of the recommendations from the 2012 Ohio Blue Ribbon Panel and the 2017 Principal Workgroup, which looked across the career span of a principal, are provided in the following recommendations.

Education and preparation for the principalship

Workgroup participants noted a gap between principal preparation programs, job demands and Ohio standards. This view is consistent with current research that highlights a disconnection between educational leadership programs and school reality (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen, 2007; Kearney and Valadez, 2015). Working to better align preparation program entry and exit requirements with outcomes and needs can enhance development of a stronger pipeline of certified candidates. Institutions of higher education must drive the review of program entrance and exit criteria while recognizing that each institution develops admission criteria and selection tools in concert with that institution's goals and mission. Further, review of program elements can provide needed ongoing professional development opportunities to educational leaders.

- ***Develop and maintain minimum admission criteria and common selection tools for principal licensure programs*** *(Institutions of Higher Education)*

  The Ohio Blue Ribbon Panel developed five goals in 2012. The first was to improve the recruitment and selection process for new principals. Four selection criteria were proposed: use of a selection tool (such as Gallop's Principal Insight); common interview protocol; a nomination process; and grade point average thresholds.

  Principal preparation programs must meet the requirements of their accrediting agencies. These requirements may not match the standards put forward by the state or by other educational entities, such as the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. However, working towards a better alignment through partnerships and coordination can improve the ability of preparation programs to meet the needs of local districts (Kearney and Valdez, 2015).

  Key stakeholders include representatives from the Ohio Department of Higher Education, the Ohio Department of Education, higher education institutions and Ohio K-12 districts. These stakeholders have a history of working together to address challenges, such as the transferability of credits within the state. Assuring K-12 representation will assist in development of meaningful preparation program criteria (Bottoms and O'Neill, 2001; Kearney and Valdez, 2015).

  Successful preparation programs operate in partnership with area districts (Darling – Hammond, et al., 2007). For program entry, district leaders such as superintendents make individual recommendations and assist in the candidate screening process, as well as the selection, evaluation and exit of principal certification candidates (Bottoms and O'Neill, 2001; Kearney and Valdez, 2015). Changes in entrance requirements to incorporate district personnel in the preparation programs should assure instructional support for real-world challenges across all elements of the principalship, including best practices in pedagogy, teacher management and school organizational functions.

  Some research indicates that tighter screening of candidates may reduce enrollment and institutions of higher education must prepare for that potential (Kearney and Valdez, 2015). However, individuals in smaller cohorts may benefit by assuring rigorous instruction and individualized attention across all elements of the principalship.

- ***Develop and implement effective principal internship practice*** *(Institutions of Higher Education)*

  One of the five goals of the Blue Ribbon Panel (2012) was to strengthen field experiences and internships in principal preparation programs. These programs must include relevant field experiences. Currently, each university establishes the number of hours and types of experiences needed by successful participants. Field experiences should be linked with academic coursework for more holistic and integrated learning (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Davis and Darling-Hammond, 2012). Prospective principals can gain practical experiences from a structured program that combines problem-based projects, case study,

academic coursework and meaningful internships. Students are increasingly participating in online, blended or virtual learning experiences. Creating leadership programs that leverage virtual platforms can extend the types of experiences available and assist developing leaders with the skills they need to lead and manage virtual educational environments (LaFrance and Beck, 2014). "It is clear that accessibility to technology and online simulations is a way to present internship experiences that are similar to school environments, placing the candidate in a scenario requiring decisions and consequences." (Staub and Bravender, 2014, p.77). This emerging mode of leadership development can be used throughout a principal's career to enhance and reinforce critical skills in diverse environments.

Development of strong internships is not only the responsibility of higher education; state and district policies must support partnerships to assure meaningful assignments. The core components of effective internships are:

- Collaboration between universities and school districts;
- Explicit assignments across a continuum of activities that provide opportunities for application of key skills;
- Diversity of assignments with an opportunity to work with diverse schools and communities;
- Clarity on internship expectations and rigorous evaluation;
- Experienced supervision with ongoing feedback (Davis and Darling-Hammond, 2012; Southern Regional Education Board, 2005).

Recruitment and job-seeking

- ***Establish structures for leadership opportunities and create a principal pipeline for identifying potential principal candidates***

There is a recognized need to assure a strong pipeline of leaders ready to assume the principalship. At least three characteristics are exacerbating a pending shortage of qualified candidates: candidates are not entering traditional administrative preparation programs; working conditions and demands discourage candidates from coming forward; and, for those entering the principalship, many are unprepared and lack supports to be successful, leading to high turnover (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007).

To develop a robust leadership pipeline, districts must put in place a formalized process for identification of high performing teachers. Teachers who demonstrate key competencies are needed. District and state human resource departments can be structured to facilitate the identification and recruitment of qualified candidates (Bottoms and O'Neill, 2001).

School districts that have a succession plan in place foster an environment where the identification of high-performing teachers or other leaders is intentional. Further, succession planning can support smooth transitions between leaders, minimizing potentially negative impacts to the school environment. However, public institutions, especially in the field of education, generally have informal or haphazard succession planning processes in place (Zepeda, Bengtson, and Parylo, 2012). Strong mentoring programs, partnerships with institutions of higher education and formalized procedures are important for successful succession planning.

Developing a nomination process assures that candidates have the qualities and support required to move successfully into a leadership role. Successful candidates are experienced teachers committed to educational excellence (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007). However, beyond identification these teacher leaders need to be provided with incentives to invest and develop into tomorrow's principals.

Assignment and supportive experiences

- ***Develop effective human capital tools and practices for employment and support of principals*** *(Ohio Department of Education)*

Four critical elements support successful principals: alignment of goals and strategies; cultures of continuous learning and accountability; effective management, flexibility, and feedback; and support and autonomy for staffing (Davis, 2014). Enhancing human capital for aspiring and current principals is part of the larger framework for professional development and career advancement.

A trusting partnership between district and state leaders is a necessary component of establishing and implementing educational policies that are effective and based on shared goals. Clarity of priorities and strategies can assist districts in assuring that supporting organizational structures, budgets and evaluation systems are in place.

- ***Enhance and promote The Principal Toolkit resources and train principals in the use of these resources*** *(Ohio Department of Education)*

Ohio has developed a communication toolkit for principals. Multiple handouts and brochures are available for use that offer information on graduation requirements and school report cards that can be provided to students and their parents. This practical information is designed to assist school leaders as they communicate with their communities. Workshops designed to review and discuss available materials can be part of the Ohio Department of Education's schedule of professional development.

Principals' information needs extend past information for the community. For example, The Great Principals at Scale Toolkit (Ikemoto, Taliaferro, Fenton, and Davis, 2014) provides instruments to districts seeking to assess the current state of their schools and develop strategies for improvement. The toolkit can be leveraged to assist in the development of a vision with supporting, prioritized strategies.

Ohio may develop different tools depending on the location of the district or the seniority of the principal. Specifically designed for beginning rural principals, Ashton and Duncan (2012) outline strategies in three primary areas: dealing with professional isolation; getting to know the community; and basic management skills. Among their toolkit recommendations are finding a mentor and establishing key relationships in the community. Other recommendations focus on developing personal resiliency and purpose, developing skills in time and task management, and scheduling time for instructional leadership.

- ***Establish program contact(s) at the Ohio Department of Education for direct support to principals*** *(Ohio Department of Education)*

A trusting partnership between district and state leaders is a necessary component of establishing and implementing educational policies that are effective and based on shared goals. Identification of a contact within the Ohio Department of Education who focuses on supporting principals can facilitate more open communication and help to create effective partnership between the Department and districts.

- ***Establish and support principal mentoring/coaching programs and networks in partnership with other entities*** *(Ohio Department of Education)*

In 2012, Ohio established the Beginning Principal Mentoring Program (BPMP). This grant-funded effort was a two-year program. Those with experience with the model who participated in the Principal Work Group felt it was successful at meeting its goals. Learning from that program can inform the development of new programs designed to provide mentoring, coaching and networking opportunities – to beginning principals as well as for aspiring and established principals.

Participation in a mentoring program increases principal effectiveness (Grissom and Harrington, 2010). Both the mentor and mentee benefit from a well-structured professional mentoring opportunity. Additionally, organizations benefit as well – mentorships improve morale, lower turnover and increase understanding of roles and responsibilities (Wallace Foundation, 2007).

A strong mentoring network is part of a broader, systemic effort to provide principals with the support and professional development they need to be effective. A successful structure for mentoring includes several critical elements:

- Training for mentors;
- Program evaluation;
- Sustained mentoring beyond entry-level;
- Funding for training, stipends and other support;
- Clear goals (Wallace Foundation, 2007).

A formalized approach to coaching, while similar to mentoring, can also develop more short-term needs around specific skills (Grissom and Harrington, 2010).

A critical step to establishing a statewide network is the determination of how mentors and coaches are selected, when and whether they are in- or out-district, or, potentially, from the business community, and how the goals of the program will be established and evaluated.

Among the elements to assist in both identifying and supporting aspiring principals is a robust mentoring network in which potential leaders are paired with those more experienced (Bottoms and O'Neill, 2001).

- ***Partner with local districts to address the social-emotional needs of students*** (Partnerships with Local Districts, Organizations, and State Agencies)

While this recommendation does not specifically address the development of a strong principal pipeline with career supports, it does highlight the underlying mission of educators to assure that programs and partnerships support the success of all students – and includes not only academic needs, but also social and emotional ones as well. A trusting partnership between district and state leaders is a necessary component of establishing and implementing educational policies that are effective and based on shared goals. Students succeed in challenging but supportive environments. Further, special student populations, such as those that are gifted or with special needs, may require additional tactics to assure that social and emotional needs are met.

Ohio has developed School Climate Guidelines. These are designed to provide districts with benchmarks and best practices on establishing a safe and nourishing educational environment. The Department can provide workshops reviewing the guidelines and assistance in developing supportive strategies.

Ongoing professional development and supports

- ***Offer relevant trainings, course content and other ongoing professional development for pre-service and practicing principals by appropriate instructor expertise*** (Institutions of Higher Education)

Effective ongoing professional development and support is part of a well-designed, systemic approach to providing principals experiences that align district goals and state standards with strategies to address daily challenges (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007). Ohio's districts are diverse with each unique in size, resources and communities. Consideration of these individual differences is important when establishing guidelines for professional development. For example, many rural districts lack the flexibility or resources to support needed educational opportunities for their leaders (Steward and Matthews, 2015).

- ***Offer training on pertinent topics*** (Ohio Department of Education)

Development of professional educational opportunities for school leaders should be developed based upon the standards. As stated earlier, the support and professional development elements should be part of a well-defined framework that links education, networks and workshops with state standard and individual needs.

Foundational recommendations

Overarching the proposed recommendations are two primary actions that the workgroup deemed necessary to support improved outcomes in the assignment and retention of principals in Ohio. The Department of Education should assure adequate allocation of funding to initiate and sustain programs and policies. Additionally, the workgroup recommended review and redefinition of the role of the principal through revision of The Ohio Standards for Principals.

- ***Assure adequate allocation of funding, with flexibility for spending*** *(Ohio Department of Education)*

Workgroup participants spoke highly of past initiatives in Ohio to establish mentoring network, leadership development or ongoing professional experiences. However, many of these were tied with grant funding that expired. Without building in budgetary items to support the efforts, they dwindled and disbanded. Further, development of a pool of academic leaders – perhaps through a more formalized teacher-leader endeavor – requires the ability to provide incentives or offset to other responsibilities.

Providing districts and buildings with flexibility in spending can allow them to better allocate funds for programs supporting academic leadership beyond the principal.

- ***Review and redefine the role of the principal*** *(Ohio Department of Education)*

Workgroup participants noted that as the responsibility scope of today's principal has grown, the capacity to participate in mentoring relationships, ongoing education, or other professional growth opportunities is limited. Being able to step away from the day-to-day requires an ability to delegate less crucial activities.

The role of the principal has evolved. Responsibilities range from managerial to instructional. Today's principal needs to provide effective coaching, create a vision that unifies the school and community, and address ever more demanding accountability requirements. The Beginning Principal Mentoring Program highlighted the changing expectations for today's principal (Ohio Department of Education, 2012).

The Ohio Standards for Principals provides the venue to reexamine and reprioritize key responsibilities. Ohio must do this with an eye to the differences between Ohio's K-12 districts in size, resources and student populations.

Developing and supporting successful principals requires realignment of priorities within each district to minimize practices that divert attention from more important activities, such as coaching or evaluation of student data (Davis, 2014).

Recommendations: a comparison

The recommendations from the 2015 Blue Ribbon Panel on Principal Preparation Programs and the 2017 Principal Workgroup, while not directly comparable, do overlap. The goals of these commissions differ with the Principal Workgroup reviewing the entire life cycle of a principal – from identification and education through overall career support – and not just the preparation and recruitment step.

2012 Blue Ribbon Panel	2017 Principal Workgroup
Foundational	
	Assure adequate allocation of funding, with flexibility for spending.
	Review and redefine the role of the principal.
Education and preparation for the principalship	
Ensure authentic program content and pedagogy to make sure coursework is relevant and current.	Develop and maintain minimum admission criteria and common selection tools for principal licensure programs.
Develop strong partnerships/collaboration among university-K-12 pairings and between university pairings/consortium-type – to support candidates in the field.	
Strengthen clinical and field experience/internship.	Develop and implement effective principal internship practice.
Embrace the metrics for principal preparation programs.	
Recruitment and job-seeking	
Strengthen recruitment and selection to bring in stronger candidates.	Establish structures for leadership opportunities and creation of a principal pipeline for identifying potential principal candidates.
Assignment and supportive experiences	
	Develop effective human capital tools and practices for employment and support of principals.
	Enhance and promote The Principal Toolkit resources and train principals in the use of these resources.
	Establish program contact(s) at the Ohio Department of Education for direct support to principals.
	Establish and support principal mentoring/ coaching programs and networks in partnership with other entities.
	Partner with local districts to address the social-emotional needs of students.
Ongoing professional development and supports	
	Offer relevant trainings, course content and other ongoing professional development for pre-service and practicing principals by appropriate instructors with expertise.
	Offer training on pertinent topics.

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