RE-IMAGINING STATE POLICY
A GUIDE TO BUILDING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT EFFECTIVE PRINCIPALS

VERSION 1.0

New Leaders

In 2000, New Leaders was founded to address the growing problems and glaring achievement gap in urban public schools by recruiting, selecting, training and supporting effective principals. Since its founding, New Leaders has trained more than 800 school leaders who are raising student achievement and graduation rates in high-need schools across the country. Over the past decade of training school leaders, we have seen the myriad of policy challenges that principals face day in and day out—from ill-fitting professional development to misaligned expectations of schools and their leaders. To help confront some of these obstacles, we began partnering with districts and states to design effective school leadership policies and practices for school systems nationwide.

Now, we're leveraging our experience preparing school leaders in twelve urban areas and our lessons from partnering with several districts and states on their leadership effectiveness policies to provide a guide for all states in how to build systems that support effective principals. **First and foremost, building a corps of strong school leaders isn't easy—but it is critically important.** On average, a principal accounts for 25 percent of a school's total impact on student achievement, while classroom factors and teachers explain one third.[1] Principals are crucial to cultivating a consistent and effective teaching corps. A 2012 study found that principals have a stronger effect on all students in a school than teachers do because teachers affect only their students.[2] Thought of another way, improving principal effectiveness has more overall impact than improving teacher effectiveness because of a principal's reach.[3] Principals also have an important role to play in advancing other education reform efforts such as school turnaround models and new data systems.

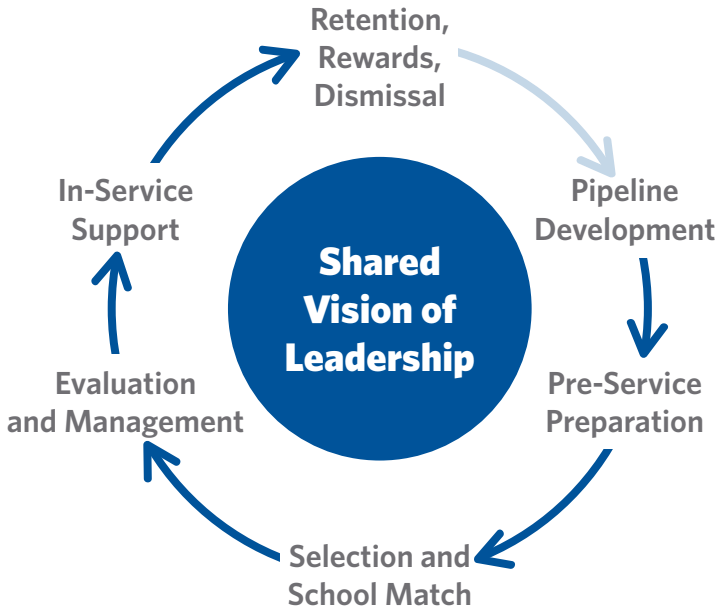
Because principals are fundamentally important to the success of students, we believe that state policies should enable strong school leaders, not hinder them. To that end, we assembled a guide to the state's role in each of the policy areas that affect leadership. This document seeks to identify the opportunities state leaders have to enact or improve policies and practices that are designed to attract, prepare, retain, develop, support and empower strong school leaders who will be integral players in the state's drive towards student success. The foundation for this work will be a shared vision of the principalship among all stakeholders through the adoption of high-quality principal performance standards. This vision will drive alignment throughout an entire human capital system—pipeline development, pre-service preparation and certification, selection and school match, evaluation and management, in-service support, and retention, rewards and dismissal.

1 Marzano, R.J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. (2005). School leadership that works: From research to results. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

2 Branch, G., Hanushek, E. A., & Rivkin, S. G. (2012). Estimating the effect of leaders on public sector productivity: The case of school principals. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education.

3 Id.

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS CONTINUUM



How to use this guide

Before tackling the full gamut of the Leadership Effectiveness Continuum, it may be helpful for a state to take inventory of the array of policies that impact principals. We suggest gathering data on the current state of the state, including current statutes, rules, and regulations that impact the way principals are trained, licensed, hired, evaluated, supported and developed, compensated, promoted and dismissed.

This guide can be used to identify the highest impact actions that a state can take to improve leadership. Notably, state influence can take many forms—some direct and some indirect. When considering the recommendations in each category, policymakers may reflect on the political climate in the state to determine which type of influence will be most effective. We recognize, for example, that state politics may make tough decisions on statutes changes an unrealistically hard hill to climb. States may instead choose to pursue change through the regulatory and rule-making process, even where they might prefer a change in statute. Given the varying contexts in states, we outline an ideal state in this guide, knowing that the opportunity to influence statutes or rules may be different for different states.

To support districts in their reform efforts, states can:

Set the rules of the game—

- **Statute**—State Departments of Education (SDOEs) can work with legislators to recommend changes in law that can be conducive to effective leadership. This includes both substantive (e.g., that principal evaluation should include direct observation of practice) and process (e.g., that the state will work to continually improve upon the initial design through the experience of implementation) characteristics, both of which are the backbone of effective leadership policy. We recommend that some key pieces be placed in statute. We'll indicate these recommended non-negotiables throughout the guide with the label **STATUTE**.
- **Rules**—SDOEs can also exercise influence in drafting rules and regulations that engender strong leadership. This avenue of actions is best supported by using a robust evidence base and stakeholder engagement process to lay the groundwork for good implementation. The evidence base helps provide the guiding principles of what works and helps focus stakeholder involvement. Remember, these new systems may touch many areas of leadership effectiveness, including processes for approving principal preparation programs, retention and reward systems for effective principals taking on more leadership responsibilities and new evaluation methods. However, as the state continues to update and improve systems over time, these details may shift to accommodate better or more effective processes. To stay nimble, we suggest putting these decisions in rules. Look for our recommendations marked **RULES** throughout the guide.

Model excellence—

Rather than re-inventing the wheel district by district, the state is in a unique position to build and provide a model of excellence for every district to use. Models can be used for anything – from a high-quality evaluation system to an example career ladder and salary structure. Use models as a high-yield investment to replicate excellence efficiently across the state. Look for suggested places to **MODEL** excellence in this guide.

Convene and build capacity—

Often the state can be most valuable as a facilitator of great ideas. Statewide or regional communities of practice offer a structured environment for districts to share best practices, new ideas and solutions to common challenges. Look for ways to **CONVENE** districts throughout this guide.

Invest in innovation—

Because we are still in the early years of recent reforms on teacher and leader quality, some of the best ideas have not been thought of yet. States can help encourage innovative solutions to challenges seen across districts. We'll give suggestions of when and how to **INVEST** in new ideas. When these ideas bear fruit and generate effective new practices, consider creating new models of excellence.

Provide public accountability—

More than monitoring compliance, the state can and should act as a public servant that holds districts and statewide programs accountable for excellence. For leadership development, this may mean designing data dashboards that capture, report and focus on outcomes that demonstrate the effectiveness of principal preparation programs.

Accountability also means knowing how well systems are doing and learning from successes and challenges. Consider places where the state can design and implement a continuous learning model that evaluates progress over time as well as recognizes road bumps midstream and course corrects.

TOOLS TO USE

We've assembled a set of ready-to-use tools that help states accelerate design and increase time and resources spent on implementation. In places where we have user-friendly tools to adopt or guide your work, we'll label them with this symbol.

A quick reference to recommendations in this guide	
Shared Vision of Leadership	Revise school leadership standards to focus principals on increasing teacher effectiveness and improving student outcomes Establish an evidence-based infrastructure and culture
Pipeline Development	Foster the role of the teacher leader Create clear and easy to navigate career paths for effective teachers
Pre-Service Preparation	Raise the bar for principal preparation programs Expand the pipeline of effective teachers and principals by opening the doors of certification to other innovative programs Hold all principal preparation programs accountable for outcomes Reinvest the fruitless "Master's Degree Bump" in more effective approaches Align licensure to school leadership standards and increase its rigor
Selection and School Match	Align job descriptions to school leadership standards Design and distribute high-quality principal hiring tools for districts Embed succession planning into districts
Evaluation and Management	Design a strong and simple model evaluation system for districts to adopt or adapt Support high-quality implementation by building district capacity and alignment for implementation of principal evaluation and support Align school accountability with teacher and principal evaluation and support
In-Service Support	Upgrade professional learning opportunities for principals Ensure that the new principal role is sustainable
Retention, Rewards and Dismissal	Codify the link between evaluation results and personnel decisions Recognize and reward effective principals

SHARED VISION OF LEADERSHIP

The foundation of an effective principal corps is the shared definition of what good leadership looks like. Fundamentally, the role of the principal is to lift up the culture of schools, build and cultivate a thriving teaching corps and instill and support high instructional standards in the fabric of schools.

To build shared vision of leadership, we recommend that you:

- Revise school leadership standards to focus principals on increasing teacher effectiveness and improving student outcomes
- Establish an evidence-based infrastructure and culture

Revise school leadership standards to focus principals on increasing teacher effectiveness and improving student outcomes

Recommendation: Set in **STATUTE** or **RULES** the standards of school leadership, which should be short, evidence-based and actionable. Standards should focus on the most important aspects of a principal's job—instructional leadership, talent management and school culture. These standards should directly inform all aspects of the leadership cycle.

Use these standards to undergird the Leadership Effectiveness Continuum and convene all stakeholders early in the process. This is especially important for the array of policies affecting principals that often occur in silo offices across a SDOE. For example, those responsible for renewing educator preparation programs may not be in regular contact with those responsible for licensing principals. A state can continue to cultivate common expectations across stakeholder groups by introducing the new standards and systems to district leaders and heads of preparation programs. What may seem like common sense is unfortunately not common practice—every state office that impacts the Leadership Effectiveness Continuum should have a shared understanding and consistent execution of effective leadership. Ensure that policies and practices are anchored in these standards and that SDOE leaders across different areas can articulate how they are embedding and advancing them.

Rationale:

- A concrete vision of success and theory of action helps align expectations across the career trajectory of principals, from recruitment of aspiring leaders through the development and retention of highly-effective veteran principals.
- We have seen instructional leadership, talent management and culture building as important roles for effective principals to play. As leaders of instruction in schools, principals can take certain actions (or delegate to the leadership team) to promote growth in student learning—including promoting rigorous curriculum, high-quality instructional practice and the use of achievement data to drive improvement and interventions.
- We've also identified talent management and adult leadership as fundamental to the success of a principal. Through an in-depth analysis of the leadership practices in more than 200 district and charter schools that saw substantial gains in student achievement in seven urban areas, New Leaders found that principals can amplify great teaching by developing teachers, managing talent and creating a great place to work. New Leaders provides an in-depth look at actions principals can take to amplify great teachers in *Playmakers: How Great Principals Build and Lead Great Teams of Teachers.*
- Finally, building a culture of high-achievement is crucial to turning around high-need schools. Principals take actions to build a culture of high expectations, align adult behavior and systems with that culture and engage families.

Establish an evidence-based infrastructure and culture

Recommendation: INVEST in the study of teachers and leaders rated as highly effective to identify replicable practices and inform professional development, selection and preparation program content. This will require a robust learning agenda that first identifies the principal actions and school practices in schools with dramatic student achievement gains and connects that learning to the policies and practices at the district and state level. Through this process, a state can identify the state and district policies and practices that set the conditions for dramatic student achievement gains.

The periodic refinement of a vision of school leadership, based upon what works in schools, will drive quality throughout the Leadership Effectiveness Continuum through **RULES**.

Rationale:

- It is critical that research about what works be rigorous and that results be delivered as constructive feedback in a form that can be used by schools and districts. Through an established and well developed learning agenda, a state can continuously learn from innovative districts and schools that are seeing improved results for students.

TOOLS TO USE

New Leaders Standards of Instructional Practice

New Leaders *Playmakers: How Great Principals Build and Lead Great Teams of Teachers*

PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT

Getting great talent in the principal's chair starts with getting great talent in the school system writ large. This happens through two equally important avenues—developing talent already in the leadership pipeline and expanding the pipeline to bring new talent into the system. In both cases, we recommend that states consider ways to identify, retain and create experiences for teachers and teacher leaders before they enter a principal preparation program. By doing so, states can create the appropriate incentives to continue the leadership trajectory for teachers as well as provide the necessary experiences to practice critical leadership skills.

Like all professionals, educators expect and want upwardly mobile career trajectories. States can help educators across districts by creating clear and easy to navigate career paths. Though this is traditionally the sole responsibility of districts, states can help set districts up for success.

To build a strong pipeline we recommend that you:

- Foster the role of the teacher leader
- Create clear and easy to navigate career paths for effective teachers

Foster the role of the teacher leader

Recommendation: Remove barriers to the development of teacher leaders. Titles can vary state by state and even district by district; in this guide, teacher leaders are classroom teachers or master educators who take on additional leadership roles in their schools—from coaching and mentoring struggling peers to leading grade teams. Often state and local laws or collectively bargained agreements restrict the types of leadership activities that teachers can assume without receiving additional levels of certification, such as observing and providing feedback to peers. If appropriate in your state, consider removing this barrier through **RULES** or **STATUTE** and allowing teachers who have demonstrated effectiveness to assume more leadership responsibilities, including providing supervision and giving feedback to other teachers.

This will help districts build strong pipelines that identify high-potential master teachers and teacher leaders in order to cultivate leadership talent early and develop that talent over time. Districts can also be **CONVENED** to collaboratively think through how to provide incentives and career pathways for strong teachers, providing salary increases for those effective educators who take on expanded leadership roles. During these sessions, consider providing technical assistance on structuring the teacher leader role to support principals in conducting teacher evaluations and instructional leadership activities.

Rationale:

- Potential school leaders need a lot of practice with adult leadership. Both through improved clinical experiences during principal preparation programs (described in the next section) as well as through increased responsibility in teacher leader roles, effective teachers can have hands-on practice prior to taking on a principalship. For example, teachers can practice observing classrooms, giving feedback on instructional practice and analyzing student data.
- In order for principals to execute on their myriad expectations, they must build school leadership capacity to support their work. Encouraging teachers to serve on leadership teams and delegating authority allows principals to more effectively manage a school and provides teachers with ownership over school decisions.

Create clear and easy to navigate career paths for effective teachers

Recommendation: Create **MODEL** pathways that keep great teachers in the classroom while simultaneously expanding their reach as master teacher, coach or teacher leader. These pathways should be inclusive of pay inflections (see Retention, Rewards and Dismissals) and requirements for additional certification (see Preparation and Licensure), and if applicable in your state, can also include sample collective bargaining language to use in union negotiations. Consider **CONVENING** districts to share best practices, developing **MODELS** collaboratively and **INVESTING** in innovative structures that are showing promise.

Rationale:

- Great teachers have other job options, both inside and outside the classroom. More than ever, teachers are leaving the teaching profession to pursue other opportunities. According to data from the Department of Education, 25 years ago the mode of teacher experience was 15 years, but by 2007 that number had dropped to only one year of experience.[4]
- More than 75 percent of highly-effective teachers indicated that they would have stayed at their schools if their main issues for leaving had been addressed.[5]

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (DC)

The District of Columbia Public School System (DCPS) recently developed a new pathway for teachers called the Leadership Initiative for Teachers or LIFT. The career ladder guides DCPS teachers on the path to a long career both inside and outside of the classroom. LIFT is a five-stage career ladder that provides all teachers with opportunities for growth, leadership and recognition.

TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (TPA)

The International Summit on the Teaching Profession, Stanford University and Pearson are collaborating to deliver a nationally available, performance-based assessment for measuring the effectiveness of teacher candidates. The project has been supported by a consortium of more than 20 states and their state departments of education, licensure boards and institutes of higher education. Pearson will provide Stanford University with the capability to deliver the TPA nationally via a web-based platform that allows for electronic submission and nationwide scoring of the assessment.

The performance assessments are meant to predict a teacher's later effectiveness as well as help teachers improve their practice.

4 Omer, S. (2011, September 26). Classroom 'crisis': Many teachers have little or no experience. *NBC News*. Retrieved from http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44505094/ns/us_news-education_nation/t/classroom-crisis-many-teachers-have-little-or-no-experience/#.UG-cfXCAApw

5 The New Teacher Project (2012). The irreplaceables: understanding the real retention crisis in America's urban schools. Brooklyn, NY: The New Teacher Project.

PRE-SERVICE PREPARATION

The current system of principal preparation is broken—nearly every state has more certified administrators than they need, but there is a shortage of leaders with the necessary competencies needed to help schools succeed. Many teachers seek educational administration degrees in order to advance up a salary schedule rather than as a pathway to strengthening leadership skills and becoming a principal. States can change the incentives and expectations for principal preparation and licensure and therefore the quality of leaders trained.

To prepare and license effective educators, we recommend that you:

- Raise the bar for principal preparation programs
- Expand the pipeline of effective teachers and principals by opening the doors of preparation to innovative programs
- Hold all principal preparation programs accountable for outcomes
- Reinvest the fruitless "Master's Degree Bump" in more effective approaches
- Align licensure to school leadership standards and increase its rigor

Raise the bar for principal preparation programs

Recommendation: In **RULES**, raise expectations for the quality of principal preparation that the state approves. Components should include:

- A defined competency framework that describes the set of skills, knowledge, and dispositions a principal must have,
- Strategic, proactive, and targeted recruiting strategies;
- Highly selective selection based on clear criteria and evaluation (including effectiveness as a teacher, strong instructional skills, belief in the potential of every child, demonstrated adult leadership potential, and a goal of actually becoming a school leader);
- Research-based content and curriculum aligned to the state's definition of leadership effectiveness; clinical practice in an authentic setting with opportunities to lead adults, make mistakes, and grow that is aligned to the competency framework along with an assessment of candidate practice as a part of program completion;
- Ongoing support for graduates; and
- Continuous improvement and use of data to assess the effectiveness of their principals and their programs.

ILLINOIS

Beginning in 2005 with the work of the Commission on School Leader Preparation, Illinois has been working to strengthen principal preparation. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) have collaboratively developed standards-based program approval criteria, which all programs must be approved under by July 2013.

The new process approves programs that are highly selective, clinically intensive, results-oriented and state supported.

Any states considering such a change should be mindful of implementation risks, such as:

(1) Duplicative and bureaucratic review processes that still orient toward Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)

(2) IHEs or other applicants may circumvent the intent of the new process by presenting the appearance (but not enacting) selectivity in candidates and in rigorous internships

(3) Review boards may lack political will to remove approval from existing programs

(4) Missing the need to re-allocate resources at the state and district level to support clinical work

We should say at the outset that we are not alone in wanting improvement in this area. NCATE, the leading organization certifying programs, is in the process of revising its standards and certification processes. We are optimistic about their efforts to make the process more rigorous and outcomes-focused and will closely follow this process. As this new process will most likely be in place only in 2016, we hope states will continue leading this effort and take action in the near future.

We also suggest that **RULES** ensure that all preparation programs pair traditional classroom preparation with hands-on learning that provides a practice-rich clinical component (or practicum) in an authentic setting where candidates can be evaluated on their practice as part of program completion. This can be achieved by requiring that participants serve in a role that is dedicated to adult leadership activities at least 50 percent of the time, such as master teacher, teacher leader, assistant principal or principal resident. Currently, clinical practicums can be insufficient to provide authentic leadership experiences for program participants. Activities such as shadowing a principal after school hours or providing administrative support during a track meet do not provide the necessary immersion in leadership responsibilities for program participants to develop their skills. Additional **RULES** or **STATUTES** may need to be altered to provide license flexibility for these educators (see below).

To create opportunities for school leader candidates to have school-based experiences, states should **INVEST** or **CONVENE** programs with districts to develop meaningful partnerships that meet district needs.

Finally, consider the process by which the state approves programs. Raising expectations and standards is a good first step in helping to elevate preparation programs, but the implementation of standards through a rigorous approval process will help ensure high-quality across the board. A rigorous process includes both initial approval as well as monitoring and renewal (see holding programs accountable below).

Rationale:

- While preparation in the classroom is important, pairing coursework with school-based opportunities to practice adult leadership reinforces key competencies and skills that effective leaders need to be successful. The hard work of being a school leader takes practice. As one example, being able to sit down with a teacher and have a difficult conversation about performance while still keeping that educator inspired is a skill only mastered through repeated practice in adult leadership skills. In one survey, 96 percent of administrators agreed that on-the-job experience had been better training than their graduate programs.[6]
- Because preparation programs can assess readiness based on observations of candidate practice in an authentic setting, clinical practice also allows the state to license based on a demonstration of skills.

6 Farkas, S., Johnson, J., & Duffett, A., with Syat, B. & Vine, J. (2003). Rolling Up Their Sleeves: Superintendents and Principals Talk About What's Needed to Fix Public Schools. New York, NY: Public Agenda.

Expand the pipeline of effective teachers and principals by opening the doors of preparation to innovative programs

Recommendation: Develop a rigorous approval process in **RULES** that allows institutions other than schools of education to apply to be approved and accredited principal preparation programs—including non-profit organizations and school systems—so long as the programs include best practices related to selection, content, clinical practice and candidate assessment. This is often referred to as "alternative certification" pathways, but we suggest making good preparation available by any provider—university based or not. Rather than creating separate processes for "alternative" programs, merely streamline the process to allow all high-quality programs to be approved by the state.

Rationale:

- Opening new routes to preparation, while maintaining high standards for all preparation programs, will provide effective sitting educators—including current assistant principals, teacher leaders, and others—as well as great educators returning to the profession—with multiple, high-quality paths to becoming a principal.
- Currently the needs of school districts are not being met—there are challenges with the current supply, capacity and preparation of principals. Non-traditional providers can work in conjunction with districts to address their specific needs, such as building a pipeline of effective leaders for rural communities.
- Non-university providers can innovate and find new methods for preparation that can be shared with the rest of the sector. This learning process will enhance the state's research and development role as a thought convener and disseminator of successful practices.
- If New Leaders experience as a non-traditional provider focused on high-quality selection is any guide, alternative certification programs could produce important results in the percentage of graduates using their degrees to move into the principalship. Whereas only 20 to 30 percent of graduates from traditional programs have served as principals,[7] over 70 percent of New Leaders graduates have served as principals.

Hold all principal preparation programs accountable for outcomes

Recommendation: Through **RULES**, hold all preparation programs, traditional and non-traditional alike, accountable to the same outcome standards and require them to learn from their results. Collect and publicly report data on program results and use specified outcome measures (including their graduates' placement and retention in school leadership roles, and satisfaction of district partners) for accountability purposes and program improvement. We would also suggest that states require programs to collect and report on the effectiveness of their graduates (including impact on student achievement while being mindful of any employee privacy issues that may arise). Given the challenges of using student achievement to evaluate principal preparation programs, we suggest that states be very thoughtful in the way that principal effectiveness and student outcome data is used for accountability by waiting until a program has a sufficient number of graduates with experience as principals before using this type of data. Since student graduate effectiveness data may take some time to accumulate, states should have an initial heavy focus on program success in graduate placement as school leaders and satisfaction measures from district partners and participants. Use this data as part of a continuous learning agenda to refine and improve state policies on principal preparation, evaluation and certification.

If a program does not have strong outcomes, the state has the opportunity to take a hard line in reviewing its practices—placing a very high bar on their demonstration of selectivity on the front end, quality content aligned with new principal expectations, quality of clinical practice, rigor of participant assessment and strength of district partnerships. For programs that do not consistently meet outcomes or program design criteria, a state can require that programs improve before being renewed to operate in the state.

We recommend that programs submit yearly data reports to the state as part of the monitoring process, but differentiate an intensive review process for programs based on their continued success. For example, programs that are excelling at producing effective school leaders may not need to be reviewed for five years whereas as moderately successful program may need to be reviewed every three years.

Rationale:

- This data can be used to hold programs accountable for improvements by expanding programs that produce effective graduates and closing programs or denying approval renewal for programs that continue to be low-performing.
- Data transparency will also be a useful tool for districts seeking to make better hiring decisions (see Selection and School Match) and for aspiring principals choosing the best programs.
- By implementing a strong review and approval process, states can reduce the number of programs that graduate large numbers of ineffective principals. Currently, many states face the challenge of too many programs that produce too few high-quality graduates. Changing the system helps ensure resources are being spent on effectively increasing the supply of high-quality principals.

Reinvest the fruitless "Master's degree bump" in more effective approaches

Recommendation: Discourage districts from utilizing the "Master's degree bump" where candidates in education administration programs receive a salary increase solely because they obtain a Master's degree. Similar to the most recent Teacher Incentive Fund program, consider **INVESTING** in districts that shift compensation systems to focus on effectiveness and enacting **RULES** or **STATUTES** that bar compensation increases solely on receiving education administration degrees. Also consider **RULES** as part of the program approval process that require candidates for preparation programs to demonstrate effectiveness as teachers, where data is available, in order to be admitted.

7 Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., Meyerson, D., Orr, M.T., & Cohen, C. (2007). Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.

Suggest that districts use the salary savings to invest in teacher leader roles (see above) and other incentives that expand the reach of effective teachers.

Rationale:

- In nearly every state, the current principal preparation structure is producing too many certified administrators and many of these candidates lack the necessary skills to be effective school leaders. Under this system, preparation programs see students enroll who are attending preparation programs without any intent to become a principal. Removing the salary increase incentive of a Masters bump helps alleviate this problem.
- This quality challenge is driven in part by local teacher salary structures, which incent teachers to seek administrative degrees regardless of interest in leadership roles and therefore provide few incentives for programs to improve the rigor of their coursework with a focus on actually preparing candidates to successfully lead schools.[8]
- While a Master's degree can certainly be useful for building administrators, course work often lacks focus on the day-to-day responsibilities of principals. This lack of focus is often a result of programs targeting their content to teachers seeking Master's degrees rather than coursework tailored to candidates preparing to be effective principals.[9]

FLORIDA
In 2011, the state legislature tackled the pervasive "Master's degree bump" challenge by enacting S.B. 736.

"Advanced degrees.—A district school board may not use advanced degrees in setting a salary schedule for instructional personnel or school administrators hired on or after July 1, 2011, unless the advanced degree is held in the individual's area of certification and is only a salary supplement."

Align licensure to school leadership standards and increase its rigor

Recommendation: Guard against divergent expectations for candidates in a preparation program, those seeking licensure and the roles and responsibilities of principals on the job. While setting expectations for preparation programs in **RULES**, we suggest strongly aligning the state principal standards and what it takes to graduate from a preparation program and receive a license.

To clarify (and raise) expectations for early career educators and those who have more experience as a principal, consider using **RULES** or **STATUTE** to differentiate between a probationary license and a permanent one. A probationary license can be issued to educators who have demonstrated two years of effective teaching, have been trained and certified (or provided a certificate) in conducting teacher observations and are entering a state approved preparation program. Creating this probationary license allows teacher leaders and master teachers the latitude to practice skills such as evaluating teachers. Attaining the probationary license should align with preparation program selection criteria; therefore, use **RULES** or **STATUTE** to remove any additional or extraneous criteria. Allow a program participant to serve as an assistant principal while holding a probationary license, but ensure readiness to serve as a principal by requiring that participants complete a preparation program first in addition to holding a probationary license.

A professional license can be granted to school leaders who have demonstrated effectiveness over time. Use the professional license process to assess the effectiveness of principals serving several years with a probationary license. Note: we do not suggest making the license permanent. Rather, consider a license renewal process that continues to take effectiveness into account.

Based on your confidence in the accuracy and reliability of district evaluation systems, consider tying a loss of professional or probationary license to chronic ineffectiveness.

Finally, create a simple, but rigorous certification reciprocity process through which talented educators from other states can become certified. This is an opportunity for states to **CONVENE** and develop multi-state reciprocity criteria.

Rationale:

- Fundamentally, a professional license certifies that individuals are ready to assume the full duties and responsibilities of their craft. For principals, this means mastering content and coursework, but it also means demonstrating the skills and practices that are necessary to run a high-achieving school. Readiness for a leadership role should be the primary determination for who receives a probationary license and consistent effectiveness in the role of principal the primary determination for a professional license.
- A comprehensive licensure system recognizes the difference between a novice principal applicant and a seasoned professional looking to grow in their mastery. Suggested areas of growth and professional development may also be added to each level to help guide districts and local superintendents as they consider improvement plans for their personnel.
- License renewal is based on competency and outputs rather than inputs of time served, hours of professional development acquired or other data that does not demonstrate how effective a principal is at his or her job.

TOOLS TO USE
New Leaders memo on principal preparation program approval

8 National Governors Association (2011). State Policies to Improve the Effectiveness of School Principals. Washington, DC: National Governors Association.

9 Hess, F.M., & Kelly, A.P. (2005). Learning to Lead? What Gets Taught in Principal Preparation Programs. Cambridge, MA: Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government.

SELECTION AND SCHOOL MATCH

Even with a strong pipeline of potential school leaders and effective preparation to meet the realities of the job, districts still face the tricky job of selecting and matching talented leaders with schools that will most benefit from their strengths. The nuance of matching the skills of a leader with the needs of a school requires valuable local knowledge—in other words, the state role here is to support and encourage not be highly directive.

To select effective leaders and match them with appropriate schools, we recommend that you:

- Align job descriptions to school leadership standards
- Design and distribute high-quality principal hiring tools for districts
- Embed succession planning into districts

Align job descriptions to school leadership standards

Recommendation: Encourage districts to share best practices on aligning expectations of principal job duties with the vision of effective leadership. Help foster discussion by **CONVENING** district workgroups, especially clustered by region, to develop common job descriptions that match to the statewide understanding of great leaders.

Rationale:

- Aligning standards of instructional practice to job descriptions helps maintain high and consistent expectations for aspiring and sitting principals.

Design and distribute high-quality principal hiring tools for districts

Recommendation: Provide school systems with **MODEL** tools that would allow them to hire principals with the competencies they need to succeed. Consider providing districts sample rubrics for evaluating important selection competencies. Districts and practitioners can also be **CONVENED** to build local capacity for understanding data about current principal performance and specific school needs.

Rationale:

- States have a role in providing model tools that districts can use to hire great leaders. Currently schools and districts are hiring principals that lack the necessary skills to be effective school leaders (see also Preparation and Licensure).
- These tools, templates and processes are often expensive and time-consuming to create, requiring expertise. States can play a leadership role and gain economies of scale by providing model hiring tools, practices and processes. States can help districts hire principals with the core competencies of effective leaders—those that establish a clear and compelling vision for high-quality instruction at the school; hire, develop and evaluate teachers against those expectations for instruction; and build a school culture that retains great teachers and helps them thrive.

Embed succession planning into districts

Recommendation: Help districts be forward thinking as it relates to their own pipeline and talent development for the future by **CONVENING** districts to discuss succession planning and processes to identify specific schools' needs, such as turnaround schools or high schools.

Rationale:

- Great districts have a clear list of potential leaders at the assistant principal and teacher leader levels. By identifying talent early, districts can track their progress, monitor their strengths and provide targeted development to address challenge areas.

EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT

More than just an accountability system to sort principals into levels of performance, the evaluation process is meant to function as an integral part of a performance management system that will develop and support on-going growth of principals. Principals and their evaluators throughout the state will need high-quality introductory training on the standards, expectations and process of the new evaluation system.

And because matching state and district expectations for principals to their own goals for success is important, the evaluation system (either the state model or a district alternative) should be based on the statewide standards of school leadership.

To evaluate and manage effective leaders, we recommend that you:

- Design a strong and simple model evaluation system for districts to adopt or adapt
- Support high-quality implementation by building district capacity and alignment for implementation of principal evaluation and support
- Align school accountability with teacher and principal evaluation and support

COLORADO

Passed in 2010, SB10-191 establishes new systems of educator evaluation based significantly on student achievement and requires the State Board to develop additional rules. The resulting regulations—termed "The Teacher Quality Standards and Elements" (TQSE)—were approved and made into law by the legislature with HB 1001. Select school districts (chosen on the basis of interest and varying stages of readiness and geographic size distribution) have begun piloting the State Model System.

Design a strong and simple model evaluation system for districts to adopt or adapt

Recommendation: Set a floor for all principal evaluations by including in **STATUTE** requirements that principal evaluations be used for continual improvement of instruction; meaningfully differentiate by four levels of performance; use multiple measures in determining performance levels including student achievement outcomes; evaluate principals on an annual basis; provide clear, timely and useful feedback aligned to professional development or support; and be used to inform personnel decisions. A state can also remove the burden of system design on districts by creating a strong and simple **MODEL** for them to adopt or adapt. The

model should include high-quality, open-source tools for assessing practice (e.g., 360 survey instruments, principal manager observational tools on principal practice and online evaluation instruments) and outcomes (e.g., valid and consistent student growth measures).

Look for ways to make data from end-of-the-year student assessments available sooner so that evaluators can provide timely, summative ratings of principals. Also be flexible in the timeline for submitting final ratings for principals. When data lags, it creates a domino effect in the evaluation process and may delay the ability of evaluators to submit ratings by June. One potential solution is to allow districts to make preliminary assessments of principals and to adjust ratings when more data becomes available.

Rationale:

- Good evaluation systems account for both inputs (professional practice) and outputs (student outcomes). They include a focused set of leadership actions that can be connected with research evidence to improve student achievement. These standards further elaborate specific competencies but avoid trying to cover the full litany of what a principal does.
- Moreover, good systems include both growth and attainment (with a stronger focus on growth), encourage growth for all students (not just those approaching proficiency), set targets that close in-school or cross-school achievement gaps, include "on track" to college non-assessment measures and align to other state and district accountability systems for principals and schools. The New Leaders Evaluation System referenced in the tools section does all of these things. Because they are non-negotiables, we recommend making each major component (professional practice and student outcomes) a statutory requirement. Moreover, because the principal is inextricably linked with student success, statutory conditions should reflect this important role and require that a principal meet these student outcome targets to be rated proficient or above.
- Creating a model evaluation system that districts can adopt or adapt lets districts focus on the often overlooked but important process of implementation.

Support high-quality implementation by building district capacity and alignment for implementation of principal evaluation and support

Recommendation: Increase the level of focus on high-quality implementation of principal evaluations and aligned principal development opportunities at the local level. For those adopting the state model, **CONVENE** principal evaluators for training with a focus on school visits, goal setting and providing effective feedback. Provide data that can be accessed, easily understood and used by those evaluating principals. Likewise, provide similar access and usability for principals when evaluating teachers. Through training, underscore that principal managers are not just doing an end of year evaluation, but rather developing, managing and giving feedback throughout the year to help principals improve.

Consider a monitoring system that identifies districts that are struggling as well as those excelling so that they can be re-**CONVENED** to share best practices.

The **MODEL** for evaluation should also include a sample communication plan that outlines goals and expectations to all educators, and establishes structures for educator and evaluator feedback on systems. For those districts adapting or designing their own models, require that they invest in sufficient training for evaluators of principals.

Rationale:

- The forward momentum made at the state-level will be for naught without strong implementation and a prioritization of principal evaluations at the district level.
- Principal evaluators need to be trained and supported in the responsibility of school visits because specific, timely and actionable feedback for principals (beyond just the formal evaluation process) is crucial to developing principals from one level to the next. Managers of principals need to provide clear standards of success, observe principals in action in order to see the quality and consistency of school practices and provide specific feedback on both demonstrations of strong competency as well as areas for improvement.
- Principal evaluators need to be given sufficient time to focus on principal evaluation and be held accountable for providing high-quality evaluations and development systems of professional learning to the principals they manage.

As Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments begin rolling out across the country, consider how the new increased rigor impacts student outcome targets in principal evaluations.

State-developed school accountability systems are a new way for states to tailor their approach to monitoring, supporting and intervening (when necessary) in districts. Support principals in aligning expectations and instructional plans with school-level targets and state expectations.

Align school accountability with teacher and principal evaluation and support

Recommendation: Align key reform goals—teacher effectiveness, new standards implementation, school accountability and others – with the design and messaging of teacher and principal evaluations. Especially in a state that has latitude to design state-specific accountability under ESEA flexibility, strongly consider aligning expectations, messaging, monitoring and interventions of school accountability with principal and teacher evaluations.

Rationale:

- Linked measures help ensure that the incentive structure for the many competing demands on a principal's time are aligned. This allows a principal to focus on what is most important.

TOOLS TO USE

New Leaders Evaluation System

- Required goal setting and strategic planning form
- Optional observation and feedback form
- Required summative rating form
- New Leaders Principal Evaluation Rubric

IN-SERVICE SUPPORT

Feedback, support and development for principals should be habitual, timely and specific. While this professional development ultimately happens at the local level, the state has an important role in raising the quality of development occurring across the state and setting expectations for the role of the principal. As districts implement high-quality evaluations, underscore the importance of targeting professional development and support to the individual needs identified during the evaluation process.

To support leaders on the job, we recommend that you:

- Upgrade professional learning opportunities for principals
- Ensure that the new principal role is sustainable

Upgrade professional learning opportunities for principals

Recommendation: Consider training principal managers in providing strong coaching and feedback to principals and providing targeted growth plans for principals. In addition to training principal managers on the specifics of new evaluation systems, provide additional support in this area to strengthen their ability to effectively support and develop principals. Consider **CONVENING** communities of practice for those evaluating and supporting principals.

To help districts more effectively spend funds on professional development, provide **MODEL** examples of ways to use federal Title II funding. Districts can be **CONVENED** to share best practices. Also monitor the progress of districts by tracking district spending on principal effectiveness as distinct from teacher effectiveness.

In states where new teacher evaluation systems are being implemented, consider targeted in-service support for all principals on how to conduct classroom observations, give actionable feedback and use the new tools and rubrics for assessment.

States can also assist districts in improving the quality of professional learning for principals by creating or accessing **MODEL** training modules and videos that describe the most important practices in the school leadership standards. These training modules may be for general leadership practices, such as building school culture, or may directly tie to state- or district-wide initiatives, such as training all principals on using a new teacher evaluation system.

Also consider **CONVENING** networks or communities of practice across districts for principals to learn from one another. These communities of practice can be built to address the specific needs of regions of the state, perhaps by pairing low-performing principals with highly-effective ones.

Rationale:

- Professional development is often divorced from the needs of individual principals and executed with haphazard quality. A statewide initiative to provide high-quality training, and videos that describe important practices in the school leadership standards, provides consistency across districts.

Ensure that the new principal role is sustainable

Recommendation: To spur innovation across the state, **INVEST** in local experiments to match principal capacity to the new role—this could mean including peer evaluation as part of teacher evaluations, implementing a School Administration Manager (SAM) project[10] to reduce principals' administrative workload or reducing operational requirements for school leaders (see Pipeline Development for additional ideas on building school capacity and broader leadership in schools to make the principal's role more manageable).

Rationale:

- Like many in education, principals are being asked to do more with less. Increasingly, this demand is being made on both their time and their budget. Help principals keep a focus on their role as an instructional leader by finding ways to alleviate the administrative and operational duties that are also part of the job.

TOOLS TO USE

New Leaders Evaluation System

- Optional observation and feedback form
- New Leaders Principal Evaluation Rubric

10 For more information see the Wallace Foundation, http://www.wallacefoundation.org/Pages/SAM.aspx

RETENTION, REWARDS AND DISMISSAL

Keeping and rewarding effective principals is an important part of managing a corps of great leaders. The state can encourage best practices at the district level as well as set statewide norms for retaining, promoting and dismissing principals.

To retain and reward effective leaders (and dismiss ineffective ones), we recommend that you:

- Codify the link between evaluation results and personnel decisions
- Recognize and reward effective principals

Codify the link between evaluation results and personnel decisions

Recommendation: As a non-negotiable, include in **STATUTE** that districts must be explicit in the way principal evaluations inform retention, promotion and dismissal decisions. For dismissal, this may mean addressing laws that deal with collective bargaining and assisting districts as they negotiate new agreements. We also recommend determining appropriate state action when the data from evaluation systems does not align with other critical data. Two situations may merit particular attention: (1) when a district has very few dismissals despite significant numbers of principals who are not meeting student achievement outcomes; and (2) when a district rates a substantial number of principals as effective despite a lack of growth in student achievement.

Also include in the **MODEL** evaluation system guidance for districts providing clear, consistent expectations while adjusting the impact on personnel decisions for first and second year principals. For example, while it is essential to always include both student achievement and principal practice, the state could provide guidance on how they might be weighted differently for first and second year principals compared to other principals.

MARYLAND

Passed in 2010, HB 1263 established that evaluation results can be used to determine pay increases and promotions. It requires the state board to establish a program to support locally negotiated incentives for highly effective classroom teachers and principals to work in public schools that are: (1) in improvement, corrective action or restructuring; (2) categorized by the local system as Title I schools; and (3) in the highest 25% of schools in the state based on a ranking of the percentage of students who receive free and reduced priced meals. The program may include financial incentives, leadership changes or other incentives. Baltimore was the first school district in the state to include pay-for-performance measures in a contract.

Rationale:

- Personnel decisions based on effectiveness help maintain accountability in the system. By retaining and rewarding effective principals, districts not only keep good educators in schools, but also reinforce the legitimacy of evaluation ratings. Likewise, when consistently low-performing principals are identified through the evaluation system and counseled out, the accuracy of the process is corroborated. Doing both—retaining successful principals and dismissing low performing principals—can help to raise student achievement through a clear process of evaluating practitioners on their ability to positively impact student results and demonstrate effective leadership practices.

Recognize and reward effective principals

Recommendation: For retention and reward, consider how additional principal compensation will look with increased leadership responsibilities. This can be done through a statewide **MODEL** of compensation and salary structure (by guidance or a change to move from a minimum salary schedule structure) or by **INVESTING** in districts who wish to pilot new salary and other reward structures based on effectiveness. In each case, use evaluation data to identify effective principals who may excel with additional responsibility—such as a principal manager.

Also consider statewide ways to publicly recognize the hard work of great teachers and principals with measures other than just compensation.

Rationale:

- Basing compensation increases or awards on effectiveness and increased responsibility has two primary results—it retains the best principals and applies lessons gleaned from their effective practices. Additional leadership opportunities may include being elevated to a principal manager role, being a mentor to aspiring principal residents, hosting school visits for communities of practice, facilitating a community of practice group or leading a "leadership lab," where high-potential assistant principals, teacher leaders and master teachers are placed to learn strong leadership practices.
- Whether it is through a principal of the year award, an annual cohort of the most effective principals or other avenues, public recognition of hard work and success goes a long way in showing people that they are valued.
- Inspire highly effective principals to move to high-need schools with incentives that go beyond just compensation. For principals, we have seen that money may have its place, but is not the primary driver for taking (or staying in) a job in a high-need school. For example, consider a district-led strategic staffing model (you do not have to go it alone, you can bring a team), increased autonomy around decision-making for principals and targeted professional development for the staff that is currently in the building.

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New Leaders

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New Leaders is a national nonprofit that develops transformational school leaders and promotes the system-level policies and practices that allow strong leaders to succeed. Founded in 2000, Over the past 10 years, New Leaders has trained more than 700 school leaders who are raising student achievement and graduation rates in high-need schools across the country. Beyond its signature principal training program, New Leaders conducts leadership development with existing school and district administrators, and designs effective leadership policies and practices for school systems nationwide.

For more information, visit www.newleaders.org.