Key Features of a Comprehensive Principal Evaluation System

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Key Features of a Comprehensive Principal Evaluation System

Drawn from a comprehensive review of research and professional literature on principal evaluation[1], twelve *Key Features* were identified as representing elements critical in establishing a comprehensive principal evaluation system. The *Key Features* were validated through focus groups of superintendents, human resource administrators, principals, and professors of education administration, along with numerous conversations with individual practitioners, experts, and researchers in K-12 and higher education, instructional leadership, and personnel evaluation. In addition, the *Key Features* were reviewed against the personnel evaluation standards described in the *Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) Framework 2009*[2].

The *Key Features* can be used for two purposes:

1. Research: To provide a basis on which to study district implementation and resources in support of these features (and their possible connection to improving student outcomes).

2. Practice: To provide a basis for a reflective guide for school districts to look at the systems, practices, and support framing their principal evaluation systems.

By serving both purposes, the *Key Features* supports the development of coherent principal evaluation systems. Using the *Key Features* also facilitates collaboration across the various perspectives of those who are working to improve how principals are evaluated.

1 **Mission to improve student learning:** Does the principal evaluation system address directly the principal's roles, responsibilities, and performance in improving teaching and learning for all students?

2 **Research and standards:** Is the principal evaluation system framed by research and national/state professional leadership standards?

3 **District policy:** Do the district's organizational structure, policies, and procedures guide and support the principal evaluation system?

4 **Clear expectations:** Does the principal evaluation system provide clear expectations for principal performance that are consistently and clearly communicated?

5 **Principal participation:** Does the principal participate in setting and prioritizing individual professional goals and objectives that relate to district and school goals?

6 **Professional growth:** Does the principal evaluation system promote and support the professional development and growth of the principal?

7 **Ongoing review:** Does the principal evaluation include opportunities to gather and review evaluation evidence through ongoing and regular interactions between the evaluator and principal?

8 **Multiple forms of data:** Does the principal evaluation system include multiple forms of data (evidence) about the principal's performance from a variety of sources, including a range of people who work with the principal?

9 **Adaptable:** Is the principal evaluation system sufficiently flexible and adaptable to adjust for variable school and community contexts, needs, and unique circumstances faced by principals?

10 **Evaluator and principal training:** Does the principal evaluation system require and provide ongoing training for evaluators and principals about the principal evaluation system?

11 **Validity and reliability:** Is the principal evaluation system designed to ensure that the processes, instruments, data, decisions, and outcomes are valid, reliable, and fair?

12 **Regular system review:** Is there regular review and revision of the principal evaluation system that includes purposes, components, processes, and outcomes?

This resource, along with additional resources and tools framed by the twelve *Key Features,* can be downloaded for free at http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/effectiveprincipals.

For more on strategies to develop principals, see the report: Integrated Leadership Development Initiative. (2010). *Effective principals for california schools – Building a coherent leadership development system.* San Francisco, CA: California Comprehensive Assistance Center, WestEd. http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/rs/1020.

Notes

(1) Davis, S., Kearney, K., Sanders, N., Thomas, C. & Leon, R. (2011 June). *The policies and practices of principal evaluation: A review of the literature.* San Francisco, CA: California Comprehensive Assistance Center, WestEd. Available at http://www.schoolsmovingup.net/effectiveprincipals

(2) The JCSEE established a framework to evaluate education personnel using four standards: 1. propriety standards that reflect legal and ethical considerations; 2. utility standards that guide evaluations to be informative, influential, and timely; 3. feasibility standards that support efficiency and ease of use; and 4. accuracy standards that support evaluations being technically adequate so they support sound judgments and decisions. From Gullickson, A. (Chair). (2009). *The personnel evaluation standards – How to assess systems for evaluating educators (second edition).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

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