

# Six Districts Begin the Principal Pipeline Initiative

**POLICY STUDIES ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Brenda J. Turnbull | Derek L. Riley | Erikson R. Arcaira  
Leslie M. Anderson | Jaclyn R. MacFarlane

Commissioned by:





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EDUCATION

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## Preface

The research in this report was commissioned by The Wallace Foundation. This is the first report from an evaluation of the foundation's Principal Pipeline Initiative, conducted by Policy Studies Associates, Inc., and RAND. This first report describes the initial plans for initiative implementation in the six participating school districts and the first steps taken toward implementation in the first year after grant award in August 2011.

## Abstract

This first report of an ongoing evaluation of The Wallace Foundation's Principal Pipeline Initiative describes the six participating school districts' plans and activities during the first year of their grants. The evaluation, conducted by Policy Studies Associates and the RAND Corporation, is intended to inform policy makers and practitioners about the process of carrying out new policies and practices for school leadership and about the results of investments in the Principal Pipeline Initiative. This report is based on collection and analysis of qualitative data, including the districts' proposals, work plans, and progress reports and semi-structured interviews in spring 2012 with 91 administrators employed by districts and their partner institutions. Leaders in all districts report wanting to enlarge their pools of strong applicants for principal positions and to identify and cultivate leadership talent as early as possible in educators' careers. Districts are actively working on all required pipeline components: (1) with stakeholder participation, they have developed standards and identified competencies for principals, which they plan to use to guide principal training, hiring, evaluation, and support; (2) they are initiating or strengthening partnerships with university training programs; (3) for hiring, they have standard performance tasks and are developing systems to capture data on candidates' experience; (4) they have diagnostic evaluation tools and are working to build the capacity of principal supervisors and mentors to support principals' skill development. In addition, all are also bolstering district-run training programs for graduates of university training programs who aspire to become principals.

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## Summary

Six large school districts began participating as grantees in The Wallace Foundation's Principal Pipeline Initiative in August, 2011. The initiative is an ambitious, multi-year effort supporting the districts and partner institutions as they work to strengthen and align the following components of their work with new principals:

- **Leader standards**, to which the sites will align job descriptions, training, hiring requirements, evaluations, and professional development
- **High-quality training**, including recruitment, selective admissions, and preservice experiences aligned with district expectations for leaders
- **Selective hiring** of the most qualified applicants, and placement based on a match between the candidate and the school
- **On-the-job evaluation and support**: evaluation that addresses the capacity to improve teaching and learning; and support that includes mentoring and professional development addressing the needs that evaluation has identified

The initiative's theory of change holds that when an urban district and its partners provide aspiring principals with training, evaluation, and support following these specifications, the result will be a pipeline of principals able to improve teaching quality and student achievement.

The six districts in this initiative are:

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, North Carolina
- Denver Public Schools, Colorado
- Gwinnett County Public Schools, Georgia
- Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida
- New York City Department of Education, New York
- Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland

This report, the first in a series to be produced by the national evaluation of the initiative, focuses on starting points: how the districts and their partner institutions were working with aspiring principals and new principals as of the first year of the grant (from August 2011 to August 2012), and how district leaders plan to improve on their structures and policies related to principals. The evaluation, conducted by Policy

Studies Associates and the RAND Corporation, is intended to inform policy makers and practitioners about the process of carrying out new policies and practices around school leadership and about the results of investments in the Principal Pipeline Initiative components. The evaluation will ultimately seek to determine the effects of “pipeline principals”—those prepared, selected, and supported in ways consistent with the initiative’s design—on important school outcomes, including growth in student achievement.

This report is based on an analysis of qualitative data collected by the evaluation team from the following sources: (1) documents including the districts’ proposals, work plans, and progress reports; (2) semi-structured interviews with 91 administrators employed by districts and partners, with almost all interviews conducted in person during site visits in April and May 2012; and (3) observation of and participation in cross-site meetings in November 2011 and March 2012, including observation of presentations and panel discussions by district leaders.

### ***The Districts’ Priorities***

All six districts applied for grants under the Principal Pipeline Initiative having already devoted attention to the preparation, hiring, evaluation, and support of school leaders, but with a desire to further strengthen and align these functions in hopes of enjoying the benefits of a stronger corps of candidates for the principalship. As the study of implementation begins, the evaluation team has explored the districts’ visions and purposes for their work on school leadership: what existing weaknesses they intend to address and what structures, procedures, and supports they intend to create. Four types of shared purposes are apparent across sites:

- District leaders in four sites want to enlarge the pool of strong applicants for principalships in their district because they see a diminution of the size or quality of the applicant pool; in the other two sites this was the case in the recent past
- In three districts, accountability systems have resulted in principal dismissals, thus simultaneously increasing demand for new principals while making the position less attractive to prospective applicants
- District leaders in all sites are eager to start the preparation pathway as early as possible in educators’ careers, reaching into the teaching force to spot potential leadership talent and to begin to cultivate it systematically
- In the districts that have developed and introduced systems for evaluation of teachers’ performance, leaders also want to strengthen the evaluation systems that can hold principals accountable



## ***Leader Standards***

Across all participating districts, district leaders express enthusiasm about clarifying standards for principals and operationalizing the standards as competencies that principals should exhibit. In particular, they reported in interviews that they welcome the opportunity to align all parts of the pipeline—including principal preparation, hiring, evaluation, and support—around standards and competencies. They said that defining and using standards, often as a replacement for an existing standards document that is relatively outdated and unused, will lend coherence to the district’s work on leadership.

The districts’ procedures for standards development incorporated any mandated state standards while also engaging local stakeholders, including principals, in the deliberations. In three of the districts where local committees completed first-draft standards and competencies, district leaders pointed to the value of a further step: having thought about the usability of these products, they are shortening them for greater manageability and focus.

## ***Preservice Training***

Principals’ preservice training includes but is not limited to the formal preparation, often university-based, that the state requires for certification to serve as a principal. Universities, other organizations, and districts themselves may provide training in school leadership for aspiring principals. At the outset of the pipeline initiative, every district envisioned preservice preparation for principals that would be aligned with local needs and specifications.

Districts and their partner universities are building closer working relationships around preparation programs. Two districts are already working closely with a single partner. The other four districts are identifying areas of mutual interest with one or several universities and taking steps toward greater alignment between district requirements and university offerings, such as by incorporating more district-specific content into the curriculum or offering longer internships under district supervision.

After participating in university training and receiving certification, aspiring principals often have years of further experience ahead of them before becoming principals. The length of time between program completion and the principalship varies across and within districts, but no district currently appoints most of its new principals from among newly minted university graduates. Instead, all of the districts offer further training opportunities to the graduates of university programs, and they are enhancing these opportunities.

## ***Selective Hiring and Placement***

Systematizing the processes for hiring principals who are well matched to specific schools is a goal in every participating district. All districts have developed or adopted performance tasks for use in assessing candidates. They are working on compiling cumulative records of their potential leaders’ experiences and

achievements over time, and they plan to use these records in the hiring process. Still, while valuing the collection and use of uniform data on all applicants, district leaders also expect to continue taking into account a candidate's idiosyncratic qualities, particularly in matching applicants to schools. They expressed the belief that decision makers should get to know candidates personally over a long period of time.

### ***On-the-Job Evaluation and Support***

In order to focus support for each novice principal on the specific needs identified through evaluation, districts are using evaluation instruments that identify gaps in skill, knowledge, or behavior, and they are employing supervisors and mentors whose jobs include helping principals address these gaps. Four districts have used the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) tool with practicing principals; another district is considering doing so; the sixth district instead is developing an existing teacher survey into a 360 degree rating system. To guide novice principals' learning and development in ways that address their diagnosed weaknesses, each district has at least two cadres of individuals in place: supervisors, and mentors or coaches. Districts are working to build the capacity of both groups to develop principals' skills, particularly in instructional leadership.

### ***Future Evaluation Reports***

As this evaluation moves forward, future reports on implementation will provide information about what happens next in the districts, analyzing how the districts and partner institutions maintain or modify particular features of the approaches described here. The evaluation team will also gather and report data on how local leaders and participants, including aspiring and novice principals, perceive the results of policies and practices around school leadership, including results for individuals, for schools, and for other organizational changes that this work on leadership may set in motion. Finally, the team will use data on principals and schools, including student achievement, to assess impact on important school outcomes. Reports will address the following topics:

- Partnerships between districts and their preservice and inservice partners (2013)
- Three years of implementation: structures and policies put in place, results observed, and what has helped or impeded progress (2014)
- Systems for evaluating principals' performance (2015)
- Implementation as the grant period draws to a close: structures and policies in place, results observed, and what has helped or impeded progress (2016)
- The impact on school outcomes, including student achievement, attributable to principals' exposure to the major components of the Principal Pipeline Initiative (2018)

## Introduction

How might school districts go about strengthening their principal corps? This question is part of the growing policy conversation around human capital in schools. The Wallace Foundation's Principal Pipeline Initiative is an ambitious effort providing more than five years of support to six large urban districts and their partners as they implement a particular set of approaches to developing and supporting new principals. The foundation is also supporting a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of this initiative as a window into the work at local district sites and, ultimately, as an assessment of the growth in student achievement that may be attributed to the districts' work with principals. This first evaluation report documents the plans and activities of the six sites during the first year of the initiative—their starting points within a multi-year plan of work. This introduction describes the background and key elements of the initiative and the plan and methods of the evaluation.

### *The Initiative: Background and Design*

The Principal Pipeline Initiative reflects lessons that The Wallace Foundation generated in more than a decade of grantmaking and research on leadership in education. It also reflects the experiences and priorities of the participating districts, which had done prior work around principal development and support and whose leaders agreed with the core tenets of this initiative. As discussed in the next chapter of this report, our evaluation has found that the districts approached the work as a way of addressing their own priorities in a way that built on and extended their existing approaches to leader preparation, hiring, evaluation, and support.

The foundation believes that school leadership deserves prominence as a policy and practice concern, that much is now known about effective practices of principals, and that useful insights are also available to guide district policy around principal preparation, hiring, evaluation, and support. Yet the foundation believes that serious gaps remain in the manner in which principals are trained, supported, and evaluated.

The foundation has noted the growing prominence of school leadership as a topic in the national policy conversation about education reform and as a priority in programs such as Race to the Top (The Wallace Foundation, 2012). The importance of principal behaviors in building the school and classroom conditions that promote student learning has been established in large-scale studies (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

Wallace-supported research has identified dimensions of principal leadership, emphasizing instructional leadership (e.g., Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2007; Portin, Knapp, Dareff, Feldman, Russell, Samuelson, & Yeh, 2009; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Based on these studies, the functions that the foundation deems essential in principal leadership are: shaping a vision of academic success for all students; creating a climate hospitable to education; cultivating leadership in others; improving instruction; and managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement (The Wallace Foundation, 2012).

But identifying these leadership functions is one thing; populating a districts' schools with leaders who effectively carry out the functions is another. In search of best practices in the development and support of new principals, Wallace-supported reports during the past decade highlighted features of program design and district policy that appeared promising. Among preparation and inservice programs that were nominated as exemplary, and whose graduates reported greater preparedness than a national comparison sample of principals, common features included rigorous recruitment and selection, alignment with standards, robust internships, opportunities for a cohort of participants to learn together, and a focus on instructional leadership and transformational leadership (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). And in a study of school districts that participated in Wallace leadership work in the past decade, researchers concluded that the districts found value in behaving as consumers who could choose whether to hire the graduates of nearby preservice institutions, using their consumer power to communicate clear expectations for principal preparation to these institutions (Orr, King, & LaPointe, 2010).

These studies informed the design of the Principal Pipeline Initiative. The foundation posits that a consistent focus on specific instructional-leadership capabilities and behaviors should shape the preservice preparation, hiring, on-the-job evaluation, and ongoing support of novice principals. Although the foundation has found exemplars of these various functions in different sites, it has not identified a single district where they are all present, aligned and pervasive throughout the district. Therefore, it has set out both to support and to test the realization of its vision in sites chosen from among the 22 large urban districts invited to submit proposals for the initiative. All the invitees had “a record of including leadership in their school reform agendas” (The Wallace Foundation, January 2011, p. 7).

For each of the six sites chosen for participation, the Principal Pipeline Initiative will provide \$7.5 million to \$12.5 million over more than five years, from August 2011 through December 2016. The initiative requires grantees to strengthen and align specific components of the principal “pipeline,” which is defined as including not only preservice preparation for aspiring principals, but also the hiring process and the evaluation and support that novice principals receive, as well as standards and expectations for principals. The request for proposals specified the desired approaches to each of four components, which the funded districts have agreed to pursue (the following is slightly abridged from The Wallace Foundation, January 2011, pp. 3-4):

1. **Leader standards.** Districts and training programs adopt clear standards for principals based on the effective leadership characteristics that research has identified. They then ensure that principal training, district hiring requirements, evaluations of principal performance, and professional development adhere to these standards. The standards address expectations for the principal's role in setting high standards for all students, developing a rigorous curriculum, supervising quality instruction, creating a culture of learning and professional behavior, connecting with the community outside the school, and ensuring that all school personnel are held accountable for their performance. Effective principals work with teachers, parents and others to plan, implement, support, advocate, communicate and monitor efforts to improve teaching and learning.
2. **High-quality training.** University or other principal training programs recruit and select only the aspiring leaders with the desire and potential to become effective principals in local schools. Their

selective admissions requirements are based on the district's leadership standards and what is known through research about important traits of effective school leadership. Training is based on the district's leadership standards and offers research-based content, problem-based pedagogy, a "cohort" model (that is, a group of students progresses through the program together), and clinical practice. Each program is frequently assessed, and districts and their training partners collaborate and provide feedback to one another.

3. **Selective hiring.** Districts develop a rigorous selection process for filling principal and assistant principal positions with the most qualified applicants. Districts give hiring preference to graduates of strong training programs, and they place them in schools based on the best fit and match between the candidate and the available vacancies.
4. **On-the-job evaluation and support.** The district conducts principal performance evaluations that assess the degree to which a new principal is developing the qualities tied to improving teaching and student achievement. Evaluation reflects the district's leadership standards and measures the principal's ability to improve teaching and learning, not merely to manage a school building. Districts follow up their principal evaluations with constructive feedback that lets the principals understand their strengths, weaknesses, and what is needed to improve. The evaluation's findings then determine what sort of professional development novice principals get. Novice principals and assistant principals with the potential to become principals participate in professional development that centers on strengthening their ability to improve instruction. Ideally, professional development includes strong mentoring by an experienced former or current principal.

The initiative's theory of change holds that when an urban district and its principal training programs provide many talented aspiring principals with training, evaluation, and support following these specifications, the result will be a pipeline of principals able to improve teaching quality and student achievement.

The foundation awarded grants to districts in which it saw evidence that components of the initiative were already in place, expecting that the grant funds would enable the districts to improve and expand on these existing practices. As implementation moves forward, the course that it follows in these sites will inevitably reflect local opportunities, constraints, and purposes. The districts are:

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, North Carolina
- Denver Public Schools, Colorado
- Gwinnett County Public Schools, Georgia
- Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida
- New York City Department of Education, New York
- Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland

This report focuses on the ways in which the districts launched their work under this initiative, in the context of their priorities and their existing programs, partnerships, and structures for school leadership development. It highlights commonalities across sites at this early stage, while also identifying the different emphases that different districts and partners brought to their work on each component. Basic information about districts and partners appears in Exhibit 1.

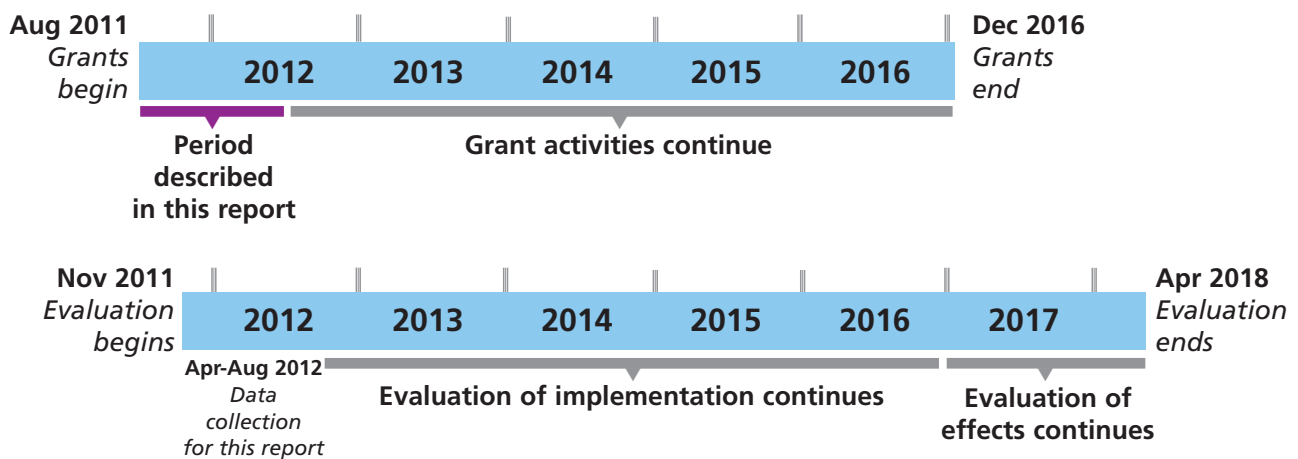
### Exhibit 1: Summary Data as of 2011-12 on Districts and Partners in the Wallace Principal Pipeline Initiative

	Partner programs – principal preparation	Internal district programs – principal preparation	Partner programs – principal induction and support
<b>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (NC)</b> 138,000 students; 159 schools Heath Morrison, Superintendent <i>(took position in 2012)</i> Rashidah Morgan, Project Director	Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) at Winthrop University; New Leaders; School Executive Leadership Academy (SELA) at Queens University	Rising Leaders Institute: Talent pool training	Executive Leadership Institute and Innovation Institute at Queens University; National SAM Innovation Project;
<b>Denver Public Schools (CO)</b> 82,000 students; 190 schools Tom Boasberg, Superintendent John Youngquist, Project Director	Get Smart Schools Fellowship Program; Ritchie Program at University of Denver	Learn to Lead; Residency for the Educational Development of DPS Intrapreneurs (REDDI)	New York City Leadership Academy (NYCLA)
<b>Gwinnett County Public Schools (GA)</b> 163,000 students; 133 schools J. Alvin Wilbanks, Superintendent Glenn Pethel, Project Director	University of Georgia; University of West Georgia	Quality-Plus Leader Academy (QLPA) Aspiring Leader Program and Aspiring Principal Program	National SAM Innovation Project; New York City Leadership Academy (NYCLA)
<b>Hillsborough County Public Schools (FL)</b> 195,000 students; 254 schools MaryEllen Elia, Superintendent Tricia McManus, Project Director	Nova Southeastern University; University of South Florida	Future Leaders Academy (FLA); Assistant Principal Induction Program (APIP); Preparing New Principals Program (PNP)	National SAM Innovation Project; New Teacher Center
<b>New York City Department of Education (NY)</b> 1,042,000 students; 1,591 schools Dennis Walcott, Chancellor Anthony Conelli, Project Director	Bank Street Principals Institute; CUNY – Baruch School of Public Affairs; New Leaders; Aspiring Principal Program at New York City Leadership Academy (NYCLA); Relay Graduate School of Education	Leaders in Educational Apprenticeship Program (LEAP)	New York City Leadership Academy (NYCLA)
<b>Prince George's County Public Schools (MD)</b> 123,000 students; 133 schools William Hite, Superintendent <i>(left position in 2012)</i> Douglas Anthony, Project Director	Bowie State University; Leadership Experiences for Aspiring Principals (LEAPP) with National Institute for School Leadership (NISL); New Leaders	Aspiring Leaders Program for Student Success (ALPSS)	National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP); School Leaders Network (SLN)

## Evaluation of the Initiative

The evaluation of the Principal Pipeline Initiative, conducted by Policy Studies Associates and the RAND Corporation, is intended to inform policy makers and practitioners about the results of investments in the initiative's components, and about the process of carrying out new policies and practices around school leadership. Like the initiative itself, the evaluation is a multi-year endeavor, and it is designed to produce different types of findings at different stages of the work. This first report focuses on the earliest stages of the initiative, describing how the districts and partners were already working with aspiring principals and new principals in the first year of the grant, and how district leaders plan to improve on their structures and policies related to principals. Data collection for this report took place during the first year after the initiative's August 2011 launch (Exhibit 2).

### Exhibit 2: Timeline of the Grants, the Evaluation, and This Report



As the initiative and the evaluation continue, four additional reports on implementation and one on effects will chronicle and assess the actions taken by districts and their partner institutions in this initiative. Two reports will have special foci: an implementation report to be issued at the end of 2013 will address partnerships between districts and preservice and inservice providers; another, in 2015, will report on systems for evaluating principals' performance. Reports to be released in 2014 and 2016 will assess overall implementation, identifying at each stage the structures and policies put in place, the results observed, and factors that have supported or impeded the sites' progress in carrying out their plans. After the end of the sites' grant period, in 2018, the final report from the evaluation will analyze the effects of "pipeline principals"—those prepared, selected, and supported in ways consistent with the initiative's design—on important school outcomes, including growth in student achievement. These effects will be assessed once key elements of the design are in place in participating sites.

This report is based on an analysis of qualitative data collected by the evaluation team from the following sources: (1) documents including the districts' proposals, work plans, and progress reports; (2) semi-structured interviews with 91 administrators employed by districts and partners, with almost all interviews conducted in person during site visits in April and May 2012; and (3) observation of and participation in cross-site meetings in November 2011 and March 2012, including observation of presentations and panel discussions by district leaders.

The analysis presented in this report draws from ongoing interim analyses that are informing the work of The Wallace Foundation and the participating sites in real time. The evaluation team produced six site-specific summaries in August 2012 documenting local structures and plans. Abridged versions of these summaries, appended to this report, provide information on each site's work as of that time. Based on the information gathered, the team developed graphical displays that map the steps in the pipeline for principals newly appointed in school year 2011-12 in each district, and excerpts from these displays are included in this report as well. The team used the qualitative data collected to identify preliminary cross-site themes in the sites' visions and early implementation steps. In a group discussion with the site teams, these preliminary themes were presented and feedback was solicited. The team refined the themes based on this feedback as well as feedback from evaluation and program officers of The Wallace Foundation. Finally, for each district, three team members again reviewed all data, identified ways in which the evidence supported or did not support the revised themes, and compiled that evidence into in-house site summaries. Project directors at the sites have checked the factual accuracy of the August 2012 reports, the graphical displays, and the findings communicated in this report.

Districts and partners are named in this report. However, because individuals were interviewed with an assurance of confidentiality, the sources quoted here are identified only with broad generic titles, such as "a district official," rather than by name or specific role.

The report begins by discussing the districts' purposes in trying to strengthen their approaches to principal preparation, hiring, evaluation, and support. It then describes their plans and first steps around each component of the Principal Pipeline Initiative. The report captures a snapshot from the participating districts at the point when they had spent almost a year as grantees in the initiative, building on their considerable prior work on school leadership and refining their visions for future work. The evaluation team has not attempted at this point to judge the quality of their ideas or the pace of their early progress. Instead, the report identifies and describes shared elements in the districts' visions, plans, and early actions, as well as what was distinctive in each site.



## The Districts' Priorities

The six grantee districts applied to participate in the Principal Pipeline Initiative because it is consistent with their existing priorities, according to interviews with district leaders. As the study of implementation begins, we have explored the districts' purposes. We try to understand and explain why and how they want to improve their work on school leadership—what existing weaknesses they intend to address and what structures, procedures, and supports they intend to create.

Four commonalities emerge in this analysis of priorities across sites. First, work on the pipeline has been spurred by an urgent sense that the district needs more strong candidates for principal positions. As of 2011-12, district leaders in four sites reported that they wanted to enlarge the pool of strong applicants for principalships in their district because they have seen a diminution of the size or quality of the applicant pool; the other two sites had experienced the same problem in the recent past and had begun to work on their principal pipelines at that time. The desire for a larger pool of strong applicants is related to a second theme that is prominent in three districts: accountability systems have resulted in principal dismissals and altered how the district and its prospective principals view the job. Third, district leaders in all sites are eager to start the preparation pathway as early as possible in educators' careers. They want to reach into the teaching force to spot potential leadership talent and to involve district and school leaders in the process of systematically cultivating talent. Fourth, in the districts that have introduced systems for evaluation of teachers' performance, leaders express enthusiasm for also strengthening the evaluation systems that can hold principals accountable.

### *Enlarging the Pool of Strong Applicants*

The priority of drawing a larger pool of stronger applicants encompasses challenges of both quantity and quality. These challenges are salient to different degrees across the districts. The challenges of filling principal vacancies with strong candidates appears most dramatic in New York City, where the sheer size of the school system and the need to hire as many as 200 principals each year are continual drivers of priorities and strategies. Several respondents reported in interviews that it has been hard to generate a pool of high-quality applicants for the principalship. A district official familiar with overall patterns in principal hiring identified this challenge as one of the key rationales for choosing to strengthen the pipeline, saying: "The work was really about how we fix the principal pipeline. Fewer folks were interested in becoming principals."

The same concern, albeit not on the same scale, was voiced in Denver, where issues of a "shallow pool for leaders" are troubling to central office staff. And similarly, in Prince George's County, district leaders recently took steps to try to ensure that they would identify potentially effective principal candidates, feeling that a recent round of principal hiring had not yielded as many strong candidates as they wanted to see. In all three districts, interviewees expressed concern that without more strong candidates, they had too-limited options for filling principal positions and for making the best match between applicants and positions.

Hillsborough County interviewees emphasized the issue of the quality of applicants more than the quantity. Hundreds of aspiring principals have moved through one or more stages of preparation, and the results of

a lack of selectivity in these earlier stages have left several district leaders concerned. They emphasized the importance of investing their preparation resources in the right candidates. They also said it is unfair to allow candidates to amass the credentials for a principalship and yet not be ready for the position.

Leaders in the other two districts said that their past work in pipeline development was designed to enlarge the pool of strong applicants. Gwinnett County addressed this priority by redesigning its pipeline some years ago, at a time of rapid growth in student enrollment. Multiple interviewees there described this time in terms like the following:

Several years ago, our county was one of the fastest growing in the nation. ... It became very obvious to our superintendent that our bench was not as deep as we thought it was and that our pipeline of leaders was not as deep as we wanted it to be.

Under those circumstances, Gwinnett County established its district-run Quality-Plus Leader Academy as a means of deliberately deepening the bench. In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, too, the concern with quality was said to have been a driving motivation in the recent past. A district leader there pointed to “huge progress” after a concerted effort to “get a great principal in every school,” an effort that has included attention to preparation and hiring procedures.

## ***Coping with the Consequences of Accountability Systems***

In districts with particularly strong accountability systems for principals, interviewees pointed to the lack of job security as a factor that depressed interest in applying for the position. Such systems were said to have simultaneously increased demand for new principals while making the principalship less attractive to prospective applicants. Recent waves of principal departures are an important part of the context for leadership development in Denver, New York, and Prince George’s County. An interviewee in New York, not employed by the district, spoke of dwindling interest in the position as an unintended consequence of high-stakes accountability for principals, saying:

The principalship is not that attractive any more. People see it as a career ender. Think about it: you go into a failing school, you’re given maybe two years to turn it around, and if you don’t, you’re gone [and no longer have a job].

A similar perspective was voiced in Denver, where a manager expressed the wish to see more strong candidates for principal positions but acknowledged that “the stress level” in the job could make it unattractive to potential leaders. Another district official in Denver observed that accountability pressures on principals are currently “unlike any other time in history.” In Prince George’s County, the district had given some principals unsatisfactory ratings, and more had left voluntarily, responding to a retirement incentive or moving to other districts. The experience of hiring a large group of principals left some district leaders wondering whether they would be able to continue finding enough of the high-quality candidates they sought.

## ***Starting the Preparation Pathway Early in Potential Leaders' Careers, and Attending to the Assistant Principalship***

Every district has introduced new leadership-preparation opportunities for teachers, and in every district the deliberate cultivation of talent all along a multi-year pipeline was cited as a priority. The rationale cited in interviews included sheer numbers—looking to the large pool of teachers as a potential source of the leaders who will be needed in the future. This perspective was particularly vivid in New York, where a district leader could say that there are 75,000 teachers in the system and that, “among them are the next generation of leaders. We should be able to find two hundred leaders each year who are really great.” This leader added that a goal is, “cultivating people at earlier stages and supporting them as they become leaders in ways that will make them want to be principals eventually.” In several districts, too, the idea of a long pipeline is appealing because it can provide a range of different learning opportunities.

Issues around the selection and professional growth of assistant principals (APs) are emerging in these districts as well. No district leader claimed to have solved these issues as yet, but addressing them is a priority. A leader in Charlotte-Mecklenburg said, “Now, I’m sort of casting my eyes on the AP position as our next place we’ve really got to focus. But now that we have rock star principals, they’re looking for rock star APs.” In Denver, a leader expressed a similar priority: “An area where we’re weakest is the very deliberate, conscious growth and career mapping and development strategy for our APs.” Another Denver official posed a fundamental question about the assistant principal position—one that came up across districts—and spoke of its implications: “Do we have the idea that AP positions are a landing place or a launching pad? If it’s a launching pad, then APs should have the same experiences as principals.”

Two districts with in-house training programs for prospective leaders, Gwinnett County and Hillsborough County, recently took steps to strengthen their formal training opportunities for teachers who are interested in becoming assistant principals. Gwinnett has introduced an Aspiring Leaders Program for this purpose, and Hillsborough a Future Leaders Academy. In Gwinnett, in addition to participating in district training, enrollees will be helped to select a university program that can qualify them for administrative licensure. (In Hillsborough, where the pathway from initial licensure to the principalship is longer, enrollees will already hold the first-tier administrative licensure available to university program graduates.)

Interviewees in all districts pointed out the importance of distributing responsibility for spotting and cultivating talent throughout the system, to sitting principals and to principal supervisors. Hillsborough County plans to train principals in how to recruit potential candidates for leadership preparation. Several district leaders in Prince George’s County emphasized that the district wants principals to identify and develop leadership talent among teachers and to encourage them to enroll in a university leadership program. One of these leaders commented that this responsibility should become a formal part of the principal’s job description. New York, where distributing responsibility for leader recruitment is a key goal, is making a formal requirement: the district is incorporating measures of long-term leader development and succession planning into the accountability system for leaders of the “networks,” which provide support to multiple schools in the district.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> New York City has about 60 networks with which schools affiliate voluntarily for many kinds of support with instructional and operational matters. Networks in turn are grouped into five clusters, which oversee and support the networks. Under the system’s overall leader, called the chancellor, New York City also has a legally mandated system of superintendents (32 community superintendents, 8 high school superintendents, and 2 superintendents for special and alternative programs) who have formal supervisory authority over schools and their leaders. These arrangements reflect reorganizations introduced during the past decade.

## ***Strengthening Principal Evaluation Along with Teacher Evaluation***

District officials spoke of the changes they intended to introduce in principal evaluation as a desirable complement to their new systems of teacher evaluation. This connection is especially clear in three of the participating districts—Hillsborough County, Denver, and Prince George’s County. Each of these districts has also participated in the Empowering Effective Teachers initiative of the Gates Foundation, which has supported in-depth work on systems of teacher evaluation.

Officials in all three districts said that the work they have done on teacher evaluation has informed the way they are approaching their newer efforts in principal evaluation. In particular, they plan to roll out the principal evaluation in a deliberate way so that all participants can learn from early steps before the stakes become higher. For Denver, the Framework for Effective Teaching, while still in pilot form, was a model for development of a counterpart Framework for Effective School Leadership. In describing their rationale for revamping principal evaluation, some interviewees across districts also said that fairness demands that they institute similar systems of accountability at all levels. Some added that teachers are watching to see whether school leaders will be evaluated as systematically as teachers must be evaluated.

### ***Summary***

Across all participating districts, the development of new principals is seen as a problem-solving opportunity and an extension of the districts’ existing efforts to strengthen their human capital. District leaders explain that new cohorts of school leaders will need the capacity to lead instructional improvement. Leaders in each district have worried—either at the start of the initiative or in the recent past—about seeing too few aspiring principals who are well qualified to carry out this task. All districts hope to solve this problem or prevent its recurrence by cultivating the skills of people already in the system who might aspire to leadership roles, enlisting their sitting principals and district staff in the effort to find and support prospective leaders. In addition to building on these human assets, districts expect to apply lessons learned in other recent initiatives: in Denver, Hillsborough County, and Prince George’s County, lessons learned in designing and implementing teacher evaluation are expected to inform future work on principal evaluation.

In describing their purposes and hopes for the work ahead, some interviewees also identified challenges that they foresee. Especially in three districts (Denver, New York, and Prince George’s County) recent principal departures have brought into focus both the need to find and support new applicants for the position and, at the same time, the disincentives for becoming a principal in a climate of strong accountability. Another challenge, brought up by several district leaders, is that of incorporating the position of assistant principal into systematic career pathways for aspiring leaders.

## Leader Standards

Across all participating districts, district leaders express enthusiasm about clarifying standards for principals and operationalizing the standards as competencies. All have had some existing standards, but they welcome the chance to make a fresh start with deliberate standards development as part of their participation in this initiative. They anticipate using standards and competencies as anchors for a shared understanding of the practice of school leadership among district staff, individual leaders and aspiring leaders, and partner institutions.

In particular, district officials reported in interviews that they welcome the opportunity to align several functions—principal preparation, hiring, evaluation, and support—around standards. They said they recognize that their district’s ways of carrying out each of these functions have evolved separately and do not necessarily reinforce the other functions. By aligning each of these functions with standards and competencies that define what principals should know and be able to do, these districts’ officials hope to bring greater consistency to the messages about expectations communicated to aspiring leaders and leaders across career stages.

There is no shortage of models on which to build in standards development. In particular, the Education Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008) reflect a multi-organization, research-based process of updating the 1996 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders, with Wallace Foundation support. The ISLLC 2008 standards, as they are called, were designed to provide a nationwide foundation for state and local standards development. State-specific standards have been developed, often on the ISLLC model, and frequently mandated for local use. The Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education, or VAL-ED (Murphy et al., 2007) also provides a taxonomy of leadership behaviors suitable for translation into standards. Districts participating in the Principal Pipeline Initiative cited their use of these models as well as their incorporation of state-mandated standards, as we discuss below when describing the stages and participants in their standards-development processes. This section of the report also addresses districts’ thoughts about the ways in which principal standards and competencies may or may not apply to assistant principals. But district leaders’ ideas about the purposes and potential benefits of defining standards and competencies undergird their work in this component of the initiative and are described first here.

### *Purposes to Be Served by Standards*

In each district, officials said that developing and using standards and competencies would lend coherence to the district’s leadership policies and practices. In Hillsborough County, for example, leader standards were called “the driving force,” and the development of standards was a matter of “putting first things first.” Similarly, Charlotte-Mecklenburg engaged in a serious, multi-step process aimed at alignment: first reviewing the state-developed standards to identify the leadership competencies and aligned standards that were most important in the district context; then refining the principal job description so that it reflected

both the evaluation instrument and the standards; then addressing the recruitment and selection processes to improve their alignment with the job description.

While interviewees in all districts spoke of the advantage of using standards to align the components of the pipeline, other aims were also described in district leaders' comments. Denver leaders pointed to a developmental purpose for standards, saying it is useful that the standards represent "a high bar" that will show new principals "where they should aspire to be." They favor demanding standards that leave room for growth and development rather than setting a threshold that all principals are expected to meet immediately.

Interviewees in three districts spoke of standards in a way that emphasized the power of standards to communicate—to convey a sense of priorities for school leadership. In Gwinnett County, one district leader said "the standards have to be the centerpiece, ... a way of communicating what you want to achieve," while another said, when asked about standards and job descriptions, "We want all of us to speak the same language." Similarly, in New York, a leader said, "We needed to create consistency of language around leadership; the [previous] school leadership competencies were not used in any systemic way." Leaders in Prince George's County said they were pleased with the opportunity to align their policies on school leadership to a set of standards. They also expressed the sense that a "definition around leadership that's more clearly and concisely connected to all our work" would help in communication. Two of them emphasized, however, that communication takes work, noting that a message developed in the district office through the process of standards development will not automatically be heard and understood at the school level.

### ***The Process of Developing Standards and Competencies***

Envisioning these potential benefits, districts were well launched on standards development in the early stages of their work with The Wallace Foundation, as of mid-2012 when data were collected for this report. They approached the standards-development process in varying ways, but their procedures incorporated any mandated state standards while also engaging local stakeholders, including principals, in the deliberations. District leaders explained in interviews that by bringing principals into the process they expected to bring both practicality and credibility to their standards and competencies.

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg had a prescribed set of standards and evaluation requirements from the state of North Carolina, but nevertheless formed a School Leadership Council including principals, assistant principals, principal supervisors, human resources staff, preservice partners, and the chief academic officer to focus on standards. This council worked during 2011-12 to identify key competencies for leadership practice aligned with a subset of the state standards. The council called this subset of the state standards the "Super Standards," reflecting the particular needs and priorities of the district.
- Denver leaders considered adopting an existing set of leader standards but then, as they had done for the district's Framework for Effective Teaching, chose to develop their own. A small committee spent time in summer 2011 in a "very, very labor intensive" process of developing a draft

Framework for Effective School Leadership reflecting the state standards, the tools and competencies emphasized in a partner preservice program, and standards drawn from national sources. The draft was then extensively vetted by district stakeholders, and the district planned to have a consulting firm use the framework in developing job descriptions.

- Gwinnett County already had job descriptions aligned to Georgia’s leadership standards, but the district also asked three preservice partner organizations and other outside experts to review its standards. The district was considering differentiating expectations by grade level of the school and experience level of the principal.
- Hillsborough County developed and refined its School Leader Standards and Competencies in a process that engaged a 20-person committee of principals and assistant principals, then asked all of the district’s principals and assistant principals to vet the resulting competencies. State standards were incorporated.
- New York convened a group representing four divisions and eight offices to develop a vision for a career continuum of leadership competencies. The group has worked on aligning the competencies to the Quality Review—the school observation and evaluation process that uses a rubric to assess how well the school is organized to support student achievement—on the premise that the strengths desired in a school should have counterparts in the leadership competencies desired in the school leader. The district’s preservice partners are also working on standards together, “trying to develop that common understanding,” as a district official put it.
- Prince George’s County drafted a set of standards for vetting internally, by stakeholders that included the teachers’ and administrators’ unions, and externally, by the state department of education.

### ***Trimming the Lists of Standards and Competencies***

In three of the districts where local committees developed or adapted first-draft standards and competencies documents, district leaders pointed to the value of a further step: having thought about the usability of these products, they are proceeding to shorten them for greater manageability and focus. In Denver, a person with a major role in this process described it as “several rigorous exfoliations,” while another observed that there was “a lot of repetition” in the document initially and that the thinking has been, “Let’s pare it down.” A participant in Gwinnett County said that the standards document, as a work in progress, was “massive” and that “gleaning through that and going through which ones are the most essential is going to be part of our work.” Hillsborough County focused its attention on nine competencies, selected from a longer array that was initially developed. These districts’ work in shortening their own sets of standards or competencies is like that of a fourth district, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, where Super Standards were locally identified and highlighted within the mandated state standards.

## Applying Standards to the Assistant Principalship

District leaders stated their intention of figuring out how standards would apply to assistant principals. They do not expect an assistant principal to show the same range and depth of competencies as a principal, and they are grappling with the challenge of spelling out expectations for the multiple roles that assistant principals may play.

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg, standards are being revised for both principals and assistant principals. There will be differences in how they are applied to the two roles, however, recognizing that assistant principals are expected to be at an earlier stage in their learning and development. A district leader said:

In some cases, when you're hiring an assistant principal, you're hiring based on potential. You're not necessarily having evidence [that the candidate meets] all these standards. So your induction process, which we're just going to be rolling out this summer [in 2012] for APs, could be informed by the Super Standards and the competencies.

In New York, with a policy of giving principals autonomy in how they assign responsibilities within their schools, the central office chooses not to tie principals' hands by specifying particular roles for assistant principals. And in all districts, leaders recognize that assistant principals often have specialized and limited responsibilities, especially in high schools. An official in Denver described the questions being asked about expectations for the position:

Are there positions out there that are just a very specialized, niche role, being used very specifically? Or do we feel like everyone needs [to work on] all of the culture, equity, strategy work that a principal would have?

## Summary

The six districts based their standards on existing models and on state-mandated standards where those existed, yet all engaged in a participatory process of developing standards and competencies for district use. They hoped that having agreed-on local standards would bring clarity and coherence to a set of functions that could otherwise be disconnected from each other: setting the expectations for preservice preparation; selecting strong candidates for the principalship; and evaluating each practicing principal's on-the-job performance. Their seriousness about this expectation is illustrated by the extra step that several districts took: having developed lengthy lists of standards, they chose to pare them down to a more comprehensible set focused on key expectations.

District leaders expressed no particular worries about their standards for principals. Some did, however, say that they were unsure how they might apply these standards to assistant principals, who are not expected to show the full range of skills embodied in principal standards and competencies. Over the coming years, we will study how the new standards and competencies are used, and the extent to which they help provide the intended coherence to district functions and leaders' career trajectories.



## Preservice Training

Principals' preservice training includes but is not limited to the formal preparation, often university-based, that the state requires for certification to serve as a principal. Universities, other organizations, and districts themselves may provide training in school leadership for aspiring principals. At the outset of the pipeline initiative, every district envisioned preservice preparation for principals that would be aligned with local needs and specifications. The districts' approaches to realizing this vision have varied, depending on the working relationships they already have with preservice partner institutions and their interest in building and running their own training programs. Discussed here are university partnerships, how districts and their partners are working with standards, preservice training provided by districts themselves, and the varying pathways found in preservice training across and within districts.

### *Longstanding, Formal Partnerships with Universities*

Previous studies for The Wallace Foundation have concluded that preservice principal training based in universities offers advantages in sustainability, compared with the in-district arrangements that may be subject to policy shifts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Orr et al., 2010). Two districts, Denver and Charlotte-Mecklenburg, have formal partnerships of several years' standing with universities. Each program is tailored closely to district requirements in a variety of ways.

Denver Public Schools and the University of Denver created the Ritchie Program for School Leaders together in 2003, with commitment from the district superintendent and the university president, and the program has been co-designed and co-led by the district and university ever since. Recruitment and admissions are carried out collaboratively; applicants' data are shared with the district. The project-based curriculum and the assessment of program participants are being aligned with the district's new standards.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg worked with Winthrop University to develop the two-year Leaders for Tomorrow program, which admitted its first class in 2008. A top district leader has participated directly in selecting the students to be admitted each year. Several interviewees described the district as the customer for Leaders for Tomorrow. A district official described the relationship and its results in these words:

We feel we've been advantaged by having [a] program ... tailored specifically to our strategic plan, where we have contracted with the School of Education and said, ... "We're going to be partners in the selection of the cohort. We're going to be faculty along with you, adjunct faculty. You're going to align everything to the strategic plan of the district. If we do Data Wise, you do Data Wise. If we do SIOP, you do SIOP."<sup>2</sup> And what we've seen happen, we've had three cohorts come out that are extraordinarily prepared to be principals, many of them totally jumping over the AP role and going directly into the principalship.

<sup>2</sup> The Data Wise Improvement Process, created by researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and school leaders in Boston Public Schools, provides a structure for the use of data to improve instructional programming. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), distributed by Pearson, is a model for classroom instruction with steps leading from lesson preparation through review and assessment.

Based on district leaders' satisfaction with the relationship with Winthrop University, they look forward to a newly initiated partnership with Queens University. There, the education and business schools have offered to collaborate in developing a one-year leader preparation program tailored to Charlotte-Mecklenburg's requirements.

It remains to be seen whether the other four districts in the initiative will build partnerships with universities that so closely interweave the roles of the district and the university in student selection and curriculum design. While leaders in these other districts said they are pleased to have the opportunity to persuade universities to align their programs more closely with district standards and priorities, not all expect the resulting relationships to become close partnerships. A leader in Prince George's County commented that universities typically want to address the state's requirements, not those of a particular district, saying that some institutions "are not open to creating a different development program for what we need. They're trying to serve the whole state and credential everybody the same way."

### ***Development of Partnerships with Universities***

With encouragement from The Wallace Foundation, all six districts are working to create or strengthen training partnerships with one or more universities. Universities are taking at least initial steps to align their curricula with each district's leadership standards.

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Hillsborough County is an example of a district that has not traditionally had close working relationships with the nearby universities that prospective administrators attend. Those universities' programs qualify their graduates only for Level I certification in Florida, which must be followed by additional preparation for Level II certification and a principalship.<sup>3</sup> However, a district administrator reported that the district has initiated conversations with the universities that the largest numbers of candidates have attended:

*We've started working more closely with them, especially more recently in looking at their course content. ... We've actually reached out to say, "we have a certain expectation for our leaders and our schools, and we need you to help us get there."*

An early sign of progress in the relationship came when university program representatives shared a draft syllabus with the district, asking for comment on the ways in which it did or did not match the content the district is looking for.

While Hillsborough draws most of its administrators from the graduates of seven nearby university leadership programs, the number of programs in New York City is larger: there are at least 23 institutions whose graduates may qualify for the state-issued School Building Leader license. Engaging in depth with all these universities is not feasible for the district. By reviewing their curricula and observing classes, a leader in the

<sup>3</sup> Under Florida's regulations, Level I programs confer a master's degree or higher in educational leadership and qualify an aspiring leader for initial certification, allowing him or her to become an assistant principal. Level II programs, which are typically offered by school districts, build on Level I training and lead to principal certification.

district began to identify those with whom the district would pursue substantive partnerships. These selected universities are crafting preparation programs tailored to address the district's leadership competencies, with internship placements. The first university to become a formal partner, Bank Street College of Education, joined an inquiry group around application of the competencies, working with two other partners that are not university-based, New Leaders (the national principal-preparation program formerly called New Leaders for New Schools) and the New York City Leadership Academy. One member of the inquiry group contrasted the current level of communication about district expectations with what existed in the past: "As [the district] shares their thinking about leadership competencies, we get a chance to cross-walk those with our evaluation tools. In the past, it wouldn't have been possible."

Prince George's County leaders took early steps in building a relationship with a university partner. Maryland's Bowie State University agreed to make changes in its leadership preparation program, considering the district's leadership standards. Program leaders at the university expect that the district will recruit candidates and play a role in selection.

Gwinnett County's university partners are subject to a Georgia state requirement that administrator certification programs must be performance-based. In response to that requirement, one partner in particular, the University of West Georgia, completely revamped its Ed.S. program (a specialist degree with coursework beyond a master's, required for leadership certification) around practical projects. The admissions process is selective; applicants who are working in schools must be approved by their principal and their district. The West Georgia students who are employed in Gwinnett County, typically as assistant principals, carry out year-long projects with "performance coaches" who are retired Gwinnett administrators.

With facilitation arranged by The Wallace Foundation, the districts have engaged with selected partners in using the Quality Measures rubrics, developed by Education Development Center with Wallace support, for self-assessment of principal preparation programs. The process calls not only for ratings of the programs along several dimensions drawn from the literature in leader preparation, but also for the compilation of evidence to substantiate the ratings. Under this initiative, facilitators representing Education Development Center worked with teams of district staff, program staff, and program graduates to collaboratively assess each of fifteen preparation programs across the six districts in 2012. These baseline reviews were intended to guide each program's improvement efforts. The experience of working together in this facilitated process was said by some to have strengthened the working relationships between districts and their partners.

### ***Connecting Standards with Principals' Preservice Training***

A partnership with preservice institutions may offer a two-way street between districts' standards and the preservice training offered for leaders: the process of standards development may draw on the knowledge of preservice partner institutions; and the standards are expected to shape expectations for candidates and the preservice curriculum.

Interviewees in four districts reported using their partners' work in their process of standards development. In Denver, for example, the district's Framework for Effective School Leadership drew on tools and definitions of competencies developed by the Ritchie program, along with other sources. Prince George's County used the work of its key partner, the National Institute for School Leadership, to assist in the development of district standards. Interviewees in Gwinnett County and New York City reported that preservice partners have engaged in scrutinizing the existing standards and helping to develop alternatives.

Every district's partnership with at least one provider of preservice principal training involves an effort to ensure that district standards are key drivers of the preparation program. These efforts have notable depth in Denver and Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Ritchie program, for example, has incorporated the framework into its curriculum and into formative evaluation for participants, with a program staff member explaining:

While they're in preparation they're being evaluated much like they would be as a principal, but in a more kind of formative way. We're building an awareness of [the standards and expectations]. So the hope is that they'll be so grounded in this kind of work that their transition from preparation to practice will be more seamless.

For Charlotte-Mecklenburg, the Leaders for Tomorrow program at Winthrop University incorporates the district's leadership standards into its admissions procedures, curriculum, and evaluation.

### ***Further Training after University Training and Licensure***

After participating in university training and receiving certification, aspiring principals often have years of further experience ahead of them before becoming principals. The length of time between program completion and the principalship varies across and within districts, as described below, but no district currently appoints most of its new principals from the cohort of newly minted university graduates. Charlotte-Mecklenburg is something of an exception to this pattern, because administrators see Leaders for Tomorrow as a program capable of producing at least a handful of principals immediately from each graduating class, and hope to say the same for the new program at Queens University. Still, the norm in Charlotte-Mecklenburg as in other districts is that graduates of university-based programs move into other positions before becoming principals.

The pathway that follows university training varies a great deal across districts and individuals, but it is seldom short. During the time that a graduate of a university leadership program spends in another school or district position while continuing to aspire to the principalship, he or she may participate in further training offered within the district. All six districts rely on district-run programs for aspiring principals who hold certification, and the districts are enhancing these programs.

Two districts prescribe a specific sequence of experiences after university preparation, with the result that a rapid progression to the principalship is designed to take five years in Hillsborough County and three years in Gwinnett County:

- In Hillsborough County, a particular sequence has been designed to follow the master's degree and Level I certification. Six months after graduation, an aspiring leader can apply for assistant principal positions. After three successful years as an assistant principal (having participated in the required Assistant Principal Induction Program during the first two of those years), he or she can enter the district's two-year Preparing New Principals program that results in Level II certification. Thus there are ordinarily five years or more between finishing the university program and acquiring principal certification in Hillsborough County. During that time there are three formal district-led training experiences: the Future Leaders Academy, the Assistant Principal Induction Program, and Preparing New Principals. Strengthening these offerings is part of the work under way in Hillsborough.
- In Gwinnett County, Ed.S. degree recipients may become assistant principals and, after two years in that position, may be admitted to the Aspiring Principal Program of the district's Quality-Plus Leader Academy. The academy program, which takes place during the school year and now features a full-semester internship, is a prerequisite for selection as a principal. Thus, a fast track to the principalship is expected to take three years from receipt of the Ed.S. Because the Aspiring Principal Program gives preference in admissions to graduates of the district's newer Aspiring Leader Program, offered to teacher leaders who are interested in pursuing leader certification, the district effectively bookends the period of university preparation with its own training: prospective candidates first participate in the district's Aspiring Leader Program, then the Ed.S. at a university, then the district's Aspiring Principal Program.

The other four districts do not have requirements that would prevent a new university graduate from becoming a principal immediately, and neither they nor their partners expect each graduate to follow a standard career progression. However, they do expect most graduates to acquire further experience and know-how before becoming principals. A typical interview response was that of the director of a university partner program who said that no specific timetable has been developed for attainment of a principalship, but that program graduates are likely to become assistant principals and to serve in that position for at least two years, but probably fewer than five years, before becoming principals.

Like Hillsborough and Gwinnett, all the other districts offer their own training programs to licensed administrators in preparation for the principalship, and all have taken steps to enhance these programs:

- Denver has added its own Learn to Lead Residency program for candidates who appear likely to be ready for principalships after the year-long program, with the first 18-member class admitted for 2012-13. Applicants, selected from among assistant principals, are offered the choice of remaining in their own school or moving to a different school, with mentorship from the sitting principal and assumption of gradually increasing levels of responsibility in the school. Each resident pursues a tailored program of learning, described in an Individualized Leadership Compact, which involves coaching, learning teams, cohort meetings, and offsite and in-district professional development. Another new district-led residency places a smaller number of aspiring principals in charter schools.

- Prince George’s County is working with the National Institute for School Leadership to develop tailored modules that will prepare aspiring principals. Grounded in the county’s standards and expectations and using videos from county schools in instruction, these modules are expected to provide an intensive learning program that will produce candidates ready to assume the principalship.
- New York City’s Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program (LEAP) is a year-long program for teacher leaders and assistant principals with master’s degrees. It is open to participants who hold School Building Leader licenses, although the license is not required, and its enrollment is growing. The program includes an intensive summer session, weekly classes, and a year-long internship in the home school; the principal of that school must meet the qualifications for a mentor principal. Graduates may apply for principalships, although more apply to become assistant principals. District leaders emphasized the value that this program offers in enabling network leaders to become acquainted with aspiring leaders in their networks, whom they can tap for future opportunities. In addition, New York has piloted a summer program to prepare new incoming principals for entry into their schools.
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg has added district-specific offerings that, while more modest in scope than those just described, address a similar purpose of rounding out the preparation of aspiring principals who have completed a university preservice program. The district has developed several one-day instructional modules, each addressing a particular aspect of school administration in the district, such as Title I budget development or services for English learners.

### ***Complicated Pathways***

The term “pipeline” conjures an image of a straight-line progression through a uniform, predictable set of preparation experiences, but the pathways of recently appointed principals and recently prepared candidates in every district show departures from a tightly managed progression. In New York, network leaders can and do appoint new principals whom they have come to know as capable assistant principals, who may have completed work for their licensure at any of two dozen institutions. An important part of the job of strengthening preparation in New York will be to help network leaders meet and encourage promising candidates in early stages of the preparation process, in conjunction with redesigned preparation opportunities. Denver recruits some of its principals from outside the district. A district official observed that a good candidate is one who wants to move to Denver because of its urban challenges; another suggested that the best candidates for leading schools with sizable English learner populations might be experienced principals from other cities with similar demographics. It appears possible, but not certain, that the district’s commitment to developing talent internally will eventually make such outreach unnecessary.

The New Leaders program operates in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Prince George’s County, and New York City. Some district officials said they would like to see it more closely integrated or aligned with their local priorities and ways of working. In New York, for example, the district and New Leaders are working to improve the matching of program graduates to school vacancies; they are taking some steps to focus New

Leaders activities in one of the district's clusters so that cluster and network leaders have the opportunity to get to know the program participants. In all three of these districts that partner with New Leaders, interviewees commented that the New Leaders summer program, which addresses leadership challenges that are common across cities nationwide, has the disadvantage of not being tailored to local strategic plans or to the leadership standards and competencies that each district is developing.

Every district has multiple options at some point in the pathway; even in Gwinnett and Hillsborough Counties, where prospective principals are funneled through specific district-led training, multiple universities offer preparation. Working out a relationship with several universities is a priority in these districts.

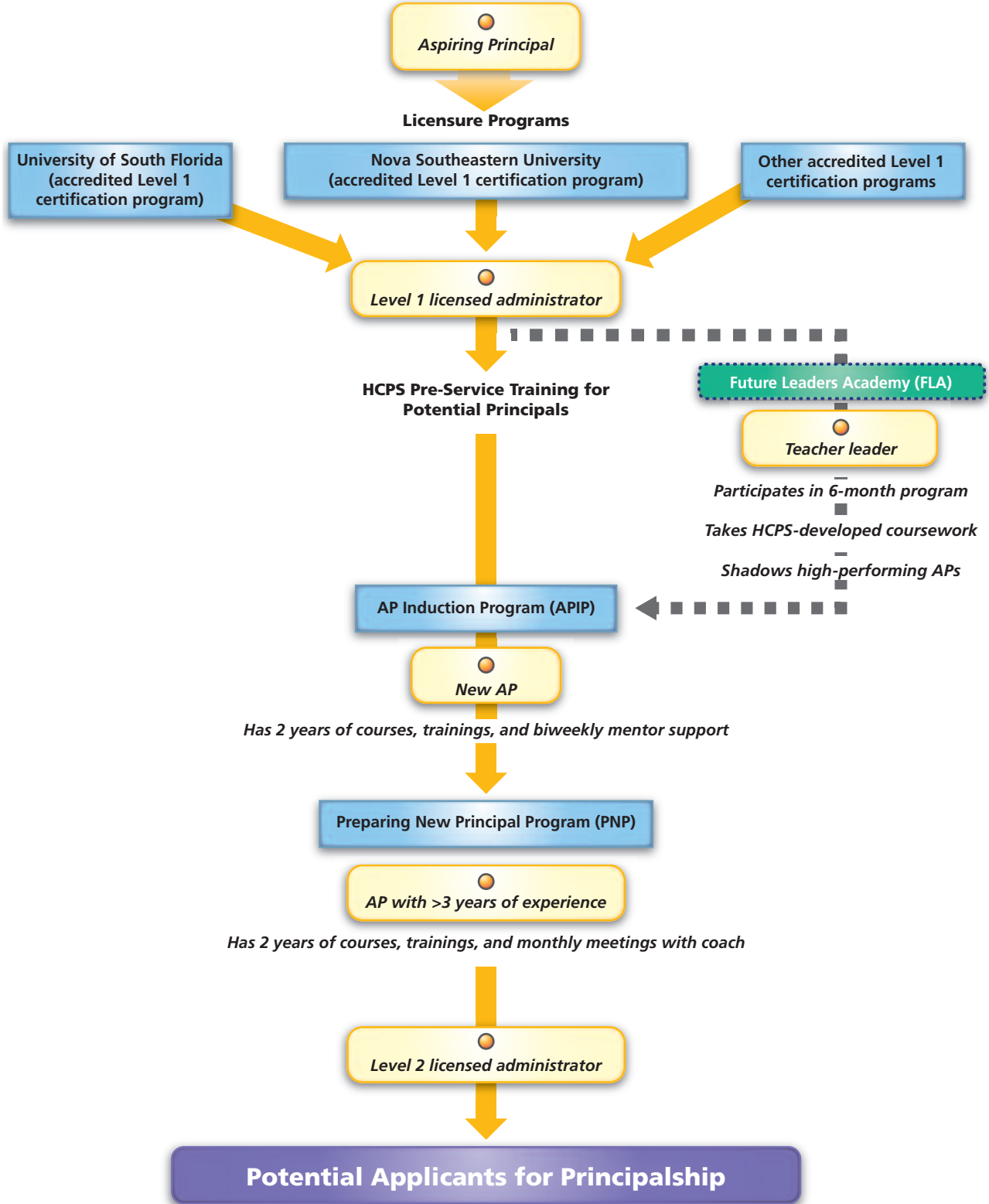
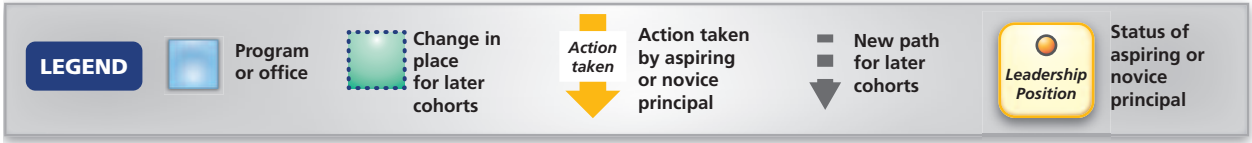
More generally, helping potential leaders find the right training sequence for them was described as a priority in Gwinnett County, Denver, and New York. Gwinnett County has developed a booklet intended as a "consumer's guide" for potential applicants to leadership preparation programs; it provides specifics on four preparation programs that the district deems most worthy of consideration by future leaders. Denver, which has several residency programs to prepare principals, is working to coordinate their selection processes, inform prospective applicants about the differences in design and emphasis across programs, and match candidates to programs.

In New York City, where prospective leaders have a plethora of options for training, charting pathways is particularly complicated. When asked about barriers to improving the pipeline, a district official commented on the need to clarify the options, both for prospective leaders and for the system leaders who are responsible for succession planning:

If someone is a strong teacher leader, what is the right leadership program for them? ... And, connected to that, for folks at the network and cluster level to have a deep understanding of each program available to them and the nuances of them. Why would we recommend some folks to the [New York City Leadership] Academy versus LEAP versus Bank Street? And [there are] options within those programs.... It's going to take some work to develop that understanding.

The exhibits on the following pages illustrate the differences across and within districts in the preparation experiences found among the cohorts of principals who were newly appointed in the 2011-12 school year, which was the first year of the Principal Pipeline Initiative. At a glance, for example, it is clear that the linear progression in Hillsborough County (Exhibit 3) differs from the many avenues to leadership available in New York City (Exhibit 4). The exhibits also show the extent to which new offerings were either in place or planned in the districts as of spring 2012; these new preparation offerings are shown in green rather than blue if they were not available to the 2011-12 cohort of principal appointees.

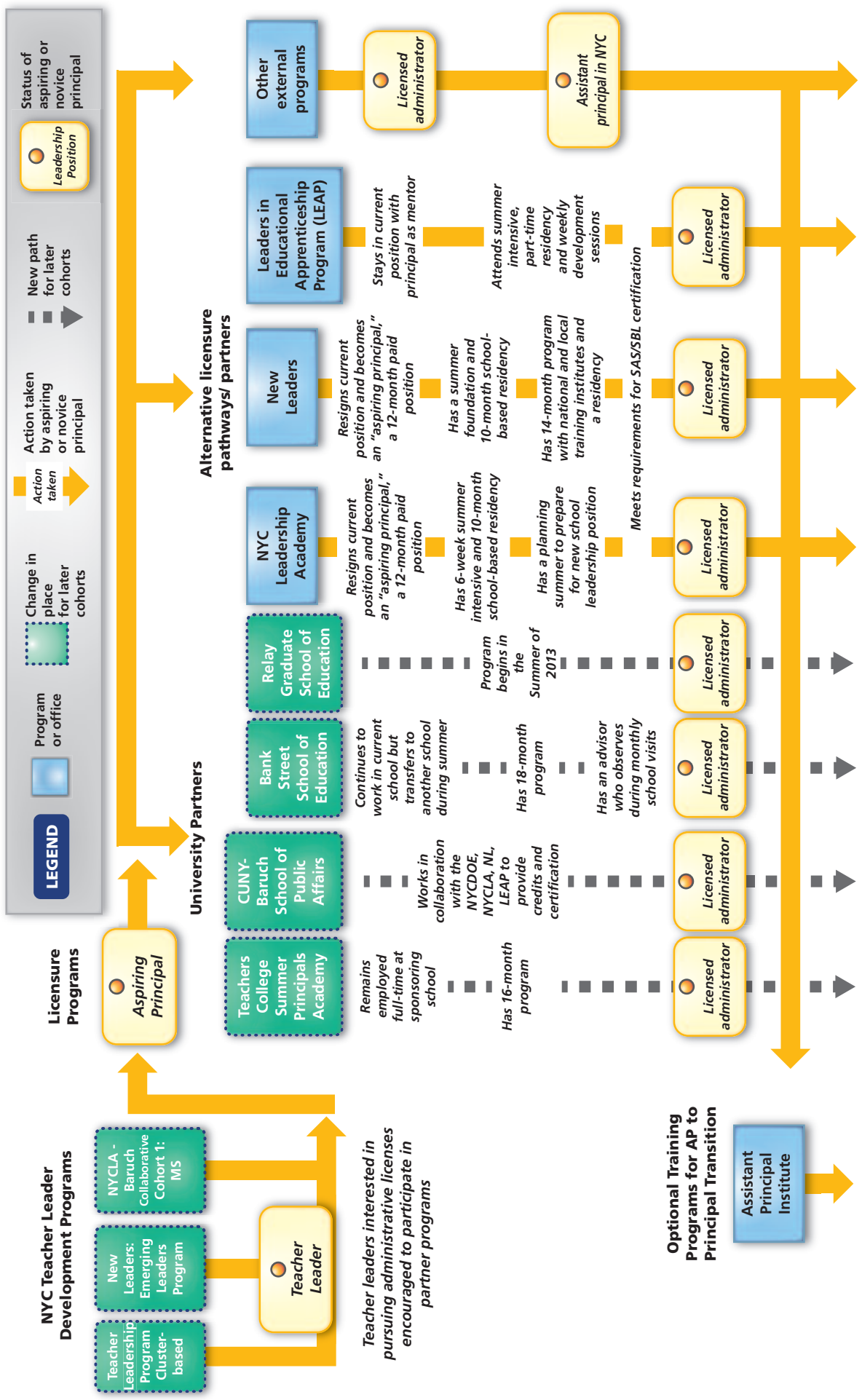
# Exhibit 3: Hillsborough County Public Schools: Preparation Pathways for Novice Principals Hired in SY2011-12



Six Districts Begin the Principal Pipeline Initiative



# Exhibit 4: New York City Department of Education: Preparation Pathways for Novice Principals Hired in SY2011-12

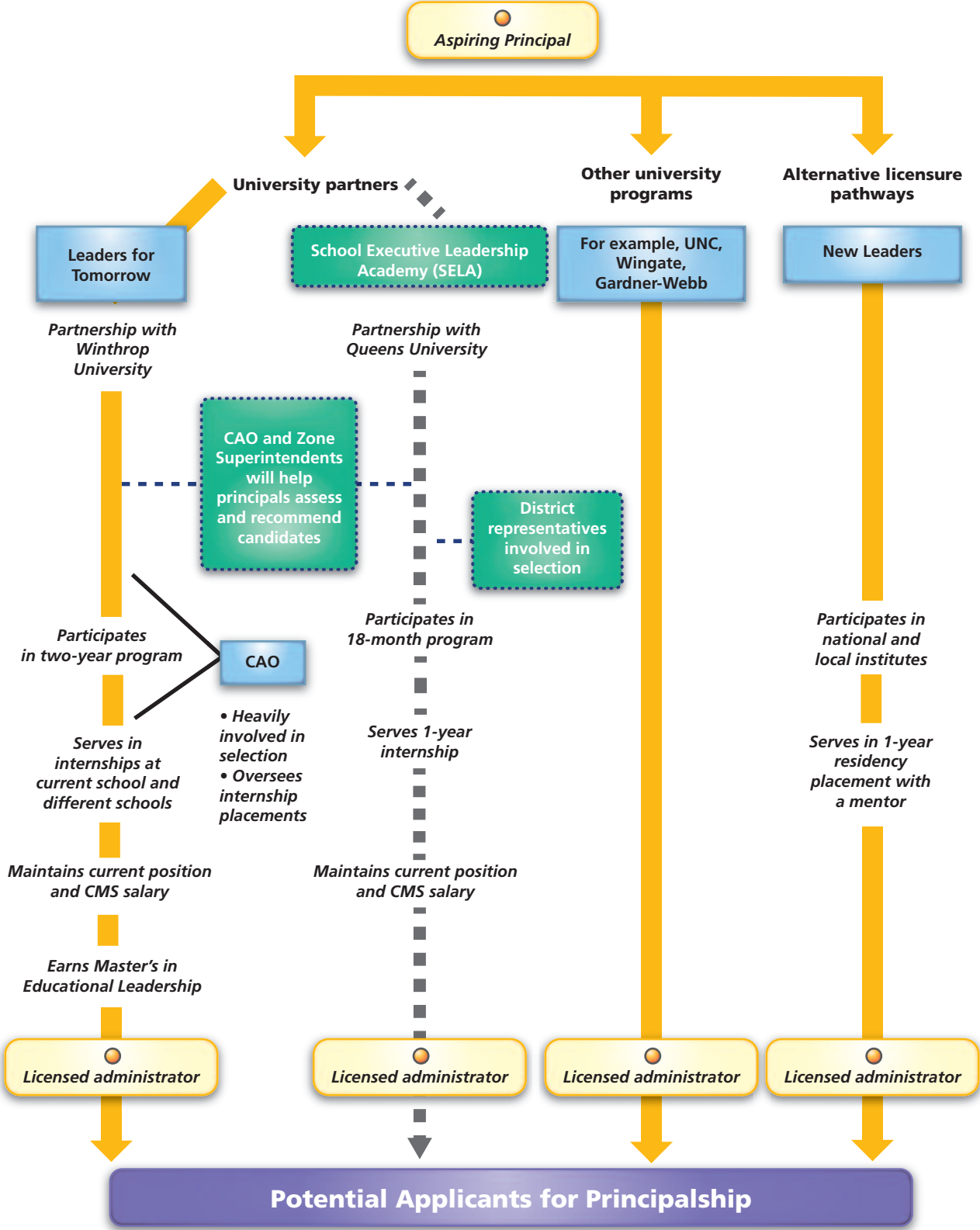


## Potential Applicants for Principalship

# Exhibit 5: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools: Preparation Pathways for Novice Principals Hired in SY2011-12

**LEGEND**

- Program or office
- Change in place for later cohorts
- Action taken by aspiring or novice principal
- New path for later cohorts
- Leadership Position
- Status of aspiring or novice principal

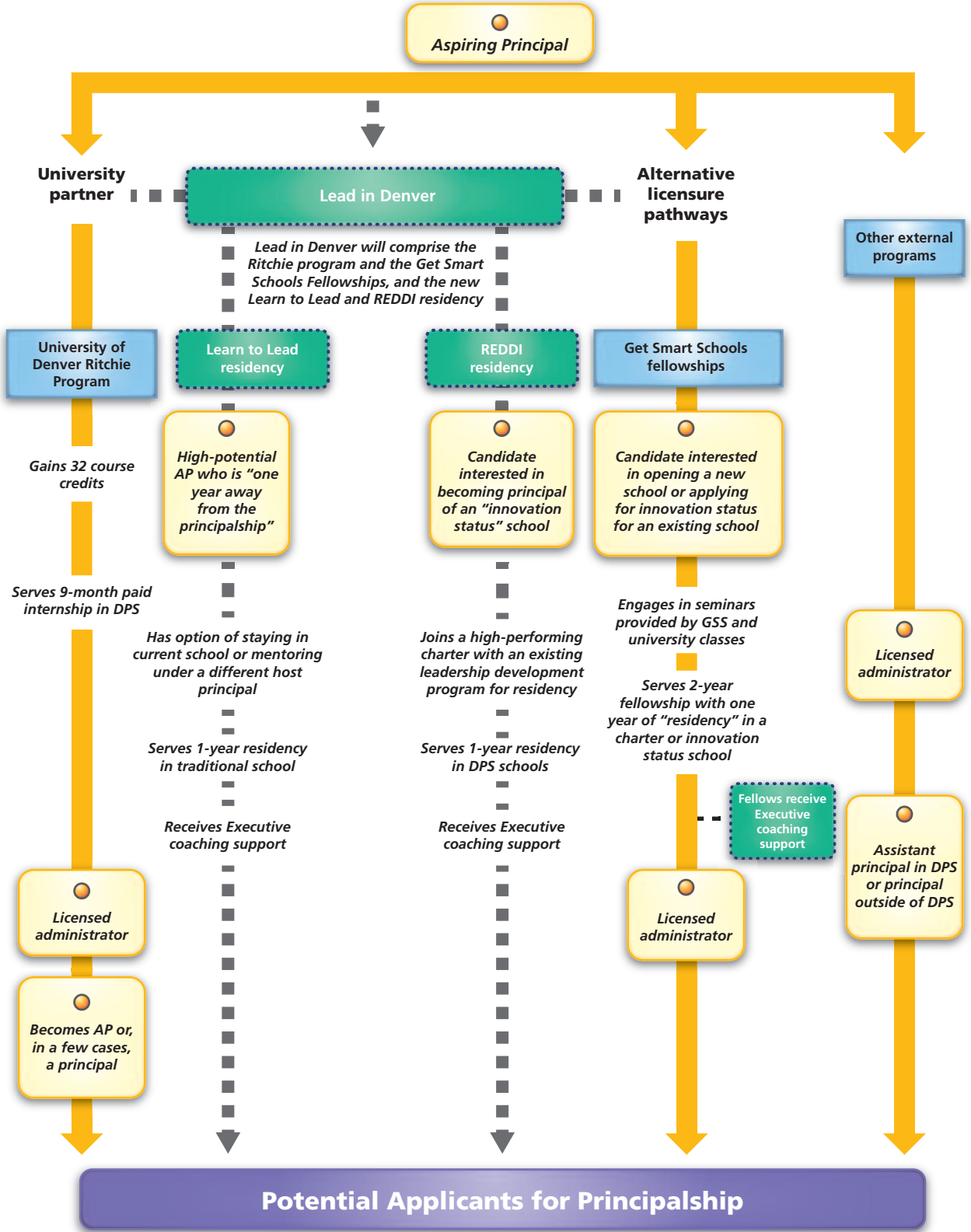


Six Districts Begin the Principal Pipeline Initiative

# Exhibit 6: Denver Public Schools: Preparation Pathways for Novice Principals Hired in SY2011-12

**LEGEND**

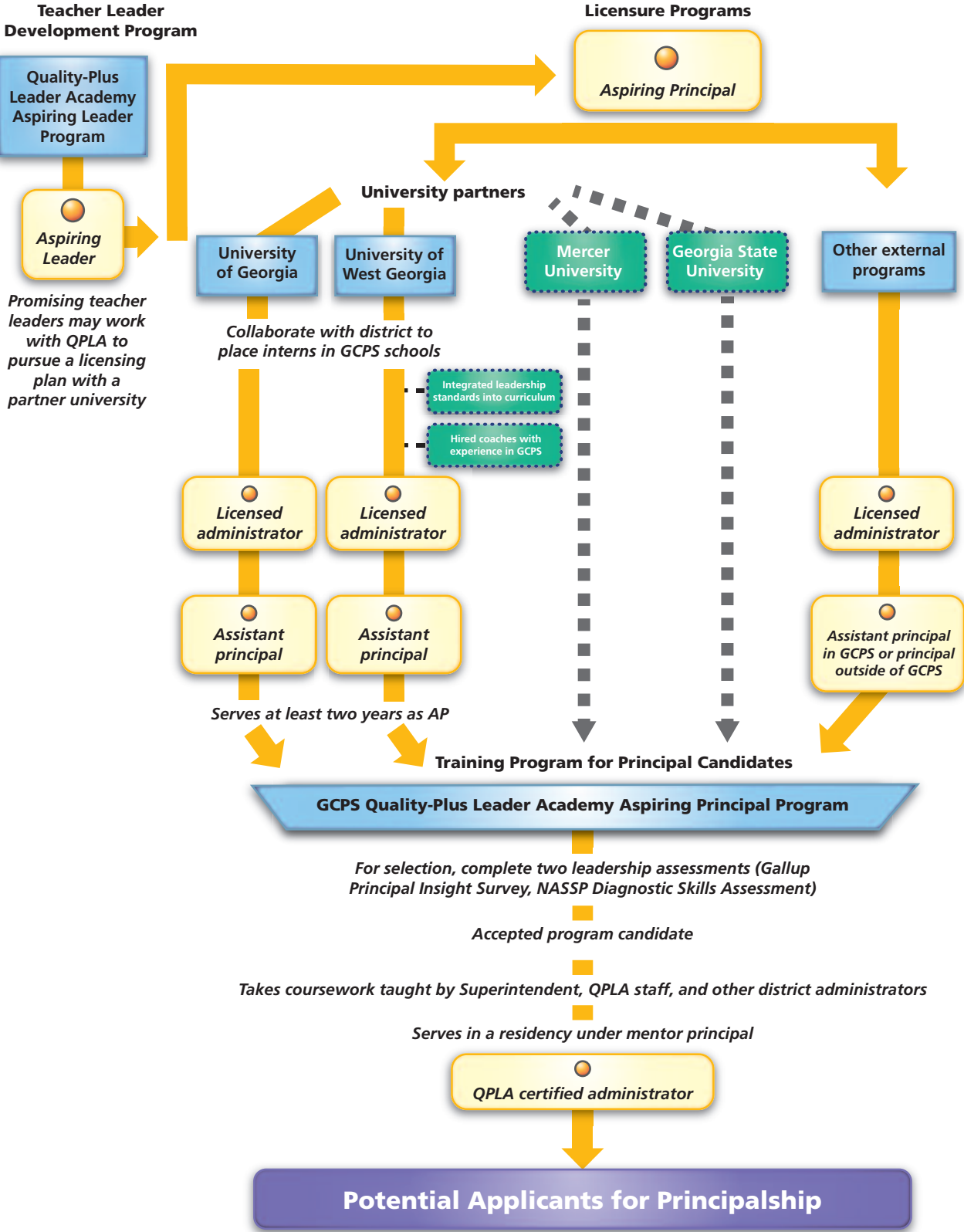
- Program or office
- Change in place for later cohorts
- Action taken
- Action taken by aspiring or novice principal
- New path for later cohorts
- Leadership Position
- Status of aspiring or novice principal



# Exhibit 7: Gwinnett County Public Schools: Preparation Pathways for Novice Principals Hired in SY2011-12

**LEGEND**

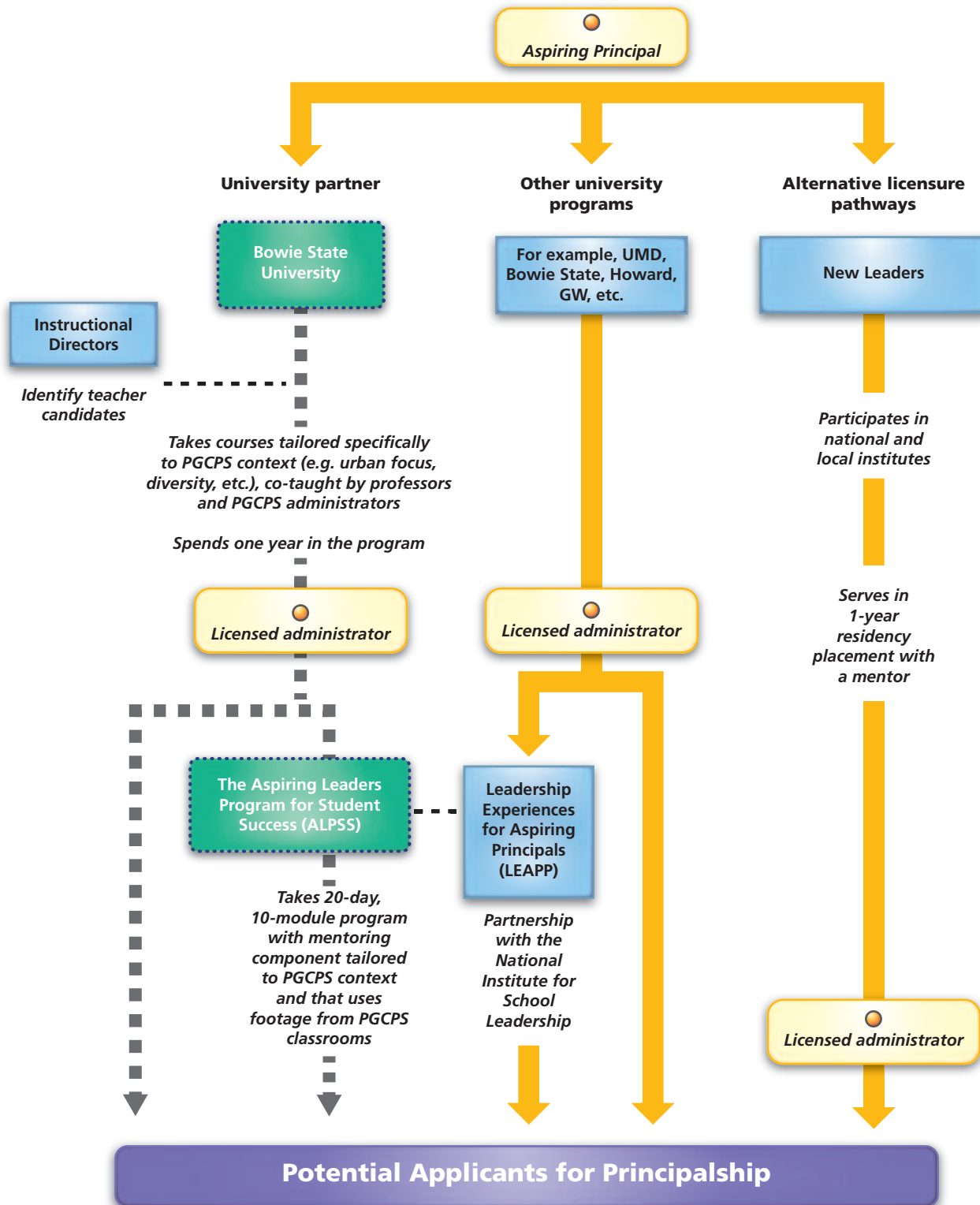
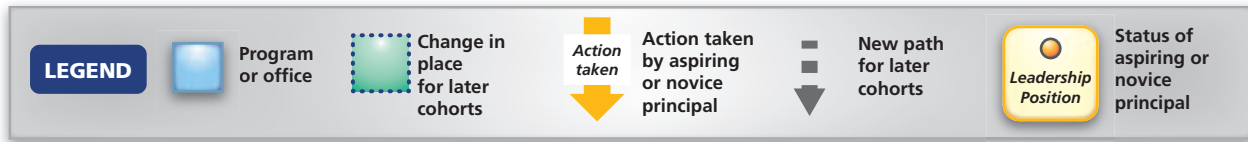
- Program or office
- Change in place for later cohorts
- Action taken by aspiring or novice principal
- New path for later cohorts
- Leadership Position
- Status of aspiring or novice principal



Six Districts Begin the Principal Pipeline Initiative

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# Exhibit 8: Prince George's County Public Schools: Preparation Pathways for Novice Principals Hired in SY2011-12



## Departures from the “Pipeline”

The reality in all the districts also differs from a neat, linear pipeline in that many licensed graduates of preparation programs have not attained school-leadership positions. Realistically, district leaders say, quite a few of them never will. Leaders in each district could point to at least one stage in the local preservice progression that is relatively unselective, providing training and credentials to candidates who are unlikely ever to be chosen as assistant principals or principals. Often this is the stage of university preparation, where individuals can self-select into programs. It can also happen in the districts’ own programs. Two districts with training programs for prospective assistant principals, Gwinnett and Hillsborough Counties, reported that they are tightening admissions requirements so that in the future they will invest their resources in only the most promising candidates.

A somewhat similar issue has arisen in Prince George’s County, but for reasons that are harder for the district to address. Having cut back on assistant principal positions because of budget constraints, the county now houses a growing group of potentially strong leaders who are unable to move into school leadership at the assistant principal level. District leaders expressed frustration with the financial limitations that prevent them from offering these potential leaders the learning opportunities of assistant principal positions.

## Summary

At the start of the Principal Pipeline Initiative, the six sites had different arrays of preservice preparation programs for aspiring school leaders, and each one has made different choices about the particular preservice offerings that the district will bolster or create. All are planning to end up with preparation pathways that will include (1) programs offered by universities or others such as New Leaders and (2) practical preparation offered by the district itself. All will provide different options for individuals at some or all stages of preparation. The sites can be roughly grouped as follows according to the types of programs that were already in place at the start of the initiative grant period and the key changes begun during the first grant year, 2011-12:

- Gwinnett and Hillsborough Counties had district-run programs in place as prerequisites to becoming a principal. They are keeping and enhancing these programs and, at the same time, making two types of additions to the preservice pathway: they are adding required district programs for aspiring leaders at earlier career stages; and they are working with nearby universities to increase the alignment of leadership curricula with district standards and priorities.
- Denver and Charlotte-Mecklenburg have enjoyed strong partnerships with university-based programs that lead to school leader licenses. They are launching additional preparation options: Denver has expanded its array of year-long residencies for already-certified aspiring principals; Charlotte-Mecklenburg is working in partnership with a second university to build a new preparation program.

- New York City and Prince George’s County, which did not have formal partnerships with universities that offer programs leading to licensure, have initiated such partnerships with selected universities. At the same time, New York is enlarging its district-run preparation program, and Prince George’s County is also working closely with an outside organization to develop an improved district-run program.

The Principal Pipeline Initiative charges districts with exercising their consumer power over the institutions that prepare their school leaders. The three types of consumer power identified in district-university relationships by Orr and colleagues (2010) are all apparent in the first year of this initiative: districts are working as *discerning customers* by identifying standards and competencies for aspiring school leaders, as described in the previous section; they are continuing or starting to be *collaborators* with selected universities; and most are also working as *competitors*, creating or enlarging their own leadership programs.

A future report from this evaluation will specifically address partnerships, and we expect to see both new progress and new challenges in these evolving relationships. The institutional relationships are complex. Moreover, the array of options available to an aspiring leader in each district is growing and changing in ways that will also present new opportunities and new issues. Assistant principals will face a shifting set of choices, as will aspiring leaders at earlier career stages, as the districts work to solidify, improve, and perhaps abandon existing preservice pathways on the basis of experience.





## Selective Hiring and Placement

Systematizing the processes for hiring principals who are well matched to specific schools is a goal in every participating district. The districts are working on several fronts: revamping hiring procedures and aligning criteria with their frameworks of standards; gathering data about candidates and organizing the data into usable form; and weighing how and when to consider the candidates' intangible qualities.

### *Refining Procedures and Criteria*

Changes in hiring procedures and criteria are under way in all districts, generally aimed at greater uniformity and closer alignment with new leader standards, but with different initial steps taken from district to district. In interviews, district officials were quick to contrast their newly designed—or planned—hiring procedures with previous practice. An official in Prince George's County said that changing the process was “a quick win,” eliminating several flaws that had been recognized in the previous, relatively informal process. Candidates now go through a uniform set of activities, with the resulting data used to inform the decision. Personal recommendations are not ignored but are much less likely to determine the outcomes. Community input, which in the past might have depended on a single, sparsely attended meeting with the candidate, instead comes in the form of a leadership profile, incorporating survey data about the school's needs. These data are now expected to be gathered annually from all stakeholders—even when no principal vacancy is imminent—to build an increasingly solid profile over time. Unsuccessful candidates for principalships receive information about their identified weaknesses so that they can work to address those weaknesses.

In other districts, new procedures and criteria are being developed and applied in stages. Denver illustrates one progression. First, based on the still-emerging leadership standards and competencies, a tool was developed for use by the principal supervisors, who lead the hiring process. After their initial experience with it, the next steps were revising the tool and developing procedural guidance for use in hiring. In Hillsborough County, an early step was revamping the interview procedures for principal candidates. To remove idiosyncratic questions from the interview process, the district developed scripted questions and a rubric for scoring the answers. Each interviewee is asked the same questions, and the interviewers make notes on their copies of the rubric. A consulting firm has been engaged to develop performance assessments aligned with the principal competencies that Hillsborough identified as the most important ones. Similarly, Denver described a plan to revisit the criteria as its standards and competencies evolve.

An official in Gwinnett County summed up the potential value of the leadership standards in the hiring process in practical terms:

The same standards that turn into the expectations for their job are the same standards that drive questions during the interview process. For example, using data to inform decisions.... During interviews, you want to ask a behavior-based question. For example, asking them to tell you when they last used data, how they have used data to make a decision, or how they use data to drive student achievement. Tell us or show us an example.

## Capturing More and Better Data for Hiring

All districts are adding to the volume of data they collect on applicants for principal positions. In an effort to improve the quality of the data available for consideration, they have developed or adopted standard instruments as well as performance tasks. The Gallup instrument, Principal Insight, is used to screen candidates in Gwinnett and Prince George's Counties. All districts also place candidates in real or simulated school environments and observe their performance. For example:

- Candidates in Denver go into a school, conduct a learning walk, and create a professional development plan for the school.
- Candidates in Prince George's County analyze videos and scenarios. A district leader said: "They have to conduct an observation, and they have to analyze a set of data, and they have to create a vision statement, and all those things have emerged from the standards."
- Similarly, both Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Hillsborough County require a case discussion of a data scenario.
- New York requires performance tasks and a threshold score on those tasks before a candidate is eligible for consideration as a principal.
- Gwinnett County candidates spend a full day in a set of simulation tasks developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. District administrators then spend several days scoring each candidate's performance.

In addition to gathering performance data at the time that a candidate applies for a position, all of the districts are working on compiling cumulative records of their potential leaders' experiences and achievements over time. In four districts, interviewees pointed out that these records include data from the admissions processes of training programs. Both Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Denver have access to the admissions folders of candidates who participated in their university partners' programs. Gwinnett and Hillsborough Counties similarly use the data compiled in the admissions processes for their in-house training programs for administrators.

New York City, while facing a challenge in pulling together data from its numerous existing data systems, has ambitious plans for eventually compiling data that will be relevant for preparation-program admissions, for assessment of those programs, for hiring, and for succession planning. According to interviews with two district officials:

[We need] a way of capturing the assessment of [a teacher leader] which is aligned to those competencies and can be used for entry into that leadership program....That tool will help inform decisions around placement to programs. It will also help us learn what sort of job we're doing.

The work we have in mind is a leadership management platform.... For year one, a focus is on the hiring process.... We also need to do more work on gathering pre-placement data. For vacancies, sometimes we don't know who is on the bench, or sometimes we'll just have names but not much more information on them.

## ***Considering Intangible Qualities in Hiring and Placement Decisions***

District leaders view the selection process as both a science and an art, according to their comments in interviews. Leaders in all districts spoke of the value of uniform data about all applicants, gathered systematically. At the same time, they cited examples of taking into account a candidate's idiosyncratic qualities, and they believed decision makers should get to know candidates personally over a long period of time.

Intangible qualities of personal style were said to enter into decisions about placement in schools. In Gwinnett County, an official knowledgeable about the hiring process described the selection of a principal for a high-functioning school:

[That principal] is going to follow principals who developed ownership of the school, had a vast, strong following of the faculty members, and have led them to high performance... The person who follows them has to be nurturing and keep them going in the direction that they were.... We needed someone who isn't going to change everything. Don't even move the trash can.

But an example cited in Hillsborough County illustrates the perception that a change in the principal's style may be needed in some schools: if the previous principal was relatively weak in interactions with students, the new principal should have strength in that area along with all the other needed qualifications, according to a district leader. An official in Prince George's County gave the example of a recently appointed principal with a calm, unruffled personal style who has had success in bringing order to a chaotic school. And for a school just starting up, the selection process in Gwinnett County would involve the question, "Who is [the principal who is] going to build that culture?"

When officials in three districts spoke of the value of a multi-year preparation pipeline, they cited their conviction that knowing candidates personally and in depth improves the selection process. In setting up programs for teacher leaders, New York City wants network decision makers "to get the opportunity to see folks who have potential, to cultivate them, so that when they become [school] leaders they can match them to the school." By enlarging the residency offerings for current assistant principals, a Denver official said, "We will have a pool next year that we've gotten to know well." Similarly, the Quality-Plus Leader Academy Aspiring Principals Program in Gwinnett County not only affords candidates a window into high-level district operations but also enables the high-level administrators to interact with the candidates who are likely to apply for principalships in the following year. With the addition of the Aspiring Leaders Program, Gwinnett district administrators are also able to meet and begin sizing up potential leaders at an earlier point in those participants' careers.

## ***Pre-Screening Potential Leaders into a Talent Pool***

The Talent Pools for principals and assistant principals in Charlotte-Mecklenburg represent a formal stage in the progression toward placement in a school. Would-be school leaders with the appropriate credentials apply to a pool, and selection into the pool is no mere formality. For the principal Talent Pool, as of 2011-12, it includes an interview, a writing activity, and an observed discussion with other applicants of a data scenario. Graduates of the district's partner preparation program, Leaders for Tomorrow, are exempted from the initial written requirements because they have already undergone an equivalent screening for entry into Leaders for Tomorrow. Only members of a pool are considered for appointment as a principal or assistant principal.

Other districts open position announcements to a wider range of candidates, with less selective pre-screening. However, the Gwinnett and Hillsborough qualification requirements, entailing admission to their selective in-house preparation program and then successful completion of the program, serve a function in those districts that is somewhat similar to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Talent Pools.

## ***Hiring and Placing Assistant Principals***

Across these districts, current practice in hiring assistant principals varies in the extent to which it is centrally specified and controlled. Hillsborough County is instituting the procedure of posing standard questions to assistant principal applicants and scoring their responses according to rubrics, just as it has for principal applicants. Charlotte-Mecklenburg, as just described, has a formal Talent Pool for aspiring assistant principals, and selection into that pool requires steps that are similar to those of the principal pool. New York, with a more decentralized structure than these two districts, is working to involve network leaders more substantively in the processes of succession planning and systematic talent development, and to equip them to participate in selection by helping them become acquainted with prospective leaders.

Prince George's County has tried to approach the placement of assistant principals with an eye toward the future of the individual being placed. Seeing leadership potential in a new assistant principal, the district tries to place him or her in a setting that offers valuable learning opportunities, such as a high-needs school with a dynamic principal.

## ***Summary***

Each participating district is moving in the direction of greater standardization in hiring and selection procedures. The newly developed leader standards are aiding this process, offering sets of categories in which applicants' strengths can be assessed. The districts are also moving to capture ever-greater amounts of data about candidates, both by conducting formal assessment procedures at the time of application and by tapping the data available from preservice programs. The evolution and eventual uses of both standards and

data systems will be analyzed in future reports from this evaluation, as the districts implement and refine new standards-based and data-based routines.

A countervailing belief is also apparent, though: district leaders are convinced that intangible qualities make an important difference in a principal's success in a particular school. Thus they want to ensure that district decision makers become personally acquainted with aspiring leaders in order to make a successful match when the time comes. How they strike a balance between formal and informal procedures, and how they and their aspiring leaders perceive the results, will be addressed in future evaluation reports.



## On-the-Job Evaluation and Support

All six districts are moving forward in efforts to tie together evaluation and support for novice principals. Each district's standards and competencies for principals are expected to facilitate this change, providing a common basis for evaluation criteria and for the content of support offerings. In order to focus support for each novice principal on the specific needs identified through evaluation, a district needs two ingredients: (1) evaluation instruments that identify gaps in skill, knowledge, or behavior; and (2) support providers who help the principal address these gaps. The districts are working to develop both ingredients.

### *Evaluative and Diagnostic Instruments*

Two districts, New York and Charlotte-Mecklenburg, are focusing in different ways on principal-evaluation instruments that will be consistent with accountability mandates. In an effort to align measures of principal performance with consequential measures of school performance, New York City has emphasized aligning the desired principal competencies with the Quality Review. This is a set of school-level measures that counts, along with student performance measures, in school accountability—which in turn can have consequences for principals, up to and including dismissal. A district leader described the effort to define principal competencies in relation to the school-level performance benchmarks used in the Quality Review as an effort:

... to strengthen [the identification of competencies] to speak more directly to what we expect our principals to do well. The Quality Review reviewers use a rubric to assess the school.... So we are trying to pull out from the Quality Review indicators the work of the principal.

Eventually, this analysis can lead to a tool for assessing principals as well as related tools for use in preparation programs and at other stages in the pipeline.

Under a state mandate to work toward pay for performance, Charlotte-Mecklenburg embarked on a district-wide Talent Effectiveness Project, developing scorecards for all positions. (This work was later put on hold, however.)

Five districts are using or considering use of the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED)<sup>4</sup> tool. The original instrument-development team at Vanderbilt University, working with Wallace support, grounded the measures in research that analyzed the association between principal behaviors and school outcomes, and the team tested the surveys for reliability (Goldring et al., 2009). The resulting packet of VAL-ED surveys—completed by principals themselves, their supervisors, and teachers in their buildings—rates principals' effectiveness on five-point scales for each of six key processes (planning, implement-

<sup>4</sup> The Wallace Foundation funded the development of the VAL-ED instrument in 2008. Grantee districts were encouraged but not required to use VAL-ED. However, Wallace did require the use of a reliable, research-based evaluation tool.

ing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring) and six core components of building leadership (high standards for student learning, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, culture of learning and professional behavior, connections to external communities, and performance accountability).

In four of the sites using VAL-ED, district leaders emphasized that their purpose in using it is diagnosis rather than high-stakes evaluation: the district aims to identify principals' strengths and weaknesses so that it can develop and offer appropriate support. This takes place at the district level in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, for example, where district professional development offerings have been developed around areas of need revealed by overall VAL-ED results. It may also take place at the individual principal level if principals are given specific feedback on their ratings and counseled into group or individual professional development designed to address their weaknesses, and districts said they were working toward such a system. In the meantime, they are encouraging principals to use their VAL-ED results for individual goal setting.

In Hillsborough County, VAL-ED has both evaluative and diagnostic purposes. It counts for 30 percent of the score in the district's principal-evaluation process, and the district also uses the results to inform professional development for principals.

The extent of use of VAL-ED varies. Three districts introduced it on a pilot basis with small groups of principals, and another district, New York City, is considering doing the same. Hillsborough County is using it districtwide. Denver has used a Teacher Perception Survey in the past and, instead of using VAL-ED, decided to continue to invest in that survey and to align it specifically to the new competency set. Denver is likely to extend the reach of the survey, making it a more broad-based 360 degree solution in the future.

### ***Professional Development for Novice Principals***

Among these districts, Charlotte-Mecklenburg offers the longest period of deliberately structured support for new principals, designed as a five-year induction sequence of professional learning. New principals work with a consultant coach in small groups for two years. In their second year as principal, some participate in the National School Administration Manager (SAM) Innovation Project, receiving coaching on their use of time for instructional leadership. Third-year principals participate in the Queens University McColl School's Executive Leadership Institute; fourth-year principals participate in Queens's Innovation Institute on issues of school improvement. Fourth- and fifth-year principals can undergo the VAL-ED assessment and participate in professional development tailored to their VAL-ED results. In the fifth year, they carry out a capstone project.

Other districts are working to systematize professional development for novice principals in various ways. In Hillsborough County, new principals participate in the district's two-year Principal Induction Program, which includes weekly coaching for first-year principals, a summer institute, ten half-day sessions, and required courses. This induction program focuses on tacit and practical content, such as implementing a "first 90 days" plan, and addresses competencies in the leader standards and evaluation with particular attention on content most pressing for novices. Since becoming a Wallace grantee, the district has also devel-



oped a parallel induction program for assistant principals. Prince George’s County offers a New Principals Academy for a cohort of novice leaders and, in addition, has many professional development offerings that district leaders want to align more clearly with the new framework of leadership standards. Denver has recognized that universal principal meetings—bringing all principals together for the same set of messages—have limited utility for professional learning. The district has cut back the number of such meetings and has set up a process intended to improve professional development offerings. After an initial cross-walk between the content of available professional development and the Framework for Effective School Leadership, the district plans to develop and implement other offerings that fill gaps.

### ***Supervisory and Coaching Roles***

To guide novice principals’ learning and development in ways aligned with their diagnosed weaknesses, each district has at least two cadres of individuals in place: supervisors, and mentors or coaches (with the latter two terms having no consistent definition across districts). Both groups’ responsibilities in working with principals are continuing to develop. Although there can be inherent tensions between evaluative and support roles—since effective support addresses the specific weaknesses that a novice is willing to reveal, while evaluation may lead to negative consequences for weaknesses—the districts have varied in the extent to which they separate the roles.

The principals’ formal supervisors in five of the districts have a mandate to help support principals as well as hold them accountable. New York is the exception, with an anomalous arrangement in which formal responsibilities for supervision and support are assigned to two different groups. By state law, community superintendents or high-school superintendents<sup>5</sup> serve as formal rating officers of principals and signatories on hiring, evaluation, and budget documents. The clusters and networks, which constitute a school support structure independent of the geographically based superintendencies, are expected to give schools and their principals feedback and support. Supervision arrangements in the other districts vary but are being re-designed for a greater focus on instructional issues and on building principals’ capacity. Principals’ supervisors are identified as key actors in helping principals set goals and finding the resources that will help them address their identified weaknesses.

At the same time, every district has at least one coaching or mentoring structure in place for all novice principals. Typically veteran or retired principals, these individuals have no evaluative responsibilities but instead offer their protégé principals an opportunity to express everyday worries without fear of the consequences. Mentors or coaches observe in the schools and may offer just-in-time advice on practical matters such as budget development, as well as helping principals with whatever challenges they face. The New York City Leadership Academy provides coaching for all first-year principals in the New York, not limited to its own graduates, and principals have the option of paying for second-year coaching from their building budgets. The academy’s coaching protocols have been a resource to Denver and Gwinnett County as well.

<sup>5</sup> See note 1, above, for a description of titles and functions in the New York City Department of Education, including the roles of the chancellor, the superintendents, and the clusters and networks.

Hillsborough County, like other districts, has invested in induction coaching. Hillsborough developed seven new full-time positions dedicated to coaching novice principals while coordinating with the principal supervisors (who are called Area Leadership Directors) on each novice's goal setting. First-year principals receive weekly coaching, while second-year principals receive bi-weekly coaching, and the coaches also facilitate group trainings and professional learning communities. The principal coaches, having demonstrated effectiveness as principals themselves, were drawn out of the principalship on three-year contracts with a right to return to a principal position.

### ***Capacity Building for Supervisors and Mentors***

Interviewees in every district reported that helping the principals' supervisors and mentors develop their own job skills is a continuing task. One challenge, mentioned in Denver, Hillsborough County, and Prince George's County, has been to make sure that the supervisors do not function solely as enforcers of compliance with rules but instead support their principals as problem solvers. Challenges can also arise in the transition from the supervisor's previous position. For the Area Leadership Directors in Hillsborough County, the supervisors who previously focused on the operational side of schools but are now asked to observe and advise principals on instructional leadership, a district leader said, "The biggest change for them is to let go, let go of some of the responsibilities. ... They're struggling with letting go and looking at leadership from a different perspective." To support them, the New Teacher Center is working with Hillsborough County, providing training and support for the Area Leadership Directors in their new responsibilities. An interview described this work as "helping shift their roles from managers of principals to developers of principals." Similar challenges were said to have faced principal supervisors in the other districts where support for instructional leadership is increasingly part of their work.

The transition from principal to mentor of principals is also far from automatic, and districts have put structures in place to help the mentors. In New York, mentors have long had training provided by the New York City Leadership Academy. As mentioned above, the academy's mentoring protocols have also been a resource for Denver and Gwinnett County. The other districts also offer support for their mentors:

- Coaches in Hillsborough County, like the principal supervisors there, have been coached by the New Teacher Center. This has included instruction in "how to gather evidence of practice and give effective feedback for practice."
- In Prince George's County, principal mentors participate in training through the National Association of Elementary School Principals' Leadership Immersion Institute program, developing their knowledge of adult learning and their techniques for "helping adults develop strengths to become effective leaders." This program includes a two-and-a-half-day institute followed by a nine-month internship for the mentors, at the end of which they can become nationally certified principal mentors.

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg “consultant coaches,” who are experienced, practicing principals, are trained by an experienced leadership educator from Winthrop University (a developer of the Leaders for Tomorrow program), and they meet with her monthly. A district administrator observed that this has increased the consistency of coaching.

## ***Evaluation and Support for Assistant Principals***

In four districts, interviewees commented on how they are using or adapting their standards for use in evaluating assistant principals and in providing needed support for their learning. Hillsborough County uses its leadership standards and competencies as the basis for assistant principal evaluation. Denver has planned to do the same, so as to bring greater consistency to principals’ evaluation of their assistant principals. Prince George’s County is using VAL-ED for diagnostic evaluation of assistant principals so that skill gaps can be identified and addressed.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Hillsborough County have developed district-run induction programs for their new assistant principals and are working to ensure that all assistant principals develop skills in instructional leadership. Each assistant principal in Charlotte-Mecklenburg is required to carry out a project related to data and student achievement. Hillsborough County, recognizing that many assistant principals carry out specialized functions in their schools, has instituted cross-training: principals are expected to ensure that their assistant principals learn how to be instructional leaders, and within a building different assistant principals (for example, the one responsible for curriculum and the one responsible for student affairs) are expected to cross-train each other. Prince George’s County works with the School Leaders Network that provides professional development opportunities for assistant principals in monthly meetings focused on problems of practice, similar to other School Leaders Network offerings for teacher leaders and principals in the district.

## ***Summary***

A desire to systematize and improve the evaluation of school leaders is a priority among these districts, as discussed earlier in this report, and all districts are beginning to translate their new leadership standards into evaluation instruments. With standards and competencies still subject to revision, and with some districts introducing new staffing arrangements for principal evaluation, more remains to be done to solidify the evaluation systems. Finding a place for the VAL-ED instrument is one part of this work in progress: four districts have used the instrument on at least a pilot basis, and one intends to continue its use districtwide. In general VAL-ED appears likely to be used for diagnostic purposes, while evaluation with consequences may be more tightly aligned with the districts’ own newly defined standards and competencies.

Each district has or is developing a sequence of supports for novice leaders, typically including professional development, coaching, and peer support. Partner organizations may be part of these supports.

The districts are defining new responsibilities for principal supervisors, mentors, and coaches. Issues of capacity have already emerged in this process, and some districts are bringing in partner organizations to coach the supervisors and coaches in the demanding task of supporting novice principals' on-the-job development. Looking ahead, though, the tensions inherent in balancing supervision and support may continue to pose challenges in these sites.

## Conclusions

All six districts joined the Principal Pipeline Initiative having already devoted attention to the preparation, hiring, evaluation, and support of school leaders, but with a desire to further strengthen and align these functions in hopes of enjoying the benefits of a stronger corps of novice principals. First-year activities in the participating sites were overwhelmingly practical in nature, aimed at rapidly augmenting, creating, or refining standards, leader-preparation offerings, hiring and placement procedures, and arrangements for leader evaluation and support, all of which are expected to conform to The Wallace Foundation's requirements. In some parts of the work, notably in preservice preparation, programs and policies continue to vary a great deal across districts. Summarized here are some of the major ways in which the sites have begun to build on their previous efforts around school leadership:

- Leaders in all districts look forward to applying new standards and competencies in the development and administration of policies around leadership. They expect standards, which are derived from ISLLC 2008 and other sources, to guide preparation programs, the hiring process, evaluation, and support. The early work has entailed either the development of district standards for leadership or the adaptation of state standards, informed by a range of local perspectives including those of practicing principals. Standards and competencies may continue to undergo revision in the coming years.
- In preservice preparation, all the districts and their partner universities are building closer working relationships around preparation programs. Their starting points are quite different, however. Two districts are already working closely with a partner. The other four districts are identifying areas of mutual interest with one or several universities and taking steps toward greater alignment between district requirements and university offerings.
- At the same time, districts are also upgrading the training that they themselves offer to licensed school leaders. Graduates of university preparation programs who receive school leader licenses are typically some years away from the principalship, and districts are enhancing the training that they offer to aspiring principals during these years. District-run learning opportunities, internships, and coaching for aspiring principals are in place in each district, and further expansion is planned.
- The hiring process is becoming more systematic. Districts are introducing or expanding the use of performance tasks and planning to assemble a richer dataset on each candidate. They are trying to eliminate the more idiosyncratic procedures that may have been used in the past, such as informal approaches to interviewing candidates. Still, they expect to leave room for the exercise of human judgment in matching candidates to schools, and they are organizing more opportunities for district leaders to become acquainted with aspiring leaders over time.
- Principal evaluation is expected to include a diagnostic component so that supervision, coaching, and professional development can focus on principals' identified weaknesses.

- Districts are organizing programs of capacity building for principals' supervisors and mentors, aimed at helping them provide effective support focused on instructional leadership. Combining the support role with principal evaluation, especially in today's climate of accountability, is a challenge for the individuals in these roles. In a larger sense, it can also be a challenge for the districts.

The Principal Pipeline Initiative, in addition to requiring attention to all the systems and structures just described, also emphasizes coherence across these structures. District leaders interviewed for this evaluation saw leadership standards and competencies as the primary vehicle for lending coherence: they said they expect the codification of principals' job responsibilities to bring consistency to the functions of preservice preparation, hiring, evaluation, and support. They observed that these four functions can easily become disconnected from each other as they are carried out over time by different district offices and outside partners. The districts' vision of coherence, then, is a practical one, having to do with a shared definition of the job of school leadership as an anchor or a common language for multiple activities.

As this evaluation moves forward, future reports on implementation will provide information about what happens next in the districts. In all likelihood, local circumstances will change in some respects, and district leaders will find that some of their plans can be carried out more smoothly than others. Districts and partners are also beginning to turn more attention to the preparation, hiring, and support of assistant principals, wrestling with the ways in which this role does or does not pose leadership challenges similar to those of the principalship.

In all aspects of their work on school leadership, it is very possible that local decision makers will continually adjust their policies and procedures. The district and partner leaders we interviewed view their standards and their arrangements for leader preparation, hiring, evaluation, and support as works in progress, subject to ongoing improvement over time.

The evaluation will analyze how the districts maintain or modify particular features of the approaches described here. The evaluation team will also gather and report data on how local leaders and participants, including aspiring and novice principals, perceive the results of policies and practices around school leadership. Finally, the team will use data on principals and schools, including student achievement, to assess the impact on important school outcomes attributable to principals' exposure to the major components of the Principal Pipeline Initiative.

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## APPENDIX: District Implementation Summaries, August 2012

### Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) *August 2012*

#### *Context and Other Initiatives*

- Begun in 2007, the CMS Strategic Staffing Initiative matches principals with schools, particularly low performing ones. The initiative gives principals a team and additional authority to support school-level changes, as well as bonuses to teacher recruits. A related initiative begun in 2012, the Project LIFT Zone, is a high-school feeder unit that has greater autonomy and receives substantial financial support from a foundation consortium. Then Project LIFT Zone may serve as an incubator of strategies that will inform Strategic Staffing schools throughout the district, as well as CMS's broader principal pipeline development.
- Funds allotted to CMS through Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act support partnerships with New Leaders and Queens University.
- Race to the Top funds help support CMS's Talent Effectiveness Project, including work focused on principal effectiveness.
- In 2011-12, the Principal Pipeline Initiative was housed in the Chief Academic Officer's (CAO's) office. For 2012-13, the CAO took the position of Deputy Superintendent, while continuing to oversee the project and maintain responsibilities of CAO.

#### *Leadership Standards*

- North Carolina worked with Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) to develop the state's leadership standards and evaluation system, published in 2009 as the North Carolina School Executive: Principal and Assistant Principal Evaluation Process. CMS and all other districts in the state must use the state standards and evaluation, though they can supplement or emphasize particular aspects of them.
- In 2011-2012, CMS developed the draft CMS Leadership Competency Framework. The district formed the School Leadership Council—including principals, assistant principals (APs), Zone

Superintendents (each of whom oversees schools in a particular geographic location), human resources staff, preservice partners, and the CAO—to identify competencies and link them to the seven state leadership standards, five of which the group identified as “Super Standards.” As of spring 2012, the district was finalizing the Leadership Competency Framework with groups of principals and assistant principals.

- In 2011-2012, CMS developed formal job descriptions for principals and APs based on North Carolina leadership standards. The CMS human resources department will incorporate these job descriptions into forms and procedures used in applications and hiring.

### **Preservice Recruitment, Selection, Training**

- Leaders for Tomorrow is administered by CMS’s partner, Winthrop University. The program began in 2008 and is tailored for CMS employees, giving them a Master’s in Educational Leadership while they maintain salary in their current positions. Principals nominate candidates (about 85-100), and about 45 of these are invited to apply. The rigorous screening process includes a pre-test, interview, writing sample addressing competencies, presentation, and “in-basket” activity. Candidates are scored and ranked, and about 20-25 are accepted into each cohort. The 2-year program is aligned with CMS competencies and the state leadership standards, and it includes a series of eight-week sessions and internships at different schools. CMS shares authority with Winthrop University over the program and its curriculum. The CAO has been heavily involved with selection of candidates and overseeing aspects of the program such as internship placements.
- The New Leaders program in CMS uses a program design consistent with its implementation in other districts. The contract between CMS and New Leaders is expected to prepare 50 new principals total by 2015, although it currently prepares approximately five principals each year.
- CMS intends to work with the Leaders for Tomorrow and New Leaders programs to strengthen their recruiting and selection processes and align them with the district’s vision of school leadership as expressed in the Super Standards and Leadership Competency Framework. The CAO and Zone Superintendents are expected to help principals assess and recommend candidates for these preservice programs based on the leadership competencies.
- Queens University is starting a new certification program called School Executive Leadership Academy (SELA) that will include a partnership with CMS. This 18-month program is expected to begin in the 2012-2013 school year. The academy will be a partnership between the Queens University schools of business and education. The New York City Leadership Academy is developing the curriculum, which includes a summer intensive and a one-year internship that includes four days of each week in a school and one day receiving professional development. The new curriculum is expected to align with the state leadership standards. The participants will collect CMS salary, and tuition costs will be offset by CMS. As of spring 2012, CMS was helping to select can-

didates for the first cohort, which will only include CMS participants. The program will mostly draw from CMS for future cohorts, though it does have approval to include participants from several nearby districts.

- CMS offers optional training to principal and assistant principal candidates in the CMS Talent Pools (described below, under Hiring and Placement). Modules are offered on topics such as English language learners, Title I budgets, and textbook inventories, which the district has identified as practical priorities. To identify topics, the district conducted a needs assessment that included VAL-ED surveys of novice principals in spring 2012.

## ***Hiring and Placement***

- In February 2011, CMS launched the AP and Principal Talent Pools. The selection process to enter the Talent Pools includes an interview, writing activity, and for principal candidates only, an observed case discussion with other applicants about a data scenario. After passing a rigorous screening process at the district level, candidates enter the pools and can apply for specific school leader positions. As of spring 2012, there were approximately 80 candidates total in the Talent Pools. The pools are updated with new candidates using the selection process several times a year. Since hiring can take place at any time of the year and placement depends on a match between the candidate and the school, the amount of time an individual spends in a Talent Pool varies, but there is a two-year limit (after which he or she can re-apply for the pool at a later time).
- When candidates apply from the pools, Zone Superintendents choose applicants who they believe closely match the profile of the school. These candidates enter a school-level selection process, meeting with an interview committee made up of school staff, parents, community members, human resources, and the Zone Superintendent. The committee recommends its top choices for approval by the Superintendent and CAO (now in the position of Deputy Superintendent).

## ***Evaluation***

- Since 2009, CMS has used a state-mandated evaluation system based on the state leadership standards and developed with help from McREL. Principals are given ratings on each standards-based element, and narrative summaries are compiled to substantiate ratings. Zone Superintendents are trained on conducting evaluations of their principals. The state's school executive evaluation process is a non-negotiable foundation for CMS principal appraisal, though the district can—and plans to—supplement the process. The state evaluation system added student growth as a measure of principal performance beginning in 2011-12.
- In the Talent Effectiveness Project, a committee of principals is working to determine measures of principal effectiveness and is designing a performance scorecard, with the expectation that the measures will be the basis for pay for performance incentives beginning in 2014.

- CMS intends to differentiate aspects of evaluation for Strategic Staffing Initiative and Project LIFT Zone schools, while adhering to the state-mandated evaluation system.

## **Professional Development and Support**

There are several levels of principal induction during a principal's first five years.

- First- and second-year principals are matched with a consultant coach who meets with principals in small groups. The consultant coaches, who are all current principals, serve a non-evaluative role while reporting to the Zone Superintendents. Each consultant coach has a case load of 5-10 novice principals and works with them for two years. Two lead PD designers, who are retired principals, provide focus lessons and coaching support to other coaches.
- Beginning in 2011-12, about 22 second-year principals are engaged in the School Administration Manager (SAM) program. They were encouraged but not required to select an AP as the SAM. For the job of collecting a week of baseline data on the principals' time use, CMS uses APs from the principal Talent Pool (to build their own knowledge), district staff, and coaches.
- Beginning in 2011-12, third-year principals participate in the Queens University McColl School's Executive Leadership Institute focusing on what kind of leader they are and how to maximize their traits to have a positive impact on the school. CMS principals have attended the institute for a couple of years, but the district has now made it a formal part of its principal induction program.
- In 2011-12, fourth- and fifth-year principals piloted the use of VAL-ED as a professional development tool and growth measure. CMS incorporated professional development using Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) modules. Beginning in 2011-12, fourth- year principals participate in Queens University McColl School's Innovation Institute focusing on how to engage in the creative process as it relates to school improvement.
- Differentiated professional development is offered by Zone Superintendents and through the zone offices. In 2011-12, CMS piloted a new role, working under one of the Zone Superintendents and charged with working with principals (novice and veteran) to achieve goals specifically identified through the evaluation. This role was intended to alleviate the Zone Superintendent's workload and focus on the professional development side of principal evaluation. For 2012-13, a support role called Principal Coach is being instituted at the zone level, focused on providing support to principals that is grounded in their evaluation.
- For several years, two Strategic Coaches in the district have worked at the behest of the CAO with struggling principals. The Strategic Coaches report on principal progress to Zone Superintendents.
- As of spring 2012, an AP induction program is being designed to complement the principal induction program. It is expected to begin in the 2012-13 school year.

# Denver Public Schools (DPS)

August 2012

## Context and Other Initiatives

- Denver Public Schools has been under the leadership of Tom Boasberg since 2009.
- DPS recently piloted a new teacher evaluation system, Leading Effective Academic Practice (LEAP), in spring 2011 and school year 2011-12. The Gates Foundation supports this work.
- Many outside grants address leadership. Examples include an Investing in Innovation grant supporting leaders in schools with high numbers of English learners; a Teacher Incentive Fund grant that offers principals pay for performance; and School Improvement Grant support for principal residents and professional development.
- Pipeline progress is monitored by a Steering Committee composed of high-level administrators, HR personnel, a Principal Talent Management team, and university and charter school liaisons.

## Leadership Standards

- DPS has developed and approved initial drafts of the Framework for Effective School Leadership, which lays out examples of principal and school (teacher and student) behaviors in a number of performance areas. Derived from work done in developing the teacher evaluation system, it has a structure and elements aligned to the Framework for Effective Teaching. The Framework was informed by Colorado state standards, tools and competencies from the Ritchie program, and “other research based on effective school leadership” (such as the NYC Leadership Academy Framework, language from New Leaders and the National Council on Teacher Quality, VAL-ED, and Charlotte Danielson’s work on leadership best practices). The Framework has been vetted by multiple district departments and partners.
- Multiple respondents reported challenges with the pre-Framework standards. Criticism centered on: 1) the limited integration of standards into the evaluation system, 2) the small number of standards and performance areas for review, and 3) lack of detail in defining leadership behavior and performance.
- DPS plans to work with Cross & Joftus to revise the job descriptions of principals and assistant principals in alignment with the Framework.

## Preservice Recruitment, Selection, Training

- The **Lead in Denver** initiative comprises three residency/fellowship programs for high-potential assistant principals and the **Ritchie Program**, a DPS-University of Denver leadership development partnership for teacher leaders and others interested in obtaining their administrative licenses.
- **Learn to Lead** is a new one-year residency for aspiring principals. In its launch year, Learn to Lead received 66 applications for the 2012-13 cohort and has admitted 18. Given the option of staying in their current school or mentoring under a different host principal, more than 75 percent of residents chose to conduct their residency in a different school. The residency is based on a “gradual release model” in which host principals assign one area of responsibility to the resident at the start of the school year, assign one or two more areas during November-January, and cede leadership of the school to the resident for one or two weeks in the spring. Each resident will have a plan called an Individualized Leadership Compact and will receive multiple supports including executive coaches, differentiated learning teams, biweekly cohort meetings, off-site leadership labs, and universal professional development offerings. Residents will also have monthly meetings with their host principal, executive coach, and the DPS residency manager to monitor progress; goals and action plans will be amended as necessary. The host principals will themselves receive professional development and coaching.
- The **REDDI residency**, funded by the Dell Foundation, is a one-year residency at a high-performing charter school that has an existing leadership development program. Part of the district’s portfolio-based approach to school improvement, the REDDI residency program is centered on developing leaders in non-traditional schools with a focus on training leaders in innovation. The district hopes that the residencies provide a medium for the cross-pollination of innovative practices from the charter sector into district schools and that the central office learns from participants how to support their pursuit of innovation. Recruitment and selection for the REDDI residency is conducted by the DPS Office of School Reform and Innovation. Four residents have been approved for the launch year. The resident experience for participants is to be negotiated with individual charter schools. Along with working in the charter school, residents will have a coach and/or a nontraditional mentor with experience outside education, and will participate in district-designed seminars on transformational and entrepreneurial leadership.
- The **Get Smart Schools Fellowship** is an existing program offering a one-year fellowship at a Get Smart charter school. The fellowship is expanding to two years starting in SY2012-13. Get Smart Schools had 10 fellows for the 2011-2012 school year. According to recruitment materials, the program seeks “teachers, students, business executives, former military leaders, and motivated individuals who are interested in opening a school or who are applying for innovation status for an existing Colorado school.” Applicants submit an application and written essays, participate in-depth interviews, and develop “a clear and viable” school plan or target placement post-Fellowship. Fellows participate in graduate-level courses at partner universities (The School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado-Denver and Daniels College of Business at the

University of Denver). Fellows also meet with coaches monthly and participate in a year-long residency. They participate in a summer institute, weekly seminars, and visits to multiple sites.

- For future cohorts, DPS plans to align the recruitment and selection processes for the different residency programs and clearly communicate the differences among programs to applicants and host sites.
- The Ritchie Program, developed and managed in a longstanding partnership between DPS and the University of Denver, is aimed at pre-licensed individuals such as teacher leaders or district administrators. Graduates typically become assistant principals. Historically, cohort sizes have been around 18 students. Ritchie program participants complete 24 course credits along with a nine-month paid internship in the district. They begin their internships by conducting a host school diagnosis similar to processes developed by the New York City Leadership Academy, then identify projects and develop a work plan for the rest of the year.

### ***Hiring and Placement***

- Typically, vacancies are posted online with schools identifying additional criteria. After applications are screened and reviewed, promising candidates are interviewed by a School Principal Selection Advisory Council composed of teachers, parents, and the instructional superintendent or executive director with jurisdiction over the school. Candidates participate in a “learning walk” through the school and are asked to create a professional development plan for the school. The council then provides a short list of candidates for superintendent review and approval.
- New tools, protocols, and trainings related to selection and hiring have been developed, and Human Resources has worked to standardize the process. DPS intends to integrate the Framework into its job descriptions and screening processes.
- DPS has also increased outreach to external candidates by developing a partnership with Teach for America, holding more recruitment events, and posting vacancies in national databases.
- DPS has also increased its attention to forecasting models. As of May 2012, DPS forecasts a need of about 17-18 new principals each year from 2012 to 2016.

### ***Evaluation***

- DPS piloted a new evaluation system for principals and APs that incorporates the new standards in January 2012. Based on lessons learned from the roll-out of the teacher evaluation system, administrators plan to continue introducing the leadership framework and providing training to principals, instructional superintendents, and executive directors during 2012-13, prior to its use as a

system with consequences for principals. In the pilot phase, administrators are gathering feedback from stakeholders, and multiple respondents indicated that the leadership standards are likely to be simplified after completion of this pilot. Student achievement results and survey data from the school community will also be incorporated in the revised evaluation system. Previously, principals were simply rated “does not meet,” “meets,” or “exceeds” expectations.

- Evaluations continue to be conducted by instructional superintendents and executive directors. Principals and their supervisors continue to hold mid-year conferences to identify areas for improvement.

### ***Professional Development and Support***

- Administrator Induction Mentors (AIM) are required for all new principals in Colorado as part of the SY2006-07 Colorado Licensure Act. Mentors are current or recent principals in DPS who have received training from the New York City Leadership Academy. Principals formally meet with mentors once a month. Second-year principals may be assigned a mentor and/or coach based on the recommendation of their instructional superintendent.
- Instructional superintendents and executive directors also play a major support role for principals. They have historically developed the agendas and professional development events for their monthly network meetings, although the district has asked them to incorporate mandatory training on certain instructional initiatives and use of the teacher evaluation system. DPS has reduced the number of “universal” meetings for principals, which have tended to be more focused on operations than on instructional topics.
- DPS intends to develop and provide increased professional development and training to instructional superintendents, executive directors, and mentor principals as the Framework and principal evaluation system are implemented.



# Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS)

August 2012

## Context

- CEO/Superintendent J. Alvin Wilbanks has led the district since 1996 and plays a central role in several components of the principal pipeline. Along with stability in district leadership, administrators also noted stability in the local board of education, which continues to support leadership development as a district priority.
- At the time of the Wallace grant award, GCPS had an established, district-developed principal development pipeline, the Quality-Plus Leader Academy (QPLA), which has received a \$3.7 million grant from the Broad Foundation. The academy started operations in 2007, and most newly appointed principals have participated in its program. As of November 2011, 58 percent of all 133 principals had been participants.
- The district has had a surge in the number and diversity of students over the last decade.

## Leadership Standards

- As of 2011-12, GCPS had aligned its principal job descriptions to the eight leadership standards developed by the Georgia Department of Education under Race to the Top. These state standards are similar to the GCPS Quality-Plus Leader standards, which are integrated in the Quality-Plus Leader Academy selection criteria and curriculum, and principal performance with regard to these standards is assessed in hiring and placement, principal evaluation, and professional development.
- Looking ahead, GCPS has collaborated with three partners (Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement, University of Georgia, and University of West Georgia) to revise its leadership standards. Each partner has provided recommendations for revisions. GCPS administrators expect to integrate selected recommendations into revised standards, competencies, and performance indicators differentiated by grade level (elementary, middle, and high) and experience level (novice 1-3 years, experienced 4-6 years, veteran 7+ years).

## Preservice Recruitment, Selection, Training

- Each in-district principal candidate must be a current assistant principal and must have participated in the Quality-Plus Leader Academy's Aspiring Principal Program. Out-of-district principal hires must participate in the Aspiring Principal Program during their first year of appointment.

- Assistant principals with two years of experience are eligible to apply to the Aspiring Principal Program. Preference is given to graduates of the academy's Aspiring Leader Program (described below). Requirements include an Ed.S. degree, an application with writing sample, and a recommendation from the applicant's current principal. Additionally, applicants complete the Gallup Principal Insight Survey and the National Association of Secondary School Principals Diagnostic Skills Assessment. The latter assessment is a full-day battery of simulated leadership activities: in-basket items, parent and teacher conferences, oral/written competency, self-reflection of strengths and weaknesses, team activities, analysis of case studies, and development of a school plan for improvement.
- The Quality-Plus Leader Academy leadership team reviews applications for the Aspiring Principal Program and pre-screens candidates based on a recommendation score and a Gallup Principal Insight score. Cohort size and composition are based on forecasted need (number of potential retirements, student population growth, need by grade level, specialized experience, e.g., experience with IB program). Preliminary selections are reviewed by the leadership team and superintendent for final selection.
- The Aspiring Principal Program is composed of 12 nine-hour sessions that include Saturdays and days during the regular work week throughout the school year, and a residency with a principal mentor. The sessions are led by top district administrators and area superintendents and have been adapted to focus on case studies. The CEO/Superintendent personally conducts the first sessions. Residents must complete team projects and develop a capstone project (an initiative in their residency school).
- During residency, program participants serve as assistant principal at their resident school. They must also lead a substantive initiative at school (e.g., leading improvement of 3rd grade writing, facilitating data discussions with the 4th grade, etc). For 2011-12, the residency has been lengthened to a full semester.
- The Quality-Plus Leader Academy selected 14 aspiring principals for its sixth cohort in 2011-12. Previous cohorts had more than 30 participants in years when GCPS had new school buildings and higher numbers of retirements.
- The Quality-Plus Leader Academy expanded in 2010 to include an assistant principal recruitment and development program, the Aspiring Leader Program. Teacher leaders may apply to this program, which includes coursework led by district administrators and a three-week residency during the summer.
- GCPS plans to increase training for mentor principals to ensure that residents are provided substantive opportunities to learn and lead.
- GCPS has relationships with the licensure programs in the University of Georgia and the University of West Georgia, with ongoing partnership discussions with Georgia State University and Mercer University.

- The University of West Georgia has a performance-based leadership program for the Ed.S., revamped to conform to new state licensing requirements, that includes an intensive year-long residency along with coursework. GCPS schools are sites for residencies. The university has also hired “performance coaches” with experience in GCPS processes and systems.

## ***Hiring and Placement***

- The hiring process for principals begins when Human Resources places internal and external advertisements of new principal openings. The district research office, with help from the Quality-Plus Leader Academy, administrators surveys community members and staff on characteristics desired in their next leader. The district research office also compiles a school accountability report to examine trends in student performance. The area superintendent develops an assessment of school needs.
- Applicants are initially screened based on participation in Aspiring Principal Program and strength of resume. Top candidates are then interviewed by a team composed of the Chief of HR, Quality-Plus Leader Academy staff, associate superintendents, and the area superintendent with jurisdiction over the school. Interviewers use a protocol that assesses candidates’ instructional skills and data use and examines their improvement and entry plan for the school. For Quality-Plus Leader Academy graduates, performance on the assessments used in academy admissions and the candidates’ work in the program are also reviewed. The leadership team considers candidates’ match with the school and selects three candidates, in rank order, for interviews with the superintendent.
- The superintendent interviews the recommended candidates and either approves a candidate for the position or requests additional candidates. He formally recommends his selected candidate to the Gwinnett County Board of Education.

## ***Evaluation***

- GCPS continues to use a longstanding Results-Based Evaluation System. Principals are given scores based on weighted measures:
  - 70 percent on student achievement results
  - 12 percent on initiatives to improve student achievement
  - 8 percent on customer satisfaction
  - 10 percent on school management
- As part of the Results-Based Evaluation System, area superintendents conduct qualitative evaluations of principal performance on their initiatives to improve student achievement. GCPS has recently developed new observation data tools to be used by area superintendents and leader mentors (described below).

- Regression models underweight principal contribution to school performance in the first year but increase the weight to the full 70 percent over time.
- Principals are assessed on “achievement gap closure” as part of the Results-Based Evaluation System. In addition, the performance of a principal’s school is compared to that of schools in other districts with similar demographics.

### ***Professional Development and Support***

- For up to two years, novice principals have support from leader mentors, who are retired principals selected by the superintendent. The leader mentors conduct one-on-one meetings twice a month, and additional meetings can be scheduled if needed. Leader mentors do not evaluate principals. Recently, leader mentors received training from the New York City Leadership Academy on protocols for structuring their meetings with principals. Additional mentors were hired in 2011-12, reducing the caseload for each mentor.
- Principals also receive professional development through monthly leadership meetings and “just-in-time” trainings. The monthly leadership meetings are led by the Quality-Plus Leader Academy team and other district administrators. The focus of these meetings can range from seasonally-related procedures to specific topics identified by the leadership development team. Just-in-time trainings are provided to specific principals or group of principals based on input from the Quality-Plus Leader Academy team and area superintendents.
- Continuing support is also available to new principals from the Quality-Plus Leader Academy network, including fellow members of their cohorts and the principal mentors with whom they worked in their internships.
- Area Superintendents play a dual role: they provide advice and professional development; and they also serve in an evaluation role as principal supervisors.

# Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS)

August 2012

## Context and Other Initiatives

- The Empowering Effective Teachers (EET) initiative began in 2007 as a \$100 million Gates Foundation grant running through 2016. It is focused on teacher and principal evaluation systems, professional development, and pay. Beginning in 2011, principals were trained on the new teacher evaluation, which had been developed in partnership with the teachers' union. The new principal evaluation was developed under EET.
- Expectations have changed for assistant principals (APs): district leaders expect them to develop skills in instructional leadership, and they expect more APs to progress toward the principalship rather than remaining career APs.
- HCPS is doing internal evaluations of the Future Leaders Academy and Preparing New Principals programs, as well as surveys of principals on coaching and the support from Area Leadership Directors.

## Leadership Standards

- As of spring 2012, HCPS was refining its draft School Leader Standards and Competencies Model, which incorporates the 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards (adopted statewide in November 2011) and the 6 VAL-ED core components and key processes. The Competencies are expected to drive aspects of the principal pipeline, including job descriptions, selection into preservice programs, hiring, training, and evaluation of principals. New job descriptions were to be vetted by stakeholders in summer 2012.
- HCPS developed the current principal evaluation recently, but prior to the new draft Competencies. In spring 2012, HCPS was working to ensure that the evaluation and Competencies are aligned. The AP evaluation was developed more recently and is aligned to the standards and competencies by design.
- In spring 2012, HCPS, with the help of Cross & Jofus consultants and a stakeholder committee, was translating the Competencies into evaluation materials and candidate selection materials for internal preservice programs.

## Preservice Recruitment, Selection, Training

- The HCPS pathway to the principalship includes: 1) Level I certification and Master's degree in educational leadership from a state-accredited university that is typically local, 2) Future Leaders Academy for 6 months, 3) AP Induction Program for 2 years, and 4) Preparing New Principals program for 2 years, resulting in a Level II certification. After Level I certification, the pathway ordinarily requires 5 years of internal HCPS preparation before becoming a principal, although the Superintendent has authority to fast-track promising candidates into the principalship more quickly.
- In 2011-12, the Future Leaders Academy completed its first year of implementation. This six-month program, which prepares promising teachers to be APs, includes HCPS-developed coursework focused on the Competencies, as well as shadowing current high-performing APs. Participants are assessed through exit interviews. In this inaugural year, HCPS admitted all applicants, but selection in future years is expected to involve interviews, written response to scenarios, performance assessments, references, and a review of past performance.
- The AP Induction Program is a two-year program for new APs that includes bi-weekly mentor support, four required courses, two-day summer institutes, and half day trainings. The participants are assessed through the district's AP evaluation, which targets specific Competencies expected of APs.
- The Preparing New Principals program is a two-year program for APs with at least three years of prior experience in the position who are selected through an application process. It includes monthly meetings with a Principal Coach, four required courses, 10 Saturday sessions, 10 topical sessions after school hours, and an entry plan project. Content is driven by the Competencies. Assessment is through the HCPS AP evaluation, VAL-ED self-assessment, an exit interview, and a performance assessment. In 2012, selection into the program is becoming more rigorous by including scored interviews, written response to scenarios, and review of past performance.
- In addition to helping the district revise selection processes for the in-house preparation programs, Cross & Jofus is also currently helping the district with a leader vacancy model that will right-size admissions for cohort groups.
- Beginning in fall 2011, HCPS has developed and delivered training to APs and principals on talent identification for the purpose of identifying promising candidates for the Future Leaders Academy and Preparing New Principals programs.
- The district used Quality Measures (QM) on its Preparing New Principals program and found that the process was useful for identifying gaps and possible improvements. It also engaged Level 1 certification programs in the QM process, including the University of South Florida and Nova Southeastern University. The University of South Florida has shown an interest in aligning content with the state standards and having more practitioners involved in delivery. It also has added a course on data use, based on district feedback.

## Hiring and Placement

- HCPS is revising its hiring practices for the 2012-13 school year. The district has already moved away from a somewhat informal interviewing process for prospective principals and in 2011 instituted a scripted interview for all candidates. Hiring processes are to be tied to new job descriptions based on the new standards and Competencies. Cross & Jofthus is helping HCPS plan changes in hiring, including ways to use performance assessment.
- With the development of a talent management module to be developed by Lawson, hiring committee members will have key data in a profile for each candidate. The data will be linked to the Competencies and the candidate's performance as a teacher and Preparing New Principals participant.

## Evaluation

- The EET project established a principal evaluation committee that includes administrator union representatives and began a new principal evaluation process in 2011. The evaluation formula includes VAL-ED ratings from school faculty and Area Leadership Directors (see below for description of this position), student achievement, teacher retention rates, alignment between principal ratings of teachers and the teachers' value-added scores, and school operations performance. HCPS is working with the University of Wisconsin's Value-Added Center, which provides the value-added evaluation data around October. This timing makes it difficult for HCPS to plan principal professional development for the next year, so in 2012, HCPS may release the VAL-ED evaluation data earlier for professional development purposes and later add value-added data for the composite evaluation score.
- HCPS has eight Area Leadership Directors (formerly named Area Directors) who supervise and support principals, oversee principal evaluation, and provide principals with feedback based on the evaluation. In the 2011-12, the Area Leadership Director role has changed to focus more on feedback around instructional leadership, and less on supporting operational functions. The transition has been a learning process for Area Leadership Directors. This year, HCPS added the eighth Area Leadership Director position and worked with the New Teacher Center to train and help Area Leadership Directors in their 2012 VAL-ED observations and ratings.
- The state, with a Race to the Top grant, expects district principal appraisal systems to have the state's leadership standards at their core and to use observation rubrics. HCPS expected to submit its new principal evaluation system to the state for approval later in 2012.
- In 2012, HCPS and Lawson are designing a talent management data system module that will include evaluation data.

## ***Professional Development and Support***

- Beginning in 2011-12, the district provided an internal Principal Induction Program for all principals in their first two years on the job. It includes assignment to a Principal Coach (see description of this role below), with whom the participant will meet regularly over the two years. The Principal Induction Program also includes a two-day summer institute, 10 half-day sessions, 10 after school sessions, and 4 required courses. The New Teacher Center has helped deliver training sessions and the summer institute.
- HCPS created the new role of Principal Coach in January 2012. The seven Principal Coaches, all pulled directly from principal positions, each have a caseload of about 8-14 principals in their first two years. The Coaches are to work collaboratively with the Area Leadership Directors to support the principals. In early 2012, each Coach sat down with each of his or her novices and the corresponding Area Leadership Director to jointly develop improvement goals for the rest of the year. In future years, this goal-setting is expected to happen in the late summer. Coaches meet weekly for 90 minutes with first-year principals and bi-weekly for 90 minutes with second-year principals. Principal Coaches also meet monthly for 90 minutes with APs in the second year of the Preparing New Principals program. Their work with novice principals is differentiated to address individual goals and aligns with the district leadership Competencies, and their work with APs is focused on entry planning. Coaches also are responsible for monthly group training sessions and facilitation of professional learning communities. Coaches have no evaluation role whatsoever, and in fact are encouraged to develop relationships that have some measure of confidentiality.
- In 2011-12, the New Teacher Center was influential in the design of the support system for novice principals and delivered training to the new Principal Coaches. As of spring 2012, it was continuing to help codify the processes and content of the Principal Induction Program and was developing content for the support system on topics such as on blended coaching.
- In providing support to novice and veteran principals, the Area Leadership Directors are now expected to focus less on building management and more on instructional leadership and talent development. This is a change from their past role primarily as evaluators and “fire extinguishers.” In 2011-12, they were trained in using VAL-ED and asked to focus on giving feedback.



# New York City Department of Education (DOE)

August 2012

## Context and Other Initiatives

- Under state law, the superintendents appointed by the central office are responsible for hiring, firing, and evaluating principals, as well as budget approval. For support, principals select a network. Networks are non-geographic and self-governing, and schools can opt to switch their network affiliation each year. Network leaders are responsible for providing support to principals and do not serve in a supervisory capacity. Each network leader usually works with about 25 principals. Groups of networks are organized into five clusters, whose leaders report to the Chief Academic Officer.
- Administrators estimate that the system needs 150-200 new principals and 350-400 assistant principals each year to fill vacancies in the district. Multiple respondents reported challenges in generating a large enough pool of high-quality applicants.
- Other grants also support leadership development: Race to the Top supports a large majority of Achievement and Talent coaches on network teams; School Improvement Grant funds have been used for leadership training and professional development in turnaround schools.

## Leadership Standards

- The DOE has reviewed and revised its Leadership Competencies based on current research on effective leadership practices as well as alignment to Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards and local and state accountability systems. Currently, the Leadership Competencies are used for selecting candidates into the principal hiring pool, but are not yet integrated into the processes for hiring/appointing principals and assistant principals to schools or for evaluating principals.
- Representing four divisions and eight offices, a group convened to begin developing a vision for a career continuum of leadership competencies for NYC educators. A first step was to analyze the competency models currently in use across the Department. The working group has begun to sketch out a unified leadership competency model, aligned to the Quality Review used in school-level accountability, that articulates the skills, knowledge, and mindsets associated with proficient or well-developed school management practices and structures.

## Preservice Recruitment, Selection, and Training

- As of 2011-12, the DOE has leadership development partnerships with the New York City Leadership Academy, New Leaders, Bank Street College of Education, and CUNY-Baruch. The district is exploring potential partnerships with other institutions as well.
- **NYC Leadership Academy** is considered a major leadership development partner to the DOE, producing its 10th cohort of 26 principal candidates in 2011-12. On average, the NYC Leadership Academy receives about 300 applications a year and conducts a rigorous, multi-phase screening process that includes group and individual interviews. Eligible applicants must have masters degrees with a minimum 3.0 GPA and a minimum of three years work experience as a paid K-12 teacher. Successful candidates resign their current positions and become “aspiring principals,” which is a 12-month paid position. The program includes a six-week summer intensive, a ten-month school-based residency in which the candidate works closely with a mentor principal, and a planning summer in which the candidate prepares to move into a school leadership position. The Academy works with mentor principals to define the appropriate resident experiences.
- **New Leaders** has been a DOE leadership development partner since 2001. Ten principal candidates made up the 2011-12 cohort. As in the Leadership Academy, candidates must resign their current position and become aspiring principals, which is a paid position. The New Leaders applicant pool includes assistant principals, instructional coaches, and central office administrators. The 16-month program incorporates national and local training institutes, as well as a residency program. In the past, New Leaders has faced challenges in placing graduates in DOE schools, but has worked to develop relationships with network leaders and others making hiring decisions. After 90 days on the job, principals are assigned to a community of practice and are encouraged to support and visit one another's schools.
- **Bank Street College of Education** is a new DOE leadership development partner that admitted its first cohort of 15 fellows in January 2012. Fellows must be nominated to the program by their supervising principal and must meet standard admissions criteria for Bank Street's graduate programs. During the 18-month program, fellows continue to work in their current school but are required to transfer to another school (potentially of a different grade level) during the summer. Fellows are organized into groups of seven to eight students who meet with an advisor over the course of the program. Advisors observe fellows during monthly visits to their schools. As a requirement of the program, fellows must complete coursework on special education leadership.
- The DOE's partnership with **CUNY-Baruch** is still in its early stages. While Baruch is part of the Leadership Inquiry Team, a memorandum of understanding between Baruch and the DOE on key features of the partnership had not been finalized as of May 2012.
- The DOE's **Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program (LEAP)** originated in part due to the perceived imbalance between the many teachers in the DOE system and the few applicants for leader-

ship vacancies. The DOE prioritized extending the leadership pipeline to potential leaders in their fourth and fifth year of teaching. Interest in LEAP has been growing, with a 60 percent increase in applications from 2010-11 to 2011-12. Applicants submit written applications, personal endorsements, and essays; participate in group and individual interviews; analyze and discuss data; and complete an on-demand writing task as part of the selection process. LEAP requires that candidates be endorsed by network leaders and reviewed by cluster leaders. Admitted participants stay in their current position and under the mentorship of their current principal during the 14-month program. Participants are required to spend six weeks in a full-time summer intensive and participate in weekly development sessions.

- The DOE is in negotiations with **Relay Graduate School of Education** to develop a teacher leaders program that will expand into a school leaders program. Another partner in this collaboration will be Teach for America.
- Network and cluster leaders are encouraged to identify approximately 50 prospective principals each year. The number of candidates network teams bring to leadership programs is considered an indicator of their efforts to build leadership capacity within schools and is now measured as part of the network assessment.

## ***Hiring and Placement***

- Principal candidates submit their resumes and information online and engage in a series of performance tasks, which are scored. Candidates who meet a minimum score are eligible for the Principal Candidate Pool.
- Network leaders and superintendents play a role in principal hiring and placement. The network leaders, collaborating with the school community and the superintendent, identify potential candidates for vacancies in their network. The network leader facilitates the interviews of candidates, using an interview committee of teachers, union representatives, parents, and other stakeholders. The committee recommends one or two candidates to the superintendent. Typically, the superintendent works with the network leaders to identify the final candidate, and the superintendent makes the appointment. While superintendents have formal, statutory hiring and supervisory powers, network teams were designed to have deep knowledge of their schools and their needs for leadership.

## ***Evaluation***

- Although state law places principals under the supervision of superintendents, the DOE assigns significant evaluation and support responsibilities to network teams, network leaders, and cluster leaders. Those who serve as principal coaches, for example, could inform decisions about leader-

ship selection and evaluation, although they are not empowered by law to conduct the evaluations.

- A principal's performance review includes: (1) an examination of the school's academic performance on state and city assessments; (2) a quality review of the school management practices; (3) school walk-throughs conducted by superintendents and network leaders; and (4) teacher, student, and parent survey ratings.
- Administrators indicated that the evaluation process is not substantively different for novice principals, though reviews may have different areas of focus. Principals in newly created schools participate in peer reviews but do not complete a traditional quality review. Major evaluation decisions revolve around upgrading novice principals from probation status and granting tenure.
- The DOE recently piloted a modified Principal Performance Review in 30 schools. The pilot includes trainings for principals, superintendents, and network leaders to ensure rigor and inter-rater reliability. The DOE is also designing a non-evaluative 360-degree instrument that is aligned with the Leadership Competencies and is meant solely for principal professional development and self-reflection purposes. The DOE is considering using VAL-ED as a tool for reflection and professional feedback.

### ***Professional Development and Support***

- Support for principals comes from various sources. All novice principals are assigned a coach in their first year. After that, principals can then use their own school budget to extend the contract of their first-year coach or select a different coach. The DOE is engaged in ongoing conversations with the Academy and New Leaders to consider other ways of supporting novice principals and whether it is reasonable to expect one coach to satisfy all the needs of a novice principal. To that end, other support models are under consideration, including developing a "strategic team" that could provide support targeted toward a specific area of need. Another type of support might be developing critical friends so that cohorts may continue to work with and support each other as novice principals.
- Network teams are another major source of support for novice principals, typically visiting schools once a week. Network teams vary in their configuration but may include curriculum experts, data coaches, and other facilitators. The district's portfolio-based approach to school support, which allows principals to choose their support network—and allows networks to determine the services and support they provide to clients—is designed to generate better alignment between school and leadership needs and the technical assistance and professional development provided.
- Some informal mechanisms exist within the DOE for gathering feedback on novice principals' needs. For example, the Academy brings novice principals together periodically to gather feedback on what is and is not working. The DOE wants to formalize the process whereby they capture

feedback—through surveys as well as VAL-ED data—at specific points during the principal induction period. The DOE plans to look at VAL-ED as a possible tool that would allow principals to reflect—in October 2012 and May 2013—on how the program helped them transition to the position and what they need in the first few years of the principalship.

- The DOE is working with the Administrative Union, which provides a range of professional development experiences and support for APs, to develop those professional development and support programs deemed of high-quality and to realign their structure to match the networks and clusters framework of the city’s school system.

# Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS)

August 2012

## Context and Other Initiatives

- In 2011, the PGCPS central office reorganized, and the Office of Talent Development within the Division of Human Resources was created by merging offices for principals and teachers. The Office of Talent Development is developing the principal pipeline. In addition, upper administrative positions were restructured from five assistant superintendents, who each supervised 50 schools, to three associate superintendents and 14 Instructional Directors. Instructional Directors each supervise 10-15 schools and report to one of the three associate superintendents.
- PGCPS' Race to the Top plans include a leadership development program that expands its partnerships with the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) and New Leaders. In addition, Race to the Top resources support professional development for principals and aspiring leaders through the School Leaders Network, which creates professional learning communities for principals.
- PGCPS is participating in the Maryland State Department of Education's Teacher Evaluation Pilot, while also piloting its own teacher evaluation model in selected schools based on the Framework for Teaching observation tool. The Framework for Teaching evaluation work was supported by the Gates Foundation and by a Teacher Incentive Fund grant and has informed the district's approach to developing a principal evaluation system.

## Leadership Standards

- PGCPS drafted new leadership standards during the 2011-2012 school year, using a variety of sources including the state, Interstate School Leaders Licensing Consortium, and National Institute for School Leadership standards. These standards have been vetted, and rollout was planned for summer 2012 during PGCPS' Summer Leadership Institute for principals. The district considered differentiating leadership standards by type of school or leader but then decided this was unnecessary.
- The district expects to approve a new principal job description that reflects the new leadership standards by October 2012.
- The new leadership standards will be aligned with all components of the pipeline, with a particularly strong emphasis on aligning the standard to evaluation and professional development.

## ***Preservice Recruitment, Selection, and Training***

- PGCPS is working with the National Institute for School Leadership to develop the Aspiring Leaders Program for Student Success (ALPSS) for current assistant principals (APs). The first cohort of 25 APs selected by PGCPS will begin in summer 2012. The program is a 20-day, 10-module program with a mentoring component aligned with the National Association of Elementary School Principals principal mentor training program. Although not finalized as of May 2012, the curriculum will be tailored to PGCPS needs and priorities, with a focus on leadership growth, risk-taking, and accountability. Modules are district-specific, and instructors will use video footage from PGCPS classrooms. The program is currently a main priority of pipeline work.
- PGCPS has had an existing partnership with New Leaders. This preservice training is costly and produces relatively few candidates (approximately five each year). There is some concern that New Leaders does not adequately prepare principals to work successfully in PGCPS schools (e.g., in turnaround schools).
- Establishing university partnerships has been the most difficult component of the pipeline for PGCPS to implement. The district issued a request for proposals for universities who were interested in making changes to their leadership preparation programs and were willing to work with PGCPS to meet district needs. With the exception of Bowie State, universities were generally uninterested. PGCPS planned to hold a convening of 100 local universities in June in hopes of generating more university interest in partnering with the district. Ultimately, PGCPS would like to have its own credentialing power.
- Currently, Bowie State is PGCPS' only university partner that was willing to tailor a program to respond to district principal preparation needs (e.g., urban focus, diversity, poverty, English learners, special education, etc.). The new program, scheduled to launch in August 2012, is intended to merge theory with practice. The envisioned program will be based on a one-year cohort model and will include five content courses aligned with PGCPS' leadership standards as well as an internship, the details of which have not yet been determined. Courses will be offered in PGCPS school buildings, and the district will cover the tuition costs. District administrators are working with Instructional Directors to identify good teacher candidates for the Bowie State program.
- PGCPS has developed doctoral programs for sitting principals and central office staff in conjunction with Howard University and the University of Maryland.
- Ultimately, PGCPS wants to develop and use hiring criteria that give priority to candidates from identified preparation programs (e.g., Bowie State and the district's own Aspiring Leaders Program for Student Success). The ideal candidate pathway would be obtaining certification through Bowie State and then participating in the Aspiring Leaders program.

## Hiring and Placement

- Principal candidates participate in a rigorous screening process that includes analyzing videos and vignettes/case studies of school scenarios. In addition, candidates participate in personal interviews and complete Gallup's Principal Insight and Clifton's Strengths Finder. The candidate's overall score or profile is based on the results of the analytic exercise, the interviews, and the online leadership identification tools. Currently, anyone with the appropriate credentials can apply to become a principal, although eventually PGCPs is interested in giving priority to those who have gone through its preservice partner programs.
- If the candidate makes it through the screening process, a candidate profile is created. The leadership standards are to be embedded in the profile, and Oracle software will house all data on the candidate.
- In addition to the candidate profile, a community profile is created for every school. This profile is developed based on: (1) surveys of parents, students, and teachers about the leadership characteristics that they think are important, (2) a review of the school's improvement plan to identify school needs, and (3) an assessment of staffing demographics.
- There are approximately 15-22 principal vacancies each year. In the past couple of years, there has been a strategic attempt to create good matches between principal and school. Candidate profiles are matched to community profiles. If the candidate appears to be a good match for the school, the candidate interviews with Instructional Directors who will then make recommendations to associate superintendents. Ultimately, hiring decisions are made by the superintendent.
- PGCPs plans to assess the quality of the principal candidate screening process, examining school-level performance data for first-year principals. In addition, the district will review candidates who were screened out despite glowing recommendations. For now, PGCPs is trying to keep the screening process as standardized as possible, but is considering whether very strong recommendations should carry weight in the overall screening, selection, and placement process.

## Evaluation

- PGCPs is in the process of drafting a new principal evaluation tool aligned with the leadership standards. As of 2012, the district has created a work group to look at models of principal evaluation systems around the country and to create a plan for developing the tool. The new evaluation system will include student achievement data as a component, but no decision has been reached about how heavily student performance will be weighted in determining principals' scores. As it designs the principal evaluation tool, PGCPs is considering the school contexts within which principals are working, such as the school's turnaround status, and the percent of special education students or English learners enrolled in the school. Full-scale implementation of the new evaluation system will not occur until 2013-14.



- PGCPS plans to benchmark against other districts using an integrated performance management system that ties student achievement, evaluation feedback and assessment results, to professional development based on identified areas of need.
- The state is designing a new evaluation system for teachers and principals and has given districts the choice of implementing their own evaluation system or defaulting to the state model. In PGCPS, if the union does not approve the district-designed teacher and principal evaluation systems, the district will have to use the state model.
- PGCPS planned on pilot testing VAL-ED in 50 schools (with both principals and APs) in spring 2012. As of May 2012, the district envisions using VAL-ED as a formative assessment tool for purposes of identifying principals' professional development needs.

### ***Professional Development and Support***

- PGCPS has had a partnership with the National Association of Elementary School Principals since 2003 to provide a principal mentor training program for PGCPS. The two parts of mentor training include (1) a three-day Leadership Immersion Institute that provides experienced principals and other administrators with effective strategies on how to integrate best practices in mentoring and adult learning with participant experiences; and (2) the National Principals Mentor Certification Program, which is a nine-month internship in which mentors-in-training are divided into cohort groups and assigned a coach. After completing the institute and internship, experienced principals are awarded national certification as a principal mentor. Ideally, aspiring principals in the ALPSS program will be assigned a trained mentor who will stay with them throughout their first two years as principal.
- PGCPS' Continued Professional Development Program offers a catalog of courses for current employees pursuing a Standard Professional Certificate or a renewal of their certification. Administrators self-select the professional development courses or activities in which to participate. There is no distinction between professional development for novice versus experienced principals and APs.
- All administrators participate in a mandatory, three-day Summer Leadership Institute.
- Other professional development and support available to principals include The New Principals Academy, which offers a monthly workshop focused on addressing the needs of new principals (e.g., managing budgets, evaluating teachers). In addition, Instructional Directors provide support for novice principals and communicate with mentors regarding principal needs.





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