

Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015

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Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015



Council of Chief State School Officers

The Council of Chief State School Officers is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Defining Instructional Leadership	3
Research Points to New Direction for Principal Supervisors.....	4
Developing the Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015	6
Focus on Student Learning: The Relationships among Standards	7
An Integrated Approach to the Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015	8
A Focus on Continuous Improvement	10
Using the Standards	11
Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015	13
Glossary.....	23
Acknowledgements.....	25
Selected Bibliography	26

An expanding base of knowledge from research and practice shows that educational leaders exert influence on student achievement by creating conditions conducive to each student's learning. They relentlessly develop and support teachers, effectively allocate resources, construct organizational policies and systems, and engage in other deep and meaningful work outside of the classroom that has a powerful impact on what happens inside it. (*Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*, p.1.)

Introduction

Now more than ever, today's school principals need support for their development and growth. The performance of principals is under scrutiny like never before, as society places higher expectations on principals to be instructional leaders who improve student learning and achievement. In districts around the country, principals are at the forefront of implementing new college-and career-ready standards, student assessments, and teacher evaluation systems. *Our Responsibility, Our Promise*, a 2012 report by the Council of Chief State School Officers, articulates the new higher expectations through its definition of school-ready principals:¹

On day one, principals should be able to blend their energy, knowledge, and professional skills to collaborate with, and motivate others to transform school learning environments in ways that ensure all students will graduate college and career ready. With other stakeholders, they craft the school's vision, mission, and strategic goals to focus on and support high levels of learning for all students and high expectations for all members of the school community. To help transform schools, they lead others in using performance outcomes and other data to strategically align people, time, funding, and school processes to continually improve student achievement and growth and to nurture and sustain a positive climate and safe school environment for all stakeholders. They work with others to develop, implement and refine processes to select, induct, support, evaluate, and retain quality personnel to serve in instructional and support roles. They nurture and support professional growth in others and appropriately share leadership responsibilities. Recognizing that schools are an integral part of the community, they lead and support outreach to students' families and the wider community to respond to community needs and interests and to integrate community resources into the school.

Strong preparation programs help to ensure that entry-level principals are ready to effectively lead systems of instruction. However, the need also exists to support principals already on the job so they are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be instructional leaders.

1 Council of Chief State School Officers, *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* (Washington, D.C.: CCSSO, 2012).

Principal supervisors are positioned to provide that support. Traditionally, principal supervisors have focused on ensuring that school leaders, and the buildings they run, complied with local policies and state regulations. Now that job description is under review. Recent research suggests that principal supervisors can positively affect student results by helping principals grow as instructional leaders. With the right training and support, they can assess and evaluate principals' current leadership practices and identify professional learning opportunities most likely to lead to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and achievement. Moreover, they can ensure that the principals' work and vision aligns with district goals, and that the central office effectively supports school leaders, schools and student success.

The shift from compliance officer to coach, however, is complicated by many factors. Nationwide, there is no consistency across districts about principal supervisor positions. Job descriptions vary, as do titles. Some districts split the work of a principal supervisor among several people, while other districts appoint a single administrator. Sometimes the job of supervising principals falls to the superintendent, in addition to his or her other responsibilities.² No matter who is supervising, they often lack the right training and support to help principals build their capacity as instructional leaders. While most principal supervisors are former principals who understand the complexities of the job, they aren't necessarily prepared to advise and guide principals. Instead of leading a school, these supervisors must now coach and support those who are--work that requires a very different skill set.

These factors underscore the need for a clear and practical definition of what a principal supervisor should know and be able to do in order to improve the effectiveness of the school leaders with whom they work. The *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015* provide such guidance. These new voluntary standards respond to the knowledge gap identified by a question in a recent report by The Wallace Foundation: "If principal supervisors in districts shift from overseeing compliance to sharpening principals' instructional leadership capabilities, and if they are provided with the right training, support and number of principals to supervise, would this improve the effectiveness of the principals with whom they work?"³ Informed by that question, The *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015* are based on the following theory of action:

2 According to AASA, The School Superintendents Association, thousands of superintendents directly supervise principals in addition to their duties running a district.

3 The Wallace Foundation, *Building Principal Pipelines – A Strategy to Strengthen Education Leadership* (New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation, 2015).

If principal supervisors shift from focusing on compliance to shaping principals' instructional leadership capabilities, and if they are provided with the right training, support and number of principals to supervise, then the instructional leadership capacity of the principals with whom they work will improve and result in effective instruction and the highest levels of student learning and achievement.

Understandably, there will be a transition period as districts redesign the role of principal supervisors so they are spending most of their time building the instructional leadership capacity of principals. How quickly this is achieved will depend on the current school and district contexts, capacity and the systems of support already in place for practicing principals.

Defining Instructional Leadership

If states and districts expect principal supervisors to help shape and develop principals' instructional leadership, it's important to understand the construct of instructional leadership. Education researcher Wynn DeBevoise defined instructional leadership as "those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning."⁴ In practice, the field has narrowly interpreted this to mean duties such as classroom observations, teacher evaluations, coaching and feedback.

Such activities are certainly vital to improving the quality of teaching and student learning, but they are far from the only ones necessary. To be effective instructional leaders, principals must engage in a wide range of leadership activities that directly connect to student learning. Instructional leaders must:

- Model learning for others – reflection, personal growth, ethical practice and a focus on improvement
- Willingly confront issues of equity that impede student learning
- Recognize and respond to the diverse cultural and learning needs of students
- Develop staff to increase their capacities for improving student learning
- Make decisions based on how they will affect student success
- Understand how all systems affect student success
- Share and distribute responsibilities for student learning

4 Wynn DeBevoise, "Synthesis of Research on the Principal as Instructional Leader," *Educational Leadership*, February 1984.

These leadership responsibilities are embedded in the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*.⁵ These professional standards embody a research-based understanding of the relationship between educational leadership and student learning. In all realms of their work, educational leaders must focus on how they are promoting the learning, achievement, development, and well-being of each student. The 2015 Standards reflect interdependent domains, qualities and values of leadership work that research and practice suggest are integral to student success:

- Develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of *each* student.
- Act ethically and according to professional norms to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.
- Strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.
- Develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.
- Cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of *each* student.
- Develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.
- Foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.
- Engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.
- Manage school operations and resources to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being.
- Act as agents of continuous improvement to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being. (*Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*)

Research Points to New Direction for Principal Supervisors

The work of supervising principals is a relatively new area of study. Most of the existing research on effective support for principals was published in the last decade and mainly addresses the leadership practices of principals and superintendents rather than the distinctive work of principal supervisors.

5 National Policy Board for Education Administration, *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* (Arlington, VA: NPBEA, 2015).

In 2010, superintendent Barry Vitcov and education consultant Gary Bloom outlined a new vision for supervising principals based on their belief that “helping principals grow their own leadership capacities will shape their schools’ culture in ways that improve student outcomes.”⁶ They offered several theoretical points to consider when defining the day-to-day work of the principal supervisor:

- The supervision of principals should be a primary responsibility, not an afterthought.
- Principal supervisors should receive training in the supervision process and have ongoing opportunities for reflection and professional development to improve their practice.
- The primary focus of principal supervisors should be to improve principal performance.
- Principal supervision should be ongoing, connected to the principal’s growth from year to year, and grounded in a coaching relationship.
- Principal supervision should be driven by a vision of the supervisor and principal as leaders of professional learning communities.
- Principal supervision should be informed by multiple data sources.
- Principal supervision should be consistent with adult learning and professional development best practices, including collaboration and a sense of shared ownership.

A recent study by researchers at the District Leadership Design Lab (DL2) at the University of Washington points to specific work practices of principal supervisors that are associated with positive school results. The study, note the researchers, underscores that “principal supervisors matter to improved student learning by working through principals and teachers, specifically, by helping principals grow as instructional leaders.”⁷ This research subsequently led to the creation of DL2’s *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards*⁸, which, along with feedback from practitioners and other state and district leaders, informed the development of the *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015* described here.

6 Barry Vitcov and Gary Bloom, “A New Vision for Supervising Principals,” *School Administrator*, December 2010.

7 University of Washington, *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014).

8 The District Leadership Design Lab’s *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0* and related assessment tools differentiate principal supervisors’ practices along four levels of expertise to help leaders locate their principal supervisors on a growth trajectory toward progressively improved performance. Districts can use them to measure principal supervisors’ growth over time, define and develop consensus around the principal supervisors’ role in the district, and inform professional development and other supports to help principal supervisors succeed. For more information, visit the University of Washington DL2 website, www.dl2uw.org.

Developing the Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015

The *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015* are grounded in the new definition of principal work found in the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*, including the actions in which school leaders should engage and the dispositions they should bring to their work. While the *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015* give special attention to sharpening principals' instructional leadership, it is the responsibility of the principal supervisor to help principals master all of the competencies put forth in *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*, such as facilitating two-way communication with families and being a responsible steward of public funds. Depending on their job description, principal supervisors may assist principals with teacher recruitment, budgeting, and other functions.

This is not to suggest that principal supervisors must know everything. For areas that fall outside of their expertise, they should serve as brokers who connect school leaders with appropriate individuals and resources in the central office or other schools. Nor should principal supervisors step in and do the work of the principals they're overseeing. Many principal supervisors are effective former principals who are intimately aware of the demands of the job. At times, they may have the urge to fix problems as they would when they ran a school. Instead, they must coach and support practicing principals to devise their own solutions, implement them, and fine-tune as necessary to improve the outcome. Through such a mentoring relationship, principal supervisors can help principals learn and grow their capacity as leaders.

Having principal supervisors spend significant time coaching principals is a relatively new concept for most districts. As a result, they don't have the necessary structures in place yet to support that type of work. The *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015* recognize that the duties of a principal supervisor will likely change over time. They are not intended to serve as a job description because principal supervisor positions vary widely from district to district. Rather, these standards are related specifically to the actions that support principals. While they privilege those functions that most effectively build the instructional leadership capacity of principals, the standards also include other functions for which a principal supervisor may be responsible. As districts redesign their central offices to better support principal supervisors in their new role, principal supervisors will be able to devote more and more time carrying out the actions described in the standards that help principals improve as instructional leaders. Other district personnel will then support principals in areas of leadership that aren't directly related to instruction. When the role of the principal supervisor has evolved to such a degree that the position is devoted to helping principals grow as instructional leaders, districts may find the University of Washington's *DL2 Principal Supervisor Performance Standards* useful.

Focus on Student Learning: The Relationships among Standards

Student learning and achievement is the focus of public education. This focus is guided by a state’s college- and career-readiness standards, which articulate the knowledge and skills students should have when they graduate high school. Figure 1 below demonstrates this focus by placing learning and achievement at the center. The adjacent circle represents the instruction and educational experiences that engage students, as well as the school culture and support they need to thrive. The *Model Core Teaching Standards* developed by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium⁹ guide instruction and the role of teachers in school culture and support for students. The next circle represents the work of the principal and other school leaders in supporting and improving the instruction and learning experiences that teachers and other staff members provide students. Their work is guided by the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*, which also direct the activities of district and central office leaders. The work of central office leaders who supervise principals is further informed by the *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015* outlined in this report.

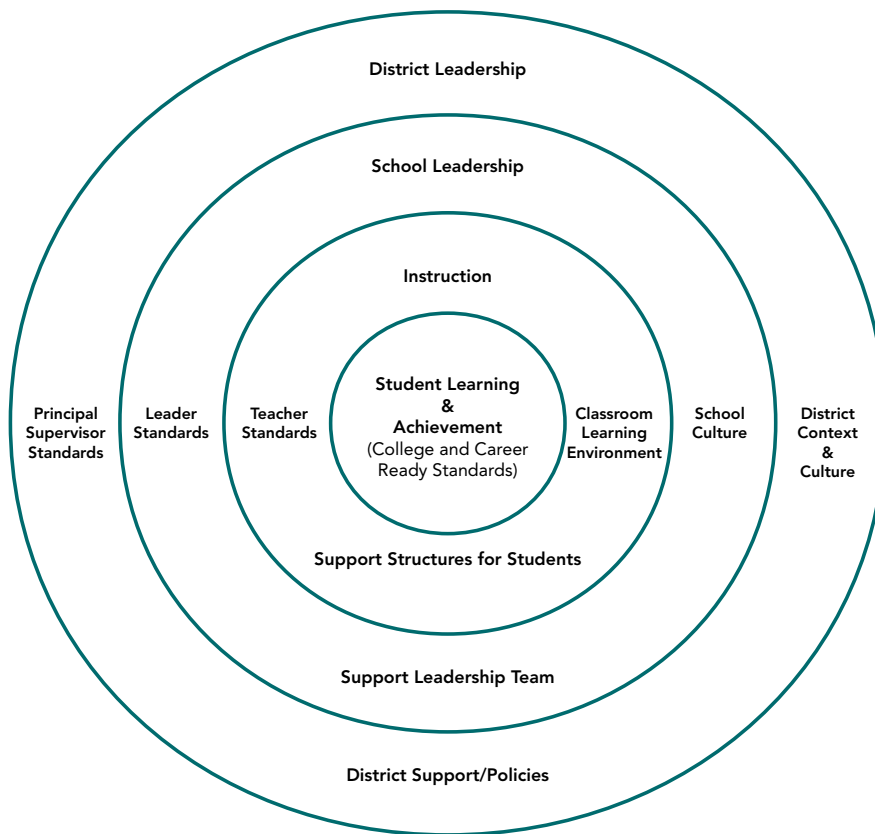


Figure 1

9 Council of Chief State School Officers, *INTASC Model Core Teaching Standards* (Washington, D.C.: CCSSO, 2011).

An Integrated Approach to the Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015

The *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015* fall into three broad categories. These three categories of standards need to be integrated to provide comprehensive support to principals.

The first category involves the work surrounding educational leadership. Since the primary role of the principal supervisor is to support and improve principals' capacity for instructional leadership, it is the focus of four of the eight standards. These standards draw heavily on the University of Washington's DL2 *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards*.

Standard 1. Principal Supervisors dedicate their time to helping principals grow as instructional leaders.¹⁰

Standard 2. Principal Supervisors coach and support individual principals and engage in effective professional learning strategies to help principals grow as instructional leaders.¹¹

Standard 3. Principal Supervisors use evidence of principals' effectiveness to determine necessary improvements in principals' practice to foster a positive educational environment that supports the diverse cultural and learning needs of students.¹²

Standard 4. Principal Supervisors engage principals in the formal district principal evaluation process in ways that help them grow as instructional leaders.¹³

The second category involves ensuring the smooth and effective functioning of the district. Such work leverages the unique position of principal supervisors within a district and requires them to liaise between the central office and individual schools. By holding both central office and school-based perspectives, principal supervisors can inform policies and procedures to ensure they are efficient and effective.

Standard 5. Principal Supervisors advocate for and inform the coherence of organizational vision, policies and strategies to support schools and student learning.

Standard 6. Principal Supervisors assist the district in ensuring the community of schools with which they engage are culturally/socially responsive and have equitable access to resources necessary for the success of each student.

¹⁰ From the District Leadership Design Lab's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standard 1* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014).

¹¹ Based on the District Leadership Design Lab's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standards 2 and 3* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014).

¹² Based on the District Leadership Design Lab's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standard 4* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014).

¹³ From the District Leadership Design Lab's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standard 5* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014).

The third category involves improving the capacity and effectiveness of the principal supervisor as a district leader.

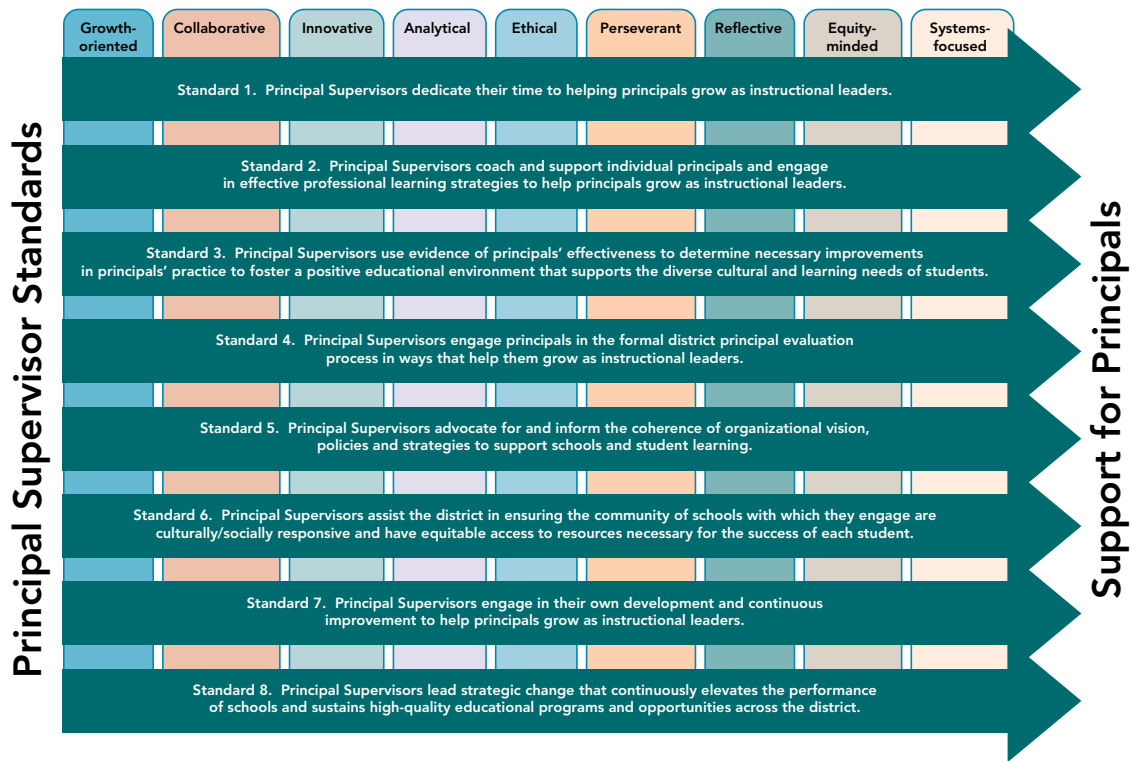
Standard 7. Principal Supervisors engage in their own development and continuous improvement to help principals grow as instructional leaders.

Standard 8. Principal Supervisors lead strategic change that continuously elevates the performance of schools and sustains high-quality educational programs and opportunities across the district.

In addition, the *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015* require principal supervisors to exhibit the same dispositions implied in *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* that transformational school leaders must bring to their work. These dispositions are threaded through all of the standards and maintain the focus on students:

- **Growth-oriented:** Transformational education leaders believe that students, education professionals, educational organizations and the community can continuously grow and improve to realize a shared vision for student success through dedication and hard work.
- **Collaborative:** Transformational education leaders share the responsibility and the work for realizing a shared vision of student success.
- **Innovative:** Transformational education leaders break from established ways of doing things to pursue fundamentally new and more effective approaches when needed.
- **Analytical:** Transformational education leaders gather evidence and engage in rigorous data analysis to develop, manage, refine and evaluate new and more effective approaches.
- **Ethical:** Transformational education leaders explicitly and consciously follow laws, policies, and principles of right and wrong in everything they do.
- **Perseverant:** Transformational education leaders are courageous and persevere in doing what is best for students even when challenged by fear, risk and doubt.
- **Reflective:** Transformational education leaders re-examine their practices and dispositions habitually in order to develop the “wisdom of practice” needed to succeed in pursuing new and more effective approaches.
- **Equity-minded:** Transformational education leaders ensure that all students are treated fairly, equitably, and have access to excellent teachers and necessary resources.
- **Systems-focused:** Transformational education leaders are committed to developing systems and solutions that are sustainable and effective district-wide and that generate equitable outcomes for all schools and stakeholders.

Figure 2 illustrates how these dispositions integrate with the standards and are essential to being an effective principal supervisor.



Note: Standard 1 is from the District Leadership Design Lab's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standard 1* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014). Standards 2 and 3 are based on DL2's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standards 2, 3 and 4*. Standard 4 is from DL2's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standard 5*.

A Focus on Continuous Improvement

Like the principals with whom they work, principal supervisors seek to effect continuous improvement. To bring about such improvements, they employ a strategic cycle of actions. They **study** and analyze data and evidence to understand a situation and identify its strengths and weaknesses. Then, they **develop** the rationale and associated plan for addressing the weaknesses and building on strengths. They **enact** the plan next, followed by **evaluating** the outcome. The cycle then repeats itself, allowing problems that were once invisible to emerge and be addressed. Through such an iterative process, approaches get revised, refined and sometimes transformed to yield progressively better results. Figure 3 illustrates the cycle of actions.

Elements of Improvement-Focused Leadership Practice

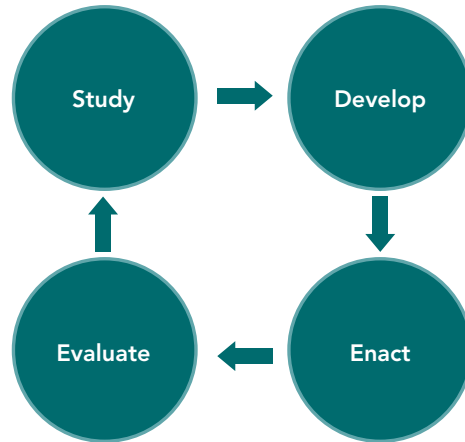


Figure 3

Using the Standards

The voluntary *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015* can benefit many stakeholders. State education agencies can use them in conjunction with the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* to develop a clear theory of action about how improved school leadership contributes to improved student outcomes. They can share the standards with their governor, legislature, local districts, leadership preparation programs, and professional development providers to start a dialogue about making school leadership a major focus of their strategic plan and targeting funds to specific efforts that help principals become stronger instructional leaders. These standards can also be incorporated into training and certification expectations for superintendents and other relevant central office roles as they might apply in individual states.

At the local level, the standards can inform the recruitment, selection, induction, professional learning, and evaluation of supervisors of principals (which can include superintendents). In considering the implementation of the standards and redesigning the way they support, not just supervise, principals, districts might consider the following questions:

1. Which actions in the standards best meet our needs and circumstances? How do we create our own standards, job description, support, and evaluation systems around those actions?
2. Will the work of the standards be shared among several administrators or performed by a designated principal supervisor?
3. Do we have the resources to create a new principal supervisor position?

4. If our superintendent is the sole supervisor of principals, how can he or she allocate more time to that work given many other district responsibilities?
5. How can our central office better support the work of principals and principal supervisors?
6. Are we ready to go deeper and make building the instructional leadership capacity of principals the primary work of principal supervisors, thereby holding others in central office accountable for non-instructional supports to principals?¹⁴
7. Will these standards prompt the necessary district and school leader discussions that determine circumstances requiring transformational change rather than incremental continuous improvement strategies?

The standards can also be a key resource for local and statewide communities of principal supervisors who share promising practices and collaboratively address problems of practice related to growing the instructional capacity of school leaders. Lastly, the standards can benefit individual principal supervisors, bringing much-needed clarity to their role for the first time. With the standards as their guide, they can focus their work and ongoing professional development on what matters most to helping principals improve instruction, learning, and ultimately student achievement.

¹⁴ Districts that are ready to go deeper and make building the instructional leadership capacity of principals the primary work of principal supervisors will find the University of Washington's *DL2 Principal Supervisor Performance Standards* helpful.



Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015

A Key to the Components of each Standard

Standard 1. Principal Supervisors dedicate their time to helping principals grow as instructional leaders.¹⁵

A broad expectation based on the central concept(s) in the *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015*.

Dispositions exemplified in Standard 1

Principal Supervisors believe in, value, and are committed to being:

- Growth-oriented
- Collaborative
- **Innovative**
- Analytical
- Ethical
- Perseverant
- Reflective
- Equity-minded
- **Systems-focused**

All of the dispositions listed are important to the Standards but the dispositions in **bold** are most central to and reflected in the specific standard.

A narrative describes the basic concepts in the standard.

Principal supervisors focus a substantial portion of their time on developing instructional leadership capacity when working with individual principals as well as groups of principals. They develop efficient approaches and connections with other central office functions to minimize their time spent on activities unrelated to principal development.

Actions that principal supervisors take to meet the standard and pursue continuous improvement

Actions

Principal Supervisors:

- Spend time in schools observing principals and the effects of their leadership efforts.
- Focus their time on supporting principals' efforts to improve teacher effectiveness, student learning and achievement.
- Identify operational and other central office supports for principals that allow principal supervisors to focus on instructional leadership.
- Monitor their use of time to ensure they are spending most of it in schools developing principals as instructional leaders.

¹⁵ The standard statement is from the District Leadership Design Lab's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standard 1* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014). The dispositions and actions are based on feedback from principal supervisors and other practitioners.

Standard 1. Principal Supervisors dedicate their time to helping principals grow as instructional leaders.¹⁶

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- Identify operational and other central office supports for principals that allow principal supervisors to focus on instructional leadership.
- Monitor their use of time to ensure they are spending most of it in schools developing principals as instructional leaders.

¹⁶ The standard statement is from the District Leadership Design Lab's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standard 1* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014). The dispositions and actions are based on feedback from principal supervisors and other practitioners.

Standard 2. Principal Supervisors coach and support individual principals and engage in effective professional learning strategies to help principals grow as instructional leaders.¹⁷

Dispositions exemplified in Standard 2

Principal Supervisors believe in, value, and are committed to being:

- **Growth-oriented**
 - Collaborative
 - Innovative
 - Analytical
- **Ethical**
 - Perseverant
- **Reflective**
- **Equity-minded**
 - Systems-focused

Principal supervisors model the leadership behaviors that they expect principals to exhibit, offer timely and actionable feedback, and provide differentiated learning opportunities to build principals' capacity as instructional leaders. Essential to this coaching role is the ability to build strong relationships with principals that result in trust, candid communication, innovative thinking, and continuous improvement of leadership practice.

Actions

Principal Supervisors:

- Communicate effectively with principals and explain reasoning and research behind decisions and actions.
- Model culturally responsive best practices and effective leadership behaviors such as self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior.
- Build relationships with principals based on the knowledge of adult learning theory, common goals, trust, support and mutual accountability.
- Differentiate the support given to each principal through balancing the learning needs of the principal and the instructional needs of the school.
- Establish and sustain safe and supportive learning communities that provide peer feedback and promote innovative thinking.
- Shift from being a coach to a supervisor as necessary to push the learning of the principal.
- Utilize professional learning strategies that are supported by research and known to be effective with principals.
- Ensure the principals' communities of practice stay focused on instructional leadership.

¹⁷ The standard statement is based on the District Leadership Design Lab's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standards 2 and 3* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014) . The dispositions and actions are based on feedback from principal supervisors and other practitioners.

Standard 3. Principal Supervisors use evidence of principals' effectiveness to determine necessary improvements in principals' practice to foster a positive educational environment that supports the diverse cultural and learning needs of students.¹⁸

Dispositions exemplified in Standard 3

Principal Supervisors believe in, value, and are committed to being:

- **Growth-oriented**
 - Collaborative
 - Innovative
- **Analytical**
 - Ethical
 - Perseverant
 - Reflective
- **Equity-minded**
 - Systems-focused

Principal supervisors effectively focus principals' learning by gathering and examining a wide variety of evidence from the school, district, and community. In addition to information about student achievement, such evidence might include teacher, student and parent perception surveys, school climate surveys, evaluations from colleagues, and the principals' personal reflections. By analyzing the evidence, the principal supervisor can make stronger inferences about principals' current level of knowledge and skills, provide differentiated feedback to principals about their work and target areas for professional learning both for individual principals and the principal learning community.

Actions

Principal Supervisors:

- Gather qualitative, quantitative and observational evidence about principals' capacity for instructional leadership and serving the needs of diverse learners.
- Use evidence from a variety of sources to assess current levels of principals' proficiency and to target areas for professional learning.
- Formatively assess principals' implementation of new practices through on-site observations and other sources of evidence.
- Provide purposeful, timely, goal-aligned, and actionable feedback to principals.
- Monitor the effects of principals' implementation of prescribed actions.

¹⁸ The standard statement is based on the District Leadership Design Lab's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standard 4* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014). The dispositions and actions are based on feedback from principal supervisors and other practitioners.

Standard 4. Principal Supervisors engage principals in the formal district principal evaluation process in ways that help them grow as instructional leaders.¹⁹

Dispositions exemplified in Standard 4

Principal Supervisors believe in, value, and are committed to being:

- **Growth-oriented**
- **Collaborative**
- Innovative
- Analytical
- Ethical
- Perseverant
- **Reflective**
- Equity-minded
- Systems-focused

Through the formal evaluation processes, principal supervisors work collaboratively with principals to identify their leadership strengths and specific areas they need to develop. The principal supervisor uses a professional learning plan to support and hold principals accountable for continuous improvement in their practice, which results in higher levels of student learning and achievement.

Actions

Principal Supervisors:

- Collaborate with principals to articulate and refine a district-wide shared vision and understanding of effective principal instructional leadership and how the evaluation system supports the vision.
- Gather qualitative, quantitative and observational evidence about principals' capacity for instructional leadership.
- Ensure all principals clearly understand the district's expectations for instructional leadership and the associated terminology.
- Communicate and model how the evaluation process supports principal's growth as instructional leaders.
- Collaborate with principals to identify leadership strengths and weaknesses, determine actions and supports needed to improve their practice, and develop a professional learning plan for achieving their goals.
- Support principals in reaching their goals by monitoring progress, conducting formative assessments, providing feedback, and revising elements of the professional learning plan as needed.

¹⁹ The standard statement is from the District Leadership Design Lab's *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards Version 1.0, Standard 5* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, 2014). The dispositions and actions are based on feedback from principal supervisors and other practitioners.

Standard 5. Principal Supervisors advocate for and inform the coherence of organizational vision, policies and strategies to support schools and student learning.

Dispositions exemplified in Standard 5

Principal Supervisors believe in, value, and are committed to being:

- Growth-oriented
- Collaborative
- Innovative
- **Analytical**
- Ethical
- **Perseverant**
- Reflective
- Equity-minded
- **Systems-focused**

Principal supervisors serve as an important conduit for two-way communication between the central office and individual principals. They translate and communicate the district vision, policies, and strategies to school leaders to help ensure that school-level goals and strategies align with those pursued by the district. Additionally, principal supervisors share feedback and data from schools to inform the district vision, policies, and strategies so that they support schools and student learning. Principal supervisors also assist districts in the development and support of a strong leadership pipeline.

Actions

Principal Supervisors:

- Examine school-level goals and strategies to promote equity for students and ensure alignment with district vision, policies, and strategies.
- Communicate the vision, goals, and strategies of the district with all internal and external stakeholders.
- Connect principals to central office resources and personnel to support the principals' work.
- Assist principals in learning to allocate school resources in ways that best support staff and meet their school's needs.
- Help principals create distributed leadership systems and structures that support teaching and learning.
- Gather and provide feedback to district leaders regarding district goals, policies, and strategies to support the work of principals and student learning.
- Strategically buffer principals from distractions to maintain their focus on instructional leadership.
- Assist with the development of a strong pipeline of future school leaders.
- Lead processes to select and induct principals ready to serve as successful instructional leaders.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the district's systems to support schools and student learning.

Standard 6. Principal Supervisors assist the district in ensuring the community of schools with which they engage are culturally/socially responsive and have equitable access to resources necessary for the success of each student.

Dispositions exemplified in Standard 6

Principal Supervisors believe in, value, and are committed to being:

- Growth-oriented
- Collaborative
- Innovative
- **Analytical**
- **Ethical**
- **Perseverant**
- Reflective
- **Equity-minded**
- **Systems-focused**

Principal supervisors work with principals to promote the understanding, appreciation, and use of the school and community's diverse cultural, linguistic, social, political, and intellectual resources. They ensure that issues of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and limiting assumptions about gender, sexual orientation, race, class, disability, and special status are recognized and effectively addressed.

Actions

Principal Supervisors:

- Ensure that each student is treated fairly and equitably and has physical access to the learning environment and academic access to excellent teachers.
- Ensure that teachers and staff are treated fairly and equitably and have physical access to a positive and collaborative work environment.
- Ensure that the school community has access to the full range of integrated services to meet the diverse cultural and learning needs of each student.
- Exhibit cultural competency in interactions and decision-making with principals and community.
- Protect students' equitable access to social capital within the school and to high-quality instructional practices.
- Monitor schools as affirming and inclusive places.

Standard 7. Principal Supervisors engage in their own development and continuous improvement to help principals grow as instructional leaders.

Dispositions exemplified in Standard 7

Principal Supervisors believe in, value, and are committed to being:

- **Growth-oriented**
 - Collaborative
 - Innovative
- **Analytical**
 - Ethical
 - Perseverant
- **Reflective**
 - Equity-minded
 - Systems-focused

Principal supervisors, as members of a professional community, seek to continuously improve their own leadership practice. By engaging in professional learning, they keep abreast of changes in laws and regulations that affect schools as well as district policies and practices. They also model the value of reflective practice for others and gain first-hand experience about the challenges of assessing professional practices through reflection and feedback, setting goals, and designing and implementing professional learning plans to meet those goals.

Actions

Principal Supervisors:

- Understand the dimensions and challenges of professional growth.
- Use relationships and experiences to inform and improve their leadership practice.
- Remain current on latest laws, regulations and required data.
- Use feedback and data from multiple sources (e.g., principals, supervisor, and principal supervisor colleagues) to reflect upon personal strengths and weaknesses and determine needed professional learning.
- Set pertinent and measurable professional learning goals to improve their leadership practice.
- Share professional learning goals with supervisors and principals to garner support and accountability.
- Engage in individual and collective professional learning activities to meet professional learning goals.
- Evaluate progress in achieving professional learning goals and adjust as necessary to reach them.

Standard 8. Principal Supervisors lead strategic change that continuously elevates the performance of schools and sustains high-quality educational programs and opportunities across the district.

Dispositions exemplified in Standard 8

Principal Supervisors believe in, value, and are committed to being:

- **Growth-oriented**
- **Collaborative**
- **Innovative**
 - Analytical
 - Ethical
- **Perseverant**
 - Reflective
 - Equity-minded
- **Systems-focused**

Principal supervisors accept responsibility for continuously improving the performance of students, teachers, principals, and schools. With sensitivity to community values and interests, they work with principals to identify needs, determine strategy, and enact change that results in ever increasing performance. By sharing feedback and data from schools, they also drive changes to the district vision, strategies and policies so that they better support schools, student learning and continuous improvement.

Actions

Principal Supervisors:

- Use evidence from a variety of data sources to identify areas that need improvement in each school as well as across schools to inform district responses.
- Determine situationally-appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental approaches, in response to identified principal and school performance needs.
- Employ innovative thinking and strategic planning to create change in response to identified school performance need.
- Communicate to principals and district the need and the means for effecting and embracing change.
- Identify operational and other central office supports for principals to implement change.
- Provide feedback to central office staff about ways to improve services that support principals, schools and student learning.
- Use data to assess the impact of change on the determined need.
- Assess the principal's effectiveness in leading change at the school level.

Glossary

Actions: The functions or activities for which a person is responsible. Each standard includes a series of actions that an effective principal supervisor must pursue to continuously improve and successfully achieve that particular standard.

Coach: To train, tutor or give instruction in order to enhance a person's growth and performance, as well as promote individual responsibility and accountability. Using their coaching skills, principal supervisors evaluate and address the developmental needs of principals and collaborate with them to create a professional learning plan that will help them gain the necessary skills to become better instructional leaders.

Culturally Responsive: Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students. (Source: *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, & Practice*, by G.Gay, 2000.)

Dispositions: Attributes or qualities that distinguish a person.

Distributed Leadership: Leadership shared by a number of individuals who work collaboratively to achieve desired goals.


Equity: In education, equity refers to the educational policies, practices, and programs necessary to: (a) eliminate educational barriers based on gender, race/ethnicity, national origin, color, disability, age, or other protected group status; and (b) provide equal educational opportunities and ensure that historically underserved or underrepresented populations meet the same rigorous standards for academic performance expected of all children and youth. (Source: Barbara A. Bitters)

Equity-Minded: Holding the disposition of concern for equity in education.

Improvement-focused Educational Leadership: A style of leadership that pursues continuous improvement in all aspects of education in order to increase student learning and achievement.

Learning Community: A group of educators who engage in professional learning that increases their effectiveness and results for all students. Learning communities are committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment (Source: Learning Forward).

Performance Standards: Guidelines that provide specific descriptions of observable performance that help to enact the principal supervisor standards in policies, programs and practice. The University of Washington's DL2 *Principal Supervisor Performance Standards* are an example.



Preparation Standards: Guidelines on the knowledge and skills that aspiring education leaders must acquire in leader preparation programs. These standards can also guide accreditation of preparation programs. The *Educational Leadership Constituent Council Standards*, soon to be updated as the National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards (NELP), are preparation standards. (Source: “*The research base supporting the ELCC standards*,” edited by Michelle D. Young and Hanne Mawhinney, 2012.)

Principal Supervision and Evaluation: A process enacted by principal supervisors for enhancing the specialized knowledge and skills of practicing principals and providing formative and summative feedback about their performance.

Professional Learning: The act of developing the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions that practicing educators need to help students perform at higher levels.

Professional Standards: High-level, broad guidelines that describe what any school leader needs to know and be able to do regardless of job title or tenure. Professional standards outline leadership knowledge, skills and dispositions, not specific job responsibilities. The *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* are an example.

Transformational Education Leaders: Leaders in education who identify a needed change, convey a shared vision to guide that change, and support and empower others as they help to enact the change and build their own capacity for leadership.

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