



# Assistant Principals: Growth and Implications for School Leadership Appendix

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## Appendix to Assistant Principals: Growth and Implications for School Leadership

### Introduction

This appendix is a companion to the report, *Assistant Principals: Growth and Implications for School Leadership*. It provides more information about how the study was conducted and its findings. Appendix A provides details on the methods used for the study, including the study sample, key measures, and analysis approach. Appendix B provides additional information to support key findings 1-4 in the report.

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## Appendix A

### Additional Details on the Methods Used in the Study

## A.1. Data sources and study sample

### Data sources

The study included data from the following sources:

#### *RAND 2024 Fall American School Leader Panel (ASLP) Omnibus Survey*<sup>1</sup>

RAND sent the ASLP survey to a nationally representative sample of 3,125 public K–12 school leaders (see [RAND American Educator Panels](#) for more details).<sup>2</sup> RAND requested participation from school leaders between October 21, 2024, and the close of the survey on November 25, 2025, which included an initial invitation to participate and four email reminders. Participants completed the survey online and received a \$10 e-gift card from RAND upon completion. The survey covered a range of education topics, including the study's questions on the prevalence of assistant principals in the United States as well as their roles, support, and preparedness for the principalship. In all, 1,019 school leaders participated in the survey (33 percent response rate). In February 2025, RAND provided survey responses to the study team and school characteristics for each respondent school, including school level (elementary, middle, or high), locale (urban, suburban, town/rural), and student race (majority white students, majority students of color).<sup>3</sup>

#### *Schools and Staffing Survey/National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS)*

These U.S. Department of Education surveys are administered to nationally representative samples of K–12 public schools, teachers, and principals to provide descriptive information on elementary and secondary education in the United States. The surveys are administered every two to four years and the 2020–2021 administration includes about 9,900 public schools. The study used data on the number of assistant principals in each school from the Schools and Staffing Survey waves from 1990–1991 to 2011–2012 and the NTPS from 2015–2016 and 2020–2021.

#### *Common Core of Data*

The Common Core of Data is a publicly available national database on public elementary and secondary schools in the United States maintained by the U.S. Department of Education. Using schools' National Center for Education Statistics identification number from the RAND data, the study linked enrollment count and district size for 2023–2024 (the most recent year of data available at the time of analysis) to survey responses.

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<sup>1</sup> RAND American Educator Panels, American School Leader Panel, "Fall 2024 Omnibus Principal Survey", data file, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, February 5, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> RAND American Educator Panels, American School Leader Panel, "2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey", Technical Document, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, February 2025.

<sup>3</sup> RAND provided data on school size, identifying schools as having student enrollment less than 450 or greater than or equal to 450. The study did not prepare for or use this information in analyses; instead, school enrollment from the Common Core of Data served as an indicator of school size.

### *EDFacts*

*EDFacts* is a U.S. Department of Education initiative to centralize performance data with other public school data. Using the National Center for Education Statistics identification number, the study linked Title I status for 2022–2023 (the most recent year of data available at the time of analysis) to survey responses.<sup>4</sup>

Exhibit A.1 describes the characteristics of the schools that principals in the study served. Because not all characteristics were available for every principal in the sample, responses are excluded from analyses on a case-by-case basis depending on data availability.

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<sup>4</sup> The study attempted to collect math and reading/English language arts proficiency from 2021–2022, the most recent data available at the time of the data collection. Unfortunately, missingness was high (13 percent for math, 9 percent for reading/English language arts), and the data were further removed in time than information from other sources, so they might not reflect current trends to the same extent. Exploratory analysis indicated that Title I, urban, and schools with a majority students of color all had lower proficiency in math and reading/English language arts than counterpart schools. Because these types of schools are also more likely to have an assistant principal, it suggests that schools with assistant principals have lower proficiency rates, on average, than schools without assistant principals.

**Exhibit A.1.** Characteristics of the sample for the ASLP survey

Characteristic	Percentage of schools	Number of schools
All schools	100	1,019
<b>School level</b>		
Elementary	59	587
Middle	19	188
High	22	224
<b>Locale</b>		
Urban	27	270
Suburban	33	323
Town/rural	40	400
<b>Title I status</b>		
Title I	61	604
Not Title I	39	387
<b>School size</b>		
Average enrollment	557	1,009
<b>Student race</b>		
Majority students of color	45	448
Majority white students	55	539
<b>District size</b>		
Small district (< 5k students)	47	464
Midsized district (5k to 25k students)	28	282
Large district (> 25k students)	25	245

Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey; Common Core of Data, 2023–2024; EDFacts, 2022–2023.

Notes: Not all schools had available data for each characteristic; percentages reported include schools with data for the specific characteristic only.

ASLP = American School Leader Panel.

**A.2. Measures**

To examine the prevalence of assistant principals, their roles, support, and preparedness for the principalship, the study developed 12 items included on the ASLP survey administered to principals (Exhibit A.2). The study team developed these items after reviewing existing surveys and literature on assistant principal and principal roles, as well as by leveraging the team’s expertise on school leadership.

**Exhibit A.2.** Items about assistant principals on the ASLP survey

Items and instructions	Response options
How many assistant principals do you have in your school?	Participants select a number between 0 and 10
How many years of experience did your assistant principal(s) have in the assistant principal role at any school before the start of the current school year?	Principals fill in a number between 0 and 70; repeated for the number of assistant principals chosen in the question above
How do you typically assign your assistant principals' responsibilities? <sup>a</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By grade level</li> <li>• By subject matter (e.g., assistant principals for English; please describe)</li> <li>• By specific task (e.g., assistant principals for student services, athletics, instruction, testing, student discipline, etc.; please describe)</li> <li>• General school assistant principal – no assignment by grade level, subject matter, or specific task</li> <li>• Other (please describe) ____</li> </ul>
In an AVERAGE WEEK, what percentage of time does your assistant principal devote to each of the following activities? Responses should sum to 100%. (If you have more than one assistant principal, please report for the assistant principal with the fewest years in the assistant principal role.) <sup>b</sup>	<p>Percentage of time for the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional planning/coaching with teachers (e.g., data meetings)</li> <li>• Formal observations of teachers and providing observational feedback (e.g., teacher evaluations)</li> <li>• Administrative duties (e.g., hiring, scheduling, budgeting, administrative meetings)</li> <li>• Parent and/or community relationships, engagement, and concerns</li> <li>• Student discipline issues</li> <li>• Non-discipline student support (e.g., mental health support, IEP meetings)</li> <li>• Working directly with students (e.g., teaching, tutoring, etc.)</li> <li>• Monitoring and supervision activities (e.g., lunch/hall/bus duty, extracurricular activities)</li> </ul>

Items and instructions	Response options
<p>Consider the professional development activities your assistant principal has participated in over the past 12 months that were supported by your school or district. Please rank the three most frequent types of professional development your assistant principal participated in, with 1= most frequent type. (If you have more than one assistant principal, please report for the assistant principal with the fewest years in the assistant principal role.)<sup>c</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University course(s) related to role as an assistant principal</li> <li>• Visits to other schools designed to improve work as an assistant principal</li> <li>• Individual or collaborative research on a topic of professional interest</li> <li>• Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching</li> <li>• Participating in an assistant principal network (e.g., a group of assistant principals organized by the district, an outside agency or through the internet)</li> <li>• District-sponsored academies or other internal development programs for leaders</li> <li>• Workshops, conferences, or training in which your assistant principal was a presenter</li> <li>• Other workshops or conferences in which your assistant principal was not a presenter</li> </ul>
<p>Please rank the top three areas for which your assistant principal needs professional development, with 1= greatest need. (If you have more than one assistant principal, please report for the assistant principal with the fewest years in the assistant principal role.)<sup>c</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using data for school improvement</li> <li>• Subject matter, teaching methods, curriculum, or pedagogical topics</li> <li>• Student social, emotional, and mental health</li> <li>• Students with special needs/special populations</li> <li>• Parent and community engagement</li> <li>• Leadership (e.g., strategic planning, vision)</li> <li>• Observation and feedback to teachers</li> <li>• School administration and staff management (e.g., scheduling, staffing and hiring)</li> <li>• Financial management (e.g., budgets, contracts)</li> <li>• General preparation for the principalship in this district</li> <li>• Promoting equity and inclusion</li> </ul>
<p>How often do you have a formal scheduled meeting or one-on-one with your assistant principal? (If you have more than one assistant principal, please report for the assistant principal with the fewest years in the assistant principal role.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily</li> <li>• 2-3 times a week</li> <li>• Once a week</li> <li>• 2-3 times a month</li> <li>• Once a month</li> <li>• Less than once a month</li> </ul>

Items and instructions	Response options
Do the assistant principal(s) at this school have access to a mentoring or coaching program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, but only assistant principals who are new to the role (i.e., in their first assistant principal role)</li> <li>• Yes, but only assistant principals who are new to this school, not new to the district (even if they have been an assistant principal at other schools in the district)</li> <li>• Yes, but only assistant principals who are new to the district (even if they have been an assistant principal in another district)</li> <li>• Yes, all assistant principals at this school have access</li> <li>• No, at the present time there is no access to a mentoring or coaching program for assistant principals in this school</li> </ul>
Consider the assistant principals in your school. How many do you believe are currently prepared to become a principal? <sup>d</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> <li>• 1</li> <li>• 2</li> <li>• 3</li> <li>• 4+</li> <li>• All of them</li> </ul>
In your district, are assistant principals evaluated using the same evaluation system as principals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>
Consider the professional development activities you have participated in over the past 12 months that were supported by your school or district. Please rank the three most frequent types of professional development you participated in, with 1= most frequent type. <sup>c</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University course(s) related to role as a principal</li> <li>• Visits to other schools designed to improve work as a principal</li> <li>• Individual or collaborative research on a topic of professional interest</li> <li>• Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching, as part of a formal arrangement that is recognized or by the school or district</li> <li>• Participating in a principal network (e.g., a group of principals organized by the district, an outside agency, or through the internet)</li> <li>• District-sponsored academies or other internal development programs for leaders</li> <li>• Workshops, conferences, or training in which you presented</li> <li>• Other workshops or conferences in which you were not a presenter</li> </ul>

Items and instructions	Response options
<p>Please rank the top three areas for which you would like to receive professional development, with 1=greatest need.<sup>c</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using data for school improvement</li> <li>• Subject matter, teaching methods, curriculum, or pedagogical topics</li> <li>• Student social, emotional, and mental health</li> <li>• Students with special needs/special populations</li> <li>• Parent and community engagement</li> <li>• Leadership (e.g., strategic planning, vision)</li> <li>• Observation and feedback to teachers</li> <li>• School administration and staff management (e.g., scheduling, staffing and hiring)</li> <li>• Financial management (e.g., budgets, contracts)</li> <li>• General preparation for the principalship</li> <li>• Promoting equity and inclusion</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup> See text for discussion of how the study treated “other” responses.

<sup>b</sup> For analysis and reporting of percentage of time on tasks, the study team combined responses to the following items: “Instructional planning/coaching with teachers (e.g., data meetings)” and “Formal observations of teachers and providing observational feedback (e.g., teacher evaluations)” to form “instructional leadership;” “Non-discipline student support (e.g., mental health support, IEP meetings)” and “Working directly with students (e.g., teaching, tutoring, etc.)” to form “student support.”

<sup>c</sup> For analysis and reporting of ranking variables, the study calculated the percentage of principals who ranked an item with a “1,” “2,” or “3,” indicating a top choice.

<sup>d</sup> For analysis and reporting of the percentage of assistant principals prepared, the study calculated the percentage of principals who did not choose the answer choice “None.”

ASLP = American School Leader Panel.

IEP = Individualized Education Program.

For multiple-choice survey questions, the study team calculated the percentage of principals choosing a response option to summarize the findings. One question (*How do you typically assign your assistant principals’ responsibilities*) had an open-ended response option (*other (please describe)*). Two coders reviewed the “other” responses. Coders attempted to recode responses into one of the provided answer options and discussed any disagreement for consensus; they recoded all responses into one of the provided answer options. For this question, principals also provided descriptions when choosing “by subject matter” or “by specific task.” A coder reviewed these data for themes. Almost all answers (96 percent of 27 text responses) to “by subject matter” described core subjects (English language arts, math, science, and social studies), and 74 percent described electives (fine and performing arts, career technical education, and foreign languages). Most responses (74 percent of 80 text responses) to “by specific task” described student behavior support tasks, such as discipline or mental health services, followed by academic support tasks (71 percent), such as curriculum and instruction tasks. Other tasks cited in less than half of text responses included administrative duties, facilities and campus management, extracurriculars and school activities, support for special populations of students, and assessment.

### A.3. Analysis approach

#### Weighting

All ASLP results use data weighted to national school leader characteristics to account for differences in sampling and response. The weighting ensures that results are nationally representative of the target population of K–12 public school principals in the United States. For each potential respondent, weights are assigned based on individual and school-level characteristics so that the sum of the weights closely matches characteristics of the national population of public school principals based on the NTPS, which allows comparison of data from the ASLP survey and NTPS. The weighting process also accounts for the likelihood of selection into the survey, the likelihood of participation, and the combined likelihood of these two events. This is a common weighting approach used for probability surveys that adjusts for nonresponse (see [American Instructional Resources Surveys: 2024 Technical Documentation and Survey Results](#)). Schools and Staffing Survey and NTPS data are weighted to be nationally representative following the technical documentation from the U.S. Department of Education.

#### Analyses

- **Descriptive analyses.** For each survey question response option, the study calculated descriptive statistics, such as means, percentages, minimums, and maximums. Responses from the ASLP survey were also compared descriptively with findings from NTPS.
- **Linear regressions.** These regressions enabled examination of the associations between responses to survey questions and school and district characteristics. First, responses to survey questions were regressed on school characteristics: school level, Title I status, locale, and school size as measured by enrollment. For all questions except for those about principals' own professional development (PD) activities and needs, principal-reported years of experience of assistant principal went in as an additional predictor in the model. Next, a separate set of linear regressions regressed responses on district characteristics—district size—and included school level.

## Appendix B

### Additional Findings from the Analyses

### B.1. Support and additional findings for key finding 1

**The percentage of schools with multiple assistant principals increased alongside the increase in assistant principals across U.S. schools overall.** When comparing the most recent data from NTPS (2020–2021) with the ASLP data for 2024–2025, the percentage of schools with an assistant principal rose for most school levels, all locales, schools that served higher and lower percentages of students of color, and Title I and non-Title I schools (Report Exhibits 1 and 2). There are similar patterns for the increase in the percentage of schools with multiple assistant principals across school characteristics (Exhibit B.1). Changes in the number of assistant principals (one, two, or three or more) vary by school characteristics (Exhibit B.2).

**Exhibit B.1.** Percentage of schools with multiple assistant principals by school characteristics, 2020–2021 NTPS and 2024–2025 ASLP

Characteristic	Percentage of schools with multiple assistant principals	
	2020–2021 NTPS	2024–2025 ASLP
All schools	21	25
<b>School level</b>		
Elementary	14	11
Middle	29	36
High	43	50
<b>Locale</b>		
Urban	29	30
Suburban	26	29
Town/rural	13	18
<b>Student race</b>		
Majority students of color	28	34
Majority white students	16	16
<b>Title I status</b>		
Title I	20	24
Not Title I	17	26

Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey; ED*Facts*, 2022–2023; NTPS, 2020–2021.

Notes: ASLP survey data include a nationally representative sample of 1,019 principals. Sample size varies based on school characteristics; see Exhibit A.1. Multiple assistant principals indicates two or more assistant principals.

ASLP = American School Leader Panel; NTPS = National Teacher and Principal Survey.

**Exhibit B.2.** Percentage of schools with one, two, or three or more assistant principals by school characteristics, 2020–2021 NTPS and 2024–2025 ASLP

Characteristic	Percentage of schools					
	2020–2021 NTPS			2024–2025 ASLP		
	One assistant principal	Two assistant principals	Three+ assistant principals	One assistant principal	Two assistant principals	Three+ assistant principals
All schools	40	12	9	42	14	11
<b>School level</b>						
Elementary	45	11	4	45	9	2
Middle	48	23	6	46	28	9
High	25	18	25	31	15	35
<b>Locale</b>						
Urban	46	16	13	46	15	16
Suburban	40	14	12	43	15	13
Town/rural	35	8	4	39	13	5
<b>Student race</b>						
Majority students of color	44	15	13	45	17	17
Majority white students	37	10	6	40	11	5
<b>Title I status</b>						
Title I	42	12	9	44	14	10
Not Title I	35	10	8	39	14	12

Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey; *EDFacts*, 2022–2023; NTPS, 2020–2021.

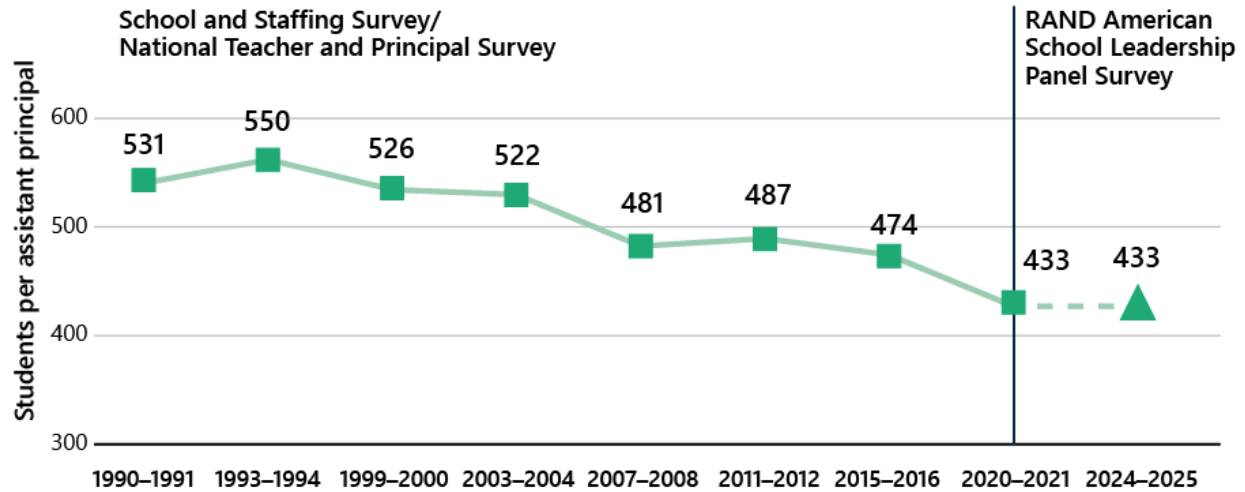
Notes: ASLP survey data include a nationally representative sample of 1,019 principals. Sample size varies based on school characteristics; see Exhibit A.1. “Three+ assistant principals” indicates three or more assistant principals.

ASLP = American School Leader Panel; NTPS = National Teacher and Principal Survey.

## B.2. Support and additional findings for key finding 2

**Increases in the number of assistant principals are not solely the result of changes in student enrollment.** Although larger schools tend to have more assistant principals, the rise in the number of assistant principals has been accompanied by a decrease in the number of students per assistant principal (Exhibit B.3; see Goldring et al. 2025).

**Exhibit B.3.** Decrease in the average number of students per assistant principal over time



Source: Schools and Staffing Survey/NTPS, 1990-1991, 1993-1994, 1999-2000, 2003-2004, 2007-2008, 2011-2012, 2015-2016, 2020-2021; RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey.

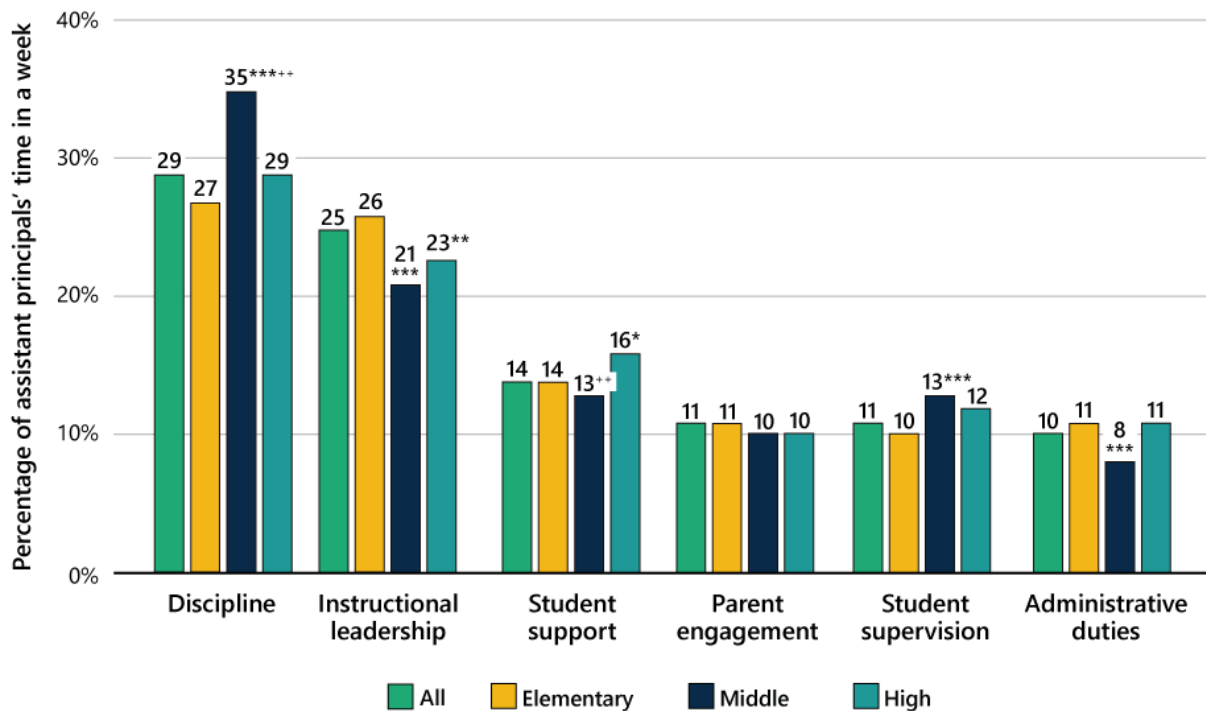
Notes: Data for 2024-2025 come from the ASLP survey and are based on 649 principals who have at least one assistant principal at their school. For 2020-2021 and 2024-2025, the calculation for students per assistant principal includes only schools that had at least one assistant principal. For previous years, calculations include students in all schools divided by the number of all assistant principals. Lower values indicate fewer students per assistant principal. Solid green lines and square shapes indicate data from NTPS; dotted green lines and triangle shapes indicate data from ASLP.

ASLP = American School Leader Panel; NTPS = National Teacher and Principal Survey.

### **B.3. Support and additional findings for key finding 3**

**Assistant principal activities vary slightly across school characteristics in ways that may align with responses to school needs.** Principals with an assistant principal in their schools reported that their assistant principals spent the most time on student discipline and instructional leadership (see Report Exhibit 3). Although this pattern generally held across school characteristics, principals in some schools reported that assistant principals spent more time on certain activities than assistant principals in comparison schools, which may reflect differences in assistant principals' roles depending on the type of school they serve and the needs of the school and students. For example, principals in middle schools and town/rural schools reported that assistant principals spent more time on student discipline than comparison schools (Exhibits B.4 and B.5); principals in suburban schools, Title I schools, and large districts reported that their assistant principals spent more time on instructional leadership than assistant principals in comparison schools (Exhibit B.5 to B.7).

**Exhibit B.4.** Percentage of time assistant principals devote to activities in a typical week by school level, as reported by principals with an assistant principal



Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey.

Notes: This exhibit is based on a survey of 642 principals who had at least one assistant principal at their school. Sample size varies based on school characteristics; see Exhibit A.1. “Instructional leadership” includes instructional planning and coaching with teachers and teacher observations. “Student support” includes non-disciplinary activities, such as supports for mental health, and working directly with students through teaching or tutoring. “Student supervision” includes lunch, hall, or bus duty and extracurricular supervision. “Administrative duties” includes hiring, scheduling, budgeting, and participation in administrative meetings. See Appendix A.2 for survey item details. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

\* indicates significant difference compared with elementary schools,  $p < .10$ .

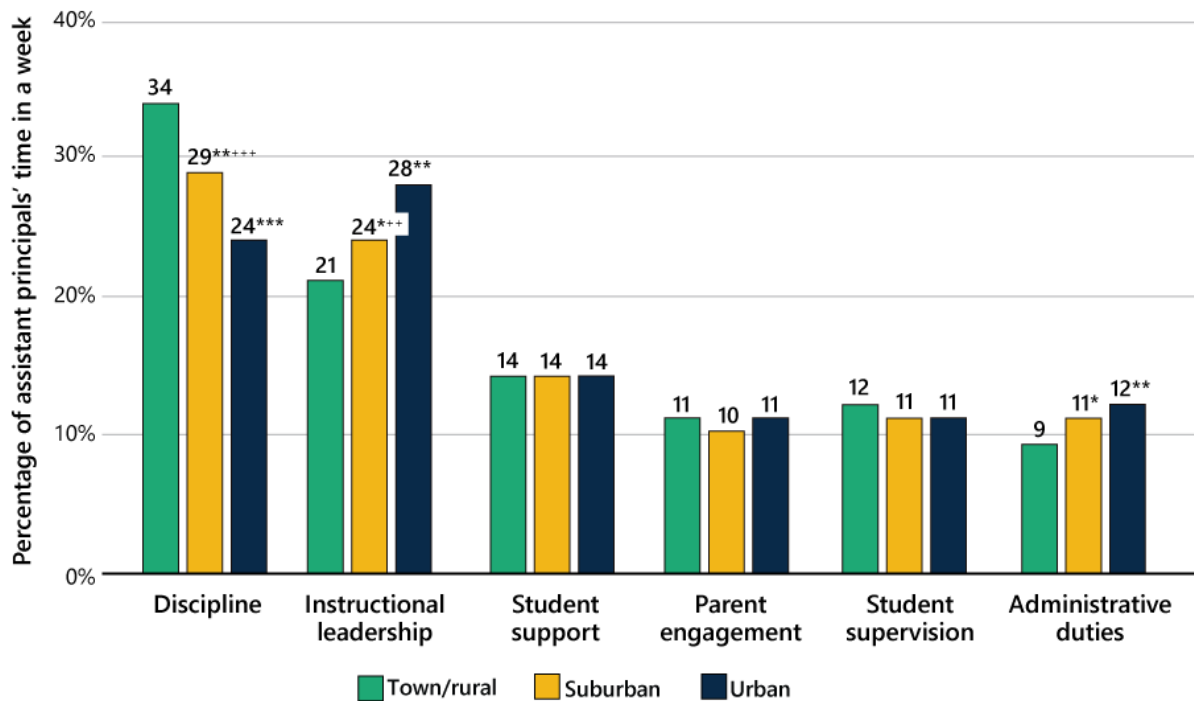
\*\* indicates significant difference compared with elementary schools,  $p < .05$ .

\*\*\* indicates significant difference compared with elementary schools,  $p < .01$ .

++ indicates difference compared with high schools,  $p < .05$ .

ASLP = American School Leader Panel.

**Exhibit B.5.** Percentage of time assistant principals devote to activities in a typical week by locale, as reported by principals with an assistant principal



Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey.

Notes: This exhibit is based on a survey of 640 principals who had at least one assistant principal at their school.

Sample size varies based on school characteristics; see Exhibit A.1. “Instructional leadership” includes instructional planning and coaching with teachers and teacher observations. “Student support” includes non-disciplinary activities, such as supports for mental health, and working directly with students through teaching or tutoring. “Student supervision” includes lunch, hall, or bus duty and extracurricular supervision. “Administrative duties” includes hiring, scheduling, budgeting, and participation in administrative meetings. See Appendix A.2 for survey item details. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

\* indicates significant difference compared with schools in town/rural settings,  $p < .10$ .

\*\* indicates significant difference compared with schools in town/rural settings,  $p < .05$ .

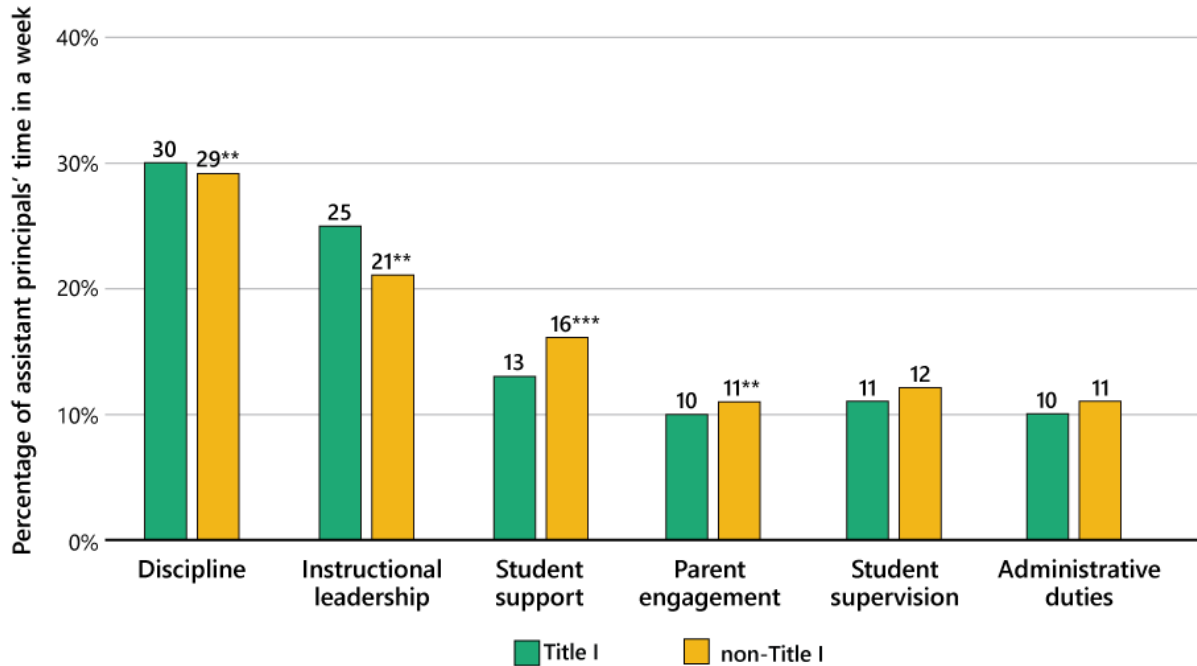
\*\*\* indicates significant difference compared with schools in town/rural settings,  $p < .01$ .

++ indicates significant difference compared with schools in urban settings,  $p < .05$ .

+++ indicates significant difference compared with schools in urban settings,  $p < .01$ .

ASLP = American School Leader Panel.

**Exhibit B.6.** Percentage of time assistant principals devote to activities in a typical week by Title I status, as reported by principals with an assistant principal



Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey; *EDFacts*, 2022–2023.

Notes: This exhibit is based on a survey of 642 principals who had at least one assistant principal at their school.

Sample size varies based on school characteristics; see Exhibit A.1. “Instructional leadership” includes instructional planning and coaching with teachers and teacher observations. “Student support” includes non-disciplinary activities, such as supports for mental health, and working directly with students through teaching or tutoring. “Student supervision” includes lunch, hall, or bus duty and extracurricular supervision.

“Administrative duties” includes hiring, scheduling, budgeting, and participation in administrative meetings.

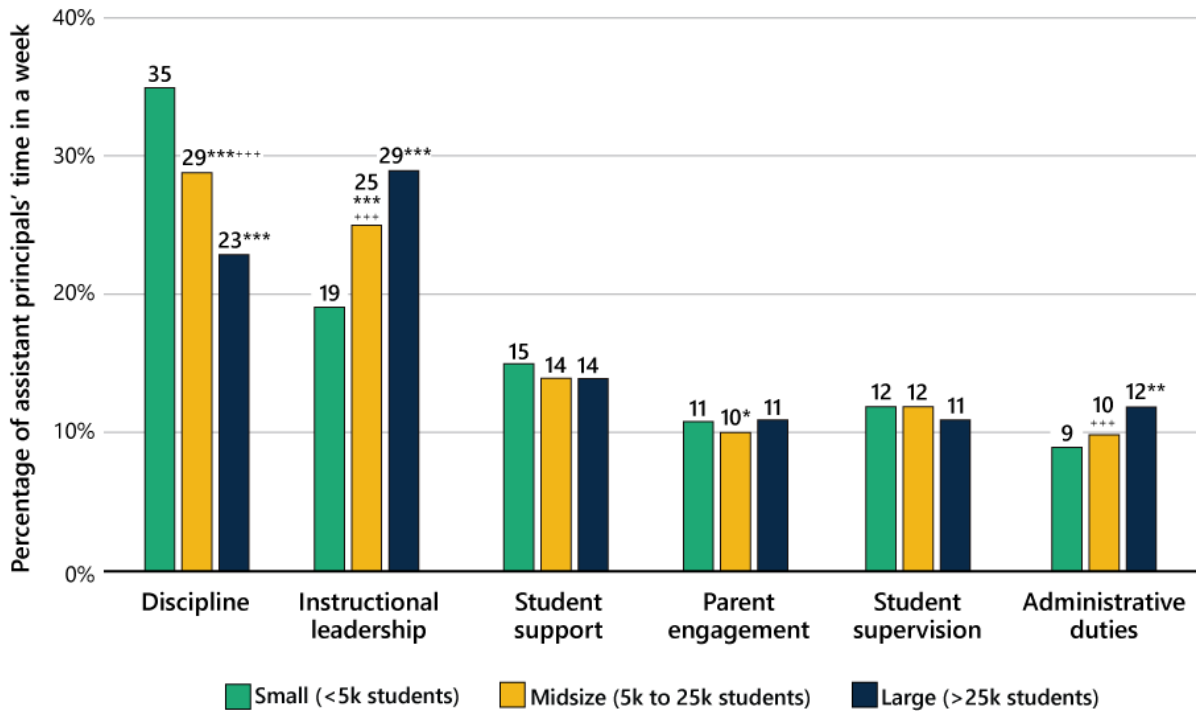
See Appendix A.2 for survey item details. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

\*\* indicates significant difference compared with Title I schools,  $p < .05$ .

\*\*\* indicates significant difference compared with Title I schools,  $p < .01$ .

ASLP = American School Leader Panel.

**Exhibit B.7.** Percentage of time assistant principals devote to activities in a typical week by district size, as reported by principals with an assistant principal



Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey; Common Core of Data, 2023–2024.

Notes: This exhibit is based on a survey of 642 principals who had at least one assistant principal at their school. Small districts have fewer than 5,000 students, midsize districts have 5,000 to 25,000 students, and large districts have more than 25,000 students. Sample size varies based on school characteristics; see Exhibit A.1. “Instructional leadership” includes instructional planning and coaching with teachers and teacher observations. “Student support” includes non-disciplinary activities, such as supports for mental health, and working directly with students through teaching or tutoring. “Student supervision” includes lunch, hall, or bus duty and extracurricular supervision. “Administrative duties” includes hiring, scheduling, budgeting, and participation in administrative meetings. See Appendix A.2 for survey item details. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

\* indicates significant difference compared with small districts,  $p < .10$ .

\*\* indicates significant difference compared with small districts,  $p < .05$ .

\*\*\* indicates significant difference compared with small districts,  $p < .01$ .

+++ indicates significant difference compared with large districts,  $p < .01$ .

ASLP = American School Leader Panel.

#### **B.4. Support and additional findings for key finding 4**

**About half of middle school principals (52 percent) reported that assistant principals had access to a mentoring or coaching program compared with 63 percent of principals overall.** In contrast, more than half of high school (70 percent) and elementary school (64 percent) principals reported that assistant principals had access to a mentoring or coaching program.<sup>5</sup> A higher share of elementary school principals (32 percent) than middle school principals (22 percent) reported that programs were available to those new to the assistant principal role (25 percent for high school principals).<sup>6</sup>

**A larger share of principals in large districts than smaller districts reported that their assistant principals had access to mentoring or coaching programs.** Three-quarters of principals in large districts (75 percent) reported that assistant principals had access to a mentoring or coaching program compared with a little more than half of principals in small (55 percent) and midsize (58 percent) districts.<sup>7</sup> Roughly equal shares of principals across district sizes reported a mentor or coaching program for all assistant principals (30, 26, and 30 percent, respectively, for small, midsize, and large districts). In contrast, 39 percent of principals in large districts reported a mentor or coaching program for new assistant principals compared with 25 percent in small and 20 percent in midsize districts.<sup>8</sup>

**Most principals, especially those with one assistant principal, scheduled meetings with their assistant principal at least once a week.** Although 87 percent of principals with an assistant principal reported having a scheduled meeting with their assistant principal at least weekly, 89 percent of principals with one assistant principal met at least weekly compared with 82 percent of principals with multiple assistant principals (Exhibit B.8).

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<sup>5</sup> Differences between middle and elementary schools, and middle and high schools, are significant ( $p < .05$ ).

<sup>6</sup> Differences between elementary and middle schools, and elementary and high schools, are significant ( $p < .10$ ).

<sup>7</sup> Differences between schools in small and large districts, and in midsize and large districts, are significant ( $p < .05$ ).

<sup>8</sup> Differences between schools in small and large districts, and in midsize and large districts, are significant ( $p < .05$ ).

**Exhibit B.8.** Frequency of principals’ scheduled meetings with assistant principals, as reported by principals with an assistant principal

Frequency	Percentage of principals		
	All with an assistant principal	With one assistant principal	With multiple assistant principals
At least weekly <sup>a</sup>	87	89	82
Daily	27	34***	16
Two or three times a week	23	24	22
Once a week	37	31**	43
Less than weekly <sup>b</sup>	14	11	18
Two or three times a month	4	2**	7
Once a month	5	4	7
Less than once a month	5	5	4
Number of principals responding	637	407	228

Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey.

Notes: See Appendix A.2 for survey item details. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

<sup>a</sup> Sum of “daily”, “two or three times a week”, and “once a week”.

<sup>b</sup> Sum of “two or three times a month”, “once a month”, and “less than once a month”.

\*\* indicates significant difference compared with principals that had multiple assistant principals,  $p < .05$ .

\*\*\* indicates significant difference compared with principals that had multiple assistant principals,  $p < .01$ .

ASLP = American School Leader Panel.

**Although principals reported that the most common types of school or district-supported PD assistant principals participated in were leadership development programs, assistant principal networks, and workshops (Exhibit B.9), findings varied by school level and district size.** For example, a larger share of high school principals (50 percent) than elementary school principals (38 percent) reported assistant principals received PD through mentoring and coaching (45 percent for middle school principals), and a smaller share of high school principals (49 percent) than elementary school principals (62 percent) reported assistant principals received PD through participation in an assistant principal network (53 percent for middle school principals; Exhibit B.10). For district size, higher percentages of principals in large districts than principals in other districts reported district-led academies, assistant principal networks, and visits to other schools as common forms of PD for their assistant principals (Exhibit B.11). In contrast, higher percentages of principals in small districts than principals in other districts reported attending workshops, conferences, or trainings and conducting individual research as common forms of PD for their assistant principals.

**Exhibit B.9.** Most common types of PD assistant principals participated in, as reported by principals with an assistant principal

PD activity	Assistant principals participating (%)
District-led academies and leader development programs	62
Assistant principal networks	56
Attending workshops/conferences	55
Mentoring and coaching	44
Research on professional topic	20
Visits to other schools	18
Presenting at workshops or conferences	17
University courses	8
Number of principals responding	635

Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey.

Notes: See Appendix A.2 for survey item details. Values shown indicate the average percentage an item was marked as one of the top three most frequently participated-in types of PD.

ASLP = American School Leader Panel; PD = professional development.

**Exhibit B.10.** Most common types of PD that assistant principals participate in by school level, as reported by principals with an assistant principal

PD activity	Percentage of principals		
	Elementary schools	Middle schools	High schools
District-led academies or leader development programs	65	56*	64
Assistant principal networks	62	53+	49**
Attending workshops or conferences	49	62**	61***
Mentoring and coaching	38	45	50**
Research on professional topic	18	24	19
Visits to other schools	18	17	17
Presenting at workshops or conferences	18	18	16
University courses	9	5	7
Number of principals responding	306	146	166

Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey; Common Core of Data, 2023–2024.

Notes: See Appendix A.2 for survey item details. Sample size varies based on school characteristics; see Exhibit A.1. Values shown indicate the average percentage an item was marked as one of the top three most frequently participated-in types of PD.

\* indicates significant difference compared with elementary schools,  $p < .10$ .

\*\* indicates significant difference compared with elementary schools,  $p < .05$ .

\*\*\* indicates significant difference compared with elementary schools,  $p < .01$ .

+ indicates difference compared with high schools,  $p < .10$ .

ASLP = American School Leader Panel; PD = professional development.

**Exhibit B.11.** Most common types of PD that assistant principals participate in by district size, as reported by principals with an assistant principal

PD activity	Percentage of principals		
	Small districts	Midsize districts	Large districts
District-led academies or leader development programs	56	60+	71**
Assistant principal networks	41	59***; ++	69***
Attending workshops or conferences	65	55*; +	45***
Mentoring and coaching	48	42	40
Research on professional topic	26	18*	16**
Visits to other schools	14	18	23**
Presenting at workshops or conferences	19	20+	13*
University courses	11	6*	6**
Number of principals responding	233	195	204

Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey; Common Core of Data, 2023–2024.

Notes: See Appendix A.2 for survey item details. Sample size varies based on school characteristics; see Exhibit A.1. Small districts have fewer than 5,000 students, midsize districts have 5,000 to 25,000 students, and large districts have more than 25,000 students. Values shown indicate the average percentage an item was marked as one of the top three most frequently participated-in types of PD.

\* indicates significant difference compared with small districts,  $p < .10$ .

\*\* indicates significant difference compared with small districts,  $p < .05$ .

\*\*\* indicates significant difference compared with small districts,  $p < .01$ .

+ indicates significant difference compared with large districts,  $p < .10$ .

++ indicates significant difference compared with large districts,  $p < .05$ .

ASLP = American School Leader Panel; PD = professional development.

Principals reported principal networks, workshops, and leadership development programs as their most common forms of school or district-supported PD. For example, 72 percent of principals with an assistant principal and 68 percent of principals without an assistant principal participated in principal networks in the previous year (Exhibit B.12). Because these peer-learning opportunities are a major source of professional development for school leaders, improving their quality could help strengthen leadership capacity and skills.

**Exhibit B.12.** Most common types of PD that principals report participating in

PD activity	Percentage of principals	
	Principals with an assistant principal	Principals without an assistant principal
District-led academies or leader development programs	52**	40
Principal networks	72	68
Attending workshops or conferences	59*	66
Mentoring and coaching	22	28
Research on professional topic	19	22
Visits to other schools	32	25
Presenting at workshops or conferences	25*	18
University courses	8	9
Number of principals responding	633	338

Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey.

Notes: See Appendix A.2 for survey item details. Values shown indicate the average percentage an item was marked as one of the top three most frequently participated-in types of PD. Items are listed in descending order of assistant principals' PD activities for comparison to Exhibit B.9.

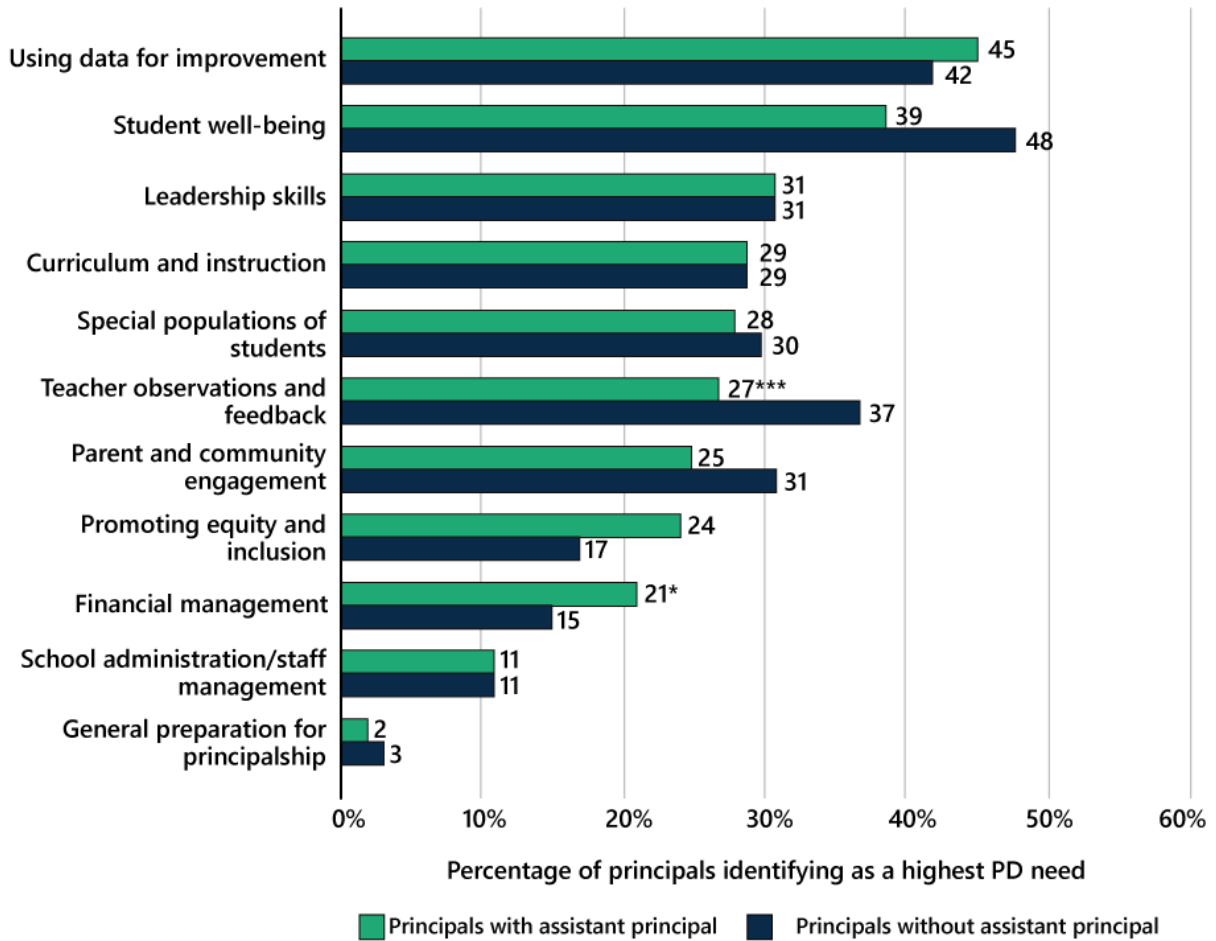
\* indicates significant difference compared with principals without an assistant principal,  $p < .10$ .

\*\* indicates significant difference compared with principals without an assistant principal,  $p < .05$ .

ASLP = American School Leader Panel; PD = professional development.

**Principals' perceptions of their own PD needs were generally similar for those with and without an assistant principal.** For example, using data for improvement and student well-being were two areas principals with and without an assistant principal saw as a high need compared with other topics (Exhibit B.13). Still, responses differed in ways that might be related to the tasks and job duties for which principals are more likely to leverage their assistant principals. This would allow principals to focus on other aspects of school leadership. For example, principals without an assistant principal reported teacher observations as a higher PD need, potentially because of a lack of other leaders in the building to carry out the task.

**Exhibit B.13.** Highest PD needs for principals with and without an assistant principal



Source: RAND 2024 Fall ASLP Omnibus Survey.

Notes: This exhibit is based on a survey of 642 principals who had at least one assistant principal at their school and 338 principals who did not have an assistant principal at their school. See Appendix A.2 for survey item details. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding. Items are listed in descending order for principals with an assistant principal.

\* indicates significant difference compared with principals without an AP,  $p < .10$ .

\*\*\* indicates significant difference compared with principals without an AP,  $p < .01$ .

ASLP = American School Leader Panel; PD = professional development.

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