The Role of Central Office Leaders in Supporting Principals as Instructional Leaders

School Administrators of Iowa - 2016

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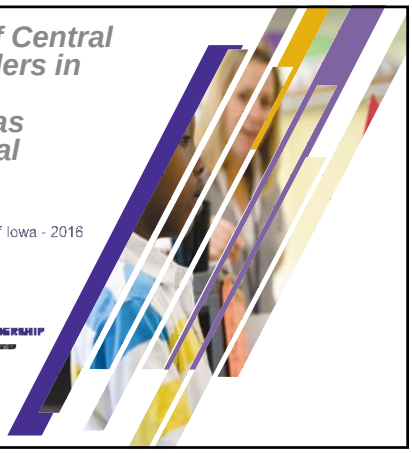
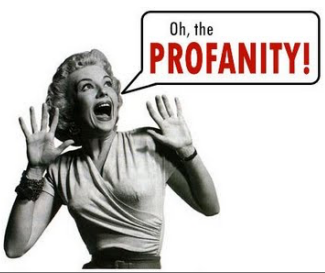


Our Mission

The Center for Educational Leadership (CEL) is a nonprofit service arm of the University of Washington College of Education dedicated to eliminating the achievement gap that continues to divide our nation's children along the lines of race, class, language and disability.

per·form·ance



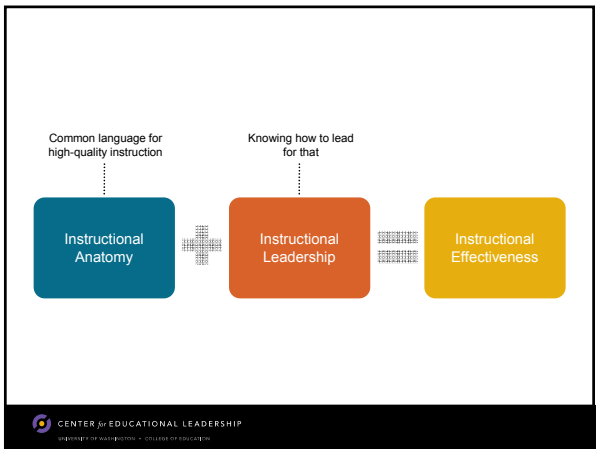
Foundational Ideas

1. If students are not learning they are not being afforded powerful learning opportunities.
2. Teaching is a highly complex and sophisticated endeavor.
3. Practice of sophisticated endeavors only improves when it is open for public scrutiny.
4. Improving practice in a culture of public scrutiny requires reciprocal accountability.
5. Reciprocal accountability implies a particular kind of leadership to improve teaching and learning.
6. Leaders cannot lead what they don't know.

Outcomes for the Session

Participants will learn:

- Research on what effective districts do to support principals as instructional leaders.
- Specific strategies for supporting principals as instructional leaders.
- How to plan next steps based on the Principal Support Framework.


Common language for high-quality instruction
Knowing how to lead for that
Instructional Anatomy
Instructional Leadership
Instructional Effectiveness
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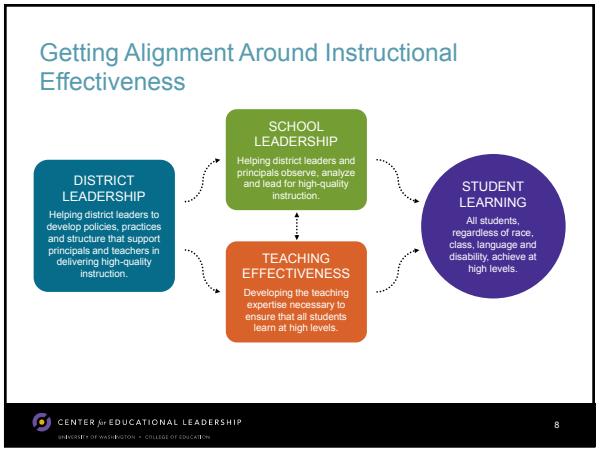
Getting Alignment Around Instructional Effectiveness
DISTRICT LEADERSHIP
Helping district leaders to develop policies, practices and structure that support principals and teachers in delivering high-quality instruction.
SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
Helping district leaders and principals observe, analyze and lead for high-quality instruction.
TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS
Developing the teaching expertise necessary to ensure that all students learn at high levels.
STUDENT LEARNING
All students, regardless of race, class, language and disability, achieve at high levels.
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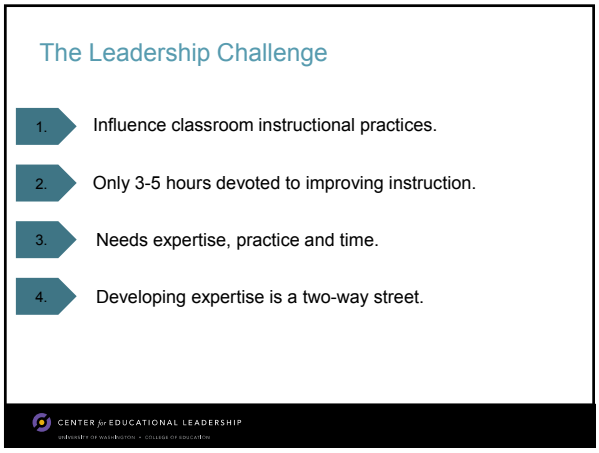
The Leadership Challenge
1. Influence classroom instructional practices.
2. Only 3-5 hours devoted to improving instruction.
3. Needs expertise, practice and time.
4. Developing expertise is a two-way street.
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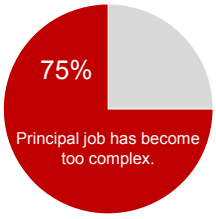
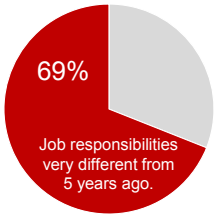
Principals surveyed in 2013:





Markow, D., Macia, L.& Lee, H. (February 2013). *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership* (ERIC Record Number: ED542202). New York, NY: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

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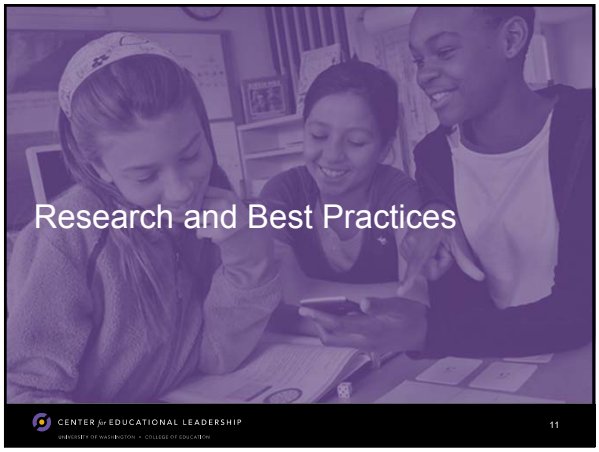

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What ideas, theories, or research do you use to drive your work supporting principals as instructional leaders?

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How we think about this work

Big Ideas

- If you have a theory of action that principal leadership matters to improve student learning
- Then you need to be ultra intentional about how to grow principal practice or you will continue to have variability in principal performance and student success.

Instructional Leader

"If you want to leverage improvement in a school system, the most critical role is the principal."

If the central office does X

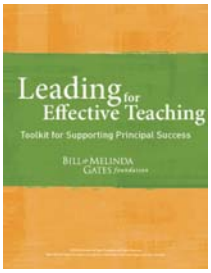
Then principals will be able to do Y

Which means teachers will do Z

Which will result in achievement for all students!

Sparks, D. (2005) Explain, inspire, lead: Interview with Noel Tichy. *Journal of Staff Development, 26*(2), 50-53.

An Example of Our Work



Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – Empowering Effective Teaching Project

11 Sites - 2 Key Questions

1. How are principals and central office leaders changing how they work to improve teaching performance?
2. What do principals and central office leaders need to know and be able to do to support the improvement of leadership and teaching performance at scale?

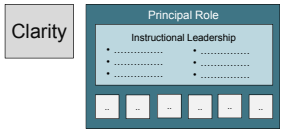
The Principal Support Framework

Action Area 1: A Shared Vision of Principals as Instructional Leaders.

Action Area 2: System of Support for Developing Principals as Instructional Leaders.

Action Area 3: Making It Possible for Principals To Be Instructional Leaders.

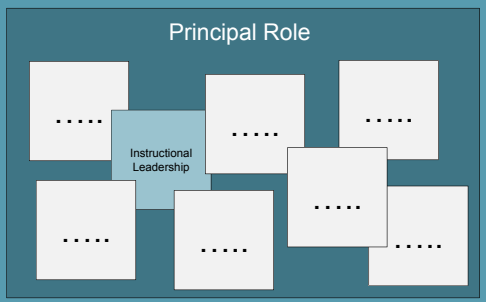
Principal Support Framework



Action Area 1 - Notice and Wonder

Working with a partner, come up **with three things** you **notice** about this action area and two things you **wonder** about it.

Action Area 1
Shared vision of principals as instructional leaders



Action Area 1

Shared vision of principals as instructional leaders

Principal Role

Instructional Leadership

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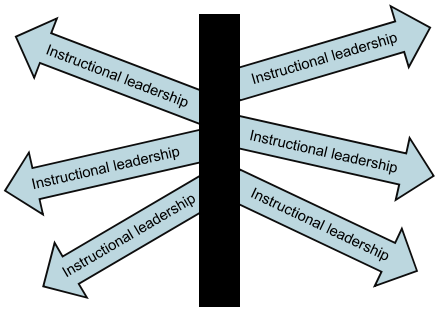
What is instructional leadership, as understood in your district?



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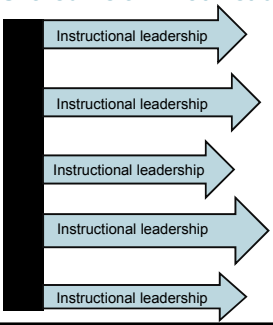
Action Area 1

Shared vision what instructional leadership is



Instructional Leadership

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Rationale for Action Area 1

Shared vision and understanding of the principal as an instructional leader.

- Clarifies principal expectations and day-to-day work as instructional leaders.
- Becomes the basis for professional learning, assessing and measuring performance.
- Drives the hiring of principal candidates.

Action Area 1 - What We Are Learning

- Evaluation frameworks are insufficient.
- Reach agreement with principals on "**POWER STANDARDS**" and let them drive:
  - Goal setting and performance improvement efforts.
  - Principal pipeline efforts.
  - Principal selection and hiring process.

What We Are Learning (cont'd)

- **Communication** in **multiple forms** is critical:
  - To the entire central office.
  - Reinforced as much as possible.

System of Support for Developing Principals as Instructional Leaders
Action Area 2
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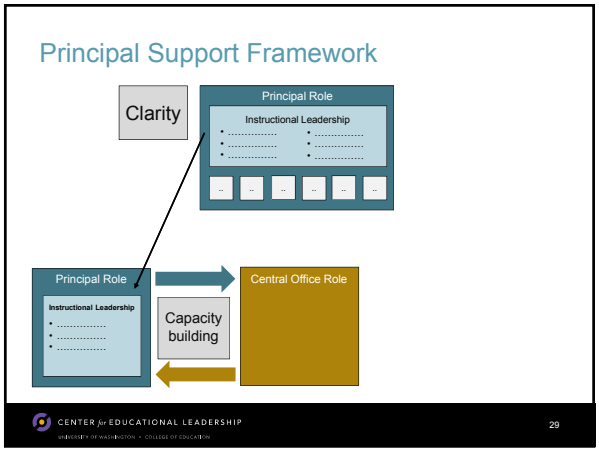
Principal Support Framework
Clarity
Principal Role
Instructional Leadership
Principal Role
Instructional Leadership
Capacity building
Central Office Role
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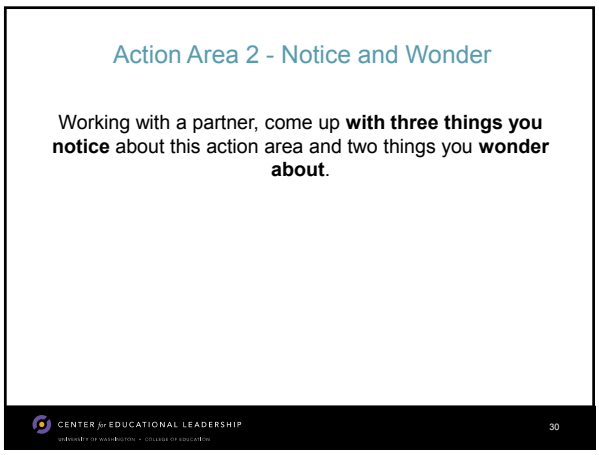
Action Area 2 - Notice and Wonder
Working with a partner, come up with three things you notice about this action area and two things you wonder about.
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Rationale for Action Area 2

- Supervision is an insufficient lever to improve practice.
- Principal professional development often outsourced, topical in nature, led by a variety of departments.
- Few intensive and intentional job-embedded opportunities to improve instructional leadership skills.
- Few formal opportunities for principals to collaborate to improve their practice.

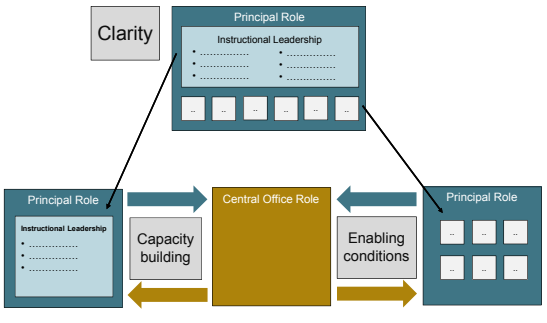
Action Area 2 - What We Are Learning

- Starts with **the right principal supervisors** who possess:
  - Deep understanding of effective **instructional practices**.
  - Deep understanding of effective **leadership practices**, especially instructional leadership and human capital management.
  - **Adult teaching and coaching skills** to help principals learn and develop; for example, working from evidence, working from problems of practice.
- Much more than a "principal supervisor initiative".

What We Are Learning, continued

- Need for principal learning systems that include:
  - Professional development
  - Coaching
  - Mentoring
  - Principal agency and collaboration

Principal Support Framework



Action Area 3 - Notice and Wonder

Working with a partner, come up **with three things you notice** about this action area and two things you **wonder about**.

Rationale for Action Area 3

- Principals need more time for instructional leadership.
- Principals don't always know what they need from the central office.
- Compliance and monitoring are not the same as a strategic partnership.
- Central office has the potential to add value to schools!

Sources of Inspiration

Practitioners
Synthesized the thinking of leaders across the country.

Education Thinkers & Researchers

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP DESIGN LAB UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

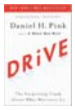
The Wallace Foundation

USHCA

CRPE REINVENTING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Organization Development & Change



Public Sector & Heath Care

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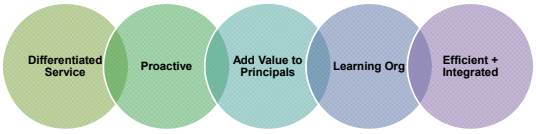
A Major Iteration of AA3



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Action Area 3 - What We Are Learning

- Empathy and responsiveness are not enough.
- Agreement on **principal role** is critical.
- Must have systems for **continuous improvement**.
- Too many central office **silos**.
- Central office staff need **professional development**.

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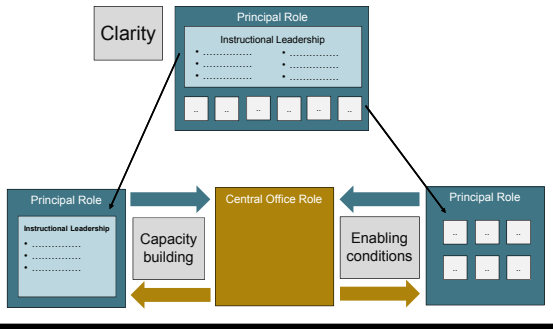
Principal Support Framework



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Evaluation

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