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

School Administrators of Iowa - 2018

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.

perform·ance

Oh, the PROFANITY!
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

Getting Alignment Around Instructional Effectiveness

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP
Helping district leaders develop policies, practices, and structure that support principals and teachers in delivering high-quality instruction.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
Helping school leaders and teachers to ensure, monitor, and lead for high-quality instruction.

TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS
Developing the teaching expertise necessary to ensure that all students learn at high levels.

STUDENT LEARNING
At students, regardless of race, class, language, and disability, achieve at high levels.

The Leadership Challenge

1. Influence classroom instructional practices.
2. Only 3-5 hours devoted to improving instruction.
4. Developing expertise is a two-way street.
Principals surveyed in 2013:

- 75% Principal job has become too complex.
- 69% Job responsibilities very different from 5 years ago.


Research and Best Practices

What ideas, theories, or research do you use to drive your work supporting principals as instructional leaders?
How we think about this work

- Reciprocal accountability
- Build expertise through teaching and coaching
- The whole central office is involved
- Engaging in joint 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!

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.

A Shared Vision of Principals as Instructional Leaders

**Action Area 1**
Principal Support Framework

Clarity

Principal Role

Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership

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

Principal Role

Instructional Leadership

What is instructional leadership, as understood in your district?

Instructional Leadership

• ………………………….
• ………………………….
• ………………………….
• ………………………….
• ………………………….

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

Central Office Role
Principal Role

Instructional Leadership

Clarity
Capacity building

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.
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

Central Office Role

Principals Role

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

Organization Development & Change

Public Sector & Health Care

A Major Iteration of AA3

Differentiated Service  Proactive  Add Value to Principals  Learning Org  Efficient + Integrated

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.