

## School Leadership

### Background

Draft

- Principals are “**second only to classroom instruction** among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.”

“Indeed, there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader. Many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst.”

*-- How Leadership Influences Student Learning, Kenneth Leithwood, et al, University of Minnesota, University of Toronto, 2004*

- “**Teacher turnover is lower** in schools led by high-quality principals.... Research further indicates that principal turnover leads to lower teacher retention and lower gains for students.”  
*-- School Leadership Interventions Under the Every Student Succeeds Act: Evidence Review, Rebecca Herman, et al, RAND, 2016*
- “Principal effectiveness is associated with greater teacher satisfaction and a lower probability that the teacher leaves the school within a year. Moreover, the positive impacts of principal effectiveness on these teacher outcomes are **even greater in disadvantaged schools.**”

-- *Can Good Principals Keep Teachers in Disadvantaged Schools? Linking Principal Effectiveness to Teacher Satisfaction and Turnover in Hard-to-Staff Environments*, Jason A. Grissom, Teachers College Record, 2011

- Schools with the most disadvantaged students tend to have **less experienced and lower-rated principals**. Principals in those schools tend to leave more frequently. (e.g, Blanchard et al. 2019).
- **Strong teachers** are more likely to stay in schools with effective principals; less effective teachers are more likely to leave ( Grissom and Bartenen 2019)

A recent large study (6 school districts) on principal pipelines finds:

- After three or more years, well-trained principals outperformed comparison schools by 6.22 percentile points in reading and 2.87 percentile points in math. These results were statistically significant and meaningful.
- Statistically significant, positive effects of the principal pipeline on achievement in elementary and middle schools and some evidence of positive effects for high schools.
- Effects on **achievement were strongest for schools in the lowest quartile** of the achievement distribution.
- The per-student costs are small relative to the student achievement benefits.

Gates, Baird, Master and Chavez-Herrerias (2019)

“We found no other comprehensive district-wide initiatives with demonstrated positive effects of this magnitude on [student] achievement,” RAND researchers say of #principalpipeline results

- Some of the fastest improving urban district (i.e, Chicago - Reardon and Hinze- Pifer 2017) , fastest improving states ( e.g. Tennessee --TDE 2018 ) , and districts with a history of high-achieving minority achievement (e.g., Charlotte-Mecklenburg) invest heavily in developing and supporting school leaders.
- Over 20 years, Chicago trained over 300 principals around “Next Generation” principles.
- Tennessee is developing regional partnerships between districts and universities to create pipelines of high-quality principals.
- In Charlotte- Mecklenburg, the policy of putting the strongest principals and teachers in front of the most disadvantaged children is called “strategic staffing.” At least 24 principals have been transferred from well-to-do schools to high-need schools.
- “Next Generation” Training for Urban Principals (UIC Model)

Heavy emphasis on instructional leadership.

Evaluating Instruction.

Data analysis.

Year-long, paid residency.

On-going mentoring, support networks (coaching for 2-3 years after licensing).

Ed.D at the end.

- Problems with traditional principal prep programs include: nonselective admissions, lots of adminitrivia, curricula that fail to take into account the needs of districts and diverse student bodies; weak connections between theory and practice; little exposure to practical use of research; faculty members with little or no experience as school leaders; and poorly designed internships; no support after licensure.

### **Sample Recommendations**

- ✓ Create a blue ribbon commission to study the desirability and feasibility of developing principal pipelines ( selection, pre-service training, in-service support) for New Jersey's urban systems modelled after the pipelines that have proven successful elsewhere (Gates, Baird, Master and Chavez-Herrerias 2019). As part of that process, sponsor a study designed to

determine how well New Jersey prepares and supports urban principals.

Consult with the Wallace Foundation on the design of the study.

- ✓ Commission a blue-ribbon committee to study New Jersey's procedures for licensing principals in light of the standards being established elsewhere.
- ✓ Increase the diversity of candidates preparing for the principalship.
- ✓ In selected former Abbott districts, convene meetings of retired principals and community leaders to discuss how principals can be better supported.
- ✓ Encourage schools of education in New Jersey to re-examine the curricula they use to train principal with an eye to better prepare them for leading schools serving urban and diverse populations.

## References

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Alyssa Blanchard, Youjin Chung, Jason Grissom and Brendan Bartanen, *Do All Students Have Access to Great Principals?*, Tennessee Education Research Alliance, 2019.

[https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/TERA/files/Principal\\_Distribution\\_Brief.pdf](https://peabody.vanderbilt.edu/TERA/files/Principal_Distribution_Brief.pdf)

Bryk, Anthony S., Penny Bender Sebring, Elaine Allensworth, Stuart Luppescu, and John Q. Easton. *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons From Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

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Reardon, Sean, Rebecca Hinze-Pifer. *Test Score Growth Among Chicago Public School Students, 2009-2014*. Stanford: Stanford Education Data Archive, 2017.

TDE – Tennessee Department of Education. “Tennessee Maintains Progress on 2017 Nation’s Report Card,” April 9, 2018. <https://www.tn.gov/education/news/2018/4/9/tennessee-maintains-progress-on-2017-nation-s-report-card.html>

## **News Reports**

["Perception Vs. Reality: Chicago Students Outperform Kids In Rest Of Illinois"](#) -

WBEZ Chicago

["Good News: Chicago Public Schools Outperform Matched Schools Across Illinois"](#)

- Diane Ravitch Blog

## **Other Resources**

The Wallace Foundation has assembled a large collection of resources on supporting school leadership at:

<https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/pages/default.aspx>

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