Perceptions of the Principal Evaluation Process and Performance Criteria: A Qualitative Study of the Challenge of Principal Evaluation

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PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL EVALUATION PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE CHALLENGE OF PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

Dissertation in Practice
by
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT
Perceptions of the Principal Evaluation Process and Performance Criteria: A Qualitative Study of the Challenge of Principal Evaluation

Dissertation in Practice by Christopher Casavant, William Collins, Erica Faginski-Stark, Jason McCandless, and Marilyn Tencza

Chair: Dr. Robert J. Starratt

Recent federal and state mandates have tasked school systems to move beyond principal evaluation as a bureaucratic function and to re-imagine it as a critical component to improve principal performance and compel school renewal. This qualitative study investigated the district leaders’ and principals’ perceptions of the performance evaluation process and criteria by which the effectiveness of principals was judged in a small, urban, New England school district.

In an effort to assist the New England School District to create a more authentic principal evaluation process, district document analysis, literature review, interview transcripts and survey data were used to make recommendations to district leaders regarding four major themes including fairness, feedback, process and critical aspects. The themes were discussed in the context of schools as complex systems, where trust and distributive leadership drive school renewal.

Emerging from the study of principal and superintendent perceptions of the process and criteria for evaluation, recommendations include: make principal evaluation an ongoing process; schedule time in each building; clearly identify criteria and supportive evidence; standardize rubrics and evaluation instrument; use evaluation instrument and feedback mechanisms that recognizes complexity of the principalship; provide meaningful feedback; and base summative evaluation on goals for personal-professional improvement and growth.
Dedication

To my incredibly supportive family: To my three sons Jacob, Matthew, and Michael who endured countless missed “Daddy days” and always offered words of support and encouragement even when I ran out of excuses as to why I needed to go to “school” on a Saturday. To my parents: Dennis and Gail along with my sister Marnie, have been an endless supply of support and guidance and who have epitomized the idiom, “patience is a virtue”. Most importantly, I would like to thank my wonderfully supportive wife Dawn who managed the chaos of three boys and two dogs while I wrote, rewrote, and wrote again. Without her unwavering support, this process would have never been possible. - Christopher Casavant

To DianeMarie, Mary Catherine, and Julianna. – William Collins

To my parents, from heaven to earth, I thank you for teaching me the value of knowledge. To my husband Tom, thank you for always believing in me and for the “can do” attitude. Your patience, love, and support throughout have been a gift. – Erica Faginski-Stark

My work is dedicated to Tamara, Ethan, Eamon, and Meredith. Your willingness to share, sacrifice and encourage made these three years of study possible. My love and thanks to you all. – Jason McCandless

To Zenon – Your patience and guidance was invaluable and I could not have accomplished this without you. 143. To Allisen, David, Michael, and Daniel ~ I love you and thank you for your support. Thank you for believing in me. I hope I am an example to my children and grandchildren of the importance of hard work. To Pat Martin: Thank you for your confidence and encouragement. - Marilyn Tencza
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Dr. Erin Nosek, a mentor and friend who walked with us each step of the way. We appreciate your willingness to travel far and wide, at any time of the day or night to support us.

Dr. Sarah Enterline, whose keen, analytical eye, kept us focused on the meaning and purpose of our study. Your questions of “So what?”, “Who cares?” kept us true to the intent of our study.

Dr. Robert Starratt, we especially wish to recognize your guidance, support, generosity, and unwavering confidence in making this accomplishment possible. Working with you in class and throughout this study has been an honor and a privilege.
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PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRINCIPAL EVALUATION PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE CHALLENGE OF PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

Executive Summary

Submitted to the New England School District

by
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Jason McCandless
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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Introduction

This study is the result of an invitation to this team to assist the superintendent of a New England school district in evaluating the principals’ perceptions of the process and performance criteria of the district’s principal evaluation system. After an intensive review of the scholarly literature on principal evaluation systems, the team focused their study around two research questions: What are the principals’ perceptions of the process and criteria for the evaluation and what are the superintendent’s perceptions of the process and criteria for the evaluation?

Guided by these research questions, the team developed a research design that involved surveying and interviewing principals in the district as well as the superintendent and assistant superintendent, and the analysis of district documents that might shed light on the practices surrounding the evaluation of principals. The interview protocols were designed to surface similarities and differences between the perceptions of the principals as a group and the district leadership as well as among the principals themselves regarding the effectiveness of the current principal evaluation system. The interview protocols focused on two aspects of the evaluation system, the process by which the evaluation was carried out and the criteria of principal effectiveness embedded in the evaluation. Based on findings from the interviews, surveys, and documents analysis, the study identified over-riding issues that appear to require attention, and will conclude with recommendations for the superintendent to consider for improving the system of principal evaluation.
Methodology

The research team conducted semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 2009). This format allowed for the team to respond to answers and to explore new ideas if they emerged. All interviews were audio recorded and took approximately 60 minutes. Two research team members were present at each interview. One conducted the interviews while the other researcher took notes. Written notations included the respondent’s gestures, the set up of the space, body language, and other aspects that would not have been captured on tape, as well as reflective notes that captured the observers’ reactions and hunches during the interview. The sample interviewed consisted of two district level leaders and ten building principals.

Procedures were taken to accurately preserve participants’ perceptions and authenticity of each interview. The research team safeguarded against misperceptions and biases by immediate review of interview notes to double-check that all the information was captured. Transcriptionists were engaged to transcribe all interviews and each completed transcription was reread by research team members. Each participant was sent a copy of the final transcription for review, edit, and return to ensure credibility. Only minor, non-substantive corrections were returned. Quotes from the transcriptions were sent to each participant who was invited to attend a validation interview with members of the research team allowing each participant the ability to exclude all or part of his/her interview from this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Padgett 1998).
Interview questions were constructed to elicit perceptions of participants of both the process and criteria of the district’s principal evaluation. Table 1 below contains examples of district personnel interview questions.

Table 1

Sample 1 of District Personnel Interview Questions

Superintendent Interview Questions: The Evaluation Process for Principals

What are the major steps followed in the current principal evaluation process? Should the sequence or the number of steps be changed? Explain why or why not. Does the evaluation require a self-evaluation to be included in the process? Should it or shouldn't it? Explain why.

Superintendent Interview Questions: The Evaluation Criteria for Principals

What are the criteria by which you evaluate principals? Do you explain to the principals what particulars are included under each criterion? Are the criteria mentioned ahead of time as examples of what criteria you expect from principals? Are principals rated on a numerical scale on each criterion, with rubrics that explain the rating?

Principal Interview Questions: The Evaluation Process

Discuss the major steps in the current evaluation process. Does the evaluation include a self-evaluation component? Should it or shouldn't it? Explain why.

Principal Interview Questions: The Evaluation Criteria for Principals

What are the criteria on which you are evaluated? Do you understand what particulars are included under each criterion? Are expectations shared ahead of time as examples of what the criteria expect from you? Are you rated on a numerical scale on each criterion, with rubrics that explain the rating?

A demographic survey of all participants was conducted. The survey provided the research team with a general understanding of the participants. Information such as age, years of service, and years as a principal provided a context from which to view the explicit responses provided by participants in their interviews.
Each interview transcript was coded by two members of the research team. When there were divergent opinions regarding an interpretation, a third research team member was consulted to reach a final decision. Pairs from the research team alternated members every third transcription to develop consistent classification of interviewee responses.

**Document Review**

The research team also performed a document review including: the evaluation instrument, the district and schools’ improvement plans, and the principals’ contract. In review of the district documents the research team found no formal policy existed on principal evaluation. District and school improvement plans articulated alignment in goals relative to school and student performance. The principals’ contract referred to the agreed upon evaluation instrument. Limited information was gleaned from the review of these documents in comparison to the interviews.

**Findings**

With the above providing an overview of the study, we now present our findings.

**Evaluation Process**

*The District Leaders’ Perceptions of the Process of Principal Evaluation*

- The evaluation process has changed each of the past four years.
- District leaders questioned how the evaluation categories reflected the actual evaluation process.
- District leaders identified a beginning goal setting, a mid-year check-in, and an end-of-year summative evaluation meeting.
• Principals were knowledgeable of performance indicators but district leaders had not explained them well.

• Every year expectations were increased.

• Walk-throughs involving conversations with principals of what they see, what they need, and how the district support them were a part of the process.

• Principals have had an opportunity to provide input in their evaluation.

• On-going conversations about the care and maintenance of the school climate have occurred between district leaders and principals.

• Specific constructive feedback about professional growth has been provided to the principals.

• Principal self-reflection about their professional growth has been a component of the process.

• District leaders hold principals to high standards with unconditional support.

• The evaluation process damaged relationships.

• Principal evaluation has improved instructional focus, data-driven decisions, and individualized professional development.

• District leaders believed that every school had an instructional focus.

• School Improvement Plans were aligned with district and principals’ goals.

• Time to conduct the evaluations was the biggest challenge.

The Principals’ Perceptions of the Process of Principal Evaluation

• The evaluation process has been consistent from year to year.

• Almost all principals identified a beginning and end-of-year evaluation meeting.
• Almost all principals had clear expectations relative to the evaluation process.
• Almost all principals did not understand how each category rating was determined.
• Some principals believe that self-evaluation was added to the process last year.
• District leaders input and feedback has been valued and respected.
• Almost all principals expressed the need for more formal and informal feedback from district leaders.
• Almost all principals said that formal evaluation feedback from multiple stakeholders was important.
• Most principals perceived the evaluation process as having neither positive nor negative impact on relationships with district leaders.
• Overall clarity and explicit feedback was needed.
• The process has been disconnected from personal-professional growth and school improvement.

Evaluation Criteria

The District Leaders’ perceptions of the Criteria of Principal Evaluation

• Evaluation criteria should have been vetted before implementation.
• State-wide assessment and student improvement were the primary criteria.
• Attendance, discipline, and dropout rate were included among evaluation criteria.
• Artifacts are included as evaluation criteria.
• Benchmark Assessments in literacy growth were criteria for elementary and middle schools.
• High standards of student growth are included as an evaluation criterion.
• Principal’s ability to make difficult decisions when needed was a criterion.
• Evidence of engagement with school, community, and families were included as criteria.
• Merit Pay was given to some principals who met the district performance criteria.
• Care and maintenance of the school was not included in evaluation of principal performance.

The Principals’ Perceptions of the Criteria of Principal Evaluation

• Almost all principals identified the results of statewide testing as the primary criterion used in their evaluation.
• Almost all principals reported a lack of supporting evidence about stakeholder relationships, yet relationships constitute over half of the evaluation categories.
• Almost all principals sought clearly defined evaluation criteria.
• Some principals were able to articulate an understanding of the district evaluation categories.
• Some or no assistance was provided for personal-professional growth and attainment of goals.
• Most evaluation categories did not encompass the scope of principal work performed.
Discussion of Major Issues Emerging from Findings

Four major themes emerged from the findings: fairness, evidence, feedback and critical aspects. These themes will be reported in two major sections: process and criteria. Process, for the purposes of this study, was defined as the actions and steps taken to complete principal evaluation. Criteria were defined as the specific standards by which principal performance will be judged.

Process

Fairness.

Principals believed that they have been treated fairly. “I haven’t had any problem with it” and “I’m not freaking out about it,” stated principals about their evaluation. They perceived the district leaders as fair and valued and respected their input and feedback. Almost all principals stated that the beginning and end-of-year evaluation meetings are consistent from year to year. Principals do not perceive that the evaluation process positively or negatively impacted their relationship with the evaluators. “I don’t really think that it [evaluation] is a critical piece of anything in this district. It is a formality. They go through it. I don’t really think that it builds or takes away from the relationship with uptown.”

Unlike the principals, district leaders questioned the fairness of the evaluations. They noted the on-going evolution of the evaluation process as well as subsequent heightened expectations as elements that would make the process unfair to principals. District leaders noted that principals have an opportunity to have a say in their evaluation; however principals stated that evaluations are completed prior to the district leaders’
receipt of principal input. The lack of principal voice may contribute to the district leaders’ perception that evaluation negatively impacts relationships. “I think it is fair…I would imagine that from the principals’ perspective that it is a lot less fair because they think that it is based on perceptions of their performance, as opposed to actual observation of their performance” stated one district leader. District level leaders affirm that relationships are the “elephant in the room”.

While the principals perceived the evaluation process as fair and the district level administrators believed that annual changes inhibited a fair evaluation of principals, the notion of trust might be considered. Given the differing perspectives of fairness, it appeared that the principals’ trust of district leadership compensated for a process that lacked the level of transparency that would result in a fair evaluation.

**Feedback.**

Formal and informal feedback emerged as important to the principal evaluation process. Principals of this district collectively identified two specific meetings that took place during the year relative to their performance. Many of the district’s principals described the process as “factory-like”. It is a “get ‘em in and get ‘em out” system much like an “assembly line”. The district’s principals were united in their reporting that the meetings yielded little in the way of useful, meaningful feedback.

District leadership described a process of occasional “walk-throughs” which inform them about student-principal relationships, teacher-principal relationships and general organization and running of the building. It was reported by the district leadership that it
was during these visits they had discussions that focused on not only the day-to-day operations of the building, but progress on their goals.

**Evidence.**

One question heard with frequency in interviews regarding evidence in the evaluative process was “how do they know this?” Nearly every principal interviewed asked this question in some form. One principal stated, “I don’t know what type of evidence is gathered.” Another gave the example of “progress toward development of positive relationships and effective communications with teachers” in the evaluation instrument and “I don’t know how they do or don’t know how I communicate with staff. I hope they don’t call random—to reach out to random, trusted staff who won’t say anything to me, I don’t know. As far as that’s concerned, I have no clue.”

The above statements encapsulate the widespread notion about evaluation evidence that one principal characterized as follows: “I know evidence is gathered. I don’t know how he gathers the evidence.” Words and phrases used by principals to describe the process for evidence collection include “vague”, “not well executed”, “random”, “sporadic”, “not well defined”, “arbitrary”, and “perfunctory.”

The district leadership’s perception aligned with the principals’ perceptions in that evidence for some aspects of the process was difficult to gather. District leadership described a process of occasional “walk-throughs”. However unlike principals, district leaders believe that these “walk-throughs” were critical to the evaluation process because they provided a glimpse of how principals responded to students and staff.
Critical aspects.

According to district leaders critical aspects of the process of evaluation in the district was shaped by the district leaders and the principals. However, they acknowledged that the process had yet to be vetted to resolve identified issues and concerns in the process. District leaders commented on two critical aspects of the evaluation process.

First, the district leaders recognized that there was insufficient time to conduct the evaluations. When asked, “What are the worst parts, if any, of the evaluation process?” one district leader responded:

Probably the worst part is we don’t have time for it, really. As we create more and more sophisticated systems, the worry, of course, is how do we actually get it all done? How do we make that, how do we embed it as part of our regular routine so that…evaluation is not just something …we insert, we check it off our check list, and then move on to the next thing…that it’s part of the way that we are in this continuous cycle of improvement.

Principals also felt that evaluation was something that just had to be done, citing “assembly line” meetings at the beginning of the year and one at the end of the year. The following response represents almost all principals’ comments: “We meet early in the school year to set goals, and then we meet later in the year to see if the goals have been met.” Principals went on to state that the end of the year meeting was not beneficial to the evaluation process because it was 10-15 minutes in length while another principal
waited outside to meet with the district leaders. As a result, no meaningful discussion that would lead to improvement occurred.

Second, the district leaders perceived that critical aspects of the evaluation helped principals’ personal-professional growth.

I think it’s [evaluation process] a combination of pat on the back and kick in the ass, and both of those things are going to encourage people to work really hard at what they do and be focused. When they do that, they’ve got to themselves seek out ways in which they can improve, and often that means networking, it means reaching out to principals who are more successful than themselves, it means engaging in professional development, it means asking us for help. So yeah, I think it causes growth.

However, more than half of the principals reported that the evaluation process did not contribute to personal-professional growth. The principals cited their own intrinsic motivation as the primary reason for improvement.

**Criteria**

**Fairness.**

Principals believed that they were and will continue to be treated fairly. Most principals stated that they know what to expect relative to the evaluation criteria. Some principals were able to point to the specific criteria contained in the evaluation instrument and felt the criteria was fair. “They are about as fair as any… if it is not reviewed consistently, you cannot imbed it into your practice.”
Other principals agreed that the criteria were fair, but the actual value that was
assigned to each measure was what they called into question. While principals felt that
they were treated fairly in the evaluation process, some called into question the
capriciousness of the criteria. One principal asserted, “it [evaluation] is fairly arbitrary”.
Other principals concurred, “I guess the question then becomes, it is not that the criteria
is fair or not fair, but where is the evidence to support the criteria?”; “I guess my question
constantly is, how do they know this? How do they know my relationships with parents,
how do they really know my relationship with students? ... I think a lot of it is arbitrary.”;
“I think the way they gather information on how you are doing…is not the most valid
because I have not ever seen the deputy superintendent in my school.” Thus many
principals did not feel the way in which evaluation criteria was measured was fair as
reflected in the statement, “I don’t even know when it happens, actually.”

District leaders perceived that from the principals’ perspective “it [evaluation] is a
lot less fair because they think that a lot of it is based on perceptions”; “It is really
historical evidence that is used. So, I think that is probably some sentiment of no one
really knows what I [principals] do”; “Unfair, ok, I am telling you that I think …we have
moved away from just saying ‘you made AYP’ or ‘you didn’t make AYP’ [and using]
AYP as a sole measure is unfair”.

**Feedback.**

Most principals did not feel that assisting with the development of the criteria by
which they were to be evaluated would be of value. In many instances, principals felt
criteria development was clearly their “bosses”’ job and “not for them” to decide. That
said, there was agreement that the current rating scale needed to be more clearly defined to accurately provide feedback on various aspects of the principalship.

Every principal interviewed reported that they were “unaware” of the evidence that was collected to inform the district leadership on principal performance in many of the categories that they were evaluated. Many of the principals reported that the evaluation criteria were “vague,” and too “general” to provide meaningful feedback. This finding coupled with a general dissatisfaction with the amount of time, data collected, and process for reporting back on specific, growth-oriented feedback resulted in principals’ perception that there was no real value to their evaluation beyond the legal requirement to get it done.

District Leaders used “artifacts of evidence” which included school-based stakeholder meeting minutes, faculty meeting minutes, and other hard evidence of community engagement to frame the specific feedback to principals. Likewise, district leaders viewed data, test scores, and other indicators of student achievement as evidence to support recommended feedback to principals. In fact, for the 2010-2011 school year, a merit pay program was instituted which was described as “thorny and not easy to navigate.” This monetary feedback on principal performance was perceived by district leaders as providing recognition not captured in the typical evaluation instrument.

Evidence.

Principals felt there was little clarity on specific criteria due to the lack of detailed indicators in the evaluation instrument. Similarly, principals believed that identifying what evidence would be used to support specific criteria was difficult. Principals
perceived that test scores and other hard data such as attendance were used to inform the evaluation. Principals also surmised, “what they [district leaders] hear” from speaking to the public was used as evidence in the evaluation of the four evaluation categories on relationships. Principals were nervous and concerned about the interpretation of data on relationships; they expressed that the least happy stakeholders were most likely to express concern to district leaders creating a skewed perception of the principal’s relationships.

Results of student scores on state-mandated testing were often used as evidence in principal evaluation. Most of the principals interviewed believed that state testing scores, practice test scores, other measures of student progress, attendance, and dropout rates did indeed constitute a measurable source of evidence. Although none of these measures were named in the actual evaluation instrument, items related to these measures certainly do appear in school improvement plans, which were featured in the evaluation criteria.

There was nothing embedded in the evaluation instrument itself which delineated what evidence about relationships would be collected. There was a prevailing notion that for some criteria (particularly interactions with parents, students, district leadership, and staff) evidence gathering consisted of noting how many phone call or e-mail complaints district leadership received about individual principals.

District leaders referred to a monthly report of 16 indicators that provided data on Benchmark Assessments, attendance, school choice changes, disciplinary data, and suspension reports that were used to assess principal performance. Anecdotal reporting from parents, teachers, and school committee members to district leadership was reported as having impacted the overall evaluation as well.
All principals were quick to state that district leaders were always a phone call or e-mail away for advice, guidance, or help. However, principals did not report frequent visits from district leadership. Nor did they perceive visits were used to gather evaluative evidence. As a result, principals again questioned where the district leaders culled their evidence from if it was not through means such as observation.

**Critical aspects.**

District leaders identified specific criteria as critical aspects used to evaluate principals. These criteria included: state standards, educational leadership, organizational management, student outcomes, outside perspective, graduation rates, attendance rates and interaction with parents and staff.

Principals identified the following criteria as critical aspects *not* used to evaluate their performance: measures taken to attain the proper services for at-risk students and families, decreasing truancy, improving graduation rates, safety, instructional leadership, teacher improvement, student achievement, and improving school climate. Both district leaders and principals shared agreement about critical aspects of a principal’s job. The differences were more in the details than the categories of evaluation. Both agreed that a need existed for an evaluation instrument that better recognizes the expansive and complex nature of the principals’ job.

**Recommendations to the New England School District Referenced to the Scholarly Literature**

Based on our findings and a review of the literature regarding principal evaluation, we present a set of recommendations for how the New England School District (NESD) may be better able to improve the efficacy and impact of its principal evaluation system.
The NESD is dedicated to the completion of principal evaluation process, as evidenced by strict adherence to an annual evaluation cycle. The mutual regard and trust that exists between principals and district leaders creates a foundation upon which the NESD can increase the meaningfulness and impact of principal evaluation as it adopts Massachusetts’ new regulation 603 CMR 35.

**Recommendation One: Make principal evaluation more of an ongoing process and less of an event.** Portin, Feldman and Knapp (2006) label principal evaluation as by and large “perfunctory” and of “limited value” (p. 2). Lashway (1998) describes the process as “bureaucratic” and “irksome” (p. 14). Principals in the NESD have validated these notions, and suggest that a more frequent visitation of the evaluation, tied to clearer criteria and better evidence gathering, would increase the value of evaluation for principals and those they serve.

**Recommendation Two: Schedule time in each building with principals to gather data and discuss their work.** Time together and coordination between principal and district level leaders are key ingredients to more effective principal evaluation (Thomas, Holdaway, & Ward, 2000; Murphy, 1985; Rhinehart & Russo, 1995). NESD principals report that building visits by district level leadership are infrequent. More district leadership time spent in the principal’s buildings will offer a better means of direct data collection, more opportunities for mentoring, and allow for more ongoing evaluative conversations.

**Recommendation Three: Clearly identify the criteria and supportive evidence used in evaluation of principals.** Standards and criteria exist for principal evaluation
(Sergiovanni, 1982; Marshall, 2010; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008; Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011). The NESD Administrator’s Evaluation Form contains performance objectives and criteria as well. Principals report, however, that they lack clarity on what exactly the criteria mean in the context of their daily work, and how evidence is gathered to support findings on the evaluation itself. The new Massachusetts’ evaluation system will provide an opportunity for the NESD district leadership and principals to collaboratively identify fine-tuned criteria within the new framework, and work to find focus areas that are most crucial to the district.

Related to a lack of clarity in what the criteria are and mean, is the lack of understanding about what constitutes evidence and how evidence is collected. Marshall (2010) states that evidence-based feedback is vital, as do Davis, Kearney, Sanders, Thomas, and Leon (2011). In the NESD, the principals’ notions of evidence gathering can be summed up in the statement of one principal, “how do they know this stuff?” Clearly, the focus of 603 CMR 35.00 (Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2011) will provide a sharper vision of what criteria principals are expected to meet, and the evidence that will be collected to support the attainment of the criteria.

**Recommendation Four: Use a standardized rubric and evaluation instruments that delineate process, evidence, employs measurable outcomes and defines performance levels.** The NESD evaluation instrument has a rating scale with five performance levels: unsatisfactory, fair, satisfactory, good, and excellent. There was
little agreement among the principals about how each performance level of the evaluation instrument is determined. This finding is consistent with other research studies that found that building-level principals’ responsibility for educational outcomes has been accompanied by little in the way of examination of the tools used to evaluate the effectiveness of principal performance (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Thomas et al., 2000; Lashway, 1998). Kim Marshall offers Marshall’s Six Domains of Principal Evaluation which include: diagnosis and planning; priority management and communication; curriculum and data; supervision and professional development; and discipline. Lashway (1998) contends, “while they [evaluation instruments] do not offer a complete solution to the evaluation dilemma, carefully chosen instruments can add depth, breadth and objectivity to principal evaluation and can promote the kind of self-reflection that fuels professional growth” (p. 14). This may offer a starting point for revising the current evaluation tool.

**Recommendation Five: Use an evaluation instrument and feedback mechanism that better recognizes the expansiveness and complexity of their jobs.** Lashway’s (1998) research found that “as key players in the school community, principals deserve accurate, relevant feedback that not only satisfies the demands of accountability but enhances their performance” (p. 14). An increasingly important area in that role of key player is in the organizational and political nature of school leadership (Sergiovanni, 1982; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008; Marshall, 2010). Many of the NESD principals reported that they do not get feedback on the summative evaluation and that many of the critical aspects of their jobs, including navigating the organizational and
political pathways unique to each building, are not reflected in either the evaluation instrument’s criteria or process.

**Recommendation Six: Provide meaningful feedback via principal evaluation to foster personal-professional growth and school renewal.** Evaluation processes should be tied to the goals for school-wide improvement and drive better teaching and learning in a school (Davis et al., 2011). Lashway (1998) states that feedback must “enhance their ( principals’) performance” (p. 14). None of the NESD principals believe that the evaluation process impacted their personal or professional development or school renewal. Researchers proposed a 360-degree multisource feedback model, where the community partakes in providing evaluative data (Berk, 2009; Dyer, 2001). Berk (2009) applied a 360-degree multisource feedback system for medical school faculty, and argues that the benefits are similarly pertinent to public education. Dyer (2001) posits, “the fundamental premise is that data gathered from multiple perspectives are more comprehensive and objective than data gathered from only one source” (p. 35). The Massachusetts evaluation regulations 603 CMR 35 adopted in June, 2011 established that effective evaluation impacts principal performance “through feedback on improvement, opportunities for professional growth, and accountability”.

**Recommendation Seven: Base summative evaluation on agreed upon goals for annual personal-professional improvement and growth.** The principals saw no relationship between their own professional goals they were annually asked to develop and the summative evaluation. Although each principal developed goals at the beginning of the year and spent time to reflect and report on their progress towards those goals, in
the end the summative evaluation was completed before the district leaders read or discussed the principals’ reflections on their progress towards the goals. Davis et al. (2011) stated that while their study found no one best way to evaluate principals, general agreement among researchers exists that evaluation processes “should be linked to the goals and processes of school-wide improvement, based upon important organizational outcomes, and should advance powerful teaching and learning” (p. 31). District leadership should strongly consider revising the evaluation process to include a review of the principal’s goals before completing the summative evaluation.
References


http://www.marshallmemo.com/articles/Prin%20Eval%20Rubrics%20Jan%202010%20.pdf


Chapter One: Overview of the Study

Introduction

A team of experienced educators involved in a doctorate-level educational leadership program at Boston College was invited to assist the superintendent of a New England School District who sought to improve the district’s principal evaluation system through evaluating the perceptions of the process and performance criteria of the district’s principal evaluation. The research team collaborated with the district and school leadership of this mid-sized urban school district in New England. Superintendents in this New England state were mandated to evaluate building principals; unfavorable evaluations could result in the removal of a poor performing principal.

The research team intended to invite one superintendent and twelve principals to participate in the study. Two principals new to the role had not previously participated in the district principal evaluation process, so they were not included in the study. The district’s deputy superintendent was found to play an integral role in the principal evaluation process, so the deputy superintendent was added. There were twelve participants in the final research study.

After an extensive review of the scholarly literature on principal evaluation systems, the team narrowed the focus of the study to include two essential research questions: 1. What were the principals’ perceptions of the process and criteria for the evaluation? 2. What were the superintendent’s perceptions of the process and criteria for the evaluation?

Guided by these research questions, the team developed a research design that involved surveying and interviewing principals in the district as well as the
superintendent and deputy superintendent. Also included in the analysis was a review of
district documents that might shed light on the practices surrounding the evaluation of
principals.

The interview protocols were designed to surface similarities and differences
between the perceptions of the principals collectively and the district leadership, as well
as among the principals themselves, regarding the effectiveness of the principal
evaluation system. As noted above, the interview protocols focused on two aspects of the
evaluation system: 1. The process by which the evaluation was carried out, and 2. The
criteria of principal effectiveness embedded in the evaluation. Based on findings from the
interviews, surveys, and document analysis, the study identified the overarching themes
and concluded with recommendations for the district leadership to consider when
revisiting the system of principal evaluation.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this action research study was to investigate the perceptions of what
the superintendent and principals considered key criteria and effective processes for the
evaluation of principals in this district. The study demonstrates a relationship between
this New England school district and the whole national and international accountability
agenda, in which the work of the principal is thought to have significant influence on the
教学 and learning quality in the school. The impetus for this research study was that
the New England School district resided in one of more than twenty-five states that
signed on to participate in the Race to the Top (United Stated Department of Education
(US DOE), 2009) fund. The Race to the Top fund emphasizes reform in attracting and
keeping great teachers and leaders in America’s classrooms. According to Goldring, Cravens, Murphy, Elliott and Carson (2009), with regard to the evaluation of principals, “when designed appropriately, executed in a proactive manner and properly implemented, [evaluation] has the power to enhance leadership quality and improve organizational performance at three levels” (p. 3). According to the authors these three levels are the individual level of practice, the level of continuous learning and development, and the level of organizational accountability.

As Stufflebeam and Nevo (1993) note in Tennessee “a number of noteworthy developments in evaluation accountability are worth mentioning and watching” (p. 32). Tennessee went on to become one of the first Race to the Top (RTTT) recipients in the nation. Virginia began revisions on a “performance appraisal process that articulates the duties and responsibilities of principals and criteria by which to judge their effectiveness” (Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), 2011, p.1; Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP), 2011). Kentucky’s Department of Education has also revised their principal evaluation system including “procedures for formative and summative evaluation and a list of performance criteria with specific standards and descriptors for each criterion” (Brown-Simms, 2010, p. 8). North Carolina schools have implemented a six step process for evaluating their school administrators. This process includes a rubric for evaluating principals as well as a goal setting form. One of the goals of this evaluation is to “serve as a guide for principals as they reflect upon and improve their effectiveness as school leaders” (Mattson Almanzán, H., Sanders, N., and Kearney, K., 2011). Additionally, the evaluation helps to guide the professional development of
principals (Mattson Almanzán et al., 2011). South Carolina’s revisions to their principal evaluation system outline important activities and steps that are essential to principal assessment. Some standards upon which principals are evaluated include: vision, instructional leadership, effective management, school climate, school and community relations, and collaboration with stakeholders (South Carolina Department of Education, 2010; Brown-Simms, 2010, p. 16).

While Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and South Carolina have engaged in efforts to improve the process and criteria for principal evaluation, so too have Connecticut, Ohio, Iowa, and Oregon. In effort to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2001), this evolutionary process reflects movement by numerous states to improve the effectiveness of their principal evaluation systems. NCLB has provided the needed impetus for states to review and revise evaluation systems.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (2008) developed the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) that contains six domains for effective principal practice. They reflect the shift in emphasis for principal evaluation from managerial to instructional leader. Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership and Education (VAL-ED) (2008) includes multiple sources of feedback from stakeholders. Many states have used these standards when designing criteria and defining the process of evaluation.

This New England school district study has the potential to significantly improve the principal evaluation process in this one school district, while at the same time possibly serve as useful to other districts seeking improvement. In March of 2010, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in Massachusetts (MA DESE), at the time one of
the contenders for Race to the Top (RTTT) funds, commented on the scarcity of well-
conceived assessment processes for principal evaluation. In its call for improvement in its
Draft Summary for Public Comment on Massachusetts’ Race to the Top Proposal, MA
DESE stated the need to “provide effective support to teachers and principals in the form
of high-quality professional development and measure the effectiveness of that
professional development” (2010, p. 1). On June 28, 2011, the MA DESE accepted and
passed the Final Regulations of Evaluation of Educators outlining assessment processes
for both teachers and principals.

Moore (2009) points out that the complexity of the principalship has increased
enormously over the past twenty years. Principal evaluation is generally not tailored to
the particular challenges and advantages of the school district. Moore (2009) states,
“although today’s principals are juggling more responsibilities than ever before, not much
has changed in either the development or evaluation of school administration in the past
century” (p. 38). District characteristics should be taken into consideration as a part of a
formal principal evaluation system, as many variables influencing student achievement
are out of the principal’s control. Coleman (1966) documented variables such as high
incidences of children who do not speak English, family socio-economic status and
family dynamics that have a deep impact on student achievement. Portin, Feldman, and
Knapp’s (2006) research found that “principals view performance evaluation as
perfunctory, having limited value for feedback, professional development, or
accountability to school improvement” (p. 2).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) illustrates the federal government’s
belief that principals matter through its commitment to hold school officials (i.e. principals) accountable for student achievement through a series of corrective actions and/or restructuring requirements. Among the “Corrective Actions” are “replacing the school staff who are deemed relevant to the school not making adequate yearly progress,” and “significantly reduc[ing] management authority at the school” (MA DESE, 2005).

It is clear that when NCLB refers to “replacing the school staff who are relevant to the failure to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) and reducing management authority” (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001, 115 STAT. 1484 PUBLIC LAW 107–110—JAN. 8, 2002) they are referencing not only teachers but principals, too. The language related to “restructuring” in regards to the replacement of school staff specifically states “this may include the principal” (MA DESE 2005, p. 7). Restructuring allows for the operation of chronically underperforming schools to be turned over to state control or even to a contracted private management company to assume operational leadership. The solution for addressing failing schools seems to focus on reduction or outright elimination of local school-based management authority with attention on replacing principals, who are the least protected employees because they are not sheltered by union agreements.

**Research Design and Questions**

The research design corresponds to a case study. It involved surveying and interviewing principals and the superintendent. The interview protocols were designed to surface similarities and differences between the perceptions of the principals as a group and the superintendent regarding the effectiveness of the current principal evaluation system. An analysis of district documents was conducted in the hopes it might shed light
on the practices surrounding the evaluation of principals.

This study sought to address four research issues: 1. The superintendent’s perception of the evaluation process for principals; 2. The superintendent’s perception of the evaluation criteria for principals; 3. The principals’ perceptions of the evaluation process for principals; and 4. The principals’ perceptions of the evaluation criteria for principals. Demographic data for the superintendent and principals was be collected from the principals and superintendent via an on-line survey tool to further analyze emergent thematic trends.

**Interview protocol.**

Prior to interviewing the participants in the school district, the interview protocol was pilot tested using a convenience sample of local principals and district leaders from districts where the researchers work. These questions were pilot tested in interviews with an elementary school principal, a secondary school principal, and a district level leader. A pair of researchers conducted each pilot interview. Revisions were made to the protocol, as necessary, following the pilot interviews. The final protocol was used during participant interviews to capture perception of principal evaluation. Data collected from participant interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Once completed, each interview was transcribed by either a research team member or an employed transcriptionist. All transcriptions were re-read by the research team members who participated in the interview to ensure all data was captured and then read again by all research team members. Once complete, three member checks with the participants were conducted: first, the full transcript was sent to each participant with an
opportunity to redact information that did not reflect their sentiments, second, direct quotes used in the research were provided to participants again with an opportunity to redact information, and finally, a meeting was held for all participants to attend to ask questions about the data and the research project.

Finally, the transcribed interviews were read again for major themes to establish a “start list” for coding. The start list was then refined into the creation of a master list of codes. Definitions for each code were agreed upon by the all research team members. In pairs of two, research team members hand-coded each interview based on the master list of codes. If there was disagreement in coding data a third team member reviewed the data and a determination of a code was reached. Codes were revised if they were unclear or too broad. When codes were finalized, the codes and direct quotes were entered into NVivo software to facilitate structure and organization of the data. Codes that reached a saturation point yielded the findings of our research.

Field notes.

The researchers used field notes after interviewing the principals and superintendent. Field notes provided immediate perceptions and hypothesis and enabled deeper insights into the data source. Capturing body language, tone, and expressions provided the researchers with deeper understanding of the information.

Sample and participant selection.

The research team employed a sample of the whole (Merriam, 2009) due to the manageable size of the district’s administrative team and the number of principals in the sample.
Limitations of the Study

Sample size.

The target sample size for this study was twelve. This was a relatively small target sample by research standards. As a result, the findings in this New England school district cannot support broad generalizations regarding principal evaluation in the United States and beyond.

Possible bias or distortion.

It is plausible, despite the research team’s effort to convey neither positive nor negative regard for the evaluation system during the semi-structured interviews, that the district leaders or principals interpreted the interviewing pair of researchers to possess preconceived negative notions about existing evaluation process and or criteria. This is especially plausible because the superintendent invited the team of researchers to examine the evaluation system in an effort to improve the district’s principal evaluation system.

Participants could conceivably respond with what they believed the interviewers and their superintendent were predisposed to hear, instead of providing answers that reflected the reality of the principal evaluation process. This occurrence could have limited the accuracy with which the research team could capture the district leaders’ and principals’ genuine perceptions of the evaluation process. Pilot interviews were conducted in an effort to minimize contention in final interview questions and protocols.

Internal bias.

Each member of the research team held or had previously held the position of
building principal. One member of the research team was a sitting superintendent. The members of the research team recognized that consciously or subconsciously their own perceptions and feelings about principal evaluation could influence data collection and analysis of the findings.

The research methodology and data gathering procedures were designed with an eye to successfully counter internal biases. By being openly cognizant of the potential influences upon the research team whose members perform the very duties being evaluated in the evaluation study, the team hoped to counter any preconceived notions about the principal evaluation process and criteria and reach objective conclusions.

**Participant perceptions.**

Another limitation to this study is its focus on the perceptions of district leaders and principals. The possibility exists that the perceptions in this New England district are specific to those participants and offer limited generalization.

**Overview of Study**

Chapter One presents the reader with a brief overview of the research study and the research questions that guided the work of the research team. An overview of chapters two through five is outlined below.

Chapter Two presents a review of recent literature on principal as instructional leader, the process for principal evaluation and the principal evaluation criteria itself.

Chapter Three presents the research design of the study and methodology for collecting, analyzing, and reporting the appropriate data. This chapter includes an examination of the research questions and the sample. It provides an explanation and
rationale for the methods of data gathering and analysis used in the study. Also included are descriptions of the pilot interview, the final interview protocols, a description of coding, and the format for presenting the collected data.

Chapter Four presents the findings through district leadership and principal interviews. Document analysis is discussed in light of significant research within the previous literature review as well as in additional new research literature suggested by the findings.

The fifth and final chapter presents conclusions and recommendations for the superintendent of the school district. It also presents implications for future principal evaluation research. The significance of this study of a New England school district appears inseparable from the larger context of national and international school accountability agenda.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

Chapter Two examines the literature relevant to the study’s guiding research questions. This review is organized around three major themes: 1. principal as instructional leader, 2. processes for principal evaluation, and 3. criteria for principal evaluation. The theme of principal as instructional leader was chosen because recent accountability efforts have found that principal leadership is second only to teacher quality in influencing student achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Glasman & Heck, 2003; Heck & Marcoulides, 1996). The themes of principal evaluation process and criteria were chosen based on initial conversations with the superintendent of the New England school district. The research team was asked to study the perceptions of the principals regarding the process and criteria of the existing evaluation system. Amsterdam, Johnson, Monrad, and Tonnsen (2003) wrote that clearly defined criteria “contribute to fair and valid decisions in the evaluation of principal job performance” (p. 222). The research suggests that clearly defined process and criteria for evaluating principals as effective instructional leaders are closely connected.

Section I: Principal as instructional leader

The review of educational literature substantiates the notion that principals are vital to schools and to students and staff. However, the nature of the position is changing. The focus on the principal’s primary role as school manager has been eclipsed by the emerging role as the instructional leader responsible for improving teaching and learning in schools. MacNeil and Yelvington (2005) observed, “Principals are no longer strictly
managers; they are expected to be leaders. Leaders that can take their school to a higher level of academic achievement, where all students are successful learners and all teachers engage their students in learning” (p. 1).

Hattie (2009) identifies two major forms of leadership in which principals engage: instructional leadership and transformational leadership. Hattie (2009) defines instructional leadership as those activities that are more managerial in nature, such as keeping the school free from distraction, creating and publicizing clear learning objectives, and setting clear and high expectations for both teachers and students. He defines transformational leadership as the activities in which principals work to “engage with their teaching staff in ways that inspire them to new levels of energy, commitment and moral purpose such that they work collaboratively to overcome challenges and reach ambitious goals” (p. 83). Hattie (2009) believes that principal behaviors related to instructional leadership have a greater effect on student achievement than behaviors related to transformational leadership. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) refute the idea that behaviors associated with Hattie’s definition of instructional leadership bear the greatest effect on student outcomes. Robinson et al. hold that more transformational-based skills are vital to improve the quality of teaching and learning within a school.

Stufflebeam and Nevo (1993) note that “the quality of leadership provided by school principals significantly influences the quality of schools” (p. 24). Principals are charged with creating an organizational environment conducive to learning, which involves an expansive number of duties. The principalship often involves acting as school ombudsman with parents, community members, students, and teachers. Likewise, many
principals are expected to supervise or attend not only daily activities, but also extra-
curricular activities. Principals are expected to be great communicators, a presence in
their school, and in their community. Principals are expected to be experts in curriculum
and pedagogy, in evaluation of teachers, and in the nuances of adult professional
development (Stufflebeam & Nevo, 1993). When speaking about teaching practices that
change the school as an organization, Elmore (1992) states that “it is patently foolish to
expect individual teachers to be able to learn and apply the ideas of current research on
teaching by themselves” (p. 46).

Kempher and Cooper (2002), in their study of state-mandated principal evaluation
programs in the north central states, discussed an evaluation dilemma: “how do we define
the all-important qualities we seek in our principals? Moreover, if we can define these
qualities how do we then evaluate them?” (p. 33). Kempher and Cooper (2002) saw this
as a dilemma because principals have to be “all things to all people” and the principal’s
job has become so much more complex in recent years; principals work with everyone
from the students to the school board president.

A 1999 study by Blasé and Blasé identified “five primary talking strategies” (p.
359) used by effective leaders with teachers to promote reflection. The talking strategies
include, “(a) making suggestions, (b) giving feedback, (c) modeling, (d) using inquiry
and soliciting advice and opinions, and (e) giving praise” (p. 359). Blasé and Blasé
(1999) found that as a result of these strategies, teachers reported increased reflective
behavior and self-esteem. The promotion of professional growth was the second key
theme among teachers as they defined what made instructional leaders effective.
According to teachers, effective instructional leaders used six teacher
development strategies: (a) emphasizing the study of teaching and learning; (b)
supporting collaboration efforts among educators; (c) developing coaching
relationships among educators; (d) encouraging and supporting redesign of
programs; and (f) implementing action research to inform instructional decision

The principalship is where the locus of control resides in school systems. Based on
the current research (Goldring, Cravens, Murphy, Elliott & Carson, 2009; Moore, 2005),
it can be inferred that because principals and principal leadership matter to the success
and/or failure of public school children, the effective and meaningful evaluation of
principals also matters. According to Lashway (1998), “a laissez-faire approach to
evaluation shortchanges everyone. As key players in the school community, principals
deserve accurate, relevant feedback that not only satisfies the demands of accountability
but enhances their performance” (p. 14). A principal evaluation tool is defined by
Lashway (1998) as an assessment instrument, which “is any systematic means of
generating tangible information about leadership qualities” (p. 14).

Normore (2004) sought to “explore and describe the school administrator appraisal
process currently implemented in one northeastern Canadian school district” (p. 284).
Normore’s (2004) study concluded that further research is required on contemporary
models of performance appraisal systems of school administrators to determine their
effect on student achievement and on the level of principal effectiveness in schools today.
Normore’s (2004) research offers insight into the process and criteria of evaluation and the role each has in improving principal performance.

Thomas, Holdaway, and Ward (2000) studied the policies and practices of principal evaluation across the province of Alberta and concluded, “In the current climate, which emphasizes accountability and school effectiveness, school systems must pay careful attention to the evaluation of principals” (p. 235). Teachers cannot bring about the systemic change by themselves. Marshall (2010) states, “the kindest thing a supervisor can do for an underperforming principal is give candid, evidence-based feedback and robust follow-up support” (p. 1). Stufflebeam and Nevo also (1993) argue that “sound evaluations of the aptitudes, proficiencies, performance, and special achievements not only protect the public from poor school leadership but also help competent and dedicated principals increasingly to improve school-based teaching and learning” (p. 24-25).

The balance between tactical and strategic leadership is how Sergiovanni (1982) outlined the role of an effective leader in his Ten Principles of Quality Leadership (10-P model). Sergiovanni’s (1982) 10-P model of quality leadership includes: prerequisites; perspective; principles; platform; politics; purposing; planning; persisting; peopling; and patriotism (p. 331). “The ten principles together suggest a climate and commitment to work that goes well beyond mere competence and satisfactory performance” (Sergiovanni, 1982, p. 323). Prerequisites are considered a tactical requirement, while the other nine fall into the strategic category of quality leadership. Tactical leadership is the day-to-day decisions one makes that result in the strategic leadership, which is the overall
long-term goal. “Quality in leadership requires that balanced attention be given to both tactics and strategy” (Sergiovanni, 1982, p. 330).

If it is important to study the means by which principals are evaluated and the criteria upon which principal performance is judged, then what must first be true is that the work of principals matters in the academic life and achievement of students and schools. Duignan (2009a) highlights the work of Duignan, 2009b; Mulford, Mulford, Sillins and Leithwood, 2006; and Leithwood & Riehl, 2003 which supports the claim that administrators, like teachers, have overlapping fields of influence and it is through these that they create the conditions for learning that positively influence teachers, teaching, and student learning. By using these “influences” effectively, educational leaders can not only positively influence teachers and their instruction but student learning as well (Duignan, 2009b; Mulford et al., 2006). Like Mulford et al. (2006), Duignan (2009a) maintains that “school leadership is second only to teaching in influencing what students learn at school” (p. 3).

It has become more apparent over the past several decades that principals impact the most important factor for schools, which is student academic achievement. Hattie’s (2009) analysis suggest that principals’ effect on student learning outcomes reach into what he defines as the range of “teacher effects” (p. 83) on learning, or the range that strongly suggests importance in student achievement.

Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) assert that principals have little more than indirect or secondary effects on student achievement in secondary school students. While Witziers et al. did confirm a relationship between school leadership and student
achievement in primary schools, they suggest that perhaps better measures are needed to more genuinely determine the degree to which principals impact student achievement. Robinson and Timperley (2007) posit that while teachers have a stronger, direct effect on student outcomes, and that the effects of principals are secondary, principals do have direct effect because principals impact the instruction and improvements that teachers make.

Hallinger and Heck (1998) engage the notion of what they refer to as the “mediated effects model,” (p. 167) in which school leaders have positive effects on student outcomes, but do so by indirect pathways. Hallinger and Heck (1998) offer another model for describing the effect of principals; they call it the “reciprocal effect” (p. 168), in which the leader creates change over time based on specific context, gathering feedback, cycling back to change and feedback gathering. As with many researchers in this area (Leithwood, 1994; Robinson and Timperly, 2003; Hattie, 2009), Hallinger and Heck (1998) identify the principal’s role in “framing, conveying and sustaining the school’s purposes and goals” (p. 171) as vital in the sphere of indirect influence.

When considering teachers’ perspectives on effective leadership, Blasé (1987) identifies two dimensions of leadership - task relevant competencies and consideration-related factors. Blasé’s (1987) nine “task-related factors” of effective principals are: accessibility; consistency; knowledge; clear/reasonable expectations; decisiveness; goals/direction; follow through; time management; and problem solving orientation.

Blasé’s (1987) five consideration-related factors are: support in confrontations/conflicts; participation/consultation; fairness/equitability; recognition, praise and reward; and
willingness to delegate authority. The consideration-related factors are associated with teachers’ social-emotion needs, perspectives, feelings, and expectations. Teachers see effective school leaders as those “that serve to recognize people and enhance their work satisfaction and self-esteem” (p. 594) making a significant difference that feeds teachers’ desire to go the extra mile, engage in new practices, and embrace the school community in a positive way.

The literature suggests that setting the direction, or what is more commonly referred to as articulating the mission, has the most profound impact on an organization (Leithwood et al., 2004). The administrator (principal or superintendent) is responsible for setting the organizational/school’s performance expectations. A byproduct of a clear and concise “direction” is that teachers and students have a sense of their work, which enables them to find a sense of identity and a shared organizational purpose (Leithwood et al., 2004). This means students will understand and be able to internalize their responsibilities (both curricular and social), which will dramatically increase their potential for achievement. Supporting teachers as learners, allowing them to address emergent instructional needs and “working as a team to plan, implement and evaluate” helped teachers to feel “on-track” and to “stay on-target” (Blasé and Blasé 1999, p. 364).

Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) suggest that successful leadership plays a significant but often-times unheralded role in the sustained improvement of student learning. Research by Creemers and Reezigt (1996) claims that among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn, leadership is second only to classroom instruction. Leithwood et al. (2004) identify three basic
administrative practices that are considered the foundation to successful leadership practices: setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization.

Initiatives such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 Educational Leadership Policy Standards, and the New Leaders for New Schools indicate that instructional leadership is important. In a New Leaders for New Schools analysis (2010), researchers assert that nearly 60% of a school’s impact on student achievement lies with principal and teacher effectiveness. Several other studies concluded that after teachers, principals had the greatest influence on student achievement (Bloom, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Glasman & Heck, 2003; Heck & Marcoulides, 1996). Given the notion that even a single teacher can have a deep impact on student achievement, both positively and negatively, the most effective schools have highly effective teachers across the entire school, an effect that lies largely with the work of the principal.

Murphy (2005) sees the history of the development of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Educational Policy Standards, developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Policy Board on Educational Administration, as a need to move beyond viewing the work of the school principal through a managerial lens. The attention paid to the work that has informed the Standards and the Policy Standards indicates that, in the eyes of the ISLLC, the principalship constitutes important work. Principals play a key role, whether their effects are direct or indirect, upon the academic life and achievement of schools and students.

Research over the past twenty years (Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger, 2003) suggests
that the principalship is a key to school quality and school improvement. The principal is seen as a vital participant in the life of school, teachers, and students. If principals and the role they play are crucial, then so too are the process and evaluation criteria by which their effectiveness is measured.

As a state participating in the federal Race to the Top (2009) fund, Massachusetts has adopted a new process and a set of criteria for evaluating educators, including principals. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Regulation on the Evaluation of Educators, 603 CMR. 35.00 (MA DESE, 2011) contains “standards and indicators of effective administrative leadership” as a central piece of the new regulations. The new Massachusetts regulations include standards addressing curriculum, instruction, and assessment; management and operations; family and community engagement; and professional culture. These standards and their indicators are indicative of not only the comprehensiveness of the work, but of the criteria the Commonwealth values, the processes it believes in, and the importance of the principalship in general.

Section II: Processes for principal evaluation

The research regarding what constitutes an effective process for principal evaluation is limited. Ginsberg and Thompson (1990) argue “that the lack of a research base leaves the field short on empirically-supported solutions for solving principal evaluation problems and makes it a formidable task for those in search of an appropriate means of evaluating principals” (p. 67). The Wallace Foundation commissioned Portin et al. (2009) to prepare a report on the effectiveness of urban school leaders. The report
found that “while we know a great deal about what it takes to lead the learning work of schools, education has been slower than many other fields in developing a widely adopted well-crafted, reliable way to assess the performance of its leaders” (Portin et al., 2009, p. 1). Glassman and Heck (1992) argue that “one recent result of the increasing awareness of evaluation as a tool to promote educational accountability has been the attempt to synthesize efforts in the area of principal evaluation. Yet, to date, few empirical studies on systematic evaluation of principals exist” (p. 15). Kearney, Sanders, Thomas, and Leon (2011) state that “rigorous empirical evidence regarding best practices in principal evaluation is extremely thin. As a result, it is difficult to assess the effects of evaluation on important school outcomes” (p. 35), such as student achievement and teacher performance. Although the research is limited in regard to what an effective research-based principal evaluation looks like, Ginsberg and Berry (1990) found that there is no shortage of principal evaluations systems. However, the report cites little systematic research to recommend one system over another. Finally, Condon and Clifford (2010) report that current evaluation processes have little consistency and varying degrees of rigor across districts.

The increased attention on improving the leadership of the school principal is a direct result of state and federal mandates that every child in every school succeed as a learner (Portin et al., 2009). Given that charge, researchers are starting to turn their attention to principal evaluation models that benefit both the leader and those whom the leader affects (Portin et al., 2009).
The method of evaluation can include various criteria imbedded within the process. One criterion included in a more powerful evaluation is collaboratively designing and implementing both the evaluation process and instrument with principals (Clifford and Ross, 2011). In the new Massachusetts regulations, collaboration is primary to the process (MA DESE, 2011). Amsterdam et al., (2003) present evidence from a substantial body of literature that supports the notion of a collaborative approach to principal evaluations by engaging a group of stakeholders to be active in the implementation of this evaluation system. Amsterdam et al. (2003) cite two instances - Brown, Irby, and Newmeyer (1998) and the Joint Committee on Standards of Educational Evaluations (JCSEE) - that speak to the importance of stakeholder collaboration in the evaluation process.

Brown et al. (1998) support collaboration as part of the process via the Administrative Portfolio Appraisal System (APAS), which is based on the assumption that principals should participate in the development of their evaluation systems. Amsterdam et al. (2003) “describe the collaborative development of district standards/criteria and accompanying rubrics for the review of principal performance” (p. 223) to be an integral component in principal evaluation. Likewise, research has repeatedly identified that processes which include goals developed cooperatively between the principal and the superintendent are considered important in the evaluation process (Davis, Kearney, Sanders, Thomas & Leon, 2011).

The Joint Committee on Standards of Educational Evaluations (JCSEE) (1988) “takes the position that stakeholder’s collaboration benefits those who will be affected by
the evaluation system and the assessment system itself” (Amsterdam et al., 2003, p. 223). The JCSEE states that technical accuracy of evaluation decisions is improved through the involvement of these groups in determining and refining its purpose, evaluation criteria, instrumentation, and procedures for collecting information (Amsterdam et al., 2003).

More and more refined research needs to be done to identify the most beneficial and legitimate means of evaluating school principals (Clifford & Ross, 2011). Much of the preceding discussion has focused on the challenges of principal evaluative processes. Some common themes emerge, however, among researchers about what may constitute the positive aspects of the process. Davis et al. (2011) analyze the evaluation process using several lenses, including: sources of feedback; ways of collecting evidence; and structure of evaluation processes and procedures (Davis et al., 2011, p. 29).

Davis et al. (2011) identify the importance of involvement from a variety of stakeholders in the development and implementation of the evaluation process. Lashway (2003) identifies the principal as a key stakeholder. Murphy and Pimentel (1996) point to the usefulness of parent, student and teacher input in building principal evaluations (as well as using surveys as evidence gathering devices) as central to refocusing principals attention from “pleasing central office personnel” (p. 78) to actual customer satisfaction. Additionally, Murphy (1985) suggests that “many successful school districts promote tighter coordination between district and site administrative staff” (p. 82) in the context of evaluative process.

The means of collecting evidence to inform principal evaluation can and should vary widely (Davis et al, 2011). As mentioned above, survey data from key stakeholders is one
means of evidence collection (Murphy, 1985). Principal portfolios (Brown et al, 1998; Russo, 2004), direct observations (both scheduled and unscheduled) by trained central office staff (Rhinehart and Russo, 1995) and self-evaluations (Peterson, 1991) all comprise means of valid and reliable data collection (Davis et al, 2011).

Structurally, the evaluation process should include explicit performance criteria (Rhinehart & Russo, 1995). Ediger (1999) claims that the assessment process for principals must be valid; harmonize with vital objectives; be utilitarian in terms of relevance to work of the principal; be effective in the process’ ability to emphasize good human relations; recognize accomplishments; and develop feelings of belonging. Milanowski, Kimball and Pautsch (2008) found that principals reported the desire for the process to be sensitive to the time needed to prepare for the process and that the demands of the process are worth it in terms of professional growth. Davis et al. (2011) state that while their study found no single best way to evaluate principals, general agreement among researchers exists that evaluation processes “should be linked to the goals and processes of school-wide improvement, based upon important organizational outcomes, and should advance powerful teaching and learning” (p. 31).

On June 28, 2011 Massachusetts adopted the Final Regulations on Evaluation of Educators. Since Massachusetts is the most recent state to adopt a new evaluation model, it will serve as a useful model that may be followed in other New England states. Massachusetts, driven by the federal Race to the Top (RTTT) fund, has clearly articulated this idea of a collaborative process. In 603 CMR 35.00, Massachusetts designed a process to involve stakeholders in an effort to create an evaluation process for principals that
includes representation of all stakeholders. Specifically, the Family and Community Engagement standard “promotes the learning and growth of all students and the success of all staff through effective partnerships with families, community organizations, and other stakeholders that support the mission of the school and district” (MA DESE 603 CMR 35, 2011).

School committees are given the opportunity to “enhance professionalism and accountability for teachers and administrators” and “establish a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process for teachers and administrators” (MA DESE 603 CMR 35, 2011). The process must reflect the promotion of “student learning, growth, and achievement” (MA DESE 603 CMR 35, 2011) “through feedback on improvement, opportunities for professional growth, and accountability” (MA DESE 603 CMR 35, 2011). Facts for decisions regarding personnel must also be evident in the process.

An integral component of the Commonwealth’s evaluation process is annual educator self-reflection and self-assessment. In these reflections and self-assessments, administrators will be expected to show evidence of student learning, growth, and achievement. It is anticipated that administrators will be able to evidence student achievement through grade level assessments, building wide assessments, and/or other defined means. Goal setting and the development of an Educator Plan will be expected. While setting goals is common, the idea of a clear plan with measurable goals and outcomes for all administrators is no longer just the ideal; it is now an expectation by which all administrators must be evaluated in the new evaluation framework (MA DESE, 603 CMR 35, 2011).
The Massachusetts Regulations for Evaluation of Educators (2011) enter the educational landscape in a time when most evaluation systems are centered on performance criteria rather than outcomes; are loosely coupled to professional standards; use various methods for gathering and analyzing principal performance; are applied unevenly; and are lacking in reliability or validity (Davis, et al., 2011). Thomas, Holdaway and Ward (2000) found that superintendents saw principal evaluation as more meaningful than the principals, and that there was a great deal of variation in the purposes and practices of evaluating principals. Similarly, Harrison and Peterson (1986) found that the perceptions of principals regarding the usefulness of their evaluation was less favorable than the perceptions of superintendents, and that principals reported less clarity on processes and procedures used to evaluate them than did their evaluators.

Section III: Criteria for principal evaluation

Our review of the literature indicates that while there is much written about administrator evaluation and its potential as a tool in the growth and professional development of a principal, evaluation remains underutilized. Murphy (2005) speaks to how the current approaches for evaluation of school administration were developed “almost entirely on a two-layered foundation built up during the 19th century” (p. 156). These two foundations were borrowed from the concepts of private sector management and behavioral science theories. Section II outlines current criteria for consideration when developing principal evaluation. These criteria are described by several terms: standards; task-related factors; consideration-related factors; talking strategies; and responsibilities and practices (Blasé and Blasé, 1999; Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Little consistency exists
in regard to the established terminology for principal evaluation.

Lashway’s (1998) research found that the “evaluation of principals often has been an afterthought, consisting of little more than bland checklists or off-handed conversations. In many districts evaluation is treated more as an irksome bureaucratic requirement than as a vital part of the self-renewal process” (p. 14). Stufflebeam and Nevo (1993) found that approximately one quarter of all states do not even require some form of principal evaluation. Thomas et al. (2000) stated that even when principal evaluation policies and practices are “carefully enunciated in school systems, human judgment is heavily involved” (p. 235). Stufflebeam and Nevo (1993) wrote that school districts “seize on standardized instruments and use them as the measure of principal performance even though they are not sensitive to the particulars of a given principal’s job in a given year” (p. 33). The lack of agreement about the criteria for principal evaluation permeates the literature.

The de facto national standards for principal evaluation come from the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) (2008). Murphy (2005) called the ISLLC standards “the most significant reshaping initiative afoot in the profession during this time” of “a post-theory era” and “post-industrial world” (p. 154). ISLLC offers a national standard with their 2008 Educational Leadership Policy Standards. The Educational Leadership Policy Standards cite six non-binding standards for educational leaders. The six ISSLC standards outline the expected role of the educational leader and intended impact on all students.
The ISLLC standards are:

**Standard 1:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

**Standard 2:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

**Standard 3:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

**Standard 4:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

**Standard 5:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

**Standard 6:** A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts appears to have used the ISLLC standards to frame the state’s thinking around principal evaluations. There are similarities between the language and proposed expectations regarding the behaviors to be exemplified by building principals. Massachusetts has identified four standards: curriculum, instruction
and assessment; management operations; family and community engagement; and
professional culture.

The passage of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 (MERA) decidedly
shifted the administrative responsibilities for student achievement away from
superintendents and school committees and onto principals. This shift to a site-based
leadership approach also brought with it the elimination of principal tenure and collective
bargaining rights, making them more vulnerable to the will of their respective
superintendents. This legislative change made it decidedly easier for superintendents to
remove principals who they deemed underperforming or undesirable.

Since MERA, more quantifiable means have evolved for determining the quality of
individual schools and individual teachers. The Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.)
chapter 69, section 1J, codifies the burden of making public school principals the
responsible party for school performance as determined by the state-wide assessment, the
Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). When a school fails to
demonstrate significant improvement the state labels the school as chronically under-
performing. Once designated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education (MA DESE) as a chronically under-performing school, “the
principal of the school shall be immediately removed and shall not be assigned to the
school for the following school year …” (M.G.L., chapter 69, section 1J).

Under the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) there is an option to remove or reduce
principals’ power when a school chronically underperforms. The federal government has
addressed the issue of poor performing schools. This action speaks volumes to the
perception of the role of the principal as vital in student learning and improvement.

The MA DESE has embedded the ISLLC standards into the state’s statutory regulation, the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR). The evaluation of teachers and administrators found in chapter 603 CMR 35.00 “requires that school committees establish a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process for teachers and administrators, consistent with these principles, to assure effective teaching and administrative leadership in the Commonwealth's public schools.”

Every organization requires the continual development of the people who work for it. Schools and school districts are no different. As stated earlier, a consistent direction for the organization to follow is also crucial to meeting with success as part of a school or as a school district. Continual development and consistent direction is not the only criteria for consideration. Walters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) contend that nothing replaces “good teachers” and that it is incumbent of school administrators to support those teachers by offering, “intellectual stimulation and individualized support by providing models of best practice and beliefs considered fundamental to the organization” (p. 38).

In addition to the increased responsibilities, the growing complexity of the role principals are expected to play in running our nation’s schools has reached an accountability crescendo where, “today, principals are performing balancing acts in order to respond effectively to the numerous demands of multiple constituencies” (Catano & Stronge, 2006, p. 224). Moore (2009) notes, “the ever-changing role of the principal has created a position of leadership so complex that traditional methods of evaluation or
feedback can no longer provide enough data to develop required skills” (p. 38). Despite the accountability bar being raised to a historic high, Catano and Stronge (2006) point out that this increased scrutiny in building-level principals’ responsibility for educational outcomes has been accompanied by little in the way of examination of the tools used to evaluate the effectiveness of principal performance.

These are mutually exclusive ideas where accountability increases for principals, yet their evaluations remain virtually unchanged. This reveals that while more and more expectations are being added to school leaders’ responsibilities, traditional methods to assess the effectiveness with which principals meet these demands remain woefully outdated. Thomas et al. (2000) found Alberta, Canada’s principals and their superintendent held different perspectives on their respective involvement in the principal evaluation process. “Principals strongly considered that they should have more involvement in planning the evaluation process. In sharp contrast, [the] superintendents’ responses focused more on the need to have principals engage in self-evaluation activities” (p. 232).

The Alberta principals recommended three areas for superintendents’ improvement in principal evaluation. “First, principals believe that evaluators need to be more aware of the school culture and principal performance based on direct contact with a principal regarding performance. Second, a superintendent or designee who is in frequent contact with principals is in a much better position to model desired behavior or to act as a mentor. Third, principals prefer direct, meaningful feedback regarding their performance” (Thomas, et al., 2000, p. 232-233). Moore’s (2009) observation that “administrators
rarely receive the type of feedback necessary to improve their leadership capabilities” (p. 39) supports the Alberta principals’ recommendations.

One of the most in-depth analyses on the impact of leadership as it relates to student achievement was performed by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005). Marzano et al. (2005) performed a meta-analysis of 69 educational research studies (1978 through 2001) conducted on kindergarten through grade 12 schools in, or similar to those of, the United States. This meta-analysis included an estimated 14,000 teachers and 1,400,000 students. Marzano et al. (2005) identified 21 school leader responsibilities and the relative strength with which they correlate (average (r)) with student academic achievement (see Table 2). Interestingly, the widening gap between principal expectations and ineffective and/or outdated principal evaluation criteria did not appear to be a result of a lack of research on principal effectiveness.

The strongest relationship between principal responsibility and student achievement existed with situational awareness falling within the interval of correlation between .11 to .51, with an average correlation of .33. Marzano et al. (2005) defined situational awareness as “the extent to which the principal is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems” (p. 43). Situational awareness is followed closely by flexibility at 0.28 and discipline, monitoring/evaluating, and outreach, all at 0.27, which also possess strong relationships between principal responsibility and the achievement of students.
Table 2

*Leadership Responsibilities on Student Outcomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Responsibilities and Their Correlations (r) with Student Academic Achievement</th>
<th>Average r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affirmation</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Agent</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingent Awards</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideals Beliefs</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, &amp; Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction, &amp; Monitoring Evaluating</td>
<td>0.20 &amp; 0.25 &amp; 0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimizer</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational Awareness</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted from “School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results” by R.J. Marzano, T. Walters and B. A. McNulty, 2005, p.194

Robinson (2007) also offers a meta-analysis of studies on various leadership practices that influence student learning outcomes. Synthesizing this 27-study meta-analysis, Robinson (2007) presents the top 5 practices in terms of effect size on student achievement (see Table 3).
Table 3

*Leadership Practices and the Effects on Student Outcomes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Leadership Practice</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting/ participating in teacher learning/development</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish goals and expectations</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, coordinating, evaluating teaching curriculum</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resourcing strategically</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring an orderly/supportive environment</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Conca, in his 2009 dissertation on eight eastern Massachusetts superintendents’ perceptions of principal evaluations, identified four primary practices utilized by superintendents to evaluate principals: superintendent site visits, “superintendent visiting a school, commonly referred to as a site visit”; document review, “the request and review of documents and artifacts produced by a principal”; examination of goals; and meeting with community members, “conversing with members of the school community regarding the principal’s leadership of the school” (p. 197).

Kim Marshall (2010) not only identified six domains for evaluating principals but also created an evaluation rubric adapted from his earlier teacher evaluation tool. Marshall’s six domains of principal evaluation are: diagnosis and planning; priority management and communication; curriculum and data; supervision and professional development; and discipline.
Principals are scored on Marshall’s rubric for each of the six domains. For each domain the principal could receive a classification of: “4- highly effective, 3- effective, 2-improvement 1-necessary or does not meet standards” (2001, p.1). Regardless of the tool, Lashway (1998) contends that, “while they [evaluation instruments] do not offer a complete solution to the evaluation dilemma, carefully chosen instruments can add depth, breadth and objectivity to principal evaluation and can promote the kind of self-reflection that fuels professional growth” (p.14).

Herman (1988) proposed a competency evaluation for school administrators that consists of five categories, each weighted variably on a five-point scale: clear statement of competency areas; list of example indicators; requirement that evidence be provided; a weighting of the competency areas; and a differentiated weighting for the various administrators to be evaluated.

Berk (2009) and Dyer (2001) propose a 360-degree multisource feedback model, where the community partakes in providing evaluative data. Berk (2009) sees the merits of a 360-degree multisource feedback system used for medical school faculty, and argues that the benefits are similarly pertinent to public education. Dyer (2001) posits that “the fundamental premise is that data gathered from multiple perspectives are more comprehensive and objective than data gathered from only one source” (p. 35). Dyer (2001) also argues that coaching is an integral component of a 360-degree process. A coach or mentor synthesizes the 360-degree feedback data, regardless of whether the feedback is positive or negative, and helps the principal establish goals and a plan of action to achieve them.
The newly adopted Massachusetts Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership (603 CMR 35.00) incorporate this notion of 360-degree multisource feedback in Standard 3: Family and Community Engagement. One of the new principal evaluation criteria states that a principal will be expected to “continuously collaborate with families” (p. 9). Similar information will be collected from staff and students as well. Data around such engagement will be used as criteria to holistically assess principal performance.

As illustrated above, the literature demonstrates that criteria for principal evaluation has been interpreted in various ways. There is little consistency and agreement about the most significant criteria to measure principal performance. Perceptions that evaluations are inconsistent and ineffective in developing principals as leaders still remain. According to Ginsberg and Thompson (1990) one of the dilemmas of evaluating principals stems from the lack of uniformity in job responsibilities; principals perform job tasks, administrative functions, and behavioral competencies. “The state of research on principal evaluation emphasizes the lack of empirically supported information about best practices” (Ginsberg & Thompson, 1990, p. 67). Ginsberg and Thompson (1990) further assert that demands for accountability raise difficult issues of identifying appropriate objectives for principal evaluation.

Many practitioners, scholars, and legislatures have tried to identify specific criteria that would accurately and fairly assess principal performance. Kim Marshall developed Principal Evaluation Rubrics, Massachusetts adopted 603 CMR 35.00, and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium developed standards to be applied to principal evaluation. No one instrument has captured all of the varied responsibilities of a
principal.

**Summary**

The initial review of the literature supports the idea that there is a positive relationship between certain principal behaviors and student achievement (Glassman & Heck, 1992; Hattie, 2009; Leithwood, 1994; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Robinson & Timperly, 2003; Stufflebeam & Nevo, 1993). Also, the review of the literature illuminates the inconsistency of the processes, criteria, and urgency that are used to evaluate principals (Kempher et al., 2002; Lashway, 1998; Normore, 2004). The inconsistencies found in the literature give the impression that the evaluation of principals is not considered a critical element of school improvement or beneficial and meaningful for providing professional feedback (Moore, 2009).

**Section I: Principal as instructional leader.**

It is evident that over the last several decades the expectations of the role and responsibilities of principals have evolved in complexity from merely managing schools to serving as instructional leaders. What is less evident is the impact this shift in responsibility has had on student learning (Moore, 2009; MacNeil & Yelvington, 2005; Stufflebeam & Nevo, 1993).

Many hold that principals are vital to student learning. It appears that principals share the causal relationship that exists between teacher and student learning; however, the empirical research on the direct or indirect influence of principals on student learning remains inconclusive. The meta-analysis complied by Marzano et al., the most comprehensive analysis of its kind on the relationship between school leadership and
student achievement, is co-relational, and at best points to a mediated influence.

State and local governments have enacted regulations and legislation holding principals accountable for student achievement, with punitive consequences for the principals of underperforming schools. These regulations and legislation also imply an assumption of a causal relationship between principals and student learning (Murphy, 2005).

Section II: Processes for principal evaluation.

The process for principal evaluation has risen to importance as a direct result of state and federal mandates (Portin et al., 2009), but there is little agreement in the limited research as to how the process should occur. The current state of research and implementation of principal evaluation is limited and inconsistent. The research supports the idea that the principal should have a primary role in the development of the evaluation system; and some current models include stakeholder (teachers, students, parents, and other critical members of the school’s community) feedback on principals’ performance. The objective of involving stakeholders is an attempt to get a holistic view of how principals carry out their roles (Davis et al., 2011; Amsterdam et al., 2003).

Having a tight system that has measurable outcomes is vital to an effective process as noted in the research. Whether using a collaborative model as proposed by the JCSEE (1988) or a portfolio model (Brown et al., 1998) the process should be valid, driven by objectives, relevant to the principal’s work, measure the ability to build relationships, and the ability to establish a sense of belonging among the community. However, it is important to maintain flexibility in the evaluation process to account for the specific
characteristics of each district. These conflicting demands make the establishment of a principal evaluation process challenging. Principal evaluation procedures continue to be an area where there is little clarity on how to create a process that measures principal performance against an agreed upon standard while simultaneously meeting the individual needs of the school district (Ginsberg & Berry, 1990; Condon & Clifford, 2010).

Given the limited research, the multiple means for creating a process of principal evaluation, and the variations that emerge from suggested processes, one must be concerned with the validity of the results. Clearly the process of principal evaluation is still in need of refinement. Ginsberg and Thompson (1990) accurately summarize the state of the principal evaluation process when they note “that the lack of research base leaves the field short on empirically-supported solutions for solving principal evaluation problems and makes it a formidable task for those in search of an appropriate means of evaluating principals” (p. 67).

**Section III: Criteria for principal evaluation.**

Principals matter; yet, it could be argued that the evaluation of principals remains an area where much improvement needs to occur. Normore (2004) contends that in the current wave of accountability, performance appraisals have become an important policy lever. In order to be useful, however, the performance appraisals of principals have to clarify the objectives, purposes, and standards that will be used.

The research indicates that there is a strong relationship between the work of a principal and student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood, Louis,
Anderson, & Wahlstrom 2004; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano, et al., 2005). In addition to student achievement, the research also indicates that a principal’s work has been shown to have a bearing on school performance, teacher quality, and policy implementation. These leadership functions can indirectly influence student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Marzano, et al., Robinson et al., 2008). The research also suggests that very little has been done to create a consistent principal evaluation system that utilizes a standard terminology or criteria in which to evaluate school principals (Lashway, 1998; Stufflebeam & Nevo, 1993; Thomas et al., 2000).

Until most recently, little has been done to design and/or implement a standardized school principal evaluation system at the state or federal level. This has not been due to a lack of government guidance or mandates. As Clifford and Ross (2011) suggest, “In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act required states to adopt new methods for evaluating principals that included high-stakes summative measures of student performance while also addressing principal pre-service and in-service quality improvements” (p. 2). At the state level in Massachusetts, Chapter 603, section 35 CMR states “The evaluation of teachers and administrators “require that school committees establish a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process for teachers and administrators” (p. 1).

As the pressure increases to make significant changes to principal evaluation systems in preparation for funding initiatives such as Race to the Top (RTTT) (2009), states like Massachusetts have adopted guidelines from the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation’s (JCSEE) Personnel Evaluation Standards (2010) and incorporated them into their evaluation procedure. Most recently, Massachusetts made
significant changes to its *Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership* (603 CMR 35.00) by embedding the ISLLC (2008) standards as well as incorporating the 360-degree multisource feedback model (Berk, 2009; Dyer, 2001).

Although these changes have made Massachusetts “more attractive” for federal funding opportunities such as RTTT, (Clifford & Ross, 2011) an issue that will still need to be addressed is “the lack of uniformity in job responsibilities and the lack of empirically supported information about best practices” (Ginsberg & Thompson, 1990, p. 67).

Recent developments in the area of principal evaluation and performance standards in Massachusetts will guide our study of one New England school district’s principal evaluation process. We will consider the relevance of the new evaluation standards, along with the body of research outlined in the literature review as we collect data about the perceptions of the principals and the superintendent, examine the district’s current policies and practices, and study how each connects to the research on effectively assessing principals, all in an effort to formulate recommendations that are grounded in both theory and best practice.
Chapter Three: Design of the Study and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the overall research design as the qualitative case study of current and desired principal evaluation protocols of a New England school district. Demographic surveys, individual interviews, and analysis of available documents concerning principal evaluation enabled the researchers to triangulate data from these three sources for consistency and coherence. Data analysis leading to a presentation of the study’s findings preceded an executive summary report to the Superintendent regarding the significance of the findings. The appendix includes interview questions; survey questions; the district improvement plan; a sample contract between the school committee and principal; the administrative evaluation instrument; a sample school improvement plan; Institutional Review Board letters to research participants; and tables used to code survey and interview data.

Research Questions

The core of the investigation is focused on the self-reported perceptions of the superintendent and the principals. As outlined in Chapter One, the study initially sought to address four research issues: 1. The superintendent’s perception of the evaluation process for principals; 2. The superintendent’s perception of the evaluation criteria for principals; 3. The principals’ perceptions of evaluation process for principals; and 4. The principal’s perceptions of the evaluation criteria for principals. As the study evolved, these four research issues were synthesized into two central research questions that provided the focus for this study:
1. What are the principals’ perceptions of the process and criteria for the evaluation? (Imbedded in this question is: what is and what should be included?)

2. What are the superintendent’s perceptions of the process and criteria for principal evaluation? (Imbedded in this question is: what is and what should be included?)

The research questions reflect the need to consider the process by which the evaluation is administered, how feedback is provided, and the consequences of principal evaluation. The research questions also focus on the criteria for determining principals’ responsibilities. The research team was looking for the strengths and weakness in the present system of principal evaluation and soliciting recommendations for improving the process and criteria of the evaluation system. The interview questions solicited information about behavior, opinions, values, and knowledge of the evaluation process and criteria.

Sample

This qualitative research study was designed to take a closer look at the dynamics of a specific case. A sample of the whole (Merriam, 2009) was used due to the manageable size of the district’s administrative team. Those invited to participate in the study included one superintendent, one deputy superintendent, and the twelve principals within the district. There were two high school principals in grades 9-12, two middle school principals in grades six through eight, and eight elementary school principals in grades pre-K through five. Only 10 principals that had been in the district for at least one year
were included in the study, along with the superintendent and deputy superintendent which brought the sample size to 12.

The participating district was located in a New England community of approximately 42,000 residents, with more than 6,000 students enrolled in the public school system. The school district’s annual budget exceeds $82 million. The district’s performance status designation was “corrective action” as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001, sec. 1003, School Improvement); and seven out of the twelve schools were considered “underperforming” according to the state and the NCLB accountability ratings. Precise information about the district has not been provided in order to protect the anonymity of the district and the subjects.

This study conducted in this New England school district may prove helpful to other school districts in this region for three reasons. First, the federal Race to the Top (RTTT) (2009) fund calls for significant changes in public education, one of which is a change in the process and criteria of principal evaluation. While only 12 states have received funding, all 50 states are closely watching how RTTT will change the educational landscape. Second, with this impending change, states and districts must consider how to effectively manage this shift so that such change can be timely, effective, and positive. Last, it is imperative for all districts that are facing this change to gain insight into the perceptions of principals and superintendents. This district epitomizes the challenge that RTTT districts will encounter.
Research Methodology

To address the research questions, the research team used the qualitative research methods of surveys, as well as semi-structured interviews, and document analysis (Merriam, 2009). Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1996) state, “qualitative inquirers seek to interpret human actions, institutions, events, customs, and the like, and in so doing construct a ‘reading’ or portrayal, of what is being studied” (p. 476). According to Merriam (2009), a case study is a good design for a practical problem. The case study will be a rich, thick (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994) description of the evaluation system of the school district as perceived by the New England school district principals and district leaders.

On-line Survey

Demographic data was collected from the principals and district leaders via an on-line survey using Survey Monkey. The researchers used the demographic data to provide information about the experiences that frame the perceptions of the principals and district level leadership. Such data included gender, age, year(s) as a principal or superintendent, and number of years in the profession and the district (see Appendix E).

The online survey was first pilot tested and evaluated to ensure that all intended information was included in the questions, that participants understood all the questions, and that the technology functioned properly.

Five principals piloted the on-line survey. The pilot sample included male and female principals from elementary, middle, and high school to closely reflect the make-up of the New England School District.
Interviews

The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the participants. The same interview questions were asked of all participants, but probing questions differed according to the responses given by each interviewee and their role. Two interviewers participated in each interview. The interviews allowed the researchers to solicit information related to the research questions about participants’ perceptions of the district’s evaluation system. Ary et al. (1996) state, “A focused interview is a way of gathering qualitative data by asking individuals questions about their behavior” (p. 487) (see Appendices A, B, C, and D for the interview protocols).

Interview questions were developed based on two primary research themes of evaluation process and criteria. The questions were written to reflect major ideas embedded in evaluation such as feedback, evidence, and professional development. These ideas formed the foundation from which the interview questions were developed. Once developed, all questions as well as the interview protocols were vetted by the research team and university faculty. The university faculty served as a panel of experts who assessed the appropriateness of each question in the protocol for generating the kind of information sought by the research questions. Revisions were made and a final set of interview questions were submitted for approval from the Internal Review Board.

Prior to interviewing the participants in the New England school district, the interview protocol was pilot tested using local principals and a district level leader from districts where the researchers work. A female middle/high school principal, both male and female elementary principals, and a male superintendent were used in the pilot test. A
pair of researchers conducted each pilot interview. It was explained to each subject that the piloting of the questions was for the purpose of evaluating the intent and word choice of the questions to ensure that participants were able to interpret each question as the research team intended. The pilot was conducted to also ascertain if the follow-up questions helped to further direct the inquiry and not be redundant. When piloted, it was found that some interview questions revealed redundant questions or answers that required additional detail for the individual to understand the intent of the question. The vetting of questions and pilot interviews resulted in changes in the interview protocol.

In addition, the pilot interviews used for instrument development were used to practice how the research team set up the interview to make the interviewee as comfortable as possible. The pilot interviews were then transcribed and used by the team to reflect the amount of time an interviewee would be engaged, to identify possible discussion points that might emerge from the interview questions, to check whether responses were consistent with the questions intended to be answered, and to generate a start list for coding the transcripts.

**Document Analysis**

Documents such as school board policies, district guidelines for principal evaluation, guidelines for principal-district office coordination, principal job descriptions, contracts, and material instruments such as rating inventories were reviewed and assessed in terms of their consistency with the perceptions of participants and the documents’ coherence with research reviewed in Chapter Two. The documents were reviewed and assessed as
data sources. Upon review of principal and district leaders’ perceptions, the documents were validated by interview responses.

**Field Notes**

The researchers drafted field notes after interviewing the principals and district leaders and examining district documents. In each of the two-person interview teams, while one member conducted the interview, the other member assumed responsibility for recording behaviors and observations of the environment. After each interview, team members confirmed their immediate perceptions and noted other unique pieces of data. Field notes provided a technique “for remembering and recording the specifics” (Merriam, 2009, p. 129) of the interview.

**Data Gathering Procedures**

Two members of the research team held an initial meeting in September 2011 to introduce the project to the superintendent and all principals in the study. The purpose of our research was explained and participation was requested. Consent letters were secured from each of the participants. All participants were notified of their rights of human subject protection, freedom to participate, and maintenance of confidentiality. Demographic information about the district was included as needed in the research, but only if it did not yield identifying characteristics. A formal letter requesting the participation of each individual was mailed after the initial meeting. All individuals had the right to decline to participate in the research project. At this time, each participant was asked to complete the on-line demographic survey (see Appendices E and F).
Accessing and making contact with each participant to schedule interviews occurred during a two week period as a result of the busy schedule of the principals. All interviews were conducted over a period of five weeks. The research team interviewed individual participants for approximately 60 minutes. Participants for whom on-site interviews were not convenient were offered the opportunity for a telephone interview; however, this option was not needed.

Each interview session was audio recorded, and one of the researchers took notes during the interview. The interviews were transcribed by members of the research team as well hired transcriptionists. The same transcription format was used for all interviews.

**Data Coding and Thematic Analysis**

Individual interviews were coded and analyzed for similarities and differences among the responses of the principals. The responses of the superintendent and the deputy superintendent were also examined for similarities and differences from the responses of principals. General ideas that were presented in a similar context were identified as themes such as feedback, evidence, and professional development. Specific ideas that were presented in the exact same context were identified as patterns. Connections that participants made from one statement to another were identified as relationships in evaluation process and criteria. These themes, patterns, and relationships suggested initial ways to interpret and code the data (see Appendix N).

Once the data was compiled, an analysis of the recurring themes as well as differing themes was completed. Throughout the process, the research team took measures to
insure that our own biases of what we expected to find did not infiltrate the data. Two research team members reviewed each transcript for interpretations and coding.

Patterns of data were used to point towards findings. Data was organized into charts to provide visible representation of the findings. The charts were initially grouped by principal perceptions of criteria and process and by district leader perceptions of criteria and process (see Appendix P). Within each group the data was then organized by sub-codes such as feedback, fairness, critical aspects, and impact/results. This step was taken to assist the research team in considering what statements, made by the participants, were most significant based on our research questions. Visually organizing the data allowed the team to recognize the repetition of specific themes and patterns and to recognize possible relationships.

**Formats for Reporting Findings**

Each section of findings included direct quotes from interviews, document analysis data, and current research found in the review of literature in Chapter Two.

The survey data, documents, and interview analysis were used to ascertain both the present practice and the desired practice regarding principal evaluation in the school district. On January 19, 2012, in a meeting with the District Leadership, an executive summary was presented that included initial findings and preliminary recommendations.

In the end, what the online survey provided to the research was that most participants had been in their present role for six or less years. The original rationale for conducting the online survey was to see if there was a demographic distinction between females and
males, between veteran and new administrators, and between secondary and elementary principals in their perceptions of the evaluation process and criteria.

Data collection via semi-structured, personal interviews provided the team with the most significant data from which to formulate findings. The 40-60 minute interviews provided large quantities of information that could be used to compare perceptions on the process and criteria. Some participants clearly articulated their perception on the process and criteria of the principal evaluation and others were less clear. The patterns of information emerged in the interview transcriptions and provided data to support the research findings.

Few challenges were encountered when gathering district documents, getting participants to complete the online survey, and in interviewing participants. During the interviews, all participating members in the study appeared willing, offered to share personal documents, and answered questions. Simple reminders via email resulted in all participants completing the online survey. Only two interviews presented a scheduling challenge. These challenges were overcome when a research team member made direct phone contact with the participants’ administrative assistants. Once this contact was made, establishing and completing the interviews went as planned.

One individual participated in the online survey and met to be interviewed. However, at the onset of the interview this participant refused to allow audio taping and to sign the Informed Consent for Participation form consenting to any level of participation. The result was that no data from this participant were included in the research or analysis of the findings.
Methods

Procedures were taken to accurately preserve participants’ perceptions and authenticity of each interview. The research team safeguarded against misperceptions and biases by immediate review of interview notes to double-check that all the information was captured. Quotes from the transcriptions were sent to each participant. Participants were invited to attend a validation interview in the New England school district, with members of the research team allowing each participant the ability to exclude all or part of his/her interview from this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Padgett 1998).
Chapter Four: Findings

The key findings from the research have been extrapolated from interviews, surveys, and document analysis. When reviewed, the results of the online survey provided limited insight into the distinction of how participants perceived the evaluation process and criteria. The perceptions of the principals and district leadership have been summarized in the context of evaluation process and criteria as guided by the interviews and documents analysis. Chapter Three, The Design of the Study and Methods, provided the context in which the findings are presented.

Evaluation Process

The following findings are representative of the district leaders’ and principals’ perceptions of the process of principal evaluation in the New England School District.

District leaders.

Current district leadership indicated that an evaluation instrument existed, but previous district leaders had no process for principal evaluation. The current process includes a goal setting meeting, usually in November or December after principals have had an opportunity to develop school-based goals that aligned with the district goals. At mid-year, usually in February or March, there was another meeting to a check-in with principals to discuss challenges, strengths, and progress towards goal attainment. Because goal achievement data may not have been available at the time of the meeting, the discussions centered on where principals believed they were going. In June, an end-of-year summative evaluation meeting was held with each principal.
Although specific timelines were identified by district leadership, the evaluation process had evolved over each of the last four years. As a part of the district leadership’s effort for school improvement, the evaluation process had undergone annual procedural changes. District leadership was cognizant that these ongoing changes may have altered the principals’ perceptions of fairness in the evaluation process. Changes in the evaluation process that were identified by district leadership were the inclusion of self-evaluation, school-based observations, and connections between principal’s goals and the improvement goals of the schools.

District leaders questioned how the categories reflected the actual evaluation process because the evaluation instrument is old, open-ended, and open to interpretation. Thus, district leaders have attempted to shape the process through the inclusion of measurable outcomes such as Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely (SMART) (O’Neil & Conzemius, 2006) goals, data from district improvement plans, and state mandated testing. These examples support the district leadership’s perception that the expectations for principals were increased every year. District leadership cited increased instructional focus as a direct result of the work that they had done on the evaluation.

District leaders believed that principals had an opportunity to provide input into the evaluation process. They cited on-going conversations with principals about the care and maintenance of the school climate as an example. Walk-throughs further involved principals in the process. The conversation allowed district leaders to converse with principals about what they observed in the school, what principals needed, and how the district could provide support to principals as a part of the process.
District leaders acknowledged the challenges of an evolving evaluation process and dedicating the time necessary to conduct effective evaluations. The district leaders expressed that the numerous iterations of the principal evaluation process had not been explained well, but they believed principals remained knowledgeable of performance indicators. As the complexity of the evaluation process increased, district leadership articulated that the greatest challenge in evaluating principals was to find ways to carve out enough time to implement meaningful, job-imbedded, assessment.

According to district leaders, the alignment of school improvement plans to district and principal goals was a strength of the evaluation process. They reported that school improvement plans defined the direction of the schools and improved principals’ instructional focus through data-driven decisions. According to the district leaders, principals then used the data from the school improvement plan to construct individual professional development plans.

Principal self-reflection about their professional growth has been a component of the principal evaluation process. District leaders stated that they provided principals with specific, constructive feedback about professional growth. District leaders expressed that they held principals to high standards with unconditional support. By the admission of district leaders, the evaluation process damaged district leader-principal relationships.

**Principals.**

The following findings are representative of the principals’ perceptions of the process of principal evaluation in the New England School District. The findings represent the perception of almost all principals who participated in this study unless
otherwise noted. The research team, for the purpose of this study, defined “almost all” as more than a majority of the participants. Interview data confirmed that almost all principals had clear expectations relative to the evaluation process; spent significant time on completing evaluation documents; and valued the feedback received through the evaluation process.

Principals identified beginning and end-of-year meetings as the two major events of the evaluation process. Principals perceived the evaluation process as consistent from year to year dating back to previous district leadership. Goal setting was identified as the primary purpose for the beginning-of-the-year evaluation meeting. All principals characterized the end-of-the-year meeting as perfunctory. In fact, terms such as “assembly line” were used to describe the end-of-the-year evaluation experience, where principals waited their turn for a 10-15 minute meeting with district leadership.

Another commonality among principals was that there was no correlation between the goals they had developed in the beginning of the year and the summative evaluation. Absent in the principals’ reporting was the impact of the evaluation process on their instructional leadership. Although each principal brought an end-of-year goals’ report to the summative meeting, the perception was that none of the information was used in the final assessment. According to each principal, the summative evaluation was completed and each was asked to sign the document prior to the district leadership’s review of the final goals report.

Principals expressed a desire for additional opportunities in the process for district leaders’ input and feedback. They indicated that they valued and respected the input and
feedback of district leaders. Planning additional opportunities for discussion was a common theme expressed by principals. They viewed the beginning and end-of-year meetings as two unrelated evaluative events.

Almost all principals specifically recommended that the formal evaluation process incorporate the feedback from multiple stakeholders. In addition, principals thought that this could be accomplished if district leaders were to spend more time in each building specifically to gather evidence for use in the evaluation.

Almost all principals expressed the need for more formal and informal feedback from district leaders. They specifically saw the process as lacking clarity and explicit feedback. There are seven categories on the evaluation instrument, but district leaders rarely commented on more than one or two categories. Principals could not explain how each category rating was determined. Almost every principal expressed the need for more communication about how and why the rating (unsatisfactory, fair, satisfactory, good, and excellent) they received was determined.

Half the principals reported the evaluation process impacted their personal-professional growth and school improvement. One principal cited taking a course to improve personal-professional growth and another principal stated that the feedback resulted in a clearer focus on teacher evaluation. The other half of principals perceived no connection. Some of those principals stated that their personal-professional growth was a result of their own internal motivation.

Most principals perceived the evaluation process as having neither positive nor negative impact on relationships with district leaders. Some principals saw their
relationship with the district level leadership as distinctly separate from the evaluation process. Some principals believed that the process formalized the relationship between the two offices, while others offered no opinion on the impact of the process on their relationship. Thus, there was a range of opinions and little consensus as to how the process affects the relationship between principal and district leadership.

**Evaluation Criteria**

The following findings are representative of the district leaders’ and principals’ perceptions of the criteria of principal evaluation in the New England school district.

**District leaders.**

The district leaders identified state-wide assessment and student improvement data as primary criteria for principal evaluation. Common evaluation criteria for principals at all levels included student growth data, principal’s ability to make difficult decisions when needed, and relationships with students, teachers, parents, community, and central office. Even though district leaders were able to identify specific criteria, they admitted that they were not clearly defined and should have been vetted before implementation.

According to district leaders, there was a delineation of certain grade-level dependent criteria. Criteria used to evaluate high school principals included attendance, discipline, and dropout rates. District level leaders cited Benchmark Assessment in literacy growth as a criterion used to evaluate elementary and middle school principals.

District leadership established additional financial compensation, i.e. merit pay, for principals who met the district performance criteria. District leaders cited one school’s
growth rate that was among the highest in the state as reason to reward a principal’s performance.

The care and maintenance of schools was an area that was not included in the criteria for principal evaluation. Other criteria identified as missing by the district leaders included clear definitions of criteria and standardized rubrics. Absent definitions and rubrics, district leaders expressed concern that criteria were open to principal interpretation.

**Principals.**

Almost all principals identified the results of statewide testing as the primary criterion used in their evaluation. Other perceptions of the criteria of principal evaluation included: progress towards annual school and district goals, the scope of the principalship, and relationships with students, faculty, and parents.

Some principals were able to articulate an understanding of all district evaluation categories. All principals discussed the fact that the instrument was heavily weighted to evaluate relationships (four out of the seven instrument criteria evaluated relationships). The lack of supporting evidence about stakeholder relationships was noted by almost all principals. Principals were unclear about how the district leadership gathered the evidence used to formulate the ratings on the four relationship-based criteria. In general, almost all principals sought clearly defined and clearly articulated evaluation criteria.

Principals reported that there was little to no assistance provided for personal-professional growth and attainment of goals. They did not perceive the correlation between the evaluation criteria and improved professional practice. Almost all principals
cited intrinsic motivation as the primary impetus for professional growth and improvement.

Most principals posited that the evaluation instrument did not encompass the scope of their work. They identified several critical aspects of their jobs that were not included in the district evaluation instrument e.g., planning and preparedness for student safety and wellbeing. Community demographics that impacted neighborhood schools and their performance were also unique. Principals perceived these qualities as important considerations to be reflected in their criteria for professional performance. Instructional leadership was also identified as a criterion that should be included in the evaluation of a principal. Principals believed that the challenge of working with teachers to improve practice should be taken into consideration. Principals identified the maintenance of the school building and facilities management as areas to be included in the evaluation criteria because both bore a significant financial role in the responsibilities of the principalship.

The discussion of findings that follows will examine both how the perceptions of the principals and district leaders differ and how they agree. The literature and the participants’ own words will be used to draw and compare conclusions about what is already known. Finally, the unique contribution the study makes to the knowledge base of principal evaluation and implications for further research will be discussed.

**Discussion of Major Issues Emerging from Findings**

Four major themes emerged from the findings: fairness, evidence, feedback, and critical aspects. These themes will be reported in two sections: process and criteria.
Process, for the purpose of this study, was defined as the actions and steps taken to complete principal evaluation. Criteria were defined as the specific standards by which principal performance was judged.

Viewed in a broader context of research literature, the findings from the New England School District will be discussed in the context of complexity theory, distributive leadership, and trust.

**Process.**

**Fairness.** Principals believed that they have been treated fairly. “I haven’t had any problem with it” and “I’m not freaking out about it,” stated principals about their evaluation. They perceived the district leaders as fair and valued and respected their input and feedback. Almost all principals stated that the beginning and end-of-year evaluation meetings are consistent from year to year. Principals do not perceive that the evaluation process positively or negatively impacted their relationship with the evaluators. “I don’t really think that it [evaluation] is a critical piece of anything in this district. It is a formality. They go through it. I don’t really think that it builds or takes away from the relationship with uptown.”

Unlike the principals, district leaders questioned the fairness of the evaluations. They noted the on-going evolution of the evaluation process as well as subsequent heightened expectations as elements that would make the process unfair to principals. District leaders noted that principals have an opportunity to have a say in their evaluation; however, principals stated that evaluations are completed prior to the district leaders’ receipt of principal input. The lack of principal voice may contribute to the district leaders’
perception that evaluation negatively impacts relationships. “I think it is fair…I would imagine that from the principals’ perspective that it is a lot less fair because they think that it is based on perceptions of their performance, as opposed to actual observation of their performance” stated one district leader. District level leaders affirm that relationships are the “elephant in the room”.

A discrepancy existed between perceptions of principals and district leadership in regard to the fairness of the evaluation process. This discrepancy between these perceptions could have engendered a level of distrust between the district administration and the principals. While principals felt the evaluation process was fair, district level administrators conversely believed that annual changes inhibited a fair evaluation process. Given the differing perspectives of fairness, it appeared that the principals’ trust of district leadership compensated for a process that lacked the level of transparency that would result in a fair evaluation. While not using the word trust, almost all principals expressed belief that they would be treated fairly by district leadership. This faith in the district leaders implied a deep sense of trust. As one principal noted, “I have faith that the district is looking for the big picture as what they need from a principal, and they’re very clear about that”. Therefore, the notion of trust must be considered.

Feedback. Formal and informal feedback emerged as important to the principal evaluation process. Principals in this district collectively identified two specific meetings that took place during the year relative to their performance. Many of the district’s principals described the process as “factory-like”. It is a “get ‘em in and get ‘em out”
system much like an “assembly line”. The district’s principals were united in their reporting that the meetings yielded little in the way of useful, meaningful feedback.

District leadership described a process of occasional “walk-throughs” which inform them about student-principal relationships, teacher-principal relationships and general organization and running of the building. It was reported by the district leadership that it was during these visits they had discussions that focused on not only the day-to-day operations of the building, but progress on their goals.

**Evidence.** One question heard with frequency in interviews regarding evidence in the evaluative process was “how do they know this?” Nearly every principal interviewed asked this question in some form. One principal stated, “I don’t know what type of evidence is gathered.” Another gave the example of “progress toward development of positive relationships and effective communications with teachers” in the evaluation instrument and “I don’t know how they do or don’t know how I communicate with staff. I hope they don’t… reach out to random, trusted staff who won’t say anything to me, I don’t know… I have no clue.”

The above statements summarized the widespread notion about evaluation evidence that one principal characterized as follows: “I know evidence is gathered. I don’t know how he gathers the evidence.” Words and phrases used by principals to describe the process for evidence collection include “vague”, “not well executed”, “random”, “sporadic”, “not well defined”, “arbitrary”, and “perfunctory.”

The district leadership’s perceptions aligned with the principals’ perceptions in that evidence for some aspects of the process was difficult to gather. District leadership
described a process of occasional “walk-throughs”. However, unlike principals, district leaders believed these walk-throughs were critical to the evaluation process because they provided a glimpse of how principals responded to students and staff.

**Critical aspects.** According to district leaders critical aspects of the process of evaluation in the district were shaped by the district leaders and the principals. However, they acknowledged that the process had yet to be vetted to resolve identified issues and concerns. District leaders commented on two critical aspects of the evaluation process.

First, the district leaders recognized that there was insufficient time to conduct the evaluations. When asked, “What are the worst parts, if any, of the evaluation process?” one district leader responded:

> Probably the worst part is we don’t have time for it, really. As we create more and more sophisticated systems, the worry, of course, is how do we actually get it all done? How do we make that, how do we embed it as part of our regular routine so that…evaluation is not just something …we insert, we check it off our check list, and then move on to the next thing…that it’s part of the way that we are in this continuous cycle of improvement.

Principals perceived that evaluation was something that just had to be done, citing “assembly line” meetings at the beginning-of-the-year and the-end-of-the-year. Principals stated the-end-of-the-year meeting was not beneficial to the evaluation process because it was 10-15 minutes in length while another principal waited outside to meet with the district leaders. As a result, no meaningful discussion that would lead to improvement occurred.
Second, the district leaders perceived that critical aspects of the evaluation helped principals’ personal-professional growth.

I think it’s [evaluation process] a combination of pat on the back and kick in the ass, and both of those things are going to encourage people to work really hard at what they do and be focused. When they do that, they’ve got to themselves seek out ways in which they can improve, and often that means networking, it means reaching out to principals who are more successful than themselves, it means engaging in professional development, it means asking us for help. So yeah, I think it causes growth.

However, more than half of the principals reported that the evaluation process did not contribute to personal-professional growth. The principals cited their own personal motivation as the primary reason for improvement. Most of the principals reported that guidance regarding professional development was limited in scope. It was often left up to them to engage in meaningful, growth-oriented, professional development opportunities. As one principal shared, “our professional development really is up to us as to how we want — how we see a need, and take care of that on our own”. The principal added, “a suggestion was to take a few law PD’s, educational law PD’s, so it’s fair. It’s not very, very finely detailed, but there’s definitely something there with suggestions.”

Criteria.

Fairness. Principals believed that they were and will continue to be treated fairly. Most principals stated that they know what to expect relative to the evaluation criteria. Some principals were able to point to the specific criteria contained in the evaluation
instrument and felt the criteria were fair. “They are about as fair as any… if it is not reviewed consistently, you cannot imbed it into your practice”.

Other principals agreed that they were treated fairly in the evaluation process. Some called into question the capriciousness of the criteria. One principal asserted, “it [evaluation] is fairly arbitrary”. Several principals concurred, “I guess the question then becomes, it is not that the criteria is fair or not fair, but where is the evidence to support the criteria?”; “I guess my question constantly is, how do they know this? How do they know my relationships with parents, how do they really know my relationship with students? … I think a lot of it is arbitrary.”; “I think the way they gather information on how you are doing…is not the most valid because I have not ever seen the deputy superintendent in my school”. Thus many principals did not feel the way in which evaluation criteria was measured was fair as reflected in the statement, “I don’t even know when it happens, actually”.

District leaders perceived that from the principals’ perspective “it [evaluation] is a lot less fair because they think that a lot of it is based on perceptions”; “It is really historical evidence that is used. So, I think that is probably some sentiment of no one really knows what I [principals] do”; “Unfair, ok, I am telling you that I think …we have moved away from just saying ‘you made AYP’ or ‘you didn’t make AYP’ [and using] AYP as a sole measure is unfair”.

**Feedback.** Most principals did not feel that assisting with the development of the criteria by which they were to be evaluated would be of value. In many instances, principals felt criteria development was clearly their “bosses’” job and “not for them” to
decide. That said, there was agreement that the current rating scale needed to be more clearly defined to accurately provide feedback on various aspects of the principalship.

Every principal interviewed reported that they were “unaware” of the evidence that was collected to inform the district leadership on principal performance in many of the categories evaluated. Most of the principals reported that the evaluation criteria were “vague,” and too “general” to provide meaningful feedback. This finding coupled with a general dissatisfaction with the amount of time, data collected, and process for reporting back on specific, growth-oriented feedback resulted in principals’ perception that there was no real value to their evaluation beyond the legal requirement to get it done.

District leaders used “artifacts of evidence” which included school-based stakeholder meeting minutes, faculty meeting minutes, and other hard evidence of community engagement to frame the specific feedback to principals. Likewise, district leaders viewed data, test scores, and other indicators of student achievement as evidence to support recommended feedback to principals. In fact, for the 2010-2011 school year, a merit pay program was instituted which was described as “thorny and not easy to navigate”. This monetary feedback on principal performance was perceived by district leaders as providing recognition not captured in the typical evaluation instrument.

Evidence. Principals felt there was little clarity on specific criteria due to the lack of detailed indicators in the evaluation instrument. Similarly, principals believed that identifying what evidence would be used to support specific criteria was difficult. Principals perceived that test scores and other hard data such as attendance were used to inform the evaluation. Principals also surmised, “what they [district leaders] hear” from
speaking to the public was used as evidence in the evaluation of the four evaluation categories on relationships. Principals were nervous and concerned about the interpretation of data on relationships; they expressed that the least happy stakeholders were most likely to express concern to district leaders creating a skewed perception of the principal’s relationships.

Results of student scores on state-mandated testing were often used as evidence in principal evaluation. Most of the principals interviewed believed that state test scores, practice test scores, other measures of student progress, attendance, and dropout rates did indeed constitute a measurable source of evidence. Although none of these measures were named in the actual evaluation instrument, items related to these measures certainly do appear in school improvement plans, which were featured in the evaluation criteria.

There was nothing embedded in the evaluation instrument itself which delineated what evidence about relationships would be collected. There was a prevailing notion that for some criteria (particularly interactions with parents, students, district leadership, and staff) evidence gathering consisted of noting how many phone call e-mail complaints district leadership received about individual principals.

District leaders referred to a monthly report of 16 indicators that provided data on Benchmark Assessment, attendance, school choice changes, disciplinary data, and suspension reports that were used to assess principal performance. Anecdotal reporting from parents, teachers, and school committee members to district leadership was reported as having impacted the overall evaluation as well.
All principals were quick to state that district leaders were always a phone call or e-mail away for advice, guidance, or help. However, principals did not report frequent visits from district leadership. Nor did they perceive visits were used to gather evaluative evidence. As a result, principals again questioned where district leaders culled their evidence from, if it was not through means such as observation.

**Critical aspects.** District leaders identified specific criteria as critical aspects used to evaluate principals. These criteria included: state standards, educational leadership, organizational management, student outcomes, outside perspective, graduation rates, attendance rates, and interaction with parents and staff.

Principals identified the following criteria as critical aspects *not* used to evaluate their performance: measures taken to attain the proper services for at-risk students and families, decreasing truancy, improving graduation rates, safety, instructional leadership, teacher improvement, student achievement, and improving school climate. District leaders and principals shared agreement about critical aspects of a principal’s job. The differences were more in the details than the categories of evaluation. Both agreed that a need existed for an evaluation instrument that better recognized the expansive and complex nature of the principals’ job.

Both district leaders and the principals shared agreement about the importance of the critical aspects on which principals were evaluated. Both groups also agreed that many, if not all of the critical aspects that were not formally evaluated, were equally important aspects of the position. As one principal shared, “Again, it’s not measured because all of it falls onto my shoulders”. The district leaders and the principals agreed that a need
existed for an evaluation tool that was capable of recognizing the complex nature of the
principals’ job, but were also quick to point out that the scope and responsibility of the
position was too complex and overwhelming to accurately measure.

**Further Discussion of the Findings**

It is important to place the findings from the New England School District’s
perceptions of the process and criteria of principal evaluation into a larger context.
Schools operate in an ontological complexity. Ontology, as derived from Latin, means
the “science of being” (Ontology, 2012). Snowden (2005) identified three physical states
of ontology as: order, chaos, and complexity. These ontologies are a refined evolution of
Snowden’s earlier work with Kurtz (Kurtz and Snowden, 2003), which originally
included a forth ontology: complicated.

The three refined ontological states are dependent “on the degree to which cause-
effect relationships can be predicted” (Snowden, 2005, p.1468). Ordered systems are
highly constrained and chaotic systems have no constraints while complex systems, such
as schools, have the simultaneity of residing with properties of both systems, more
chaotic than ordered systems and more ordered than chaotic systems. “The word
*simultaneity* refers to events or phenomena that exist or operate at the same time” (Davis,
2005. p. 14). When cause and effect relationships can be predicted most or all of the time,
order exits. When cause and effect relationships can sometimes or never be predicted, the
result is chaos. When order and chaos overlap, the ontology of complexity emerges. It is
in the simultaneity known as complexity that school principals must operate, in the
ontological middle ground between order and chaos (see Figure 1).
1. People who live in order.
2. People who live in chaos.
The overlap or radical between order and chaos is complexity.
3. People who know the difference between order and chaos.

*Note: Above is a visual representation of a principal’s role as it applies to the complexity theory (Davis, 2005; Manson, 2001).*

Paradoxically, when complexity theory illuminates this ontological middle-ground where principals stand, Manson (2001) looks at how individual elements work in concert to create systems with complex behaviors. All principals exist in a system where complex behaviors impact the overall system as a result of order and chaos.

Schools exhibit many features of complex adaptive systems, being dynamical and unpredictable, non-linear organizations operating in unpredictable and changing external environments. Indeed schools both shape and adapt to macro- and micro-societal change, organizing themselves, responding to, and shaping their communities and society [i.e. all parties co-evolve] (Mason, 2008, p. 19).

Thus, in a complex system such as a school, principals must balance the
numerous variables that exist. Principals who balance the variables of order and chaos acknowledge the parts that contribute to the overall health and positive climate of the school (see Figure 1). For a complex system such as a school to be healthy, an effective leadership model is imperative.

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) emphasize that distributive leadership supports complex, healthy systems to maintain balance between order and chaos. Distributive leadership provides opportunity for all stakeholders to share in the decisions and direction of a system. Hargreaves and Fink assert that “leadership is always distributed in some way or other. The point is to show how the distribution occurs” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006, p. 111). Once the system is able to self-identify the shared leadership, stakeholders will feel empowered. Unfortunately, “self-conscious and deliberate leadership activity in schools is still too scarce” (Hargreaves et al., 2006, p. 111) to be able to see the impact distributive leadership can have in schools. Leaders, must “move away from the heroic (solo) decision making [of the past] and … make decisions with the assistance of the community” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011, p. 24).

The involvement of the community’s stakeholders begins with having a shared vision and values. “If they [leaders and stakeholders] are not bound together by a clear vision, tight processes and clear accountability, multiple sources of leadership can pull a school apart” (Hargreaves et al., 2006, p. 111). Without these elements order or chaos will result. Distributive leadership can be applied to the complexity theory as defined by Snowden (2005). While Snowden used the terms order and chaos, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) use the terms “autocracy” and “anarchy” (p. 113) to describe the boundaries of
distributive leadership in education. Similar to the complexity theory, autocracy is the point in distributive leadership where each educator is so autonomous they each seek attainment of their own personal goals at a cost to the system. Anarchy is the point in distributive leadership where there is no direction from above or below and each educator exists without a role or commitment to the system (see Figure 2).

Complexity demands distributive leadership where guided distribution occurs. In an attempt to get leadership “just right” in temperature, actions such as regular meetings between the leadership and stakeholders or in the case of this study, between the evaluator and evaluatee, guide actions that take place. This form of leadership empowers the stakeholders and provides the leadership the opportunity to maintain focus on the system’s goal.

A broad and longstanding consensus in leadership theory holds that leaders in all walks of life and all kinds of organizations, public and private, need to depend on others to accomplish the groups’ purpose and need to encourage the development of leadership across the organization (Wallace Foundation, 2011, p. 6).
Figure 2 The Rising Temperature of Distributive Leadership

Note: Raising the Temperature of Distributed Leadership (Hargreaves et al., 2006, p. 113)

Focused leadership occurs when stakeholders are empowered to share decision-making authority in distributive leadership. Distributive leadership supports complex systems. Complex systems, such as schools, are supported by distributive leadership because distributive leadership promotes and provides the opportunity for shared decision-making in critical areas like programmatic and academic reform(s) (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). In order for educators in a complex system to support, agree, and defend shared decisions one significant factor must exist. That factor is trust. Vodicka
(2006) concurs “that trust is likely the most important element in the development of a learning community” (p. 27) which is parallel to the findings discussed in this study.

The subjectivity of trust makes it difficult to explain and measure because trust is based on factors like beliefs, perceptions (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1997) and moral and ethical perspectives (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Regardless of the difficulty in defining trust, the literature is clear that trust is recognized as a vital element in well-functioning organizations. Trust resides in people, not institutions; human resources are more critical than structural conditions (Bryk et al., 2003) in balancing between “too hot” chaos and “too cold” order.

For complex systems to attain trust Mayer and Gavin (2005) cite three factors of a manager’s trustworthiness: ability, benevolence, and integrity, while Bryk and Schneider (2003) cite four considerations in the establishment of trust: respect, personal regard, competence in one’s role, and personal integrity. Given these three factors and four considerations, it can be reasoned that the ability or competence in the evaluator is important, benevolence, respect, and personal regard between evaluator and evaluatee is important, and the belief that the evaluator has integrity is fundamental in the establishment of trust in a complex system. “In a study of …perceptions…[the] level of trust in the supervisor [evaluator] was more important in regard to the perceived fairness than any other characteristic of the performance evaluation process” (Fulk, Brief, & Barr, 1985, p. 301).

Faulk, Brief, and Barr’s (1985) finding is consistent with the findings of this study. Principals did not acknowledge the annual changes in the process of principal
performance evaluation as identified by the district leadership. When asked what
principals might perceive as most unfair in the evaluation process, district leadership
perceived that the most unfair element of the process was its inconsistency. Principals in
the New England School District stated that district leadership is “very approachable”,
are “good listeners”, “provided the opportunity to give feedback”, and “it [the evaluation]
is fair”. Given this data, principals perceived that the district leaders displayed integrity,
were competent in their roles, and were benevolent. Based on this data and the above
research, a hypothesis can be made that organizational trust existed in the New England
School District.

Once established, trust according to Mayer and Gavin (2005) and Bryk and
Schneider (2003), results in school renewal. A belief in the existence of trust decreases
the sense of risk when change in the system is necessary. People are willing to take risks
to improve the system when trust is established between the evaluator and evaluatee.
These studies cited markedly better performance and outcomes in schools when
leadership was trusted.

From this human resource lens, also termed “social accounts perspective” according
to Russeau and Tijoriwala (1999), “trust in management lead to acceptance in
organizational change” (p. 525). These findings further suggest that “high trust creates a
broad zone of exigencies of complex organizational change” (Russeau & Tijoriwala,
1999, p. 525).

Systematic, progressive change in educational leadership can be identified in
documents created at the state level. The Commonwealth of Virginia has published, in
draft form, new principal evaluation standards. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has finalized their regulations on the evaluation standards for all Massachusetts educators, including principals. Both documents recognize the complexity of the principal as an educational leader. They repeatedly cite distributive leadership throughout each documents’ established standards as it is an expectation of contemporary principal behavior based on research. Research indicates when “principals give power away they oftentimes become more powerful. This enables them to narrow their focus and concentration to factors that contribute directly to school effectiveness” (Stronge & Tonneson, 2011, p. 12).

While Virginia and Massachusetts’ principal evaluation standards vary in number, there are distinct similarities in what they are expecting of the modern principal. Instructional leadership is a defined standard for both Commonwealths. Under instructional leadership, the idea of a clear and shared vision is articulated. Virginia elaborates on this standard by articulating additional behaviors that include communicating with stakeholders, expecting and attaining goals, and the explicit implementation of distributive leadership in order to increase the likelihood of attaining the established goals (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2012; Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2011).

The Virginia draft evaluation document defines additional standards such as school climate, communications and community relations, professionalism, and student achievement. These draft standards are comparable standards to Massachusetts and their standards of family and community engagement and professional culture. Throughout
these standards each commonwealth identifies at length the need for principals to build relationships with stakeholders such as students, teachers, parents, and community members. The idea of shared and focused standards and goals is incorporated throughout each of the documents. Shared collaboration and empowerment of teachers as well as democratic conversations and deliberations about school matters are also included.

In reviewing each document created by both Commonwealths, it is apparent that the concept of complexity theory has been imbedded throughout the principal evaluation standards. The ontological state of the principalship as related to **simultaneity** is acknowledged in the evolution of evaluation standards with characteristics that reflect distributive leadership, by the repeated and deliberate construction of evaluation standards.

Complexity theory would suggest that schools, as complex organizations, with outcomes subject to innumerable variables, benefit from leadership practices broadly described as “distributive.” In making recommendations to the New England School District regarding their principal evaluation system, it is clear that the notions of “teamwork skills” (Bennett, Wise, Woods and Harvey, 2003, p. 11) and a “fluidity of location” (Bennett et al., 2003, p. 11) in relation to “leadership and followership” (Bennett et al., 2003, p. 11) must be present. Recommendations to the district reflect the need for evaluative work that is more communication-heavy, better informed by clear evidence gathered from a multitude of sources, and directed at individual and whole-school growth and renewal.
Chapter Five: Recommendations

Based on the discussion of the findings in Chapter Four and a review of the literature regarding principal evaluation, a set of recommendations follows for how the New England School District may be better able to improve the efficacy and impact of its principal evaluation system. The New England School District is dedicated to the completion of the principal evaluation process, as evidenced by strict adherence to an annual evaluation cycle. The mutual regard and trust that exist between principals and district leaders creates a foundation upon which the New England School District can increase the meaningfulness and impact of principal evaluation as it moves forward to improve the processes. Through further formalizing of the process, creating more consistent feedback loops and better delineating the evidence to inform evaluation, this trust is likely only to increase (Hartman & Slapnicar, 2009) and position the New England School District for further improvement in evaluating its principals.

A cautionary note, however, must be sounded as means of contextualizing the following recommendations. As discussed above, the systemic complexity of a school district—and the schools that comprise the district, and the classrooms that comprise the school and the individuals who comprise the classrooms—would suggest that making simple cause and effect leaps in terms of principal evaluation would be misguided. The notion of “performativity” or the culture of using outcomes (such as student test scores) to measure direct benefit or lack of benefit of individuals within the sphere of influence of the outcome (Beatty, 2007, p. 329) permeates our current age of so-called accountability. Ball (2000) warns that within this judgmental thinking lies the “possibility
that commitment, judgment and authenticity within practice are sacrificed for impression and performance (p. 6)”. These recommendations are therefore placed in the context not of measuring direct causal effects of the work of principals, but in the notion of schools as complex systems where the work of the principal as school leader is one of many factors influencing teacher performance and student outcomes.

**Recommendation One: Make principal evaluation an ongoing process rather than an event.** The principal interviews that were conducted in the New England School District supported ideas expressed in current literature on principal evaluation, particularly those that indicate that principal evaluation can be a bureaucratic exercise, with little to no impact on principal improvement or school renewal. Portin, Feldman, and Knapp (2006) label principal evaluation as by and large “perfunctory” and of “limited value” (p. 2). Lashway (1998) described the process as “bureaucratic” and “irksome” (p. 14). The principals found that the process was no more than a series of events that were unrelated and did little to help improve their performance. One of the newest evaluation systems to be developed nationally, The Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012) recommends that the evaluation process be ongoing, and build on a “five step cycle of continuous improvement” (p. 7).

North and South Carolina have outlined important steps as part of ongoing processes (Brown-Simms, 2010) that need to be included in principal evaluation. Both Carolinas, Delaware, Iowa, New Mexico, and Ohio include in new evaluation regulation models the
need for ongoing, growth oriented processes, as opposed to a series of events (Mattson, Almanzán, Sanders, & Kearney, 2011).

As a result of a move to an authentic, collaborative and ongoing process principals can become better servants to students and teachers, and superintendents can become servants to their principals. The New England School District, in its adherence to a process, is ready to move forward with an embedded, ongoing process that builds on a foundation of trust to create, as the aforementioned states, a process which is continually revisited, and truly an ongoing, growth-oriented process. School renewal is not about a point in time. It is about continuous, critical inquiry into current practices that might improve education.

**Recommendation Two: Schedule time in each building with principals to gather data and discuss their work.** Time together and coordination between principal and district level leaders are key ingredients to more effective principal evaluation (Thomas, Holdaway & Ward, 2000; Murphy, 1985; Rhinehart & Russo, 1995). The Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation (2012) requires more frequent site visits by superintendents or their designees, and “observations of the principal ‘in action’ in the cafeteria, at meetings and at school events” (p. 12).

New England School District principals report that building visits by district level leadership are infrequent. More district leadership time spent in the principals’ buildings will offer a better means of direct data collection, more opportunities for mentoring, and allow for more ongoing evaluative conversations. Normore (2004) writes that frequent school visits encourage discussions between the district leadership and principal that
center on specific problems (i.e. curriculum and instruction, building management, leadership ability, relationship with teachers, students and parents). These visits will provide first-hand knowledge for district leadership to formulate an opinion about principal performance. In addition to visits, Normore (2004) identified other opportunities for district leaders to gather assessment data like communication at group meetings of principals, norms that were communicated, and specific procedures and criteria that had been identified.

The individual ratings received on the summative evaluation did not present a concern for the principals. However, they could not articulate where the data came from that was used to formulate those ratings. Effective school leadership is dependent on many variables. In the New England School District principals expressed their trust in the superintendent. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) write that “a person’s level of comfort in the midst of vulnerability speaks to the accompanying level of trust” (p. 556). This is certainly the case in the New England School District. The facets of trust outlined by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) are evident among the principals, and can be the basis for more open sharing of issues and concerns. Through frequent, candid collaboration that only comes through time spent together, leaders better position themselves to be forces in the school renewal process.

**Recommendation Three: Clearly identify the criteria and supportive evidence used in evaluation of principals.** Standards and criteria exist for principal evaluation (Sergiovanni, 1982; Marshall, 2010; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008; MA DESE, 2011). The New England School District Administrator’s Evaluation Form
contains performance objectives and criteria as well; however, principals report that they lack clarity on what exactly the criteria mean in the context of their daily work, and how evidence is gathered to support findings on the evaluation itself. A new evaluation system will provide an opportunity for the district leadership and principals of New England School District’s to collaboratively identify fine-tuned criteria within a new framework, and work to find focus areas that are most crucial to the district.

Related to a lack of clarity in what the criteria are and mean, is the lack of understanding about what constitutes evidence and how evidence is collected. Evidence-based feedback is vital (Davis, Kearney, Sanders, Thomas, & Leon, 2011; Marshall, 2010). In the New England School District, the principals’ notions of evidence gathering can be summed up in the statement of one principal, “how do they know this stuff”?

While delineating a more precise set of criteria that principals will be measured against and the evidence that informs the criteria, the district must keep the complex nature of the school in mind. A certain fluidity which allows for the creation of “emotionally safer spaces for learning and growing together” (Beatty, 2007, p. 328) must be maintained as the creation of criteria is completed. Similarly, the criteria must be formed so as to measure the distributive actions of the principal, as they encourage “former bystanders out of the stands and onto the court” (Beatty, 2007, p. 328) to engage as leaders in their own right.

**Recommendation Four: Use a standardized rubric and evaluation instrument that delineates process, evidence, employs measurable outcomes and defines performance levels.** The New England School District evaluation instrument has a
rating scale with five performance levels: unsatisfactory, fair, satisfactory, good, and excellent. There was little agreement among the principals about how each performance level of the evaluation instrument is determined. This finding is consistent with other research studies that found that building-level principals’ responsibility for educational outcomes has been accompanied by little in the way of examination of the tools used to evaluate the effectiveness of principal performance (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Lashway, 1998; Thomas et al., 2000). Marshall (2010) offers Marshall’s Six Domains of Principal Evaluation which include: diagnosis and planning; priority management and communication; curriculum and data; supervision and professional development; and discipline. Lashway (1998) contends, “while they [evaluation instruments] do not offer a complete solution to the evaluation dilemma, carefully chosen instruments can add depth, breadth and objectivity to principal evaluation and can promote the kind of self-reflection that fuels professional growth” (p. 14). This may offer a starting point for revising the current evaluation instrument.

A move to rubrics of directly measurable, clear-cut objectives is vital in this time where accountability is tied to measurable outcomes. The New England School District is well positioned through the previously discussed notions of trust and respect among its principals and district leaders to define a formal process which is inclusive of measurable goals and outcomes, but maintains the power of their trusting community as a “growth center” for the administrative team (Bauch, 2001).

Hartmann and Slapnicar (2009) suggest that a clear formal process avoids the use of “untraceable personal judgments” (p. 725) and “allows higher levels of integrity, honesty,
accuracy and consistency in performance evaluation” (p.725). As the district leaders and principals continue to interact, and continue to use a more formalized transparent process, open and honest two way communication will increase and allow principals growth room “without fear of negative repercussions” (Faulk, Brief and Barr, 1985, p. 302).

**Recommendation Five: Use a principal evaluation instrument and feedback mechanism that better recognizes the expansiveness and complexity of the principalship.** Lashway’s (1998) research found that “as key players in the school community, principals deserve accurate, relevant feedback that not only satisfies the demands of accountability but enhances their performance” (p. 14). An increasingly important area in that role of key player is in the organizational and political nature of school leadership (Sergiovanni, 1982; Council of Chief State School Officers; Marshall, 2010). Most of the New England School District principals reported that they do not get feedback on the summative evaluation and that many of the critical aspects of their jobs, including navigating the organizational and political pathways unique to each building, are not reflected in either the evaluation instrument’s criteria or process.

The principalship is complex work in a complex environment. Principals who create “safe environments for teachers to critique, question and support each other” (Hattie, 2009, p. 83), manage to wade through the complexity and exert the most influence on student achievement (2009). Recognizing the intricacy of the many tasks that comprise the principal’s work, and recognizing a principal’s ability to form the caring, compassionate, trusting (Houchens & Keedy, 2009) relationships that allow a school to work in collaborative and reflective ways must be a key ingredient in principal
evaluation. The same trust that exists between principals and district leaders should be present between those same principals and the teachers with whom they work and serve. The evaluation instrument itself, and the continuous feedback loop the instrument should encourage must recognize and work to evaluate the effectiveness of the principal in managing, mitigating, and empowering others to move forward toward positive, agreed-upon goals through the layers of complexity present in schools.

**Recommendation Six: Provide meaningful feedback via principal evaluation to foster personal-professional growth and school renewal.** Evaluation processes should be tied to the goals for school-wide improvement and drive better teaching and learning in a school (Davis et al., 2011). Lashway (1998) states that feedback must “enhance their [principal] performance” (p. 14). Some of the New England School District principals believe that the evaluation process impacted their personal or professional development and school renewal.

Researchers propose a 360-degree multisource feedback model, where the community partakes in providing evaluative data (Berk, 2009; Dyer, 2001). Berk (2009) applied a 360-degree multisource feedback system for medical school faculty, and argues that the benefits are similarly pertinent to public education. Dyer (2001) posits, “the fundamental premise is that data gathered from multiple perspectives are more comprehensive and objective than data gathered from only one source” (p. 35). 360-degree feedback demands an examination of work that moves beyond an individual evaluator’s response (Moore, 2009) and “allows teachers and staff an opportunity to
provide feedback and influence the way they are managed and led” (p. 39), creating
greater commitment to seeking and accepting feedback themselves.

The Massachusetts evaluation regulations 603 CMR 35.01 establishes that effective
evaluation impacts principal performance through feedback on improvement,
opportunities for professional growth, and accountability. The value placed on feedback
in this one state indicates the necessity of high quality feedback as a means of
professional growth, and for quality control and accountability purposes. The value of
this feedback in the New England School District is enhanced by the trust among
principal and district leaders. This trust will allow for evaluation feedback to help drive
personal and school renewal, as in the absence of this trust, conversations about what is
and what is not working will not likely take place in a meaningful way (Bryk &
Schneider, 2003).

The strong bonds of trust between evaluator and evaluatee in the New England
School District encourages relationships which support honest, continuous self-
assessment (Beatty, 2007) as a piece of the multi-source feedback. The trust that exists
among parties allows for the current process not to get in the way, as principals appear to
realize a weak system of evaluation is mitigated by a strong faith in the evaluator. An
ongoing process which enters more voices into the conversation, including individual
principal voices, will only strengthen the evaluation process.

**Recommendation Seven: Base summative principal evaluation on agreed upon
goals for annual personal-professional improvement and growth.** The principals saw
no relationship between their own professional goals they were annually asked to develop
and the summative evaluation. Although each principal developed goals at the beginning of the year and spent time to reflect and report on their progress towards those goals, in the end the summative evaluation was completed before the district leaders read or discussed the principals’ reflections on their progress towards the goals. Davis et al. (2011) stated that while their study found no one best way to evaluate principals, general agreement among researchers exists that evaluation processes “should be linked to the goals and processes of school-wide improvement, based upon important organizational outcomes, and should advance powerful teaching and learning” (p. 31). District leadership should capitalize on the trust and respect they have from the principals and utilize a collaborative process that includes helping to guide and facilitate principal and school goals and a review of the principal’s goals before and as a feature of the summative evaluation.

Schools can be “complex social milieu” (Shanklin, Kozleski, Meager, Sands Joseph & Wyman, 2003, p. 375) where the dynamics of authority, power and culture all play out daily, among the administration, faculty and staff. Add students, families, community members, and the larger society to the mix and the complexity grows. Incorporating school-wide goals into the personal growth goals of a principal may strengthen factors that influence student achievement. Participating in teacher development, planning and coordination, regular classroom visits, strategic resource management and demanding an orderly, supportive environment all impact student learning (Hattie, 2009).
Incorporating these domains into principal goal setting via the school improvement plan will enhance the New England School District’s goal setting work, and establish a tighter coupling between principal evaluation and whole school renewal.

**Recommendation Eight: Study the impact of cultural and geographic contexts on principal evaluation.** Evidence suggests that individual leaders behave quite differently depending on the circumstances they are facing. There is a need to develop leaders with large repertoires of practices and the capacity to choose from the repertoire as needed. This calls into question the common belief in leadership styles and the search for the single best model. There is evidence about the relevance to leaders of geographic location (urban, suburban, rural) and level of school (elementary or secondary) and both school and district size. Some of the principals in the New England School District noted that they would like to see a differentiation of criteria in an evaluation of principals in elementary and high schools. Many expressed the unique challenges they faced in supervising teachers in their school setting. Within the New England School District, there were a number of cultural differences in the schools, factors such as diverse populations, socio-economic need, and level of parental involvement. According to Clifford and Ross (2011), principal evaluation should be based on transparent expectations for performance that are attuned to school leaders’ work by taking into account, possibly, differences between secondary, middle, and elementary school leadership approaches.

As states move forward with new statewide legislative requirements for principal evaluation, the question becomes how these requirements contextualize the vastly
different nature of individual school districts. So too do the questions of differences among individual schools within the same district. Demographic, cultural, organizational, economic and other differences among schools may drive a need for principal evaluation measures to be more site-specific and flexible, even as the measures are attempting to be more uniform and transparent.

**Recommendation Nine: Consider a redefinition of the job duties and the concentration of principal evaluation to focus on instructional leadership.** As the role of principal continues its evolution from building manager to full-time instructional leader, principals’ work will require a redefinition. All of the principals interviewed for this study described what they perceived as the enormity of their daily work. Principals described their daily duties as ranging from social worker to community activist to cafeteria supervisor. With one exception, no principal expressed that their sole focus was educational leadership.

One principal in the NESD has experimented with delegating nearly all building supervision and student/parent outreach to assistant principals and deans. This principal spends his time exclusively examining data with teachers, evaluating teachers, observing classes, and helping teachers hone their instructional skills. This principal described frustration with the current NESD principal evaluation system in that it did not recognize a principal’s ability to delegate certain functions, stating that the work was being done, just not exclusively by the principal.

The principal believed his time was better spent dedicated exclusively to the types of activities that Blasé and Blasé (1999) used to define “educational leadership”: (a)
emphasizing the study of teaching and learning; (b) supporting collaboration efforts among educators; (c) developing coaching relationships among educators; (d) encouraging and supporting redesign of programs; and (f) implementing action research to inform instructional decision making (p. 363).

Blasé and Blasé (1999) asked the following questions: What characteristics of school principals positively influence classroom teaching, and what effects do such characteristics have on classroom instruction? Researchers such as Leithwood et al. (2004) call for additional research on the relationships among instructional leadership, teaching, and student achievement. There is a need for more research into the effects of leader behavior on teacher behavior, the relationship of instructional leadership to teaching, instructional leaders' characteristics, and conditions necessary for effective instructional leadership. New models for delegating the non-instructional work necessary to keep schools open, orderly, and ready to facilitate achievement may provide new areas of understanding for making the NESD a better place for students to learn and grow.

**Implications for Further Research**

Perhaps the greatest area of agreement in the literature regarding the effective evaluation of school principals is that there exists little agreement concerning one best process and set of criteria to evaluate principals. Clearly in recent years the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002) and the Race to the Top (RTTT, 2010) initiative have focused attention on the role and power of the principal in student achievement, and there is no shortage of state-based initiatives examining principal evaluation. Likewise, the availability of commercial inventories and principal assessment measures indicate that
while there is little agreement on the very best way to evaluate principal practice and performance, there is increasing agreement that the role is vital to factors that influence student achievement. In contemplating implications for further research, several areas emerge from the team’s findings.

First, the delineation of the summative aspects of evaluation and the formative aspects of evaluation need to be made clear in the context of increasing state and federal accountability. Assessments have two purposes according to Condon and Clifford (2009). An assessment used for summative purposes tends to inform a decision about competence, and there is no opportunity for remediation or development after completion. According to Condon and Clifford (2009), formative assessments measure competence and could also be used by school districts to evaluate and assess potential areas of improvement for individual school principals in order to target professional development needs. Formative assessments should be adaptable enough to take into account the context of a principal’s workplace. One of the benefits of formative assessment is that it allows users to get immediate feedback on their strengths and weaknesses and can provide an opportunity to make mid-course changes. Other benefits include: increased accountability of principals and assessment of good instructional leadership practices and behavior.

More research focusing on how to wed the two aspects of evaluation in a high stakes environment is needed. Principal evaluation instruments should take into consideration the fact that school renewal is a cumulative, multi-year effort. Evaluation during the
early years of renewal, measure the beginning variables that might build a foundation for improved student learning, but which may not be immediately reflected in test scores.

Second, the collection of evidence that informs judgments in the summative and formative realm of principal evaluation needs refining and greater clarity. Originally used in business, the 360 degree feedback model is gaining recognition in education. Many states have incorporated 360 degree feedback models into their evaluation systems for teachers, principals, and superintendents. The participation of multiple stakeholders strengthens the quality of principal evaluation procedures by accounting for variations in school factors and contexts. The model allows leaders to gather data about themselves from multiple perspectives. “The fundamental premise is that the feedback is more comprehensive and objective than data gathered from only one source” (Dyer, 2001, p. 35). One role that 360 degree feedback plays is to allow leaders to compare their views of themselves with the views that others have of them. It can be a powerful tool if used wisely. Trust is a crucial part of the process. Dyer (2001) also suggests other factors essential to the effectiveness and integrity of a 360 degree model which include: feedback is developmental, not evaluative; feedback data belong to the receiver; and the process is confidential. Researchers suggest that the information provided by the multi-rater instrument be used only for personal and leadership development.

Finally, several researchers suggest that principals are the key stakeholders in their evaluations and such should be deeply involved in the creation of the process and the criteria upon which they are judged. The principals in the New England School District have little interest in this level of involvement and by-in-large hold the notion that it is
the job of district leadership to decide how they want to evaluate principals. While statewide dictation of evaluation process and criteria may make involvement in the construction of an evaluation system moot, principal involvement in the development of an evaluation instrument remains an interesting area for further study.
Appendix A

Principal Interview Questions: The Evaluation Criteria for Principals

1. What are the criteria on which you are evaluated? Do you understand what particulars are included under each criterion? Are expectations shared ahead of time as examples of what the criteria expect from you? Are you rated on a numerical scale on each criterion, with rubrics that explain the rating?

2. Do you think the criteria are fair? Explain why or why not. Would you single out one or more criterion as unfair? Give your reasons for each one you think unfair. Do you think those criteria should differ depending on the experience and grade level responsibilities of each principal? Explain.

3. Have you had the opportunity to participate in determining the criteria upon which your evaluation is based? Would you consider having a say important? Why, why not? If you had to state what the 3-5 most important things you do as a principal over the course of the school year, would you find those things covered in the criteria of your evaluation? Explain.

4. Did you/ do you get explicit feedback on the criteria that would define your strengths and shortcomings on each of the criteria, including specifics on what and how to improve shortcomings?

5. Does your evaluation result in professional development opportunities to improve identified areas of weakness?

6. Do you find the use of the evaluative criteria a help in doing your job? Whether yes or no, please explain.
7. What are the critical aspects of your job that are not evaluated? Please explain.
Appendix B

Principal Interview Questions: The Evaluation Process for Principals

1. Discuss the major steps in the current evaluation process? Does the evaluation include a self-evaluation component? Should it or shouldn't it? Explain why.

2. What role does dialogue or conversation have in the evaluation process between you and the evaluator before, during and after the evaluation takes place?

3. How much time does the superintendent spend with you on a weekly basis?

4. Are periodic meetings about evaluations held between all or groups of the principals and the superintendent? Explain and give examples.

5. Is the evaluation process consistent from year to year? Explain. Is that helpful? Explain?

6. How does the evaluation process affect your relationship with the superintendent? Explain. Give examples.

7. What kind of evidence is gathered as a basis of your evaluation? Are you satisfied that that part of the evaluation is well executed? Explain.

8. Do you have a say in what you will do in the coming year as a result of your yearly evaluation?

9. Has the evaluation process impacted your professional growth and practice as a principal? Explain.

10. Can you identify specific improvements in student learning and teacher effectiveness that you can attribute, directly or indirectly, to your yearly evaluations? Explain with examples.
11. What are the strengths, if any, of the evaluation process?

12. What are the weaknesses, if any, of the evaluation process?

13. If you were superintendent, how would you change the evaluation process for principals?
Appendix C

Superintendent Interview Questions: The Evaluation Criteria for Principals

1. What are the criteria by which you evaluate principals? Do you explain to the principals what particulars are included under each criterion? Are the criteria mentioned ahead of time as examples of what practices you expect from principals? Are principals rated on a numerical scale on each criterion, with rubrics that explain the rating?

2. Do you think the use of those criteria is fair? Explain why or why not. Would you single out one or more criteria as unfair? Get your reasons for each one you think unfair. Do you think those criteria should differ depending on the experience and grade level responsibilities of each principal? Explain.

3. Have you given principals the opportunity to participate in determining the criteria upon which their evaluation is based? Would you consider having a say important? Why, why not? If you had to state what the 3-5 most important things principals do over the course of the school year, would you find those things covered in the criteria of the evaluation? Explain.

4. Did you/do you need to provide some professional development opportunities to enable principals to get a fair evaluation on any of the criteria? Explain with examples.

5. Did you/do you give explicit feedback on principal strengths and shortcoming on each of the criteria, including specifics on what and how to improve shortcomings?
6. Do you find the use of the evaluative criteria a help in guiding a principal to do their job? Whether yes or no, Please explain.

7. Would you like to see one or more other criteria added to your evaluation? Are there time consuming parts of the principal’s job that are not evaluated? Please explain.
Appendix D

Superintendent Interview Questions: The Evaluation Process for Principals

1. What are the major steps followed in the current principal evaluation process? Should the sequence or the number of steps be changed? Explain why or why not. Does the evaluation require a self-evaluation to be included in the process? Should it or shouldn't it? Explain why.

2. What kind of conversations take place between you and the principal before, during, and after the evaluation takes place?

3. Is the evaluation’s process the same every year, or does it vary? Explain. Is that helpful? Explain? Should it vary? Explain.


5. Does the evaluation process enter into discussions during periodic meetings of all or groups of the principals with the superintendent? Explain and give examples.

6. Does the evaluation process help principals in their professional growth?

7. What kind of evidence is gathered to be used as a basis of principal evaluation? Are you satisfied that that part of the evaluation is carried out well? Explain.

8. Do principals have a say in what they will do in the coming year as a result of your yearly evaluation?

9. Are principals better leaders now because of the way you have been evaluated? Explain.
10. Can you name specific improvements in student learning and teacher effectiveness that you can attribute, directly or indirectly, to yearly evaluation of a principal? Explain with examples.

11. What are the best parts, if any, of the evaluation process?

12. What are the worst parts, if any, of the evaluation process?

13. If you were principal, how would you change the evaluation process used by the superintendent?

14. How much time do you spend with the principals on a weekly basis?
Appendix E
Demographics of Principals: Evaluation Survey

1. What is your gender? ______ Male ______ Female

2. What is your age range?
   < 24  25-29  30-34  35-39  40-44  45-50  51-55  56-60  60 +

3. Is this your first principalship? ____ Yes ____ No

4. How many years have you been principal? ____________

5. What grade levels do your service in your school?
   PK  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10  11  12  12+  Alternative  Vocational

6. How many years have you worked with your current superintendent? ____________

7. How many times have you been evaluated by your superintendent? ____________

8. When did you negotiate your last contract? ____________

9. How many years is your current contract? ____________

10. Is there an explicit process by which principals are evaluated in your school district?
    ____ No ____ Yes, if so please explain briefly

11. Can you identify the criteria and norms of your evaluation?

(Hallinger & Murphy, 1987)
Appendix F

Demographics of Superintendents: Evaluation Survey

1. What is your gender? _____ Male _____ Female

2. What is your age range?
   < 24  25-29  30-34  35-39  40-44  45-50  51-55  56-60  60 >

3. Is this your first superintendency? ____ Yes ____ No

4. How many years have you been a superintendent? _________

5. How many years have you worked in this district as a superintendent? _________

6. Do you practice a research based evaluation process?
   _____ No _____ Yes, if yes please identify the process or model _______

7. How many years have you utilized a performance evaluation process for principal evaluation? (circle one)
   0  1-2  3-4  4-5  5-6  7-8  9-10  10+  

8. How frequently do you complete the evaluation of your principals?
   A. Every year    B. Every other year   C. Every third year   D. Other

   (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987)
Appendix G

District Improvement Plan
Public Schools
2011-2012

October 12, 2011
Domain 1: Literacy in All Content Areas

Goals:

Students will know and use reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking strategies to learn across all content areas. They will demonstrate, communicate, and transfer their learning to new situations.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of mathematical literacy, fluency with algebraic thinking, both abstract and procedural, and will implement strategic and efficient problem solving.

Specific Goals:

1. Embed literacy instruction in all content areas.

2. Match core instruction and interventions to student needs using a three-tiered system.

3. Implement the Mathematics and ELA (English Language Arts) with.

Actions:

1. Embed literacy instruction in all content areas.

   - Focus on strong content literacy instruction in all content areas for all students.
   - Integrate frequent reading, writing and vocabulary development in all content areas.
   - Develop instructional activities that will promote critical thinking and meta-cognition.
   - Write to communicate as well as writing to learn.
   - Increase the use of complex text from multiple sources.
   - Use text at grade level complexity.
   - Focus on persuasive and informational writing.
   - Engage in academic discussions at all levels.
   - Develop students' skills in the use of various media and technology.

PK-5: Literacy and Reading Instruction

Focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension using a strong core program for all students. All students will be taught with grade-level materials, and leveled readers will be used for practice and application of skills taught.
• Whole and small group instruction; ample guided and independent practice; differentiated instruction specific to the needs of the students
• Writing and word work in conjunction with reading
• Spelling instruction based on student need and integrated with word study (phonics)
• Shelter instruction in the classroom for Levels 3-5 English Language Learner students
• Increase in the use expository text at primary grades.
• Expand vocabulary instruction beyond the core program.

6-12: Literacy in Content Areas

Focus on strong content literacy instruction in all content areas for all students; provide instruction using grade level materials.

• Integrate frequent reading, writing and vocabulary development in all content areas.
• Develop instructional activities that will promote critical thinking and metacognition.
• Focus on writing to communicate as well as writing to learn.
• Incorporate sheltering strategies in the content areas for Levels 3-5 English Language Learner students.
• Provide Levels 1-2 English Language Learner students a team teaching approach (English Language Learner teacher and content area teacher) to delivering instruction.
• Provide Special Education students with effective access to the curriculum through a co-teaching approach (Special Education teacher/ELA/Math/ content area teacher).

All Students: Literacy in Mathematics Instruction

Focus on a coherent progression of mathematics with an emphasis on mathematical conceptual understanding, mathematical computational fluency and mathematical problem solving skills using a strong core program for all students.

• Promote, math expression, math reading, consistent math vocabulary and math writing fluency.
• Increase students' coherence in mathematics instruction across and between all grade levels.
• Utilize math intervention resources that are aligned with the core instruction.
• Incorporate sheltering strategies in the content areas for Levels 3-5 English Language Learner students.
• Offer native language clarification of mathematical concepts and vocabulary when needed.
• Provide Levels 1-2 English Language Learner students a team teaching approach (English Language Learner teacher and content area teacher) to delivering instruction.
• Provide Special Education students effective access to the curriculum through a co-teaching approach (Special Education teacher/ELA/Math/content area teacher).

PK-5: Literacy in Mathematics Instruction
• Develop competency in basic math skills appropriate to each grade level.
• Develop proficiency with whole numbers, decimals, percents, and fractions.
• Develop basic algebraic thinking at all grade levels.
• Develop literacy of mathematical symbols and notations.
• Develop students’ abilities to use reasoning skills when problem solving.

6-12: Literacy Instruction in Mathematics
• Improve students’ understanding of the relationships within mathematical representations.
• Develop students’ abilities to strategically choose and efficiently implement procedures in algebra.
• Increase students’ abilities to use reasoning skills when problem solving.
• Improve students’ literacy in mathematical symbols and notations.
• Utilize and improve students’ algebraic thinking so that students can access advanced mathematics and pursue college and career pathways without the need for remediation.

2. Match core instruction and interventions to student needs using a three-tiered system.
• Tier I whole and small group instruction within core instruction; ample guided and independent practice; differentiated instruction
• Tier II supplemental and additional instruction beyond the core that provides students additional instruction and reinforcement
• Tier III intervention for students identified to have a gap in learning or difference in learning that impacts the achievement of grade level standards
• For Tier II and Tier III, interventions are strategically matched to student sub-skill deficits, and the interventions support and accelerate the academic progress of students.

3. 2011 Mathematics and ELA Literacy Curriculum Frameworks
• Provide professional development on the Mathematics and Literacy
• Initiate curriculum guide development committees.
D. Performance Aspirations:

- Meet Targets as displayed in Tables 1 – 6.

- Increase from \textit{to} the number of grade three students meeting or exceeding the benchmark for Oral Reading Fluency on the DIBELS.

- Increase from \textit{to} the number of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the grade 3 reading comprehension.

- Increase by 6\% the District percent on reading comprehension questions on the 2012 ELA in Grades.

- Increase the District writing\textit{...opic development score on 2012 \)...}

  \begin{tabular}{lcc}
  Grade & - from & \% \\
  Grade & - from & \% \\
  Grade & - from & \% \\
  \end{tabular}

- Increase from \% to \% the number of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the grade.

- Increase from \% to \% the number of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the grade Mathematics.

- Increase from \% to \% the number of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the grade Mathematics.

- Increase from \% to \% the number of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the grade Mathematics.

- By 2013, 100\% of students will be Algebra ready when entering grade 8 as evidenced by an increase in enrollment in 8th grade Algebra 1 from 33\% in 2011 to 50\% in 2012.
**Grade Span 3 - 5**

Table 1: ELA Performance Targets for years 2011 - 2014: Grades 3 - 5

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* Actual Scores

Table 2: Mathematics Performance Targets for years 2011 - 2014: Grades 3 - 5

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* Actual Scores
### Grade Span 6 – 8

Table 3: ELA Performance Targets for years 2011 – 2014: Grades 6 - 8

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Table 4: Mathematics Performance Targets for years 2011 – 2014: Grades 6 - 8

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* Actual Scores
**Grade Span 9 - 12**

Table 5: ELA Performance Targets for years 2011 – 2014: Grades 9 - 12

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Table 6: Mathematics Performance Targets for years 2011 – 2014: Grades 9 - 12

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Domain II: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Goal:

Students will learn within a standards-based and data-driven system that includes aligned, coherent curricula and rigorous instruction that is responsive to the needs of all students.

Specific Goals:

1. Standards-Based Curriculum
   - Implement a Pre-K - 12 standards-based curriculum that is aligned with to ensure a cohesive system.

2. Effective Instruction
   - Provide effective instruction that will prepare students to transition to the next grade level successfully and ultimately to achieve college and career readiness without the need for remediation.

3. Assessment
   - Utilize a data-driven decision-making system to inform and differentiate instruction to facilitate student learning.

Actions:

Standards-Based Curriculum

1. Meet curriculum requirements for college and career readiness.
3. Monitor any gap in content areas during transition between editions.
4. Collaborate vertically to reinforce cohesiveness.
5. Align curriculum with the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes (ELPBO) and include language and content area objectives.

Effective Instruction

6. Utilize research-based instructional methods, interventions and best practices in district classrooms with support from professional development in the following areas:
   - Alignment to the instructional expectations outlined in the 2011 Literacy and Mathematics
   - The Psychology of Student Engagement: Strategies for Educators
   - Content based professional development that spans across and between grade levels
   - Category English Language Learner trainings

8
• Professional learning community and content offerings
• Differentiated Instruction
• Targeted professional development based on school instructional foci
• Literacy/LETRS professional development
• Cultural Competency in the Classroom and Beyond
• Leadership development to guide continuous instructional improvement

7. Utilize instructional strategies that address the following:
   • Engaging students in tasks that address all four cognitive domains: recall, skills and concepts, strategic thinking, and extended thinking
   • Increasing focus on persuasive and informational writing across content areas
   • Reading complex text accurately and fluently in all classes
   • Engaging students in critical thinking through discussions and written work
   • Providing opportunities for students to apply content knowledge in real-world applications

8. Provide both a direct and/or team teaching method for the delivery of instruction to Levels 1-2 ELL students in order to maximize access to the core curriculum. (Team teaching includes the English Language Learner teacher and content/classroom teacher.)

9. Implement sheltered instruction across the content areas for Levels 3-5 ELL students.

10. Implement instructional accommodations and modifications specified in students’ Individual Education Plans and 504 Plans with fidelity.

Assessment

11. Implement existing District assessments to monitor student learning and curriculum cohesiveness. (Appendix 1)

12. Systematically track and analyze student progress through data.

13. Utilize student assessment data to inform and adjust instruction to maximize student learning.

14. Utilize student assessment data to determine the allocation of resources.

15. Develop learning communities that utilize data to improve learning for all students.

16. Develop formative and summative assessments and extended performance tasks, as part of the Race-to-the-Top (RTTT) initiative.

17. Develop an action plan for increasing the number of students completing the recommended completion rate as part of the RTTT initiative.
Performance Aspirations:

- Increase from % to % the 9th to 10th grade promotion rate.
- Reduce by % the achievement gap for each low performing subgroup, as measured by CPI.
- Reduce by % the gap in high school graduation rate by each low-performing subgroup. (Table 7)
- Increase the 4-year cohort graduation rate from % in 2009 to % in 2012. (Table 7)
- Increase from % to % the percent of students completing the
  Reduce percentage of students dropping out from % in 2010 to % in 2014.
- Maintain District attendance rate at % or higher for all levels.

AYP Targets:

Table 7: Graduation Rate Targets (4 & 5 year unadjusted) for years 2011-2018

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Domain III: School Climate

Goal

Students will learn in a physically and emotionally supportive environment conducive to student growth and achievement.

Specific Goals:

1. School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS)
   
   • Build positive school climate through continued implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS).

2. Prevention
   
   • Reduce the incidence of violence, bullying, substance abuse, pregnancy and sexually transmitted illnesses through the consistent implementation of prevention programming and professional development for staff and others.

3. Safety Nets
   
   • Increase attendance, academic advancement, and graduation rates through academic, behavioral, and social support services.

Actions

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS)

1. Utilize building-specific data in each school to establish PBS goals and develop implementation plans.

2. Review and continue revitalization of building-based School Climate Team membership and the creation of a calendar of meetings.

3. Create a district level PBS advisory group to provide opportunities for across-building collaboration and to guide professional development and intervention activities.

4. Administer the \( \text{Survey}\) to faculty and school leaders to gather school climate data as is available by the

5. Offer professional development to support effective, proactive classroom routines and procedures with a focus on enhancing student engagement.

6. Expand implementation of systematic, routine intervention programs for targeted at-risk students, utilizing the Behavioral Education Program (BEP) model.
7. Refer students who display academic, behavioral and/or social risk indicators to the problem-solving process (Building Assistance Meetings) to develop and monitor intervention plans/safety nets in each building.
8. Convene an interdisciplinary district team to identify and create written protocol and procedures for risk assessment of students identified as possible threats to themselves or others.
9. Identify survey tools that measure student school engagement and aspirations, and implement the survey with teachers and students to determine engagement and school climate factors.
10. Create a survey calendar to coordinate evaluation efforts.

Prevention

1. Fully implement Violence Prevention Programs—Second Step (Grades K-6) and Steps to Respect (Grades 3-5).
2. Utilize district Bullying Prevention and Implementation Task Force of teachers and administrators, in collaboration with parents, students and community stakeholders to review, refine and implement the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.
3. Implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program and other bullying prevention activities identified in the District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan in each school (Grades K-12).
4. Further develop a reporting system of suspected bullying incidents and explore use of an electronic bullying reporting system.
5. Implement substance abuse prevention programs in Grades 6 and Grade 9.
6. Implement pregnancy/STI prevention curricula in Grade 8—10.
8. Implement “Balancing the Equation” activities in identified grade levels.

Safety Nets

1. Support students at risk through assessment, behavior planning, interventions such as counseling, case management, family consultation, and referral to appropriate resources.
2. Evaluate and refine Educational Options for Success (EOS) and Positive Options Program (POP), including credit recovery, dual enrollment, extended day and year programs, the Juvenile Resource Center, and alternative pathways.
3. Increase participation of students and families in extended day and year 21st Century Programs.
4. Provide transition planning and programs for students.
5. Expand the model of professional learning communities across middle and high schools to identify a set of educators to support, monitor and plan for the needs of students at risk during the 8th to 9th grade transition.
6. Participate in the Urban Schools with a district team continuing to research and implement best practices including mentoring, early warning indicators, early childhood interventions.

7. Administer My Voice survey in concert with the

Performance Aspirations:

1. School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS)
   - Reduce incidence of in and out-of-school suspension.
   - Evaluate annual results of SET (School Evaluation Tool) and EBS (Effective Behavioral Support) survey data to determine increased level of PBS implementation in each school.
   - Review the impact on the performance of individual students who participated in a Behavioral Education Program (BEP) Program.
   - Improve student attendance and increase academic or behavioral performance through the use of Building Assistance Meetings.
   - Implement and evaluate protocol for risk assessment.

2. Prevention
   - Implement the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, and identify data for numbers of incidents of bullying.
   - Report reduction in risk behaviors and increase in protective factors on Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) survey.
   - Fully implement Second Step and Steps to Respect curricula on the annual implementation survey.
   - Increase percentage of staff completing annual school-based Olweus anti-bullying training.
   - Provide orientation and training in the Olweus Anti-Bullying Program and other prevention programming to 100% of new staff as pertinent to their grade levels.
   - Provide students with substance use prevention and teen pregnancy/sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) prevention programming that leads to a decrease in at-risk indicators in post-tests completed by those students.
• Indicators show an increase in student physical activity and nutrition in response to Balancing the Equation grant.

3. Safety Nets

• Decrease in dropout rate and increase graduation rate (according to indicators established in Domain II)

• Increased student participation in 21st Century programming

• Increase in attendance rate to achieve and maintain state established performance target of 93% average daily attendance

• Increase in promotion rate for grades from % to

• Decrease in number of students failing 2+ classes in grades 6-9

• Increase in levels of student engagement

• Increase in student aspirations as measured by the number of graduates scheduled to enroll in pursuing a post-secondary credential
Domain IV: Safety and Emergency Planning

Goal

Public Schools will continue to develop, plan, and practice emergency planning procedures to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Specific Goals:

1. Emergency Planning and Practice
2. Maintenance of Certified and Trained Staff
3. Coordination with Community-Based Public Safety Organizations

Actions

Emergency Planning and Practice

1. Each school and the School Administration Center will conduct drills for evacuation and relocation, lock-down and shelter-in-place situations.

2. Emergency Planning Teams at each school and the School Administration Center will meet annually to review incident command roles and expectations and protocols and procedures and to revise security and safety plans based on current standards and evidence from practice drills.

3. The District Emergency Management Team will review these plans annually.

Maintenance of Certified and Trained Staff

1. The district will increase and maintain certification of staff in each school building that are trained in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention strategies for de-escalation, personal safety and safe physical holds in the event that a restraint becomes necessary.

2. The district will deliver professional development training regarding safety and emergency procedures for district health care and educational staff in CPR, AED (Administrative Enforcement Order), First Aid, Epi-Pen use, temporary medication distribution, vaccination administration training, and pandemic illness prevention during the year.

Coordination with Community-Based Public Safety Organizations
1. Collaboration with emergency service agencies, i.e., FEMA, the Police and Fire Departments and the District Attorney’s Office will be maintained to provide students and families with information and skills that ensure safety in and out of school and support an increase in protective factors and a decrease in risk factors for students (i.e. Drug Awareness Resistance Education, Gang Resistance Education And Training, Canine Unit Demonstrations, and Violence Prevention programming including anti-bullying prevention and intervention, including cyber-bullying).

2. Students, families, and staff will be provided with information, preventative strategies, and care through collaboration with the Department of Public Health (i.e. H1N1 informational sessions and vaccination clinics, dissemination of information processes, and Emergency Recovery efforts through FEMA recovery standards).

Performance Aspirations

- Documentation of completed drills and corresponding revisions to safety and emergency planning procedures and protocols
- Positive normative behaviors among students and decreased risk behaviors through student participation in school and community-based programs and events
- Increased number of trained and certified staff capable of responding to a safety, emergency, or health-related event
- Informed and prepared staff, students and families who have the information necessary to respond safely in emergency situations
Domain V: Family, School, and Community Connections

Goal

- Public Schools shares responsibility with families, business partners and the community to foster and maintain welcoming, mutual and culturally-sensitive collaborations that support student learning and career/college readiness.

Specific Goals:

1. Effective Mutual Communication
   - Schools routinely and systematically share and solicit information with and from families and engage in meaningful dialog about learning, academic expectations, achievement and healthy student development.

2. Schools as Partners with Families
   - Staff shares responsibility with families to support academic achievement and healthy student development.

3. Schools as Partners with the Community
   - Staff collaborates with community partners to connect students and families to expanded learning opportunities and community services to support academic achievement, social development and civic participation.

Actions

Effective Mutual Communication:

1. Utilize district and building parent advisory committees to create routine opportunities for interaction and communication regarding district policies, current issues, concerns, and possible solutions.

2. Analyze school climate, parent surveys and other pertinent data to inform the development of more responsive family engagement planning.

3. Examine current ways that staff and families interact (using a variety of methods, media and technology) both formally and informally to inform plans for improving communication.

4. Plan routine, consistent communication timelines and expectations for delivery at the district and school level.
Schools as Partners with Families

1. Identify and deliver clear, concise messages to families about the ways that they can support and work with the schools to improve student academic and social success.

2. Identify and deliver consistent set of expectations for staff regarding communication with families.

3. Actively recruit under-represented families to participate in parent leadership and collaboration groups and communicate in families’ native languages whenever possible.

4. Provide opportunities for families to share their unique experiences and skills to enhance the learning of all students.

5. Schedule school activities at community locations, such as work sites, libraries, and faith-based centers, to improve access of programming by removing obstacles to participation.

Schools as Partners with the Community

1. Collaborate with local businesses, postsecondary schools and community organizations to identify resources to expand school and community learning sites and alternative pathways for instruction and to encourage community members to serve as mentors for students.

2. Participate actively in community coalitions focused on improving student success and healthy development; such as the Employment Board, Prevention Partnership, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coalition, etc.

3. Coordinate with community partners the delivery of prevention and wellness services and resources through such programs as the Juvenile Resource Center, the Abuse Services and 21st Century providers.

4. Partner with local government officials to support program and budget development and to facilitate understanding of District mission within the community.

Performance Aspirations:

1. Written recommendations and implementation of communications and public relations plan and feedback
2. Increased number of families, including under-represented populations, participating in school-based programs offered to parents; evaluation of feedback from parents

3. Increased number of staff participating in community organizations and events

4. Reports from business and community stakeholders of mutual collaboration in support of student achievement and college/career readiness

5. Consistently delivered and updated district and school websites

6. School newsletters routinely delivered across the district

7. Establishment of guidelines regarding norms for staff communication with families

8. Identified ways that families can support school success in their homes
Appendix H

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT
BETWEEN
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
AND

TO SERVE AS
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
FOR THE PERIOD
AUGUST 1, 20( ) THROUGH JULY 31, 20( )

Preamble
This document (hereinafter "the Agreement" or "this Agreement") recites in full the terms and conditions under which NAME, residing at ADDRESS (hereinafter "the Employee"), and the Superintendent of the Schools ("the school system"), County, (hereinafter "the Superintendent"), acting pursuant to his statutory authority under the laws of the and also as the agent for the School Committee (hereinafter "the Committee"), do hereby agree that the Employee shall serve as an employee with the Public Schools in the position and for the period of time set forth below.

Article I Period of Employment
The Superintendent and the Employee agree that, except as may be otherwise set forth herein, the Employee shall serve the Public Schools as SCHOOL PRINCIPAL for the period commencing August 1, 20( ), and ending July 31, 20( ).

Article II Responsibilities
The Employee shall be responsible directly to the Superintendent or her/his designee for satisfactory performance of those duties and tasks set forth in the Employee’s position description.
Employment Agreement between
School Committee
August 1, 2009 - July 31, 2012
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Article III Compensation

§ 1. Regular Compensation
The Employee shall be paid in the year 20( ) - ( ) a salary of $______.

§ 2. Salary for August 1, 20( ) - July 31, 20( )
The Public Schools and the Employee agree that any salary increase for the period of August 1, 20( ) through July 31, 20( ) and August 1, 20( ) through July 31, 20( ), will be subject to negotiations prior to August 1 of each of the above years. The parties further agree that the salary for the above contract years shall not be less that the prior contract year.

§ 3. Calculation of Per Diem Rate
The Employee’s per diem pay rate shall be determined by dividing his annual salary by 210, the number of work days set forth for that contract year in Article V § 1, below.

§ 4. Payment for Early Notice of Intent to Retire
If the Employee is eligible to retire during the period of this Agreement, has at least ten (10) years’ continuous service as a teacher or principal in the school system, and gives irrevocable notice by January 1 of his intent to retire, resign, or otherwise leave the employ of the Public Schools at the end of that contract year, so long as the Employee ends his employment other than for reasons of proof or credible allegations of misconduct or other good cause for termination, then the Employee shall be entitled to payment of five thousand dollars ($5,000.00) upon retirement. The Committee, solely at its discretion, in extraordinary circumstances, may waive the irrevocability of the retirement notice.

§ 5. Severance Pay
A. Unused Sick Leave
1. If the Employee has served in a professional capacity for at least twenty (20) years in the Public Schools, or has been principal in the Public Schools for at least five (5) years, then he shall be entitled to severance pay upon his death, retirement, resignation, involuntary termination for other than cause, or otherwise leaving the employ of the Public Schools, so long as the Employee ends his employment for reasons not arising from proof or credible allegations of misconduct or other good cause for termination.

2. The procedure used to calculate the Employee’s severance pay for unused sick leave shall be as follows.
   a. An accounting of the Employee’s unused sick leave accumulated while a member of the Public Schools will be made.
   b. All personal days used after September 1, 1975, shall be deducted from the Employee’s unused sick leave for severance pay purposes only.
The Employee shall receive fifteen percent (15%) of his current per diem rate of pay for each unused sick leave day for severance pay purposes only. If the Employee chooses upon retirement to apply the aforementioned sum to his health insurance premium for a coverage provided to its retirees by the City of, upon retirement, then the sum due the Employee shall be increased by ten percent (10%).

B. Unused Personal Leave

If the Employee qualifies to receive severance pay pursuant to subsection A, above, and if the Employee has not used more than one-half of the personal leave days available to him during his period of employment by the Public Schools, then the Employee shall receive one hundred dollars ($100.00) per day for each unused personal day as part of his severance pay.

C. Forfeiture of Severance Pay

The Employee shall forfeit all severance benefits as described in this Section if he resigns or retires before the end of the contract year; except that this restriction shall not apply in the case of verified medical reasons, or other mitigating personal reasons, that the Superintendent in her/his sole discretion determines would make a mid-year retirement or resignation necessary or justifiable.

Article IV Benefits

To the extent permitted by federal or state law, or by ordinance or policy of the City of, the Employee shall be entitled to such benefits, including health insurance, term life insurance, and withholding for tax-sheltered annuity contributions, and all other benefits that are available to other employees of the Public Schools who work comparable hours and weeks per year. Health insurance rates and benefits for the employee shall be whatever benefits are provided to, and whatever rates are paid by, other Public Schools employees, and changes therein shall not be subject to prior agreement or ratification by the Employee.

Article V Work Year

§1. Work Year

The Employee’s work year shall be a full year, as defined in Article XVIII § 1, below, and, except as otherwise provided herein, the Employee shall appear for work on 210 working days of that year, ready, willing, and able to meet the responsibilities and to perform the duties and tasks of his position satisfactorily. The Employee’s work year obligation shall include orientation days, staff development days, and all other days when teachers are present, with the remainder of the Employee’s work year obligation determined in concert with the Superintendent or her/his designee.
§2. Buy-back of Vacation Leave for Approved Reasons
The Employee may, with the submittal of a written plan for use of the time, and with the prior written approval of the Superintendent, buy back not more than ten (10) days’ vacation time during a contract year. Such days shall be compensated at the current per diem rate.

§3. Extension of Work Year at Superintendent’s Direction
The Employee may be directed by the Superintendent to work up to five (5) additional days in a contract year, with compensation at the Employee’s per diem pay rate. Such days shall be compensated at the current per diem rate.

§4. Extension of Work Year at Superintendent’s Direction for Purposes of Transition
If, during or at the end of this Agreement, the Employee retires or resigns at the end of a contract year other than for reasons of proof or credible allegations of misconduct or other good cause for termination, then the Superintendent may direct the Employee to work up to ten (10) additional days in order to facilitate the administrative transition to a new principal for the next school year. Such days shall be compensated at the Employee’s per diem rate in the contract year in which his employment ends.

Article VI. Work Day
The Employee shall work at his assigned tasks for as long as necessary before the beginning of the regular classroom teacher’s work day and after the conclusion of the regular classroom teacher’s work day in order to fulfill all the responsibilities of his position. Such obligations shall include but shall not be limited to being available to respond to emergency situations that might occur as students travel to and from school, and to be in attendance to monitor or to arrange for designees to monitor all pre- and post-school activities and other such responsibilities associated with educational leadership.

Article VII. Performance Evaluation.
§1. Immediate Supervisor
The Employee, in the capacity set forth in Article I, above, shall report in all matters to the Superintendent; and, in all operational matters, shall report to the Deputy Superintendent as the Superintendent’s designee.

§2. Evaluation Procedure
The Employee shall meet with the Superintendent at least once during the year for the purpose of establishing annual objectives as a component of the evaluation process and for discussing the Employee’s performance in the fulfillment of his job responsibilities. The evaluation of the Employee’s performance by the Superintendent shall be based upon established criteria, including the Employee’s Management by Objectives, and in compliance with provisions that evaluations be performance-based, and shall include consideration of both student academic performance
and fulfillment of teacher performance standards. The development of evaluative criteria for subsequent years may also be a component of the Employee's evaluation process. The Deputy Superintendent shall be an in-put evaluator.

§3. Merit Pay
A. Special circumstances wherein a performance objective is established that would result in a particularly noteworthy accomplishment for the Employee's school, or a major contribution by the Employee to system-wide progress, may, upon realization or successful completion, result in a predetermined financial merit award as authorized by the Superintendent, based on in-put from the Deputy Superintendent.

B. No payment made under this subsection shall be considered as part of the Employee's base salary.

Article VIII. Leave
§1. Paid Sick Leave
The Employee will receive fifteen (15) paid sick leave days with full pay for each school year, with additional sick leave granted at the rate of one (1) paid sick leave day for each ten (10) days of employment required by this Agreement in excess of the school year, for a total of 18 paid sick leave days per contact year. Sick leave is granted for absences due to injury, illness, or disability. The Employee may accumulate unused sick leave days up to 195 days in addition to his current sick leave days for the year.

§2. Paid Personal Leave
The Employee may be granted up to two (2) paid personal leave days per year by the Superintendent or her/his designee. A reason may be required before granting the request.

§3. Paid Bereavement Leave
A. 1. In the event of a death in the Employee's immediate family, the Employee shall be entitled to bereavement leave without loss of pay for up to five (5) consecutive work days, calculation of such days to begin either with the day of the family member's death or the day of the funeral, at the Employee's discretion.

2. As used herein, "immediate family" shall mean a parent, spouse, life partner/companion, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sibling, or a person for whom the Employee has had the responsibility for making funeral arrangements.
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B. The Employee shall be entitled to bereavement leave without loss of pay for up to
four (4) consecutive work days, such days to begin with either the day of the death or
the day of the funeral, at the Employee’s discretion, of a grandparent, grandchild,
brother-in-law, sister-in-law, or someone living in the employee’s immediate
household.

C. The Employee shall be entitled to bereavement leave without loss of pay for the day
or portion thereof that is necessary to attend the funeral of the following: uncle, aunt,
nephew, niece, cousin, or -in-law other than enumerated in subsections A or B,
above.

§4. Jury Duty Leave
The Employee shall be granted paid leave for jury duty service. The Employee shall
reimburse the Pittsfield Public Schools the amount of any and all compensation that the
Employee receives from any other source for his jury duty service.

Article IX Certificate
The Employee shall furnish to the Superintendent or her/his designee not later than the
Employee’s first day of employment, and shall duly maintain throughout the term of the
Agreement, a valid and appropriate certificate that qualifies the Employee under
and the regulations of the
promulgated thereunder to serve in the
in the
position set forth in Article I, above.

Article X Professional Development
§1. Professional Development Funds Available to All Principals
A. General Professional Development Fund
The Committee shall set aside thirteen thousand dollars ($13,000) annually for professional
development opportunities for all principals employed in the Public Schools.

B. Graduate Coursework Fund
The Committee shall set aside $5,000 per year, as a fund separate and distinct from that
described in Subsection A, above, for principals’ reimbursement for tuition and fees
when taking graduate coursework approved in advance by the Superintendent of Schools or
her/his designee. Consistent with the general rules described in § 3 of this Article, and any
other rules set forth therein to the contrary notwithstanding, payment from the graduate
coursework fund shall be made pro rata at the end of each contract year based on submittal
by each principal seeking reimbursement of satisfactory evidence of that principal’s
successful completion of the coursework for which reimbursement is sought.
§2. Purpose of Professional Development Funds
The funds described in § 1 of this Article shall be used to facilitate the Employee’s recertification, or to foster enhancement of her ability to lead his school if the principal’s role is defined in

§ 3. Procedure for Claiming Professional Development Funds
Subject to funding and to the Employee’s provision of suitable documentation, the Superintendent shall see to the Employee’s reimbursement of expenses he may incur in attending meetings, courses, conferences, or other professional improvement opportunities, so long as said attendance was undertaken with the advance approval of the Superintendent or her/his designee. The Employee’s request for reimbursement under this section shall be made in writing on the appropriate forms prior to his attending any such meeting, course, conference, or other professional improvement opportunity. Permission to attend such programming shall not be withheld unreasonably. Except as set forth specifically in § 1.B of this Article, the way in which these funds will be allocated to principals who qualify shall be determined by the Superintendent or her/his designee based upon the funds available and the amount of the requests. The reimbursement for personal car mileage will be in accordance with the rate established for and being paid by the Public Schools at the time the mileage is incurred.

Article XI Indemnification
The Committee shall indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the Employee against any claim, liability, judgment, or other legal action arising out of, or relating to, the Employee’s performance of his duties, insofar as such protection is not inconsistent with and insofar as such coverage is in accordance with the Public Schools’ or the City of pertinent insurance policies. To the extent permitted by law and applicable insurance coverage, the Committee shall continue to so indemnify, hold harmless, and defend the Employee even if such claim or legal action has been commenced following the end of the Employee’s period of employment by the Committee if such claim arose out of acts he performed while functioning within the scope of his official duties of employment. The Committee may compromise and settle any such claim or legal action and shall pay, or its insurer shall pay, the amount of any such settlement or final judgment rendered thereon.

Article XII Other Work
During the term of this Agreement the Employee shall devote his full time, skill, labor, and attention to the discharge of his duties in the position to which he is appointed to serve under Article I, above; provided, however, that the Employee may undertake other work, with or without remuneration, as long as such activities do not interfere, in the opinion of the Superintendent, with the full and faithful discharge of the Employee’s responsibilities and duties as specified herein.
Article XIII. Termination of the Agreement

§1. Termination by Mutual Consent
This Agreement may be terminated by written agreement between the Superintendent and the Employee. Such an agreement shall be effective only when signed by both parties hereto.

§2. Termination by Resignation
Except as may be otherwise agreed in writing by the parties hereto, the Employee may resign his position, as stated in Article I, above, by means of a writing submitted to the Superintendent or his designee not fewer than sixty (60) calendar days in advance of the effective date of the resignation.

§3. Termination for Financial Necessity and/or Reorganization
The Agreement may be terminated as of July 31st of any year due to financial necessity and/or reorganization so long as notice is provided to the Administrator no later than June 1st. In such situation, the Superintendent may determine not to terminate the Agreement, but instead to cause a reduction of the workday or work year, or demote the Administrator to a less skilled position. If such a determination is made, the Administrator must be given notice no later than June 1st and such change will not occur until August 1st. If the workday or work year is reduced, there will be a corresponding proration of the salary to reflect the changed workday or work year. In the event of a demotion, the parties will negotiate the salary rate of the new position.

§4. Termination by Notice Not to Renew Agreement at Expiration, or For Cause.
The Employee’s employment may not be otherwise terminated except in accordance with the pertinent provisions of , and other applicable state and federal law.

Article XIV. Written Agreement
This Agreement shall continue in full force and effect for the term expressed in Article I, above, unless otherwise terminated in a manner set forth in Article XIV, above, or unless modified in a writing signed by the parties hereto; and no modification of this Agreement shall be deemed to have or shall be given effect unless and until reduced to a writing and signed as herein required.

Article XV. Severability
The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this Agreement shall in no way affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision hereof.
Article XVI. Headings
Numbered headings appearing herein are intended for convenience of reference only, and are not intended to alter, vary, or otherwise affect the construction and meanings of any part of this Agreement.

Article XVII. Definitions
§1. Except where another meaning is expressly stated, the term “year” shall mean in this Agreement the period August 1 through July 31, and shall be understood to be synonymous with the term “contract year,” as used herein.

§2. The term “school year” shall mean in this Agreement the part of the year, as defined in §1, above, that students receive instruction pursuant to the School Committee’s approved school calendar.

§3. The term “working day” shall mean in this Agreement any day of the year when the central administrative offices of the Public Schools are open for business.

§4. The term “work day” shall mean in this Agreement that portion of a working day when the Employee shall be expected to be present at work and to be performing the duties and tasks and to be meeting the responsibilities of his position.

Article XVIII. Scope of the Agreement
All provisions of the Agreement pertain solely and without exception to the Employee’s service to the Public Schools in the position set forth in Article I, below.

Article XIX. Integration
This Agreement represents the full and complete understanding and intent of the parties hereto and, except as may be stated expressly herein or as may be required by law, no other writing shall be considered a part of this Agreement, or as modifying or qualifying any part of this Agreement.
Employment Agreement between

School Committee

August 1, 2009– July 31, 2012

Page 10 of 10

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have set their hands the day and year set forth below.

Superintendent of
Schools _______________________________ Date ________________

Employee ______________________________ Date ________________
Appendix I

Administrator’s Evaluation Form  
2009-2010

Name: ____________________________________________

Position: _________________________________________

Years in Present Position: ____________________________

Employment Date: _________________________________

Administrator’s Signature: _________________________ Date: __________________

Evaluator’s Signature: _____________________________ Date: __________________
PERFORMANCE RATING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RATING SCALE</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Progress Toward Objectives

Progress toward annual goals and objectives established by the Superintendent of Schools.

Progress toward the annual School Improvement Plan objectives established by the Administrator and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools.

Comments:

Relationships with Students

Progress toward development of positive relationships and effective communications with students.

Degree to which school encourages development of self-educating pupils.

Degree to which the pupils demonstrate growth in self-control or self-discipline.

Effectiveness in dealing with conflict situations, behavior problems, etc.

Degree to which the school encourages the development of a positive self-image among students.

Comments:

Relationships with Faculty

Progress toward development of positive relationships and effective communications with teachers.
Degree to which the faculty participates in the decision-making process.

The extent to which the administrator succeeds in stimulating the professional development of the staff.

Effectiveness as a supervisor and evaluator of teachers.

Effectiveness in dealing with faculty complaints, concerns, and problems.

Comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships with Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Progress toward development of positive relationships and effective communications with parents.

Extent to which the school is supported by the community it serves.

Effectiveness in dealing with parental complaints, concerns, and problems.

Comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships with Central Adm.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Effectiveness with which all of the services of the Central Administration are employed (pupil, program, personnel, plant, and business services.)

Progress toward development of positive relationships and effective communications with Central Administration.

Efficiency in carrying out assignments for the Central Administration with regard to surveys, reports, etc.

Comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational Mgt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress toward developing efficient management of schools and programs.

Effectiveness with which faculty is deployed and utilized.

Effectiveness with which School Committee policies and administrative regulations are observed by the principal and those who report to him/her.

Effectiveness with which space and facilities are used to advance the educational program.

Extent to which management and control make the school humane without detriment to the efficiency and effectiveness of its operation.

Degree of effectiveness in the preparation and administration of the school budget.

Comment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Ed. Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The degree to which leadership advances the quality of the educational program or programs.

Degree to which the educational programs reflect sound, research-based educational practice.

Degree to which the professional competence of the faculty improves.

The degree to which originality and vigor characterize approach to school problems and mark the work of staff.

Effectiveness of contributions to system-wide planning and programs.

Extent and relevance of the program carried out for self-development.

Degree to which pupil mastery of skills in relation to potential is assessed and corrective measures taken as necessary.

Comments:
Appendix J

School Improvement Plan (SIP) 11-12

School

Website: http://www

SIP Directory

- Literacy
- Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment (CIA)
- School Climate
- Safety & Emergency Planning
- Parent, School & Community

Literacy

Goals:

- Students will know and use reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking strategies to learn across all content areas. They will be able to demonstrate and communicate their learning and transfer that learning to new situations.

A guaranteed and viable curriculum: Provide a new reading Scott Foremans program, Reading Street, and a Pittsfield School District English Language Arts curriculum that is linked to essential standards, reading programs, and assessments.

Effective instructional practices: Provide weekly opportunities to work with the reading coach and teaching team members to implement best instructional practices and routines.

Use of assessment to inform instruction: Use ongoing progress monitoring with DIBELS assessments to inform instruction and student differentiation/intervention. Continue to administer the GRADE reading

http://www

12/6/2011
assessment at all grade levels, K-5, and provide data team analysis of the comparative levels of success that these indicators provide in helping students meet improvement levels on the

Data Team: Use task analysis of questions to develop grade level focus on instructional activities to improve student performance.

Literacy skills in all areas: Facilitate non-fiction reading and writing each day in each class, with a greater emphasis on building vocabulary to better meet comprehension, content, and writing expectations.

H.O.T. (Higher Order Thinking): Encourage small student groups and discussions to build strength in problem solving, global awareness, creative thought and expression, team building, 21st century skills. Model writing skills and graphic organizers to assist students in the thinking process required to be a successful writer.

- Students will demonstrate understanding of mathematical literacy, fluency with procedural operations, and implement effective and efficient problem solving.

A guaranteed and viable curriculum: All grades will implement the mathematics pacing guide, and focus instruction on the standards and requirements. School will develop and implement math expectations for grades to meet the 2011 standards.

Effective instructional practices: Instructional practice will be guided by a focus on mathematics standards content, using appropriate supplemental activities from the Math Expressions program.

Use of assessment to inform: Data from grade level assessments and Galileo online assessment will be used to inform instruction and student differentiation/intervention.
Math literacy skills in all areas: A commitment to applying math concepts to real life questions and everyday experiences each day in each class.

H.O.T. (Higher Order Thinking): Students will work as whole group, small groups, and individuals to develop problem solving, global awareness, creative thought and expression, team building, and 21st century applied math skills. Students will be expected to discuss mathematical ideas and work with peers.

Specific Goals

1. Systematic use of data

Student outcomes will improve through the use of data to make instructional decisions. Multiple types of assessments will be used at different levels to monitor students' learning, program quality and professional development needs. The Data Team will work with grade level teams to monitor progress and focus instruction.

2. Standards-based curriculum

All students will have access to rigorous course content and strong literacy support. Curriculum will be standards-based and include a scope and sequence for literacy development along with identified benchmark assessments that align with state content standards.

3. School-wide tiered system of literacy instruction and interventions

All students will demonstrate ongoing success with a tiered system of literacy instruction that includes excellent core instruction and interventions that are matched to targeted need.

Activities:

1. Universal screening/benchmarks:

   School has developed a literacy assessment framework and will ensure that teachers administer progress monitoring and benchmark assessments to all students in addition to
   Instructional Leadership Team/Data Team that will review student data and

create action plans for development of appropriate enrichment and intervention.

The Data Team and grade level teachers will review and/or implement new DIBELS assessment programs and offer professional development and material support.

2. Tiered Instruction

Effective instructional practices: Provide weekly opportunities to work with the reading coach and teaching team members to implement best instructional practices and routines. This will ensure that there is a tiered model of instruction in all grades.

- Teachers will teach a 90 minute reading block.
- Reading teachers, intervention teachers, and special education teachers will instruct the Tier 3 reading group model in intensive intervention focused on individual student need.
- Teachers will deliver content rich lessons following the Effective Daily Instruction (EDI) model.
- Reading coach will co-teach/plan lessons to model best reading instruction practices.
- Reading coach will meet with teaching staff weekly to review progress monitoring of data.
- Ongoing professional development will be offered to staff members, especially new staff members.

3. Encourage students to speak, read, and write complete thoughts and sentences.

Literacy skills in all areas: Facilitate non-fiction reading and writing each day in each class, with a greater emphasis on building vocabulary to better meet comprehension, content, and writing expectations.

4. Literacy

Focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension using a strong core program for all students.
School Improvement Plan (SIP) 11-12

- Modeling: whole and small group instruction; ample guided and independent practice; differentiated instruction
- Writing and word work in conjunction with reading.
- Focused instruction on development and use of robust vocabulary.
- Build reading comprehension skills.
- Critical thinking and metacognition.
- Maintain the use of DIBELS benchmark assessments and progress monitoring.
- Encourage greater student reading stamina (test duration) through "Battle of the Books" or other reading stimulus programs.

5. PK-5 Mathematics Literacy

Focus on a coherent progression of mathematics with an emphasis on mathematical conceptual understanding, mathematical computational fluency and mathematical problem solving skills using a strong core program for all students.

- Focus on a progression of critical foundations with an emphasis on fluency with whole numbers.
- Promote specific standards based math content knowledge through focused instruction related instructional tools including math content skills, math reading, math vocabulary and math writing fluency.
- Implement district Galileo benchmark assessments (Grades ___).
- Pilot AIMSWEB for early numeracy skills in grades ___ for possible whole school implementation.


Indicators of Success:

1. Reading:

Use of assessment to inform instruction: Use ongoing progress monitoring with DIBELS assessments to inform instruction and student differentiation/intervention. Continue to administer the GRADE reading assessment at all grade levels, and provide data team analysis of the comparative levels of success that these indicators provide in helping
students meet improvement levels on the 

2. Writing:

Implementation of grade level writing expectations and assessments including rubrics designed to assess areas of focus for each grade level. Improvement in writing scores on will also indicate growth in writing questions and compositions to ensure that students meet improvement levels on the 

3. Math:

Use of assessment to inform instruction: Use ongoing progress monitoring with Galileo and other formative math assessments to inform instruction and student differentiation/intervention. Continue to administer formative assessments at all grade levels, and provide data team analysis of the comparative levels of success that these indicators provide in helping students meet improvement levels on the 

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment (CIA)

Goal:

Students will be proficient within a standards-based curriculum and high-quality, research-based instruction. District staff will use assessment data to inform curriculum development and instructional practice in order to promote student learning and meet goals as listed below:

Performance Goals:

Student Enrollment Numbers - Projections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

http://www 12/6/2011
School Improvement Plan (SIP) 11-12

4  54  60  40  54  69  70
5  55  57  60  40  54  69
Students testing:  154  163  198  209

ANNUAL YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) PERFORMANCE TARGETS – 2010 -2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011 CPI baseline</th>
<th>Target CPI Gain</th>
<th>2012 CPI Target Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>84-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific Goals:
1. Systematic use of data
   
   staff will systematically use data to track student progress, allocate resources, and provide students with appropriate instruction.

2. Standards-based curriculum
   
   staff will implement a standards-based curriculum that is aligned with the state frameworks and ensures that all students receive rigorous and sequential instruction targeted toward preparing them to be career and college ready.

3. Effective Instruction
   
   District staff will provide students with scientific, research based instructional methods and intervention so that students meet or exceed grade level proficiency.

Activities:

1. Instructional focus

http://www...
Instructional Leadership Team and staff members will develop an instructional focus based on data demonstrating shared and common practices used across all content areas.

**Express Yourself!!**

School is committed to model, practice, and expect complete sentences and expressive language to develop student growth in:

- Vocabulary
- Speaking
- Writing
- Expressing ideas

Our school wide focus is to have all school students speak in complete sentences and show significant growth in their ability to listen, speak, read, and write complete thoughts as measured by the local benchmarks, writing assessments, and results to meet.

2. **Effective instructional strategies**

Staff will identify effective instructional strategies and practices and provide critical feedback for improvement through the use of student data and informal and formal observations. Staff will also analyze questions and use tasks and language that will develop higher levels of thinking to meet student performance goals.

**Class Presentations:** Students enrich their vocabulary and strengthen their oral language by using complete sentences when presenting and sharing with fellow classmates.

- Morning meeting
- Think/write/pair/share/
- Social language
- Listening binders
- Explaining math thinking/algorithms

**Response Journals:** Students will organize their thoughts and ideas in journals by writing responses to prompts related to curriculum content using:
School Improvement Plan (SIP) 11-12

- Graphic organizers
- Math Sentences – Numbers, Pictures, & Words
- Explain Their Answers
- Writing rubric - exemplars
- T-charts
- T.T.Q.A - Turn the question around

3. Leadership development

will develop skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement (i.e. Focus on Results). Data Team will meet regularly and guide staff in instructional improvement according to student performance data.

4. Curriculum development

will continue to develop curriculum and implement instruction that is aligned to the instructional focus to meet the specific needs of the students at to build success in meeting requirements (see above).

5. Professional development

staff will be offered focused professional development opportunities to meet the instructional needs of the students based on data analysis using regular formative and summative assessments.

Indicators of Success:

Students will demonstrate academic growth as measured by formative and summative assessments. This growth will be accomplished through the following:

1. A published instructional focus with evidence of implementation.

Express Yourself!

School is committed to model, practice, and expect complete sentences and expressive language to develop student growth in:

- Vocabulary
- Speaking
- Writing

http://www

12/6/2011
2. Implemented curriculum and instruction to meet the determined student needs.

3. Rigorous classroom instruction as indicated by classroom walk-throughs and observations. New methods of classroom supervision and support will be piloted for possible implementation. (Kim Marshall)

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School Climate

Goal:

- Students will learn in a physically and emotionally supportive environment conducive to student growth and development.

- Student and staff will recognize, report, and reduce all types of bully behaviors.

Specific Goals:

1. School-wide positive behavior support plan (PBS)

   Reduce disruptive behavior and build positive school climate through full implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS).

2. Prevention

   Reduce the incidence of violence, substance abuse and pregnancy, and sexually transmitted illnesses through prevention programming.

   Reduce the incidence of bully behavior through open reporting and preventive actions.

3. Student and family support services

   http://www...
Increase attendance, academic advancement, and graduation rates through academic, behavioral, and social support services.

Activities:

1. School-wide positive behavior supports (PBS)
   
   a. School will utilize building specific data to establish PBS goals and develop implementation plans. The use of electronic log entries and data will guide pro-active school wide planning to continue to improve behaviors.
   
   b. Professional development will support effective classroom routines and procedures. (Responsive Classroom model; PBS supports)
   
   c. The Olweus Bully Prevention model will be taught and implemented to prevent incidents of bullying.
   
   d. Students who display academic, behavioral and/or social indicators will be referred to the problem-solving process (Building Assistance Meetings) to develop and monitor intervention plans/safety nets in each building. The program will be developed for individual students who indicate a need for a personal support plan.

2. Prevention
   
   a. Violence Prevention Programs—Second Step (Grades 3-5) and Steps to Respect (Grades 6-8)—will be fully implemented.
   
   b. School (Grades 3-8) will continue to implement and strengthen the Olweus anti-bullying curriculum. The PBS/Bully Prevention team will actively teach the definition of bullying and ways to prevent it. currently has an active definition of bullying, an anti-bully pledge, and behavioral rubrics for action if reported.

3. Student and family support service
a. Staff will support students at risk. This will include assessment, behavior planning, interventions such as counseling, case management, family consultation, and referral to appropriate resources.

b. will provide transition planning and programs for students transitioning to grade. We will develop direct contacts at the middle school to improve transitions for students moving to grade.

c. will provide family support services through the family center and community coordinator to help families make sure their child attends school.

d. Identify families in need and assist in providing health, dental, social, and emotional services. will develop in-school programs with the Center to keep students in school, rather than pulled out for extra services.

4. Provide exemplary before and after school programs to support the needs of students and families.

Indicators of Success:

1. School-Wide Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS)

   a. Reduction in incidence of school disciplinary referrals.

   b. Use of data to determine areas of need and implement proactive strategies.

   c. Building Assistance Meetings will result in improved student attendance and increased academic or behavioral performance.

   d. Develop and implement protocol for risk assessment.

2. Prevention

   a. Reduction in the reported incidence of violence and bullying.

   c. Continued implementation of Second Step and Steps to Respect curriculums.

   d. Continued implementation and strengthening of Olweus anti-bullying program ideas.
3. Student and family support services
   a. Increased family involvement in school events and programs - survey families for new ideas to boost family attendance.

   b. Increase in attendance rate.

   c. Increase in community outreach and services available for families.

   d. Continue to support full day programs to encourage families to be involved in early education.

   e. Support and maintain before and after school programming to meet specific student needs.

Safety & Emergency Planning

Goal:

- I will continue to develop, plan, and practice emergency planning procedures to support the safety of students and personnel.

Specific Goals:

1. Emergency plans

   The Emergency Planning Team has developed a school-wide emergency plan and will continue to meet to plan and review protocols/procedures.

2. Emergency drills

   I will conduct drills for relocation, lock-down and shelter-in-place situations.

Activities:

1. Emergency planning

http://www' 12/6/2011
Emergency Planning Team will meet annually to review and
revise, as needed, security and safety plans based on current standards and
evidence from practice drills. These plans will be reviewed annually by the
District Emergency Management Team.

2. Safety drills

School will complete a relocation, lock down, and shelter-in-place drill
and will use the feedback from these drills to develop the safety and
emergency planning process.

3. Coordination with community services

Through collaboration with emergency service agencies (i.e. FEMA,
and NIMS), students and families will be provided with information and skills
that ensure safety in and out of school (i.e. Drug Awareness Resistance
Education, Gang Resistance Education And Training, Canine Unit
Demonstrations, Anti-Bullying Professional Development and Planning with
the District Attorney's Office). will partner with "i"
to teach pedestrian and bicycle safety.

4. Development of evacuation route

Through collaboration with community groups, school administration, and
neighboring property owners, the Emergency Planning Team has
developed a plan for a safe evacuation route and will practice a full evacuation.

5. Professional Development

Safety and emergency procedural professional development for health care
and educational staff will be offered in CPR, First Aid, Epi-Pen use,
temporary medication distribution, vaccination administration training,
restraint training, and pandemic prevention throughout the year.

6. Health services

Students, families, and staff will be provided with information, preventative
strategies, and care through collaboration with the Department of Public
Health (i.e. H1N1 informational sessions and vaccination clinics,

http://www\1/9c/ 12/6/2011
dissemination of information processes, and Emergency Recovery efforts through FEMA recovery standards).

Indicators of Success

1. Emergency planning and monitoring
   will provide documentation of the completed drills and will use feedback to inform revision of the safety and emergency planning procedures.

2. Coordination with community service
   Student participation in school and community based programs and events will increase positive normative behaviors among students and decrease risk behaviors.

3. Professional development
   There will be an increase in the number of trained and certified staff capable of responding to a safety, emergency, or health related event. Several staff members will also be trained in de-escalation and restraint techniques.

4. Development of Conte evacuation route
   Through collaboration with area officials, a plan has been developed for a safe evacuation route to High School.

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Family, School & Community

Goal:

will share responsibility with parents, business partners, school committee members, and community providers to foster and maintain positive, mutual collaborations in order to support student learning and career/college readiness.

Specific Goals:

1. Dissemination of information

   Staff will share relevant information with families and other stakeholders in a timely and consistent manner through the use of an updated website and calling system.

2. Families as partners with School

http://www/ 

12/6/2011
staff will partner with families to support academic achievement and positive development of students. The Family Center will continue to organize and promote family activities that involve families in high student achievement, e.g. family reading programs, class presentations, showcase events, concerts, plays, and other demonstrations of achievement.

3. School as Partner with Community and Business Partners

staff will partner with community and business partners to support academic achievement and positive development of students. The community coordinator will continue to develop collaborative relationships with many area organizations.

4. Develop a team of community members to improve our playground for the health and safety of students.

Activities:

1. Communication

will continue to develop a plan for effective communication for staff and families, continuing to use regular newsletters, calls home, website postings, and calls.

2. Families as partners

will continue to welcome families as partners in the education of our children. Family events coordinated by our family center will support and involve parents in the success of all students. We also actively engage family members in educational opportunities.

3. as partner with community and business partners

staff members continue to plan for involvement is the community and with business partners. Our school/community coordinator takes an active roles in facilitating use of the building and providing meaningful programs for our students and the community. We also partner with organizations in many supporting roles for our before and after school programs.

4. Playground Committee

http://www 12/6/2011
family center, ), and School Community Coordinator will work with community members, parents, and business partners to improve the playground facilities.

**Indicators of Success:**

1. Implementation of communications and public relations plan and feedback from staff, parents, and community members. A needs assessment will take place annually.

2. Data on the current levels and nature of parent involvement in their child's education.

3. Number of families participating in the family nights and school based events. Evaluation of feedback from parents.

4. Data will reflect that business and community stakeholders report mutual collaboration in support of student achievement and college/career readiness.

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Using SIP

Appendix K

Boston College
Boston College Lynch School of Education

September 20, 2011

Principals of the [Redacted] Public Schools,

First, thank you for taking the time at your administrative council meeting to meet with members of our team for an overview of our research project that will be hosted in [Redacted]. Please know our team of doctoral researchers truly feels honored that you have graciously engaged us in this endeavor.

Friday, September 23rd will be the first day that we will be available to conduct interviews. We were hoping to be able to conduct three to six interviews depending upon your availability. A team of researchers could begin interviewing a principal as early as 8 a.m. Based on our pilot interviews, we estimate that each interview should take no more than 40 minutes. Given this, it could be possible to schedule interviews as close as every hour on the hour.

If you would kindly respond to inform our team of whether you are available on Friday with the times that would work best for you we would be appreciative. Once we can identify the availability of participants, we will send a confirmation email along with a brief online survey and the interview questions for your review. If Friday does not work for you, please know that within the next week we will be forwarding additional times for future interviews. All emails can be sent to efaginski@bhsschools.com.

Again, we thank you for your time and appreciate your contribution to our work and the field of education.

Sincerely,

Erica A. Faginski-Stark
Principal Investigator
Appendix L

Boston College
Boston College Lynch School of Education

October 14, 2011

Thank you for taking the time to interview with our research team. It truly was a pleasure to meet with you. Please find enclosed a copy of your transcript for review. As we noted when we met, please review the contents of the transcription. If there is any information that you would not like considered for use in our study please cross out the applicable lines, keep a copy for your records, and send a copy back to our research team so that we can make the appropriate changes. If we do not hear back from you by October 25 we will assume that you are comfortable with the transcript in its entirety.

We are really excited to start looking at the information we have gathered and to be able to provide feedback to the Public Schools.

With sincere appreciation,

Erica Faginski-Stark
Principal Investigator

Enclosure:/Transcription
Appendix M

Boston College Consent Form

Boston College Lynch School of Education

Informed Consent for Participation as a Subject in:

Perceptions of Principal Evaluation Process and Performance Criteria: A Qualitative Study of the Challenge of Principal Evaluation

Primary Investigator: Erica Faginski-Stark

Co-Investigators: Christopher Casavant, William Collins, Marilyn Tencza, and Jason McCandless

Type of Consent: Adult Consent Form

Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study on the perceptions of what the superintendent and principals in a New England school district consider effective processes and key criteria for the evaluation of public school principals.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you have worked as a superintendent or principal of the selected New England School District.
- We ask that you read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of what the superintendent and principals in a New England school district consider effective processes and key criteria for the evaluation of public school principals. The purpose of the study is not to design an ideal evaluation model, it is to uncover the perceptions of the superintendent and principals. We will
examine the principal evaluation practices of this New England district guided by four research questions:

1. What are the principals’ perceptions of the criteria for the evaluation?
2. What are the superintendent’s perceptions of the criteria for the evaluation?
3. What are the principals’ perceptions of the process for evaluation?
4. What are the superintendent’s perceptions of the process for principal evaluation?

- Participants in this study are from a New England school district. One superintendent and eleven principals will be invited to participate in this study.

**Description of the Study Procedures:**

- If you agree to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:
- Meet with the researchers for the purpose of the study to be explained in full.
- Participate in one, on-line survey that will take approximately 3 minutes.
- Participate in a semi-structured interview which will last approximately one hour. During this one time interview, you will be asked to share your perceptions of the principal evaluation process. Two researchers will be present during the interviews.

**Risks/Discomforts of Being in the Study:**

- The study has the following risks. First, that your school district will be identifiable through the responses gained in this research. The researchers will take all possible precautions to maintain confidentiality and the likelihood of identification is small. Second, that the superintendent of this New England school district will receive the findings of the research team. It is possible that some responses provided in the interview will identify the individual if they are unique and particular to an individual in the district. Again, the research team seeks to maintain the greatest level of confidentiality for all participants. Participants will be provided with the findings and will have the opportunity to request that any identifying information be struck for the document’s findings so that confidentiality is maintained.
- It is possible that this study may include risks that are unknown at this time.

**Benefits of Being in the Study:**

- The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of what the superintendent and principals in a New England school district consider key criteria and effective processes for the evaluation of public school principals.
- The benefits of participation are the contributions will provide the administrators of this district with the perceptions of district employees as well as research relative to the most critical criteria and processes for principal evaluation.
Payments:

- There will be no payment to participants of this study.

Costs:

- There is no cost incurred by the participant of this research study.

Confidentiality:

- The records of this study will be kept private. In any report we may publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be kept in a locked file.
- All electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file. Audio recordings of the semi-structure interviews will be maintained, transcribed and coded by the research team. The recordings will be destroyed after transcription is completed. All transcriptions will be kept in a locked file and used for the educational purpose of this group’s dissertation.
- Access to the records will be limited to the researchers; however, please note that regulatory agencies, and the Institutional Review Board and internal Boston College auditors may review the research records.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, it will not affect your current or future relations with the Boston College.

- You are free to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason.
- There is no penalty or loss of benefits for not taking part or for stopping your participation.

*You will be provided with any significant new findings that develop during the course of the research that may make you decide that you want to stop participating.

*Dismissal from the Study:

The investigator may withdraw you from the study at any time if you have failed to comply with the study requirements.
Contacts and Questions:
The researchers conducting this study are:

Principal investigator:  Co-investigators:
Erica Faginski-Stark  Christopher Casavant, Gardner, MA
61 Washington Avenue  chriscasavant98@bc.edu
South Hadley, MA  01075  William Collins, Longmeadow, MA
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William Collins, Longmeadow, MA
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Jason McCandless, Lee, MA
jason.mccandless@bc.edu

Marilyn Tencza, Worchester, MA
tenca@bc.edu
marilyn.tencza@bc.edu

For questions or more information concerning this research you may contact them at the email address listed above.

- If you believe you may have suffered a research related injury, contact Erica Faginski-Stark, Principal Investigator at efaginski@bc.edu who will give you further instructions.
- If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact: Director, Office for Research Protections, Boston College at (617) 552-4778, or irb@bc.edu

Copy of Consent Form:

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records and future reference.

Statement of Consent:

I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this study. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form.

Study Participant (Print Name): ___________________________________________

Participant or Legal Representative Signature: ___________________  Date _______
Appendix N

Preliminary Codes and Definitions for Westside
Chris Casavant, William Collins, Erica Faginski, Jake McCandless, Marilyn Tencza
September 22, 2011; Revised September 24, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Routines and methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Standards of evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Process remain the same from year to year</td>
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<tr>
<td>cd</td>
<td>Clearly defined</td>
<td>Steps or elements of process and criteria are articulated and understood</td>
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<tr>
<td>con</td>
<td>Conversations</td>
<td>Dialogue between the evaluator and evaluatee</td>
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<tr>
<td>ca</td>
<td>Critical aspects</td>
<td>Important areas not included in evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Artifacts and data taken into account when evaluated</td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Reasonable and equitable expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>fb</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>Information from evaluator on performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>imp</td>
<td>Impact/Result</td>
<td>Statements of the value in the process and criteria;</td>
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<tr>
<td>kow</td>
<td>King of the World</td>
<td>How interviewee's would change the process</td>
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<td>p</td>
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References


www.doe.mass.edu/arra/rttt/PCsummary.doc


