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Beyond The Brick And Mortar: Examining Internal Selection Of Principals

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BEYOND THE BRICK AND MORTAR: EXAMINING INTERNAL SELECTION OF
PRINCIPALS

by

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Brittany Ann Upton
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ABSTRACT

Consistent growth, expansion, and construction in high enrollment North Dakota school districts and across the country lead to the addition of principal positions. This study closely examined the internal recruitment and selection of the building principal. Experienced principals who have led both a new and existing North Dakota public school with high enrollment served as field expert participants in a Delphi Study and qualitative document review. Ten Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) were used by participants as competencies to first identify which have been more important when considering leading both a newly built school and an existing school. After three rounds of iterative Delphi surveys, consensus was reached, finding the three most important competencies to be: (a) Community of Care and Support for Students, (b) Mission, Vision, and Core Values, and (c) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. This study also confirmed the presence and/or absence of each competency within a principal job description and two sets of interview questions. Despite their deemed importance, eighty percent of the competencies were found to be over or underrepresented within the documents, only two of the ten were considered reasonably represented. This report presents the findings of relevant literature, Delphi Study competency identification, as well as a document review detailing importance and presence comparisons within recruitment and selection documents. A White Paper is included, intended to support

district leadership in sharing results of this study as well as five considerations for action based on key findings.

INTRODUCTION

Decades of research has highlighted the impact and importance of a highly effective principal when seeking positive student performance and thriving school conditions. With enrollment numbers predicted to continue to rise across the United States leading to additional new schools, recruiting and hiring principals will be a frequent and likely increasing occurrence for school districts. Given pre-existing complexities of the role of a principal coupled with the unique set of responsibilities involved in opening a new school, clarity around the specific competencies needed of candidates produces an opportunity for districts to closely examine their processes beyond the basic construction of brick and mortar to appropriately selecting candidates for this critical position.

This work is presented in three Artifacts. Artifact I details a comprehensive review of relevant literature as it relates to the problem of practice and overall study. Next, Artifact II outlines the research design, procedures, detailed findings, and recommendations of the study. Lastly, Artifact III is presented in the form of a White Paper intended as guidance for school boards and district leadership to reflect and review current practices and consider taking action where needed based on the findings and recommendations of this study.

Definitions of Key Terms and Phrases

Competency – The knowledge, skills, behaviors, and dispositions necessary for a principal to effectively lead a school and drive high levels of student achievement. This study considered formalized, principal effectiveness standards to be synonymous with competencies.

High Enrollment School Districts – There is no formal definition, but for this study, high enrollment was considered more than 7,500 K-12 enrolled students. Four total high enrollment districts with populations ranging from 7,500 to 13,700 were involved in this study. Two districts' growth trends were highlighted during the literature review, field experts participated from three districts, and one district was highlighted in greater detail across the literature review and field study.

Human Capital – The talent and experience of staff, viewed as an asset/value, or expense/cost to an organization.

Human Capital Management (HCM) – The process of strategically managing human resource practices such as recruitment, selection, performance management, etc., in an effort to optimize contribution, productivity, and effectiveness of an organization. In the education sector, the goal is to maximize both student performance and teacher effectiveness.

Overview of the Problem

The central problem of this study was the lack of a defined, comprehensive, internal principal selection process when opening new schools. It was unknown what factors have been most important and uncertain if practices at the time of this study were designed to obtain capable candidates. With student enrollment, new school construction,

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and principal job openings all on the rise, districts need guidance in embracing these changes while maintaining the integrity of solid professional practices. A system has been needed that is built upon clarity and consensus in what is essential for school principals to know and be able to do in order to effectively launch and lead new school buildings.

As district leadership in North Dakota looks externally, they are faced with a high demand yet limited supply of qualified applicants. When looking internally, adding to the problem is the lack of a formal principal evaluation model to guide central office administration in the recruitment, selection, onboarding, and growth of administrators when faced with opening new schools. With varied, inconsistent approaches to professional growth documentation and evaluation, districts are left without a base to identify their strongest leaders and best matches when looking within to launch new schools.

Districts of varying sizes may find themselves placing particular priority over some competencies for building level principals than others. For example, larger districts may place less priority over operational competencies such as budgeting, staffing, and transportation, due to the existing personnel in formalized departments who take care of those tasks. A defined process may outline a proper balance of managerial and instructional leadership competencies. Additionally, a central office can ensure principals obtain key experience and training to successfully launch a building while taking into consideration multiple departments (e.g., staffing, budgeting, curriculum). Relying on a clear and objective process and criteria may also promote diversity and balance among staff in new schools, avoiding having too many novice or like-minded staff as a result of

a principal hand-selecting or recruiting teachers. With enrollment numbers predicted to continue to rise leading to additional new schools, guidance is needed beyond the basic construction of brick and mortar to establish key foundational components of new schools, beginning with the leaders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to draw attention to current hiring practices at the time of the study and create guidance for districts to effectively recruit and select principal candidates to lead new schools. Further, this study aimed to:

1. Identify key competencies from education field experts specifically relevant to opening a new school.

2. Evaluate the presence of these competencies within district human capital management processes such as recruitment and hiring.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this project:

1. What are the most critical competencies of school principals leading an existing and newly built school in high enrollment, public North Dakota school districts?

2. How do critical school principal competencies compare in perceived importance when serving an existing school versus opening a newly constructed school?

3. How present are these competencies in high enrollment public school district recruitment and selection processes?

ARTIFACT I

REVIEW OF RELEVANT RESEARCH

Reviewing the literature that uncovers specifics regarding the magnitude of this problem and the underpinning complexities of principal succession helped identify data we needed to collect from field experts. First, a review of the literature examined the current status of growth and hiring trends at the time of this study across the state of North Dakota specific to school principals. While the four largest districts are mentioned in order to provide context to the growth trends found in the research for large schools, more detailed information was provided around the largest school district, Bismarck Public Schools. Revealing growth and hiring trends complements further exploration of the role of school principals and related demands on the position. Reviewing this may assist in connecting any past and current efforts (at the time of this study) to addressing the problem and to designing a practical field study that outlines predominant practices or identifies gaps in the information.

Growth, New School Construction, and Hiring Trends

At the time of this study, North Dakota had 281 elementary schools that fell within 171 school districts (North Dakota Information Technology, n.d.a). Student enrollment in the state had increased steadily from 103,700 students in the 2013-2014 school year to 115,986 students in the 2019-2020 school year (North Dakota Information Technology, n.d.c) According to the 21st Century School Fund and National Council on

School Facilities (2018), "The National Center for Education Statistics projects . . . a statewide total enrollment increase of . . . 22.9 percent" (p. 81) between 2012 and 2024 for North Dakota.

North Dakota state law requires a formal application and approval for all school construction and/or renovation projects over $150,000 as well as districts seeking to open new schools (N.D. Cent. Code, n.d., Section 15.1-36-01.1). Further, the proposing school district must meet a list of conditions found in Chapter 15.1-36 of North Dakota's Century Code such as demonstrating that, "the student population has been stable or has increased during the preceding five school years and is expected to be stable or to increase during the ensuing five school years" (N.D. Cent. Code, n.d., Section 15.1-36-01.2.b.1). The law also demands providing "clear and convincing evidence" in times of a declining student population that "no feasible alternatives to the proposed project" exist (N.D. Cent. Code, n.d., 15.1-36-01.2.b.2). Between 1995 and 2020, 87 new schools have been approved for construction in North Dakota, 49 (56.3%) of those were established in the last 10 years (from the time of this report; Tescher et al. 2020).

According to results of an annual survey administered by *District Administration* to hundreds of district leaders across the country, 38% of districts planned to launch a building construction project in 2019, with 21% seeking a bond proposal (Zalaznick, 2018). This increased nearly 10% from 30% in 2017 (Goral, 2017a, 2017b). Between 2010 and 2020, North Dakota approved 49 expansions, additions, and/or new building projects, and 22 specific new school construction proposals (Tescher et al., 2020). The two largest districts in the state—Bismarck Public Schools (n.d.) and West Fargo Public Schools (n.d.)—together, built 15 new schools in the past 10 years.

Student enrollments are not the only numbers on the rise. Additional students mean new facilities to accommodate the numbers; new facilities require new school principals. Over the last 3 years (at the time of this study), number of administrators increased from 626 in 2018-2019 to 643 in 2019-2020 to 666 in 2020-2021 (North Dakota Information Technology, n.d.b). Bismarck Public Schools (BPS) has enacted a principal hiring process for multiple positions each year over the last 5 years. In fact, 25 principals have been hired in the BPS district since 2016. Of those, 88% have been internal candidates. While the majority of new hires have filled retirements and transfers to outside districts, BPS has been actively constructing new buildings over the last decade. Between 2010 and 2023, BPS will have built six new schools, each requiring a new principal. In addition to construction of new buildings, six existing buildings have undergone expansion construction projects, most of which have added administrative positions in the form of assistant principals. Tables 1 and 2 show both assistant principal and head principal hiring trends (Bismarck Public Schools, n.d.).

Table 1

BPS Principal Hiring Trends, 2016-2020

Period	Total Number of Principals Hired	Number of Hired Internally
March 2016-March 2017	3	2
March 2017-March 2018	2	2
March 2018-March 2019	7	6
March 2019-March 2020	5	4
March 2020-March 2021	2	2
March 2021-March 2022	3	3
March 2022-March 2023	3	3

Table 2

BPS New Construction, 2010-2023

School Year	Number of New Schools
2010-2011	1
2013-2014	1
2014-2015	1
2015-2016	1
2022-2023	2

Similar to Bismarck schools, three of the next largest school districts in North Dakota—West Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot—have also experienced construction of multiple new schools and additions in the last 10 years with new school projects currently underway at the time of this study. West Fargo specifically, the second largest district, within 200 students of Bismarck, has newly built and opened 9 of their 20 elementary, middle, and high schools between the years of 2012-2021, with multiple expansions to many of their new and existing campuses (West Fargo Public Schools, n.d.).

Principal Positions in the United States

Between the school years 1999-2000 and 2017-2018, United States public schools experienced an eight percent increase in school principal positions—83,790 in 1999-2000 to 90,850 in the year 2017-2018 (de Brey et al., 2021). Despite the number of "stayers" (principals who stayed at the same school from year to year) slightly increasing between the 2012-2013 school year and the 2016-2017 school year, de Bray et al. found that for the school years 2011-2012 to 2012-2013, roughly 22% of principals either moved to a new campus or left the profession (de Brey, 2021). In addition, acting principals are less

experienced in the field. In our country's public schools, for the school year 2017-2018, only 4% of principals had 20+ years experience while around 73% were found to have 9 or less years experience (de Brey et al., 2021).

A 6-year project examining the interaction of leadership with school systems and its effect on student achievement found the following as it relates to principal turnover:

- "On average, schools experience fairly rapid principal turnover: about one new principal every three to four years" (p. 165).

- "Rapid principal turnover has moderately negative effects [on student achievement, largely through its effects] on school culture" (p. 165).

- "Rapid principal turnover" has less effect on teachers' reports about what they do in their classrooms. (Louis et al., 2010, p. 165)

Role of a Principal

School leaders are now being tasked to operate and manage schools while taking responsibility for student academic achievement. Research shows a strong connection to student performance, culture, climate, and teacher attrition based on effective school leaders. Being positioned to influence and inspire effective teaching, research suggests one of the most important indicators of student academic success has been an effective campus principal, second to teacher effectiveness (Marzano et al., 2011). In fact, Woodard (2013) suggested "principals account for 25 percent of . . . [a school's] impact on student achievement" (para. 3), primarily due to their responsibility of hiring, developing, and managing their teaching force. Being the person leading staffing, professional growth, and overall climate and culture of a building, the principal role intersects with teacher retention and attrition. Ingersoll (2001) analyzed national data on

teacher retention and found that 38% (p. 521) of teachers who reported leaving due to dissatisfaction cited inadequate administrative support as one of the top two reasons for their departure. With increased demands to meet students' and staffs' unique needs, matching the right principal to lead the launch of a new building is critical for climate, culture, and student achievement.

Accountability

From policymakers to parents, school leaders are facing a heightened amount of accountability for student performance physically, socially, emotionally, and academically. In the early 2000s, with passing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (No Child Left Behind Act, 2002), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965), accountability measures included meeting standard testing participation, attendance, and graduation rates, as well as achieving annual math and reading proficiency targets on state assessments. Failure to meet these parameters threatened sanctions, public attention, and scrutiny, and thus, increased pressure on school principals (Mitani, 2018). Policymakers and officials considered the looming potential of sanctions to influence a shift in the role of a principal to increase involvement in instructional functions of a school including reviewing student data, school curriculum, ramping up classroom observations and feedback, and more. This NCLB time period also highlighted student achievement as a significant result of quality teachers. Effective teaching practices rooted in research rose to the national scene of conversation and debate. Several studies found strong evidence linking positive student achievement to highly skilled teachers (Horton, 2016; Marzano et al., 2011).

Amidst the numerous contributions to the field specific to *teacher* effectiveness and its impact on student achievement, attention and investment in improving teacher quality through effective *principals* has been largely overlooked from federal, state, and local levels. Principal quality made its debut on the national education agenda through competitive grants as a result of President Obama's administration's ESEA flexibility waivers and Race to the Top (RTTT) efforts. These opportunities forced states and districts to more closely examine, measure, and monitor principal effectiveness, primarily through evaluation system parameters (Briggs et al., 2013). Today, ESEA and NCLB has been reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, the major source of federal funding for public school education in the United States at the time of this study. In order for states to receive federal funding under the ESSA, indicators of principal effectiveness must be submitted as part of the application process. In addition, criteria used by states to measure principal effectiveness must be made public and be evidence-based. This exacerbates the earlier emphasis in principals shifting from management and operations towards instructional leaders. Robinson (2010) stated, "Instructional leadership refers to those sets of leadership practices that involve the planning, evaluation, coordination, and improvement of teaching and learning" (p. 2).

Human Capital

One key strategy to many school improvement efforts involves attention on human capital. Multiple researchers have outlined human capital frameworks that encompass similar components. In 2011, Allan Odden shared six main elements associated with human capital to include: (a) recruitment, (b) selection/placement, (c) induction/mentoring, (d) professional development, (e) performance management, and (f)

compensation. Around the same time the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching produced a human capital framework specific to teachers. This reflected the elements of Odden's ideas within four subsystems: (a) acquire, (b) develop, (c) sustain, and (d) evaluate (Odden, 2011, p. 11; Myung et al., 2013, p. 8). Regardless of the specific models' intricacies, the main features of both models maintain a striking resemblance to each other. Research exists outlining it is not the mere existence of each element, but rather the intentional strategic management of each, that holds potential for school and organization improvement. Management of human capital needs to be seen as a partnership among district level leaders, human resources departments, and school level leaders. No subsystem or element of a framework could exist without first having clarity around the specific knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to effectively perform.

Competencies

The concept of competencies has been used for over half a century. As far back as the 1970s, Harvard professor David McClelland was engaged to discover specific attitudes and habits of top performing United States Information Agency (USIA) workers beyond measures used by the USIA. Existing USIA screeners and selection methods related little to actual job performance expectations and ended up eliminating high numbers of potentially qualified candidates. McClelland "demonstrated that habits of behavior and underlying motivations, which he called 'competencies,' differentiate workers' performance outcomes" (Steiner & Hassel, 2011, p. 2). Competencies include explicit and measurable skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary for a principal to effectively lead a school and drive high levels of student achievement (Briggs et al., 2013; Casey, 2018; Horton, 2016; Sanghi, 2016; Steiner & Hassel, 2011).

Identifying competencies establishes a mutual understanding between an organization's leaders and its followers about how to perform work, what is valued from higher levels of leadership, what it takes to succeed, and specifically what workers should focus on in their own performance. When this shared understanding is developed, advertised, and aligned to other human capital processes, it can help an organization in areas such as higher retention rates, job satisfaction, and the achievement of strategic goals (Briggs et al., 2013; Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). Figure 1 shows how competencies can center human resources functions for school leaders.

Figure 1

Human Resource Alignment Components

Note. From "Teaching Assessment for Teacher Human Capital Management: Learning From the Current State of the Art," by A. T. Milanowski, H. G. Heneman, III, and S. M. Kimball, 2011, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, p. 4 (https://wcer.wisc.edu/docs/working-papers/Working_Paper_No_2011_02.pdf). Copyright 2011 by Wisconsin Center for Education Research.

Leadership competencies continue to serve as guidance for principal preparation program recruitment, screening, development, and evaluation. Additionally, competencies are a building block upon which principal evaluation measures are built. For example, in 2013 Marzano researchers identified "24 categories of leader actions and behaviors [competencies]," which later evolved into the "Marzano School Leader Evaluation System" (Horton, 2016, p. 40). Grounding processes such as recruitment and selection by competencies is a reliable way to not only hire leaders who produce the best outcomes, but to also ensure evidence-based decisions with minimized bias.

There have since been multiple approaches published to aid both private and public sectors in developing a model of competencies. Whether starting from scratch or from an existing validated model, Lucia and Lepsinger's (1999) book, *The Art and Science of Competency Models*, provides comprehensive guidance around two approaches to establishing a competency model (Horton, 2016; Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999).

When considering educator competencies, no single "correct" set of competencies exists; rather, the importance lies more in the alignment of systems defining educator competencies so those competencies align to a district system's vision and expectations. Equally important is to align defined competencies to desired learner outcomes, or student competencies. As higher levels of leadership weigh the expectations of staff to possess or display all leader competencies at once, it is cautioned instead to think holistically and create teams in a distributive way to balance individuals' competencies needed within an organization or team. In reference to meeting an expectation of mastery

of competencies, the more appropriate target is to practice, learn, and refine competencies at the individual level over the course of time (Casey, 2018; Steiner & Hassel, 2011).

Standards for Effective School Principals

Effectiveness standards for principals can be considered competencies in that standards too outline knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors of high-performing school leaders. States may leverage these standards to anchor their policies and approaches to growing a robust fleet of school leaders. Standards can provide a framework or guidance to principal preparation programs, licensures, and evaluation requirements. At the time of this study, 47 states used some form of principal effectiveness standards (Briggs et al., 2013). Additionally, standards for effective principals can serve as a critical foundation to what is sought after in recruitment and hiring, can be built upon through professional development, and can be monitored through performance evaluations (Mendels, 2012). When looking to the research for standards for school principals, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) and the National Education Leadership Preparation (NELP) are two notable, widely used sets related to preservice preparation and inservice training of practicing school principals. Each are presented in further detail as follows.

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards were created in 1996 and were revised in 2008 to meet the increasing need to evaluate and train school leaders in the United States. The standards were again revised in the Spring of 2015 as a response to numerous studies that indicated the ISLLC Standards did not encompass the multiple roles and experiences school leaders encounter. In November of

2015, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) approved replacing the ISLLC standards with Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). These ten standards were considered to more clearly emphasize students' academic success *and* well-being. They exist to guide professional practice and how educational leaders are prepared, hired, developed, supervised, and evaluated. They also inform government policies and regulations that oversee the profession.

In summary, the PSEL standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2015) are as follows:

Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms

Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students

Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel

Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community

Standard 9: Operations and Management

Standard 10: School Improvement

(pp. 9-18)

While states are not required to use these standards, 32 of 47 states reported using the ISLLC or modified version, whereas 18 states developed their own (Briggs et al., 2013).

National Education Leadership Preparation Standards

The revision of the PSEL standards ignited parallel work related to aspiring and novice educational leadership standards. December, 2015, marked the creation of the National Education Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards. Different from broader expectations in the PSEL standards, NELP standards outlined more specifically outcomes and expectations for aspiring, entry-level educational leaders. These have been intended to guide preservice program design, accreditation review, and state program approval (NPBEA, 2018). A separate set of eight NELP standards exist for building-level leadership and seven standards for district level leadership. Both sets are presented as a series of acceptable and adequate content knowledge separate from educational leadership skills.

Other Sets of Standard Competencies

While PSEL and NELP standards are robust outcomes of significant, formalized standards, other sets of leadership competencies exist in the field that appear in multiple reports and research ventures. Two more well-known examples of these include McREL's Balanced Leadership Framework (Waters & Cameron, 2007) and Reginald Green's 13 core competencies (Green, 2010), both grounded in research and found to correlate to student achievement. McREL's Balanced Leadership Framework was built as a result of Marzano and colleagues outlining 21 leadership responsibilities that are positively correlated with student achievement through a 30-year meta-analysis (Briggs et al., 2013). They include: (a) affirmation, (b) change agent, (c) communication, (d) contingent awards, (e) culture, (f) curriculum/instruction/assessment, (g) discipline, (h) flexibility, (i) focus, (j) ideals/beliefs, (k) input, (l) intellectual stimulation, (m)

knowledge of curriculum/instruction etc., (n) monitors, (o) optimizer, (p) order, (q) outreach, (r) relationship, (s) resources, (t) situational awareness, and (u) visibility (Jacob et al., 2015).

Green's competencies are strongly aligned to the ISLLC/PSEL standards and are as follows: (a) visionary leadership, (b) unity of purpose, (c) instructional leadership, (d) curriculum and instruction, (e) establishing learning communities, (f) organizational management, (g) collaboration, (h) assessment, (i) diversity, (j) professional development, (k) reflection, (l) inquiry, and (m) professionalism (Green, 2010).

In comparing the PSEL and NELP standards alongside the McREL and Green competencies, all are found to be consistent with the dozens of studies commissioned by the Wallace Foundation beginning in 2000 which has found principles to have five emphasized key responsibilities: (a) shaping a vision of academic success for all students, (b) creating a climate hospitable to education, (c) cultivating leadership in others, (d) improving instruction; and (e) managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement (Wallace Foundation, 2013).

With the profound existence of research-based, overlapping competencies as they relate to principal effectiveness, states and local districts are provided with a strong foundation to inject these competencies into current and future processes and plans for continuous improvement of the position or role of a principal.

Principal Selection

Research shows a correlation between district-level leaders and impacting student achievement through the responsibility of managing the human capital of school-level administrators (Odden, 2011). Districts should develop and implement a staffing strategy

for school principals. This often begins with recruitment, which typically has both an internal and external focus, however, isn't always carefully managed. The Wallace Foundation (2013) finds hiring well trained candidates for principals to be one of four main parts in an effective principal pipeline. Leithwood et al. (2006) found that student learning and development is influenced specifically by how a leader directs an organization, manages the people within the organization, and leads vision and goal development of the organization (in education, the school district).

Internal and External Candidates

There are several opportunities and challenges to embrace when considering filling principal vacancies with both internal or external candidates. Looking internally provides candidates familiar with how a school district operates, its climate, culture, and processes. Presumably, internal candidates require less training and/or mentoring from the incumbent. External candidates may take longer to acclimate and become confident with the internal workings of a school district, such as whom to seek out with questions or issues. Selecting external applicants has also been found to cause tensions or feelings of resentment from internal candidates and colleagues. Despite this, an opportunity while looking externally may involve keeping internal staff sharp and committed. Chen (2005) found, "although external recruitment hurts the 'morale' of insiders and reduces their total effort, the output of the workers will actually increase" (p. 261).

Succession Planning

Across the recruitment, selection, and development aspects of human capital stretches succession planning. The screening and selection of future principals is largely left to individuals, existing hidden pipeline hierarchies, and educators' desired

universities to determine. Principal succession typically follows that of an informal route rooted in classroom teaching. It begins as teachers take coursework that leads to a credential, then an assistant principal position. Principals are often then chosen from this pool of assistant principals. There remains a large opportunity for district leaders to work with leadership training partners to develop their own principal pipeline or aid in better identification and screening of quality candidates that meet existing organization needs as well as future priorities (Odden, 2011; University of Washington, n.d.).

Succession planning involves developing action plans for individuals to assume the most critical positions. In contrast to talent management, succession planning focuses mostly on the development of a capable pool of internal candidates who will be prepared for a transition at the time a promotion is needed or as a leadership opportunity becomes available. Experts at the University of Washington (n.d.) cite the following benefits that succession planning brings an organization's capacity in the long term:

- Identifying critical positions and highlighting potential vacancies;

- Selecting key competencies and skills necessary for business continuity;

- Focusing development of individuals to meet future business needs.

(para. 3)

North Dakota Principal Evaluation

Extending beyond the requirement to ensure every teacher in the state is highly qualified through licensure provisions, administrative rules in North Dakota also require teachers be supervised by "qualified principals." While North Dakota Century Code (15.1-15) states that every public "school district shall conduct two performance reviews of each individual employed as a teacher, a principal, or as an assistant or associate

superintendent during each of the first three years an individual holds such a position"
(Section 15.1-15-01.1.a), common historical practice has been to leave the details in
defining principal performance evaluation up to local school districts. This has led to
significant variances in the type, frequency, standards, and measurement of principal
performance across the state.

In an effort to develop more consistent standards and guidelines, in 2011, the
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) established the State ESEA
Reauthorization Planning Committee, which then created a subcommittee called the
Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support System (TPESS) subcommittee. The
TPESS subcommittee was comprised of teachers, administrators, legislators, higher
education representatives, and a representative from the North Dakota Center for
Educational Leadership (NDCEL). What began as this team's original focus soon shifted
from teacher evaluation to principal evaluation, and thus, a name adjustment to the
PTESS to emphasize the new priority. This committee incorporated evidence-based
practices to issue guidelines for local school districts to develop and implement their
principal evaluation models by February 1, 2015 (NDCEL Principal Evaluation
Guidelines, 2020).

Within these guidelines, the North Dakota state superintendent formally adopted
the 2008 *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School
Leaders* as the "operative standards upon which the statewide principal performance
evaluation system is to be based" (NDCEL Principal Evaluation Guidelines, 2020, p. 4).
No later than February 1 of 2015, districts were allowed to purchase, adopt, or develop a
principal evaluation model as long as it addressed the following conditions:

- aligned to 2008 ISLLC standards

- specified at least four differentiated performance levels

- incorporated multiple evaluation measures related to standards-based leadership competencies

- detailed method for recording performance level determinations

- formally applied and approved by the state department

(NDCEL, 2020, p. 6-7)

With revised ISLLC standards making their debut just months after the state-wide mandatory implementation date of 2015, North Dakota had yet to formally revisit its commitment to effective principal evaluation, still requiring districts to abide by the 2014 guidelines containing outdated 2008 ISLLC standards among other provisions.

As research uncovered a potentially wide variance among districts shaping the role of a principal as well as taking different approaches to the competencies, succession planning, and evaluation of principals, it became clear that some form of consensus needed to be sought with regards to the field study application of addressing this problem. Researchers proceeded to review research around a methodology designed to build consensus among field experts—the Delphi Technique. Learning more about this method would assist in designing and executing collection of data.

The Delphi Method

Selective deployment of a particular method of gathering data was important in this study due to the geographical limitations of field experts yet the need for collaboration and consensus among a group of experts. As a result, the researcher reviewed literature focusing on the Delphi survey technique in order to have a basis for fully designing this study. The Delphi technique was developed by RAND Corporation

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associates in the early 1950s. A Delphi method is often deemed a qualitative approach whereby a group of field experts, individually and anonymously, answer questions in writing about a topic. Meta-studies surrounding this technique have had panel sample sizes ranging from 3 to 171 participants. This approach brings a group of experts towards consensus by a researcher collecting their responses, summarizing those responses, and bringing results back before the panelists. The primary underpinning of this technique is anonymity; panel experts are never made aware of fellow panelists' identities or brought together at any point in a study.

The second critical component of this study involved central tendencies. Through repeated iterations of collecting, summarizing, and revisiting results, the desired outcome of reaching a central point of consensus among panelists increases with each consecutive round (Andrews & Allen, 2002; Rowe & Wright, 1999).

The basic steps of the Delphi process were outlined by Pfeiffer (1968):

1. The first questionnaire which is sent to the panel of experts may ask for a list of opinions involving experiences and judgments, a list of predictions, and a list of recommended activities.

2. On the second round, a copy of the collective list is sent to each expert and the expert is asked to rate or evaluate each item by some criterion of importance.

3. The third questionnaire includes the list, the ratings indicated, and the consensus, if any. The experts are asked to either revise their opinions or discuss their reasons for not coming to consensus with the group.

(as cited in Yousuf, 2007, pp. 2-3)

Decades and iterations later, Randall Dunham (1996) identified the following seven-step

process for collecting data:

1. Identify the issue and solicit ideas

2. Response to first questionnaire

3. Create and send a second questionnaire

4. Response to second questionnaire

5. Create and send a third questionnaire

6. Continue the process until it is clear no new ideas are being generated and no new strengths, weaknesses, and opinions have been identified

7. Resolution is determined one of two ways:

    a. If clear, dominant results are the outcome, a final formal ranking through a Likert evaluation scale is conducted based on the final results of the questionnaire rounds

    b. Resolution can be determined using a nominal group technique for voting, whereby participants assign specified point allotments to the most promising ideas, participants cast their "votes" accordingly and the facilitator compiles the results.

While there is no finite number of rounds to this technique, "the payoff usually

begins to diminish quickly after the third round" (Yousuf, 2007, p. 3). This approach is

deemed advantageous when opinions of experts and practitioners are needed yet may be

unable to physically be in proximity to each other. Criticisms of this approach include the

subjectivity in the opinions of the panelists as well as the challenge in determining

reliability and level of expertise of individuals selected to participate in the panel. There

is no "typical" Delphi. The method is modified to suit the circumstances and research

questions involved (Andrews & Allen, 2002; Rowe & Wright, 1999; Yousuf, 2007).

Common Approaches to Addressing the Problem

To aid in succession and hiring of principals, districts look to their existing

policies or other outside districts through professional connections, updating every so

often their process of choosing candidates for principal positions. To aid in the shortage

of qualified applicants, districts are trying to make the principalship role more attractive

through sign-on bonuses or alternative licensure avenues. Purchased programs that assign

a score to candidates based on particular aptitudes may help in recruiting and selecting

candidates. The use of distributive leadership by supervisors to increase existing

principals taking on more responsibilities may make those individuals stand out during

new hiring processes.

When considering funding these approaches, school districts, through the Every

Student Succeeds Act (2015), have flexibility in leveraging federal dollars towards high-

quality principals. For example, under Title II, Part A (supporting effective instruction),

approximately $2.3 billion/year has been allocated to states to improve the quality of

teachers and school leaders, with 3% that can be allocated specifically for the principal

pipeline, such as for recruitment or professional development (Council of Chief State

School Officers, 2016; Nielsen & Lavigne, 2020, p. 5).

Another common approach to addressing effective succession of principals is for

district leaders to focus time and attention on a selected candidate during an inservice

phase rather than preparation or onboarding phases. This might include leveraging the

evaluation process as a way to hold principals accountable and determine their

effectiveness. For example, under Title II, Part B of ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015), nearly $489 million a year has been authorized for use for human-capital management system components such as specialized professional development, mentor assignments, or performance incentives such as bonuses based on student achievement outcomes (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2016).

Connections to Relevant Theoretical Foundations

This research venture occurred through the theoretical underpinnings of one key framework, Human Capital Management (HCM), and one organizational theory, systems theory. While there is not a lot of research in the educational field as it relates to human capital management, the components used in other professional contributions and findings aligned very well to this study. With staff salaries and benefits accounting for 70% to 80% of school district expenditures, "human capital" is a significant academic investment for districts, and often represented as both a challenge and an opportunity (Myung et al., 2013). Where it is a challenge to identify relevant measures and provide meaningful information which can be acted upon, an opportunity to evaluate and maximize the value of people is a great benefit.

First, this study viewed people, specifically elementary principals for the primary value they add to an organization, as assets rather than costs. As a process is sought for recruiting and selecting principals, using this asset perspective at the forefront of this study was a solid anchor in that it prioritized the magnitude this sole position has on an entire system and its potential to positively affect staff and students.

The second theoretical perspective that complimented this study involved viewing schools as open, social, organizational systems through systems theory. In 1966, Katz and

Kahn defined an open, social system as one comprised of subsystems and divided further into teams where information and resources flow in and out in constant exchange amidst an unpredictable environment. Within a system, a manager is present who scans the environment, monitors the inputs and throughputs (processes), and makes necessary changes for improvement through constant feedback loops (Bridgen, 2017). This study viewed each open principal position as seeking a manager for a system. Additionally, applying systems theory encouraged a shift towards holism, or viewing a system as made up of interdependent parts. In this case, the "parts" departments and leaders, not solely a superintendent, interact through multiple feedback loops based on inputs, processes, and outputs to create a viable, well-rounded succession system.

The intersection of systems theory and the HCM framework provided a solid theoretical basis for this study as it examined central office leaders as they act in the management role of a school system, defining inputs, processes, and outputs, monitoring for feedback, and making necessary changes all through one of the primary assets or inputs in the system—the school principal. Weaving together these theories emphasizes Myung et al.'s (2013) conclusion after studying human capital frameworks within education that, "no single subsystem taken alone can be expected to improve the teacher workforce" (p. 9).

The above review of relevant literature shows many contributing factors to the complexities faced by school districts in succession planning and processes of hiring school principals. Artifact II introduces the research approach followed in this study. This includes methods and processes used to collect data from field experts in order to address the problem.

ARTIFACT II

RESEARCH APPROACH NARRATIVE

As part of the description of the research approach, a rationale for the design, participant selection, research questions, and data collection are presented.

Research Design

This study used mixed research methodologies in two phases. Quantitative descriptive research through surveys drove the determination of principal competency importance in the actions and lived experiences of field experts. The inclusion of a qualitative approach aimed to more closely examine the context and the influence this context has on school leadership actions. These aims assisted in generating the following research questions for this project:

1. What are the most critical competencies of school principals leading an existing and newly built school in high enrollment, public North Dakota school districts?

2. How do critical school principal competencies compare in perceived importance when serving an existing school versus opening a newly constructed school?

3. How present are these competencies in high enrollment public school district recruitment and selection processes?

The first phase of this study aimed to identify what experts consider to be the most important knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors of effective school principals when considering the context of opening a newly built school versus serving an existing building. The researcher chose survey collection over an interview method because the primary aim was to pinpoint the *most effective* competencies, not just find effective competencies (reaching consensus was important). To do this, Dunham's (1996) seven step Delphi technique process was used, only in a technology-enhanced fashion to eliminate the physical paper and mailing of questionnaires and responses. A Delphi technique was chosen due to its ability to elicit free expression from field experts in an anonymous fashion, while allowing panelists to be informed of each other's views in an environment of controlled feedback. Further, its iterative nature allowed experts to change their opinions free from criticism.

The researcher designed the web-based questionnaires and document analysis via Qualtrics software. The first step was to administer the electronic questionnaire to field experts. The results were compiled, summarized, and presented to the panelists. Then, panelists reviewed the collective results and completed a second round of questions, potentially revising their original opinions. This process was repeated a third time in effort to reach a ranking consensus of the competencies for effective school leaders that should be prioritized when selecting an internal school principal candidate to open a new building. As consensus was reached, the resolution phase followed, involving a nominal group technique, or rank-ordering of the dominant results for voting. This formalized both the competencies and the priority ranking in order to proceed into the second phase of this study, the document review.

The second phase targeted research question three with the intent to expose the absence or presence of the most critical competencies in district recruitment and selection processes. The researcher identified a document review as the best approach in order to authentically address the question using recent, real documents. This was chosen as a better, more controlled approach than asking participants to reflect individually on their own individual district's documents or processes.

<center>**Participants and Setting**</center>

Participant Identification

This study sought to collect data from individuals who have the common experience of serving as a school principal opening a newly constructed building in high enrollment North Dakota school districts. To form the panel of participants for this study, the researcher employed qualitative homogeneous snowball sampling. Selection began by contacting superintendents or research approved designees in four of the largest high enrollment public school districts in North Dakota—Bismarck, Grand Forks, West Fargo, and Minot Public School Districts. Each district was experiencing growth and had been opening new schools within the last 6 years. Limiting the scope to relatively large school districts controlled the context while maintaining a small sample size to allow for in-depth perspectives from field experts. Three of the four districts consented to participate and provided a suggested list of candidates that fit participant criteria. In this case, criteria included veteran principals and those serving in the capacity of school principal for at least 5 years, who have also opened new schools. The focus of this study hinged upon the *qualifications* of participants more than the *number* of participants. A total of eight principals participated in this study across three districts, two secondary (middle-high

<center>30</center>

school) and six elementary, all of whom have served as a principal of both an existing and newly built school. Including multiple districts provided more voices and avoided limitations of specific individuals as far as their time in their role or other knowledge and/or experiences. Table 3 is a snapshot of the makeup of enlisted participants.

Table 3

Participant Demographic Snapshot

Total Participating Districts	3
Total Participants	8
Years of Principalship Experience	37.5% 5 years 25% 6-10 years 37.5% 11-19 years
Average Experience of All Panelists	10 years
Grade/Division Served	75% Elementary (6) 25% Secondary (2)

Participant Engagement

Some participants engaged in only the surveys and some participants engaged in both the surveys and document review. Table 4 outlines the percentages of participation in each data collection round.

Table 4

Percentage of Participants in each Data Collection Phase

Phase	Participants	Percentage of Total Participants (%)
Round 1 Questionnaire	8	100
Round 2 Questionnaire	6	75
Round 3 Questionnaire	7	88
Document Review	6	75

Limitations

Meta-studies using the Delphi technique indicated there is no "typical" sample size; rather that the method is modified to suit the circumstances and research questions. Despite this, Delphi panel sample sizes range from 3 to 171 experts (Rowe & Wright, 1999). Having eight total participants, transferability may be considered a limitation of this study, especially without the participation of the fourth invited district. While participants were principals who had experience opening new buildings, the roles and responsibilities of principals in this process varied with context and factors such as specific district size, structure, budget, etc. Another limitation was seeking consistent participation from experts amidst busy professional and personal schedules.

To overcome time demands and omit nuisances of additional emails, screens, and documents, the latter rounds of the study encompassed the previous rounds' results embedded directly within the questions. This created conditions for participants to more efficiently review and participate in subsequent rounds. Finally, while the knowledge gained during this study can help inform the alignment of effective principal competencies in a school district's human capital management (HCM) framework, this study is limited to examining the recruitment and selection phases. There remains a large opportunity to expand the exploration into other pieces of a HCM system, such as onboarding, goal setting, and evaluation processes for principals.

Data Collection

This dissertation in practice utilized two sources for data collection: online survey questionnaires and document reviews. Each is discussed as follows. First an email was sent (Appendix A) to participants' school email accounts provided by the consenting

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districts' research approvers. This invitation email included a brief introduction to the

study and the two phases, a link to the Qualtrics questionnaire, and an assigned

participant identification number. The email prompted the recipients to either reply to the

researcher indicating consent to participate, or to directly begin round one with the

assigned identification number indicating automatic consent to participate. As each

survey round completed and the next began, the researcher continued to email the

participants in the same manner with the brief introduction and enclosed survey link. The

same was true for the final data collection through the document review. Table 5 offers a

summary of the type and format of data collection for the study.

Table 5

Data Collection Summary

Type	Format	Task/Prompt Format	Research Question
Online Survey Questionnaire	Round 1	● Demographics ● Likert Ratings	RQ1 & RQ2
Online Survey Questionnaire	Round 2	● Review Results ● Sort-Ranking List ● Likert Ratings	RQ1 & RQ2
Online Survey Questionnaire	Round 3	● Review Results ● Sort-Ranking List ● Likert Ratings	RQ1 & RQ2
Document Review	Principal Job Description	● Highlight/code	RQ3
Document Review	Existing School Principal Interview Questions	● Highlight/code	RQ3
Document Review	Newly Built School Principal Interview Questions	● Highlight/code	RQ3

Instruments – **Online Survey Questionnaires**

The first of three researcher-designed questionnaires (Appendix B) entitled, "Examining Internal Selection of Principals," consisted of 19 items categorized into two parts. Part one asked participants to provide some demographic information as well as general perceptions related to building principals in both a newly constructed and existing building. Although the questionnaire was anonymous, participants were given an identification number that allowed for the researcher to gauge comparisons and respondent engagement.

Following the demographic section, the second portion of the questionnaire provided the participants with the 10 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) asking participants to consider these as "competencies," and rank the importance of each when serving as a building principal of an existing building, and separately, when leading a newly constructed building. These were closed questions designed as 10-point Likert-scale with a rating of one being the lowest importance and ten indicating the utmost or highest importance. Culminating this questionnaire, one open-ended question was provided asking if participants felt any competencies (knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors) were absent or under-represented within the 10 PSELs provided.

The second questionnaire (Appendix C) designed for Round 2 also included two parts. Part 1 provided participants with a list of all 10 PSEL standards and prompted dragging and ranking them in order of importance, once when considering serving as a principal of a new building, and again as a principal serving an existing building. Part 2 of the second questionnaire embedded the results from Round 1 Likert-type questions

including the rating selection percentages, overall means, and standard deviations within the questionnaire. Figure 2 shows an example.

Figure 2

Round 2: Sample Question Showing Results
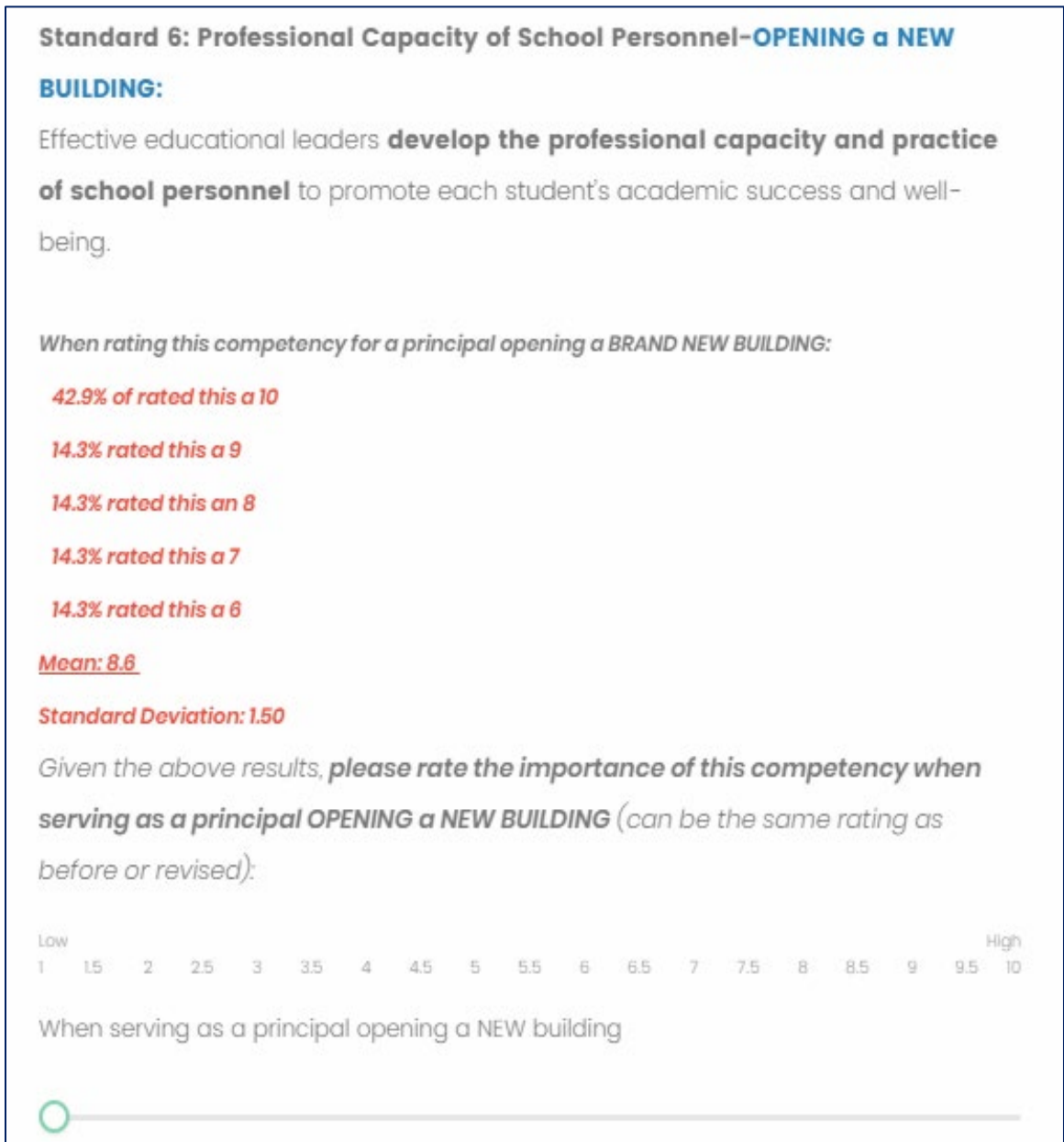
As participants reviewed the results, they completed an exact replication of the PSEL rating questions as Round 1 with the exception of omitting any questions where a central tendency had already been identified. A central tendency, or "consensus" was deemed as 75% or greater with a standard deviation less than 1, a general agreement of the substantial majority of panelists.

The questionnaire used for the third round (Appendix C) was a replica of the second. It shared the updated results of the sort-list rankings from round two as well as the updated results from round two of the PSEL Likert rating questions. Any additional PSEL rating questions where consensus had been established were disclosed as such and not prompted for further responses.

Document Reviews

Document reviews presented visual evidence of school leader competencies based on explicit criteria within recruitment and selection documents. Document types included a job description, interview questions for principals of newly built schools, and interview questions for principal selection at existing schools. Participants were provided a digital copy of the three documents using the same Qualtrics software as the questionnaire data collection. This task asked each of the participants to locate and digitally highlight instances when each of the ten PSEL competencies appeared throughout a principal job description and interview questions. To enable consistent analysis, the job description and two sets of interview questions were provided from the district with the most research participants and are explained further.

Job Descriptions

Job postings are said to symbolically present "a first impression of the underlying institutional values that will guide the desired means of accomplishing outcomes" (Hoffman & Bresciani, 2012, p. 28). The job description used in this study (Appendix E) consisted of four labeled categories with a range of 7 to 22 listed items or criteria within each. Field experts reviewed each of the 55 items/criteria laid out in the job description. Table 6 shows a breakdown of specific categories and number of items listed.

Table 6

Job Description Document Components

Category	Items/Criteria Available to Select
Essential Functions	18
Skills	7
Knowledge	8
Abilities	22
Total	55

Interview Questions

The first set of interview questions (Appendix F) included 11 items and was used to hire building principals to fill principal vacancies in existing schools. The second set of interview questions (Appendix F) also consisted of 11 items and was specifically designed for the internal selection of *current* principals to open a newly constructed school. As the principals reviewed the digitally embedded questions within the document, they were able to click and associate it with one or more of the 10 PSEL standards, if applicable. Appendix D shows the participant view of this review task. This phase of the

study targeted research question three, "How present are these competencies in high enrollment public school district recruitment and selection processes?"

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed after each survey round in order for field experts to review the results and prepare for continued participation in subsequent rounds. To format the material in a meaningful way, raw data was copied from Qualtrics into an Excel spreadsheet that further assisted in the calculation of statistics and analysis of trends within the content of the surveys as well as the document review. This was to allow for different configurations of descriptive statistics and comparisons among competencies, documents, and type of context (new vs. existing). After initially analyzing the data collected from the questionnaire rounds and later the document review, six specific formulas of descriptive statistics were configured and are represented in Table 7.

Table 7

Data Formula Configurations

Statistic Configuration	Formula	Analysis Period
Ranking of Competency Importance (New/Existing)	Mean	● Between rounds ● Culmination
Likert Rating of Competency Importance (New/Existing)	Number, Percent, and Mean	● Between rounds ● Culmination
Frequency of Presence	Number, Percent	● Culmination
Representation Concentration	Percent	● Culmination
Ranking of Presence (New/Existing)	Mean	● Culmination
Comparison of Importance to Presence	Mean	● Culmination
Over/Underrepresentation	Count *(within 2, over/under by 3, over/under by 4 or more placement rankings)*	● Culmination

Findings

After defining each of the formulas above, the researcher reviewed participant responses to summarize the type of information that fell into each. As a result, the findings of this study are explained as they relate to each of the research questions.

Research Question 1

What are the most critical competencies of school principals leading an existing and newly built school in high enrollment, public North Dakota school districts? Participants were asked to identify the most critical competencies regarding a principal opening a new school in two different ways. First, when presented with a full list of all 10 PSEL competencies, the survey prompted participants to drag and drop, creating a sorted order of competencies, ranking the most critical at the top to least at the bottom. The results of this approach are shown in the left column in Table 8.

Next, as shown by the right column, participants were presented with each individual competency and asked to rate its importance on a Likert scale. Using two approaches to discern the same information was to promote validity in the responses. The top three most critical principal competencies leading a newly built school were (a) Community of Care and Support for Students; (b) Mission, Vision, and Core Values; and (c) Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families. Table 8 shows the full results of both response methods and all the competencies.

Table 8

Most Critical Principal Competencies for a New School

PRINCIPAL OF NEWLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDING			
Ranking by Sort Order (most critical to least)		**Likert Rating** by Mean (1-10) (least critical to most)	
Competency	Average Ranking	Competency	Average Rating
Standard 5 Community of Care & Support for Students	1st	**Standard 5 Community of Care & Support for Students**	10.0
Standard 1 Mission Vision Core Values	2nd	**Standard 1 Mission Vision Core Values**	10.0
Standard 8 Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	3rd	Standard 7 Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	10.0
Standard 2 Ethics & Professional Norms	4th	**Standard 8 Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families**	10.0
Standard 7 Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	5th	Standard 9 Operations & Management	9.7
Standard 4 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	6th	Standard 4 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	9.1
Standard 3 Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	7th	Standard 3 Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	8.5
Standard 9 Operations & Management	8th	Standard 6 Professional Capacity of School Personnel	8.1
Standard 6 Professional Capacity of School Personnel	9th	Standard 2 Ethics & Professional Norms	8.0
Standard 10 School Improvement	10th	Standard 10 School Improvement	7.9

Table 9 presents the same configurations only in the context of an existing school. Field experts identified the top three most critical competencies needed as a principal of an *existing* school to be (a) Mission, Vision, and Core Values; (b) Community of Care and Support for students; and (c) Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment.

Table 9

Most Critical Principal Competencies for an Existing School

PRINCIPAL OF AN EXISTING BUILDING			
Ranking by Sort Order (most critical to least)		**Likert Rating** by Mean (1-10) (least critical to most)	
Competency	Average Ranking	Competency	Average Rating
Standard 1 Mission Vision Core Values	1st	**Standard 5 Community of Care & Support for Students**	9.8
Standard 5 Community of Care & Support for Students	2nd	**Standard 1 Mission Vision Core Values**	9.7
Standard 4 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	3rd	Standard 7 Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	9.5
Standard 6 Professional Capacity of School Personnel	4th	**Standard 4 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment**	9.4
Standard 7 Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	5th	Standard 6 Professional Capacity of School Personnel	9.3
Standard 10 School Improvement	6th	Standard 3 Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	8.8
Standard 3 Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	7th	Standard 10 School Improvement	8.8
Standard 2 Ethics & Professional Norms	8th	Standard 8 Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	8.6
Standard 8 Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	9th	Standard 2 Ethics & Professional Norms	8.4
Standard 9 Operations & Management	10th	Standard 9 Operations & Management	8.1

To further address research question one, the researcher looked at the average rankings and ratings of the competencies for both a principal of a new *and* existing school and computed the combined average to arrive at the overall top three competencies named by the field experts. These were found to be (a) Community of Care

and Support for Students; (b) Mission, Vision, Core Values; and (c) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Table 10 outlines the overall average ranking of all the competencies.

Table 10

Overall Average Ranking of Competencies (New & Existing)

NEW **AND** EXISTING BUILDING OVERALL RANKINGS	
Mean Ranking	**Competency**
1st/2nd	**Community of Care & Support for Students**
1st/2nd	**Mission Vision Core Values**
3rd	**Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment**
4th	Professional Community for Teachers & Staff
5th/6th	Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families
5th/6th	Ethics & Professional Norms
7th	Professional Capacity of School Personnel
8th	Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
9th	School Improvement
10th	Operations & Management

Research Question 2

How do critical school principal competencies compare in perceived importance when serving an existing school versus opening a newly constructed school? As part of the round 1 survey, 100% of participants agreed (63% strongly agree, 37% agree) that, "Serving as a principal opening a new school requires a unique type or amount of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and/or behaviors than serving as a principal of an existing building."

Based on the response data, the participants' expressed opinions matched their actions. When comparing the field expert rating and ranking results between newly built and existing buildings, there were some significant variances between the two contexts of serving as a principal. Table 11 shows the full side by side comparison.

Table 11

Context Comparison Rankings

IMPORTANCE COMPARISON SUMMARY				
	NEW BUILDING		EXISTING BUILDING	
Competency	Ranking by sorted list	Ranking based on Likert Ratings	Ranking by sorted list	Ranking based on Likert Ratings
Mission Vision Core Values	2nd	2nd	1st	2nd
Ethics & Professional Norms	4th	9th	8th	9th
Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	7th	7th	7th	6th
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	6th	6th	3rd	4th
Community of Care & Support for Students	1st	1st	2nd	1st
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	9th	8th	4th	5th
Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	5th	3rd	5th	3rd
Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	3rd	4th	9th	8th
Operations & Management	8th	5th	10th	10th
School Improvement	10th	10th	6th	7th

The graph in Figure 3 depicts a visual representation of the differences between new building and existing building principal competency deemed importance. The variance of importance between the competency under the two contexts of principalship is shown by the different bars. Two of the ten (20%) competencies- (a) Equity and

Cultural Responsiveness and (b) Professional Community for Teachers and Staff, were

ranked the same in importance across both contexts. With the remaining eight

competencies, four, or 40%, were ranked within two placements of each other, and the

remaining four competencies showed a larger variance ranging from four to six different

ranking placements. This supported the initial field experts' stated position in that 80% of

competencies arrived at unique levels of importance.

Figure 3

Competency Ranking Differences by Context

Competency Ranking Comparison by Sort Order
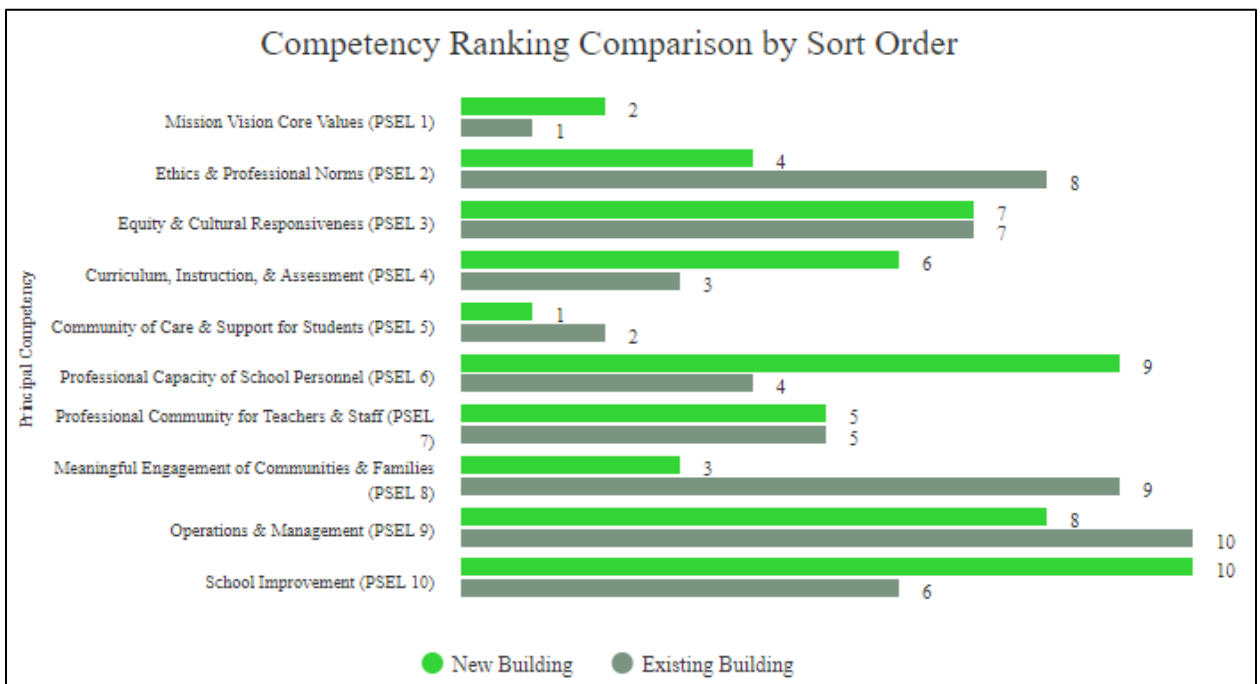
Research Question 3

How present are these competencies in high enrollment public school district

recruitment and selection processes? To answer the third research question, the

researcher looked not only at the frequency each competency was identified but also the

concentration of the selected content within the document and the degree it represented

the competencies. This provided a cross examination of the content in the event that some of the criteria were more heavily represented than others.

There were 54 total criteria on the district's job description. When reviewing it, field experts collectively selected 303 items as representing one or more competencies. Each competency ranged in frequency from 4% to 21% of the instances. Table 12 depicts the instances each was identified within the 55 criteria across Essential Functions, Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities.

Table 12

Competency Presence in Job Description

Competency	Instances	Comparative Frequency to Total Instances (%)
Mission Vision Core Values	31	10
Ethics & Professional Norms	32	11
Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	15	5
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	15	5
Community of Care & Support for Students	15	5
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	35	12
Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	43	14
Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	13	4
Operations & Management	63	21
School Improvement	41	14
Total	303	

Job Description Analysis

When examining the job description itself and the concentration or dispersal of different criteria representing the selected instances, Table 13 shows how many different

criteria statements were selected of the total 55 statements as representing each competency. For example, field experts selected 18 different items of the 55 listed items in the job description as representing the competency of Mission, Vision, Core values. This meant that 33% of the job description criteria was found to represent this one competency, or rather, 67% of the job description was *not* found to represent anything about mission, vision, and core values.

Table 13

Job Description Representation by Competency

Competency	Number of Criteria Statements Selected (s)	Percent of Overall Job Description Selected to Represent this Competency (s/n=%)
Mission Vision Core Values	18	33
Ethics & Professional Norms	20	36
Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	8	15
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	12	22
Community of Care & Support for Students	10	18
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	16	29
Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	27	49
Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	7	13
Operations & Management	21	38
School Improvement	24	44

n= 55 total statements

New Building Principal Interview Question Analysis

There were 11 interview questions for selecting an internal candidate to lead a newly constructed building. When field experts examined the 11 questions, they

identified 65 instances where a competency was represented. Of those 65 instances, table 14 represents the frequency each competency was identified with the chosen top 3 competencies represented in bold.

Table 14

Competency Presence in New Building Interview Questions

Competency	Instances	Comparative Frequency to Total Instances (%)
Mission Vision Core Values	14	22
Ethics & Professional Norms	8	12
Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	7	11
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	0	0
Community of Care & Support for Students	0	0
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	4	6
Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	9	14
Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	8	12
Operations & Management	7	11
School Improvement	8	12
Total	65	

Of the 11 questions, some competencies were found in nearly every question, whereas some were not to be found in any. Table 15 outlines how many of the 11 different interview questions were selected as representing each competency. For example, field experts selected 9 different questions of the 11 as representing the competency of Mission, Vision, Core Values. This meant that 82% of the interview

questions were found to represent this one competency, or rather, 18% of the interview questions were *not* found to represent anything about mission, vision, or core values.

Table 15

New Building Principal Interview Question Representation by Competency

Competency	Number of Questions Selected (Q)	Percent of Overall Interview Questions Selected to Represent this Competency (Q/11=%)
Mission Vision Core Values	9	82
Ethics & Professional Norms	5	45
Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	1	9
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	0	0
Community of Care & Support for Students	0	0
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	4	36
Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	5	45
Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	5	45
Operations & Management	5	45
School Improvement	3	27
		n= 11 total questions

Existing Building Principal Interview Question Analysis

When field experts reviewed the eleven interview questions used in selecting candidates to serve existing schools, eighty-five instances were indicated as representations of one or more PSEL competencies. Table 16 represents the frequency each competency was identified of the total eighty-five instances throughout the questions. The top competencies are bolded.

Table 16

Competency Presence in Existing Building Interview Questions

Competency	Instances	Comparative Frequency to Total Instances (%)
Mission Vision Core Values	16	19
Ethics & Professional Norms	13	15
Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	10	12
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	0	0
Community of Care & Support for Students	10	12
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	7	8
Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	13	15
Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	11	13
Operations & Management	2	2
School Improvement	3	4
Total	85	

Of the 11 questions, some competencies were identified in several different questions, whereas some were found in very few, or in one case, not at all. Table 17 outlines how many of the 11 different interview questions were selected as representing each competency. For example, field experts selected ten different questions of the 11 as representing the competency of Professional Community for Teachers and Staff. This meant that 91% of the interview questions were found to represent this one competency, or rather, 9% of the interview questions were *not* found to represent anything about Professional Community for Teachers and Staff.

Table 17

Existing Building Interview Question Representation by Competency

Competency	Number of Questions Selected (Q)	Percent of Overall Interview Questions Selected to Represent this Competency (Q/11=%)
Mission Vision Core Values	8	73
Ethics & Professional Norms	8	73
Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	5	45
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	0	0
Community of Care & Support for Students	5	45
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	4	36
Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	10	91
Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	5	45
Operations & Management	2	18
School Improvement	2	18
		n= 11 total questions

Field experts found zero instances in the interview questions of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, one of the top three competencies for school leaders of an existing school. While nearly every question (eight of 11) were found to represent mission, vision, and core values, this served as only 19% of the field experts' total instances of witnessed competencies. This shows that participants found many of the questions to represent multiple competencies.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify key competencies of principals in different contexts and expose their presence or absence in district recruitment and selection processes. This study affirmed that serving as a principal warranted some key competencies regardless of the context of opening a new building or serving one already in existence. Field experts also confirmed there are some competencies uniquely more or less important across the two contexts. Once determining these competencies, this study uncovered several gaps where the presence of these competencies was inequitable to its importance.

The researcher deemed imbalanced representation in relation to the ranking of importance to be within two placement rankings. Any placement rankings found to be below or above two were deemed under or overrepresented and captured as an area worthy of devoting some attention. These results are summarized in Table 18 using the key provided.

Table 18

Importance Versus Presence Comparison Summary

KEY	Within 2 placements	Underrepresented by 3 placement rankings	Underrepresented by 4 or more placement rankings	Overrepresented by 3 or more placement rankings	Overrepresented by 4 or more placement rankings
	(balanced/ reasonable)	(appeared **less often** than its deemed importance)		(appeared **more often** than its deemed importance)	

	IMPORTANCE VERSUS PRESENCE COMPARISON SUMMARY							
	NEW BUILDING				EXISTING BUILDING			
	IMPORTANCE		PRESENCE		IMPORTANCE		PRESENCE	
COMPETENCY	Ranking by sorted list	Ranking by Likert ratings	Ranking by Presence in Interview Questions	Ranking by Presence in Job Description	Ranking by sorted list	Ranking by Likert Rating	Ranking by presence in Interview Questions	Ranking by Presence in Job Description
Mission Vision Core Values	2nd	2nd	1st	6th	1st	2nd	1st	6th
Ethics & Professional Norms	4th	9th	3rd/4th/5th	5th	8th	9th	2nd/3rd	5th
Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	7th	7th	6th/7th	7th/8th/9th	7th	6th	5th/6th	7th/8th/9th
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	6th	6th	9th/10th	7th/8th/9th	3rd	4th	10th	7th/8th/9th
Community of Care & Support for Students	1st	1st	9th/10th	7th/8th/9th	2nd	1st	5th/6th	7th/8th/9th
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	9th	8th	8th	4th	4th	5th	7th	4th
Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	5th	3rd	2nd	3rd	5th	3rd	2nd/3rd	3rd
Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	3rd	4th	3rd/4th/5th	10th	9th	8th	4th	10th
Operations & Management	8th	5th	6th/7th	1st	10th	10th	9th	1st
School Improvement	10th	10th	3rd/4th/5th	2nd	6th	7th	8th	2nd

Where there were ties for placements, any ranking that qualified being over or underrepresented was identified in order to still draw attention to that competency presence for potential future revisions

Overall, many gaps were identified in the document review. It was found that 80% (8 of the 10) competencies were over or underrepresented as compared to their importance rankings on the job description as shown by the red and yellow cells above. Only 2 of the 10 competencies were deemed reasonably represented compared to their deemed importance as shown by the green in Table 18.

Both sets of interview questions were found to be less discrepant in importance/presence compared to the job description. Forty percent of the principal competencies for a newly built school and fifty percent for an existing school were over or underrepresented within the interview questions as compared to their importance ranking.

As the field experts identified the most important knowledge, skills, and behaviors to embody in order to serve as an effective principal, four of these competencies called for more immediate attention in that they were not reasonably present within recruitment and selection processes. As Table 19 outlines, two of these four competencies with the largest discrepancies in presence- (a) Community of Care and Support for Students and (b) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment- were the top three most important competencies of any and all contexts presented to field experts.

Figure 4 shows a visual representation of the information presented numerically in Table 19. Each competency is placed in the appropriate corresponding quadrant indicating how its overall ranking of importance (vertical placement) compared to its overall presence in recruitment and selection documents (horizontal placement). For example, the competency "Community of Care and Support for Students" was the most important, yet nearly the least present, as shown in the upper left quadrant. The

competency "Ethics and Professional Norms" was found to be the least important, yet nearly the most represented competency throughout the documents. These discrepancies are the areas in need of closer examination on both the research and practitioner sides.

Table 19

Overall Competency Importance Versus Presence Comparison Summary

KEY	Within 2 placements	Underrepresented by 3 placement rankings	Underrepresented by 4 or more placement rankings	Overrepresented by 3 or more placement rankings	Overrepresented by 4 or more placement rankings
	(balanced/ reasonable)	(appeared **less often** than its deemed importance)		(appeared **more often** than its deemed importance)	

OVERALL COMPETENCY IMPORTANCE VERSUS PRESENCE COMPARISON SUMMARY		
	NEW **AND** EXISTING BUILDING OVERALL AVERAGES	
COMPETENCY	**IMPORTANCE RANKING**	**PRESENCE RANKING** Across All Documents
Mission Vision Core Values	2nd	1st
Ethics & Professional Norms	10th	3rd
Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	8th	6th/7th
Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	5th	10th
Community of Care & Support for Students	1st	9th
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	7th	8th
Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	3rd	2nd
Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	4th	4th/5th
Operations & Management	6th	4th/5th
School Improvement	9th	6th/7th

Figure 4

Importance/Presence Comparison Matrix: New and Existing Schools
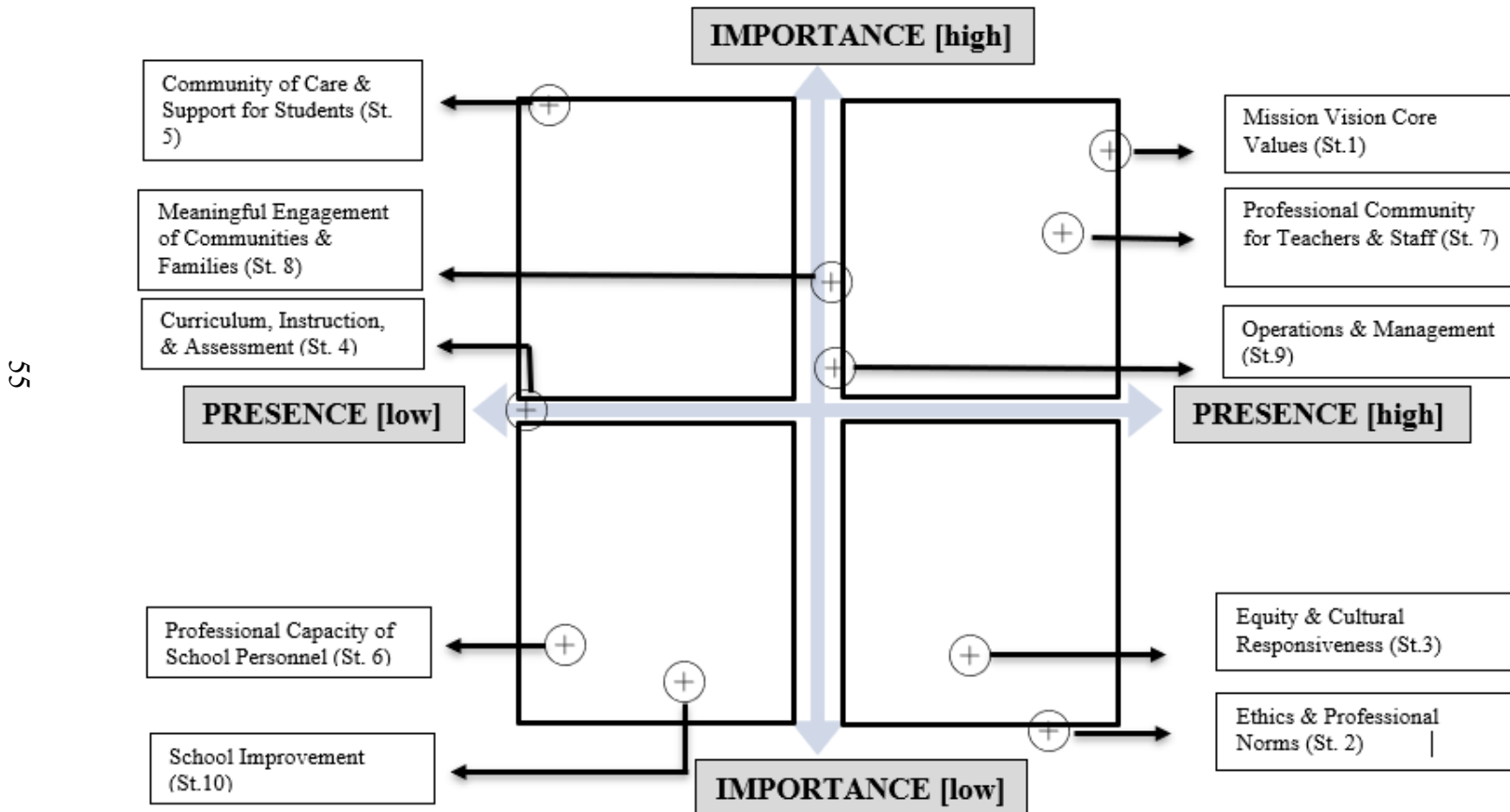
Recommendations

Recommendations for two stakeholder groups are presented. First, an opportunity for researchers to continue diving deeper into some of the preliminary findings, and second, for practicing practitioners to take action.

Further Study

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends conducting additional rounds of Delphi Studies unpacking the specific competencies shown to be significantly under or overrepresented despite showing high importance. As field experts identify lesser comparative value in competencies such as ethics and professional norms as well as equity and cultural responsiveness yet witness these being some of the most present in current processes, there remains opportunity to further explore what the implications may be on the current and/or future profession.

District Action

Further, it is recommended that school leaders commit to staying knowledgeable with the roles, responsibilities, and impact that resides within the position of school principal. District leaders must use this to begin to closely examine current practices for principal succession, beginning with identifying the most critical competencies of effective leaders. To assist in this recommendation, a white paper is included in Artifact 3 intended to offer detailed guidance when designing a succession plan and aligning human capital management systems altogether.

This artifact presented an overview of the research design, data collection, data analysis, findings, and recommendations of this study. Artifact three will present a white

paper developed based on the findings of this study intended to both communicate the

findings as well as address this problem of practice.

ARTIFACT III

INTRODUCTION TO WHITE PAPER

This study aimed to identify the most important principal competencies when serving an existing as well as a newly built school, then to explore the presence or absence of these competencies in district recruitment and selection processes. To address this problem of practice, the researcher produced a white paper that communicates the research and findings of this study.

The intended audience of this white paper is school district school boards, superintendents, human resources staff, and other district level leaders interested in and responsible for human capital management and principal succession planning. The following white paper presents five considerations based on this study, recommended steps, and guiding questions for school district leaders to utilize when planning school principal succession. These tools provide packaged guidance to leaders regarding how to establish aligned human capital systems that prioritize the most effective principal competencies to best support our current and future students.

Study uncovers top competencies for school principals and their existence in hiring practices

District considerations for reviewing and aligning recruitment and selection processes to the most needed knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

Dr. Brittany Upton, University of North Dakota, August 2022

North Dakota

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Introduction

Decades of research has highlighted the impact and importance of a highly effective principal when seeking positive student performance and thriving school conditions. With student enrollment, new school construction, and principal job openings all on the rise, districts need guidance in embracing these changes while maintaining the integrity of solid professional practices. A system has been needed that is built upon clarity and consensus in what is essential for school principals to know and be able to do in order to effectively launch and lead new school buildings.

This report shares results from a study conducted by Dr. Brittany Upton (2022) with that closely examined leadership competencies specific to the recruitment and selection of the building principal. Field experts with experience leading a newly built and existing school from high enrollment North Dakota public schools were invited to participate in a Delphi Study and document review. The study first identified the core competencies for effective school principals and later exposed or confirmed the presence of these competencies within the job description and sets of interview questions. Five considerations are presented based on this study, recommended steps, and guiding questions for school district leaders to utilize when planning school principal succession. These tools provide packaged guidance to leaders regarding how to establish aligned human capital systems that prioritize the most effective principal competencies to best support our current and future students.

Five Considerations for District Leaders At-a-Glance:

Principal openings are increasing as a result of attrition, increased student enrollment, and the construction of new schools.

The most critical competencies of school principals opening a new school are (a) Community of Care and Support for Students, (b) Mission, Vision Core Values, and (c) Meaningful Engagement of Community & Families.

The position of a school principal is demanding, complex, and directly related to increasing student achievement.

Serving as a school principal of an existing school versus a newly built school requires an emphasis of different key competencies to be effective.

Despite their importance, the top critical competence for school principals are largely absent in recruitment and selection processes.

Definitions of Key Terms and Phrases

Competency – The knowledge, skills, behaviors, and dispositions necessary for a principal to effectively lead a school and drive high levels of student achievement. This study considered formalized, principal effectiveness standards to be synonymous with competencies.

High Enrollment School Districts – For this study, high enrollment was considered more than 7,500 K-12 enrolled students. Four total high enrollment districts with populations ranging from 7,500 to 13,700 were involved in this study.

Human Capital – The talent and experience of staff, viewed as an asset/value, or expense/cost to an organization.

Human Capital Management (HCM) – The process of strategically managing human resource practices such as recruitment, selection, performance management, etc., in an effort to optimize productivity and effectiveness of an organization. In the education sector, the goal is to maximize both student performance and teacher effectiveness.

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Principal openings are increasing as a result of attrition, increased student enrollment and the construction of new schools.

Below is a snapshot of the growth, construction, and hiring trends across the United States & North Dakota

North Dakota Enrollment/Growth

- Student enrollment in North Dakota has increased steadily from 103,700 students in 2013 to 115,986 in 2019 (North Dakota Information Technology, n.d).
- According to the 21st Century School Fund and National Council on School Facilities (2018), "The National Center for Education Statistics projects . . . a statewide total enrollment increase of . . . 22.9 percent" (p. 81) between 2012 and 2024 for North Dakota.

Construction/Expansion

- 38% of districts in the US will launch a building construction project this year, with another 21% looking at a bond proposal for a construction project. This increased nearly 10% from 30% in 2017 (Goral, 2017a, 2017b).
- Between 2010 and 2020, North Dakota approved 49 expansion, addition, and/or new building projects, and 22 specific new school construction proposals (Tescher et al., 2020).

Principal Positions Increase, Experience Decreases

- Between the 1999-2000 and 2017-2018 school years, US public schools experienced an eight percent increase in school principal positions—83,790 in 1999-2000 to 90,850 2017-2018 (de Brey et al., 2021).
- 22% of principals either moved to a new campus or left the profession (de Brey, 2021).
- North Dakota administrator positions have also increased each year over the last three years: 626 in 2018, up from 609 just two years prior (North Dakota Information Technology, n.d.).
- The largest ND district, Bismarck Public Schools, has hired 25 principals since 2016; 88% were internal candidates (Bismarck Public Schools, n.d.).
- Acting principals are less experienced, only 4% of principals having 20 or more years experience while 73% were found to have 9 or fewer years (de Brey et al., 2021).

It is critical for district leaders to stay abreast of the current growth, expansion, and hiring trends at a local and national level in order to best prepare strategy for managing human capital effectively. Equally important to staying proactive is understanding the immense potential power the principal position beholds.

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The position of a school principal is demanding, complex, and directly related to increasing student achievement.

Principals account for at least 25% of the school level impact on student achievement.

With increased demands to meet student and staff unique needs, matching the right principal to lead a building is critical for climate, culture, and student achievement. Being positioned to influence and inspire effective teaching, research suggests one of the most important indicators of student academic success has been an effective campus principal, second to teacher effectiveness (Marzano et al., 2011). In fact, Woodard (2013) suggested "principals account for 25 percent of . . . [a school's] impact on student achievement" (para. 3), primarily due to their responsibility of hiring, developing, and managing their teaching force. Being the person leading staffing, professional growth, and overall climate and culture of a building, the principal role intersects with teacher retention and attrition. Ingersoll (2001) analyzed national data on teacher retention and found that 38% (p. 521) of teachers who reported leaving due to dissatisfaction cited inadequate administrative support as one of the top two reasons for their departure.

With such a complex position connected to school and student success, finding, hiring, and keeping quality candidates in the current and upcoming market is arguably an even greater feat on the shoulders of school boards and district level leaders. In this endeavor, the time to explicitly identify the particular knowledge and skills needed to be effective is long overdue. Numerous lists of standards exist, however processes such as recruitment and selection are often designed removed from these lists and crafted by ad hoc committee members or human resources staff typically hired from positions outside of education.

This study deployed multiple iterative rounds in a Delphi technique to veteran principals from high enrollment public districts in North Dakota. Table 1 outlines the most important school principal competencies (knowledge, skills, behaviors) needed to effectively lead both newly built and existing schools as deemed by these field experts: (a) Community of Care and Support for Students; (b) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; and (c) Mission, Vision, Core Values.

Table 1
Top Principal Competencies

	Average Top 3 Competencies of Principals Overall (new and existing building)
1)	Community of Care & Support for Students
2)	Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment
3)	Mission, Vision, Core Values

Serving as a school principal of an existing school versus a newly built school requires an emphasis of different key competencies to be effective.

100% of principals agreed or strongly agreed "Serving as a principal opening a new school requires a unique type or amount of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and/or behaviors than serving as a principal of an existing building."

When looking to field experts to discern a difference between competencies needed to effectively serve an existing building, a 2022 study found 100% of participants agreed (63% strongly agree, 37% agree) that, "Serving as a principal opening a new school requires a unique type or amount of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and/or behaviors than serving as a principal of an existing building." The participants' expressed opinions matched their actions in producing the data. When comparing the field expert rating and ranking results between newly built and existing buildings, 80% of all the competencies were rated significantly different between the two contexts of serving as a principal. The average sort-ordered ranking results are shown in order of most to least important below, with competencies of leading a new building on Table 2, and those of an existing building on Table 3.

Table 2
Ranked Principal Competencies (New Building)

	Ranked Competencies of Principals NEW BUILDINGS
1st	Community of Care & Support for Students
2nd	Mission, Vision, Core Values
3rd	Meaningful Engagement of Community & Families
4th	Ethics & Professional Norms
5th	Professional Community for Teachers & Staff
6th	Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment
7th	Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
8th	Operations & Management
9th	Professional Capacity of School Personnel
10th	School Improvement

Table 3
Ranked Principal Competencies (Existing Building)

	Ranked Competencies of Principals EXISTING BUILDINGS
1st	Mission, Vision, Core Values
2nd	Community of Care & Support for Students
3rd	Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment
4th	Professional Capacity of School Personnel
5th	Professional Community for Teachers & Staff
6th	School Improvement
7th	Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
8th	Ethics & Professional Norms
9th	Meaningful Engagement of Community & Families
10th	Operations & Management

As field experts considered leading a newly built school versus an existing school, Figure 1 shows only two of the ten competencies- (a) Equity and Cultural Responsiveness, and (b) Professional Community for Teachers and Staff, were ranked in equal importance. Four of the remaining eight were ranked within two placements of each other, and four showed a larger variance, ranging from four to six different placement rankings.

Figure 1

Competency Ranking Comparison by Sort Order

Competency Ranking Comparison by Sort Order
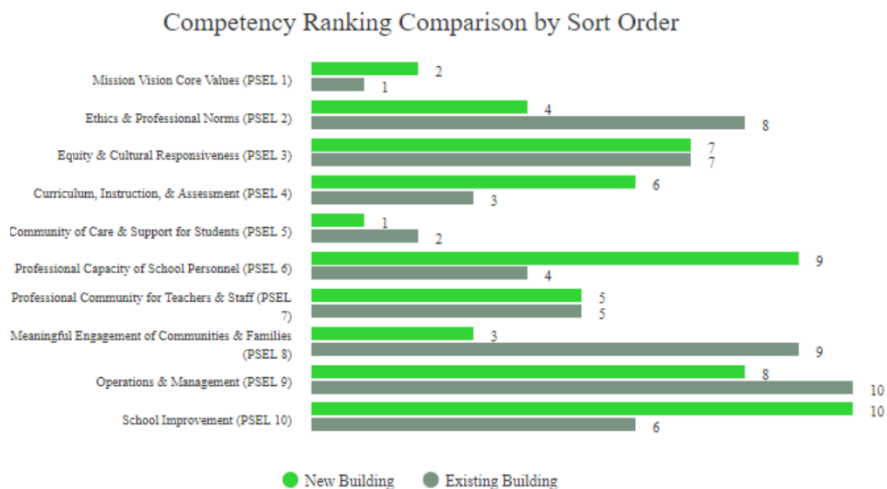
Consideration #4

The most critical competencies of school principals opening a new school are:

(a) Community of Care & Support for Students,
(b) Mission, Vision, Core Values, and
(c) Meaningful Engagement of Community & Families

Field experts were provided with the 10 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) to use as competencies and individually rate each on a Likert scale of importance ranging from one (not very important) to 10 (very important). Participants also sort-order ranked the list of all 10 by dragging and arranging each. After three rounds, consensus was reached and the results are shown in Table 4. The top competencies for principals serving a new building are bold.

Table 4
Average Top Principal Competencies Serving a New Building

Competency	Average Sorted Ranking	Competency	Average Rating
Standard 1 Mission Vision Core Values	**1st**	**Standard 5 Community of Care & Support for Students**	**9.8**
Standard 5 Community of Care & Support for Students	**2nd**	**Standard 1 Mission Vision Core Values**	**9.7**
Standard 4 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	**3rd**	Standard 7 Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	9.5
Standard 6 Professional Capacity of School Personnel	4th	**Standard 4 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment**	9.4

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Despite their importance, the top critical competencies for school principals are largely absent in recruitment and selection processes.

80% of the competencies were over or under represented in district recruitment and selection documents.

When first considering the context of opening a newly built school, Figure 2 depicts a detailed view of the top three most important competencies needed to effectively lead a new school and the degree to which field experts located these within the job description and interview questions.

Figure 2

TOP 3 PRESENCE OF PRINCIPAL COMPETENCIES LEADING A NEW SCHOOL

TOP 3 COMPETENCIES		Job Description		Interview Questions	
		Instances	Percentage	Instances	Percentage
Community of Care & Support for Students	1st	15	5%	0	0%
Mission Vision Core Values	2nd	31	10%	14	22%
Meaningful Engagement of Community & Family	3rd	13	4%	8	12%

TOP 3 COMPETENCIES — **PRESENCE/ VISIBILITY**
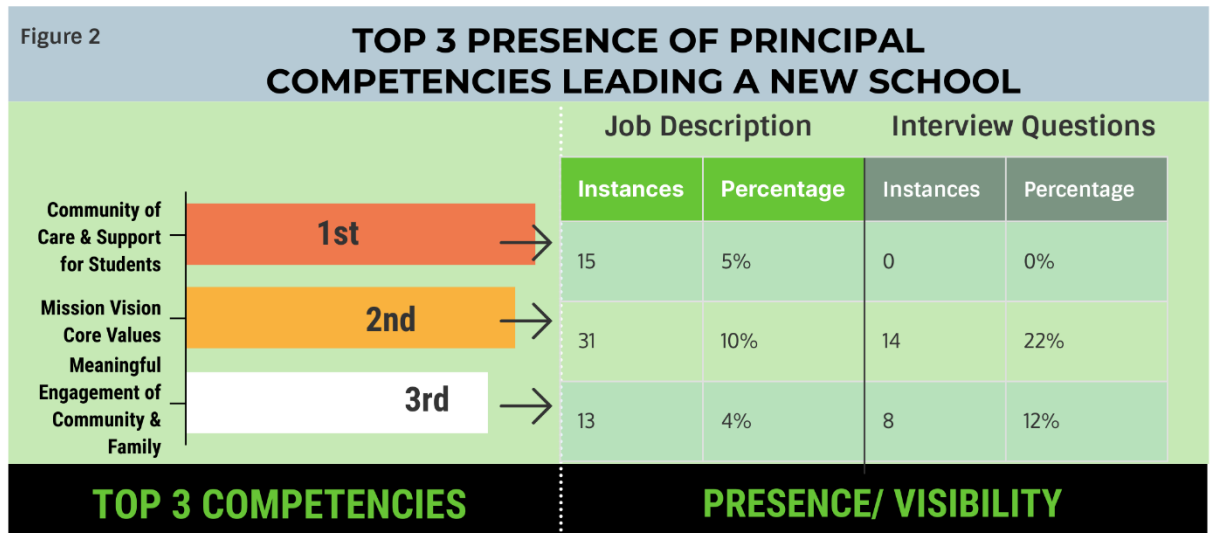
When examining the contexts of principals serving both newly built and existing buildings, the concerns worsen. Only two of the ten competencies were deemed reasonably represented compared to their deemed importance. The remaining eight were over or under represented as compared to their importance rankings on the job description.

80%
Over or Under Represented
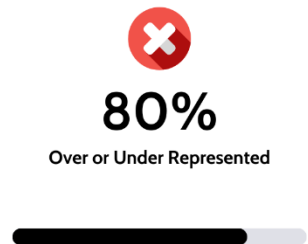
Findings...

> <

How did the current recruitment & selection documents measure up?

As the field experts identified the most important knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to serve as an effective principal, several competencies were not reasonably present within recruitment and selection documents as compared to their deemed importance. Table 5 outlines the results using the key provided.

Within 2 placements	Underrepresented by 3 placement rankings	Underrepresented by 4 or more placement rankings	Over Represented by 3 or more placement rankings	Over Represented by 3 or more placement rankings
balanced/ reasonable	appeared **less often** than its deemed importance		appeared **more often** than its deemed importance	

Table 5
Competency Importance Versus Presence Comparison Summary

Competency (listed by highest ranked importance)	Average Ranking by Sort Order (most critical to least)	Ranking by Presence in Interview Questions	Ranking by Presence in Job Description
Standard 5 Community of Care & Support for Students	1st	9th/10th	7th/8th/9th
Standard 1 Mission Vision Core Values	2nd	1st	6th
Standard 8 Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families	3rd	3rd/4th/5th	10th
Standard 2 Ethics & Professional Norms	4th	3rd/4th/5th	5th
Standard 7 Professional Community for Teachers & Staff	5th	2nd	3rd
Standard 4 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment	6th	9th/10th	7th/8th/9th
Standard 3 Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	7th	6th/7th	7th/8th/9th
Standard 9 Operations & Management	8th	6th/7th	1st
Standard 6 Professional Capacity of School Personnel	9th	8th	4th
Standard 10 School Improvement	10th	3rd/4th/5th	2nd

Interview Questions:
- **4 of 10** competencies were over or under represented

Job Description:
- **7 of 10** competencies were over or under represented

The top 3 most critical competencies of a principal leading a newly school **failed** a balanced representation **in 4 of 6 examinations.**

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Additional Findings: Importance vs. Presence

Figure 3 shows a visual representation of the results in Table 5. Each competency is placed in the corresponding quadrant indicating how its overall ranking of importance (vertical placement) compared to its overall presence in recruitment and selection documents (horizontal placement).

For example, "Community of Care and Support for Students" was deemed most important, yet nearly the least present, as shown in the upper left quadrant. The competency "Ethics and Professional Norms" was found to be the least important, yet nearly the most represented competency throughout the documents. These discrepancies indicate areas in need of closer examination, perhaps with potential further rounds of research as well as on the practitioner side of current district leadership.

Figure 3

Importance/Presence Comparison Matrix: New & Existing Schools
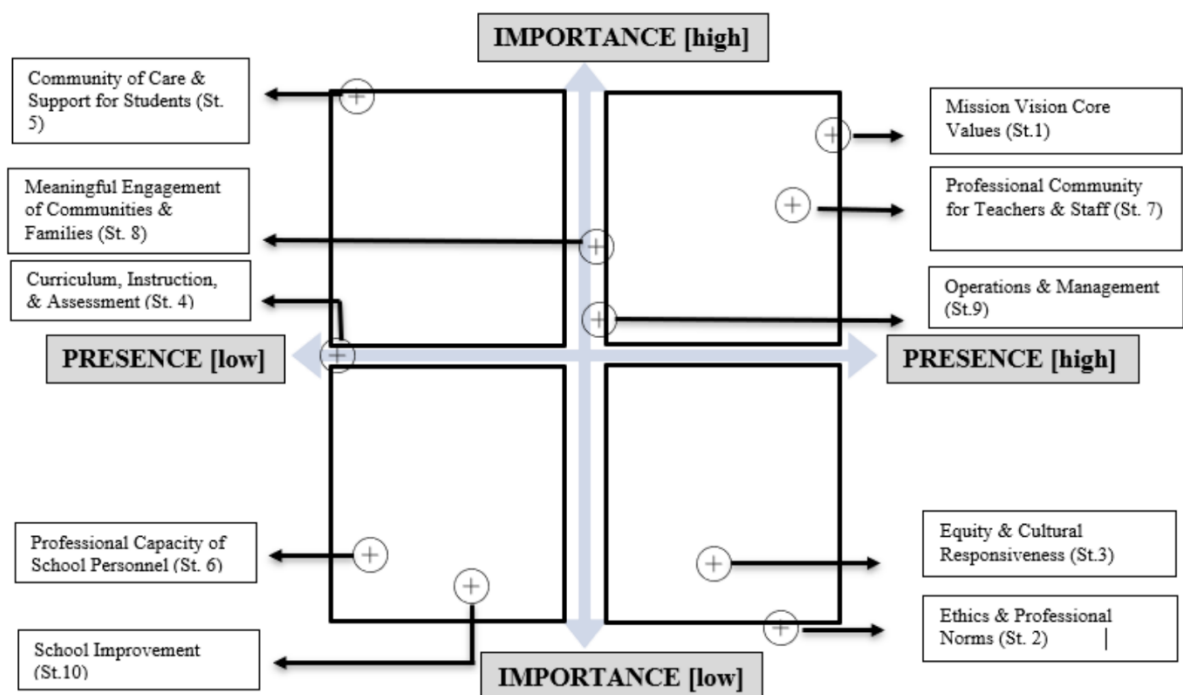
Conclusion

Given the pre-existing complexities in the role of a principal coupled with the unique set of responsibilities with opening a new school, clarity around the specific competencies needed of candidates produces an opportunity for districts to closely examine their processes beyond the basic construction of brick and mortar to appropriately select this critical position. This is called "human capital management," and begins by identifying competencies.

Effective human capital management holds potential to alleviate the shortage of quality school principal candidates. Figure 4 outlines all of the elements involved in human capital which are referenced in the following guidance for districts to examine their entire system alignment, with performance competencies at the core.

Figure 4
Human Resource Alignment Components

Note. From "Teaching Assessment for Teacher Human Capital Management: Learning From the Current State of the Art," by A. T. Milanowski, H. G. Heneman, III, and S. M. Kimball, 2011, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, p. 4 (https://wcer.wisc.edu/docs/working-papers/Working_Paper_No_2011_02.pdf).

When considering educator competencies, no single "correct" set of competencies exists; rather, the importance lies more in the alignment of systems defining educator competencies so those competencies align to a district system's vision and expectations. Equally important is to align defined competencies to desired learner outcomes, or student competencies. As higher levels of leadership weigh the expectations of staff to possess or display all leader competencies at once, it is cautioned instead to think holistically and create teams in a distributive way to balance individuals' competencies needed within an organization or team. In reference to meeting an expectation of mastery of competencies, the more appropriate target is to practice, learn, and refine competencies at the individual level over the course of time (Casey, 2018; Steiner & Hassle, 2011).

Recommendations: Take Action

As a result of the comprehensive literature review and action research conducted at the time of this study, Figure 5 depicts a flowchart to issue visual guidance to begin or refine the management and/or alignment of human capital for a school district, with guiding questions to follow.
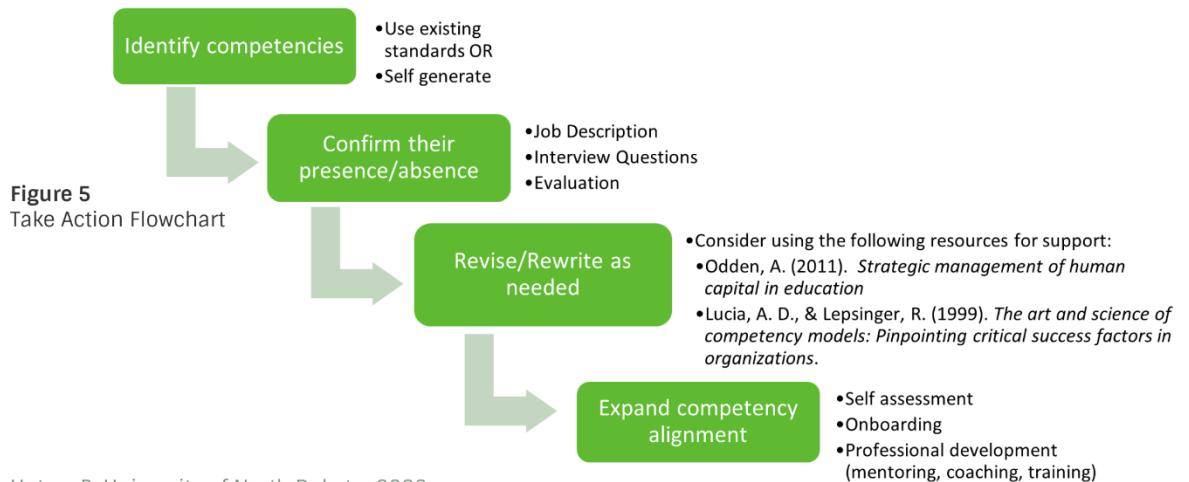
Figure 5
Take Action Flowchart

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? Appendix A: Guiding Questions for a District Leadership Team:

1. How do we define the most critical knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors of school principals (competencies)? [see next page for samples]

2. Will we create our own or use existing standards or models?

- Check state guidance to ensure evaluation guidelines are considered for full system alignment
- Consider consulting the following resources to support competency model creation:
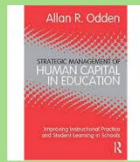
Odden, A. (2011). Strategic management of human capital in education
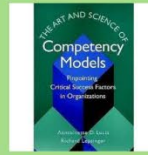
Lucia, A. D., & Lepsinger, R. (1999). The art and science of competency models: Pinpointing critical success factors in organizations.

- Are our competencies aligned to our vision and expectations?
- Are our defined competencies aligned to the desired learner outcomes, or student competencies?

3. What is unique or missing of these when opening a new school?

4. Where do these exist on our job description to recruit the best candidates?

5. Where do these exist within our interview questions to screen and select the best candidates?

6. Who selects or writes the items on these documents?
   - Is each competency represented?
   - Are the most/least important the most/least represented?

7. What else is represented on these documents, and what is its purpose?

8. How are the following aligned to our established key competencies?
   - Onboarding
   - Mentoring/Coaching
   - Professional Learning/Training
   - Evaluation

Identify competencies
- Use existing standards OR
- Self generate

Confirm their presence/absence
- Job Description
- Interview Questions
- Evaluation

Revise/Rewrite as needed
- Consider using the following resources for support:
- Odden, A. (2011). Strategic management of human capital in education
- Lucia, A. D., & Lepsinger, R. (1999). The art and science of competency models: Pinpointing critical success factors in organizations.

Expand competency alignment
- Self assessment
- Onboarding
- Professional development (mentoring, coaching, training)

Appendix B: Support for Identifying Competencies

Below exist two sample sets of questions for district use in beginning identification of the most critical knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors of school principals.

Sample Survey Questions to Elicit Principal Competencies

Type A: Competency Ranking

INSTRUCTIONS: Rank the following leadership "competencies" in order of most important (1st/top of the list) to least important (bottom of the list) by dragging & dropping to rearrange your list or Numbering 1 through 10 with 10 being the least important. "Competencies" are defined as knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors, and considered to be the bold, active part of each PSEL standard.

WHEN OPENING/LEADING A BRAND NEW SCHOOL
MOST IMPORTANT (1)--> LEAST IMPORTANT (10)

_____ Mission Vision Core Values-- **develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values** of high quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.
_____ Ethics & Professional Norms-- **act ethically and according to professional norms** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
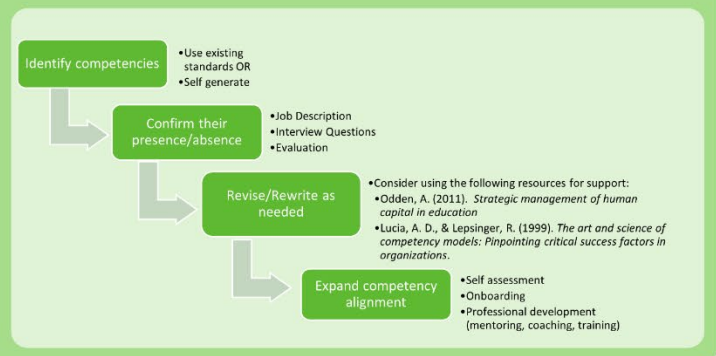_____ Equity and Cultural Responsiveness-- **strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices** to promote each student's academic success and well-being
_____ Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment--**develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
_____ Community of Care & Support for Students-- **cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community** that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.
_____ Professional Capacity of School Personnel--**develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
_____ Professional Community for Teachers & Staff-- **foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
_____ Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families--**engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
_____ Operations & Management-- **manage school operations and resources** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
_____ School Improvement--**act as agents of continuous improvement** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Type B: Competency Rating

INSTRUCTIONS: Competencies are defined as knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors. The bolded part of each standard should be considered the competency for this survey. Read the 10 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) standards below. For each competency, rank the degree to which you believe this standard/competency is important by dragging the slider. 1 would be of lowest importance, 10 would indicate the utmost or highest importance. In the first row, provide the importance ranking when serving as a building principal of an existing building. In the second row, indicate the level of importance specifically when a principal is opening and leading a new building.

Competency/Standard 1: [Mission Vision Core Values Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.]

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building
Low   High
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

When serving as a principal opening a NEW building
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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APPENDICES

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT/INVITATION EMAIL

Greetings!

You are invited to participate in a questionnaire and document review to examine which standards of effective school principals are most critical when building and opening a new elementary school, and further, to examine how prevalent these "competencies" are in district human resources documents and processes.

Principals who have opened new buildings in Minot, Grand Forks, and Bismarck Public Schools will participate in this research, in addition to principals in Bismarck with five or more years experience. The possible benefits to participating include sharing future knowledge about principal skills, knowledge, behaviors, and dispositions that rise to the top when opening a new elementary school, and how districts can include these criteria throughout their recruitment, onboarding, and development processes.

Phase 1: Survey Completion: This survey should take you about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer 17 questions on a survey. In effort to reach group consensus among the participants, ten of the questions, the ranking items, will be returned to you to complete two additional times after seeing the anonymous group results after each round.

Phase 2: Document Analysis: After the survey completion rounds, you will have an opportunity to review the district job description, interview questions, and evaluation rubric and be asked to label all instances of seeing the 10 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) within them. This should take about 10-30 minutes to complete. Please know that this study has been approved by the IRB at the University of North Dakota, and that I have received approval from your district to contact you about this work. If you have any questions or concerns about the nature of this research or the survey, please contact me at brittany.upton@hotmail.com.

Please reply to this email on or before Monday, December 20th that you are willing and able to participate so that I can ensure you receive the survey, anonymous responses, and compensation gift card at the end of the study, OR jump in and begin completing the questionnaire below as automatic consent to participate. Your Participant ID will be #xx. Please indicate this number when prompted on the survey in place of your name.

Here is a proposed draft timeline for participation

Week of 12/13-12/27 Indicate willingness to participate; Complete 1st round of questionnaire (5-10 minutes)
Week of 1/2-1/8 Review results & complete 2nd round of questionnaire (5 minutes)
Week of 1/9-1/16 Review results & complete 3rd round of questionnaire (5 minutes)
Week of 1/17-2/15 Phase 2: Label job description, interview questions, and evaluation rubric (10-30 minutes)

Thank you for helping me learn more about school principal competencies and recruiting and hiring systems alignment.

Sincerely,

Brittany Upton

University of North Dakota

Preview the Survey, or begin round 1 using ID number X indicating you automatically consent to participate:

- Click below to take the Questionnaire OR Copy and paste the URL into your browser:
  https://und.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_56EXOa8viGTBifk

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA Institutional Review Board Study Information Sheet

Title of Project: Beyond the Brick and Mortar of New Schools: Examining the Internal Selection of Principals

Principal Investigator: Brittany Upton, *Brittany.upton@hotmail.com*
Department: Educational Practice and Leadership
Advisor: Dr. Jared Schlenker, 701-777-3584, *jared.schlenker@und.edu*

Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this research study is to identify key knowledge, skills, and behaviors from education field experts specifically relevant to opening a new school, then to evaluate the presence of these competencies within district system processes such as recruitment, onboarding, and evaluation.

Procedures to be followed:
You will be asked to answer up to 17 questions on a survey. In effort to reach group consensus among the participants, ten of the questions, the ranking items, will be returned to you to complete two additional times after seeing the anonymous group results after each round. After the survey completion rounds, you will have an opportunity to review the district job description, interview questions, and evaluation rubric and be asked to label all instances of seeing the 10 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) within them.

Risks:
There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

Benefits:
It is not expected that you will personally benefit from this research.
Possible benefits to others include future knowledge about principal selection criteria when opening a new elementary school, and how districts can include these criteria throughout their recruitment, onboarding, and development processes.

Duration:
It will take about 10 minutes to complete the survey questions.
It will take about 10-30 minutes to complete the document analyses later.

Statement of Confidentiality:
The questionnaire does not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to. Therefore, your responses are recorded anonymously. If this research is published, no information that would identify you will be included since your name is in no way linked to your responses. All survey responses received will be treated confidentially and stored on a secure server. However, given that the survey can be completed from any computer (e.g., personal, work, school), we are unable to guarantee the security of the computer on which you choose to enter your responses. As a participant in this study, we want you to be aware that certain "key logging" software programs exist that can be used to track or capture data that you enter and/or websites that you visit.

Right to Ask Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Brittany Upton. You may ask any questions you have now or contact her. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, please contact Ms. Upton's academic advisor, Dr. Schlenker, at 701-777-3584 during the day. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact The University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at (701) 777-4279 or UND.irb@UND.edu. You may contact the UND IRB with problems, complaints, or concerns about the research. Please contact the UND IRB if you cannot reach the research staff, or you wish to talk with someone who is an informed individual who is independent of the research team. General information about being a research subject can be found on the Instructional Review Board website "Information for Research Participants" http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/research-participants.html

Compensation:
You will receive a $10 gift card for your participation in this research.

Voluntary Participation:
You do not have to participate in this research. You can stop your participation at any time. You may refuse to participate or choose to discontinue participation at any time without losing any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. You must be 18 years of age older to participate in this research study.
Completion of this survey implies you have read the information in this form and consent to participation in this research.

APPENDIX B

ROUND ONE SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Serving as a principal opening a **new school** requires a unique type or amount of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and/or behaviors than serving as a principal of an **existing** building."
  o Strongly Disagree (1)
  o Disagree (2)
  o Agree (3)
  o Strongly Agree (4)

- Do the following exist formally in your district **for principals opening new buildings**?

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Unsure (3)
Formalized Onboarding Plan	○	○	○
Formalized Principal Mentorship Program	○	○	○

- Which 5 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) do you believe were considered most when you were selected over other candidates to serve as the principal of the new school? **(select only 5)**
  ☐ Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values (1)
  ☐ Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms (2)
  ☐ Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness (3)
  ☐ Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (4)
  ☐ Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students (5)
  ☐ Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel (6)
  ☐ Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff (7)
  ☐ Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community (8)
  ☐ Standard 9: Operations and Management (9)
  ☐ Standard 10: School Improvement (10)

- How early were you selected as the principal of the new building before the opening of the doors/ class in-session? If having opened a new building more than once, consider your most recent.
  o Less than 3 months prior (1)
  o 3-5 months prior (2)
  o 6-7 months prior (3)
  o 8-9 months prior (4)
  o 10-11 months prior (5)
  o 12 or more months prior (6)

- How prepared did you feel as the principal the first year the doors opened at the new school you opened?
  o 1 Not at all (1)
  o 2 (2)
  o 3 (3)
  o 4 Very (4)

- Whether low or high, to what extent did each of the following contribute to your feelings of preparedness?

	Not at all (1)	(2)	(3)	Very (4)
External (district) processes and procedures (1)	○	○	○	○
Internal (self) motivation and actions (2)	○	○	○	○

PART II INSTRUCTIONS: Competencies are defined as knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors. The **bolded** part of each standard should be considered the competency for this survey. Read the 10 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) standards below. For each competency, rank the degree to which you believe this standard/competency is important by dragging the slider. *1 would be of lowest importance, 10 would indicate the utmost or highest importance.*   In the first row, provide the importance ranking when serving as a building principal of an **existing building.** In the second row, indicate the level of importance specifically when a principal is opening and leading a **new building.**

Standard 1: Mission Vision Core Values Effective educational leaders **develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.**

	Low High
When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
When serving as a principal opening a NEW building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Standard 2: Ethics & Professional Norms Effective educational leaders **act ethically and according to professional norms** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

	Low High
When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
When serving as a principal opening a NEW building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness Effective educational leaders **strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

	Low High
When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
When serving as a principal opening a NEW building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Effective educational leaders **develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
When serving as a principal opening a NEW building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students Effective educational leaders **cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community** that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
When serving as a principal opening a NEW building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel Effective educational leaders **develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
When serving as a principal opening a NEW building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff Effective educational leaders **foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
When serving as a principal opening a NEW building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community Effective educational leaders **engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

When serving as a principal opening a NEW building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Standard 9: Operations and Management Effective educational leaders **manage school operations and resources** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
When serving as a principal opening a NEW building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Standard 10: School Improvement Effective educational leaders **act as agents of continuous improvement** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
When serving as a principal opening a NEW building	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Are there any competencies (knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors) you feel are absent or under-represented within the 10 standards above?
  o Yes (1)
  o No (2)

- If yes, list here:

ROUNDS 2 AND 3 SURVEY QUESTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS: For this study, "competencies" are defined as knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors, and considered to be the bold, active part of each PSEL standard.

Please complete the (2) ranking questions below, then complete the same PSEL standard rating questions after reviewing the round 1 results in red for each standard.

WHEN OPENING/LEADING A BRAND NEW SCHOOL

MOST IMPORTANT --> LEAST IMPORTANT

Rank the following leadership "competencies" in order of most important (1st/top of the list) to least important (bottom of the list) **when considering a principal OPENING A NEW BUILDING.**

(Drag & drop to rearrange your list)

_____ Mission Vision Core Values-- develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.

_____ Ethics & Professional Norms-- act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ Equity and Cultural Responsiveness-- strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being

_____ Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment--develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ Community of Care & Support for Students-- cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

_____ Professional Capacity of School Personnel--develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ Professional Community for Teachers & Staff-- foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families--engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ Operations & Management-- manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ School Improvement--act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

WHEN LEADING <u>AN EXISTING SCHOOL</u>

MOST IMPORTANT --> LEAST IMPORTANT

Rank the following leadership "competencies" in order of most important (1st/top of the list) to least important (bottom of the list) **when considering a principal LEADING a school already in existence:**

(Drag & drop to rearrange your list)

_____ Mission Vision Core Values--develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.

_____ Ethics & Professional Norms--act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ Equity and Cultural Responsiveness--strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being

_____ Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment--develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ Community of Care & Support for Students--cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

_____ Professional Capacity of School Personnel--develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ Professional Community for Teachers & Staff--foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ Meaningful Engagement of Communities & Families-- engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ Operations & Management-- manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

_____ School Improvement--act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read the following PSEL standards (competencies). Compare and contrast the listed knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed between principals of brand new schools versus existing schools.

2. Review the collective participant results (mean, percentages, standard deviation) from the previous round in red.

3. Where prompted, rate the importance of this competency when serving as a building principal of an *existing* building AND/OR a *new* building (where specified) by dragging the slider. *1 would be of lowest* importance, 10 would indicate the utmost or highest importance.

Standard 1: Mission Vision Core Values- OPENING a NEW BUILDING:

Effective educational leaders **develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.**

When leading a brand new building:

100% rated this a 10

Mean: 10

Standard Deviation: 0

[Consensus Reached- no further rating needed]

Standard 1: Mission Vision Core Values-SERVING an EXISTING BUILDING:

Effective educational leaders **develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.**

When rating this competency for a principal serving in an ALREADY EXISTING BUILDING:

57.1% rated this a 10

14.3% rated this a 9

14.3% rated this an 8

14.3% rated this an 7

Mean: 9.1

Standard Deviation: 1.1

Given the results, ***please rate the importance of Mission Vision Core Values when serving as a principal of an existing building*** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

	Low	High
	1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5 5.5 6 6.5 7 7.5 8 8.5 9 9.5 10	

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building

Standard 2: Ethics & Professional Norms- OPENING a NEW BUILDING:

Effective educational leaders **act ethically and according to professional norms** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal opening a BRAND NEW BUILDING:

85.7% rated this a 10

14.3% rated this a 7

Mean: 9.57

Standard Deviation: 1.05

Given the results, **please rate the importance of this competency (ethics & professional norms) when serving as a principal of a principal of a new building** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

Low   High

1   1.5   2   2.5   3   3.5   4   4.5   5   5.5   6   6.5   7   7.5   8   8.5   9   9.5   10

When serving as
a principal
opening a NEW
building

Standard 2: Ethics & Professional Norms-SERVING AN EXISTING BUILDING

Effective educational leaders **act ethically and according to professional norms** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

*When rating this competency for a principal serving in an **ALREADY EXISTING BUILDING:***

71.4% rated this a 10

14.3% rated this an 8

14.3% rated this a 7

Mean: 9.3

Standard Deviation: 1.2

Given the results, **please rate the importance of this competency (ethics & professional norms) when serving as a principal of an existing building** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

Low   High

1   1.5   2   2.5   3   3.5   4   4.5   5   5.5   6   6.5   7   7.5   8   8.5   9   9.5   10

When serving as
a principal of an
EXISTING building

83

Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness- OPENING a NEW BUILDING:

Effective educational leaders **strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal opening a BRAND NEW BUILDING:

71.4% rated this a 10

14.3% rated this a 9

14.3% rated this an 8

Mean: 9.6

Standard Deviation: .73

Given the above results, ***please indicate your rating of the importance of this competency (equity & cultural responsiveness) when serving as a principal OPENING a NEW BUILDING*** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

Low   High

1   1.5   2   2.5   3   3.5   4   4.5   5   5.5   6   6.5   7   7.5   8   8.5   9   9.5   10

When serving as
a principal
opening a NEW
building

Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness-SERVING AN EXISTING BUILDING

Effective educational leaders **strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal serving in an ALREADY EXISTING BUILDING:

42.9% rated this a 10

28.6% rated this a 9

28.6% rated this an 8

Mean: 9.1

Standard Deviation: .83

Given the above results, ***please rate the importance of this competency (equity & cultural responsiveness) when serving as a principal of an existing building*** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

Low   High

1   1.5   2   2.5   3   3.5   4   4.5   5   5.5   6   6.5   7   7.5   8   8.5   9   9.5   10

When serving as
a principal of an
EXISTING building

Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment- OPENING a NEW BUILDING:

Effective educational leaders **develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal opening a BRAND NEW BUILDING:

42.9% of rated this a 10

28.6% rated this an 9

28.6% rated this an 8

Mean: 9.1

Standard Deviation: .83

Given the above results, **please rate the importance of this competency (curriculum, instruction, & assessment) when serving as a principal OPENING a NEW BUILDING** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

	Low																		High
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10

When serving as a principal opening a NEW building

Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment- SERVING AN EXISTING BUILDING

Effective educational leaders **develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal serving in an ALREADY EXISTING BUILDING:

57.1% rated this an 8

28.6% rated this a 10

14.3% rated this a 7

Mean: 8.4

Standard Deviation: 1.05

Given the above results, **please rate the importance of this competency (curriculum, instruction, & assessment) when serving as a principal of an existing building** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

	Low																		High
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building

Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students-OPENING a NEW BUILDING:

Effective educational leaders **cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community** that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

When considering serving an opening NEW BUILDING:

100% rated this a 10

Mean: 10

Standard Deviation: 0

[Consensus Reached- no further rating needed]

Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students- SERVING AN EXISTING BUILDING

Effective educational leaders **cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community** that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

When rating this competency for a principal serving in an ALREADY EXISTING BUILDING:

71.4% rated this a 10

14.3% rated this a 9

14.3% rated this a 7

Mean: 9.4

Standard Deviation: 1.05

*Given the above results, **please rate the importance of this competency when serving as a principal of an existing building** (can be the same rating as before or revised):*

Low   High

1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5 5.5 6 6.5 7 7.5 8 8.5 9 9.5 10

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building

*Given the above results, **please rate the importance of this competency when serving as a principal OPENING a NEW BUILDING** (can be the same rating as before or revised):*

Low   High

1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5 5.5 6 6.5 7 7.5 8 8.5 9 9.5 10

When serving as a principal opening a NEW building

Effective educational leaders **develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal serving in an ALREADY EXISTING BUILDING:
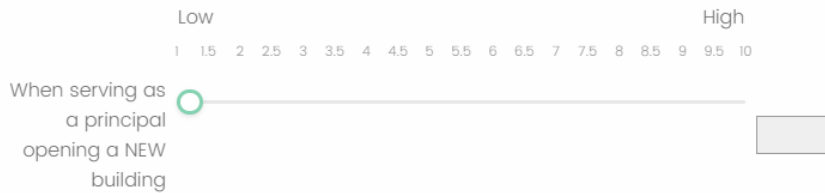
  42.9% rated this a 9

  28.6% rated this a 10

  14.3% rated this an 8

  14.3% rated this a 7

<u>*Mean: 8.9*</u>

Standard Deviation: .99

Given the above results, **please rate the importance of this competency when serving as a principal of an existing building** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

	Low																		High
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building
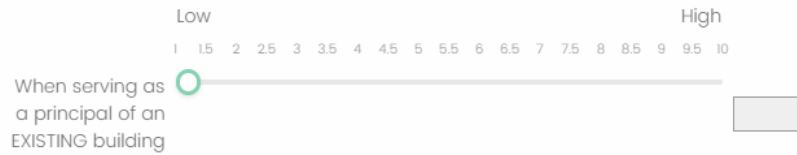
Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff- OPENING a NEW BUILDING:

Effective educational leaders **foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal opening a BRAND NEW BUILDING:

100% rated this a 10

<u>*Mean: 10*</u>

Standard Deviation: 0

[CONSENSUS REACHED- no further ratings needed]

Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff- SERVING AN EXISTING BUILDING

Effective educational leaders **foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal serving in an ALREADY EXISTING BUILDING:

42.9% rated this an 8

28.6% rated this a 10

28.6% rated this a 9

Mean: 8.9

Standard Deviation: .83

Given the above results, **please rate the importance of this competency when serving as a principal of an existing building** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

Low	High
1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4 4.5 5 5.5 6 6.5 7 7.5 8 8.5 9 9.5 10	

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building ⭕━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━━ [_____]
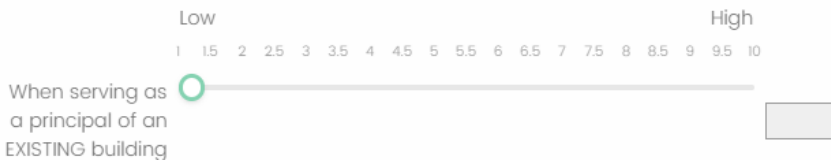
Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community- OPENING a NEW BUILDING:

Effective educational leaders **engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal opening a BRAND NEW BUILDING:

100% rated this a 10

Mean: 10

Standard Deviation: 0

[CONSENSUS REACHED- no further ratings needed]

Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community-SERVING AN EXISTING BUILDING

Effective educational leaders **engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal serving in an ALREADY EXISTING BUILDING:

42.9% rated this a 10

28.6% rated this a 9

14.3% rated this an 8

14.3% rated this a 7

Mean: 9.0

Standard Deviation: 1.07

*Given the above results, **please rate the importance of this competency when serving as a principal of an existing building** (can be the same rating as before or revised):*

	Low																		High
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building

Standard 9: Operations and Management- OPENING a NEW BUILDING:

Effective educational leaders **manage school operations and resources** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal opening a BRAND NEW BUILDING:

71.4% rated this a 10

28.6% rated this a 9

Mean: 9.7

Standard Deviation: 0.45

*Given the above results, **please rate the importance of this competency when serving as a principal OPENING a NEW BUILDING** (can be the same rating as before or revised):*

	Low																		High
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10

When serving as a principal opening a NEW building

Standard 9: Operations and Management- SERVING AN EXISTING BUILDING

Effective educational leaders **manage school operations and resources** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal serving in an ALREADY EXISTING BUILDING:

42.9% rated this a 7

28.6% rated this an 8

14.3% rated this a 10

14.3% rated this a 9

Mean: 8.0

Standard Deviation: 1.07

Given the above results, **please rate the importance of this competency when serving as a principal of an existing building** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

	Low																		High
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10

When serving as a principal of an EXISTING building

Standard 10: School Improvement- OPENING a NEW BUILDING:

Effective educational leaders **act as agents of continuous improvement** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal opening a BRAND NEW BUILDING:

28.6% rated this a 10

28.6% rated this a 9

28.6% rated this a 7

14.3% rated this an 8

Mean: 8.6

Standard Deviation: 1.18

Given the above results, **please indicate your rating of the importance of this competency when serving as a principal OPENING a NEW BUILDING** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

	Low																		High
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10

When serving as a principal opening a NEW building

Standard 10: School Improvement- SERVING AN EXISTING BUILDING

Effective educational leaders **act as agents of continuous improvement** to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

When rating this competency for a principal serving in an ALREADY EXISTING BUILDING:
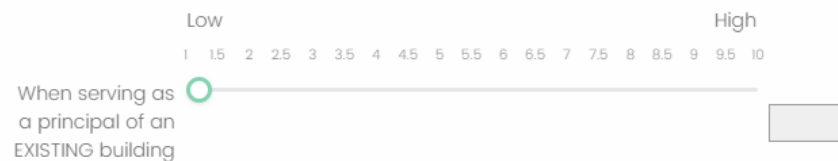
42.9% rated this a 10

28.6% rated this a 9

28.6% rated this a 8

Mean: 9.1

Standard Deviation: .83

Given the above results, **please rate the importance of this competency when serving as a principal of an existing building** *(can be the same rating as before or revised):*

Low   High

1   1.5   2   2.5   3   3.5   4   4.5   5   5.5   6   6.5   7   7.5   8   8.5   9   9.5   10

When serving as ⭕
a principal of an
EXISTING building

Are there any competencies (knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors) you feel are absent or under-represented within the 10 standards above?
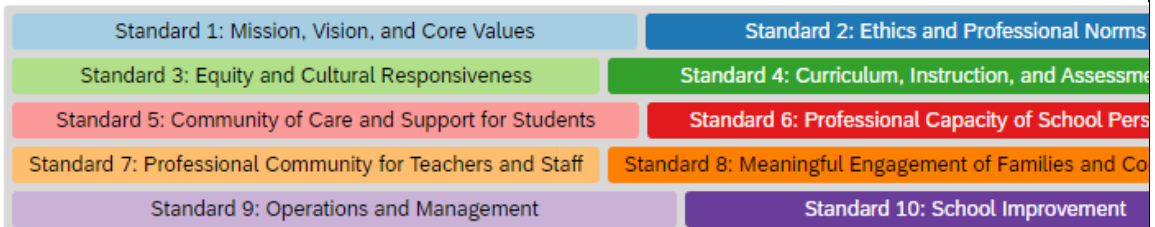
○ Yes
○ No

If yes, list here:

DOCUMENT REVIEW PROTOCOL

INSTRUCTIONS: Below are a series of items from an elementary principal district job description and interview questions.

1. Please read each item while considering the 10 PSEL standards.

2. Hover and CLICK over words and phrases you believe directly correlate to specific standard(s).

**When doing so, a color-coded list of the standards will automatically appear for you to select the appropriate one(s).

Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values	Standard 2: Ethics and Professional Norms
Standard 3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessme
Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students	Standard 6: Professional Capacity of School Pers
Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff	Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Co
Standard 9: Operations and Management	Standard 10: School Improvement

*In instances where multiple standards are needed, select the words "additional as needed" and choose the desired standard.

PRINCIPAL JOB DESCRIPTION DOCUMENT

Elementary School Principal

Purpose Statement

The job of Elementary School Principal is done for the purpose/s of directing the instructional process with specific responsibility for overseeing overall site operations, services, staff and providing instructional leadership at an elementary school; providing information and serving as a resource to others; enforcing established policies and regulatory requirements; and coordinating school activities and addressing issues situations and/or problems that arise on campus or with enrolled students.

This job reports to Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools and Student Services

Essential Functions

- Chairs and/or facilitates meetings (e.g. curriculum, safety, site advisory, special district committees, etc.) for the purpose of coordinating activities and ensuring that outcomes achieve school, district and/or state objectives.

- Collects and analyzes data (e.g. building records, reports, assessment results, etc.) for the purpose of identifying goals, assessing organizational effectiveness and promoting organizational learning.

- Creates prepares and presents information (e.g. budget overviews, accounting processes, distribution formulas, etc.) for the purpose of communicating information, gaining feedback and ensuring adherence to established internal controls.

- Develops budgets and financial forecasts for the purpose of providing financial guidance and recommendations to administrative personnel, Superintendent and/or governing Board.

- Evaluates assigned personnel for the purpose of ensuring that standards are achieved and performance is maximized.

- Facilitates communication between personnel, students and/or parents (e.g. PTO, staff meetings, inquiries from parents, etc.) for the purpose of evaluating situations, and/or initiating activities which foster productive parent and community involvements, solving problems and/or resolving conflicts.

- Implements policies, procedures and/or processes related to school climate, curriculum and pedagogy for the purpose of ensuring the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a child-centered vision of high quality school that is shared by all members of the school community.

- Manages school administrative functions (e.g. facility maintenance, budget, staffing, delegating responsibility, etc.) for the purpose of maintaining safe and efficient school operations within district guidelines.

- Observes classroom instruction for the purpose of evaluating the implementation of established curriculum, instructional techniques, and classroom management to maximize student learning in an inclusive school climate.

- Prepares and maintains a wide variety of materials (e.g. quantity reports, student activities, correspondence, etc.) for the purpose of documenting activities, providing written reference, and/or conveying information.

- Promotes the development of a culture of continuous school improvement for the purpose of nurturing a culture of shared accountability for colleagues, for students and for the school as a whole.

- Represents the school within community forums for the purpose of maintaining ongoing community support for educational goals and/or assisting with issues related to school environment.

- Supervises all personnel for the purpose of monitoring performance, providing for professional growth and achieving overall district objectives.

Other Functions
- Performs other related duties as assigned for the purpose of ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of the work unit.

Job Requirements: Minimum Qualifications

Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

SKILLS are required to perform multiple, technical tasks with a need to periodically upgrade skills in order to mee changing job conditions. Specific skill based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the j include: planning and managing projects; using pertinent software applications; preparing and maintaining accura records; administering personnel policies; data use and analysis; working collaboratively; and solution-oriented creativity.

KNOWLEDGE is required to perform algebra and/or geometry; review and interpret highly technical information, technical materials, and/or speak persuasively to implement desired actions; and analyze situations to define issu and draw conclusions. Specific knowledge based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions o job include: pertinent codes, policies, regulations and/or laws; conflict resolution; bookkeeping principles; concep management and supervision; understanding change process; leadership needed to improve systems; and differentiate PD.

ABILITY is required to schedule a number of activities, meetings, and/or events; gather, collate, and/or classify d and use job-related equipment. Flexibility is required to independently work with others in a wide variety of circumstances; analyze data utilizing defined but different processes; and operate equipment using standardized methods. Ability is also required to work with a significant diversity of individuals and/or groups; work with data o varied types and/or purposes; and utilize job-related equipment. Independent problem solving is required to anal issues and create action plans. Problem solving with data frequently requires independent interpretation of guidelines; and problem solving with equipment is moderate. Specific ability based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include: communicating with diverse groups; maintaining confidenti setting priorities; working as part of a team; working with frequent interruptions; creating a positive school climate students, staff and community; motivating staff; adapting to changing work priorities; and leading change.

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS DOCUMENT

Existing Building Principal Interview Questions

1. What is your approach to understanding the perspectives of students/staff from different cultural backgrounds?

2. If you were hired for this position, what process would you use to identify your top 3 priorities for starting a new year with a new community of students, parents and staff?

3. What is the role of the building administrator in regard to special education meetings?

4. When was a time you took a professional risk? What were the results? What did you learn?

5. What do you believe are your most outstanding contributions to your current building/district in regard to systems?

6. How do you build positive relationships (with your team, with students, with coworkers, with your community)? Describe a time you struggled to build a relationship with someone; what strategies did you use and how did it work?

7. How would you carry the banner during a time you had to lead people or yourself through a difficult district change? How did you handle the situation? What would you do differently if you had to do it all over again?

8. Describe a time when you took on a leadership role to improve an outcome or make a change for the better

9. What characteristics/qualities do you value of a past mentor/colleague/supervisor you have worked with or admire?

10. How do you keep lines of communication open with your staff and/or studen'ts' parents or guardians? Why is this important to you?

11. How would you engage Student Support Services Staff (i.e. School Counselors, School Social Workers, and School Psychologists) in developing a blended model of collaboration to implement a MultiTiered System of support to meet the mental health needs of students.

New Building Principal Interview Questions
1. "Why This, Why Now, Why You?"

2. How would you navigate the next year with a foot in each building?

3. What do you anticipate happening the summer prior to opening?

4. Describe your vision for your first 6 weeks of opening doors?

5. How do you build community with parents from various buildings?

6. Recount an occasion when you were able to connect individuals from different backgrounds or cultures in a unified district effort.

7. Share your implementation and support of innovative practices in your building.

8. Give an example of how you carefully considered your audience prior to communicating with them. What factors influenced your communication?

9. Two members of a team do great work, but they do not work well together. What are some of the key ways to get them to work together better?

10. Share your 3 year plan to build, evaluate and sustain the top 3 important Systems/Programs available at our district.

11. Describe a time when you had to make a very important and difficult decision that affected everyone in your building.

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