



**Data-Driven
Human Capital
Strategies**

STRATEGY BRIEF:

Induction of School Leaders

Local education agency (LEA) and school leaders can use this brief to learn more about:

- Effective practices they can use to improve induction of new school leaders;
- Examples from other schools that have implemented strategies to address this challenge; and
- Resources to support this work in your LEA.

To learn more about educator induction generally, see the [Induction Guide](#).

Context

Principals' numerous roles include setting the school culture and impacting teaching conditions. By influencing teacher human capital through hiring, support and development, principals indirectly impact the instruction that students receive, making the principal the second most significant school-level factor in student learning.¹ However, many principals exit their preparation programs not feeling prepared to lead.² As such, LEA-level supports for new principals through programs like induction are important, as they can improve principal practice.³

All supports for principals, including principal induction, should be part of a larger standards-based system of principal talent management.⁴ Principal standards, such as the Pennsylvania Leadership Standards, should serve as the cohesive basis for all aspects of

1 Bottoms, G., & Fry, B. (2009). *The district leadership challenge: Empowering principals to improve teaching and learning*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/District-Leadership-Challenge-Empowering-Principals.pdf>; Ferguson, R., & Hirsch, E. (2014). Using teacher and student surveys to link school context, classroom learning conditions, and achievement. In T. J. Kane, K. A. Kerr, & R. C. Pianta (Eds.), *New guidance from the Measures of Effective Teaching project*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; George W. Bush Institute. (2016). *A framework for principal talent management*. Houston, TX: Author. Retrieved from <https://gwbccenter.imgix.net/Resources/gwbi-framework-principal-talent-mgmt.pdf>; Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement; and Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/how-leadership-influences-student-learning.aspx>

2 Wright, J., Siegrist, G., Pate, J., Monetti, D., & Raiford, S. (2009). Perceived induction needs for beginning principals. *International Journal of Educational Preparation*, 4(3); Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., & Meyerson, D. (2005). *Review of research. School leadership study. Developing successful principals*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.

3 Davis et al., 2005

4 George W. Bush Institute, 2016; Turnbull, B. J., Riley, D. L., & MacFarlane, J. R. (2015, January). *Building a stronger principalship: Volume 3—Districts taking charge of the principal pipeline*. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Building-a-Stronger-Principalship-Vol3-Districts-Taking-Charge.pdf>

principal talent management, from preparation to hiring to support.⁵

The Pennsylvania Department of Education provides support to new principals through its Principal Induction Program. The Principal Induction Program requires new principals to complete eight courses developed by the National Institute for School Leadership and offered by regional sites across the state. The courses are aligned with the three core Principal Leadership Standards⁶ and must be completed by principals during their first two years on the job. Although this program offers a baseline of support, LEAs should provide additional job-embedded and district-specific support to new principals, through induction and mentoring at the LEA level.

What LEA policies and practices are most effective?

Induction provides principals with professional learning support and onboarding related to district expectations and culture; it may include orientation, professional learning communities, or a cohort model where new principals can help support each other. Mentoring is a component of induction; it provides principals with ongoing coaching from a trained, experienced mentor for one or more years.

Provide LEA-level induction for new principals.

Induction programs should provide seamless support for new principals, from the preparation program to the school; LEAs should design and implement induction programs that expand on and complement what principals learned in their preparation programs.⁷ This requires LEAs to be aware of what new principals did and did not learn in their preparation programs. In order to get principals ready for the new school year, LEAs should consider summer induction or onboarding for new principals to provide them with the necessary knowledge to begin the school year, such as “a combination of ‘just-in-time’ technical information (key policies, systems, timelines, etc.), introductions to the district-level people they can go to for help with various issues (HR, finance, etc.), and

⁵ Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2008, June). A framework for principal preparation program guidelines. Harrisburg, PA: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Teachers-Administrators/Certification%20Preparation%20Programs/Specific%20Program%20Guidelines/Principal%20Framework%20Guidelines.pdf#>; George W. Bush Institute, 2016

⁶ The three core leadership standards include: I. Knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically, creating an organizational vision around personalized student success. II. An understanding of standards-based systems theory and design, and the ability to transfer that knowledge to the leader’s job as an architect of standards-based reform in the school. III. The ability to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system. See Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2008, p. 3.

⁷ Parkay, F. W., Currie, G. D., & Rhodes, J. W. (1992). Professional socialization: A longitudinal study of first-time high school principals. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 28(1), 43-75.

the development of a vision and entry plan for their new role.”⁸ Finally, any professional learning that is part of an induction program should give principals the opportunity to apply that knowledge, as “structuring learning in real, school-based situations allows principals to grapple with and gain knowledge from experiences that will be applicable in their principalship.”⁹

Resource: *The Colorado Department of Education Principal/Administrator Induction Program Evaluation Rubric Indicator Aligned Best Practices is a tool that includes a list of indicators for principal induction programs and describes best practices that could show if an LEA is meeting all of those indicators.*

Reflection Questions:

- *What elements does your current new principal induction program include?*
- *How could data be collected on what program elements new principals would like?*
- *How could those be incorporated?*

Provide mentors to new principals.

Teacher mentoring receives much more attention than principal mentoring. Providing new principals with mentors can help improve principal effectiveness and retention.¹⁰ A mentor may help a principal address on-the-job challenges, using the principal standards as a guideline and point of discussion. There are three important factors to consider when implementing principal mentoring:¹¹

Mentor selection. LEAs should implement quality mentor selection, taking into account “having a history of effectiveness as a principal, demonstrating strong communication and listening skills, and matching mentors and principals based on similar styles of

⁸ NYC Leadership Academy. (2019). Giving new principals a strong start: What works in principal induction. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/principal-induction-leadership-brief.pdf>, p. 1

⁹ NYC Leadership Academy, 2019, p. 2

¹⁰ NYC Leadership Academy, 2019; Dukess, 2001; Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2015

¹¹ These three components are summarized in George W. Bush Institute, 2016.

thinking.”¹² This kind of mentor selection can improve principal practice.¹³ With fewer principals in a district, finding mentors for new principals can be challenging. Smaller LEAs can consider finding mentors for new principals in other LEAs or by tapping recently retired principals for the role.

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Role definition. It is important for LEAs to set clear definitions of mentor and principal roles in their relationship; this factor can improve both principal practice and the effectiveness of individuals interested in being principal mentors.¹⁴

Mentor training. Mentors may need training on topics such as principal standards and instructional leadership; they also may need support to improve their skills at mentoring and providing feedback to new principals.¹⁵

Resource: *Center on Great Teachers and Leaders Recruit, Select, and Support Turnaround Leader Competencies Professional Learning Module Part 3: Developing and Retaining Turnaround Leaders. This three-part professional learning module includes Part 3 on Developing and Retaining Turnaround Leaders, with a slide presentation and facilitator’s guide for helping LEAs to determine which structures will be used for principal support. The handouts for this part include a Self-Assessment of District Support for Turnaround and two examples of how professional learning activities could be organized—individually or for a group. Chinle Unified School District in Arizona used this professional learning module to improve its principal induction and support through the Talent for Turnaround Leadership Academy, a collaboration of several organizations, including the West Comprehensive Center and the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders. Its principal induction program includes professional development, professional learning communities, and ongoing mentoring.*

¹² George W. Bush Institute, 2016, p. 15

¹³ Dukess, L. F. (2001). Meeting the leadership challenge: Designing effective principal mentor programs: The experiences of six New York City community school districts. New York, NY: New Visions for Public Schools. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED464392>; Ashby, D., & Maki, D. M. (1996, February). What first year principals don’t know: How you may be able to help new colleagues succeed. Paper presented at the annual convention of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, San Francisco, CA; Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes, 1992.

¹⁴ Dukess, 2001; Alsbury, T. L., & Hackmann, D. G. (2006). Learning from experience: Initial findings of a mentoring/induction program for novice principals. *Planning and Changing*, 37(3/4), 169–189; Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes, 1992.

¹⁵ Goldring, E. B., Grissom, J. A., Rubin, M., Rogers, L. K., Neel, M., & Clark, M. (2018, July). A new role emerges for principal supervisors: Evidence from six districts in the Principal Supervisor Initiative. New York, NY: Wallace Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/A-New-Role-Emerges-for-Principal-Supervisors.pdf>

Reflection Questions:

- *What ongoing mentoring, coaching and support are provided for new principals?*
- *How could intermediate units or former principals be used as sources of mentors or coaching?*

EXAMPLE IN ACTION:




These three LEAs have developed local pipelines to produce new principals; the LEAs then provide comprehensive support to these beginning principals, including coaching and mentoring.

- **Hillsborough County Public Schools in Florida** has a pipeline for training and supporting teachers who are interested in becoming principals, to help them prepare for the role. Interested teachers can apply to be a part of the program. After six months of training, the aspiring principals are placed as assistant principals for two years, with ongoing support and mentoring. Assistant principals can then apply for the Preparing New Principals Program, where they receive daily mentoring, monthly coaching, and further training on the role of a principal. The final part of that pipeline is the Principal Induction Program, which provides new principals with coaching and ongoing professional learning for their first two years on the job. All principal supports are aligned with the district’s Principal Competency Rubric. Hillsborough County received support and grant funding through the Wallace Foundation to improve the quality of its principal pipeline; a report for the project further described the work.
- **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina** also was a recipient of the Wallace Foundation principal pipeline grant. The district established a five-year induction program for new principals, aligned with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Competencies, Skills and Beliefs for School Leaders. The induction program moves participants through the program as a cohort. The George W. Bush Institute described these ongoing supports in a “Districts to Watch” example.
- **Gwinnett County Public Schools in Georgia** developed the Quality-Plus Leader Academy to develop and support principals; it includes professional learning, collaboration with other principals, and two years of mentoring. Gwinnett County Public Schools was another recipient of the Wallace Foundation principal pipeline grant. A case study about Gwinnett County Public Schools describes the development and support of principals in the district, including induction support. The mentoring support provided to new principals is described in this Wallace Foundation podcast: [Mentors Support Novice Principals on the Job](#).

Reflection Questions:

- *Is the LEA intending to implement a comprehensive program to support principals at one time or is the LEA planning to scale up over time?*
- *What pieces should be prioritized, if the LEA is scaling up over time?*
- *How can the LEA identify teacher leaders who are strong candidates to become school administrators, and how can the LEA then support them through a pipeline to school administration?*



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