



BACKGROUND: THE INITIATIVE AND THE EVALUATION

The Wallace Foundation Initiative

- Investment in a districtwide strategy for developing a larger corps of effective principals, the Principal Pipeline
- Two purposes:
 - ◆ Support implementation of pipeline components in grantee sites
 - ◆ Test whether this produces an impact on important outcomes in the schools led by “pipeline principals,” including student performance
- Multi-year commitment to six urban districts with strong records of work on school leadership

Participating Districts

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina
- Denver, Colorado
- Gwinnett County, Georgia
- Hillsborough County, Florida
- New York City, New York
- Prince George's County, Maryland

Components of the Pipeline Model

1. Leader standards to which sites align job descriptions, preparation, selection, evaluation, and support
2. Preservice preparation that includes selective admissions to high-quality programs
3. Selective hiring, and placement based on a match between the candidate and the school
4. On-the-job evaluation and support of principal capacity to improve teaching and learning, with support focused on needs identified by evaluation

PSA/ RAND Evaluation

- Overall:
 - ◆ Document the **implementation** process across sites and over time
 - ◆ Measure the **effects** of “pipeline principals” on key outcomes, including student achievement
- The third implementation report analyzes changes made, challenges encountered, and work to be done in the six sites

Data Collection So Far

- Documents: sites' work plans and progress reports
- Semi-structured interviews with administrators in district central offices and partners, spring 2012, 2013, and 2014
 - ◆ Total of 308 interviews
 - ◆ Interview data were coded for cross-site analysis
- Web-based surveys of first-, second-, and third-year principals and assistant principals (APs), spring 2013 and 2014
 - ◆ Overall principal response rate was 57% in 2013, 66% in 2014
 - ◆ AP response rate was 45% in 2013, 73% in 2014
- Observation of cross-site meetings, including presentations by district leaders, 2011-14



LATEST FINDINGS

FROM *BUILDING A STRONGER
PRINCIPALSHIP, VOL 3: DISTRICTS
TAKING CHARGE*

Leader Standards

- Districts found that having standards and competencies for principals helped them exercise strategic influence on their leadership pipelines
 - ◆ They aligned principal preparation, hiring criteria, evaluation, and support to their standards
- Districts treated their standards documents as living documents and expected to continue adjusting them

Principal Preparation

- Districts developed their own, district-run programs as part of formal principal preparation
 - ◆ Programs were “a year-long interview” (Gwinnett) and “transition into the principalship” (Denver)
- They also formed partnerships with preparation programs run by universities and nonprofits
 - ◆ Together, district and program leaders collected and reviewed data on program design and outcomes

Assistant Principals (APs) Were a Key Part of the Pipeline

- Among principals appointed in 2011-2014, 84% reported on the survey having served as APs
 - ◆ The median time in that position was 5 years
- 83% of APs appointed in 2011-2014 reported that they planned to apply to be principals in the district, or had already done so
- Districts wanted to improve opportunities for APs who showed promise as potential principals

Changes in Hiring and Placement

- Districts added new stages of assessment and selection, such as hiring pools for principals
- Candidates more often had to show practical skills
 - ◆ For example by observing a lesson on video and describing how they would give feedback
- Succession planning discussions, using data on schools and leaders, engaged top district leaders
- Data-rich candidate profiles were becoming available for use in placement decisions
- Districts hoped to measure skills in working productively with teachers and community

Changes in Evaluation and Support

- Districts added new positions and more training for principal supervisors and mentors/coaches
- Most were in early stages of changing principal evaluation. The work included:
 - ◆ Developing evaluation tools aligned with standards
 - ◆ Training and supporting the supervisors who evaluated principals

Professional Learning and Support for Novice Principals

- Five districts expanded mentoring/ coaching support for principals under the initiative
 - ◆ And New York was planning changes
- Districts hoped to tailor mentoring/ coaching and professional learning to principals' individual strengths and weaknesses
 - ◆ Their new data systems, tracking each principal's career and competencies, could make this feasible

Some Questions for a District

- How does the district spot high-potential APs and help them develop?
- How do applicants demonstrate that they can do the job of principal? Do you rely on interviews and recommendations, or give them hands-on assessments?
- Why are some new principals not renewed? What is the district doing to help new principals succeed?
- Has the district learned lessons from teacher evaluation that it can use in principal evaluation?