PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL LEARNING: EXPLORING THE CONNECTION OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP
FRAMEWORK AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

By
DAVID EDWARD HAMMOND

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Educational Leadership, Sport Studies and Educational/Counseling Psychology
AUGUST 2015

© Copyright by DAVID EDWARD HAMMOND, 2015
All Rights Reserved
To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of DAVID EDWARD HAMMOND find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

____________________________________________
Kristin Shawn Huggins, Ph.D., Chair

____________________________________________
Sharon D. Kruse, Ph.D.

____________________________________________
Gay Selby, Ed.D.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The dissertation journey is long and arduous. As with any rigorous and demanding pursuit, I found that I had to surround myself with individuals that could provide experience, knowledge, and emotional support that would nourish me throughout my journey.

I appreciated the time and guidance my committee chair, Dr. Kristin Huggins, has devoted to my efforts. She helped to ensure clarity and focus in my thought process as I examined the literature and analyzed the data I collected as a part of this study. The second member of my committee, Dr. Gay Selby, helped push my thinking and shape my argument, not only as a member of my committee, but also as a valuable instructor during my superintendent’s certification. Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. Sharon Kruse for joining my committee near the end of the process. I appreciate your willingness to familiarize yourself with my study and participate in the final phases involved with earning my degree.

I would also like to thank the many friends and colleagues that helped me on along the way. Jennifer, Shannon, Rebecca, and I developed a strong friendship forged over two long summers and many classes. They provided me with countless hours of support and a critical lens with which to examine my work.

Education has always been an important part of my life. My parents, Ned and MaryAnn, devoted their lives to serving students as a part of the public education system. They were responsible for shaping my character and instilling a set of core values that reflect a strong work ethic, integrity, and compassion.

In order to make the impossible possible, I needed an ally that would encourage without judging, support without questioning, and inspire without limits. I am blessed to have a wife that
does all of those things and much more. She continues to be the smartest person I know. Thank you Erin for all that you do to support Luke, Madeline, Thomas, and me.
PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPAL LEARNING: EXPLORING THE CONNECTION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

Abstract

by David Edward Hammond, Ed.D.
Washington State University
August 2015

Chair: Kristin Shawn Huggins

Educational research over the last decade has identified the role of the principal as the instructional leader within the building as an essential contributor to improved teaching (Honig, 2012; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Despite the urgent need to improve the evaluation process for principals to support building level instructional leadership, the current body of research connecting principal professional learning to principal evaluation is thin (Davis et al., 2011; Goldring et al., 2009). Today, professional evaluation standards must measure and improve practice while fostering an atmosphere of continuous learning. The purpose of this qualitative research study was to investigate the perceptions of principal evaluators and principals of principal professional development and the connection that may exist between principal professional development and the Association of Washington School Principals’ (AWSP) Leadership Framework. This study explores the changes districts are making as a result of the new AWSP Leadership Framework, a four-tiered rubric-based model. Two research questions guided this study: (a) how have principal evaluators and principals perceived the AWSP Leadership Framework; and (b) how have the changes in principal evaluation influenced
principal evaluators’ practices concerning principal professional development? The findings analyzed principal learning as a result of the implementation of the AWSP Leadership Framework. Three themes emerged as a result of principal evaluator interviews, principal interviews, and a review of documents. The first theme focused on creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader. The second theme was guiding the focus for improvement of principal practice using a researched-based, four-tiered model for principal evaluation. The third theme involved seeking to understand principal’s needs for professional development. Collectively, the findings highlight the need for relevant learning guided by research-based criteria to ensure principals are developing the skills and attributes needed to continue to evolve as instructional leaders. Further research is needed on the long-term effects of a rubric-based evaluation model. The AWSP Leadership Framework’s specific language and components of self-reflection and goal-setting offer district leaders the unique opportunity to surrender some of the more traditional aspects of principal professional learning. The data suggests a shift to a more principal-driven evaluation process.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</strong></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ABSTRACT</strong></td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIST OF TABLES</strong></td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New State Evaluation Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Learning</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Methodology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Key Terms</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of Study</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Role of the Principal</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared instructional leadership</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Evaluation</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District leadership’s influence on principal evaluation.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Tiered Evaluation Model</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research base</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Learning</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective practice.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. METHODS</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample and Context</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School districts</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview pilot</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity and Reliability</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positionality</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Limitations</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. FINDINGS</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background and Districts’ Approach to the AWSP Leadership Framework</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osage School District</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fox Point School District ........................................................................................................ 61
Anderson School District .............................................................................................. 63
Themes of Significance in the Responses .......................................................................... 63
Theme one: Creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader .................................................................................................................. 63
Theme two: Guiding the focus for improvement of principal practice. ............. 67
Theme three: Seeking to understand principals’ needs for professional development. ........................................................................................................ 77
Summary .......................................................................................................................... 92

5. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ...................... 94

Purpose of the Study ........................................................................................................ 94

Research Question 1: How Have Principal Evaluators and Principals Perceived the AWSP Leadership Framework? ............................................................................ 97

Theme one: Creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader .................................................................................................................. 97

Theme two: Guiding the focus for improvement of principal practice. ............. 98

Research Question 2: How Have the Changes in Principal Evaluation Influenced Principal Evaluators’ Practices Concerning Principal Professional Development? .................................................................................. 100

Theme three: Seeking to understand principals’ needs for professional development. ........................................................................................................ 100

Discussion ......................................................................................................................... 104

Implications for Practice and Future Research ................................................................ 107
Implications for district leaders. ................................................................. 109

Implications for future research. ................................................................. 111

Conclusion .................................................................................................. 113

REFERENCES ............................................................................................. 114

APPENDIX

A. AWSP LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK ......................................................... 125

B. RESEARCH BASE FOR AWSP LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK .................... 141

C. INTERVIEW QUESTION PROTOCOL ......................................................... 155

D. PRINCIPAL REFLECTION DOCUMENT .................................................. 157

E. INITIAL CODING REPORTS ............................................................... 170

F. WASHINGTON STATE TEACHER/PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA ...... 175
LIST OF TABLES

1. Interview Participants by Title, Role, and Average Years of Experience in Position .......... 47
2. Documents Collected From Participants ........................................................................ 51
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The steady increase in national, state, and local accountability through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation has forced educators to increase their expectations for student learning, requiring an intensified focus on the ways in which teaching and learning occur. In particular, states are exercising policy leadership intended to improve teaching and learning. Yet often, historical precedence and prior political practice within each state dictate the decisions that are made. Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, and Anderson (2010) stated that “in formulating policy, states continue to use practices deeply embedded in their particular traditions and political cultures” (p. 229). These traditions and cultures create an intensified internal and external political environment in which school boards and superintendents operate. This new environment has fueled the push to increase accountability for student achievement through the use of teacher and principal evaluation. Recently, the surge in political pressure from new and old constituents has required districts to seek new models of evaluation or risk being subjected to impending mandates. This pressure to perform and the call for more effective principal evaluation have become a sign of the educational reform era (Davis & Hensley, 1999; Fullan, 2003).

Changes in Evaluation

Part of the pressure to perform has been created due to research, which shows that effective school leadership is a key element in the effectiveness of school organizations (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hattie, 2008; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). In fact, research shows that principals have an indirect but measureable effect on student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson,
Further, effective teachers, who are supported by systems and cultures created and maintained by school leaders to focus on student learning, influence the quality of student performance (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Despite these findings, practitioners, researchers, and policy makers agree that current evaluation systems do not improve teacher performance or student achievement (Davis, Kearney, Sanders, Thomas, & Leon, 2009; Goldring et al., 2009; Marzano, Schooling, & Toth, 2010). Yet within the current evaluation systems available, evaluation tools that measure contributions to student achievement have shown greater success in measuring and improving teaching, especially those that examine practices in relation to professional standards (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Thus, promise exists for creating systems through proven models.

While standards-based reform and the NCLB Act of 2001 have dictated outcomes for improved student achievement, these reforms and policies have failed to provide school leaders with the tools to orchestrate these monumental changes in practice (Barnes, Camburn, Sanders, & Sebastian, 2012). As a result, individual states have adopted evaluation models that are competency based, supported by evidence, and tied to sustained professional growth over time. These new models of evaluation are designed to cultivate a new generation of school leaders with the knowledge and skills best suited to meet the current and future needs of a changing education system. This is in stark contrast to pre-NCLB evaluation models that were void of a clearly communicated purpose, superficial, and based solely on informal feedback from a variety of stakeholders loosely connected to the principal (Goldring et al., 2009). Those models are not appropriate for the challenges faced by post-NCLB school leaders because they were designed based on the principal’s role as a manager and not necessarily as an instructional leader. Thus, in order for principals to meet the more intensified requirements, districts must create and maintain
systems of structured and purposeful professional development that help principals meet this rapid increase in accountability (Clifford & Ross, 2012; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2009). As a result, states are exercising policy leadership to increase accountability and improve student learning. State policy leadership for improved teaching and learning predates the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and even though states have become the leaders in educational policy changes and policy instruments, specific evaluation tools can vary from state to state (Briggs, Cheney, Davis, & Moll, 2013).

**New State Evaluation Policy**

On March 29, 2010, in response to the national pressure to increase teacher and principal performance, Governor Christine Gregoire signed into law Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6696. The bill called for more rigorous criteria for the evaluation of teachers and principals in the state of Washington. Specifically, the law called for new frameworks, measures, and evaluation processes. The passing of 6696 was followed by the passing of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5895. Among other things, 5895 identified specific growth goals for principals—criteria three, five, and eight—and added that evaluation could be used when making human resource decisions. The new guidelines for evaluating principals used research-based instructional frameworks to promote learning through professional conversation about practice that would analyze classroom events (Danielson & McGreal, 2005). In fact, Washington State is only one of 27 states that report that their standards are connected to current educational research (Briggs et al., 2013). The state’s role is to set the standards for evaluation while the individual school districts facilitate implementation of the new standards. Recruitment and selection of principals, development and support of principals, assessment and rewarding of principals, data-driven instruction, and the development of a positive school culture are all tenets of Washington
State’s new process. In addition, Washington State has poised themselves as a leader in educational reform efforts around principal evaluation (Briggs et al., 2013).

Washington’s new principal frameworks are comprehensive, are research based, and contain explicit language that can be used to identify areas for principal learning. The two principal frameworks districts had to choose from when 6696 passed were developed by the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) and Robert Marzano. Both models use a specific, detailed rubric to encourage principals to improve instructional practice (AWSP, 2013). The frameworks chosen for principals were developed using primary empirical resources and secondary research resources. Only high quality research resources were used, from published, reputable education journals and/or other peer-reviewed resources (“Wenatchee Pilot Study,” 2010). The principal frameworks chosen also contained research-based practices for principals. This reliance on research has proven to be an essential component as districts adopt specific frameworks and develop important professional development activities associated with their new evaluation tools (Marzano et al., 2010).

Many evaluation systems used today were developed using Madeline Hunter’s work in 1970 and relied on a small number of observable behaviors (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Goals for student achievement have evolved, so evaluation systems and districts must evolve as well (Bethman, 2015). The new evaluation tool and process require district office personnel to provide principals with a better kind of professional development to enable them to meet or exceed these new levels of accountability (Hallinger, 2005). The frameworks were designed to stimulate professional development and align with already existing district goals for student achievement. They were also designed for some flexibility to allow principals to develop local goals specific to their particular student population, which would allow for focus on a few high
impact criteria (Davis et al., 2011). Districts may have responded to state leadership initiatives, but they are also actors in the legislative process. Professional associations provide districts with the ability to shape policy and further district-driven agendas as legislators shape policy initiatives (Briggs et al., 2013; Wahlstrom et al., 2010).

**Principal Learning**

The new principal frameworks in Washington State require comprehensive performance evaluation and professional learning systems that accurately reflect complex, targeted, aligned professional development for principals (Marzano et al., 2010; Tucker & Stronge, 2005). A cornerstone of this system is collective learning opportunities. Principals learn useful instructional leadership and instructional strategies when given the opportunity to converse with their colleagues about instruction. This is a move away from the traditional, hierarchical, and centralized approach to supervision done by administrators or quasi administrators in which peer coaching may have been encouraged but not supported. The new model supports supervision and evaluation with a collaborative, constructivist, and decentralized approach in which self-analysis, reflection, peer observation, and feedback are encouraged (Danielson & McGreal, 2005; Lambert, 2006; May & Supovitz, 2010). Pilot districts in Washington reported an increase in collaboration and professional development as a result of the new criteria (“Wenatchee Pilot Study,” 2010). The new process takes more time and requires more one-on-one time between the principal evaluator and principal, but overall, respondents reported the ability and need to take more active roles in their own evaluations to improve their practice (“Wenatchee Pilot Study,” 2010). Instructional practice improves if evaluation is clear, consistent, and purposeful. The building of strong, trusting, and collaborative relationships between evaluators and
principals is an essential component of improved performance (Danielson & McGreal, 2005; Davis & Hensley, 1999; Marzano et al., 2010).

The key to increased student achievement as a result of the new evaluation frameworks lies in district-supported principal professional development (Honig, 2012; May & Supovitz, 2010; Tucker & Stronge, 2005; Marzano et al., 2010). Professional development must enable principals to dialog with each other around routine strategies to build instructional capacity based on building needs (Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). The new frameworks provide principals with a common language of instruction that can be used as a professional learning resource and a tool to monitor principal growth. The performance measures associated with the rubrics should provide principals guidance for targeted improvement and help to facilitate professional conversations around instructional strategies. Improved student performance is a direct result of these professional conversations, staff development, and alignment with the new frameworks (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, Lapointe, & Orr, 2009; Marzano et al., 2010; Tucker & Stronge, 2005).

The driving force of the new frameworks for principals is the data-driven instructional component. The study of principal evaluation and leadership development is vital if one is to examine the scope of efforts to improve student achievement through data (Marks & Nance, 2007; May & Supovitz, 2010). A variety of research suggests that data-driven instruction has the ability to increase student performance (Halverson, 2010; Wayman & Stringfield, 2006). The new state of education underscores the importance of data-driven instruction as a means to use student data to drive instructional practice and improve achievement (Halverson, 2010). If student data is to play an important role in student achievement, superintendents and district office leadership must provide principals with professional development opportunities that
enhance their understanding of student growth data (Cosner, 2009; Gawlik, 2008; Hallinger, 2005; Sinnema & Robinson, 2012). A principal evaluation process that values student growth at its core can be an important tool for building a positive culture and increasing the instructional capacity within the principal’s school (Cosner, 2009; Gawlik, 2008; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; May & Supovitz, 2010).

Teaching is the real business of schools—a concept that the general public does not always understand (Pellicer, 2008). Given time and support, the new principal performance evaluation system Washington State adopted will improve learning for all students. A growth model with professional development and collaboration at its core will require districts to simultaneously develop student growth goals and professional learning. Discussions regarding student growth now run parallel with conversations regarding professional development. Professional development opportunities that involve looking at data and analyzing how instructional practice shapes the data are starting to have a real impact on student achievement (Hattie, 2008; Park & Datnow, 2009). Principal evaluators and principals are beginning to focus on quality instruction and are becoming more aware of how their practice connects to student achievement. If implemented as designed, this new evaluation system will result in improved student learning, but it will not happen overnight.

**Statement of the Problem**

Reformers study the leadership of the school principal to discover how leadership influences student learning. Unlike the teacher in the classroom, the principal does not affect student achievement directly. Instead, the principal’s direct interactions with teachers can affect a number of variables associated with improvement. Studies report that three to five percent of the variation in student achievement is most likely a result of leadership at the building level.
Educational research over the last decade has identified the role of the principal as the instructional leader within the building as an essential contributor to improved teaching (Honig, 2012; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

Despite the urgent need to improve the evaluation process for principals to support building level instructional leadership, the current body of research connecting principal professional development to principal evaluation is thin (Davis et al., 2011; Goldring et al., 2009). Although a variety of principal qualities have been exposed in the literature, little discussion has been offered about the professional growth principals must undergo in order to build and sustain high levels of student achievement within their schools (Cantano & Stronge, 2007; Condon & Clifford, 2010; Peterson, 2002). Nevertheless, the days of evaluation solely measuring competence are a thing of the past. Today, professional evaluation standards must measure and improve practice while fostering an atmosphere of continuous learning. Clear, well-developed and systematic evaluation of principal performance is a critically important function of school organizations (Clifford & Ross, 2011; Goldring et al., 2009). A growth model with professional learning and collaboration at its core will require districts to simultaneously develop student growth goals and professional learning. In order for these models to be successful, sustained, embedded professional development must begin with the building leader and permeate the school culture (Cosner, 2009; Davis et al., 2011; Honig, 2012; Peterson, 2002; Weber-Wright, 2009).

A program of sustained, embedded professional learning for principals would help the already dwindling population of well-trained principals in the United States (Honig, 2012; Peterson, 2002). Districts cannot rely on principal preparation programs to provide new principals with all the tools they need to be successful because these programs barely have
enough time to dispense theory, let alone the litany of practical applications necessary for effective training (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Peterson, 2002). In addition, these preparation programs are terminal and do not offer sustained growth and development for the duration of the principal’s career. Therefore, districts must create professional development programs within the organization to meet the ongoing needs of their principals (Honig, 2012; Webster-Wright, 2009). These programs must align with the new principal evaluation process adopted by each state. Ongoing, meaningful professional development connected to principal evaluation will give districts the best opportunity to meet or exceed state accountability requirements for student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005; Waters & Marzano, 2006).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to investigate the perceptions of principal evaluators and principals of principal professional learning and the connection that may exist between principal professional learning and the Association of Washington School Principals’ (AWSP) Leadership Framework, a new growth-based principal evaluation tool. This study explores the changes districts are making as a result of the new AWSP Leadership Framework, a four-tiered rubric-based model.

**Research Questions**

To understand the connection between evaluation and principal professional learning, the following two research questions were considered:

1. How have principal evaluators and principals perceived the AWSP Leadership Framework?
2. How have the changes in principal evaluation influenced principal evaluators’ practices concerning principal professional development?
Overview of Methodology

Data for this dissertation were collected as part of a qualitative study that examined principal evaluators’ and principals’ understanding of the connection between principal professional learning and a four-tiered model for principal evaluation. Qualitative research methods were used to gather and analyze information from interviews and documents (Merriam, 2009; Seidman, 2006). The interviews were conducted and the documents were gathered from three mid-sized districts in the state of Washington. Mid-sized districts contain between 3,000 and 8,000 students. These data sources allowed me to analyze the perceptions of principal evaluators and principals while taking into consideration support documents used during principal professional development and evaluation. The combination of these data sources helped me construct a rich description of principal professional development in each of the three districts. The data sources were also key components necessary to analyze a newly adopted principal evaluation process that most closely reflects a growth model (Bauer & Brazer, 2012; Creswell, 2008; Seidman, 2006).

The primary source of data for this study was 16 person-to-person interviews (Merriam, 2009). Interviews with principal evaluators and principals addressed principal evaluation, principal professional learning, and the district vision for sustained professional growth of building principals. The interviews also sought to provide insight into ongoing challenges the districts may face while trying to improve instructional leadership as they continue to implement the new AWSP Leadership Framework. Once the interviews were completed, an employed transcriptionist transcribed each one. All transcriptions were read to ensure all data were captured. Pseudonyms were used, and any reference to the respondent’s district was withheld to preserve confidentiality (Seidman, 2006). In addition, prior to and after the interviews,
documents such as goal-setting forms, mid-year evaluations, professional development portfolios, portfolios or evidence-gathering tools associated with the AWSP Leadership Framework to document principal growth, and e-mails were gathered and analyzed.

**Significance of the Study**

School improvement efforts rely on competent, effective, and innovative school leadership. Principal leadership substantially affects the essential academic success of students. Strong school leaders are responsible not only for creating a continuous culture of improvement; they are also tasked with managing resources and engaging communities. In an educational community where people are being asked to do more with less, the focus on the role of the principal and principal effectiveness has become very important.

The complex role of the principal has increased significantly over the last 20 years. Principal evaluation and professional growth models are not tailored to the particular challenges and nuances of individual districts. Traditional principal evaluation and professional growth models have not produced the type of school leaders needed to innovate and produce large-scale changes in the core of educational practice. The requirements of NCLB legislation create an imperative for states to develop systems of supports for their principals’ professional growth and evaluation. When principal evaluation is designed appropriately and proactively and is properly implemented, it has the power to enhance leadership quality and improve the overall performance of an organization in three key areas. These areas are the level of practice, the level of continuous learning and development, and the level of organizational accountability—all of which are supported and cultivated through evaluation (Goldring et al., 2009).

Principal evaluators and principals have a unique understanding of evaluation and professional development, as well as of the changes districts are making as a result of the
implementation of a new principal evaluation framework. This research has the power to inform policy makers and education practitioners about the important link between principal evaluation and principal professional learning. In addition, this research will raise important questions related to program design to assist district leaders in making changes to principal professional learning as a result of new principal evaluation frameworks. Educators need to use evaluation as a process toward improvement and not as an end point. The terminal nature of evaluation is no longer sought in education. Thinking of evaluation as a way to improve performance by helping principals grow professionally is a fairly new concept that should be supported. Efforts to improve principal practice begin when districts appreciate the thoughtful intentionality that must be employed to create sustainable principal improvement over time.

**Limitations of the Study**

My study contains some inherent limitations. Seidman (2006) tells us that the interview process is relational and that rapport is vital to successful completion. I have very limited experience as an interviewer, so it was important for me to keep an accurate journal of my experience to reflect upon the process when I reported my results. I also worked to provide an abundance of detail to assist others with transferability.

The sample for this study was limited to 16 participants from three mid-sized school districts in the state of Washington. Since this sample was not large and was limited to one state, the degree to which the findings can be applied to other situations could be a concern. The question of transferability will need to be answered by individuals reviewing the study (Merriam, 2009). I hope that educators who review this study in the state of Washington will seek to apply these findings to their particular situation and that educators outside of the state will be able to
identify the relationship between principal professional development and evaluation, regardless of the tool or model being used by their particular state.

In an effort to minimize limitations and study bias, the data collection and analysis were conducted in strict accordance with qualitative research guidelines to ensure accuracy. Trustworthiness throughout the study was maintained through a triangulation of data sources, member-checks, a journal of case study notes, and a reflexivity journal to strengthen the reliability of the study (Merriam, 2009; Pillow, 2003; Seidman, 2006; Yin, 2009).

Assumptions

Two primary assumptions were made during this study. One was that the data collected during the interview process were accurately recorded and transcribed. The second was that the perceptions and practices documented during the interviews accurately reflected the experiences of the principals and the principal evaluators.

Definition of Key Terms

*Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)* – Washington State’s professional association for principals, assistant principals, and principal interns. AWSP works closely with policymakers and administrators to ensure principals are supported. The association also offers a multitude of professional development opportunities for principals, assistant principals, and principal interns.

*Association of Washington School Principals Leadership Framework* – An evaluation framework for principals and assistant principals consisting of eight different criteria. Each criterion is attached to a rubric that was developed using primary and secondary resources.

*Educational Service District (ESD)* – A regional educational entity supervised by a board of directors to support the learning of, and provide resources for, students attending schools in
districts within that particular region. Washington’s nine ESDs provide essential services for school districts and communities and help the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to implement education initiatives.

*No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* – A Public Law 107-110 signed into law by President George Bush on January 8, 2002, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the central federal law in pre-collegiate education.

*Principal Evaluation* – A comprehensive evaluation assessing a set of predetermined criteria that contribute to an overall performance rating.

*Principal Professional Development* – Principal professional development is associated with a one-size fits all top-down model of training or in-service. These models are based on the assumption that individuals need direct instruction about how to improve their skills (Martin, Kragler, Quatroche, & Bauserman, 2014).

*Principal Professional Learning* – Principal professional learning looks more like growth in practice and “ownership over compliance, conversation over transmission, deep understanding over enacting rules and routines, and goal-directed activity over content coverage” (Martin et al., 2014, pg. 147).

*Regional Implementation Grant (RIG)* – A grant awarded to early adopters of the new teacher and principal evaluation frameworks in Washington State.

*Rubric* – An assessment tool to measure individual or group performance.

*Secondary Sources* – Interpretations of primary sources of research.

*Teacher/Principal Evaluation Pilot (TPEP)* – The Teacher/Principal Evaluation Pilot was a direct result of Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6696 during the 2010 legislative session. The evaluation provisions in the bill aligned with Washington’s Race to the Top
application. The bill called for the state to shift from a binary system of unsatisfactory/satisfactory to a four-tiered evaluation system. The legislation created eight new criteria by which teachers and principals would be evaluated.

**Organization of Study**

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One presents a brief overview of the importance of the study, the study’s problem and purpose, and the research questions that guided the work. Chapter One also discusses methodology for the study, limitations of the study, and assumptions; it also provides the definition of key terms.

Chapter Two presents a review of recent literature on principal evaluation and principal professional development. The intent of this section is to provide a summary of the relevant literature pertaining to the topics of the changing role of the principal, principal evaluation, the four-tiered evaluation model, and principal professional learning. The literature reviews the current research base for principal evaluation, identifies areas that are central for developing effective evaluation, outlines the need for carefully planned and executed principal professional learning, and explains the AWSP Leadership Framework. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the necessity for districts to create systems within the organization to meet the ongoing professional development needs of their principals (Barnes et al., 2012; Houle, 2006; Knapp, Copeland, Honig, Plecki, & Portin, 2010; Webster-Wright, 2009).

Chapter Three outlines the research design of the study and methodology for collecting and analyzing the data. This chapter includes information for the sample, data analysis, trustworthiness, positionality, and validity and reliability. Chapter Four reviews the findings of the study, and the final chapter, Chapter Five, includes conclusions, discussion, and recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

The intent of this section is to provide a summary of the relevant literature pertaining to the topics of principal evaluation and principal professional development. The following literature review is divided into four major sections: the role of the principal, principal evaluation, the four-tiered evaluation model, and principal learning. The first section reviews the historical shift of the principal as a manager to the principal as an instructional leader. The second section reviews the current research base for principal evaluation, identifies areas that are central for developing an effective evaluation model, and puts in context the responsibility the school organization has for creating systems that focus on student learning in order to meet ever-increasing accountability measures. The third section explores the four-tiered evaluation model as well as the empirical base for the AWSP Leadership Framework. Finally, the fourth section outlines the need for carefully planned and executed principal professional learning (Barnes et al., 2012; Houle, 2006; Knapp et al., 2010; Webster-Wright, 2009).

The Role of the Principal

The empirical literature around the role of the principal substantiates the notion that principals are an important part of the school organization (Amsterdam, Johnson, Monrad, & Tonnsen, 2003; Catano & Stronge, 2007; City, Elmore, Fiarman & Teitel, 2009; Hallinger, 2005). The literature also substantiates the fact that the nature of the principal position is changing (Barnes et al., 2009; Clifford & Ross, 2012; Hallinger, 2005). An understanding of the historical progression of the principalship with regard to reoccurring metaphors in the literature from the 1920s to the 1990s provides a historical account of the principal’s role up to the point of being labeled an instructional leader (Hallinger, 2005). Beginning in the early 1970s, a
principal’s effectiveness was directly related to his or her ability to manage the tasks and routines of subordinates while delivering rewards and sanctions as appropriate (Catano & Stronge, 2007). In the past two decades, this theory shifted to define a principal as an instructional leader who facilitates continual improvement to the school’s culture that results in improved student achievement over time.

As this shift took place, the instructional leader was viewed more as a top-down supervisor and evaluator of teachers, curriculum, and school programs (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). This view later evolved into the more contemporary view of the principal as the instructional leader. Hallinger (2005) describes this contemporary view of the principal as the instructional leader:

The effective instructional leader was able to align the strategies and activities of the school with the school’s academic mission. Thus, instructional leaders focused not only on leading, but also on managing. Their managerial roles included coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction. Instructional leaders led from a combination of expertise and charisma. These were hands-on principals, hip-deep in curriculum and instruction and unafraid of working directly with teachers on the improvement of teaching and learning. (p. 4)

The shift from the principal as a manager to the principal as an instructional leader is requiring districts to increase their support while remaining ever aware of the constant reductions in financial resources. In short, districts and schools are being asked to do more with less (Horng, Klasik, & Loeb 2010; Leithwood & Mascall; 2008). Unfortunately, it is clear that few districts and few local administrators have the interest, the knowledge, or the managerial skill to support the principal as an instructional leader (Copland, 2003; Honig, 2012). The changing role of the
instructional leader in the current standards-driven, high-stakes, high-accountability testing environment has prompted school districts not only to increase the support for instructional leaders but also to ensure that achievement results are tied to professional development practices of principals through their work with their teachers (Marks & Nance, 2007; May & Supovitz, 2010).

Even though the role of the principal continues to evolve into more of an instructional leader, principals are also being asked to retain the managerial responsibilities of the past, which involves an exhaustive number of duties. The principal often serves as the school’s liaison with parents, the community, students, and teachers. In addition, principals are expected to maintain a presence at a number of different school- and district-related functions. The result is that principals are being asked to manage their buildings while leading school improvement efforts, increasing student achievement, and continually providing high quality professional development for their teachers (Stronge, 2013)—professional development that is critical to developing the instructional capacity within others.

The addition of the skills and attributes involved with being a high quality instructional leader has added many layers of complexity to the new role of the principal. The Wallace Foundation (2009) agrees that principals are no longer managers and defines the complex new role of the principal as a force that must create collaboration and cohesion around the school’s learning plan and goals. MacNeil and Yelvington (2005) observed, “Principals are no longer strictly managers; they are expected to be leaders. Leaders that can take their school to a higher level of academic achievement, where all students are successful learners and all teachers engage their students in learning” (p. 1). Principals must have the skills and support to create an
atmosphere to improve teaching and learning because behaviors related to instructional leadership have a direct effect on student achievement (Hattie, 2008).

According to Davis et al. (2011), principals are required to be educational visionaries, curriculum leaders, assessment experts, data facilitators, disciplinarians, community builders, facility managers, special program supervisors, and budget analysts. Principals are an important catalyst for shaping student learning and accelerating the effectiveness of teachers with their students (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). As an instructional leader, the principal’s primary purpose is to develop staff resources within the building to meet the ever-changing needs of a diverse student population. Unlike in the past, principals are now being held accountable for their standardized test scores and being asked to propel their buildings forward on assessments through innovative instructional practices (Hallinger, 2005; Knapp et al., 2010). Subsequently, the leadership efforts of principals are very important in fueling the success or failure of districts.

Shared instructional leadership. Current research focuses on a model of shared instructional leadership as the next step in the evolution of the principal (Lambert, 2003; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Successful school leaders understand the need for change, nurture their school environment, and encourage active participation and partnerships with all members of the school community. The essential skills of a leader are the same in the educational field as in any other field. An effective school leader possesses a strong sense of social justice, a clear academic vision, an intellectual mastery, and an engaging personality that serves to inspire a group of people (Elmore, 2000; Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Principals must be able to adapt to changing conditions and be adept not only at building relationships and reading people but also at organizing those people in such a way as to meet the established goals of the organization (Barnes et al., 2012; Catano & Stronge, 2007). They must drive instruction
while understanding “that the nutrients of sustainable school progress are found in positive relationships; sharing of power and information; the valuing of others; and the building of strong, stable, and trusting relationships” (Acker-Hocevar, Cruz-Janzen, & Wilson, 2012, p. 217). High-achieving schools require interaction and accountability from everyone to create teacher leaders who will engage the students, their colleagues, and their communities. If schools are to improve student achievement, the school’s leadership structure must increase teacher capacity through the development of strong teacher-leaders.

Recent school reform efforts encourage school leaders to act as facilitators and to focus their efforts on building organizational learning through shared leadership and collaboration to ensure a culture of achievement and accountability (Lambert, 2003). Acker-Hocevar et al. (2012) found that “rather than high performance based on a federal- and state-mandated model, what creates and sustains high achievement stems from a much different model grounded in systems theory, partnership power, and additive schooling” (p. 7). Schools demonstrating a shared leadership and accountability “free up the human energy system to build collective efficacy for sustaining school improvement” (p. 186).

Yukl (2013) defined shared and distributive leadership as “the process by which focal leaders encourage and enable others to share responsibility for leadership functions” (p. 294). Contrary to the traditional notion of leadership, individuals within the organization are empowered to assume effective leadership roles. The style in which a solitary leader directing change or improvement efforts from above is transitioning to a leadership style shared by two or more individuals. Distributive leadership is also referred to as collective, participatory, or group-centered leadership. Yukl asserted that “distributive leadership involves multiple leaders with distinct but inter-related responsibilities” (p. 295). With a constant increase in accountability and
workload, school administrators are depending more and more on shared leadership to help propel the organization forward. Acker-Hocevar et al. (2012) noted that the theory of distributive leadership “in concert with systems leadership, might help explain why principals today must seek to build pools of expertise with the needed organizational capacity to solve schoolwide problems, increase teacher leadership, and promote organizational efficacy” (p. 17).

Leaders create conditions for learning and innovation through recruitment, empowering individuals, publically recognizing their accomplishments, and acknowledging a connection to the past (Yukl, 2013). A shared and distributive leadership system that focuses on opportunities for members to benefit from the experiences and capacities of others within the association is a theory of leadership that combines well with the tenets of education. The role of the principal as the instructional leader and facilitator of distributive leadership suggests a theory of action in which “the decisions made at the school regarding identification of critical problems, and development of solutions for same, should be made collectively, and focus on improving the learning of all students” (Copland, 2003, p. 376). The conceptual framework “relies on conceptual understandings of school leadership that deviate from traditional norms of hierarchy” (Copland, 2003, p. 376). The framework also relies on cognitive and social theories grounded in organizational learning theory. Copland (2003) noted that the origins of a distributive leadership system “provide evidence of the efficacy of policy strategies rooted in new understandings of school leadership” (p. 375). His “research provides initial evidence of the power of inquiry as the engine to enable the distribution of leadership, and the glue that binds a school community together in common work” (p. 394).

Leithwood and Mascall (2008) found that “higher-achieving schools awarded leadership influence to all school members and other stakeholders to a greater degree than that of lower-
achieving schools” (p. 529). Shared leadership and accountability are essential when working to build a school culture and climate that empowers stakeholders to increase student achievement. Internal shared leadership recognizes teacher, community, and staff expertise. A leadership style that values the voices of all and helps participants to feel heard while at the same time facilitating a decision-making process that will yield the best outcome is better able to align with the organizing variables. Hilty and Acker-Hocevar (2012) stated:

Teacher leadership for the 21st century must move beyond a consideration of teacher roles and relationships subordinate to the work of other leaders within school organizations and consider the possibilities for transforming these relationships within the context of the teacher leadership movement; a transformation based on a different understanding of teachers’ work, it puts the needs and interests of teachers at the forefront of a revolution to alter teacher and leader relationship in schools and classrooms. (p. 8)

 Principals understand that the work of teacher-leaders is not just confined to students in the classroom. These highly accomplished teachers interact at multiple levels within the organization. The focus always remains with the student, but the work could, and most likely does, involve colleagues, administrators, parents, and community members.

The concept and implementation of shared instructional leadership by principals is fairly new in education. Yukl (2013) noted that “much more research is needed on the distribution of leadership responsibilities among the member of a team or organization” (p. 295). Empirical literature is just starting to reveal a number of small-scale, qualitative studies that describe the practice and characteristics of shared instructional leadership.
The development of effective teacher leaders through shared instructional leadership strategies is an essential component of school reform. The accountability measures in place at the national and state level require schools to be thoughtful about the consumption of limited resources. The challenge principal evaluators and principals will face in the short term is the need for more empirical data to help shape and measure the impact of their role.

The study of principal leadership is vital in an examination of the scope of principal efforts to improve student achievement through instructional practice (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; May & Supovitz, 2010). The changing role of the instructional leader in the current high-stakes, high-accountability testing environment has prompted school districts not only to increase the support for instructional leaders but also to ensure that achievement results are tied to the professional development practices of the principal (Marks & Nance, 2007; May & Supovitz, 2010). Research suggests that principal practice is the most likely mechanism for positive and significant change in teacher performance and student learning (Marks & Nance, 2007; May & Supovitz; Reitzug, West, & Angel, 2008). A connection between sustainable school improvement and the nature of leadership, or more specifically the ability to build leadership capacity for school improvement, will positively influence this change in performance and learning.

Principal Evaluation

Effective principal evaluation systems promote increased accountability, stimulate instructional leadership behaviors, and provide data for targeted support and professional development (Brown-Sims, 2010). Principal professional learning as a result of intentional professional development can be a component of the evaluation process. Evaluation is described as determining what a person should be able to do, defining actual performance, and assigning
ratings based on proficiency (Amsterdam et al., 2003). In the field of education, the purpose of school principal evaluation is to capture the essence of the principal’s practice and provide valid and reliable data to determine performance and professional development (Goldring et al., 2009). Effective principal evaluation holds principals accountable for the performance of students and staff as well as for their own performance. Effective principal evaluation also places a greater focus on the quality of how principals are evaluated rather than on the what or content.

According to Davis et al. (2011), “Implementation trumped instrumentation in terms of how well evaluations were conducted, how evaluations were perceived by principals, and how connected effective evaluations were to promoting the principals’ professional growth” (p. 8). Therefore professional growth is rooted in implementation and process. A climate of system-wide accountability has placed an emphasis on an evaluation process with clearly defined criteria for principal performance (Catano & Stronge, 2007; Clifford & Ross, 2011). According to Goldring et al. (2009), “When designed appropriately, executed in a proactive manner and properly implemented, [principal evaluation] has the power to enhance leadership quality and improve organizational performance at three levels” (p. 3). These levels are the individual level of practice, the level of continuous learning and development, and the level of organizational accountability.

Historically, principal evaluation was neither aligned with professional standards nor rigorously tested for reliability and consistency. Principals generally perceived their evaluations to be based on the subjective feelings of their evaluators rather than on closely monitored and measurable performance indicators (Davis et al., 2011). The evaluation instruments did not reflect research-based practices and were neither technically sound nor useful for improving performance (Amsterdam et al., 2003; Clifford & Ross, 2011; Davis et al., 2010). Davis and
Hensley (1999) found that principals did not perceive that formal evaluation shaped or directed their professional learning or promoted school effectiveness. Additionally, principals found that the process was arbitrary and offered little or no benefit to their professional growth or accountability to school improvement (Condon & Clifford, 2010; Kempher & Robb-Cooper, 2002; Portin, Feldman, & Knapp, 2006). Most evaluations were not aligned with higher levels of instructional leadership intended to improve student achievement, and they were administered inconsistently, resulting in unreliable measures of performance (Catano & Stronge, 2006; Goldring et al., 2009; Thomas, Holdaway, & Ward, 2000). Recent independent reviews of research on the effectiveness of principal evaluation systems concluded that these systems do not promote accurate judgments of principal effectiveness (Clifford & Ross, 2011; Davis et al., 2010).

In the early 21st century, the focus of principal evaluation began to shift from conformity and loyalty to improvement of professional performance and administrator effectiveness (Green, 2004; Thomas et al., 2000). The principal evaluation process is now used to foster a climate conducive to continuous improvement of student learning and organizational effectiveness. Consequently, principal evaluators are now tasked with the responsibility of not only providing a summative assessment of the principal’s abilities but also using the evaluation process as a tool to identify strengths and areas for improvement. These strengths and areas for improvement can then be used as a diagnostic tool to develop an appropriate course of professional development for principals (Clifford & Ross, 2011; Davis et al., 2011; Goldring et al., 2009).

**District leadership’s influence on principal evaluation.** Research clearly shows the effects of purposeful leadership on organizations, the effects of leadership on student achievement, and the effects of instructional leadership on school culture (Lambert, 2006;
Leithwood & Macall, 2008; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Thus, school districts should be places that encourage professional growth and enhance leadership capacity (Rorrer, Skrła, & Scheurich, 2008). Specifically, superintendents should expose district leadership to a vision that inspires a culture conducive to continuous improvement (Honig & Copland, 2008). The ability to motivate while creating an atmosphere fortified with high expectations is the hallmark of a district focused on student achievement and will support the work of principals (Honig, 2012; Waters & Marzano, 2006). If superintendents and district leaders are to support the work of principals, they themselves must learn how to support and maintain an aligned system of instructional leadership.

The leadership and vision of the superintendent is a driver for district activities such as goal setting, including goals for student achievement and classroom instruction, school board support, continuous monitoring of student growth goals, effective use of resources, and principal autonomy with an eye toward operational boundaries (Marzano et al., 2005; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Kelley and Shaw (2009) found that most districts impede school improvement because “there is typically no clear, shared vision in the district, so individuals within the district office and between the district office and the school work at cross purposes with one another” (p. 145). Setting district-level goals and specific goals for student achievement assists principal evaluators with putting a fine focus on their vision for instructional improvement within the district (Kelley & Shaw, 2009). Leading the allocation of resources, including district office support personnel, and providing principals with the tools they need to improve instruction in their buildings requires superintendents to understand that the basic framework for school improvement must involve a deep reflection on practice and on teacher and principal collaboration (Leithwood et al., 2004). The superintendent must also be keenly aware of the role that district support staff
and leaders play in the quest for sustained instructional improvement (Honig, 2012; Lambert, 2003; Scheurich & Skrla, 2002).

District leaders, including administrators, board members, and district office support staff add value to the organization when they effectively address the needs of the schools (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Waters and Marzano’s (2006) meta-analysis of the impact of district leadership (independent variable) on student achievement (dependent variable) found that the correlation between the two variables was .24 at $p < .05$. This translates to an increase in average student performance of 9.5 percentile points. Educators have a tendency to forget about the impact district leadership has on learning because these types of activities are so far removed from the classroom. Waters and Marzano highlighted just how important district leadership is to raising student achievement. The participation of central office leaders in district-wide learning improvement is essential in helping districts build their capacity to help all students grow (Elmore, 2000; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).

If principal evaluators are to support the work of principals, they themselves must learn how to support and maintain an aligned system of instructional leadership. The multifaceted role of principals as instructional leaders in the current high-stakes, high-accountability testing environment has prompted school districts not only to increase their support for principals as instructional leaders but also to ensure that the student achievement results of the school are tied to the professional development practices of the principal (Marks & Nance, 2007; May & Supovitz, 2010). In the past, the evaluation and professional development of principals were always seen as independent of each other, but now principal evaluators are starting to make a connection between professional development and evaluation—a connection that is vital if a system of sustained student growth is to be created (Marks & Nance, 2007; Leithwood et al.,
According to Clifford and Ross (2012), “Effective principal evaluation is part of a comprehensive system of support, including quality professional development, induction support for early career principals and recognition of advanced performance” (p. 8).

Essential tasks for district leaders include making learning central to their own work; consistently communicating the centrality of student learning; articulating core values that support a focus on powerful, equitable learning; and paying public attention to efforts to support learning. Leaders whose actions reflect these principles, and do so in relation to a few learning goals while minimizing potential distractions, seem especially likely to bring about and sustain system-wide improvement (Copeland, 2003).

Empirical evidence for the effects of principal evaluation on important school outcomes is still very thin (Davis et al., 2011). More rigorous studies on principal evaluation are needed. It is too difficult to assess and generalize the effect of principal evaluation practices using objective measures such as quality of student work, level of student content knowledge, student progress toward annual quantifiable goals, and individual student learning gains compared with those of previous years (Clifford & Ross, 2012; Tucker & Stronge, 2005). Evaluation systems require a system of leading and lagging indicators to provide constructive, specific, and focused feedback for principals and teachers (Schooling & Marzano, 2010). Professional evaluation standards measure and improve practice while fostering an atmosphere of continuous learning. A growth model of evaluation allows evaluators to consider individual principal needs throughout the process. The frameworks adopted by the state of Washington contain these leading and lagging indicators, giving principals and teachers the best opportunity for measured feedback that will allow for growth.
Four-Tiered Evaluation Model

Evaluation as a way to improve performance is a fairly new approach that should be supported throughout the state. On March 29, 2010, in response to the pressure to perform, Governor Christine Gregoire signed into law Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6696, which required the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to develop new and more rigorous criteria for the evaluation principals in the State of Washington. The intent was to improve principal learning statewide. The new guidelines for evaluating principals used research-based instructional frameworks to promote learning through professional conversation about practice that would analyze classroom events. The law specifically called for all districts to conform to the new frameworks, measures, and principal evaluation tools beginning with the 2013–14 school year.

The new principal evaluation frameworks consist of eight research-based criteria evaluated according to a four-tiered rubric. The four levels of the rubric are unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, and distinguished. Each element under the eight criteria is clearly defined through narrative in accordance with the four levels (Appendix A). Derrington and Sanders (2011), as a result of their extensive research on principal evaluation, support a rubric with descriptors as an essential component of effective principal evaluation. As principal evaluators use a multidimensional evaluation process, a specific rubric to provide in-depth detail and understanding around each element under the criteria has become essential (Reeves, 2004). Amsterdam et al. (2003) “describe the collaborative development of district standards/criteria and accompanying rubrics for the review of principal performance” (p. 223) as an integral component in principal evaluation. In addition, research has repeatedly identified that goals developed cooperatively according to a guiding framework or rubric between the principal
evaluator and the principal are considered important in the evaluation process (Davis et al., 2011; Stronge, Xu, Leeper, & Tonneson, 2013).

Amsterdam, Johnson, Monrad, and Tonnsen (2003) wrote that clearly defined criteria “contribute to fair and valid decisions in the evaluation of principal’s job performance” (p. 222). The eight criteria merge in places to evaluate principals in five major areas: culture, data, curriculum, instruction, and community. The purpose of the framework is to connect the responsibilities of the principal with district policies and practices while maintaining the understanding that the ultimate goal is professional growth for the principal and student growth for the school. This connection symbolizes the relationship between the district and the principal to illustrate the responsibility the district has to support principals’ growth and provide resources for their efforts at the building level. The district must assess the needs of their principals prior to delivering professional development that will support principals’ effectiveness. The problem is that the new evaluation framework does not currently align with most of the existing principal evaluation systems currently used in the state of Washington. Presently, principals are not required to connect student and/or building data with the evaluation process. Therefore, it is imperative that evaluators be intentional and thoughtful as they familiarize themselves with the new tool and evaluate the needs of the principals as it is implemented.

The AWSP Leadership Framework was designed by a committee consisting of more than 20 Washington state principals and subsequently adopted by the Washington State Legislature to promote the continuous growth of principals in areas that are most clearly tied to student achievement. The framework was developed to align with Washington State evaluation criteria, Washington State evaluation rules, and the Revised Code of Washington, Chapter 28A-405. The writers of this new principal evaluation tool worked to align principal evaluation with the shift in
accountability and responsibility principals have recently experienced. The goal was to create a document that would support the growth of principals through targeted professional development (AWSP, 2013).

The framework was designed as a growth model for principal evaluation and professional development. The task force that constructed the framework developed an accountability statement or vision to guide their work:

Student achievement in a performance-based school is a shared responsibility involving the student, family, educators and the community. The principal’s leadership is essential. As leader, the principal is accountable for the continuous growth of individual students and increased school performance as measured over time by state standards and locally determined indicators. (AWSP, 2013)

The culmination of this work was seven leadership responsibilities for principals that corresponded with components in each of those seven areas to define activities that would lead to proficiency. In 2010, the Washington State Legislature added an eighth criterion for closing the achievement gap to the seven originally identified by the task force. Each of the eight criteria work to define the focus principals should have when working to improve student achievement, build consensus, and remove distractions that may detract from the organization’s mission.

The eight criteria of the AWSP Leadership Framework are as follows: Criterion One, creating a culture; Criterion Two, ensuring school safety; Criterion Three, planning with data; Criterion Four, aligning curriculum; Criterion Five, improving instruction; Criterion Six, managing resources; Criterion Seven, engaging communities; and Criterion Eight, closing the gap. The eight criteria that comprise the AWSP Leadership Framework directly align with Washington State’s new evaluation criteria (AWSP, 2013). The core of the framework focuses
on student achievement through quality teacher evaluation and development and data analysis. This focus follows a national trend that tasks the principal with improving school effectiveness by creating a school culture that supports continuous student learning (Davis et al., 2011; Goldring et al., 2009). Principals of today must help teachers understand their role in developing students who can perform in an era of increased accountability and vacillating performance measures that can change seemingly overnight based on the whims of lawmakers and public pressure to perform.

**Research base.** The AWSP Leadership Framework was designed to stimulate discussion and assist principal evaluators in designing professional learning opportunities to best fit the individual needs of the principals. The research base for the AWSP Leadership Framework (Appendix B) draws from literature meant to identify leadership behaviors that ensure rigorous curriculum and quality instruction while working to create a safe culture that engages the entire educational community (AWSP, 2013; Goldring et al., 2009). Shannon and Bylsma (2004) found that “improved districts build a culture of commitment, collegiality, mutual respect, and stability” (p. 46). Effective leaders in those districts work to create a culture that fosters accountability while tasking the stakeholders to take the responsibility needed for all students to thrive. Criterion One in the AWSP Leadership Framework defines the elements needed for principals to create an atmosphere of peer support and collaboration that supports an environment of continuous learning for adults and students. These elements of leadership are shared mission, clear vision, advocacy, creating powerful learning opportunities, and shared leadership and are consistent with what Leithwood et al. (2004) considered effective leadership traits and practices when trying to influence student learning. Criterion Two continues to support the idea of culture by ensuring a safe learning environment for students and staff.
Woolley and Grogan-Kaylor’s (2006) research supported this notion by stating, “Essentially, positive and supportive social environments are foundational to appropriate school behavior, which in turn leads to children’s perceptions of school as enjoyable and meaningful, which ultimately leads to successful academic performance” (p. 94).

Criteria Three, Four, and Five focus on the aspects of data-driven planning, curriculum, and instruction. The new state of education underscores the importance of data-driven planning as a means to use student data to drive instructional practice and improve achievement (Halverson, 2010; Wayman, 2005; Young, 2006). Data use is an important tool when trying to shape instruction and help teachers think in a collaborative way. Data-driven instructional practices are not new to education. The concept has actually been a part of instructional leadership for quite some time and, as Wayman and Stringfield (2006) noted, “Data use often resulted in improved teaching practice such as collaboration, better knowledge of student needs, and efficiency of effort” (p. 549). The use of student data combined with a strong knowledge of curriculum is a very realistic and powerful method for improving student performance (Halverson, 2010; Lambert, 2006; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Wayman, 2005; Young, 2006).

A strong knowledge of curriculum, specifically regarding the alignment of curriculum and assessments with state standards and tests, is an important component of principal learning that is guided by a research-based, four-tiered model. Criterion Four of the AWSP Leadership Framework guides principals to align curriculum with best practice instructional strategies for teachers. Massell (2000) reported that in “today's charged atmosphere of accountability and standards-based reform, districts are seeking to align the curriculum and instruction vertically to state policies and horizontally to other elements of the district and school practice” (p. 4). According to the AWSP Leadership Framework, an effective leader bears the responsibility for
ensuring school practice aligns instructional strategies and practices with state and local district learning goals (Massell & Goertz, 2002). The principal must deploy resources and illicit support from district officials to engage and guide instructional staff in the alignment process, assist staff in adjusting instruction with shifting curriculum, and use a variety of assessments to diagnose the needs of students (Hallinger, 2007). As a precursor for this work, the principal must be given the authority to direct financial resources to student need, assign and reassign staff to deliver effective instruction, and report curricular concerns to the appropriate district authorities (AWSP, 2013).

The principal’s role in the delivery of effective instruction is one of the main tenets of the shift from the principal as a manager to the principal as an instructional leader. May and Supovitz (2010) report that the “principals’ influence on instructional improvement is significantly related to their interactions with individual teachers” (p. 347). They continue by sharing that “the time a principal spends on instructional leadership is predictive of increases in the variability in instructional change across teachers within the school” (p. 348). This change supports the idea that the activities of a principal are more likely to yield meaningful changes in teacher practice when activities are specific and targeted. The purpose of Criterion Five, Improving Instruction, in the AWSP Leadership Framework is to provide principals with the guidance to help them plan and reflect about improving teachers practice. The elements are created to ensure that the principal is monitoring instruction and assessment practices while assisting staff in developing student growth goals and the implementing of effective instructional practices.

The focus of Criterion Six is managing resources to improve the quality of instruction to meet or exceed student achievement goals. The elements for Criterion Six analyze the actions
principals take when managing human and fiscal resources and fulfilling legal responsibilities (AWSP, 2013). Criterion Seven underscores the importance of parent and community involvement in the schools. The elements contained in Criterion Seven, engaging the community, detail the principal’s role in involving parents in their child’s education and involving community in the school. The research around their involvement is clear. When parents are involved in their child’s education, there is a high likelihood that achievement increases (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). Parent engagement can look different depending on the school and community. The principal, in consultation with staff, creates the best avenue for parents to participate in the educational process. This participation can range from volunteering in the classroom to participating on site councils involved in the decision-making process for the building. Parents who take an interest in their child’s education and are involved in the school setting help to support and enrich instructional activity happening in and out of the classroom setting. This parent involvement is crucial as principals work to reduce the achievement gap for students who share an historical disadvantage and students who may not be realizing their full potential. In Criterion Eight, principals are required to identify learning gaps early, identify barriers to closing these learning gaps, and construct a plan that uses best practice teaching strategies to reduce the achievement gap over a period of time (Wahlstrom et al., 2010).

In order for change to occur, principals must have the tools and skills to be able to lead their staff in professional development activities. The AWSP Leadership Framework is a valuable four-tiered evaluation model to help principals view their leadership through the lens of student achievement. The current body of research offers a wealth of findings in the areas of the effects of instructional leadership on the organization, the effects of instructional leadership on student achievement, and the effects of instructional leadership on school culture (Lambert,
2006; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). Principals must focus their instructional leadership in ways that will bring about the greatest improvement in student learning. A four-tiered research-based evaluation rubric like the AWSP Leadership Framework gives principals a mechanism for that focus: a mechanism to assist with reflection, goal setting, and laser-like leadership development.

**Principal Learning**

Little systematic research has been conducted regarding the connection between principal professional development and principal evaluation (Goldring et al., 2009). Barnes et al. (2012) defined the development of professional practice as “a process in which learners become increasingly more competent performers in their complex working conditions and that professional performances include a cognitive, as well as behavioral dimension” (p. 244). The current research base for organizational professional development concurs and identifies two areas that are central for developing a structure within the organization that will be effective and productive: structural arrangements and cultural elements (Barnes et al., 2012; Rhoton & Stiles, 2002; Webster-Wright, 2009). These are key factors to consider when designing a system of sustained professional development for principals (Park & Datnow, 2009). The quality and impact of professional development depends on what principals learn, how they learn it, and their ability to make the connection between theory and practice (Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Sinnema & Robinson, 2012).

According to Peterson (2002), the essential components associated with the structural aspect of principal professional development are clear purpose, curriculum coherence, instructional variety, and differentiation. District leaders should carefully plan the structure for principal professional development (Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006). Professional development for principals should be relevant and reflect the individual needs of the principal and that
principal’s building (Hallinger, 2005; Houle, 2006; Lambert, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Principals often face a variety of challenges unique to their particular building, student population, and community (Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2009). These challenges should prompt district leaders to generate strategic learning that provides targeted assistance for principals. The learning could exist in many different forms ranging from a collective, dialogic learning opportunity to peer coaching or mentoring. The former would provide experienced principals with training specific to strategic and instructional leadership while the latter would be most appropriate for new principals to support technical and management issues associated with building leadership (Hallinger, 2005; Peterson, 2002; Webster-Wright, 2009). This configuration allows for principal professional development that is skill based, which is essential since all principals do not have the same needs (Barnes et al., 2012; Clifford & Ross, 2012; Houle, 2006; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2009).

The mission of, use of time in, and instructional approaches of principal professional development should reflect the district’s vision, and the focus should always remain on student achievement (Wahlstrom et al., 2010; Waters & Marzano, 2006). The learning should be purposeful. In fact, Acker-Hocevar et al. (2012) revealed, “Most of the learning in preparation for the real demands at [principals’] schools happens on-site, on-the-job, through self-directed learning, trial and error, and from each other” (p. 233). Thus, what is needed are principal professional development programs that support reflective practice and collaborative learning (Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006).

These requirements reflect the notion that professional skill development entails a combination of skill progression and embodied understanding of practice. This idea has significant implications for both research and practice; in both areas, a substantial shift of focus
is needed from the transfer of knowledge and skills toward developing understanding of, and in, the practice in question (Barnes et al., 2012; Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Pashiardis & Brauckmann, 2009; Peterson, 2002). Districts should strive to structure professional learning that enhances principals’ understanding of instruction while giving them the tools to enhance practice (Cosner, 2009; Gawlik, 2008; Hallinger, 2005; Peterson, 2002; Sinnema & Robinson, 2012). The effectiveness of this structural design could be enhanced by the development of a culture of collegiality, connectedness, and trust among principals. If these principles are embodied in the practice of principal learning, then principals are more likely to benefit from the activities.

Peterson (2002) stated that “some of the most successful professional development programs for principals developed a strong, positive culture among participants with a clear set of symbols and ceremonies” (p. 217). This connection to culture and tradition can only serve to strengthen the impact on principal learning in a district. Researchers agree: “Basic findings of research on organizational learning is that collective learning requires a safe space in which people can share their questions and understand without fear of being judged harshly by their peers or their supervisors” (City, et al., 2009, p. 162). According to Houle (2006), a delicate balance must be sought between providing principals with the help they need and preserving their egos. She goes on to assert that it is essential to provide principals with a safe space to say “I don’t know” or ask for help without being negatively judged by their peers and district leaders (Houle, 2006). Established group norms for adult learning help to create this safe space and develop trust to create a positive link to the learning community (Barnes et al., 2012; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Houle, 2006). This sense of belonging and ownership of the group’s mission is an invaluable part of principal professional learning.
The goal of this group, or community of practice, is to develop a learning environment in which practitioners can pool their skills and experiences to solve common problems of practice and develop new sources of knowledge (Barnes et al., 2012; Webster-Wright, 2009). These communities of practice think and learn as a team. The social interaction provides principals with a nurturing environment in which to interact with content through a shared language. The goal is to help principals deprivatize their practice and look to each other, through the facilitation of district leadership, to improve their craft (Barnes et al., 2012; Houle, 2006; Webser-Wright, 2009). Houle (2006), summarized these ideas by stating,

Long-term professional development focused on providing a risk-free environment for principals to not only make sense of their current context but to move them to think outside of those parameters to new possibilities is critical to making that shift. Only at that point can we begin to take steps to achieve sustainable change in the educational system. (p. 158)

Vital to this sustainable change is principals’ ability to be honest with themselves and to seek to intrinsically improve their craft regardless of external impediments.

**Reflective practice.** A principal’s ability to improve his or her craft is associated with the degree to which that principal is experimenting, learning, growing, and embracing change each day. Often, principals become consumed with the learning of their students and teachers and forget to take the time to reflect on their practice. According to Schon (1983), reflective practice is “the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning” (p. 102). This process is an important tool in principal professional learning because it allows principals to learn from their own experiences, rather than from formal professional development. The result is considered a more personal professional learning experience.
Reflection on practice is not just looking back on past actions and situations but rather taking a conscious look at the emotions, experiences, actions, and responses during those actions and situations. These experiences add to a principal’s existing knowledge base to draw out new knowledge and meaning to gain a higher level of understanding. Principals can gain a better understanding of their skills and have a tremendous learning opportunity if they engage in reflective practice.

According to Moon (2004), reflective practice that is often used in the professional learning context refers to improving practice through the “translation of the products of reflection into the real world of action so that they affect practice and something is done differently” (p. 191). The basic premise behind reflection is delaying action until the situation is thoroughly understood, the goal has been ascertained, other options have been considered and weighed, and a plan has been developed before any action is taken (Cranton, 1996). Lashway (1998) contended that although “they [evaluation instruments] do not offer a complete solution to the evaluation dilemma, carefully chosen instruments can add depth, breadth and objectivity to principal evaluation and can promote the kind of self-reflection that fuels professional growth” (p. 14). One of the goals of evaluation should be to “serve as a guide for principals as they reflect upon and improve their effectiveness as school leaders” (Mattson, Almanzán, Sanders, & Kearney, 2011).

**Conclusion**

Put simply, with changes in accountability come changes in evaluation, with changes in evaluation come changes in leadership, and with changes in leadership come leadership development and a new way of thinking about how districts will assess the needs and support individual principals. The key is leadership. Wahlstrom et al. (2010) claimed, “Based on
preliminary research...leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning” (p. 9). The leadership needed to support student learning requires well-trained principals (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Horng et al., 2010; Peterson, 2002). Districts cannot rely on outside principal professional development to provide new and existing principals with the tools they need to increase student achievement in their building. Instead, they must create systems of professional learning within the organization to meet the ongoing needs of their principals (Barnes et al., 2012; Houle, 2006; Webster-Wright, 2009). These professional learning opportunities should be relevant, safe, goal-driven, reflective, and closely aligned with principal evaluation (Knapp et al., 2010; Webster-Wright, 2009). This alignment of meaningful professional development for building leaders will allow districts to meet the accountability requirements levied by national and state mandates for student achievement.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Policy makers and educators are constantly confronted with the challenges of improving learning for all students. Often these decisions are fraught with emotion and carry financial implications that may not be supported by all of the decision makers. In order to ensure that educational decisions are made with the best interest of the students in mind, policy makers and educators have turned to the work of educational researchers to provide empirical evidence that curriculum, instructional strategies, and technology increase student achievement prior to their adoption and/or implementation (Creswell, 2008; Huck, 2012; McEwan & McEwan, 2003). In fact, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 specifically states that all decisions using federal funding are to be made using scientifically based research. Research adds to our knowledge, fills a void, confirms or refutes prior studies, adds literature about practice, and assists in advancing or improving practice. Research offers practitioners new ideas and helps them to evaluate current beliefs and approaches (Creswell, 2008).

The research designs most commonly used to help guide educational practitioners’ decisions are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Creswell, 2008). The community of educational practitioners is also seeing the emergence and acceptance of action research as a proven method of investigation (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Qualitative and quantitative designs are sometimes viewed as opposites or dichotomies. This is not entirely correct. Creswell (2009) states that “the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative), or using closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions)” (p. 3). Historically, quantitative designs dominated research in social sciences from the late 19th
century up until the mid-20th century. The latter half of the 20th century saw a marked increase in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009).

This chapter reviews the research design and protocols involved with the development and facilitation of my qualitative study concerning perceptions and practices regarding principal professional learning and evaluation. As stated in Chapter One of this dissertation, little systematic research has been conducted on the connection between principal professional learning and principal evaluation (Goldring et al., 2009). To close that gap, this study sought to explore the principal evaluators’ and principals’ perceptions of principal professional learning and the connection that may exist between principal professional learning and the new principal evaluation rubric, the Association of Washington School Principals’ Leadership Framework.

**Research Design**

Researchers must use the appropriate methodology to ensure validity and reliability and to connect their studies to the improvement of practice (Merriam, 2009). As I completed my research on the principal evaluators’ and principals’ understanding of the new principal evaluation criteria and how those criteria can be used as an organizational tool for professional learning to change principal practice, I needed to analyze all aspects of my study to guarantee that I was using the proper design. Based on the inherent strengths and weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research designs, I chose a qualitative approach. I used interviews and a variety of documents to conduct my research. I sought to understand how principal evaluators and principals perceived the new evaluation requirements and how those requirements connected to principal professional development. Since I sought understanding, a quantitative study would have limited my ability to interpret my data and might not have been an effective
tool to reflect the variation that was likely to be present between the principal evaluators’ and the principals’ responses.

Gathering the perceptions of evaluators of principals and of principals regarding principal professional development and evaluation required a design that was able to use interviews and document analysis. A qualitative approach best fit with the objectives for this study because the approach allowed for a constant search for concepts, patterns, and emerging themes to provide the best explanation of what was occurring in the inquiry (Srivastava & Nopwood, 2009).

The systematic study or exploration involved with qualitative research helps to develop a detailed understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Thus, qualitative methodology assists in identifying, exploring, and describing the phenomenon. Such a methodology gives the best opportunity to analyze the perceptions of principal evaluators and principals while taking into consideration a number of support documents used during principal professional development and evaluation (Creswell, 2009; Srivastava & Nopwood, 2009). A qualitative study also provides for the ability to observe and seek to understand and interpret social interactions during the collection process (Creswell, 2009; McEwan & McEwan, 2003; Stake, 2010). As the key instrument in this process, I used multiple sources of data to perform an inductive data analysis to construct patterns and identify categories that led to the development of themes (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009).

**Research Questions**

To understand the connection between evaluation and principal professional learning, the following two research questions were considered:

1. How have principal evaluators and principals perceived the AWSP Leadership Framework?
2. How have the changes in principal evaluation influenced principal evaluators’ practices concerning principal professional development?

Sample and Context

This multisite case study investigated principal evaluators’ and principals’ perceptions of principal professional development and evaluation. This study was straightforward and did not need to identify subtle theory (Yin, 2013). The study included interviews with 16 participants from three cases or districts throughout the state of Washington. The resulting data allowed for an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon.

The total population for the sample consisted of districts that participated in the Washington State Teacher/Principal Evaluation Project’s (TPEP) first Regional Implementation Grant (RIG I). Prior to RIG I, a TPEP Pilot beginning in September of 2010 was implemented, which was a one-year pilot of the new teacher and principal evaluation framework. The eight pilot districts went through a rigorous process of developing the new evaluation system. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) added the RIG I districts in September of 2011. These districts were considered early adopters of the work completed by the pilot districts.

In a short phone interview with Gary Kipp, executive director for AWSP, I was able to determine that RIG I districts had the most experience with the new principal evaluation tool (personal communication, January, 2014).

The RIG I group consisted of 65 districts. Therefore, the total population for the sample was 65 districts. The first consideration for the sample went to districts with between 1,500 and 7,500 students. Districts with a total student population of between 1,500 and 7,500 are more likely to have principal evaluators that not only evaluate the principals but also are the primary source for principal professional development. Principal evaluators in larger districts may not
have a close connection to principal professional development because executive directors or coordinators are responsible for district professional development activities. The second consideration was geographic diversity. The third sample population consisted of districts from different Educational Service Districts (ESDs) throughout the state. This geographic diversity ensured that the principal evaluator and principal perceptions gathered were representative of the entire state. Lastly, the districts that participated in this study all had superintendents who served in the district during the entire evaluation pilot. This consistency in leadership provided a better opportunity to gather data that were a reflection of the work of implementing the new AWSP Evaluation Framework. A change in leadership during the implementation pilot could have changed the direction and fragmented or distorted the work of the principal evaluators with the principals under their supervision. This sample population yielded superintendents and executive level leadership with a better awareness of the AWSP Framework and its implementation within the districts selected.

Based on these criteria, the original list of 65 districts was narrowed to eight. In order to maintain diversity with regard to student population, the final sample population for this study consisted of districts with a student population range of between 5,500 and 7,000. Four districts in this range were contacted. One of the four declined to be a part of the study because they did not feel they had devoted enough time to principal evaluation and professional development. The majority of their time with principals was devoted to learning the new teacher evaluation tool. The three districts used for this study allowed me to maintain a geographic diversity that was within the original district student enrollment parameters and offered multiple sources of evidence to develop converging lines of inquiry or triangulation (Yin, 2009).
School districts. This study used data collected from interviews and documents in three different districts situated throughout the state of Washington. Osage School District is located in the eastern part of the state. I conducted interviews with three evaluators of principals and three building principals in Osage School District. Fox Point School District is located on the west side of the state, specifically in the Puget Sound area. One principal evaluator and three principals were interviewed from Fox Point School District. Anderson School District is located in the southwestern part of the state. One evaluator of principals and five building principals were interviewed from Anderson School District.

Participants. I conducted a total of 16 interviews. Five of the interviews were with principal evaluators and 11 interviews were with building principals. Table 1 illustrates the attributes of those interviewed. With the exception of one elementary principal, each principal and principal evaluator had at least 2 years’ experience with the AWSP Leadership Framework.

Table 1

Interview Participants by Title, Role, and Average Years of Experience in Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Number of Participants in that Position</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Average Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Evaluator</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Superintendent or Executive Director</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Evaluator</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection

Data for this dissertation were collected as part of a qualitative study that examined principal evaluators’ and principals’ understanding of the connection between principal professional learning and the new four-tiered, research-based principal evaluation rubric. Qualitative research methods were used to gather and analyze information from interviews and documents during the 2013–2014 academic year (Merriam, 2009; Seidman, 2006). I completed in-depth, semistructured interviews with 16 principal evaluators and principals and gathered documents connected to principal professional learning, reflection, and goal setting from three mid-sized districts in the state of Washington. These data sources allowed me to analyze the perceptions of principal evaluators and principals while taking into consideration a number of support documents used during principal professional development and evaluation. The combination of these data sources helped me construct a rich description of principal professional development in each of the three districts. The data sources were also key components necessary to observe changes in perception and practice as a result of a newly adopted principal evaluation process that most closely reflects a growth model (Bauer & Brazer, 2012; Creswell, 2008; Seidman, 2006).

Interviews. The primary source of data for this study was 60- to 90-minute, person-to-person interviews (Merriam, 2009). In an attempt to gain access, each district was initially contacted through e-mail to explain the purpose of the study and obtain consent for my research. Consent letters were given to each of the participants in the study. Participants’ names and any other identifying characteristics about the district were kept private. The coordinating contact in each of the three districts was either the superintendent or another principal evaluator. All three districts allowed access to all principals. The only restrictions were a result of scheduling and
principal availability. Two of the three districts asked me to make direct contact with principals to ask for their participation once the principal evaluator sent out consent for my work in the district. The deputy superintendent in the remaining district coordinated all of the interview appointments for me on the date requested.

All interviews were held in the offices of the participants. The semistructured interview question protocol addressed principal evaluation, principal professional development, and the district’s vision for sustained professional growth of the building principals (Appendix C). Semistructured interviews were chosen because they bring a more focused attention to the appraisals and insights of the principal evaluators and principals. The same interview questions were asked of each participant, but probing and follow-up questions allowed for flexibility according to each person’s initial response and position. The interviews also provided insight into ongoing challenges the district may face while trying to improve leadership as they continue to implement the new AWSP Leadership Framework. The interview process was flexible to obtain as much information as possible for analysis. Once the interviews were completed, a professional transcriptionist transcribed each interview. In the transcriptions, I replaced all respondents’ names with pseudonyms and withheld any reference to their districts to preserve confidentiality (Seidman, 2006).

The review of literature and my own personal experiences in the field assisted in framing each of the questions for the interviews. I designed the questions to draw out the respective perceptions of principal evaluators and principals regarding principal professional learning and evaluation. I designed the main and follow-up questions to give the respondents latitude to elaborate on aspects of the questions that were important to them. Participants’ responses were sufficiently probed to clarify, engage, and empathize with conceptions and intentions (Seidman,
During each interview, I recorded notes in a study journal to capture the respondents’ initial thoughts and body language (Yin, 2009).

**Interview pilot.** Prior to interviewing participants in the three identified districts, I conducted a pilot to test the interview protocol using a convenience sample of two principal evaluators and one principal from a mid-sized school district not associated with the study. Seidman (2006) urged “all interviewing researchers to build into their proposal a pilot venture in which they try out their interviewing design with a small number of participants” (p. 39). This pilot provided valuable information about the practical aspects of interviewing and whether the research structure was appropriate for the study. I revised the protocol based on information I obtained during the pilot interviews. I redesigned the questions to give respondents an opportunity to elaborate, to remove repetition, and to make the questions more direct. As the research instrument, I learned to be careful to avoid leading questions or questions that would require only short, nondescriptive responses. I also learned to look for signs that participants might be filtering or altering their answers (Bauer & Brazer, 2012; Seidman, 2006). Such signs include long pauses prior to answering, memory lapses, anger, frustration, and refusal to answer certain questions.

**Documents.** Merriam (2009) refers to documents or artifacts as “ready-made source[s] of data easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator” (p. 139). Prior to and after the interviews, I gathered and analyzed documents listed in Table 2. In addition to the documents obtained from each of the sites, I analyzed the research base and the AWSP Leadership Framework to help bring context to the interviews.
These multiple data sources added to the validity and reliability of the study by allowing me to analyze the perceptions and practices of principal evaluators and principals while taking into consideration a number of support documents used during principal professional learning and evaluation (Merriam, 2009). As I gathered the documents in the field during the interview process, I was careful to include an analysis of each document I collected at the time of collection in my case notes (Yin, 2009). This measure allowed me to ensure that the events and facts of the study were supported by more than a single source of evidence between the documents and other data collected in order to corroborate the same fact or phenomenon (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). The combination of these data sources helped me construct a rich description of principal professional learning activities taking place in each of the districts (Merriam, 2009). The data sources were also the key components necessary to analyze how principal professional development was associated with the newly adopted AWSP Leadership Framework.
Data Analysis

The interviews and observations went through several layers of analysis. The coding for this study was a mixture of inductive and deductive reasoning involving in vivo coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Similarities and differences were noted within the principal evaluators’ responses and within the principals’ responses. Then, the two groups were compared with each other and corroborated with the various documents collected throughout the study. During the first level of review, the transcripts were analyzed for initial open codes. I recorded my preliminary thoughts and documented recurring items in the margin (Merriam, 2009; Saldana, 2012). Open coding was the first pass through the data to locate emerging themes and assign category titles. I also highlighted all of the questions and underlined, connected, and/or circled key words and concepts. I circled words and used arrows and underlines to connect different ideas within the answers to the questions. This initial activity allowed me to determine whether the research questions for this study matched the data from the interviews. Once the initial codes were defined, I grouped all of the codes that connected to wider topics. The last step of this first level involved journaling about my learnings in a detailed manner (Merriam, 2009; Seidman, 2006). I was careful not to refer to these learnings as themes. At this point, the learnings were considered broad topics that connected to my research questions.

The next step included the first cycle of data analysis or in vivo descriptive coding (Saldana, 2009). I used the options in Microsoft Word to perform several operations: (a) I marked important information with different codes by using regular codes, colors, symbols, or emoticons; (b) I organized my thoughts and theories in memos and recorded them in the data; and (c) I made use of search tools to identify common words and/or phrases. I found it helpful to record recurring words from the transcripts in my study journal. This coding measure allowed
me to analyze these words when I was finished. Finally, I grouped my open codes into categories and began to develop my analytical codes to go beyond descriptive coding (Merriam, 2009; Saldana, 2012). Thirteen categories that corresponded with the interview protocol were recognized and resulted in 130 subcategories (Appendix E). The different categories led to hierarchical subcategories. The second cycle or axial coding allowed me to cluster and eliminate categories to go deeper into the data. At the deepest level of analysis, selective coding, I chose themes and compared and contrasted all of my data points for the final stage of analysis (Saldana, 2012).

This final stage of analysis led to the identification of major reoccurring themes throughout the data (Saldana, 2012). Understanding that it is very rare for anyone to get coding right the first time, I paid particularly close attention to language and reflected deeply on all emerging patterns (Saldana, 2012). This deep reflection helped me to identify emerging patterns in the data.

Validity and Reliability

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is often questioned because concepts such as reliability and validity cannot be addressed in the traditional way. Shenton (2003) states that the “meeting of the dependability criterion is difficult in qualitative work” (p. 63). Shenton (2003) continues, “Researchers must take steps to demonstrate that findings emerge from the data and not their own predispositions” (p. 63). With this in mind, I established a reflexive journal to validate and question my research practices throughout the course of this study (Pillow, 2003). I also solicited critical feedback from peers, used purposive sampling that focused on particular characteristics of the population, and relied on triangulation to determine major themes. In
addition to employing these strategies, I engaged in frequent debriefing sessions with a critical friend to discuss alternative approaches and widen my vision for the research (Shenton, 2003).

Qualitative research is characterized by a purpose, a battery of research questions, meticulous data collection, and a process for analyzing data that uses emerging themes to make systematic comparisons of respondents’ accounts to identify and interpret the larger meanings of the findings. My process was iterative, examining and re-examining the data to ensure the findings represented the experiences of the participants in order to establish validity (Merriam, 2009; Seidman, 2006). To compile my data, I used flexible, emerging structures and evaluative criteria (Merriam, 2009; Pillow, 2003). Triangulation of sources was used to compare and cross-check data collected. Triangulation that involves multiple data sources in an investigation helps to produce a better understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. Some see triangulation as a method for corroborating findings and as a test for validity (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). However, this has been a source of debate among the research community. A more accepted view by qualitative researchers is that triangulation is a technique used to ensure that an account is rich, robust, comprehensive, and well-developed (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). Merriam (2009) found that an important part of triangulation was “data collected from people with different perspectives” (p. 216). This study examined data collected from the principal evaluator and principal perspectives as well as a number of supporting documents from both perspectives to enable me to produce a deeper understanding of my phenomenon.

My critical friend helped me constantly examine my own bias as well as reflect throughout the duration of the study (Taylor, 1997). I also studied and used reflexivity to attend to the context of knowledge construction, especially to my influence on every step of the research process. Pillow (2003) explained that reflexivity “is often understood as involving an
ongoing self-awareness during the research process which aids in making visible the practice and construction of knowledge within research in order to produce more accurate analyses of our research” (p. 178). I kept a reflexivity journal throughout this study to aid in analyzing my actions as the instrument. I used the journal to engage the notion of creating transparency in the research process (Pillow, 2003).

**Positionality**

Positionality in qualitative research is important to recognize. A researcher’s bias can easily affect the outcome of a study (Merriam, 2009). My positionality was as an outside researcher. I currently serve as an assistant superintendent in Washington State. The content of the interviews I conducted with principal evaluators and principals around principal professional development and evaluation was familiar to me because I am responsible for the same work. I started my educational career as a high school English teacher and then moved into an instructional coaching position prior to becoming an assistant principal at the high school level. Prior to becoming an assistant superintendent, I was a high school principal for seven years.

As a former principal and a current principal evaluator, I was careful to recognize potential bias during all phases of my study. Merriam (2002) recognizes that researchers tend to project their own experiences onto the data provided by the subjects of the research. I worked to check my own bias and remain vigilant as I approached all of my interviews. As an outside researcher, I had no authority over any of the participants. I continually reminded participants that their data would be kept confidential once the study was published and that none of the information provided would be shared with their current principal evaluator during the interview process in their particular district.
I believe the new principal evaluation tool is a growth tool and should be used in conjunction with principal professional development. It was important for me to reflect and acknowledge this bias while I conducted my research. I constantly looked at my role in the study to analyze how I was affecting the data. As a researcher, I recognized my ethical obligation to conduct this study in accordance with the rules for qualitative research methods (Merriam, 2009).

**Study Limitations**

The sample for this study was three school districts in Washington State. This is a relatively small sample size. Yin (2009) explores the traditional prejudices against the case study method by calling attention to the fact that case studies “provide little basis for scientific generalization” (p. 15). He continues by noting that “case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (p. 15). Therefore, the goal is not to expand and generalize theories. However, the findings of my study may be transferable to other principal evaluators and principals working with the AWSP Leadership Framework or some other four-tiered rubric for evaluation.

The researcher’s presence during data gathering, which is part of qualitative research, has the ability to affect participants’ responses. Upon reflection, I find it plausible that the principal evaluators and principals interviewed may have felt that I possessed preconceived notions about principal professional development and evaluation. By identifying possible areas prone to distortion, I mitigated concerns regarding my own power as a researcher and an assistant superintendent that could have developed with the interview process. My goal for the interviews was to facilitate a positive interaction. I attempted to be respectful, nonjudgmental, and nonthreatening as I built the relationship with each respondent (Merriam, 2009). Despite my
best efforts, the respondents may have felt that I had a negative or positive opinion on certain questions, or they themselves may have harbored preconceived notions about the new evaluation process or criteria. The participants could have responded to questions in a manner that did not necessarily reflect their true opinion but instead reflected what they thought I might want to hear. This occurrence could have limited the accuracy with which I could capture the genuine perceptions of the participants regarding evaluation and principal professional development.

In qualitative research, quality is overly dependent on the skill of the researcher and is easily influenced by the researcher’s personal biases. As a researcher, I have little experience conducting interviews and analyzing documents to investigate a phenomenon. Although I learned a great deal about conducting research and about my own work as a principal evaluator, I lack the gravitas that seasoned researchers can gain only through experience. I was careful to seek guidance from my committee when appropriate and took the time to reflect on my work and make the adjustments needed to maintain fidelity within my study. I worked to gain the trust of the participants in the study by maintaining a positive, helpful, and productive demeanor throughout the process. All of the interviews were conducted in person, so I was able to develop a relationship with each of the interviewees (Creswell, 2009; Seidman, 2006).
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the principal evaluators’ and principals’ perceptions of principal professional learning and the connection that may exist between principal professional learning and the Association of Washington School Principals’ (AWSP) Leadership Framework, a new four-tiered principal evaluation tool. This chapter presents data from principal evaluators and principals from the study population. The data identified three major themes: (a) creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader, (b) guiding the focus for improvement of principal practice, and (c) seeking to understand principals’ need for professional development. Theme two and three also contained subthemes.

The first theme, creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader, underscored the changing role of the principal and how the AWSP Leadership Framework has provided a structure to support the principal as an instructional leader. The second theme, guiding the focus for improvement of principal practice, illustrated how the AWSP Leadership Framework was used as a guide for principal evaluators and principals as they worked to improve principals’ skills. A subtheme that emerged under theme two was how the four-tiered rubric model was used to assist with principal goal setting and reflection as a way to increase effectiveness of practice. The third theme, seeking to understand principals’ needs for professional development, exposed the practices principal evaluators engaged in as they provided principals with professional development and learning opportunities. A subtheme of this third theme was how the relevancy of the learning was an important concept while undergoing changes in teacher and principal evaluation. Another subtheme analyzed the collective, participatory nature of principal learning. This collegial design facilitated principals’ coming
together to have conversations to help develop the skills and attributes needed to become effective instructional leaders.

**Background and Districts’ Approach to the AWSP Leadership Framework**

Before the themes of significance are addressed, it is important to understand the subtle differences between the three districts involved in this multisite case study in their approaches to principal professional learning and the use of the AWSP Leadership Framework. Because all three of these districts were Regional Implementation Grant I (RIG I) districts, they all had the opportunity to work with the AWSP Leadership Framework for one full year prior to my interviews. All three districts were similar in how they used the AWSP Leadership Framework. They employed a strategy that divided the evaluation tool into two different categories. The first took into account all of the criteria that were responsible for measuring curriculum and instruction. The consensus indicated that these were Criterion Three, Planning with Data; Criterion Four, Aligning Curriculum; Criterion Five, Improving Instruction; and Criterion Eight, Closing the Gap. The second group was dedicated to the criteria that were considered organizational tasks. This second group consisted of Criterion One, Creating a Culture; Criterion Two, Ensuring School Safety; Criterion Six, Managing Resources; and Criterion Seven, Engaging Communities.

**Osage School District.** Osage School District divided principal evaluations among three different evaluators. This was a practice they had been doing prior to implementing the AWSP Leadership Framework. John Hernandez, the superintendent, stated, “So we used to break up the old evaluation. As the assistant superintendent, prior to becoming the superintendent, I did the instructional things, Todd did the financial sort[s] of things, and the superintendent did some leadership-overarching things.” This process involved three different people working on or
contributing to aspects involved in one principal evaluation. Hernandez stated that this practice still continued with the new evaluation tool. He stated,

With a new system, we were still doing that collaboratively. So last year, we had all of our principals use the AWSP Leadership Framework, and they were all on comprehensive [long evaluation that looks at all the criteria]. This year, we’ve got them all on focused [short evaluation that looks at only one criterion], and we’re doing Criterion Eight, Closing the Gap.

This unique strategy of compiling and sharing data for the evaluation did not seem to have any negative consequences on the relationship between the principal evaluator and the principal. In fact, principals agreed that they had a strong supportive relationship with all three district office administrators who contributed to the evaluation. Jason Workman, a principal, stated, “[The principals] have a good relationship with John, Todd, and Tina. The relationships are really good and healthy.” In the first year of using the AWSP Leadership Framework, principals reported that they met with the superintendent one-on-one to review each of the criteria and discuss the work in their respective buildings. The three different evaluators worked together during principal professional learning opportunities. Each evaluator had an area of focus connected to the framework that he or she would deliver to principals. They all found it beneficial to divide the framework and work to their strengths when addressing principal professional learning as a result of the new evaluation for principals.

In the second year of implementation, principals reported that the three evaluators facilitated groups that consisted of three to four principals. Each evaluator still evaluated the principals he or she had evaluated in the prior year. These groups brought together principals from a variety of grade levels, backgrounds, and years of experience. The conversations in these
groups were facilitated by the evaluator, but centered on what principals were doing to maintain proficiency in the focus area of Criterion Eight, Closing the Gap. Principals examined different indicators of growth within their building and asked each other questions to help solve problems or to reflect on their experiences. These small-group learning opportunities took the place of the large-group professional learning the district had used in the past. Principals reported that the work during this second year focused on the areas of the framework tied to curriculum and instruction as they supported Criterion Eight, Closing the Gap. The second group of criteria, or management tasks, was not a regular part of the small-group discussions. The principal evaluators in Osage School District wanted all of the principals to be exposed to the new four-tiered framework in year one. The decision to move principals to focus on Criterion Eight in year two was driven by the district’s need to ensure the achievement of students who share an historical disadvantage as well as students not reaching their learning potential. The feeling was that elements contained in Criterion Eight would be the best measure to meet their goals.

**Fox Point School District.** Fox Point School District employed an approach similar to that of Osage School District. Lou Turner, the executive director for Curriculum and Instruction, collaborated with the superintendent to divide the AWSP Leadership Framework into two groups. These two groups were consistent with the two groups mentioned above. The first group of criteria was tied to curriculum and instruction, and the second was tied to organizational tasks.

In the first year, Turner facilitated principal professional learning for all principals with a focus for learning in the area of curriculum and instruction, and the superintendent worked in the areas of organizational tasks. Principal professional learning opportunities were driven by both individuals, depending on the topic. Turner did not relinquish the role of principal evaluator, but
he did divide the framework into the areas of instruction, curriculum, management, and culture. The superintendent was responsible for meeting with principals and supervising various management aspects of the principalship and also worked with principals to establish and maintain an overall vision for learning according to the district initiatives.

In the second year, Turner continued to evaluate all of the principals, and the principal professional development focused more on instructional leadership. The organizational-related criteria in the framework supported by the superintendent became less of a driving force for principal professional learning because the principal group proved to be consistently proficient in these tasks throughout the year. The superintendent continued to work with principals on their leadership and vision for learning in their buildings, but the bulk of principal professional learning shifted to Turner. He stated,

[In] many ways, I think I’m the principal professional development. I really tried to fashion my work after providing support, differentiating those supports to take into account current levels of principal knowledge, looking for opportunities to take a joint work approach around common themes, and structure principal PLCs [small group of principals working together] around common problems of practice. I try to develop a structure where they are learning from each other.

This idea of learning from each other in a PLC is similar to the second-year approach taken in Osage School District. Similar to Osage School District’s use of the AWSP Leadership Framework to guide their discussions, Turner used the curriculum and instruction criteria of the AWSP Leadership Framework to guide Fox Point School District’s conversations and give principals the opportunity not only to learn from each other but also to reflect on their work.
Anderson School District. In Anderson School District, Larry Gruenhagen, the deputy superintendent, was the lone evaluator for all the principals in his district. He was responsible for evaluating and developing principals in all eight of the criteria. Even so, just as I observed in Osage School District and Fox Point School District, he still divided the AWSP Leadership Framework into major categories. Gruenhagen stated,

> I took the framework and took out everything that I thought was a compliance . . . task. [For instance,] building the master schedule is part of using your resources. Everybody has to do it, so I created a checklist based on those kinds of tasks. For example, looking at your staffing model [and] meeting with your parents [would be on the checklist] . . . so our administrators have a weekly to-do [list] and a monthly to-do [list] that . . . [includes] tasks that they are doing anyway. By doing those, they are demonstrating proficiency in those areas. I try to take some of the management tasks away so we can concentrate on developing a problem of practice to explore the instructional aspects of the evaluation.

Gruenhagen used this strategy so that he could dispatch the management aspects of the leadership framework in a timely manner. He was concerned that he would be using an exorbitant amount of time to pursue and collect evidence in these areas. He used the majority of his time with principals to focus on areas that were directly related to improving student achievement in the district. Again, just as in Osage School District and Fox Point School District, the focus was on instruction and Criteria Three, Four, Five, and Eight.

Themes of Significance in the Responses

**Theme one: Creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader.**

The intense focus on instruction being demanded of principals requires a shift from the principal as a manager to the principal as an instructional leader. Tom Adams, a principal, commented on
this shift, “My work as a principal is about improving instruction with the ultimate goal of raising student achievement.” Adams understood that unlike in the past, principals are now being held accountable for their achievement scores and being asked to propel their buildings forward on assessments through innovative instructional practices (Hallinger, 2005; Knapp et al., 2010). Lou Turner, a principal evaluator, discussed this shift and came to the conclusion that, “In general I would like to see more focused instructional leadership for principals.” As a principal evaluator, he understood where the focus should be on his work to improve principal practice.

In order for principal evaluators to support the work of principals, they themselves must learn how to support and maintain an aligned system of instructional leadership. There was a consensual agreement between principal evaluators and principals that principal professional development should help principals develop the skills needed to improve their role as instructional leaders in their buildings. Todd Benjamin, a principal evaluator, reported, “Principals are instructional leaders of the buildings. We really rely heavily on them to be the instructional leader to provide leadership to the teachers.” Kellen Michael, a principal, stated, “One of the primary goals is to be an instructional leader and [support] effective instruction through effective evaluation. That’s number one.” When asked to comment on the purpose of principal professional development and how the AWSP Leadership Framework supports that development, Jason Workman, a principal, stated, “Improving instruction would be the overarching goal.” Michael, Workman, and Benjamin agreed that the AWSP Leadership Framework outlines through a four-tiered model the leadership attributes necessary for principals to follow as they develop the skills needed to facilitate of a high quality instructional program. The three districts in this study found a structure for this aligned system in the four-tiered,
research-based evaluation model developed by AWSP. These districts were starting to make a
connection between evaluation and professional development activities—a connection that is
vital if a system of sustained student growth is to be created (Marks & Nance, 2007; Wahlstrom,
Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010).

The principal evaluators in this study had a unique understanding of evaluation and
principal professional development as well as of the changes needed to support the new AWSP
Leadership Framework. Thinking of evaluation as a way to improve performance by helping
 principals grow as instructional leaders was a fairly new concept. A four-tiered research-based
model to help principal evaluators and principals clearly define expectations for principals
focused their work on the role of the principal as the instructional leader. Tina Rizzo, an
assistant superintendent, stated:

I think that this AWSP Framework has defined it very clearly for us. [The other principal
evaluators] and I work very closely together to determine the needs of the principals. But
I think with the advent of the framework, it has made our work easier because it has
defined it very clearly. It’s made it very easy to have district-wide initiatives regarding
principal professional development.

The ability to move forward with the framework as an influence gave district level administrators
the license to drive the principal professional development process to focus on the role of the
principal as an instructional leader based on their perceptions of the AWSP Leadership
Framework. In contrast to Rizzo, Larry Gruenhagen, a principal evaluator, reminisced about the
way he was evaluated as a principal prior to the adoption of the new AWSP Leadership
Framework. He stated,
I had no idea [how I would be evaluated]. I put stuff together to try to communicate with my supervisor what I was working on while I was working on it. Sometimes evaluation became keeping fires out of the district office. And if you did that well, people would leave you alone and let you do your thing.

He expressed appreciation for the best practices and guidance the framework now offers principals. Gruenhagen continued, “We have some best practices in the new framework that we can look to, and when we are faced with challenges and decisions. I used the rubrics to show principals the characteristics of a good instructional leader.” This was an excellent example of the changing role of the principal and how the AWSP Leadership Framework was used as a catalyst to help facilitate that change. Rizzo and Gruenhagen’s comments capture the thoughts of the other principal evaluators in this study. The perception is that principal professional development has changed to accommodate the changing role of the principal as an instructional leader as a result of the implementation of the AWSP Leadership Framework.

A principal, Jason Workman, discussed the frustration principals sometimes feel when dealing with the minutiae involved in being a principal. He looked to the framework to structure his thinking in the defined areas of leadership to help bring clarity to his role as an instructional leader. Workman stated,

The job seems very nebulous. I like the opportunity to innovate and be creative. On the other hand, it can spin out of control very quickly and feel too nebulous. The framework clarifies leadership responsibilities. For example, here’s an area I need to work on: improving instruction, school safety, [and] creating culture. It [the AWSP Leadership Framework] narrows down my thinking. I think the other principals would say the same thing: that it narrows our thinking down to something common and pretty specific that we
can then ask for in terms of support. I can go right to one of these eight criteria and say, “I need this,” or, “I need support in this area.”

The evolving role of the principal as an instructional leader can be overwhelming for principals if they are not provided specific support. Workman spoke to the AWSP Leadership Framework’s ability to help narrow his thinking and clarify his leadership responsibilities to ensure he is focused on the attributes needed to improve student achievement. Kellen Michael, another principal, spoke directly to the fact that instructional leadership is clearly a focus for principals. He stated, “Not all eight of the criteria [are covered in principal professional development], but . . . the criteria related to instructional leadership are a focus.” This focus on instructional leadership is important as principal evaluators work to provide the necessary principal professional development opportunities that will support principals’ improvement as instructional leaders.

**Theme two: Guiding the focus for improvement of principal practice.** Principal evaluators stated that the professional development needs of principals were based on the leadership skills and attributes required, as measured by the AWSP Leadership Framework, to improve instructional practice. Even though the process for determining a specific focus in these areas differed from district to district, principal evaluators consistently reported that they used the AWSP Leadership Framework to guide principal professional development. The four-tiered rubric allowed principal evaluators to provide feedback and to plan for principal professional development along a continuum. Larry Gruenhagen, a principal evaluator, stated, “The framework was like a road map to help me show them where they needed to improve.” Gruenhagen and other principal evaluators used the AWSP Leadership Framework to illustrate the skills principals needed to practice to improve their ability to increase student achievement in
their building. Gruenhagen continued, “We can look to that framework to give us some guidance around how we should approach things.” He saw the value of using the AWSP Leadership Framework as a guide to focus his efforts to improve principal practice.

Principals also expressed the opinion that the AWSP Leadership Framework was a valuable guide for their professional learning. The framework helped them recognize areas of strength as well as areas that needed continued learning. Rayna Messer, a principal, used the framework as a way to help her improve in certain areas. She agreed with other principals’ assessment that the framework provided a clear target or guide for the principal. Messer stated, “I think that it [the AWSP Leadership Framework] helps at the beginning of the year to focus where you need to grow.” This quotation illustrated that Messer used the research-based criteria in the AWSP Leadership Framework to identify where she needed to develop as a leader. She continues, “for me, my learning, is really all a part of the new [AWPS Leadership] framework. I look to it to show me what I need to do in my building.” She used the framework to help guide her learning as identified by the criteria contained in the AWSP Leadership Framework.

Makayla Dehmer, a principal, reported that the AWSP Leadership Framework, “is very specific in what needs are, giving principal the guidance to get more professional development around those needs.” Dehmer recognized the ability of the framework to help guide principal professional development. Cameron Stokes, another principal, was more direct in his assessment of the strength of the AWSP Leadership Framework as a guide for his professional learning. “I think it [the AWSP Leadership Framework] is pretty clear and gives me conversation starters for my learning. I think it helps to guide my learning as a principal.” As with other principals, Stokes referred to the AWSP Leadership Framework as a guide to support his learning. He and
other principals appreciated the focus the framework provided as they worked to improve their practice.

Kaitlyn Sisich, a principal, agreed that the framework was a tool to guide principals as they improved their craft, and she saw the value in clearly defined anchors to help illustrate practice, especially for new principals. She stated,

I think it’s fair in that people who are new to the system have a better structure around them, better scaffolding to move up and through. And if you are not doing everything you could or should, there . . . [are] some anchors people can point [you to] and say . . . “I need you to work on this.”

The framework provided definition for principals as they attempted to focus their professional learning on activities that would increase their effectiveness as leaders of their buildings. Sisich called specific attention to the anchors principals can use to guide their development when they need to work on skills. John Hernandez, a superintendent agreed with Sisich and added, “I think that the AWSP Leadership Framework with the way it’s laid out is clear and simple to understand for principals.”

Another value identified by principals was the specific research-based areas of the framework that principals could reference to grow professionally. Makayla Dehmer, a principal in Fox Point School District, spoke to this usefulness, saying,

It [the AWSP Framework] provides all principals with that opportunity for growth so you can specifically identify areas that you want more professional development in based on the goals that you are setting around the framework and the rubrics.
Dehmer, along with other principals, appreciated the flexibility of the framework to identify areas that principals may need to concentrate their efforts to improve their leadership performance. This ability to identify areas for professional development was an important factor as principals reflected on their craft and set short- and long-term goals for performance. Brett Lucas, a principal in the Fox Point School District, expressed appreciation for the deep knowledge he was able to obtain from the framework as he continued to learn. He reflected,

So I would argue that the deep knowledge throughout the framework helps to guide my learning. I am a new principal, so having a deeper understanding of what the indicators are and how AWSP created the indicators based on the research really guides my work. I mean, I know principals created this evaluation tool to give us solid examples of the skills we need to lead our buildings.

Lucas also understood how the framework was created. He described the framework as a tool to help him as he learned about the skills needed to become a successful principal. Rayna Messer, a principal, agreed when she reported that “the framework helps to guide me to the standard and work toward [proficiency] in the rubric.” The four-tiered model helps principals define the skills needed to improve. Principal evaluators and principals agreed that the AWSP Leadership Framework helped narrow their focus and guided principals with research-based criteria important for principal professional development, goal setting, and reflection in areas crucial to instructional leadership.

Subtheme: Goal setting and reflection using a four-tiered model. Principal evaluators and principals perceived the AWSP Leadership Framework as a guide to support their professional development and learning. As principal evaluators and principals worked to improve principal practice, both groups credited the AWSP Leadership Framework with
providing structure to the goal setting and reflection process principals engaged in with their evaluators. Luke Thomas, a principal, told of how he used the framework to guide the conversations he had with his evaluator throughout the year. Even though the process was driven by the evaluator, he found the framework beneficial when working to capture his learning as well as to target certain areas of leadership that he felt needed to evolve. Thomas stated, “We talk about our plan and what we are going to do to reach those goals. We talk about the support we need, and then he [the evaluator] does a mid-year check with us.” The initial goal conference, mid-year check, and final evaluation of Thomas’s goals were all guided by the language in the AWSP Leadership Framework. Thomas continued to explain the process he participated in with his evaluator, saying, “if he has some questions, we will talk about what things I am doing to meet that criteria.” The research-based criteria were the focus of the conversation and learning for the principal. The goal-setting and monitoring process described by Thomas mirrors the process followed by other principals in Anderson School District as well as by the principals in Osage School District and Fox Point School District.

Principals’ ability to reflect on their own practice, whether with supervisors or with colleagues, provided them with an opportunity to deepen their knowledge, and in doing so, to develop and monitor professional goals that supported the skills they needed to increase student achievement in their building. Principal evaluators and principals reported that the AWSP Leadership Framework provided them with invaluable guidance as they worked to develop professional goals that aligned with district initiatives. Rayna Messer, a principal, discussed the importance of goals with regard to professional growth: “I think someone that’s growing professionally has some goals. They kind of know where they want to go. Then they set a plan and they check in with that plan.” Lou Turner, a principal evaluator, agreed, observing:
I think the first word that comes to mind for me is awareness. There are [people] who are aware of where their leadership is and [have] a goal [for] where they want to be, and [are] working towards that goal. I think you can have principals [who] are growing in unintentional ways, but that’s accidental. And I think that the purpose of the framework is really intentional growth. Somebody who’s [intentionally growing is] setting clear goals for themselves and going after those [goals], and it’s not just that the goals are about achievement. The goals are about how they’re going to become a different leader.

Turner recognized what other principal evaluators and principals said in their interviews with regard to unintentional or accidental growth as opposed to intentional growth. The AWSP Leadership Framework provided principals with a structure to cultivate and evaluate their work. Turner spoke to the purpose of the framework to support intentional growth in principals. Working with principals to set goals and reflect on their practice to, as Turner put it, “become a different leader” lends itself to the transformational attributes of an evaluation process that uses the AWSP Framework to facilitate intentional learning in specific areas. Turner continued his comments about using the framework by stating that “the AWSP Leadership Framework makes goal setting manageable and meaningful for principals because it so closely matches the work principals believe needs to be done in their building.” He opined that the strength of the framework for goal setting and reflection comes from the “natural harvest of evidence from the work that’s important to principals.” This natural harvest Turner spoke to is the alignment that principal evaluators and principals are observing when working to set goals and reflect using the AWSP Leadership Framework. Principals reported that the framework aligns with the goals they are setting to improve their instructional skills, which makes it more meaningful and beneficial to their learning.
Another example of someone who used goal setting and reflection guided by the AWSP Leadership Framework is Makayla Dehmer, a principal in Fox Point School District, who explained the process she had gone through in her district with regard to analyzing the framework and developing “look-fors” with her evaluator and principal colleagues. She stated, “Individually with my evaluator, we’ve set appropriate goals. We’ve taken our K-12 principal meetings and we have worked through the framework to develop artifacts and evidence that we could use to show progress with our goals.” This was done by breaking down the framework’s four-tiered model in various criteria to define each tier. Dehmer and other principals in Fox Point School District tracked this work electronically and in binders dedicated to collecting evidence tied to the AWSP Leadership Framework. These artifacts and evidence she referred to provided the necessary monitoring devices to allow for a rich discussion with her evaluator and superintendent as she worked to improve her skills. Another principal in Fox Point School District, Cameron Stokes, supported Dehmer’s observations as he discussed his experience with the goal setting process:

I was on a comprehensive evaluation last year. So that included multiple goals. This year I am on a focused evaluation. So, we did a process this year where we filtered out what . . . I really want to work on, and I really wanted to work on school culture, Criterion One. I have a great supervisor who said, “Well, let me just listen. And then, I’m going to throw out a suggestion or maybe what it sounds like you want to work on.” And we came to an agreement. I thought that was very good; it felt really collaborative. That has all been filed into my goal one or Criterion One for me. Every time I have a monthly check-in with my supervisor, we discuss where I am with my goals.
Stokes called attention to the collaborative nature of the goal setting and monitoring process. He also was clear about the role the AWSP Leadership Framework played in driving the process with his evaluator. Stokes also reported that, while on comprehensive last year, he did have goals set in all eight areas of the framework. Thus, the year in which the study was conducted was his second consecutive year using the framework to set and monitor his goals to improve his leadership skills.

Turner, Dehmer and Stokes’s evaluator, followed a similar process with the principals he supervised, as did the evaluators in the other two districts in this study. Turner stated,

This year I did a pre-meeting in September, and then a midyear check-in in late January [and] early February, and then we’ll do a pre-summative in May . . . [T]he pre-summative is a new idea I’m adding . . . in this year, based on my experience last year where I was totally taken off-guard. I want to be prepared, so I’m going to ask them [the principals] to really rate themselves on their goals and where they achieve, and then I’ll use the data to write my final summative evaluation.

All of the principal evaluators in each of the three districts described essentially the same process as Turner: The AWSP Leadership Framework was used to encourage goal development, support reflective practice throughout the year, and guide skill development. The changes and small adjustments made by principal evaluators and principals throughout the process really spoke to the evolutionary nature of evaluation supported by the framework. The four-tiered rubric gave principals the opportunity to clearly define their abilities according to the rubric. Tom Adams, a principal for Osage School District, stated, “I knew how I was performing and where I should be performing if I was not at the proficient level. This provided context to my work as an instructional leader.” Adams used the framework to define his skills and improve his skills in
order to meet the proficient tier. Luke Thomas, another principal, stated, “we [he and his evaluator] will set some agreements as to what do I need to do to reach the next level [according to the rubric] or . . . [establish] my plan. And then we will meet again at the summative and do the same thing, where we will talk about where I am at and [the] next steps.” The four-tiered rubric played an important role in this process because both of them were able to see exactly what behaviors and skills Thomas needed to move between tiers on the scale.

Documents such as goal-tracking sheets and reflective binders with artifacts were used to track progress and provide evidence for each of the criteria. Principals agreed that this structure provided them with the ability to understand the skills needed to improve their practice. The goal-setting and monitoring process was enhanced by the increased opportunity for focused reflection on practice and the learning involved with improving that practice. Principal evaluators and principals agreed that the AWSP Leadership Framework supported reflection that involved critical thinking about meaningful leadership activities and was central to helping the principals learn professionally.

Principal evaluators reported the benefits of the self-assessment to help analyze leadership ability in the eight defined criteria. Todd Benjamin, a principal evaluator stated, “We met with them first on their self-assessment. So John, Tina, and myself, [along] with all the principals as they went through their self-evaluation, [examined] where they felt they were in their learning.” Another principal evaluator stated,

They self-assessed as basic [just below proficient] in a lot of areas. I actually had them higher in some of those areas. I think I have maybe one or two components that are basic, but I have pretty veteran principals.
This process was used as a starting point with principals in all three districts. The results of these self-assessments helped principal evaluators and principals determine where they should focus their learning efforts, set goals, and work to reflect on their practice (See Appendix D).

Principals reported that the ability to self-assess using the framework in the beginning of the school year helped focus their efforts in their buildings and drove the conversations with their evaluators concerning their goals. The self-assessment tool used in conjunction with the framework provided an opportunity to delve deeper and reflect into the areas of leadership that may not be explored on a regular basis. When asked how he used this new process under the new evaluation framework to support his growth, Luke Thomas, a principal, stated,

Larry [the evaluator] has us self-evaluate . . . and then meet with him to talk about where we think we are with our goals [and] what areas we want to improve. We talk about our plan and what specific steps we are going to take to reach those goals. I feel that the AWSP Leadership Framework keeps pushing us to improve. It gives us a set of targets to move forward.

Another principal supports Thomas’s view of the framework. He stated,

It’s good for me to just reflect on the work I am doing. What did we do this year? How could we have improved what we did? The framework helps me keep track and . . . organize the year because it goes by so quickly.

The ability to track and organize provides structure to the learning for principals. The experiences reported by the principal evaluators and principals demonstrate that the practice of ongoing, structured, active self-reflection for these principals and others in this study was facilitated not only by the work of the principal evaluator but also by the content of the AWSP
Leadership Framework. The four-tiered rubric within the framework helped principals identify skills that needed to be improved. The feedback from principals supported reflection that led to individual learning and interpretation of the greater meaning and implications of the leadership qualities contained within the framework. The reflective atmosphere established by the principal evaluators and the framework permeated all areas of leadership development, including principal professional learning, with a focus on instructional leadership.

Theme three: Seeking to understand principals’ needs for professional development. The change in principal evaluation led to a change in the philosophy for principal professional development. Principal evaluators reported that the observations and interests of principals throughout the year were responsible for helping to shape principal professional learning. The data collected as a part of this study identified systems in all three districts that took advantage of a variety of feedback opportunities from principals to determine needs in order to provide professional learning opportunities that were relevant to principals. Lou Turner, an executive director in Fox Point School District, determined the needs for principal professional learning by creating opportunities for feedback and observing the actions of the principals in his district. He stated,

I didn’t know what they needed [prior to their evaluations], but in my visits with them, I’ve always taken data about what’s coming up and . . . [the] patterns that influence my leadership, and that data is sometimes just what I hear. Other times it’s just informal conversations. At the end of the last year, I pulled together a steering committee of principal reps and I think I had five of my 10 principals . . . [I] said, “Okay. What’s the professional learning you guys need this next year?” I think it’s important for folks to have some voice in their professional development.
This process also helped Turner generate support from the principals. Turner made sure to provide direction to principals that took into account state and district initiatives. The group then moved forward with a principal professional learning plan based on their input and Turner’s direction.

John Hernandez, the superintendent in Osage School District, was similar to Turner in that he listened to a variety of sources within the district to determine the direction for principal professional learning. When asked what strategies he and his team employed to improve principal practice, he stated,

> If we see that we’re struggling with some ALE [alternative learning experience] things or some school choice things, we’ll build that in. For example, we had learning that needed to take place around student growth goals. The assessment coordinator heard right away from several principals that they’d like to get a presentation out to their sites. So principals have actually quite a bit of input into their professional learning.

Todd Benjamin, also in Osage School District, supported Hernandez’s assessment:

> “Other times it’s my notes, and then observing them [principals] in the different settings that we have, whether it’s the principal PLCs or different trainings or meetings.” A sense of awareness for the needs of principals is developed through careful observation by principal evaluators. It was clear that sometimes just listening and observing principals as they do their work is the best indicator, or set of indicators, for determining their relevant needs.

> Principals agreed with the strategies employed by principal evaluators for gathering data to shape principal professional development. When asked whether a system was in place for gathering input from principals about what they need, Rayna Messer, a principal in Anderson
School District, stated, “He [her evaluator] does a lot of surveys, with a lot of open questions.”

Luke Thomas, another principal in Anderson School District, added,

Larry is good about giving surveys and meeting with us one-on-one. He meets with us around the framework about three times a year. [During] his first year, though, he met with us quite a bit, just checking in and seeing what we needed. [He was] pretty responsive.

As a follow-up, Principal Thomas was asked to elaborate on the difference between his first year with his evaluator and his current practice to elicit feedback from principals regarding their professional learning. He responded,

At the beginning it was an individual [process], but now it is more of a team [process]. . . . I think it has . . . been a transformation. . . . Before, we all kind of did our own thing and [now] we are on the same page, moving in the same direction . . . He’s getting us all on the same page, which is good.

Kaitlyn Sisich, a principal in Osage School District, confirmed what other principals noted: “Initially it was like, ‘Okay. This law passed. We have to do this, and . . . this is . . . where we are going to jump in.’” Even though principal evaluators had to drive certain principal professional development activities as a result of changing laws and state mandates, principals still reported feeling that they were receiving appropriate, high-quality learning.

This idea of directed but relevant learning was a common idea among principals in this study. Luke Thomas, a principal in Anderson School District, added, “I think TPEP was just kind of dictated because it is a need.” Thomas was referring to the Teacher Principal Evaluation Project (TPEP) and more specifically the requirements involved in his own evaluation through
the AWSP Leadership Framework and the new evaluation requirements he was required to follow for all of his teachers, which was extremely relevant to his duties as a principal. Additionally, even though the new teacher evaluation was relevant and important to principal learning, Thomas’s individual needs did not have a specific role in determining the focus for his professional development. Makayla Dehmer, a principal in Fox Point School District, stated,

Most recently, we haven’t done a lot around having input on what we see as needs for principal professional development. This year we’ve had professional development in coaching around the leadership framework. I don’t know specifically if that came from our needs or from us wanting that. However, it’s been very beneficial.

Dehmer supported the comments of Thomas, Sisich, and Michael with this idea of a disconnect between the professional development wants and needs of principals. Regardless, she clearly trusted the direction chosen by her evaluator and found the AWSP Leadership Framework-driven professional learning beneficial. Principal evaluators found that relevant principal learning opportunities combined with a culture of collegiality, connectedness, and trust among principals provided an atmosphere conducive to skill development.

**Subtheme: Providing relevant professional development opportunities.** Kellen Michael, a principal, discussed the strength of principal professional development that is relevant and applicable to a principal’s setting:

I think the number one thing you really want for principal professional development is you want it to be relevant. When it is relevant it’s realistic and you can apply it in a setting that is authentic . . . I think [my evaluator] has done a good job of leading that because he has . . . learning walks [observation of teaching] for principals where the leadership parts of the framework are embedded.
Michael saw a huge benefit to professional development that was rooted in the work they are required to do to improve instruction and in the language of the AWSP Leadership Framework.

The new teacher evaluation frameworks were a particular focus for all three districts as they worked to provide principals with the necessary skills to facilitate the learning in their buildings regarding this shift in teacher evaluation. The districts in this study benefited from the instructional leadership criteria of the AWSP Leadership Framework as a resource and a guide for principals as they worked with their teaching staff on the new teacher evaluation frameworks. The common thread of improved instructional leadership for principals started with principal professional learning focused on instructional leadership as a result of the AWSP Leadership Framework and led to support for teachers from the same principals as they worked to modify their practice to adhere to the new teacher evaluation tool and process (Appendix F). When asked about how the professional learning needs of principals were determined, Todd Benjamin, a deputy superintendent, said, “I think part of it was with the whole new teacher evaluation system.” Lou Turner, a principal evaluator in Fox Point School District, stated that a major focus for his district last year and this year was “using the new teacher evaluation system to leverage teacher growth and support teacher growth.”

The new frameworks provided teachers with a common language of instruction that could be used as a professional learning resource and a tool to measure teacher growth. The growth goals associated with the rubrics provided teachers with guidance for targeted improvement to facilitate professional conversations around instructional strategies. These conversations must be facilitated and supported by the building principal. Tina Rizzo, an assistant superintendent, stated,
I would say the biggest need we’ve been focusing on with principals is really helping them understand data and . . . most recently the student growth percentiles, . . . the difference between student growth percentiles and achievement, and how . . . we evaluate their staff appropriately based on the new requirements for student growth goals and the other specific requirements of the new teacher evaluation.

Rizzo referred to the integral role that the understanding of student growth percentiles plays in principal professional learning. Rizzo specifically referred to the support principal evaluators must give principals under Criterion Three, Planning with Data, of the AWSP Leadership Framework. Criterion Three specifically guides principals through data-driven planning for increasing student achievement. This connects well with the support principals gave teachers in the student growth-driven criteria of the new teacher evaluation.

John Hernandez, a superintendent responsible for principal professional learning and evaluation, contributed to the notion that principal professional learning should support the work principals are doing in their buildings with the new teacher evaluation system. Specifically, he wanted principals to improve teacher performance through focused conversations. He stated, “I think I want them to be very proficient with the new teacher evaluation system because I think it’s . . . the conversations around it that have enormous potential for improving instruction and performance.” Superintendent Hernandez voiced understanding of how important principal/teacher conversations can be for improving instruction. Thus, he provided principals with professional learning opportunities to ensure that they develop the skills required to support teacher development. Like other principal evaluators in this study, he found that the AWSP Leadership Framework blended well with the learning principals needed to support teachers in moving toward improved performance.
All three districts recognized the importance of principals’ working to coach teachers toward quality instruction and the ongoing open dialog principals must engage in when developing the attributes of a high-quality instructional program. Luke Thomas, a principal, was quick to liken his experience to that of an instructional coach. He observed,

I think as far as just really working on being more of an instructional coach, an instructional leader . . . asks the right questions. So, [the role involves] not just being an evaluator, but [asking] how can we push those teachers to improve their craft.

Principal professional development focused on the learning required to help principals grow as instructional leaders and helped principals facilitate the changes being made as a result of the new teacher evaluation requirements. Principal evaluators organized principal professional development activities to support principals not only as evaluators but also as instructional coaches for teachers being asked to perform under a new evaluation model. The new teacher evaluation model required a more thoroughly developed process for supporting teachers. Rayna Messer, a principal, stated, “Right now, through the evaluation system, we’ve really been working on how to grow teachers, and [develop] that coaching piece and how that balances us as . . . evaluator[s] and . . . coach[es].” She went on to discuss questioning strategies that help teachers self-identify areas needing growth and how that growth can be supported by strategies she learned through her principal professional learning.

This strategy is relevant to the work principals are required to do daily and helps principals focus on working with the teacher to improve the quality of instruction happening in the classroom. The importance of incorporating others for feedback and discussion was consistently stressed when principal evaluators and principals discussed principal professional learning focused on improving instruction.
Makayla Dehmer, a principal in Fox Point School District, shared her experience as a part of her district’s principal professional learning around the coaching of teachers. She stated,  

“That opportunity to be able to go back and ask those questions can’t be a one-time deal. It needs to be . . . ongoing professional development . . . With our coaching class that we had this year, it was several different coaching trainings that we had, so that when we came back, we got to practice what we were doing, but we also got to ask questions so that we each time [we] came away with more . . . I feel like that’s really important.

Dehmer spoke to the relevant, ongoing nature of principal professional development. She emphasized the value of incorporating skill development on a continuing basis to take advantage of the back-and-forth that is required for principals to hone their learning (Hallinger, 2005; Houle, 2006; Lambert, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Lou Turner, Dehmer’s evaluator, not only provided principals with the opportunity to increase their learning around the coaching of teachers but also modeled effective coaching strategies as he worked with the principals in his district. He stated, “I also take a coaching stance in my conversations with principals many times, so I’m really trying to provoke them to think.” Turner used the AWSP Leadership Framework to guide his thinking around the development of principals in his district. The idea of provoking principals to think about their leadership was shared by other principal evaluators in this study. Turner continued and delved a little deeper into the attributes defined by the Leadership Framework that support principals as they work to influence instruction in their buildings. He reported,

“In general, I would like to see more focused instructional leadership for principals. I’d like to see them in classrooms more [often] than just [during] their formal evaluations . . . using what information they gather from being in classrooms to inform their leadership
actions, including their SIP [School Improvement Plan]. I don’t have a lot of evidence to suggest that’s happening beyond the formal pieces right now, so that would be a goal for everybody in the system, but then the differentiated goals [would be included as well] based on . . . the principal’s self-reflections and evaluation goals.

Principal evaluators are constructing relevant professional learning opportunities for principals that encourage critical thinking, analysis, and reflection to build leadership skills needed to meet the instructional criteria contained within the AWSP Leadership Framework.

**Subtheme: Collective participatory professional learning.** Along with providing relevant professional development opportunities, principal evaluators offered collective, dialogic learning opportunities that engaged principals in self-directed, participatory learning. These opportunities helped principals shift from the old, traditional, collective, passive learning to learning with and from colleagues through their daily work (Hallinger, 2005; Peterson, 2002; Webster-Wright, 2009). John Hernandez, a principal evaluator in Osage School District, saw value in how the framework has improved the depth of conversations principals were having with each other. He stated,

I just think that the depth of conversations people have had, how honest they are with themselves, and how willing they are to listen when we do those PLC conversations [shows that] they are interested in what their peers have to say and are willing to try to duplicate some of those practices that are working well.

These collective learning opportunities facilitated the deprivatization of principals’ practice through deep, focused conversations with their evaluators and peers.
Kellen Michael, a principal, discussed the importance of principal professional learning opportunities that led to collegial conversations with other principal to help improve their skills around instructional leadership:

Principal professional growth that employs a strong collective, dialogic model places principals in the role of actively constructing and analyzing professional practice through their experiences and in engagement with others. Rayna Messer, a principal in the same district as Michael, shared her thoughts on the concept of the learning labs designed to help support the work principals do to improve instructional practice:

Principal professional growth that employs a strong collective, dialogic model places principals in the role of actively constructing and analyzing professional practice through their experiences and in engagement with others. Rayna Messer, a principal in the same district as Michael, shared her thoughts on the concept of the learning labs designed to help support the work principals do to improve instructional practice:

While we’re working, we have learning walks that we’re doing to try to gain some consistency and commonality between principals around the evaluation process while keeping a focus on the teacher growth requirements of the principal evaluation. It is a positive collaborative process that helps with the observation process when we work to coach our teachers throughout the year. And through the learning walks, we go in and we observe in classes and then we compare and share our notes with other principals. We observe each other doing a pre and a post conference with a teacher, and then we reflect.
Messer expressed appreciation for the fact that she could participate in a process for improving instruction that carried the accountability measures contained within the AWSP Leadership Framework at its core, was clearly grounded in their work, and was intentional when working to provide principals with the venue and structure for collaboration.

Larry Gruenhagen, Michael’s and Messer’s evaluator, explained that he intentionally designed principal professional development to “connect key points of their [evaluation] cycle and what they are working with their teachers on to points in time where we [the evaluators and principals] can come together and collaborate around that.” He observed that the supportive context of inquiry would allow principals to explore agreements and disagreements about classroom instruction. He wanted his principals to develop a shared understanding of how, why, and under what conditions instruction and leadership yield positive student results. He summarized this process by stating, “When principals are pushing back by saying, ‘I didn’t understand what this meant,’ or, ‘Can you tell me a little more how this is supposed [to] work?’ . . . then that’s strong evidence to me that we are growing.” These types of questions are evidence of the deep thinking that was going on when he brought principals together to have these rich discussions.

Another principal, Luke Thomas, described a process in his district in which some of the professional development opportunities were actually structured to incorporate the teacher–principal observation and evaluation discussion to develop the coaching skills involved in being a strong instructional leader. Principals found this type of experience to be an extremely relevant model of professional learning because the lab setting gave principals the opportunity to observe their colleagues engaging in the evaluation process with a teacher around an actual lesson. Thomas specified,
I think it is good to talk about instruction as a team. It blends well with my coaching background. It calibrates this overall learning and talking about the same thing. And I don’t think we get enough time as principals to talk about and see instructional practice.

The model allowed for “time-outs” during the conversation during which the principal leading the discussion with the teacher could meet with his or her evaluator. At the conclusion of the principal-teacher discussion, the teacher gave feedback to the principal that was heard by others observing the process. After the teacher left, the principals and the principal evaluator discussed the interaction to hone skills involved with coaching teachers to improve their craft. Thomas described the overall process:

There is a pretty defined protocol of what we do. Usually it is four principals; we go and observe, and we come back as a principal team and . . . [say], “Okay. What kind of questions do we want to ask? What was our goal for this debrief?” . . . Then, we bring the teacher in, and do that same process. The teacher will leave, and then we debrief as a team.

The idea of conversations around instruction with the AWSP Leadership Framework driving the content was a consistent focus throughout the findings. Principal evaluators expressed appreciation for the deep, focused conversations they were having with principals. They also spoke highly of the conversations they were having with teachers to improve instructional practice. In keeping with this common thread, principals similarly expressed appreciation for the conversations they were able to have with their colleagues. Makayla Dehmer, a principal in Fox Point School District, spoke of her critical need for collaboration with her principal colleagues:
I feel that it’s critical not only for us to have the professional development, but I also think it’s critical for us to be able to collaborate around that as well. Coming from a district where there was [sic] not a lot of other principals to collaborate with, I value having a cohort that I can collaborate with here.

Dehmer explained that professional development combined with collaboration was critical to her learning. Todd Benjamin, a deputy superintendent in Osage School District, agreed and spoke to the power of collaboration when analyzing data.

They may take one data element to talk to us about what it means in their building or what they are going to do to improve instruction using data. So I think it’s just a constant sharing of knowledge and information with each other and being able to just have the communication; [to ask,] “What are you doing? What works? What doesn’t work?” . . . and just that continual growth. I facilitate conversations between principals all the time.

The learning facilitated by deputy superintendent, Benjamin, centered on investigating shared problems or questions of practice as they relate to principal practice. Benjamin offered a perspective consistent with the idea that principal practice is not a one-size-fits-all vocation and that constant planning and reflection enhances the professional learning experience (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Amsterdam et al. (2003) found that collaborative learning offers principals an alternative to the “sit and get” or top-down approaches to principal professional development. Dall’Alba and Sandberg (2006) found that collaborating with colleagues creates a professional learning experience framed by the application of the group’s professional knowledge. Jason Workman, a principal in Osage School District, enjoyed the many opportunities he had to reflect and learn
with his colleagues and administrators from the district. He stated, “We really do have plenty of
opportunities to interact as a principal cohort and staff, and to interact with district folks . . .
[W]e have good conservations . . . it is very inspiring and I really appreciate that.” This
inspiration Jason spoke to was a consistent message offered by principal evaluators and
 principals when they were asked to discuss their interactions during principal professional
learning opportunities.

When asked about principal professional development, and specifically about structures
that support collaborative practices, principal evaluators and principals both reported the impact
that formal and informal opportunities for discussion had on informing their practice. Makayla
Dehmer, a principal, explained the basic differences between the two factors when she said,

We have formal structures where we have elementary principal meetings . . . and learn as
a principals’ group, and then informally we build in time outside of those meetings,
whether it’s during the year or during the summer, where we meet and collaborate on our
own.

Dehmer echoed comments from other principals in this study when she discussed taking
advantage of formal opportunities for learning as structured by the evaluator or district, and the
informal opportunities that are usually organically grown out of the needs principals have to
 collaborate with each other.

Principal evaluators spoke more to formal opportunities that included learning walks,
instructional coaching development, and professional learning communities (PLCs). Tina Rizzo,
a principal evaluator for Osage School District, reflected on the PLC she facilitated and how the
heterogeneous makeup of the group enhanced the principals’ learning:
My principal group involves a high school principal who is at an alternative, nontraditional school. They actually determine their problem and practice, where they were initially looking at reading, and really realize[d] their biggest problem in practice was [that] kids weren’t even showing up to take the test. But when they started talking about a problem of practice around reading, of course, the elementary person had a lot to say about reading that the high school person was quite receptive to because . . . [reading is] seldom a high school person’s educational focus . . . . Collaborative groups have been very helpful. Just being able to ask questions based on different views [is beneficial].

Rizzo found that the strength of the group’s work really lay in differences in the problems of practice and backgrounds of the participants. Principals engaged in learning and conversation from inside their practice and built up their professional knowledge by examining and reflecting on new learning through the lens of prior knowledge and experience, and of new information and data. Lou Turner, another principal evaluator, also used heterogeneous principal groups to facilitate ongoing efforts to improve instruction. He stated,

I really tried to fashion my work after providing support, differentiating those supports to take into account current levels of principal knowledge, looking for opportunities to take a joint work approach around common themes and structure principal teams around common problems of practice. I try to develop a structure where they are learning from each other.

Interviewees reported that structured, formal principal professional development was a valuable strategy for helping principals unpack and understand the eight criteria contained within the AWSP Leadership Framework to improve practice.
Another strategy, equally as powerful, that was reported by both principal evaluators and principals was the use of informal conversations driven by principals. Being vulnerable about struggles with the principals in one’s district and asking questions or presenting scenarios without having the feeling of being judged was an important piece of informal principal professional development. Brett Lucas, a principal, stated, “As a new principal, I have been fortunate in that my own colleagues help me learn what to expect in the first 90 days and how to work with the criteria in the AWSP Leadership Framework.” Lucas sought out his colleagues as a new principal to help him with certain cultural components of being a new principal. He also worked with his colleagues to ensure that he was working to enhance his leadership skills in concert with the AWSP Leadership Framework. In this circumstance, as in others, principals’ practice and conversations concerning professional development changed as a result of the expectations contained within the AWSP Leadership Framework. Larry Gruenhagen, a principal evaluator, encouraged his principals in their efforts to create these informal opportunities. He stated, “They are collaborating with their colleagues in unstructured ways. So when I hear that principal A is calling principal B based on a conversation we had in a meeting, that’s evidence to me that they are growing.”

Summary

Chapter Four of this dissertation presented three themes of significance in the interview responses of principal evaluators and principals. The primary themes explored in this chapter were: (a) creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader, (b) guiding the focus for improvement of principal practice, and (c) seeking to understand principals’ needs for professional development. The first theme, creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader, explored the structure the AWSP Leadership Framework provided principal
evaluators and principals as they worked to improve the skills required to be an effective instructional leader. The next theme of significance discussed how the AWSP Leadership Framework was used to guide the improvement of principal practice. Within this theme, a subtheme illustrated how principal goal-setting and reflection were used to support this improvement. The third and final theme, seeking to understand principals’ needs for professional development, analyzed the practices principals evaluators are using to support principal professional learning. Two subthemes emerged in the areas of relevant principal professional development and collective participatory learning between principals. Common among all of these themes was the role the AWSP Leadership Framework played in the development of principals. This vital resource was used by principal evaluators and principals as a tool to enhance the learning required to improve principals’ instructional knowledge and skills. Chapter Five discusses conclusions, implications, and recommendations resulting from these findings.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Principal effectiveness is a critical lever that substantially affects the essential academic success of students. Strong school leaders are responsible for managing resources, engaging communities, and creating a continuous culture of improvement. Principal evaluators are responsible for helping principals learn and develop the skills and attributes needed to affect learning in schools. Principal evaluation models that accurately, effectively, and fairly assess the level of a principal’s performance while providing useful feedback for professional growth and learning provide principal evaluators with the necessary guide to assist with this important work. When principal evaluation and principal professional development are designed appropriately, as well as proactively and properly implemented, they have the power to enhance leadership quality and improve the overall performance of an organization (Goldring et al., 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to investigate the principal evaluators’ and principals’ perceptions and practices concerning principal professional development and the connection that may exist between principal professional development and the Association of Washington School Principals’ (AWSP) Leadership Framework, a new four-tiered, research-based evaluation rubric. Specifically, this study explored steps districts were taking with regard to principal evaluation and principal professional development as they implemented the AWSP Leadership Framework. To understand the connection between evaluation and principal professional development, the following two research questions were considered:

1. How have principal evaluators and principals perceived the AWSP Leadership Framework?
2. How have the changes in principal evaluation influenced principal evaluators’ practices concerning principal professional development?

The intent of this chapter is to present the conclusions, implications, and recommendations for leadership actions and future research (Creswell, 2009). First, each of the three major themes discovered is connected to the literature. Next is a discussion to interpret the findings. The final section contains implications and recommendations for practice and research as well as the lessons learned from this study.

This study identified three major themes as a result of the data gathered from principal evaluators and principals in the study population. The three major themes were: creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader, (b) guiding the focus for improvement of principal practice, and (c) seeking to understand principals’ needs for professional development.

The first theme, creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader, discovered the importance of the AWSP Leadership Framework in structuring the learning of principals. Learning guided by the AWSP Leadership Framework, a research-based evaluation model, helped principals focus on the appropriate skills and attributes involved in becoming an effective instructional leader. The second theme focused on the AWSP Leadership Framework as a guide for principal evaluators and principals as they worked to improve principal practice. Principal evaluators and principals perceived the ability of the framework to guide principal professional learning opportunities that helped principals acquire the knowledge and skills to enhance their practice. A subtheme under this second theme spoke to the four-tiered rubric’s role in helping principals set goals and reflect on their practice. The AWSP Leadership Framework was used as a resource for principal evaluators and principals as they worked to
develop and monitor goals and reflect on their practice throughout the year. The third theme concentrated on the principal evaluators’ role in seeking to understand the professional development needs of their principals. Two subthemes emerged as a part of this overall theme. Principals developed skills through relevant professional development and were encouraged to engage in collective collegial conversations. Figure 1 represents the connection the three major themes had in supporting the changing role of the principal as an instructional leader. Principal evaluators and principals both agreed that working with colleagues in a collegial manner to help develop skills and implement practice was an important part of principal professional learning. These three themes connected to the research questions for this study.

Figure 1: Themes and principal learning. The model illustrates how the combination of the three major themes works to support the principal as an instructional leader.
Research Question 1: How Have Principal Evaluators and Principals Perceived the AWSP Leadership Framework?

Theme one: Creating structure to support the principal as the instructional leader.

Empirical research has established that principal leadership is second only to teaching among school-related factors as an influence on student achievement (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Principals today are tasked with being instructional leaders who can shape vision, build productive teams, use data, and cultivate leadership in others (Portin, 2009). The changing role of the principal as an instructional leader in the current high-stakes, high-accountability testing environment finds support in an evaluation framework designed to encourage the development of knowledge and skills that promote the improvement of learning and teaching (Marks & Nance, 2007; May & Supovitz, 2010). Principal professional development practices in all three districts are starting to use the AWSP Leadership Framework to structure support for the principal as an instructional leader.

Principal evaluators and principals interviewed for this study reported that the AWSP Leadership Framework aligns well with the learning principals needed to support teachers in moving toward improved performance. The perception shared by principal evaluators and principals was that the AWSP Leadership Framework supports a structure that encourages principals to focus on the skills and attributes needed to increase student achievement. Another perception held by principal evaluators and principals was that the criteria contained within the AWSP Leadership Framework with a specific connection to the principal as an instructional leader was used more than the other criteria that focused on management activities. Principal evaluators and principals consistently agreed that principal professional development should help principals develop the skills needed to improve their instructional leadership while still
maintaining or meeting their managerial responsibilities. This shift from the principal as a manager to the principal as an instructional leader is supported throughout the literature (Hallinger, 2005; Peterson, 2002; Webster-Wright, 2009). Principal evaluators and principals consistently reported that they focused on Criteria Three, Four, Five, and Eight in the AWSP Leadership Framework to facilitate principal professional development in areas crucial to instructional leadership.

**Theme two: Guiding the focus for improvement of principal practice.** Historically, the evaluations of principals and principal professional development have always been seen as independent of each other (Marks & Nance, 2007; Wahlstrom et al., 2010). This independence or disconnect did not hold true for the three districts in this study. Principal evaluators and principals reported that the AWSP Leadership Framework was used as a guide for targeted support and professional development (Brown-Sims, 2010). The perception was that principal professional development changed as a result of the implementation of the AWSP Leadership Framework. The AWSP Leadership Framework clearly defined principal research-based practices and provided consistent, specific language to help guide principal development. Goldring et al. (2009) analyzed the purpose of principal evaluation and found that principal evaluation should capture the essence of the principal’s practice and provide valid and reliable data to determine performance and professional development. This shift in thinking about principal evaluation and the connection that now exists between principal professional development and the AWSP Leadership Framework may be a new concept for principal evaluators and principals, but it is clearly supported in the literature. This new concept is helping districts create systems to meet the instructional needs of their principals (Barnes et al., 2012; Webster-Wright, 2009).
Goal setting and reflection using a four-tiered model. The research on principal evaluation states that principals historically have viewed the evaluation process as being arbitrary and offering little or no benefit to their professional growth or accountability to school improvement (Condon & Clifford, 2009; Kempher & Robb-Cooper, 2002; Portin, Feldman, & Knapp, 2006). The principals interviewed for this study reported just the opposite. They expressed the opinion that the AWSP Leadership Framework was a valuable influence on their professional learning. The research-based framework acted as a guide that allowed them to recognize both areas of strength and areas for continued learning. This guide offered principal evaluators and principals a degree of flexibility as they worked to identify areas to improve leadership and the performance for schools. The ability for principals to interact with the AWSP Leadership Framework provided principal evaluators and principals with the opportunity to engage in reflection and goal setting to improve principal effectiveness (Whaley, 2002).

Whaley’s (2002) research states that effective principal evaluation systems encourage principals to reflect on practice and develop professional goals. The AWSP Leadership Framework offered a guiding structure for principal evaluators and principals to self-reflect and develop professional goals aligned with district and state initiatives (Portin, 2009). Principals reported that the AWSP Leadership Framework aligned with the work that they were doing in their buildings, and the goal-setting process was aligned with that work in the framework, which made it more meaningful and beneficial to their learning (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hallinger, 2005; Lambert, 2003). The AWSP Leadership Framework provided principals with a structure to cultivate and evaluate their work and supported reflection that involved critical thinking about meaningful leadership activities central to helping principals learn professionally. The experiences reported by principal evaluators and principals demonstrated that the practice of
structured, active self-reflection for principals supported individual learning and interpretation of
the greater meaning and implications of the leadership qualities contained within the AWSP
Leadership Framework. Principal evaluators worked with principals to set goals and reflect on
their practice. Principal evaluators and principals perceived the reflective, goal-driven
atmosphere established in the AWSP Leadership Framework encouraged leadership
development through principal professional development, with a focus on instructional
leadership.

Research Question 2: How Have the Changes in Principal Evaluation Influenced Principal
Evaluators’ Practices Concerning Principal Professional Development?

Theme three: Seeking to understand principals’ needs for professional development.
The literature supports principal professional development that is relevant, is self-directed, is
collegial, and always remains focused on student achievement (Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006;
Wahlstrom et al., 2010; Waters & Marzano, 2006). Acker-Hocevar et al.’s (2012) research
found that principal learning happens on-site in job-specific circumstances in addition to
resulting from the collaboration between principals and teachers. This research was supported
by principals in all three districts as they described the efforts of their evaluators to ensure that
principal learning had a strong connection to the building work. Data collected as a part of this
study identified systems in all three districts that took advantage of a variety of feedback
opportunities from principals to determine needs. A sense of awareness of the needs of
principals was developed through careful observation by principal evaluators. Principals
gained the most benefit when principal professional development was implemented in
conjunction with their daily duties (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hallinger, 2005; Houle, 2006).
Principals discouraged the “sit and get” type of professional development that was more of a
staple prior to the implementation of the AWSP Leadership Framework. This attitude corresponds to the research of Amsterdam et al. (2003), who found that collaborative learning offers principals an alternative to the “sit and get” or top-down approaches to principal professional development. Principal evaluators in this study understood the need to closely align principal professional development with the everyday work of principals and have worked to design learning opportunities for principals that were collective and dialogic. This notion is also support by Dall’Alba and Sandberg (2006), who found that collaborating with colleagues creates a professional learning experience framed by the application of the group’s professional knowledge. Principal evaluators and principals expressed appreciation for the deep, focused conversations they had around practice.

**Providing relevant professional development opportunities.** Collegial professional development that was relevant offered principals an opportunity to engage in learning that moved from the old, traditional, collective, passive learning to learning with and from colleagues through their daily work (Hallinger, 2005; Peterson, 2002; Webster-Wright, 2009). According to Peterson (2002), one of the essential components associated with the structural aspect of principal professional development is clear purpose. The principal evaluators and principals in all three districts stated that the purpose for principal professional development was to improve the leadership skills and attributes required, as measured by the AWSP Leadership Framework, to improve instructional practice. The connection to the AWSP Leadership Framework influenced how principal evaluators in this study designed and delivered principal professional development.

Principal evaluators are now tasked with the responsibility of not only providing a summative assessment of the principal’s abilities but also using the evaluation process as a tool
to identify strengths and areas for improvement. These data are then used as a diagnostic tool to develop an appropriate course of professional development for principals (Clifford & Ross, 2011; Davis et al., 2011; Goldring et al., 2009). The AWSP Leadership Framework helped principal evaluators plan for principal professional development while assessing the skills and attributes of a successful leader. As a result most principal agreed that the content was timely and necessary.

The new teacher evaluation frameworks were a particular focus for all three districts as they worked to provide principals with the necessary skills to facilitate the learning in their buildings regarding this shift in teacher evaluation. Principal evaluators organized principal professional development activities to support principals not only as evaluators but also as instructional coaches for teachers being asked to perform under a new evaluation model. The importance of promoting discussion and encouraging constructive feedback was consistently stressed when principal evaluators and principals discussed these coaching opportunities for teachers.

The idea of provoking principals to think about their leadership was shared among other principal evaluators in this study. Principal evaluators constructed professional development opportunities for principals that encouraged thoughtful thinking, analysis, and reflection to meet the instructional criteria contained within the AWSP Leadership Framework (Cosner, 2009; Gawlik, 2008; Hallinger, 2005; Peterson, 2002). The common thread of improved instructional leadership for principals started with principal professional development focused on instructional leadership as a result of the AWSP Leadership Framework and led to support for teachers from the same principals as they worked to modify their practice to adhere to the new teacher evaluation tool and process.
Collective participatory professional learning. All three districts recognized the importance of an open dialog between principals when developing the attributes of a high-quality instructional program. To that end, principals were encouraged to work collegially as they focused on the learning required to increase their instructional leadership skills in order to facilitate the changes being made as a result of the new teacher evaluation requirements (Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006). Offering structured, formal principal professional development was a valuable strategy for helping principals unpack and understand the eight criteria contained within the AWSP Leadership Framework and to facilitate the learning required to improve the skills and attributes of an instructional leader. The research supports offering structured professional development programs that enhance principals’ understanding of instruction while giving them the tools to improve practice (Cosner, 2009; Gawlik, 2008; Hallinger, 2005; Peterson, 2002; Sinnema & Robinson, 2012). The principal evaluators in this study understood the importance of this structural design in developing a culture of collegiality, connectedness, and trust among principals (Cosner, 2009).

Another strategy reported by both principal evaluators and principals, equally as powerful, was the use of informal conversations driven by principals. This practice was born out of similar job responsibilities and the need “to share their questions and understand without fear of being judged harshly by their peers or their supervisors” (City et al., 2009, p. 162). For principals, being able to become vulnerable with fellow principals in their districts and to ask questions or present scenarios without having the feeling of being judged was an important piece of their informal principal professional development (Houle, 2006). When asked about principal professional development, and specifically about structures that support collaborative practices, principal evaluators and principals both reported the impact that formal and informal
opportunities for collegial conversations had on informing their practice. The quality and impact of professional learning depends on what principals learn, how they learn it, and their ability to make the connection between theory and practice (Dall’Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Sinnema & Robinson, 2012). The AWSP Leadership Framework brings together theory and practice and provides principals with a common language in the context of leadership development. This common language is used as principals interact with their peers and evaluators to improve the achievement of their students.

**Discussion**

Despite the urgent need to improve the evaluation process for principals, the current body of research connecting principal professional learning to principal evaluation is thin (Davis et al., 2011; Goldring et al., 2009). Although a variety of principal qualities have been exposed in the literature, little discussion has been offered about the professional development principals must undergo in order to build and sustain high levels of student achievement within their schools (Peterson, 2002). The three districts in this study have dedicated the time and effort to understand the new AWSP Leadership Framework and create a course of action for improvement to meet the professional development needs of their principals. This course of action mirrors what Goldring et al. (2009) found in that professional evaluation standards must measure and improve practice while fostering an atmosphere of continuous learning.

This study illustrates changes three districts in the state of Washington made with regard to principal evaluation and principal professional learning as a result of the implementation of the AWSP Leadership Framework. Principal evaluators’ and principals’ perceptions of principal professional development changed as a result of the new AWSP Leadership Framework a four-tiered evaluation model. These changes in perception nourished the changes principal
evaluators’ and principals’ implemented in their professional development practice. Principal professional development in these districts clearly emphasized that the development involved with improving instruction was reflective, was goal-driven, and used a strong, relevant, collegial model that supported principals as they actively constructed and analyzed professional practice in their schools. Principals engaged in learning and conversation from inside their practice and increased their professional knowledge by examining and reflecting on new learning through the lens of prior knowledge and experience, new information and data, and the impact of their actions.

The AWSP Leadership Framework provides a guide allowing principal evaluators and principals to analyze the actions they take to improve instruction for their students. This research-based model for evaluation was used as a guide to evaluate the needs of principals and to provide a proper context for principals to view their leadership. In some cases, the professional development principals received exposed some missing skills or gaps in their practice. The data also identified strategies for improving teacher performance as a result of the components contained within the framework.

The shift to a new approach to evaluation has required principal evaluators to exhibit more of a developmental mindset when working with principals. Principal evaluators designed professional development opportunities that encouraged principals to engage in relevant, collegial conversation around improving instructional leadership. These three districts designed principal professional development opportunities that reflect current practice and encourage leadership development. Principal evaluators in this study saw the value of the AWSP Leadership Framework as a tool to help structure principal professional development to support principals as they navigate the many changes in education.
The systems these districts created within the organization, combined with the guidance of the framework, encouraged principals to develop leadership skills needed to improve instruction. The research with regard to principal evaluation is very clear. Principal evaluation must be tied directly to principal professional development that is relevant if it is to influence practice (Barnes et al., 2012; Clifford & Ross, 2012). A principal evaluation system that takes into account the importance of relevant learning, reflection, goal-setting, and collective conversations among colleagues offers principals a strong opportunity to affect student learning. Principal evaluators bear the sole responsibility for ensuring the organization’s capacity for providing principals with effective structures for principal professional learning.

The AWSP Leadership Framework was designed specifically for reflection and goal-setting not only to provide a summative measure of a principal’s demonstrated abilities but also to provide diagnostic data to help shape principal professional development. The leadership framework was not only a response to policy but also a response to the research that supports a connection between principal evaluation and principal professional development. The AWSP Leadership Framework was designed by principals to inform their practice. The leadership framework was flexible enough to allow districts to incorporate state and local initiatives while keeping a focus on developing leadership skills and attributes principals needed in the new era of educational reform.

The three districts in the study all used the AWSP Leadership Framework to increase principals’ effectiveness as instructional leaders. They held to the tenets of good professional development practice by ensuring the work was relevant and collegial (Hallinger, 2005; Houle, 2006; Lambert, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2010). The implementation of the AWSP Leadership
Framework is still in its infancy. Nonetheless, these districts show great promise in working with this new framework to improve principal performance and increase student achievement.

**Implications for Practice and Future Research**

This study influenced my practice as a principal evaluator in a number of ways. First, I felt my role was to provide support for principals by creating and managing professional development opportunities that align with the challenges involved with school leadership. The work I did as a result of this study helped me think about my role in a different way. Rather than creating and managing, I seek to provide the structure for principals to collaborate and reflect on their practice with their peers and district-level support personnel. In education, a lack of time and resources can be a considerable impediment when working to offer school leaders the support they need to grow. This study helped me realize how planning with the AWSP Leadership Framework as a guide can streamline and focus principal learning. In addition, as I work with principals on an individual basis, I will consider questioning strategies based on the rubrics written in to the AWSP Leadership Framework to help principals reflect on their practice and set goals that are directly tied to student achievement.

Another effect on my practice became apparent as I analyzed the data and themes that emerged from this study. I was struck by the influence the AWSP Leadership Framework had on the principal evaluators and the principals in these districts. The strength of the AWSP Leadership Framework lies in its ability to guide the goal-setting process and provide a mechanism to monitor and adjust those goals with the four-tiered rubric as needed throughout the school year, or in some cases, throughout multiple school years. The goal-setting process for the principals I work with has aligned well with the instructional leadership components contained within the AWSP Leadership Framework. The notion of providing principals with a variety of
relevant learning opportunities to improve their instructional leadership was born out of the research on quality professional development and the practice I observed in these three districts. I work to create collegial venues in which principals can share ideas about teacher evaluation and distributive leadership models within their buildings. This practice enables principals to learn from the work of their colleagues with the understanding that each building model has been constructed with the tenets of the AWSP Leadership Framework.

Lastly, my reflection throughout this process never strayed from the duty of the organization to create structures that will increase student achievement. Something that I did not necessarily learn through this process but that has been strengthened through this process is the constant focus on student achievement. Principal professional development practice should provide numerous principal growth opportunities that easily connect to improved student performance. When asked what a growing principal looks like and what the indicators and actions of a principal who is professionally growing are, most respondents answered that a principal is reflective, asks questions, participates in activities, and seeks out colleagues to share ideas. In addition, I have learned that a growing principal is not afraid to make mistakes and to learn from those mistakes.

Based on my extensive data analysis and findings, I have assembled the following recommendations for district leaders and for future research. The three implications for district leaders are: (a) principal evaluators are encouraged to maintain fidelity in using the AWSP Leadership Framework; (b) a focus on supporting the principal to create systems of shared leadership; and (c) principal evaluators need to explore job-embedded principal professional development. The three implications for future research are: (a) how would a principal-driven evaluation and professional development process improve principal practice; (b) could principal
evaluators and principals benefit from a more in-depth examination of the principal professional development practices of the principal evaluator; and (c) what would emerge from a longitudinal study on the effects of a four-tiered rubric principal evaluation model.

**Implications for district leaders.** All of the districts I chose for my study focused more on the AWSP Leadership Framework criteria that was directly related to the role of the principal as an instructional leader. They did so because of time constraints and because of what they felt was the core business for their principals. Osage School District in particular went too far, by only requiring the Focused Evaluation of all of their principals. If we hope that evaluation can help propel principals forward, then there needs to be some fidelity to implementing the tool as designed. According to Clifford and Ross (2012), effective principal evaluation includes a comprehensive system of support that includes quality professional development for principals. District leaders are an important part of this system of support for principals. Leading the allocation of resources, including district office support personnel, and providing principals with the tools they need to improve instruction in their buildings requires district leaders to understand that the basic framework for school improvement must involve a deep reflection on practice (Leithwood et al., 2004). District leaders must also take the time to learn about the AWSP Leadership Framework. Principal evaluators and other support personnel within the district need to collaborate to create meaningful professional development for building leaders to meet the accountability requirements levied by national and state mandates for student achievement. The ability to motivate principals while creating an atmosphere fortified with high expectations is the hallmark of a district focused on student achievement and will ultimately support the work of principals (Honig, 2012; Waters & Marzano, 2006).
Another aspect of supporting the work of principals is principal professional development that encourages building organizational learning through shared leadership and collaboration to ensure a culture of achievement and accountability. Acker-Hocevar et al. (2012) found that “rather than high performance based on a federal- and state-mandated model, what creates and sustains high achievement stems from a much different model grounded in systems theory, partnership power, and additive schooling” (p. 7). Leithwood and Mascall (2008) found that “higher-achieving schools awarded leadership influence to all school members and other stakeholders to a greater degree than that of lower-achieving schools” (p. 529). Shared leadership and accountability are essential when working to build a school culture and climate that empowers stakeholders to increase student achievement. Schools demonstrating a shared leadership and accountability “free up the human energy system to build collective efficacy for sustaining school improvement” (Acker-Hocevar et al., 2012, p. 186). The three districts in this study focused their professional development and learning on the principal neglecting to address the characteristics involved with creating a model that supports shared leadership within the school.

As districts delve deeper into the criteria of the AWSP Leadership Framework, they are likely to discover that high-achieving schools require interaction and accountability from everyone to create teacher–leaders who will engage the students, their colleagues, and their communities. If schools are to improve student achievement, the school’s leadership structure must increase teacher capacity through the development of strong teacher leaders. As the role of the principal continues to evolve, districts need to recognize that the instructional leaders they are supporting today need to be given the skills to create and sustain systems of shared leadership in their buildings. District leaders who assist principals in creating and maintaining a shared
leadership model within their buildings have the potential to solve school-wide problems, increase teacher leadership, and promote organizational efficacy (Acker-Hocevar et al., 2013).

Lastly, principal evaluators should explore the benefits of truly job-embedded principal professional development opportunities. Sustained, job-embedded systems of support that engage teachers to improve practice reinforce the role of the principal as the instructional leader (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004; Peterson, 2002). Principal evaluators should work to provide principals with professional development opportunities that are directly associated with a principal’s setting. The time spent on instructional leadership tasks such as classroom observations and data discussions within one’s own building has the ability to improve teachers’ practice (Augustine et al., 2009). Principal evaluators are encouraged to take advantage of on-site principal professional development that incorporate as much of a principal’s regular day as possible.

Implications for future research. The first recommendation for future research is to explore an increase in principal voice with regard to evaluation and professional development. Data from principal interviews support a possible shift to a more principal-driven evaluation process. The AWSP Leadership Framework’s specific language, components of self-reflection, and rigorous parameters for goal-setting based on student measures and performance offer district leaders the unique opportunity to surrender some of the more traditional aspects of the relationship between the principal evaluator and the principal. Allowing principals to provide more structure during conversations involving their evaluation and professional development may improve the evaluator and principal relationship, placing responsibility for learning in the capable hands of the principal. Growth models of evaluation like the AWSP Leadership Framework have created urgency to know more about the interactive nature of the evaluation
relationship and about the structures and processes of evaluation that increase principal effectiveness.

The second recommendation for future research is for a more in-depth analysis of the principal evaluator’s principal professional development practices. An analysis that involves a deeper examination of how principal evaluators engage and guide principal professional development is needed. In this study, I was able to analyze interviews and documents from principal evaluators and principals to investigate the changes districts are making as a result of a new four-tiered evaluation model. These traditional methods I have employed are not designed to delve deeply into work practices. Researchers with a passion for understanding the nuances behind principal professional development and evaluation are encouraged to expand their methodology and commit the time and resources needed to examine principal evaluator practice over time. The expanded time and resources involved with examining this practice would be similar to the time and resources researchers have used to examine the practice of classroom teachers over time. There is a wealth of knowledge available to support teachers as they work to improve student achievement. The same time and attention should be spent on learning how to best support principals as they evolve as instructional leaders.

Finally, to expand upon my second recommendation involving principal evaluator practice, I encourage researchers to collect longitudinal data that analyzes the growth principals are making as a result of the AWSP Leadership Framework. Analyzing the long-term effects of this new model and the impact on principal professional development practice over time could offer other district leaders insights into effective practice strategies regarding implementation of an ongoing growth model for principal evaluation. Principal practice can start to be improved
when districts appreciate the thoughtful intentionality that must be employed to create sustainable principal improvement over time.

**Conclusion**

This study will bring attention to the changes districts are making as a result of the new AWSP Leadership Framework. The research may inform policy makers and education practitioners about the important link between principal evaluation and principal professional development. My hope is that the study raises important questions related to program design to assist district leaders with changes to principal professional development as a result of the new AWSP Leadership Framework. Educators need to use evaluation as part of a process that moves toward improvement and not as an end point. The terminal nature of evaluation is no longer sought in education. Thinking of using evaluation as a way to improve performance by helping principals grow professionally is a fairly new concept that should be supported throughout the state and nation. This study sought to improve principal practice by helping districts appreciate the thoughtful intentionality that must be employed to create sustainable principal improvement over time.
REFERENCES


doi:10.1007/s11092-005-2981-y


doi:10.1177/1094670510361748


114


115


doi:10.1080/15700763.2011.629767


APPENDIX A

AWSP LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK
Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) Leadership Framework

Criterion One Rubric – Creating a Culture

Creating a school culture that promotes the ongoing improvement of learning and teaching for students and staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>DISTINGUISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Develops and sustains focus on a shared mission and clear vision for improvement of learning and teaching</td>
<td>Does not communicate mission, vision, and core values; tolerates behaviors and school activities in opposition to a culture of ongoing improvement</td>
<td>Vision and mission are developing; connections between school activities, behaviors and the vision are made explicit; vision and mission are shared and supported by stakeholders</td>
<td>Communicates a vision of ongoing improvement in teaching and learning such that staff and students perceive and agree upon what the school is working to achieve; encourages and supports behaviors and school activities that explicitly align with vision; shares enthusiasm and optimism that the vision will be realized; regularly communicates a strong commitment to the mission and vision of the school and holds stakeholders accountable for implementation</td>
<td>Is proficient AND provides leadership and support such that shared vision and goals are at the forefront of attention for students and staff and at the center of their work; communicates mission, vision, and core values to community stakeholders such that the wider community knows, understands and supports the vision of the changing world in the 21st Century that schools are preparing children to enter and succeed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| 1.2 Engages in essential conversations for ongoing improvement         | Avoids conversations; does not make time for conversations; is not available to staff, students, other stakeholders, does not communicate high expectations and high standards for staff and students regarding ongoing improvement | Communication reflects essential issues with members of the school community; supports a feedback loop that reaches students and staff; barriers to improvement are identified and addressed; conversations are mostly data-driven for the purposes of assessing improvement with infrequent high | Assumes responsibility for accurate communication and productive flow of ideas among staff, students and stakeholders; provides leadership such that the essential conversations take place and in ways that maintain trust, dignity, and ensure accountability of participants; creates and sustains | Is proficient AND establishes and promotes successful systems and methods for communication that extend beyond the school community; creates a productive feedback loop among stakeholders that keeps the dialogue ongoing and purposeful; methods are recognized and adopted for purposes beyond |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>DISTINGUISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Facilitates collaborative processes leading toward continuous improvement</td>
<td>Does not actively support or facilitate collaboration among staff; tolerates behavior that impede collaboration among staff; fosters a climate of competition and supports unhealthy interactions among staff</td>
<td>Demonstrates some understanding of the value of collaboration and what it takes to support it (i.e. building trust); facilitates collaboration among staff for certain purposes; emerging consensus-building and negotiation skills</td>
<td>Actively models, supports and facilitates collaborative processes among staff utilizing diversity of skills, perspectives and knowledge in the group; assumes responsibility for monitoring group dynamics and for promoting an open and constructive atmosphere for group discussions; creates opportunities for staff to initiate collaborative processes across grade levels and subject areas that support ongoing improvement of teaching and learning</td>
<td>Is proficient AND successfully creates generative systems that build the capacity of stakeholders to collaborate across grade levels and subject areas; is recognized by school community and other stakeholders for leadership that results in a high degree of meaningful collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Creates opportunities for shared leadership</td>
<td>Offers no model or opportunity for shared leadership (i.e. delegation, internship, etc.); makes decisions unilaterally</td>
<td>Offers opportunities for staff and students to be in leadership roles; engages processes for shared decision-making; uses strategies to develop the capacity for shared leadership (i.e., Delegation, internship, etc.)</td>
<td>Provides continual opportunity and invitation for staff to develop leadership qualities; consistently engages processes that support high participation in decision-making; assesses, analyzes and anticipates emerging trends and</td>
<td>Is proficient AND proactively cultivates leadership qualities in others; builds a sense of efficacy and empowerment among staff and students that results in increased capacity to accomplish substantial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Criterion Two Rubric – Ensuring School Safety

**Providing for school safety.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>DISTINGUISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1 Provides for Physical Safety</strong></td>
<td>Neglects to consider the physical safety of students and staff; does not maintain and/or implement a current school safety plan; plan in place is insufficient to ensure physical safety of students and staff; major safety and health concerns</td>
<td>Maintains and implements a school safety plan monitored on a regular basis; minor safety and sanitary concerns in school plant or equipment; problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner; eager to improve knowledge about school security and issues relating to school facilities; an emergency operations plan is reviewed by appropriate external officials and posted in classrooms, meeting areas and office settings</td>
<td>Implements a school safety plan that is based upon open communication systems and is effective and responsive to new threats and changing circumstances; proactively monitors and adjusts the plan in consultation with staff, students, and outside experts/consultants; staff proficiency in safety procedures as measured and monitored by group assessments followed by group reflection</td>
<td>Is proficient AND serves as a resource for others in leadership roles beyond school who are developing and implementing comprehensive physical safety systems to include prevention, intervention, crisis response and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.2 Provides for social, emotional and intellectual safety</strong></td>
<td>Neglects the social, emotional or intellectual safety of students and staff; does not have an anti-bullying policy or behavior plan in place that promotes emotional safety; does not model an appreciation for</td>
<td>Strives to provide appropriate emotional support to staff and students; policies clearly define acceptable behavior; demonstrates acceptance for diversity of ideas</td>
<td>Assumes responsibility for the social emotional and intellectual safety of all staff and students; supports the development, implementation, and monitoring of plans, systems, curricula, and programs that provide</td>
<td>Is proficient AND makes emotional and intellectual safety a top priority for staff and students; ensures a school culture in which students and staff are acknowledged and connected; advocates for students to be a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Criterion Three Rubric – Planning with Data

*Leading the development, implementation and evaluation of data-driven plan for increasing student achievement, including the use of multiple student data elements.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>DISTINGUISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of ideas and opinions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Resources to support social, emotional and</td>
<td>Replaces protective factors that reduce risk for all students and staff</td>
<td>Part of and responsible for their school community; ensures that school community members are trained and empowered to improve and sustain a culture of emotional safety; cultivates intellectual safety of students and staff by advocating for diversity of ideas, respecting perspectives that arise, promoting an open exchange of ideas; involves school community in active intellectual inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Recognizes and seeks out multiple data sources</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seeks multiple sources of data to guide decision making; emerging knowledge of what constitutes valid and reliable sources of data and data integrity</td>
<td>Systematically collects valid and reliable data from at least three sources to be used in problem solving and decision making; builds capacity of staff to recognize information as data by providing examples of using data throughout the building and in staff meetings; systematically gathers data on grades, attendance, behavior and other variables to inform efforts</td>
<td>Is proficient AND explores and uses a wide variety of monitoring and data collection strategies (both formal and informal) to triangulate data; responds to an identified need for timely data by putting new data collection processes in place to collect reliable and valid data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Analyzes and interprets multiple data sources to inform school-</td>
<td>Reviews and shares limited school-level data only as required; interpretation of data may be incorrect or</td>
<td>Uses numerous data analysis methods and eager to broaden knowledge of data</td>
<td>Analysis includes at least three years of data including state, district, school and formal and informal</td>
<td>Is proficient AND consistently leads in data interpretation, analysis, and communication;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>DISTINGUISHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level improvement efforts</td>
<td>incomplete; uses data in ways unintended by assessment purpose</td>
<td>analysis and interpretation; uses school-level data to inform improvement across eight Criteria</td>
<td>classroom assessments; interprets available data at the subscale level to make informed decisions about strengths and areas of need; provides teacher teams with previous year's data and asks them to assess students' current needs</td>
<td>links at least three years of student data to teachers and builds capacity of staff to understand and use their data for improved teaching and learning; practices a high standard for data reliability, validity and fairness and keeps these concepts in the forefront of conversations with staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Implements data drive plan for improved teaching and learning</td>
<td>Plan is limited, not data driven and/or not aligned with the needs of the school; little stakeholder involvement and commitment</td>
<td>Plan is monitored, evaluated and revised resulting in data driven changes; works to build stakeholder involvement and commitment; models data-driven conversations in support of plan</td>
<td>Provides leadership such that plan is clearly articulated and includes action steps and progress monitoring strategies, and strategies in the plan are directly aligned with the data analysis process and are research based; leads ongoing review of progress and results to make timely adjustments to the plan; data insights are regularly the subject of faculty meetings and PD sessions</td>
<td>Is proficient AND creates a school culture of using data for decisions and continuous improvement in aspects of school life; orchestrates high-quality, low-stakes action planning meetings after each round of assessments; data driven plan specifically documents examples of decisions made on the basis of data analysis and results are documented to inform future decisions; provides coaching to other school administrators to improve their data drive plan and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Assists staff to use data to guide, modify and improve classroom teaching and learning</td>
<td>Does not assist staff to use multiple types of data to reflect on effectiveness of lessons, guide lesson and assessment development, differentiate</td>
<td>Occasionally assists staff to use multiple types of data to reflect on effectiveness of lessons, guide lesson and assessment</td>
<td>Regularly assists staff to use multiple types of data to reflect on effectiveness of lessons, guide lesson and assessment development, differentiate</td>
<td>Is proficient AND demonstrates leadership by routinely and consistently assisting teachers to use multiple types of data to reflect on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>DISTINGUISHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instruction, and to determine whether re-teaching, practice or moving forward is appropriate; focuses more on student characteristics rather than the actions of teachers; no improvement in student academic achievement</td>
<td>development, differentiate instruction, and to determine whether re-teaching, practice or moving forward is appropriate; strategies result in incomplete relationship between the actions of teachers and the impact on student achievement, minimum improvement in student academic growth</td>
<td>instruction (highly achieving as well as non-proficient) and to determine whether re-teaching, practice or moving forward with instruction is appropriate at both the group and individual level; strategies result in clear relationship between the actions of teachers and the impact on student achievement; demonstrated and measurable improvements in student academic growth readily apparent</td>
<td>effectiveness of lessons, guide lesson and assessment development, differentiate instruction, and to determine whether re-teaching, practice or moving forward with instruction is appropriate at both the group and individual level; explicitly demonstrates consistent and measurable improvements in student academic growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Provides evidence of student growth that results from the school improvement planning process*</td>
<td>School improvement planning process results in no improvement in student academic growth</td>
<td>School improvement planning process results in minimal improvement in student academic growth</td>
<td>School improvement planning process results in measurable improvement in student academic growth</td>
<td>School improvement planning process results in significant improvement in student academic growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Criterion Four Rubric – Aligning Curriculum**

**Assisting instructional staff with alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment with state and local district learning goals.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>DISTINGUISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Alignment of curricula to state and local district learning goals</td>
<td>Has incomplete or insufficient knowledge of state and local district learning goals across grades and content areas; has insufficient knowledge to evaluate curricula; does not effectively assist staff to align curricula to state and district learning goals</td>
<td>Has emerging knowledge and understanding of state and local district learning goals across grades and content areas to facilitate some alignment activities with staff</td>
<td>Every class has a curriculum based on the standards of the state and district learning goals/targets; has deep knowledge of state and district learning goals and how to align these with curricula for diverse populations; systematically focuses staff on alignment; establishes a system that uses a feedback loop from the</td>
<td>Is proficient AND provides leadership and support such that all teachers have fully aligned curriculum materials (including high achieving) and training on how to use them; staff takes ownership of the alignment processes of goals to curricula; staff understand alignment of curricula to state and local district learning goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>DISTINGUISHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Alignment of best instructional practices to state and district learning goals</td>
<td>Has incomplete or insufficient knowledge of best instructional practices across grade levels and content areas; does not effectively assist staff to align instructional practices to state and district learning goals</td>
<td>Has sufficient knowledge and understanding of best instructional practices across grade levels and content areas to facilitate some alignment activities with staff; emerging knowledge of culturally-relevant teaching &amp; learning methodologies</td>
<td>Has deep knowledge of best instructional practices for diverse populations and how to align these with curricula; systematically focuses staff on alignment; establishes a system for ongoing alignment that involves staff; continually supports, monitors alignment and makes adjustments; has teacher teams cooperatively plan aligned units, reviews them and then gives teachers feedback; reads and shares research that fosters an ongoing, school wide discussion on best practices for non-proficient to above proficient student</td>
<td>Is proficient AND provides leadership and support such that staff understand alignment of best instructional practice to state and district learning goals as foundational to the improvement of teaching and learning; staff takes ownership and backward-design high quality, aligned units to discuss with their teams; ensures that staff is current on professional literature regarding instructional practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Alignment of assessment practices to best instructional practices</td>
<td>Has incomplete or insufficient knowledge of assessment in terms of reliability, validity and fairness; does not effectively assist staff to align assessment to instructional practices</td>
<td>Has emerging knowledge and understanding of assessment in terms of reliability, validity and fairness; facilitates the implementation of certain aspects of a balanced (diagnostic, formative and summative) assessment system; facilitates the alignment</td>
<td>Has deep knowledge of assessment; every course has a document (syllabus, course outline or learning objectives) that identifies the learning outcomes in language accessible to students and parents; student work created in response to teachers' assessments of the learning outcomes accurately reflect the state standards and</td>
<td>Is proficient AND provides leadership and support such that staff takes ownership of the alignment processes of assessment to instructional practices; staff understand the alignment of assessment to teaching as foundational to the improvement of teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

132
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>DISTINGUISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>district learning goals/targets; continually provides support to systematically focus staff on alignment of assessment to instruction using best practices; establishes a system for ongoing alignment of formative and summative assessment that involves staff members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Monitors instruction and assessment practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not adequately monitor instruction and assessment practices of staff; untimely and irregular evaluations; provides insufficient feedback to staff regarding instruction and assessment practices</td>
<td>Develops and uses observable systems and routines for monitoring instruction and assessment practices; provides some effective feedback to staff; feedback is linked back to instruction and assessment; partly familiar with evaluating technology-rich instruction</td>
<td>Develops and uses observable systems and routines for monitoring instruction and assessment; uses data consistently to provide staff meaningful, personal feedback that is effective for improving instruction and assessment practices; ensures that teachers go beyond what students fail to learn and delve into why (root causes); deep understanding of evaluating technology-rich instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Assists staff in developing required student growth plan and identifying valid, reliable sources of evidence of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not meet with faculty members to develop, review and modify student growth plans; student growth plans do not meet minimum requirements; does not assist staff in the identification of performance indicators</td>
<td>Meets minimum teachers’ contract requirements to develop, review, and modify student growth plans (individual or groups plans) based on identified areas of need; assists</td>
<td>Meets with faculty members regularly (beyond minimum teachers’ contract) to develop, review, and modify student growth plans (individual or group plans); assists identification of performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion Five Rubric – Improving Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Monitoring, assisting, and evaluating effective instruction and assessment practices.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>DISTINGUISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>DISTINGUISHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effectiveness</td>
<td>or performance indicators are not sufficient; assessment results of selected teachers show little to no academic growth of students</td>
<td>identification of performance indicators to monitor and benchmark progress; assessment results of selected teachers show minimum academic growth of students</td>
<td>indicators to benchmark progress; research-based planning and performance-linked goal setting strategies, such as &quot;SMART&quot; goals, are used allowing timely feedback to make mid-course corrections and improve teacher practice; assessment results of selected teachers show measureable and improving academic growth of students</td>
<td>on student growth plans and progress; assessment results of selected teachers show consistent academic growth of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.3 Assists staff in implementing effective instruction and assessment practices</strong></td>
<td>Does not fully support staff in their efforts to improve teaching and assessment; does not have knowledge or understanding of best instruction and assessment practices; does not make assisting staff in improved teaching and assessment a priority</td>
<td>Facilitate staff in the implementation of effective instruction and balanced assessment systems assessments; emerging knowledge of applied learning theories to create a personalized and motivated learning environment</td>
<td>Facilitates and supports staff in the implementation of effective instruction and assessment practices; has deep and thorough knowledge and understanding of best practices in instruction and assessment; devotes considerable time and effort to the improvement of instruction and assessment; assists staff to use the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning</td>
<td>Is proficient AND serves as a driving force to build capacity for staff to initiate and implement improved instruction and assessment practices; encourages staff to conduct action research; seeks ways to extend influence of knowledge and contribute to the application of effective instruction and assessment practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.4 Reliably and validly evaluates staff in effective instruction and assessment practices</strong></td>
<td>Evaluations lack strong evidence yielding potentially unreliable staff evaluations; makes claims about staff performance that are not valid; does not establish systems or routines that support improved instruction and assessment practices; little to no understanding of</td>
<td>Regularly and systematically evaluates all staff yielding valid and reliable results; recommendations lead staff to some improvement in instruction and assessment practices; developing understanding of</td>
<td>Evaluates staff reliably and validly; provides triangulated data evidence to support claims; recommendations are effective and lead to consistently improved instruction and assessment practices</td>
<td>Is proficient AND consistently demonstrates leadership in the practice of thoroughly, reliably, and validly evaluating staff in such a way that continuous improvement in instruction and assessment becomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>DISTINGUISHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student diversity and its meaning in instruction and assessment</td>
<td>student diversity (culture, ability, etc.) and its meaning in instruction and assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the professional standard; provides detailed, formative assessment with exemplary feedback that leads to improvement; builds capacity in staff to accurately and validly assess self and others, promoting a culture of continual improvement due to ongoing evaluation of effective instruction and assessment practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Provides evidence of student growth of selected teachers*</td>
<td>Multiple measures of student achievement of selected teachers show no academic growth</td>
<td>Multiple measures of student achievement of selected teachers show minimal academic growth</td>
<td>Multiple measures of student achievement of selected teachers show measurable academic growth</td>
<td>Multiple measures of student achievement of selected teachers show significant academic growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion Six Rubric – Managing Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing both staff and fiscal resources to support student achievement and legal responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>DISTINGUISHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Managing human resources (assignment, hiring)</td>
<td>Does not adequately address issues in hiring, retention, and placement of staff for the benefit of students in classrooms; does not put student needs at the forefront of human resource decisions; does not make an effort to ensure quality personnel in each position</td>
<td>Places the needs of students at the center of some human resource decisions with moderate effect; possesses some skills and knowledge required to recruit and retain highly qualified individuals in school positions</td>
<td>Places students' needs at the center of human resource decisions and decisions regarding hiring, retention and placement of staff; conducts a rigorous hiring process when choosing staff; focuses energy on ensuring productivity through staff placement</td>
<td>Is proficient AND optimizes the school's human resources and assets of staff members to maximize opportunities for student growth; is distinguished in management of human resources and is called upon to share those successful processes outside of school; efforts produce a positive work environment that attracts outstanding talent; continuously searches for staff with outstanding potential as educators and provides the best placement of both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

135
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>DISTINGUISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.2 Managing human resources</strong>&lt;br&gt;(ongoing professional development)</td>
<td>Staff receive inadequate opportunities for professional development to meet students' and staffs' needs; professional development offered is not of sufficient quality to be effective</td>
<td>Professional development plan somewhat aligns to organization's vision and plan; PD is partly effective in leading to minor improvements in staff practice; little or no documentation of effectiveness of past professional development offerings and teacher outcomes</td>
<td>Professional development plan has three to four areas of emphasis, job embedded, ongoing and linked to the organization's vision and plan; systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of past PD offerings and outcomes; creates and supports informal professional development (i.e., professional learning communities); offers PD that meets teachers' needs and has elements of high quality PD (sufficient duration, content, etc.)</td>
<td>Is proficient AND has adopted research-based strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of PD documenting growth in teacher knowledge to student outcomes; can identify specific PD offerings of prior years that were systematically reviewed and either eliminated or modified to support organizational goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.3 Managing fiscal resources</strong></td>
<td>Does not make fiscal decisions that maximize resources in support of improved teaching and learning; provides little or no evidence of lists of milestones or deadlines in managing time or fiscal resources; does not work with teachers to establish goals for student achievement linked to individual teacher professional development</td>
<td>Makes some fiscal decisions that maximize resources and support some aspects of improved teaching and learning; projects are managed using milestones and deadlines but not updated frequently; sometimes meets project deadlines but impact not frequently documented; frequently works with teachers to establish goals for student achievement linked to individual teacher</td>
<td>Engages others in dialogue on budget decisions based on data, School Improvement Plan, and district priorities that support learning; makes fiscal decisions that maximize resources and supports improved teaching and learning; uses defined process to track expenditures; frequently monitors data, documents and evaluates results; uses findings to improve fiscal decisions made in the future; documented history reveals ability to manage complex projects and meet deadlines within budget; regularly</td>
<td>Is proficient AND demonstrates leadership in the design and successful enactment of uniquely creative approaches that regularly save time and money; results indicate that strategically redirected resources have positive impact in achieving priorities; guides decision-making such that efficacy grows among stakeholders for arriving at fiscal decisions for improvement of teaching and learning; augments resources by writing successful state and/or federal grants; seeks numerous external</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>DISTINGUISHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Fulfilling legal responsibilities</td>
<td>Fails to demonstrate adequate knowledge of legal responsibilities; entertains behaviors and policies that conflict with the vision of improved teaching and learning or with law; tolerates behavior from self, staff and/or students that is not legal</td>
<td>Demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of legal responsibilities; does not entertain behaviors and policies that conflict with the vision of improved teaching and learning and with law; does not tolerate illegal behavior from self, staff and/or students</td>
<td>Assumes responsibility for operating within the law; demonstrates deep and thorough knowledge and understanding of the intent of the law; operates with deep and thorough knowledge and understanding of district policies, grant requirements and collective bargaining agreements; keeps student and staff well-being at the forefront of legal responsibilities; tolerates no behavior outside of the law and approaches problems proactively</td>
<td>Is proficient AND consistently demonstrates leadership for developing systems that communicate and support staff in upholding legal responsibilities; creates a culture of shared legal responsibility among students and staff; involves stakeholders in the creation of a school culture that thrives upon and benefits from addressing legal responsibilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Criterion Seven Rubric – Engaging Communities**

*Partnering with the school community to promote student learning.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
<th>BASIC</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>DISTINGUISHED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Communicates with community to promote learning</td>
<td>Communication is sparse and opportunities for community involvement are not fully realized or made available; not visible in community or perceived as community advocate</td>
<td>Communication with the community is regular, yet is mainly informational rather than two-way; channels of communication are not accessible to all families; practices some discretion when dealing with personal information about students and staff.</td>
<td>Builds effective communication systems between home, community and school that are interactive and regularly used by students, school staff and families and other stakeholders; uses multiple communication channels appropriate for cultural and language differences that exist in the community;</td>
<td>Is proficient AND moves beyond typical communication practices to proactively develop relationships through home visits, innovative technology, visiting community groups, etc. with parents/guardians and community; creates and promotes opportunities for students and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>DISTINGUISHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates little effort to engage families or the community in school activities; fails to share the vision of improved teaching and learning beyond school; does not identify and utilize community resources in support of improved student learning</td>
<td>Encourages and supports involvement of community and families in some school activities; shares the vision for improving teaching and learning with some families and communities; identifies and utilizes some community talent and resources in support of improved teaching and learning; limited family participation in some school decision-making processes and engagement activities</td>
<td>Encourages and supports consistent and ongoing community and family engagement for stakeholders in school activities; consistently implements effective plans for engaging community outside of school to participate in school decision making to improve teaching and learning; community resources are identified and utilized in support of improved teaching and learning; actively monitors community involvement and adjusts, creating new opportunities for families and community to be actively engaged in</td>
<td>Is proficient AND consistently demonstrates leadership in the area of effectively engaging families and the greater community in support of students, staff and the vision of improved teaching and learning; is recognized outside of school for developing and implementing programs that partner with school, family and community; programs are held as a model for other schools to adopt and follow; builds capacity in the community for imitating new and beneficial forms of community involvement in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>DISTINGUISHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>part of the vision of improving teaching and learning</td>
<td>school; service integration through partnerships involving school, civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation and others to meet needs of parents, caregivers and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion Eight Rubric – Closing the Gap</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating commitment to closing the achievement gap.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements</td>
<td>UNSATISFACTORY</td>
<td>BASIC</td>
<td>PROFICIENT</td>
<td>DISTINGUISHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Identifies barriers to achievement and knows how to close resulting gaps</td>
<td>Is unaware of achievement gaps that exist in school population and how the school and teachers have played a role in perpetuating gaps; attributes gaps to factors outside of the school’s locus of control; opportunities to learn and resources are not distributed equitably among students</td>
<td>Demonstrates emerging awareness of specific school-wide achievement gaps and issues of equity access; recognizes responsibility and has some confidence in teachers and school to impact these gaps; creates new opportunities to learn</td>
<td>Identifies learning gaps early using formative assessments; demonstrates complete knowledge and understanding of the existence of gaps; accepts responsibility for impacting these gaps; identifies and addresses barriers to closing gaps</td>
<td>Is proficient AND focuses attention of school community on the goal of closing gaps; systematically challenges the status quo by leading change, based on data, resulting in beneficial outcomes; builds capacity among community to support the effort to close gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Demonstrates a commitment to close the achievement gap</td>
<td>Does not acknowledge the responsibility of school to close gaps; does not consider subpopulations when constructing school learning goals and targets; does not have a plan to close gaps</td>
<td>Achievement data is accessible and shared with a portion of the school community; attempts to target efforts towards closing achievement gaps; uses culturally-relevant methodologies to close gaps; demonstrates emerging progress in closing gaps</td>
<td>Achievement data is accessible to all members of the school community including non-English speaking parents; constructs plan with specific strategies to impact gaps; communicates, monitors and adjusts efforts to effectively make progress toward reducing gaps; models and builds the capacity of school personnel to be culturally competent and to implement socially just practices; demonstrates</td>
<td>Is proficient AND successfully keeps the work of closing gaps at the forefront of intention for staff and community members; assumes responsibility for closing gaps; builds capacity in staff members and others to advance learning for students; has deep knowledge and understanding of the nature of gaps that exist at the level of group and at the level of individual students who are not reaching full learning potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Provides evidence of growth in student learning*</td>
<td>Achievement data from multiple sources or data points show no evidence of student growth toward the district’s learning goals; there are growing achievement gaps between student subgroups</td>
<td>Achievement data from multiple sources or data points shows minimum evidence of student growth toward the district’s learning goals for identified subgroups of students</td>
<td>Achievement data from multiple sources or data points show evidence of improving student growth toward the district’s learning goals; the average achievement of the student population improved as does the growth of each subgroup of students identified as needing improvement</td>
<td>Achievement data from multiple sources or data points show evidence of consistent growth toward the district’s learning goals; there is consistent record of improved student growth, on multiple indicators, with identified subgroups of students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

RESEARCH BASE FOR AWSP LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK
Criterion 1 Research | Creating a Culture

Creating a school culture that promotes the ongoing improvement of learning and teaching for students and staff.

“Leaders ask ‘what is essential, what needs to be done and how can we get it done.’ An effective leader maintains visibility and transparency and creates a culture that fosters mutual accountability; it becomes the responsibility of all staff to make sure that all students are successful. An effective leader advocates, nurtures, and sustains a school culture and instructional program that promotes student learning and staff professional growth. They lead by "creating powerful, equitable learning opportunities for students, professionals, and the system, and motivating or compelling participants to take advantage of these opportunities" (Knapp, Copland, Talbert, 2003, p.12, as quoted in Murphy, 2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND LEARNING RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1 Develops and sustains focus on a shared mission and clear vision for improvement of learning and teaching</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing and sustaining a school climate of trust, strong relationships and stakeholder commitment are fundamental to school success. The school leader influences the school climate. There is a positive correlation to school effectiveness and school climate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wallace Foundation. The Principal Story video and field guide retrieved from 20www.wallacefoundation.org/principal-story/Pages/default.aspx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NYC Leadership Academy, <a href="http://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/">http://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2 Engages in essential conversations for ongoing improvement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation between principals, teachers and students create a culture of ongoing improvement as well as fulfill our needs to connect with each other in the school in positive ways. Ongoing discourse helps to support first-year teachers as well as encourage teachers to mentor each other.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND LEARNING RESOURCES

| 1.3 Facilitates collaborative processes leading toward continuous improvement | The development of a collective process designed to facilitate the purposefully examination, reflection and improvement of outcomes, can be used to empower teachers with voice and the ability to take action in the continuous improvement cycle in the school environment.  
|---|---|
| 1.4 Creates opportunities for shared leadership | Effective principals distribute leadership among competent staff so improvements are sustainable and school-wide. Research suggests several specific behaviors that principals can employ to develop the existence of five elements of healthy school cultures: continual school-wide review, understanding change & innovation, high expectations, shared decision-making and shared supportive leadership.  
**Criterion 2 Research | Ensuring School Safety**

**Providing for school safety.**

An effective leader supports the community (both in and out of school) to develop a more nuanced/expanded understanding of what it means to be safe. Physical, emotional, and intellectual safety are critical and necessary conditions in order for effective teaching and learning to take place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND LEARNING RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.1 Provides for Physical Safety</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased knowledge about the current threats in our schools is a way to provide for increased physical safety for students, teachers and staff in the school. The following resources provide timely information about ways to increase physical safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.keeperschoolssafe.org">www.keeperschoolssafe.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.2 Provides for social, emotional and intellectual safety</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust among staff is one of the factors that contribute to the social, emotional and intellectual safety of the school staff and students. Principals can help to foster trust to bring out the best in teachers and improve student learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leading the development, implementation and evaluation of a data-driven plan for increasing student achievement, including the use of multiple student data elements.

Data refers to any type of information. Information or data can be represented numerically; data is also qualitative, the result from a relevant conversation with any stakeholder. Effective leaders rely on data to promote improvement in all aspects of school and across all of the eight Criteria. A leader influences others to achieve mutually-agreed upon purposes for the improvement of teaching and learning through consistent use of data. Acting on knowledge achieved through data becomes a cultural norm across the school.

### SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND LEARNING RESOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.1 Recognizes and seeks out multiple data sources</th>
<th>These resources explain the reasons to use multiple measures and the importance of triangulating data. The fundamentals of education measurement are reviewed to help guide the analysis, interpretation and communication of data results.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.2 Analyzes and interprets multiple data sources to inform school-level improvement efforts</th>
<th>Using data in a systematic way can provide insight into students’ thinking; thus, informing classroom instruction to assist moving students’ toward the learning targets.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND LEARNING RESOURCES

| 3.3 Implements data driven plan for improved teaching and learning | These guides help clarify the foundational understandings needed to create a systematic way to collect and interpret data accurately.  


[http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=school+using+data+to+improve+teaching+and+learning](http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=school+using+data+to+improve+teaching+and+learning) |
|---|---|
| 3.4 Assists staff to use data to guide, modify and improve classroom teaching and learning | Many different types of qualitative and quantitative data can be used to examine classroom teaching and learning. Student data can be disaggregated by gender or proficiency level, for example, to uncover the effects of teaching interventions on different subgroups of students and guide instructional strategies. Students get the same assessment question incorrect for different reasons but there are methods to solicit students’ misconceptions and correct them.  


Criterion 4 Research | Aligning Curriculum

Assisting instructional staff with alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment with state and local district learning goals.

An effective leader assumes responsibility such that state and district learning goals align with curriculum, curriculum aligns with best instructional practice, and best instructional practices align with assessment practices.

### SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND LEARNING RESOURCES

| 4.1 Alignment of curricula to state and local district learning goals | The alignment of curricula to local district and state learning goals shows a powerful connection to student learning and resulting achievement scores. The degree of alignment can vary from district to district creating an unlevel playing field for students. Deep alignment can be realized by utilizing a variety of supplemental learning materials (high quality internet materials, multimedia, etc.) to fill in the gaps between the learning goals and textbooks.


| 4.2 Alignment of best instructional practices to state and district learning goals | The principal’s instructional leadership tasks include assisting teachers in both the “what” and “how” to teach in the alignment process. Instructional practices coupled with best teaching strategies, must be tightly linked to the content knowledge and skills needed to move from a novice understanding to a proficient or above proficient understanding of the learning targets.


4.3 Alignment of assessment practices to best instructional practices

Well-designed assessments are tightly linked to instruction so that students can demonstrate where they are in their journey toward the learning targets. This is called “instructional sensitivity” of the assessment instrument. The more instructional sensitivity, the more likelihood that the assessment will register improvements in instructional strategies. Well-designed assessments offer multiple ways for students to show what they know.


Criterion 5 Research | Improving Instruction

Monitoring, assisting and evaluating effective instruction and assessment practices.

An effective leader is knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the design and implementation of the instructional program; prioritizes effective teaching by visiting classrooms regularly and working with teachers on instructional issues; consistently supports colleagues in their efforts to strengthen teaching and learning in classrooms; works tirelessly to support staff in doing their best work.

5.1 Monitors instruction and assessment practices

The data resulting from formative and summative student assessments is useful for teachers to use to monitor and reflect on their instructional practices.


| 5.2 Assists staff in developing required student growth plan and identifying valid, reliable sources of evidence of effectiveness | There are a number of ways to measure student academic growth; from formal assessments to reflective lessons. A solid student growth plan includes multiple sources of evidence taken at multiple times throughout the academic year. Valid sources of evidence are closely aligned to curriculum and instruction and have a high degree of “instructional sensitivity.”


|---|---|
| 5.3 Assists staff in implementing effective instruction and assessment practices | The following resources provide information on how to facilitate teachers to move the conversation from the student to the learning task and teacher instruction and assessment practices.


| 5.4 Reliably and validly evaluates staff in effective instruction and assessment practices | An objective evaluation can help teachers grow and improve their professional teaching practice. The following resources offer a framework to assist principals in the process of improving teacher effectiveness.


Criterion 6 Research | Managing Resources

Managing both staff and fiscal resources to support student achievement and legal responsibilities.

This criterion primarily covers human resources and addresses principal power, to the extent that the principal can impact decisions of hiring. An effective leader manages human and fiscal resources in transparent ways such that the capacity of the school community to make complicated decisions grows. Decisions are made about resources that result in improved teaching and learning while allowing staff to feel empowered throughout the process.

### SUPPORTING RESEARCH & LEARNING RESOURCES

| 6.1 Manages human resources (assignment and hiring) | The principal's role requires successful management of organizational behavior, which leads to the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers.  
|---|
| 6.2 Manages human resources (ongoing professional development) | High quality in-service professional development for teachers is facilitated by certain policy mechanisms and processes that districts can use. Certain management/implementation strategies, such as aligning professional development to district’s learning goals and assessments, continuous improvement efforts, and teacher involvement in planning, are associated with the provision of higher quality professional development for teachers.  
| 6.3 Manages fiscal resources | The alignment of a school budget with district resources focused on intended student outcomes is an essential element in effective school operations and leadership. Highly successful principals engage staff in budget development toward a meaningful decision-making process. Effective principals ensure that the highest priority for budget development is focused on improved student learning.  
|---|---|
| 6.4 Fulfills legal responsibilities | Highly successful principals possess a common set of legal knowledge allowing for confident decision-making while providing for the safety and security of their schools. The changing nature of school law requires principals to maintain a comprehensive review of legal decisions impacting student achievement.  
Criterion 7 Research | Engaging Communities

Partnering with the school community to promote student learning.

An effective leader engages with the community in sensitive and skillful ways such that the community understands the work of the school and is proud to claim the school as their own. An effective leader understands the greater community to be a valuable resource and works to establish a genuine partnership model between home and school. An effective leader understands that aligning school and community efforts and values is an ongoing work in progress that must be nurtured, sustained, and monitored, and is able to influence others to adopt the same understanding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND LEARNING RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.1 Communicates with community to promote learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7.2 Partners with families and school community</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Criterion 8 Research | Closing the Gap

Demonstrating a commitment to closing the achievement gap.

Closing the gap refers to improving achievement for groups of students that share an historical disadvantage as well as the achievement of individual students who are not realizing learning potential. Evidence used to support student improvement comes from multiple opportunities for gathering information about achievement: standardized tests and other assessments that are school-directed; assessments that are teacher designed and embedded into instruction; portfolio and performance-based project assessments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND LEARNING RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Identifies barriers to achievement and knows how to close resulting gaps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8.2 Demonstrates a commitment to close the achievement gap | The school principal has a mission to be confident in students’ abilities and also expect teachers and students to attain the school’s goals, thus communicating that learning for all students is the most important mission. The following resources provide information about how to create the all-inclusive school.


|---|---|
| 8.3 Provides evidence of growth in student learning | There are a number of different ways to measure student growth in content knowledge; from formal assessments to reflective lessons. A solid student growth plan includes multiple sources of evidence taken at multiple times throughout the academic year. Valid sources of evidence are closely aligned to curriculum and instruction and have a high degree of “instructional sensitivity”.


APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTION PROTOCOL
Introduction Questions

- Please tell me a little bit about your history as an educator. Please provide information about your background in education, your experience, and any specific training you have had to support you in your role as a principal evaluator/principal.
- Please tell me why you chose to be an educator and ultimately decided to move to a position of leadership in the district office/within a school.

Interview Questions

1. Please share with me your expectations for principal professional development in this district.
2. How are professional development needs for principals determined?
3. Please describe what a growing principal would look like.
4. What do you see as three or four main goals for principal professional learning in your district?
5. What are the actions and indicators that you would use to define a principal who is growing professionally?
6. Please describe the process for evaluating principals in your district based upon the AWSP Leadership Framework.
7. How do you see the evaluation process connected to principals’ professional learning?
8. Please describe the strengths of the AWSP Leadership Framework.
9. Please describe some challenges you faced when using the AWSP Leadership Framework.
10. Moving forward, how might these challenges be able to be mediated?
11. What are some of your successes with the AWSP Leadership Framework concerning principal professional development?
12. What do you see as the main value of having the AWSP Leadership Framework for principal professional development?
13. Please share with me any other thoughts you might have about principal growth and learning and the new AWSP Leadership Framework.
APPENDIX D

PRINCIPAL REFLECTION DOCUMENT
This document will be used as the framework for principal evaluation. Make a copy of the document and save it as your evaluation for the 2014-15 school year. After you have completed the self-assessment, please share this document with your evaluator.

**Principal Criteria**
1. Creating a Culture
2. Ensuring School Safety
3. Planning with Data
4. Aligning Curriculum
5. Improving Instruction
6. Managing Resources
7. Engaging Communities
8. Closing the Gap

**To Do’s**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting Meeting</td>
<td>10/10/14</td>
<td>September/October with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Meeting</td>
<td>9/15/14</td>
<td>September with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIP</td>
<td>12/14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-year review</td>
<td>2/5/15</td>
<td>January/February with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>8/25/14</td>
<td>Staff PLC Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ToA Check-in</td>
<td>2/5/15</td>
<td>Done at Mid-year review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final review</td>
<td></td>
<td>June with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SIP to Do - completed
- Narrative
- Action Plan grounded with PLC SMART goals that evolve over the school year
- Culture & Climate Action Plan grounded in PBIS plan
- Rationale connecting Theory of Action to the SIP

**Problem of Practice**

Our 2012-13 data revealed a decline in our math and reading scores, performing below the district average. With our focus on reading for the 2013-14 school year, we showed gains of 9.1% in 3rd grade and 1.6% for 4th in our reading MSP scores. Continuing our work building teaching practices around thinking strategies to support reading skills for understanding and strengthening our PLC purpose, vision, commitments and goals will be our work this year to impact student learning.
**Theory of Action**

If we collaborate as a school/PLC to teach ACTIVE Thinking Strategies for all students, using concrete lessons as a foundation for teaching, students will gain the same experience and develop a common language to build on for their Thinking Strategies and teachers will build their practices to support students thinking and understanding.

If students have a common experience and language to build on their Thinking Strategies across all grade levels and apply these strategies to the reading across content areas, then their reading comprehension scores will improve and impact their meeting reading and other content area standards.

If PLCs work to develop common assessments based on CCSS and analyze students’ data to identify students needing support/extensions, then teachers can develop interventions for students not meeting or exceeding standards and make plans to respond to their students’ needs.

If teachers build their teaching strategies and strengthen their work and focus as a PLC to inform their teaching and identify students for interventions, then more students will meet standards and our staff will strengthen our impact for our students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROMOTE</th>
<th>PROVIDE</th>
<th>PRODUCE</th>
<th>ASSESS</th>
<th>ACHIEVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTIVE Thinking Strategies School Wide</td>
<td>Book Study Concrete lessons for all teachers/students to build reading comprehension</td>
<td>Alignment with ACTIVE and Thinking Strategies and CCSS</td>
<td>Learning Scale Report Card</td>
<td>Teacher growth with practices: sharing of teaching strategies monthly during staff meetings, grade levels rotate modeling lessons Common Lessons taught monthly in all classes Common experiences, language and strategies for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching strategies</td>
<td>Time to share learning Learning Walk Day</td>
<td>Common language, strategies, experiences Student Learning Scale</td>
<td>Teachers will be able to: Identify…October Introduce…winter Apply…spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student thinking strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students will be able to: Identify…fall Describe…winter Apply…spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC</td>
<td>Weekly common meeting time (50 minutes Wednesday 1:30-2:20) and plan time within weekly schedule</td>
<td>Norms Data Protocol Meeting Notes Worksheet Data driven interventions for students</td>
<td>PLC developed formative assessments AIMS, DRA and state testing data Homeroom Report Card</td>
<td>Build School Wide: Mission, Vision, Values, Goals Evolving PLC Data driven teams responding to students’ needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>Focus/time to continue deepening knowledge of CCSS</td>
<td>PLC developed/created formative assessments aligned to CCSS</td>
<td>Intervention support for those not meeting/demonstrate student growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PD on Formative Assessments</td>
<td>PLC assessment plan to monitor students' growth</td>
<td>Information for next steps with teaching and learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iSmarter Balanced Coverage for assessing: DRA-1-3 F/W/S to monitor student growth</td>
<td>DRA data in Homeroom Fall-Oct Winter-Spring-</td>
<td>Identify students meeting standards and those that need support/enrichment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data to direct plans for intervention/interim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Model</th>
<th>Schedule providing 90+ minutes of time for Literacy instruction daily.</th>
<th>Focused lessons for student growth: Learning Goal/Target/Learning Scales</th>
<th>Learning Scales for student growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continued PD focus on: Learning Target/Goal/Scale, Gradual Release, Workshop, Anchor Charts, mini lessons, formative assessments</td>
<td>Classrooms utilizing the Workshop Model Student engagement I do, we do, you do...</td>
<td>Observation Walk Through Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Walk Day</td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Walk feedback/reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focused and intentional lessons on CCSS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intended Impact**

...is the deepening of knowledge and application of Thinking Strategies that build understanding. This will result in an increase in students meeting standards, both at the classroom and state level.

**Mid-Year Professional Learning**

**3.5 SIP Student Growth** - Theory of Action Work (most of all school), Reading Standard 2 - Student Scale-

Benchmark 1 for Students: Fall DRA Data, AIMS Data, CCSS 2 Learning Scale for each grade level
Benchmark 1 for Teachers: Strategy Learning Scale
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Creating a Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Benchmark 2: Winter DRA Data, AIMS Data, CCSS 2 Learning Scale for each grade level

Benchmark 2 for Teachers: Strategy Learning Scale

Summative Student: PLC developed grade level assessment

---

5.5 Selected Teacher Student Growth (2)  
*Proficient = Multiple measures of student achievement of selected teachers show measurable academic growth*

Case Study 1 - Teacher A
Case Study 2 - Teacher B

---

8.3 Subset Analysis - (Subset of T of A Work)

Reading Standard 2 -
Title Reading
Math Intervention -
LEAP Data
Identify your group(s)

How did you identify?
What was the baseline?
What was the intervention?
How did you monitor progress?
Where did they end up?
Given this data, what are your next steps?
1.1 Develops and sustains focus on a shared mission and clear vision for improvement of teaching and learning. 
   Communicates a vision of ongoing improvement in teaching and learning such that staff and students perceive and agree upon what the school is working to achieve; encourages and supports behaviors and school activities that explicitly align with vision; shares enthusiasm and optimism that the vision will be realized; regularly communicates a strong commitment to the mission and vision of the school and holds stakeholders accountable for implementation.

1.2 Engages in essential conversations for ongoing improvement. 
   Assures responsibility for accurate communication and productive flow of ideas among staff, students and stakeholders; provides leadership such that the essential conversations take place and in ways that maintain trust, dignity, and ensure accountability of participants; creates and sustains productive feedback loops that include staff members and students; keeps the dialogue ongoing and purposeful; regularly communicates high expectations and standards for staff and students regarding ongoing improvement.

1.3 Facilitates collaborative processes leading towards continuous improvement. 
   Actively models, supports, and facilitates collaborative processes among staff utilizing diversity of skills, perspectives and knowledge in the group; assumes responsibility for monitoring group dynamics and for promoting an open and constructive atmosphere for group discussions; creates opportunities for staff to initiate collaborative processes across grade levels and subject areas that support ongoing improvement of teaching and learning.

1.4 Creates opportunities for shared leadership. 
   Provides continual opportunity and invitation for staff to develop leadership qualities; consistently engages processes that support high participation in decision-making; assesses, analyzes and anticipates emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt shared leadership opportunities.

- If we walk around the building, what would we see that reflects the culture and priorities of this school? What are the points of pride?
- What decision-making process do you use and who is involved in that process?

Tasks
- Meet with school leadership team to identify a problem of practice for continuous improvement (1.4)
- Complete Theory of Action Planning Sheet (1.1, 1.2, 1.3)

Evidence:
1.3 What does monitoring group dynamics look like? Is a system needed? I think it goes back to my questioning skills. I’m trying to use the summarizing technique and then using phrases like “this is a theme I heard”. Growth - it will feel more natural and having the key phrases/questions ready to go.
1.2 Student feedback loops - student surveys
2 Ensuring School Safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1</th>
<th>Provides for physical safety</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implements a school safety plan that is based upon open communication systems and is effective and responsive to new threats and changing circumstances; proactively monitors and adjusts the plan in consultation with staff, students, and outside experts/consultants; staff proficiency in safety procedures as measured and monitored by group assessments followed by group reflection</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.2</th>
<th>Provides for social, emotional and intellectual safety</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assumes responsibility for the social, emotional and intellectual safety of all staff and students; supports the development, implementation, and monitoring of plans, systems, curricula, and programs that provide resources to support social, emotional and intellectual safety; reinforces protective factors that reduce risk for all students and staff</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tasks:
- Update Safety Plan
- Update PBIS as part of SIP "Culture & Climate"
- Conduct required safety drills and utilize Safety Team to reflect on lessons learned

Evidence:
SET Score
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Planning with Data</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Recognizes and seeks out multiple data sources</td>
<td>B-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systematically collects valid and reliable data from at least three sources to be used in problem solving and decision making; builds capacity of staff to recognize information as data by providing examples of using data throughout the building and in staff meetings; systematically gathers data on grades, attendance, behavior and other variables to inform efforts</td>
<td>B-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Analyzes and interpret multiple data sources to inform school-level improvement efforts</td>
<td>B-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis includes least three years of data including state, district, school and formal and informal classroom assessments; interprets available data at the subscale level to make informed decisions about strengths and areas of need; provides teacher teams with previous year's data and asks them to assess students' current needs</td>
<td>B-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Implements data driven plan for improved teaching and learning</td>
<td>B-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides leadership such that plan is clearly articulated and includes action steps and progress monitoring strategies, and strategies in the plan are directly aligned with the data analysis process and are research based; leads ongoing review of progress and results to make timely adjustments to the plan; data insights are regularly the subject of faculty meetings and PD sessions</td>
<td>B-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Assists staff to use data to guide, modify and improve classroom teaching and student learning</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regularly assists staff to use multiple types of data to reflect on effectiveness of lessons, guide lesson and assessment development, differentiate instruction (highly achieving as well as non-proficient) and to determine whether re-teaching, practice or moving forward with instruction is appropriate at both the group and individual level; strategies result in clear relationship between the actions of teachers and the impact on student achievement; demonstrated and measureable improvements in student academic growth readily apparent</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Provides evidence of student growth that results from the school improvement planning process</td>
<td>B-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School improvement planning process results in measurable improvement in student academic growth</td>
<td>B-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tasks:**
- Review school data, determine possible problems of practice (Data Meeting)
- Prepare for Continuous Improvement workshop
- Formative data collection & analysis of Theory of Action (Midyear Check)
- Facilitate screening data analysis (AIMSweb K-8, benchmark data)

**Evidence:**
- Moving to school wide data protocol, piloted with several grade level PLCs - this connects to Student Growth template
- PLC time - distinguished between planning PLC time and Data PLC

**time Impact:**

164
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Aligning Curriculum</strong></th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Assists staff in aligning curriculum to state and local district learning goals&lt;br&gt;Every class has a curriculum based on the standards of the state and district learning goals/targets; has deep knowledge of state and district learning goals and how to align these with curricula for diverse populations; systematically focuses staff on alignment; establishes a system that uses a feedback loop from the instruction and assessment alignment work to make makes adjustments to curricula</td>
<td>P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Assists staff in aligning best instructional practices to state and district learning goals&lt;br&gt;Has deep knowledge of best instructional practices for diverse populations and how to align these with curricula; systematically focuses staff on alignment; establishes a system for ongoing alignment that involves staff; continually supports, monitors alignment and makes adjustments; has teacher teams cooperatively plan aligned units, reviews them and then gives teachers feedback; reads and shares research that fosters an ongoing, school wide discussion on best practices for non-proficient to above proficient students</td>
<td>B-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Assists staff in aligning assessment practices to best instructional practices&lt;br&gt;Has deep knowledge of assessment; every course has a document (syllabus, course outline or learning objectives) that identifies the learning outcomes in language accessible to students and parents; student work created in response to teachers’ assessments of the learning outcomes accurately reflect the state standards and district learning goals/targets; continually provides support to systematically focus staff on alignment of assessment to instruction using best practices; establishes a system for ongoing alignment of formative and summative assessment that involves staff members</td>
<td>B-P</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tasks:**
- Support PLC team SMART goal development (SIP Action Plans)
- Update Literacy, Math/Science action plans based on PLC goals

**Evidence:**
Think about evidence of how you’re moving teachers along the professional learning scale for content literacy and engagement.

**Impact:**
### Improving Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1 Monitors instruction and assessment practices</th>
<th>Self: B-P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develops and uses observable systems and routines for monitoring instruction and assessment; uses data consistently to provide staff meaningful, personal feedback that is effective for improving instruction and assessment practices; ensures that teachers go beyond what students fail to learn and delve into why (root causes); deep understanding of evaluating technology-rich instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.2 Assists staff in developing required student growth plans and identifying valid, reliable sources of evidence of effectiveness</th>
<th>Self: B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meets with faculty members regularly (beyond minimum teachers 'contract) to develop, review and modify student growth plans (individual or group plans); assists identification of performance indicators to benchmark progress; research-based planning and performance-linked goal setting strategies, such as “SMART” goals, are used allowing timely feedback to make mid-course corrections and improve teacher practice; assessment results of selected teachers show measurable and improving academic growth of students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.3 Assists staff in implementing effective instruction and assessment practices</th>
<th>Self: P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates and supports staff in the implementation of effective instruction and assessment practices; has deep and thorough knowledge and understanding of best practices in instruction and assessment; devotes considerable time and effort to the improvement of instruction and assessment; assists staff to use the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.4 Evaluates staff in effective instruction and assessment practices</th>
<th>Self: P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluates staff reliably and validly; provides triangulated data evidence to support claims; recommendations are effective and lead to consistently improved instruction and assessment practices; demonstrating knowledge of student diversity (culture, ability, etc.) and its meaning in instruction and assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.5 Provides evidence of student growth of selected teachers</th>
<th>Self: B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple measures of student achievement of selected teachers show measurable academic growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Tasks:
- Self-assessment goal setting meetings with teachers (Sept 30)
- Participate in Learning Lab Inter-rater evaluation training
- Conduct observation cycle
- Conduct Midyear Checks with teachers by Feb 28
- Facilitate school learning walk process
- Complete summative evaluation reports

#### Evidence:

#### Impact:
### 6. Managing Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.1</th>
<th>Managing human resources (assignment, hiring)</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Places students’ needs at the center of human resource decisions and decisions regarding hiring, retention and placement of staff; conducts a rigorous hiring process when choosing staff; focuses energy on ensuring productivity through staff placement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.2</th>
<th>Managing human resources (ongoing pd)</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional development plan has three to four areas of emphasis, job embedded, ongoing and linked to the organization’s vision and plan; systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of past PD offerings and outcomes; creates and supports informal professional development (ie. professional learning communities); offers PD that meets teachers’ needs and has elements of high-quality PD (sufficient duration, content, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.3</th>
<th>Managing fiscal resources</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engages others in dialogue on budget decisions based on data, School Improvement Plan, and district priorities that support learning; makes fiscal decisions that maximize resources and supports improved teaching and learning; uses defined process to track expenditures; frequently monitors data, documents and evaluates results; uses findings to improve fiscal decisions made in the future; documented history reveals ability to manage complex projects and meet deadlines within budget; regularly works with teachers to establish goals for student achievement linked to individual teachers professional development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.4</th>
<th>Fulfilling legal responsibilities</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumes responsibility for operating within the law; demonstrates deep and thorough knowledge and understanding of the intent of the law; operates with deep and thorough knowledge and understanding of district policies, grant requirements and collective bargaining agreements; keeps student and staff well-being at the forefront of legal responsibilities; tolerates no behavior outside of the law and approaches problems proactively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tasks:**
- Finalize master schedule
- Complete budget
- Report evaluation data
- Share school PD plan with district

**Evidence:**

**Impact:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Engaging Communities</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Mid</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7.1 | Communicates with community to promote learning  
 builds effective communication systems between home, community and school that are interactive and regularly used by students, school staff and families and other stakeholders; uses multiple communication channels appropriate for cultural and language differences that exist in the community; practices a healthy discretion with personal information of students and staff | P |   |   |
| 7.2 | Partners with families and school community  
 encourages and supports consistent and ongoing community and family engagement for stakeholders in school activities; consistently implements effective plans for engaging community outside of school to participate in school decision making to improve teaching and learning; community resources are identified and utilized in support of improved teaching and learning; actively monitors community involvement and adjusts, creating new opportunities for families and community to be a part of the vision of improving teaching and learning | P |   |   |

Tasks:
- Engage parent groups (PTA, parent advisory, etc) in school improvement work
- Engage all school community

Evidence:

Impact:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>Closing the Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Identifies barriers to achievement and knows how to close resulting gaps. Identifies learning gaps early using formative assessments; demonstrates complete knowledge and understanding of the existence of gaps; accepts responsibility for impacting these gaps; identifies and addresses barriers to closing gaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Demonstrates a commitment to close the achievement gap. Achievement data is accessible to all members of the school community including non-English speaking parents; constructs plan with specific strategies to impact gaps; communicates, monitors and adjust efforts to effectively make progress toward reducing gaps; models and builds the capacity of school personnel to be culturally competent and to implement socially just practices; demonstrates improvement in closing identified gaps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Provides evidence of growth in student learning. Achievement data from multiple sources or data points show evidence of improving student growth toward the district’s learning goals; the average achievement of the student population improved as does the achievement of each subgroup of students identified as needing improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tasks:
- Identify targeted subgroup for closing the gap case study

Evidence:

Impact:

Reflection about systems - evolving them through practice

How do PLCs create/flourish in thinking about systems?

PLC stages - connecting to professional learning
APPENDIX E

INITIAL CODING REPORTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Coding Reports</th>
<th>Documents (16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Categories and Subcategories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expectations Principal PD**
- Align curriculum - Common Core: 6
- Collaboration - interaction: 12
- Danielson framework: 3
- District goals and support: 7
- Improve instruction: 8
- Improve student learning: 2
- Inspirational - motivational: 2
- Prepared - knowledgeable: 11
- Relevant - authentic - realistic - actionable: 8
- Teachscape: 1
- TOSA positions: 3
- TPEP PLCs RIG: 7

**Determine PD Needs for Principals**
- Collaboration - interaction: 14
- Communication - input: 12
- District-level: 11
- PD provided - not sure how needs determined: 3
- Surveys and Google Drive: 2
- TPEP PLCs: 8

**Describe Growing Principal**
- Build trust and relationships: 7
- Change is observable: 5
- Collaborative: 9
- Communication - articulate - seeks input: 11
- Develop others: 9
- Experiences successes and failures: 4
- Knowledge-seeking - curious: 8
- Positive: 1
- Problem solving: 4
- Purposeful: 3
- Pushback: 1
- Reflective: 4
- Shared leadership: 2
- Transparent: 2
- Visionary - sets goals: 11
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Coding Reports</th>
<th>Documents (16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Categories and Subcategories</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Goals PD development</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration - consistency</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum alignment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielson Frameworks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data and data cycles</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation systems</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and supporting growth in general</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving instruction</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input - feedback</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional framework</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead change &amp; vision for district</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School culture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student growth and assessment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPEP PLCs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing goals</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actions indicators growing principal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee retention</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged - interested</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor - measure</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observable change and actions</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation process based on AWSPLF</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practices - meeting</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive vs focused evaluation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data-based</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eVal - self-evaluation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nesting process</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLCs - problems of practice</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective - flowing</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; PD</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation connection principals’ PD</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation connection</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration - sharing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus - criteria - guide</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports growth</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories and Subcategories</td>
<td>Documents (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-evaluation connection</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths AWSPLF</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built around ISLLC Standards</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility of developers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria - rubric - basic - ideal - target</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic - reasonable</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources - examples</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges using AWSPLF</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing the gap</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common language</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging communities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence &amp; documentation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multitudinous standards</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritizing criteria</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time factor</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilizing data</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How challenges might be mediated</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations district level</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise statewide regional</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrower focus on standards</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing solutions - dialogue</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize resources</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Successes with AWSPLF re principal PD</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning curriculum</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing the gap</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic tools</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective instruction</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee satisfaction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals and focus</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining data</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not asked</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School culture</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Coding Reports</td>
<td>Categories and Subcategories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing - collaboration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and federal level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systemic process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main value AWSPLF for principal PD</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building on Marzano TPEP &amp; Danielson Framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection with developers &amp; experts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus around the principalship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent - measurable - rubric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide for growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not asked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anything else re growth PD &amp; AWSPLF</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not asked or none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal growth &amp; PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would like to see</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See results of this study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from state agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher growth &amp; PD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would like to see</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

WASHINGTON STATE TEACHER/PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA
The graphics above illustrate the relationship between the new Washington State teacher and principal evaluation criteria. The criteria and process for both teachers and principals rely on indicators embedded in five key areas: culture, data, content, instruction, and community.