



Principal and School Leader Evaluation

Recent changes to existing federal programs and new initiatives, such as the School Improvement Grants (SIG) and Race to the Top (RTTT), place greater emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of principals. To meet program requirements, states and local districts have had to quickly devise principal and school leader evaluation plans to quantify “effectiveness” based in significant part on student standardized assessment scores. As a result, we are learning that many state and local evaluation practices lack clear performance standards and rigor based on well-established research that identifies the characteristics of a high-performing principal. In addition, there appears to be inadequate opportunities for the input of the practitioner perspective, or principals, in the design and implementation of state and local evaluation programs.

NAESP supports the unique role of principals within the learning community, and informs the various aspects of sound policy and practice of effective school leadership. NAESP’s *Leading Learning Communities* promotes six standards for what principals should know and be able to do – offering a portfolio of strategies for practitioners with tools and resources that can immediately be applied to develop effective leadership skills. The standards, which were developed from and continue to align to a robust leadership research base, provide a solid foundation for how best to train, assess and evaluate highly effective principals. At a minimum and in addition to student performance measures, any principal evaluation system must rely on a core set of competencies in school leadership, or research-based evidence of the capabilities every principal or school leader must demonstrate.

In 2010, NAESP initiated a broad effort to carefully and inclusively examine the impact of recent federal policies on principal competency and evaluation. NAESP is partnering with Johns Hopkins University and the American Institutes for Research to reiterate the key indicators from research that substantiate the competencies of effective school leadership. This work also examines state and local evaluation practices and how the evidence-based research is or is not being appropriately applied, and will result in a common set of guidelines for use by states and local districts in any school leadership evaluation system.

NAESP, in collaboration with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), is engaging a committee of principals representing all grade levels and demographics, to review the research, discuss and determine the capabilities upon which any school leader should be evaluated, and provide the practical from-the-field input on system design and implementation.

NAESP Position on Principal Evaluation

- Like teachers, principals must receive a comprehensive, fair and objective performance evaluation using systems that consider multiple measures of the competencies needed to improve student learning.
- NAESP believes the principals' voice is critical to the discussion, design and establishment of state and local evaluation systems. Principals must be afforded opportunities to provide on-going feedback as systems are developed and implemented.
- High quality school leadership is the second most important factor for determining student academic achievement and the variety of skills needed to be a strong school leader must be carefully identified, examined, and appropriately weighted in any approach to determining "effectiveness".
- NAESP believes that principal evaluation should be a carrot, not stick, approach. Principal evaluation systems must provide meaningful indicators for the preparation of a reasonable professional development plan to enhance and grow a school principal's leadership capacity with a consideration for the many contexts unique to the school and the community it serves.
- At a minimum, any principal evaluation system must rely on a core set of competencies in school leadership, or research-based evidence of the capabilities every principal or school leader must demonstrate.