

on growth or gain in achievement is limiting. There are three questions that require attention here: What is the level of achievement? What is the gain in achievement? And what is the equitable distribution of achievement?

There are two messages we want to leave principals. Starting with the indirect point, almost everything we have reported about principal evaluation applies to teacher evaluation, as well. Because principals are in charge, in this realm, our hope is that principals will start to view this responsibility with a more refined lens.

Second, in many cases, principals have a voice in how the evaluation systems that impact them are created and implemented. Armed with an understanding of the essential components of successful systems, principals can have a positive impact on the processes in principal evaluation systems in their districts and throughout the nation. 

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Principal ONLINE

Access the following Web resources by visiting *Principal* magazine online: www.naesp.org/JanFeb14

 The Wallace Foundation has numerous **resources on principal evaluation**, including tools and worksheets for principal improvement.

 NAESP's report, *Rethinking Principal Evaluation*, outlines **the key domains of school leadership**, and essential features for evaluation systems.

Take Charge of Principal Evaluations

Comprehensive principal evaluation systems can be an effective way to support the professional growth of instructional leaders, helping them to learn, grow, and improve schools. As states and districts across the nation take steps towards developing systems and improving evaluation processes, Pennsylvania districts are implementing the Framework for Leadership set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The research used to develop this model is based on a review of work from other states, the Core and Corollary Standards, which detail the skills and abilities for effective principals, as well as a review of relevant research. The model shares strategic goals with the Danielson Framework for Teaching, which is also used in the district. The rubric assesses four domains:

- Strategic/cultural leadership;
- Leadership for learning; and
- Systems leadership;
- Professional and community leadership.

In an effort to increase communication and collaboration, the superintendent meets with building principals and other administrators in the summer to set goals for the upcoming year. A mid-year meeting is held during the winter to review progress on goals. Last, an end-of-year meeting is held so that the summative evaluation can be completed. Principals are also encouraged to compile evidence throughout the year to support their personal and professional growth in each domain.

Accurately measuring principal effectiveness is an important discussion at the district, state, and national level. But, this can't be a topic just for policy-makers and superintendents; principals must take a leading role and include their voices in this important conversation. Here are four ways that principals can maximize the evaluation experience, regardless of the model that is used.

1 Know the standards for measurement. Be familiar with the tool your supervisor uses to evaluate performance. Whether it is a rubric, student achievement data, a portfolio system, or a combination of these elements, understanding the expectations and the method of measurement will help you gather the necessary evidence to demonstrate progress in each area.

2 Set goals that connect to district initiatives. Aligning building-level goals to district-level goals engages all educators in a common purpose. Include goals that fit within an area of interest for teachers and building leaders to ensure school commitment to achieving goals.

3 Keep your supervisor well informed. The evaluation process isn't always a two-way street. Work to build a relationship by keeping your superintendent abreast of the happenings in your building. Send periodic updates via email, or set aside time every quarter to meet to ensure that they are aware of the progress towards the goals.

4 Create positive PR. Getting the word out about the great things happening in your school is critical. Principals can take this proactive approach by sending out newsletters, posting a principal's blog, or communicating with local media. These strategies help to publicize student accomplishments, classroom activities, and school events, while also raising community awareness, engaging parents in your school, and informing your supervisor.

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