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Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding **factors of effective educational leadership, especially with regard to capacity-building, professional development, and feedback.**

Ask REL Southwest is part of a collaborative Ask-A-REL reference desk service provided by the 10 regional educational laboratories (REL). By design, this service functions much in the same way as a technical reference library providing references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations for research-based education questions.

Please note that REL Southwest has not evaluated the resources themselves, but offers this list to you for your information only.

BACKGROUND

REL Southwest held a Governing Board meeting on May 2–4, 2016, in New Orleans, Louisiana. A needs-sensing focus group activity was conducted with Board members in attendance. Of the new needs identified by the group, five needs were submitted as Ask A REL questions. This response addresses one of those questions.

Following an established REL Southwest protocol, we conducted a search for research reports as well as descriptive briefs on effective educational leadership, for use and dissemination at the September 2016 Governing Board meeting. The sources included federally funded organizations, additional research institutions, educational databases, and general Internet searches.

QUESTION

What is known about effective educational leadership and its intersection with (1) capacity-building, (2) professional development, and (3) feedback?

Sources

Anderson, K. D. (2008). Transformational teacher leadership in rural schools. *Rural Educator*, 29(3), 8–17. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ869293>.

From the ERIC abstract: “In this paper, the author explores the rural school context and its teacher leaders as a third transformational leadership prototype adding to Leithwood and Jantzi’s (1999) two transformational leadership prototypes of females and new teachers in the elementary school. The author helps illuminate new understanding of rural schools and their highly interactive decision making styles where teacher leaders are a source of creativity development of unique forms of leadership. If researchers focus on teachers as leaders in rural schools, specifically those who operate outside of

traditional leadership roles, there exists a promising area of new understanding for educational leadership as transformational teacher leadership.”

Bridges, Edwin (2012). Administrator preparation: Looking backwards and forwards. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 50(4), 402-419. Retrieve from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ970579>.

From the ERIC abstract: “The purpose of this paper was to conduct a critical analysis of the origins and implementation of problem-based learning in educational administration as a window into the limitations of this approach and more generally administrator preparation. Design/methodology/approach: The author reviewed the published work of the originator from 1970-2009, as well as his preparation program for principals, and evaluated his approach primarily in light of two perspectives, emotional labor and positive emotions. The paper probes the utility of using these sociological and psychological perspectives in studying and understanding the emotional side of administration through interviews with principals. Findings: The major finding of this analysis was to question whether sufficient attention is being paid to the emotional aspects of administration in problem-based learning in particular and administrator preparation programs more generally. The analysis reveals several areas where more attention should be paid and provides some insight into the nature of mental and emotional labor of principals. Originality/value: The paper combines two theoretical approaches in a novel way to raise a series of questions that can be used to evaluate programs for preparing administrators in terms of a critical, but for the most part neglected, area—the emotional side of administration. The author describes an approach that might be used for those who choose to incorporate this facet of administration into their preparation programs.”

Clayton, J. K. (2014). The leadership lens: Perspectives on leadership from school district personnel and university faculty. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 9(1). <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1024109>.

From the ERIC abstract: “This study examined the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for aspiring school leaders from the perspective of university faculty in educational administration programs and acting school administrators and teacher leaders. The author sought to understand the congruence and/or dissonance between university faculty in educational administration programs and acting school administrators and teacher leaders in their view of necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes for aspiring school leaders. Using a qualitative research design, the author interviewed both university professors in education administration programs and current administrators who serve as principal, assistant principal, curriculum supervisors, superintendents, department chairs, and other school leaders.”

Kraft, M. A. and Gilmour, A. (2016). Can Principals Promote Teacher Development as Evaluators? A Case Study of Principals Views and Experiences. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, doi: 10.1177/0013161X16653445. http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mkraft/files/principals_as_evalutors_rr_final_unblinded.docx.pdf.

From the abstract: “**Purpose:** New teacher evaluation systems have expanded the role of principals as instructional leaders, but little is known about principals’ ability to promote teacher development through the evaluation process. We conducted a case study of principals’ perspectives on evaluation and their experiences implementing observation and feedback cycles to better understand whether principals feel as though they are able to promote teacher development as evaluators. **Research Method:** We conducted interviews with a stratified random sample of 24 principals in an urban district that recently implemented major reforms to its teacher evaluation system. We analyzed these interviews by drafting thematic summaries, coding interview transcripts, creating data-analytic matrices, and writing analytic memos. **Findings:** We found that the evaluation reforms provided a common framework and language that helped facilitate principals’ feedback conversations with teachers. However, we also found that tasking principals with primary responsibility for conducting evaluations resulted in a variety of unintended consequences which undercut the quality of evaluation feedback they provided. We analyze five broad solutions to these challenges: strategically targeting evaluations, reducing operational responsibilities, providing principal training, hiring instructional coaches, and developing peer evaluation systems. **Implications:** The quality of feedback teachers receive through the evaluation process depends critically on the time and training evaluators have to provide individualized and actionable feedback. Districts that task principals with primary responsibility for conducting observation and feedback cycles must attend to the many implementation challenges associated with this approach in order for next-generation evaluation systems to successfully promote teacher development.”

Lambert, L. (2002). A framework for shared leadership. *Educational Leadership* v59 n8, p37-40. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ644980>.

From the ERIC abstract: “Asserts that principals can improve student learning by sharing the leadership of instruction with teachers and parents thereby building leadership capacity. Describes characteristics of schools with high leadership capacity. Provides examples of building leadership capacity through the use of study groups, action-research teams, and leadership teams.”

From the article: (<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may02/vol59/num08/A-Framework-for-Shared-Leadership.aspx>.)

“Leadership Capacity in Action

A growing number of schools have undertaken the work of building leadership capacity to bring about sustainable school improvement. Schools are inventing and experimenting with many forms of participation. The following examples come from former principal students of mine or from educators whom I have come to know in my development work, in the United States, Canada, England, and Australia.

Study Groups

Study groups read articles or books together and discuss the implications of the texts’ ideas. Educators in Edmonton, Wild Rose, and Calgary in Alberta, Canada; Columbus, Ohio; Kansas City, Kansas; and San Leandro, California, regularly use study groups as a means to challenge and integrate their thinking and move to new and collective levels

of understanding. These conversations give rise to new and better instructional practices...

Action Research Teams

Action research teams identify a compelling question of practice and conduct research to discover information that will shed new light on the question and lead to new actions...

Vertical Learning Communities

In the vertical learning communities model, multiple grades are linked together in a common community in which teacher leaders have the authority to work closely with students in instruction, curriculum design, discipline, and family relations. Teachers know all the students well, so students feel cared about. During an advisement period, teachers mentor students in small groups. The curriculum is carefully articulated and focused on student needs, and discretionary time and resources allow teachers to do intensive collaborative planning. Teachers are assigned to students for multiple years; this "looping" structure creates strong, long-term relationships...

Leadership Teams

At Hawthorne School in Kansas City, Kansas, the Vision Team joins principal Jayson Strickland to analyze data and to plan, advocate, monitor, and implement the school improvement plan. The team is composed of representatives from various school departments (grade level and special education teachers and reading specialists) who are nominated and selected by the staff. All meetings are open to anyone who wants to attend. The team keeps the plan alive and ensures that its components are systematically implemented..."

Louis, S. K., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K. L. & Anderson, S. E. (2010). Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning, *Educational Research Service*.¹ <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Investigating-the-Links-to-Improved-Student-Learning.pdf>.

From the ERIC abstract: "In a recent 334-page report, "Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning," authors Kyla Walstrom, Karen Seashore Louis, Kenneth Leithwood, and Stephen Anderson discuss findings from the Learning from Leadership study. This study was designed to identify and describe successful educational leadership and to explain how such leadership at the school, district, and state levels can foster changes in professional practice that yield improvements in student learning. The report, commissioned by The Wallace Foundation and issued by the University of Minnesota Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement and the University of Toronto Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, draws on research conducted over a 5-year period. This "Informed Educator" includes excerpts from an executive summary of the larger report. (Contains 2 figures.)"

From the report: "Education is widely held to be crucial for the survival and success of individuals and countries in the emerging global environment. U.S. politicians of all stripes have placed education at the center of their political platforms, and education

¹ Note: This report was not peer-reviewed.

has been at the center of many European and Asian policy agendas. Comparable agreement is also evident about the contributions of leadership to the implementation of virtually all initiatives aimed at improving student learning and the quality of schools. It is therefore difficult to imagine a focus for research with greater social justification than research about successful educational leadership. That was the broad focus for this six-year study funded by the Wallace Foundation: to identify the nature of successful educational leadership and to better understand how such leadership can improve educational practices and student learning.

More specifically, we sought to do the following:

- Identify state, district, and school leadership practices that directly or indirectly foster the improvement of educational practices and student learning.
- Clarify how successful leadership practices directly and indirectly influence the quality of teaching and learning.
- Determine the extent to which individuals and groups at state, district, school, and classroom levels possess the will and skill required to improve student learning, and the extent to which their work settings allow and encourage them to act on those capacities and motivations.
- Describe the ways in which, and the success with which, individuals and groups at the state, district, school, and classroom levels help others to acquire the will and skill required to improve student learning.
- Identify the leadership and workplace characteristics of districts and schools that encourage the values, capacities, and use of practices that improve student learning.”

McCullough, M., Lipscomb, S., Chiang, H., Gill, B., & Cheban, I. (2016). Measuring school leaders' effectiveness: Findings from a multiyear pilot of Pennsylvania's Framework for Leadership (REL 2016–111). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences and Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic. <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=REL2016111>.

From the IES description: “This “Stated Briefly” report is a companion piece that summarizes the results of another report of the same name. This study examines the accuracy of performance ratings from the Framework for Leadership (FFL), Pennsylvania's tool for evaluating the leadership practices of principals and assistant principals. The study analyzed four key properties of the FFL: score variation, internal consistency, year-to-year stability, and concurrent validity. Score variation was characterized by the percentages of school leaders earning scores in different portions of the rating scale. To measure the internal consistency of the FFL, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the full FFL and for each of its four categories of leadership practices. Analyses of score stability used data on FFL scores of school years across two years to calculate Pearson's correlation coefficient. Concurrent validity was assessed through a regression model for the relationship between school leaders' estimated contributions to student achievement growth and their FFL scores. This report is based primarily on the 2013/14 pilot in which 517 principals and 123 assistant principals were rated by their

supervisors; an interim report examined data from the 2012/13 pilot year. The study finds that the FFL is a reliable measure, with good internal consistency and a moderate level of year-to-year stability in scores. The study also finds evidence of the FFL's concurrent validity: principals with higher scores on the FFL, on average, make larger estimated contributions to student achievement growth. Higher total FFL scores and scores in two of the four FFL domains are significantly or marginally significantly associated with both value-added in all subjects combined and value-added in math specifically. This evidence of the validity of the FFL sets it apart from other principal evaluation tools: No other measures of principals' professional practice have been shown to be related to principals' effects on student achievement. However, in both pilot years, variation in scores was limited, with most school leaders scoring in the upper third of the rating scale. As the FFL is implemented statewide, continued examination of evidence on its statistical properties, especially the variation in scores, is important.”

McCullough, M., Lipscomb, S., Chiang, H., Gill, B., & Cheban, I. (2016). Measuring school leaders' effectiveness: Findings from a multiyear pilot of Pennsylvania's Framework for Leadership (REL 2016–106). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences and Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic. <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=REL2016106>.

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Slater, L. (2008). Pathways to Building Leadership Capacity, *Educational Management Administration Leadership* v36 n1, 55-69. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ793552>.

From the ERIC abstract: “Within the complex working of today's schools, as principals share the lead and the load, the success of their performance will be determined by their ability to inspire a culture of empowerment by acting as ‘hero-makers’ rather than heroes. Drawing on the resources of others is essential for the site-based breakthroughs or change in complex school systems and in turn builds human capacity and self-knowledge. In order to develop human potential, the leader needs to know people well, look for strengths in individuals, and build upon them. Effective communication is instrumental in establishing collaborative relationships and is a key aspect of building leadership capacity in a school. These relationships provide the framework within which we come to understand and value each other's experiences, interests, and dreams. In this article, I will discuss the findings of a study that describe how principals used communication strategies and skills to foster the empowerment of other stakeholders within the context of collaborative initiatives. The findings from this qualitative focus group study involving principals, parents and teachers demonstrate that leaders can use several communication techniques to encourage shared leadership and thereby to build human and organizational capacity.”

Additional Resource to Consult

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS — Concordia University — Posted November 17, 2012 <http://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/educator-tips/five-strategies-principals-can-use-to-give-effective-feedback-to-teachers/>.

Five Strategies Principals Can Use to Give Effective Feedback to Teachers

From the article: “Evaluating and offering feedback to teachers is one of the hardest jobs a principal must do. Many teachers become defensive when a principal offers negative feedback, particularly if the feedback comes as the result of hearsay or a random one-time visit to the teachers’ classroom. However, in order to create a successful school environment and make sure everyone is meeting professional standards, principals must find effective ways to give feedback to teachers.” The article further outlined (with descriptions) six things leaders can do to make feedback effective:

- Make time for teachers
- Outline expectations
- Encourage goal-setting
- Offer immediate feedback
- Identify strengths
- Positive environment

METHODS

Search of Databases and Websites

- [Institute of Education Sciences \(IES\) website](http://www.ies.ed.gov) (<http://www.ies.ed.gov>)
- [ERIC database](http://www.eric.ed.gov) (www.eric.ed.gov)
- [Google Scholar](http://scholar.google.com) (scholar.google.com)
- Google (<https://www.google.com/>)
- Bing (<http://www.bing.com/>)

Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Searches

Educational leadership; feedback; Teacher administrator relationship; educational leadership + capacity building; educational leadership + feedback

Criteria for Inclusion

REL Southwest selected resources that provide research on effective educational leadership. When REL Southwest staff reviewed the resources, we considered, among other things, three factors:

1. **Date of Publication:** The search was limited to research conducted since 2000.
2. **Source and Funder of the Report/Brief/Article:** Priority was given to publications written in relevant, peer-reviewed journals or reports or produced by well-known research organizations.
3. **Methodology:** Sources include literature reviews and commissioned reports.

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