

The Role of Principal Supervisors in Challenging Times: Focus on Teaching and Learning

Webinar
October 20, 2020

If you can see the
slide and hear the
music, you are all set.



learningforward
THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

Welcome! We will begin shortly

All attendees are muted upon entry.
Please use the chat feature for comments
and questions during the webinar.

Getting started



Frederick Brown
Moderator

Chief Learning
Officer/Deputy

Learning Forward



Thank you for joining us

The webinar will be recorded and available.

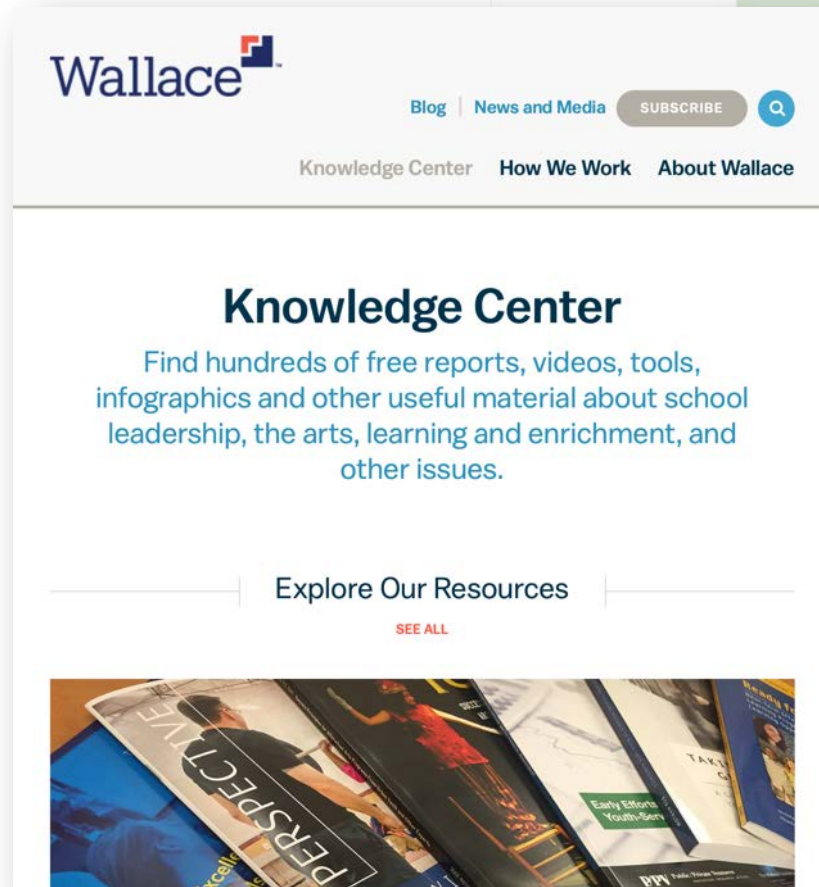
All webinar registrants will receive a follow-up email that will include the webinar slide deck, recording, and other resources mentioned during the presentation.

Please introduce yourselves in the chat box

- Your name
- Your location
- Your role in the educational sector



[@learningforward](https://twitter.com/learningforward)



The screenshot shows the Wallace Knowledge Center website. At the top left is the Wallace logo. To its right are navigation links for "Blog", "News and Media", and a "SUBSCRIBE" button. A search icon is also present. Below these are links for "Knowledge Center", "How We Work", and "About Wallace". The main heading is "Knowledge Center", followed by a paragraph: "Find hundreds of free reports, videos, tools, infographics and other useful material about school leadership, the arts, learning and enrichment, and other issues." Below this is a section titled "Explore Our Resources" with a "SEE ALL" link. At the bottom is a collage of various reports and infographics, including one titled "PERSPECTIVE" and another titled "Early Efforts Youth-Serv".

Participants will ...

- Explore key concepts from the Vanderbilt and Mathematica report: [Changing the Principal Supervisor Role to Better Support Principals](#)
- Consider actions that principal supervisors can take to support principals, especially during these challenging times
- Explore actions that districts took to improve the structure and support the role of the principal supervisor

1. Do your district's principal supervisors support principals more on management or instruction?
 - A. Management
 - B. Instruction
 - C. Other
2. Approximately how many principals do each of your district's principal supervisors support?
 - A. 1–5
 - B. 6–10
 - C. 11–25
 - D. 26+

Focus on teaching and learning



Panel discussion



Andy Cole
Consultant
The Wallace
Foundation



Ellen Goldring
Executive
Associate Dean
Peabody College
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN



Rudy Jimenez
Assistant
Superintendent
North East ISD
San Antonio, TX



Brent Brummet
Executive Director
for School
Administration
North East ISD
San Antonio, TX

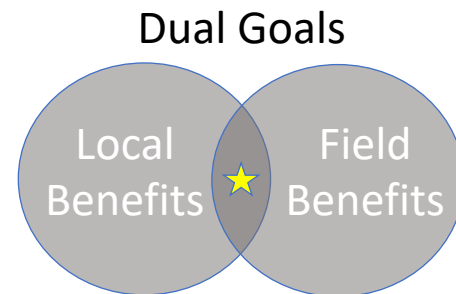
About The Wallace Foundation

Andy Cole, Consultant

- The mission of The Wallace Foundation is to foster
 - improvements in learning and enrichment for disadvantaged children and
 - the vitality of the arts for everyone.
- We work with grantee partners to develop — then broadly share — evidence-based, practical, effective approaches in our focus areas.



The Wallace Approach (our theory of change)

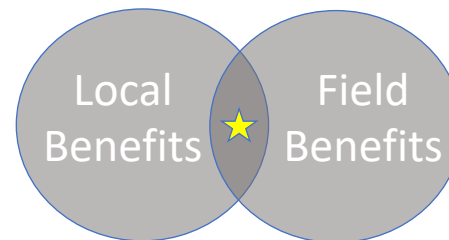


The Wallace Approach (our theory of change)

Understand the Context

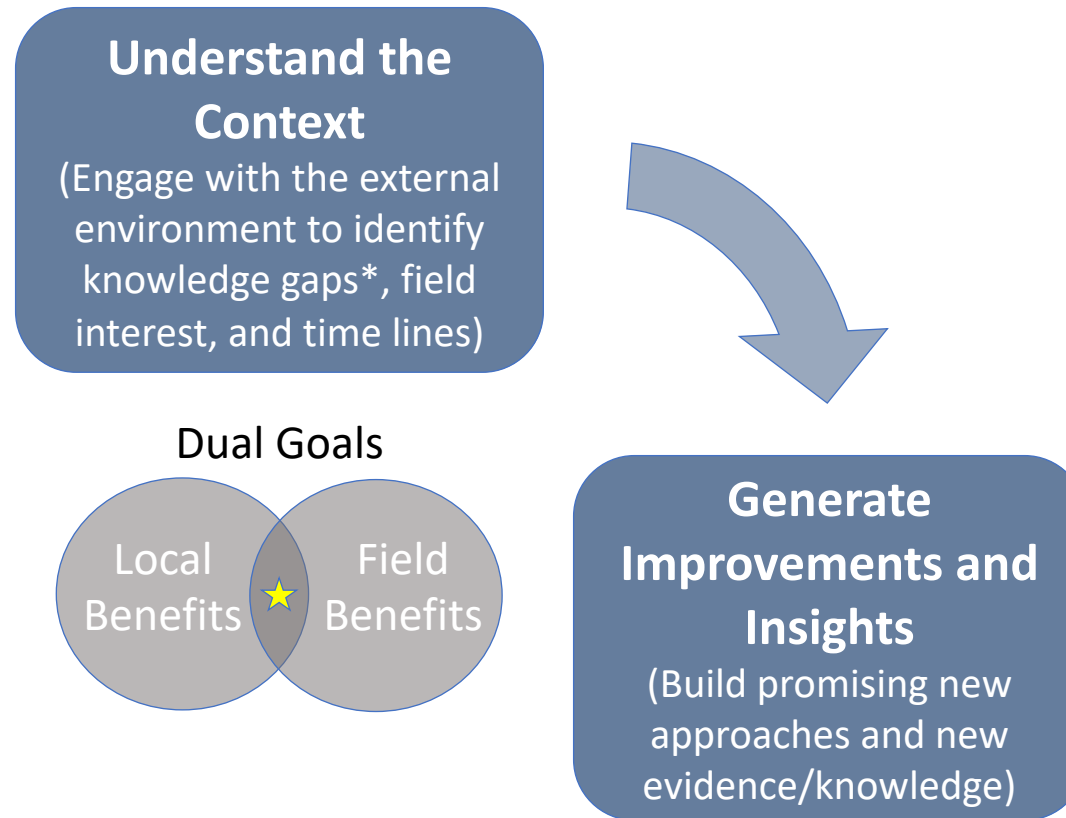
(Engage with the external environment to identify knowledge gaps*, field interest, and time lines)

Dual Goals



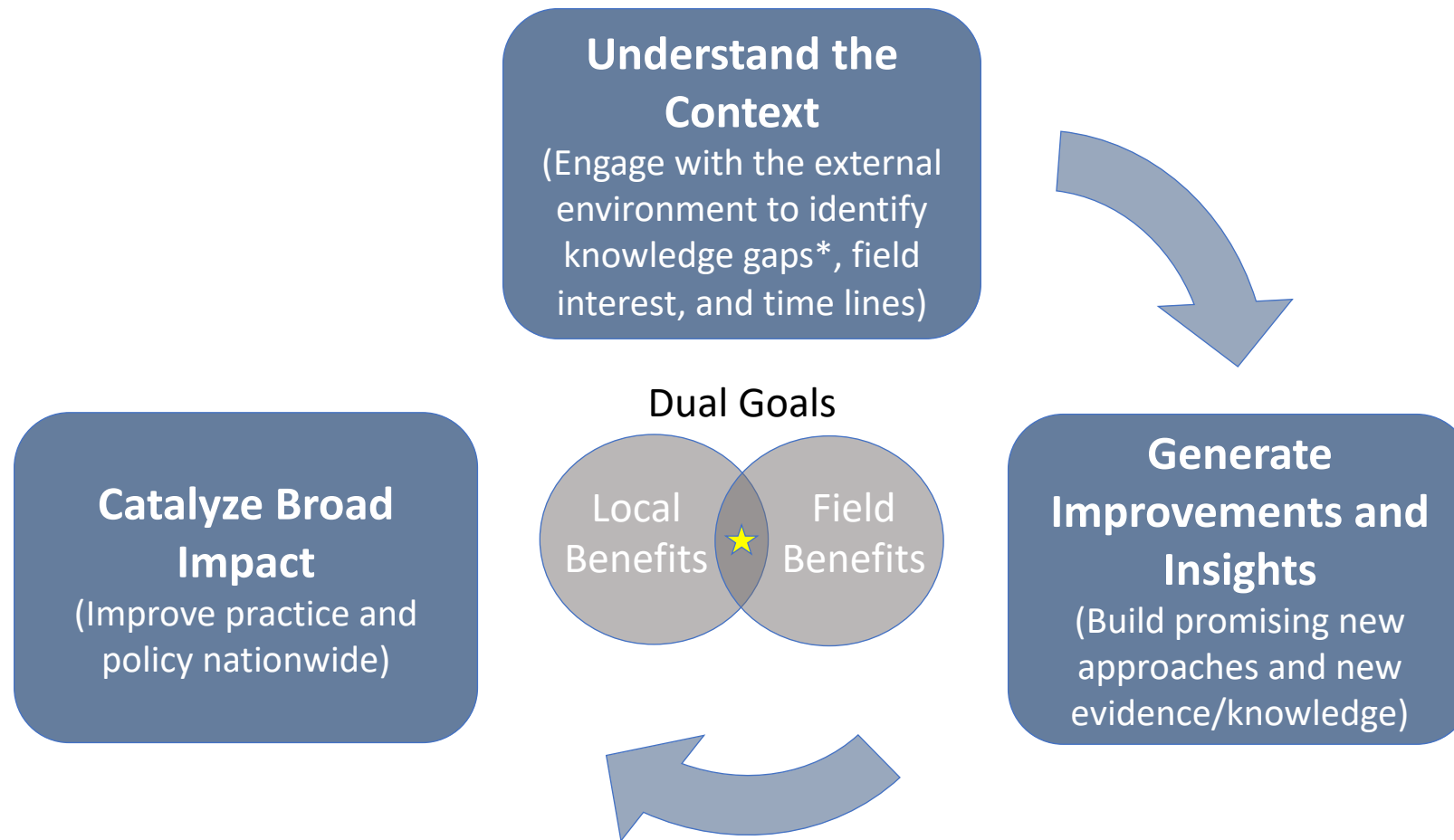
*Wallace seeks to identify a gap in knowledge that, if filled, would help propel progress in a field. This requires both an unanswered question and field interest in the answer.

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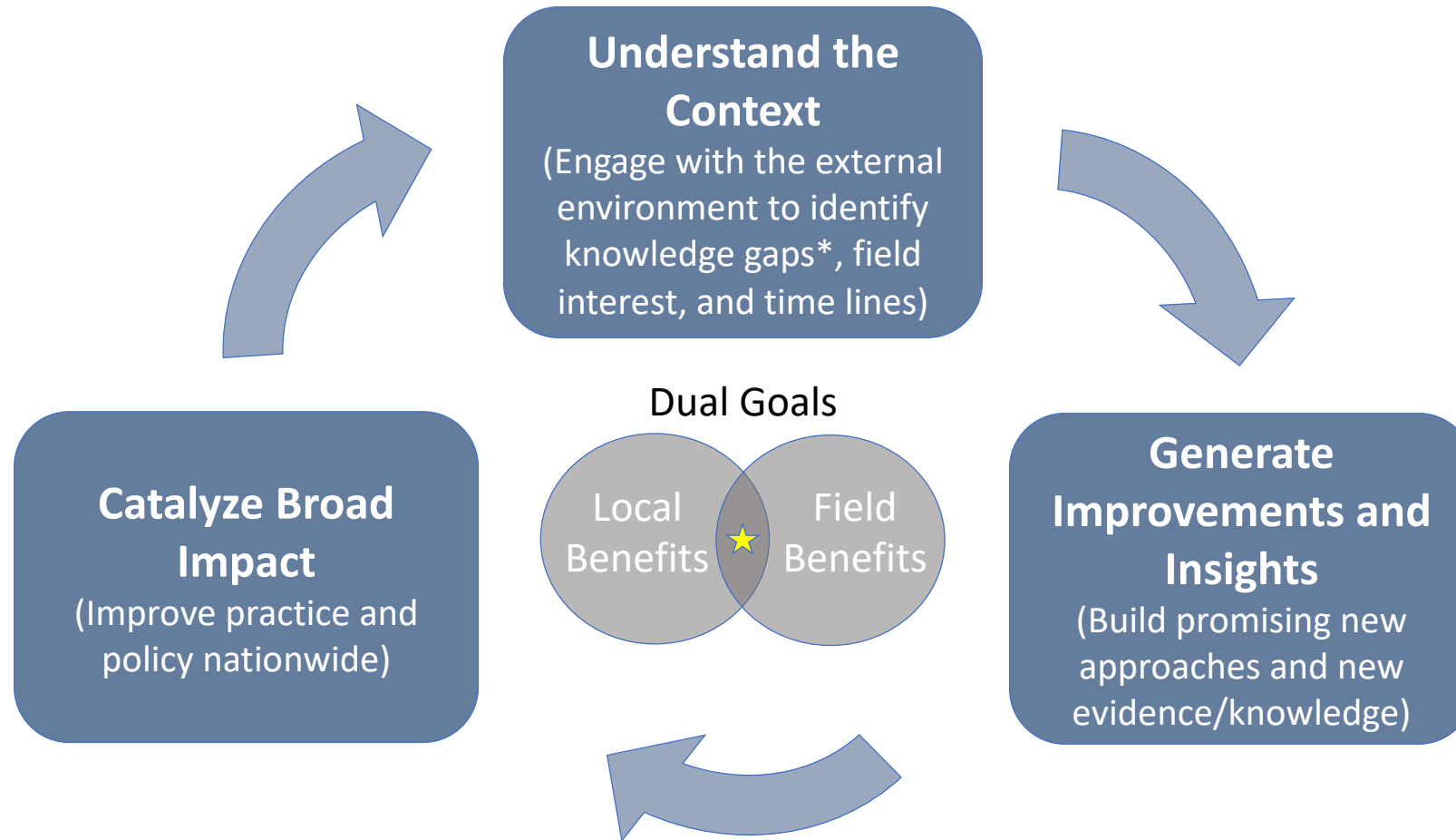
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Effective principals matter for student learning

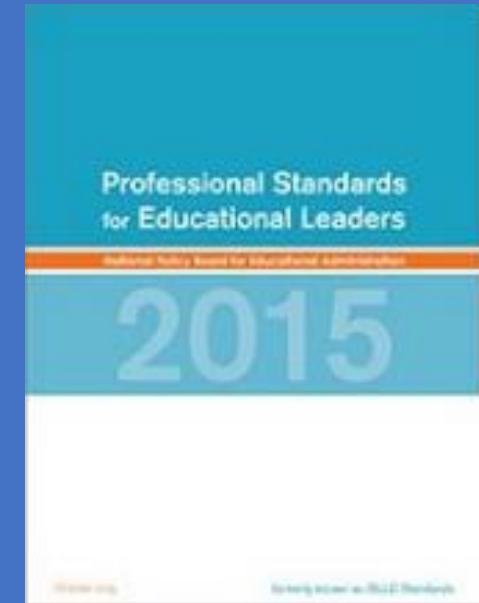
- Principals are “**second only to classroom instruction** among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.”

— *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*, Kenneth Leithwood, et al., University of Minnesota, University of Toronto, 2004

- “Principals are **multipliers of effective teaching.**”

— *Developing Excellent School Principals to Advance Teaching and Learning: Considerations for State Policy*, Paul Manna, The Wallace Foundation, 2015

- Updated voluntary, professional standards for principals reflect this new research and a new understanding of the role.

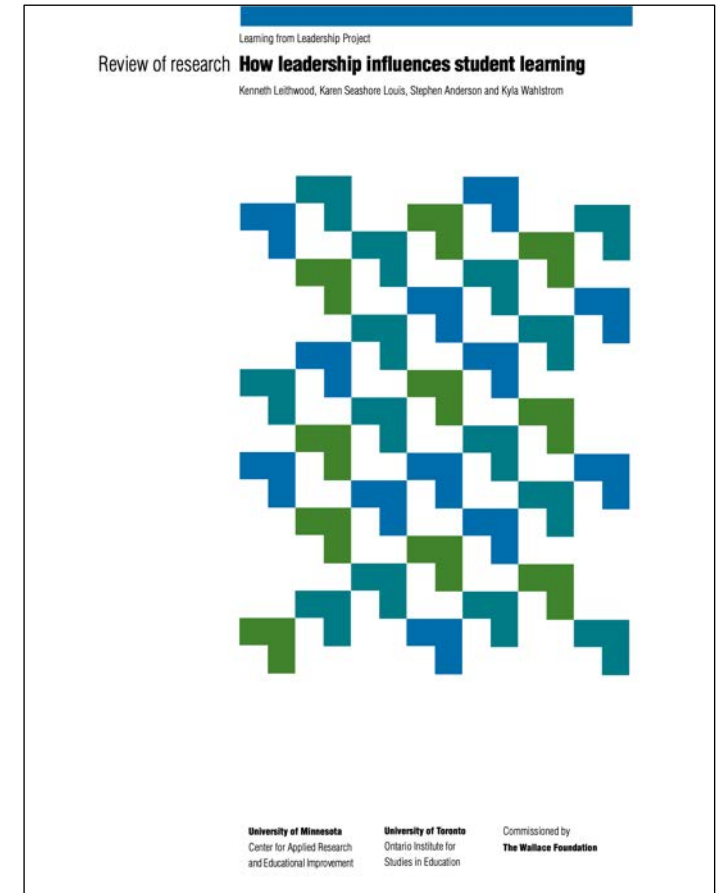


The **Professional Standards for Educational Leaders** are an updated set of voluntary, evidence-based professional standards for the job that spell out 10 essentials, including the ability to support rigorous instruction.

Principals are critical to improving struggling schools

- “...there are **virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader.** Many other factors may contribute to such turnarounds, but leadership is the catalyst.”
- “There seems little doubt that both district and school **leadership provides a critical bridge between most educational-reform initiatives, and having those reforms make a genuine difference for all students.**”

— *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*,
Kenneth Leithwood, *et al.*, University of Minnesota, University of Toronto, 2004



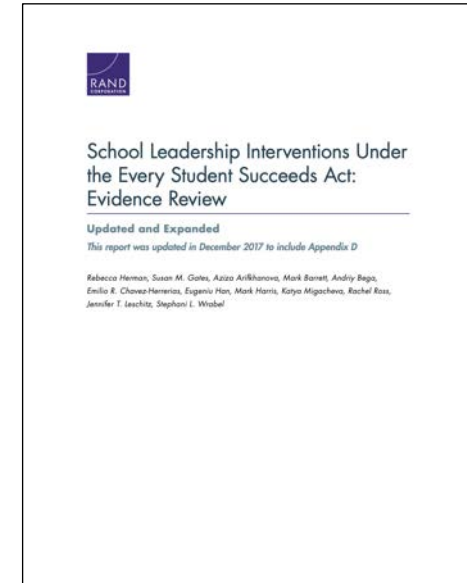
A strong link between teachers and effective principals

“Teacher turnover is lower in schools led by high-quality principals.... Research further indicates that principal turnover leads to lower teacher retention and lower gains for students.”

— *School Leadership Interventions Under the Every Student Succeeds Act: Evidence Review*, Rebecca Herman, et al., RAND, 2016

“Our results suggest that strategic retention is evidenced among more effective principals. High-performing teachers, measured both by classroom observation and value-added scores, are less likely to leave schools with effective principals. Yet teachers who receive low observation scores are in fact more likely to leave schools with effective principals...”

— *Strategic Retention: Principal Effectiveness and Teacher Turnover in Multiple-Measure Teacher Evaluation Systems*, Jason A. Grissom and Brendan Bartenen, Vanderbilt University, American Educational Research Journal, 2018



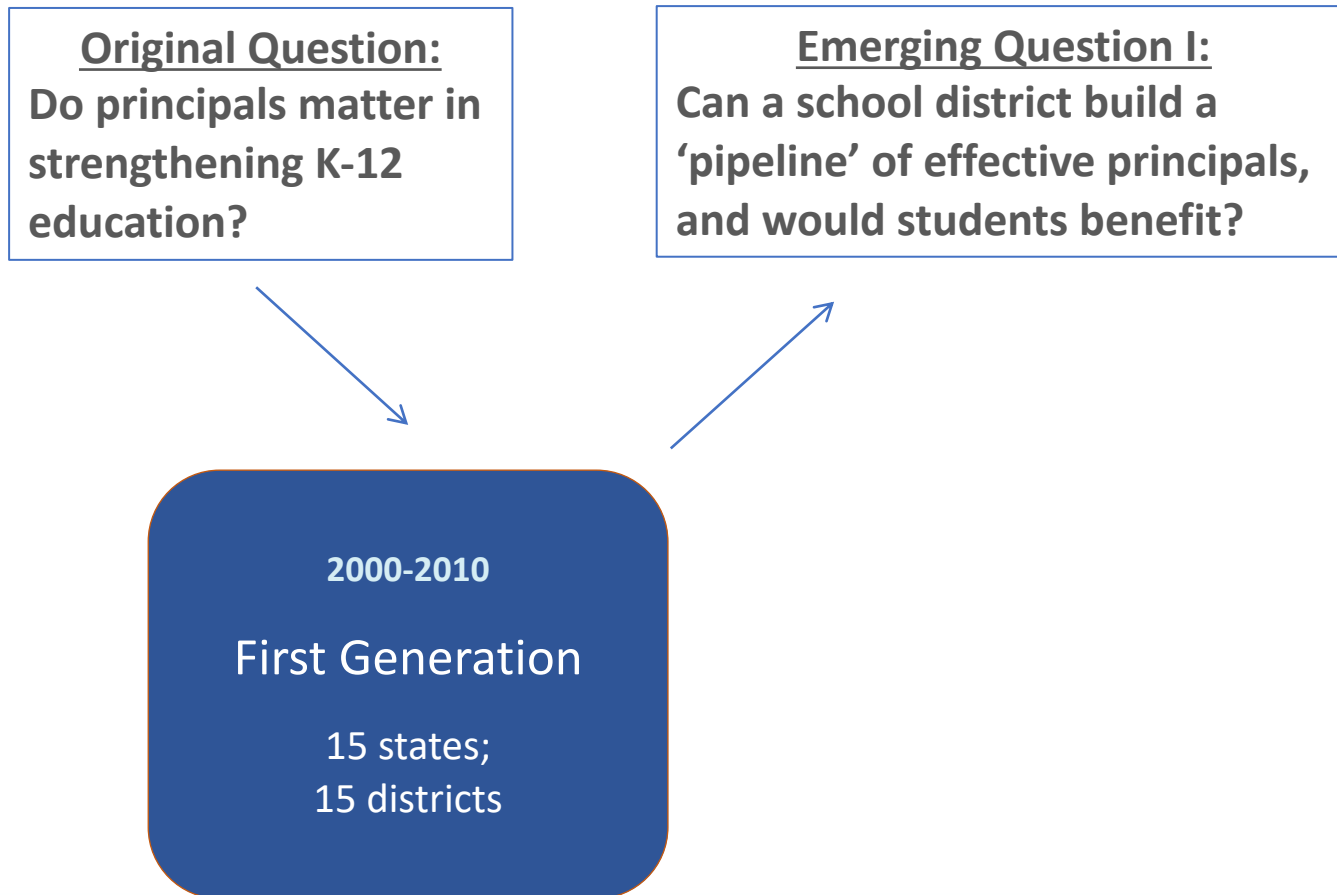
Context: The evolution of initiatives in education leadership

Original Question:
Do principals matter in
strengthening K-12
education?

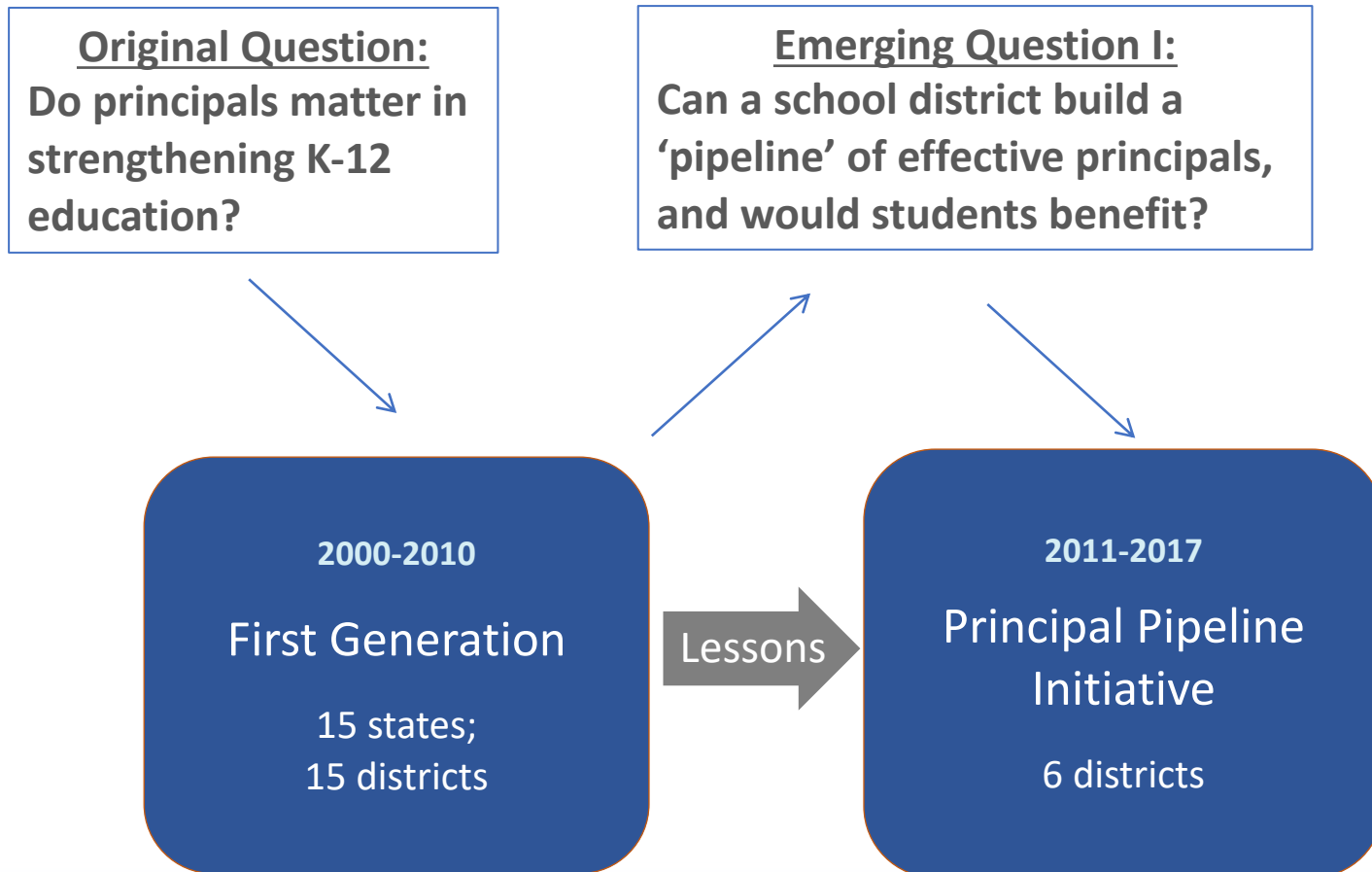


2000-2010
First Generation
15 states;
15 districts

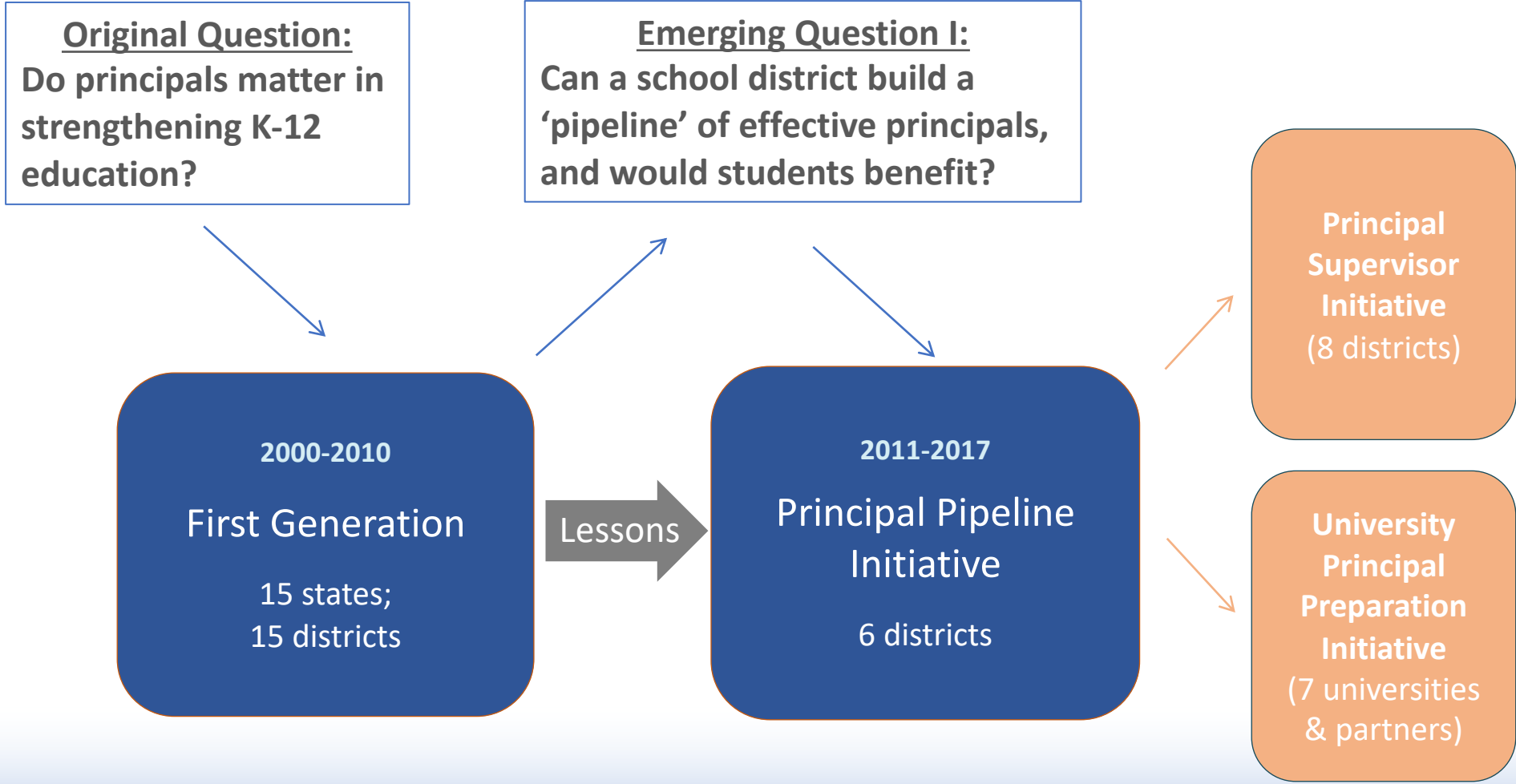
Context: The evolution of initiatives in education leadership



Context: The evolution of initiatives in education leadership



Context: The evolution of initiatives in education leadership



Pipelines are a strategic approach to developing and supporting principals

- Research suggests seven reinforcing domains:
 - Leader standards
 - High-quality preservice preparation
 - Selective hiring and placement of principals
 - On-the-job evaluation and support
 - Leader tracking systems
 - **Principal supervisors**
 - Systems and capacity to sustain pipelines

For more evidence and information — wallacefoundation.org

KNOWLEDGE CENTER

School Leadership

School leadership is second only to teaching among school-related factors in its impact on student learning, according to research. Moreover, principals strongly shape the conditions for high-quality teaching and are the prime factor in determining whether teachers stay in high-needs schools. High-quality principals, therefore, are vital to the effectiveness of our nation's public schools, especially those serving the children with the fewest advantages in life.

Browse the reports and other resources on these pages for insights into school leadership and how to improve it.

LEARN ABOUT OUR STRATEGY



IN THIS SECTION

- School Leadership
- Principal Training
- District Policy and Practice
- State and Federal Policy
- Effective Principal Leadership
- Principal Evaluation
- Principal Supervisors
- Principal Pipelines
- The Impact of Building Principal Pipelines

School Leadership Feature



Review of research **How leadership influences student learning**
Learning from Leadership Project
Kenneth Leithwood, Karen Seashore Louis, Stephen Anderson and Kyia Wallstrom

How Leadership Influences Student Learning
Leadership is second only to teaching among in-school influences on student success, according to this landmark examination of school leadership.
REPORT



Districts



Principal Supervisors



Principals

Changing the Principal Supervisor Role to Better Support Principals

Evidence from the Principal Supervisor Initiative

Learning Forward

October 20, 2020

Ellen Goldring
Peabody College, Vanderbilt University



VANDERBILT
PEABODY COLLEGE

Agenda

- **Why focus on principal supervision as a strategy to improve school leadership effectiveness?**
- **What is Principal Supervisor Initiative (PSI)?**
 - **How was PSI implemented in six urban districts? What were districts' experiences and lessons learned from the PSI?**
- **What are implications from the PSI for district change and district efforts to support school principals?**
 - **What are high leverage changes districts might focus on?**

Motivation for the PSI: Why Principal Supervisors?

- **The PSI was motivated by an effort to increase student learning and achievement by improving principal effectiveness**
 - Research has shown that strong principals are integral to strong schools and to improving teaching quality
 - Numerous studies have shown the importance of effective leaders for teacher satisfaction, teacher retention, school climate, parent engagement, and student achievement



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- **Principal supervisors are a potential point of leverage for supporting and developing principals**
- **Motivating hypothesis for the PSI: Changing the principal supervisor role *from overseeing administration and operations to providing instructional leadership* can drive improvement in principal effectiveness**

Descriptions of the Principal Supervisor Role Prior to Change

“Every issue came to the [supervisor], so they were kind of like a catch-all.”

— District Leader (2015)

“My role was anything and everything, and it was very hard to focus on instructional leadership.”

— Principal Supervisor (2015)

The Principal Supervisor Initiative (PSI)

- **Effort to improve the performance of principal supervisors and the principals they oversee**
 - **Four-year initiative, launched in June 2014**
 - **Implemented in six urban school districts:**
 - Baltimore City; Broward County; Cleveland; Des Moines; Long Beach; Minneapolis

Five Core Components of the PSI

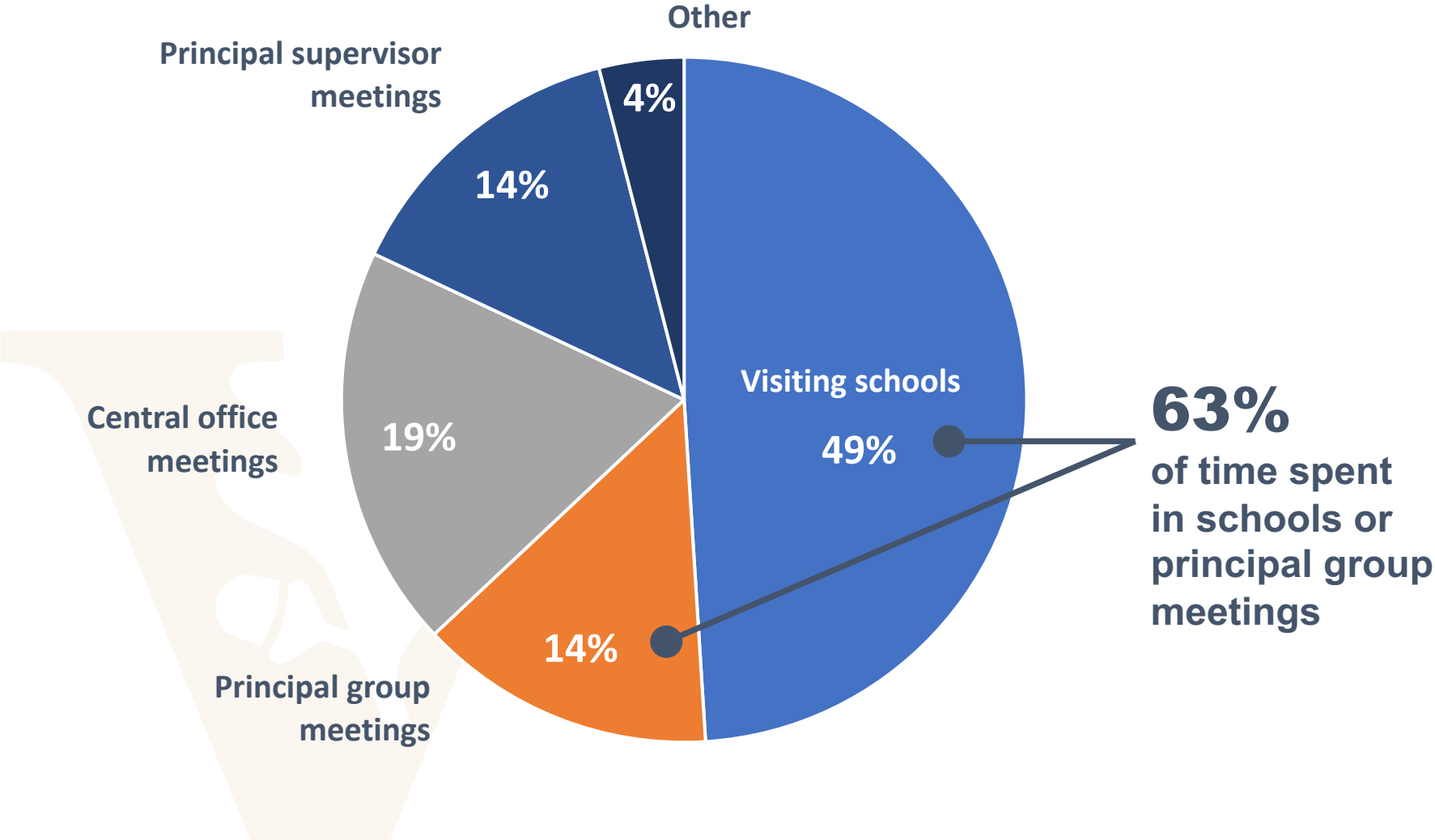
1. Revising supervisors' job descriptions to focus on instructional leadership
2. Reducing supervisors' span of control
3. Training supervisors and developing their capacity to support principals
4. Developing apprentice programs to identify and train new supervisors (succession planning)
5. Strengthening central offices to support and sustain these changes



Districts Made Substantial Changes to Support Principal Supervisors

- **Reduced principal supervisors' span of control from an average of 17 to an average of 13**
 - Supervisors with smaller spans of control visited principals more frequently and provided more intensive support
- **Clarified their definitions of high-quality instruction and instructional leadership**
 - Developed a more coherent approach to supporting principals and schools
 - Provided training aligned to new expectations for the supervisor role
- **Changed central office structures, roles, and culture to better support principal supervisors**

Supervisors' Time Use, 2016–2017



- Exhibit reads: Supervisors spent 49% of their time visiting schools in 2017.
- Survey question: Over the past three months, what percentage did you spend on each of the following activities in a typical week, excluding travel time? Total must equal 100%.
- Source: Supervisors surveys; 2017 N=50.

Supervisors' Instructional Leadership Practices

- **Walkthroughs**
 - Prime way to provide feedback and coaching to principals
 - Focus and frequency varied
- **Feedback**
 - Targeted the principal's own feedback to teachers about instruction ("feedback on feedback")
 - Most helpful feedback focused on specific principal actions with continuity from one visit to the next
- **Coaching**
 - Some districts, but not all, established a common approach to ensure consistency

Principal Supervisors Developed Clarity About the Purpose of Their Role

- **Principal supervisors developed a shared professional identity and community of practice**
- **Principal supervisors reported that their practices became more consistent**
- **Principal supervisors spent the majority of their time with principals**



“Throughout the four years I have to say what has changed the most is my skillset. ...[PSI] gave me more clarity about what really my role was all about, and how I could impact a more in-depth level with my principals, and how I could work differently with them.”

— Principal supervisor (2018)



“There has been a stronger focus on understanding good instruction, being able to coach around it, being able to support principals and implement academic programs that reflect the rigor of the standards.”

— District leader (2018)



Considerations for Revising the Principal Supervisor Role

- **Embed and align the principal supervisor role with the broader structures and work of the central office**
- **Communicate the importance of high-quality principal support to multiple stakeholders**
- **Recognize that changing supervisors' practices requires sustained effort and commitment**
- **Maintain balance between supervisors' focus on instructional leadership and flexibility to meet principal needs**
 - **Developing supervisors' expertise in instructional leadership requires sustained support and development**

Overview of Study Reports For More Information

- **A New Role Emerges for Principal Supervisors: June 2018**
 - PSI experiences through spring 2017
- **Changing the Principal Supervisor Role to Better Support Principals: March 2020**
 - PSI experiences through spring 2018
 - PSI effects on teachers' perceptions of principals' performance through spring 2018
- **Leading the Change: March 2020**
 - Comparison of the principal supervisor role in PSI and other urban districts

North East ISD, San Antonio, TX

- One of 19 districts within San Antonio city limits
- Covers 130 square miles
- 60,426 students; 4,400 teachers
- Student Demographics:
 - 61% Hispanic, 24% White, 7% African American, 4% Asian
- 69 schools: 1 Pre-K Academy, 45 ES, 14 MS, 8 HS, ACE (HS)
- 4 Principal Supervisors (Executive Directors for School Administration)



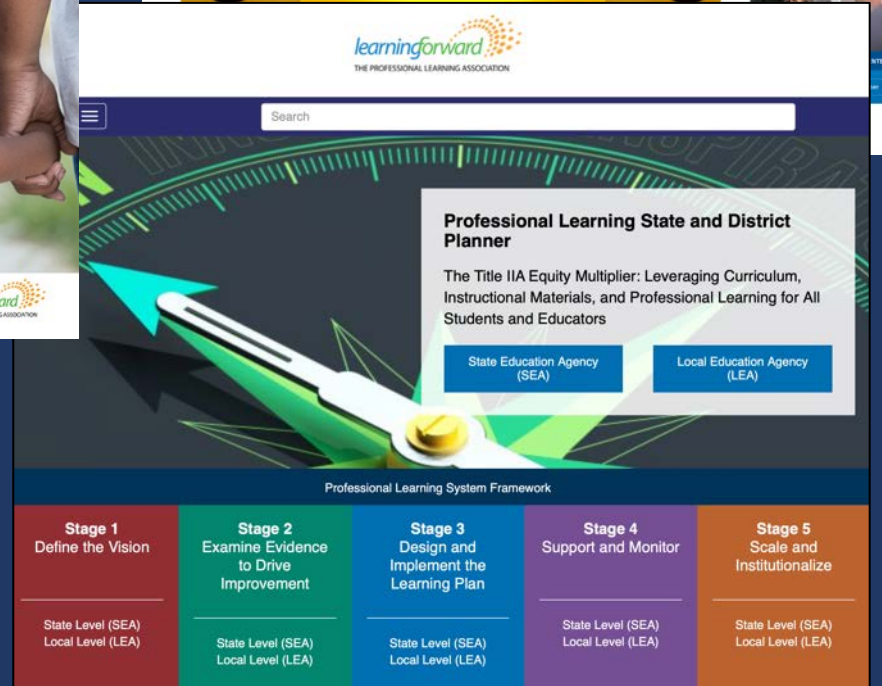
Discussion and Questions



Online resources

Look for follow-up resources, including a recording of this webinar and slides

- Read latest issue of [The Learning Professional](#)
- Check out the [Learning Forward blog](#)
- Use the planner at [Professional Learning State and District Planner](#)



Mark your calendars

Thursday October 22 3 pm ET	Thursday November 12 3 pm ET	Thursday November 19 3 pm ET
Equity-centered Leadership in Challenging Times	Engaging young children and their families: Best practices for remote and hybrid learning	Virtual Professional Learning Structures and Strategies

VIRTUAL

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DEC. 6–8, 2020**

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Membership Type	Price	Additional Info
District Membership	Starts at \$1,600 per year	The Learning Professional
Comprehensive Membership	\$159 per year (BEST VALUE)	The Learning Professional
Standard Membership	\$99 per year	The Learning Professional
Digital Membership	\$69 per year	The Learning Professional

Thank you!

