About the Author

Roxanne Garza is a policy analyst with the Education Policy program at New America. A member of the PreK–12 team, she provides research and analysis on policies and practices that impact teaching quality and school leadership. Prior to joining New America, Garza worked as deputy director of public policy at Citizen Schools, where she combined analysis with advocacy for state and national policies impacting expanded learning time, national service, and STEM education. Garza has also worked on higher education and workforce policy at the Center for Public Policy Priorities and the U.S. Department of Education. She holds a master’s degree in public affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs and a bachelor’s degree in economics from the University of Texas at Austin.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the many state education agency leaders who shared their perspectives and work on principal evaluation and support systems. I appreciate the time they spent in phone interviews and in reviewing my work to accurately portray their efforts. Thank you to those who reviewed drafts of this paper, including Zachary Scott of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Sarah Rosenberg of New Leaders, Elizabeth Ross of the National Council on Teacher Quality, Laura Checovich of the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Matthew Clifford of the American Institutes for Research. I am also grateful to New America colleagues Melissa Tooley, Elena Silva, Kevin Carey, Abbie Lieberman, and Sabrina Detlef for providing expert and editorial insight, and to Kristyn Lue and Joshua Ddamulira for research support. Thank you also to Kirk Jackson and Tyler Richardett for their help in the execution of this project. Finally, this work would not have been possible without generous support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The views expressed herein represent those of the author and not necessarily the individuals or organizations named above.

About New America

We are dedicated to renewing America by continuing the quest to realize our nation’s highest ideals, honestly confronting the challenges caused by rapid technological and social change, and seizing the opportunities those changes create.

Find out more at newamerica.org/our-story.

About the Education Policy Program

New America’s Education Policy program uses original research and policy analysis to solve the nation’s critical education problems, serving as a trusted source of objective analysis and innovative ideas for policymakers, educators, and the public at large. We combine a steadfast concern for low-income and historically disadvantaged people with a belief that better information about education can vastly improve both the policies that govern educational institutions and the quality of learning itself. Our work encompasses the full range of educational opportunities, from early learning to primary and secondary education, college, and the workforce.

Our work is made possible through generous grants from the Alliance for Early Success; the Buffett Early Childhood Fund; the Annie E. Casey Foundation; the Foundation for Child Development; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; the Hising-Simons Foundation; the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; the Joyce Foundation; the George Kaiser Family Foundation; the W.K. Kellogg Foundation; the Kresge Foundation; Lumina Foundation; the McKnight Foundation; the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; the David and Lucile Packard Foundation; the Siemens Foundation; the W. Clement and Jessie V. Stone Foundation; and the Walton Family Foundation. The views expressed in this report are those of its author and do not necessarily represent the views of foundations, their officers, or employees.

Find out more at newamerica.org/education-policy.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Shift from Teacher to Principal Evaluation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Instructional Leadership in Principal Evaluation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Instructional Leadership in Practice</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotlight on Missouri’s Leadership Development System</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotlight on Minnesota’s Principal Specialists</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotlight on Texas’s Vertically Aligned Coaching Teams</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges to Supporting Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions and Recommendations for States</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Research Questions and Methodology</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Sample of Questions Sent to SEAs</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C: List of Telephone Interviews</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before he became director of educator evaluation and training at the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Jim Masters was the superintendent of Monroe City School District in northeast Missouri. As the leader of the small, rural district, a big part of his job was supporting the principals who led the district’s schools. He came to understand that, despite the bustle of school life, a principal’s job can be “profoundly isolating.” Newly-hired principals were typically mentored through the first two years of their career, but the quality of that experience, from a statewide perspective, was uneven. After those first two years, they were largely left to their own devices. But without ongoing support, principals often find themselves overwhelmed by the urgent matters that arise each day in their buildings, leaving them with little time to support teaching and learning, which a growing body of research suggests is critical to academic success.

In his new position, Masters is working to help Missouri schools do better. With the help of funding for school leaders provided through an important yet little-noticed change in federal law, Missouri has hired a cadre of former principals and superintendents to provide training and support to acting principals, tailored to their particular career stage.

This focus on principals comes at a critical time. While research has long demonstrated that teachers are the most important in-school factor contributing to student learning, principals are a close second. And while principals’ impact on student achievement may be indirect, they hire, support, develop, and retain teachers who have a direct impact on student learning and success. Today, in addition to setting the school vision, interpreting and implementing policy, and managing the budget, principals are expected to play the role of “instructional leader” (see The Instructional Leader Role on page 4). As instructional leaders, principals influence the quality of teaching and learning by providing feedback and coaching, connecting the instructional program to curricular resources, and using data to inform instruction and professional learning for teachers.

The work of principals as instructional leaders has now been bolstered by federal policy through the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the primary federal law governing K–12 education. The reauthorized law increased its focus on school leadership as a linchpin for improving teaching quality and student achievement. Coined the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the law includes explicit language allowing states to set aside a portion of Title II, Part A funds to support preparation, recruitment, and development of school leaders. The law also allows states to use this funding to improve school leader evaluation systems, opening up the opportunity to assess and support instructional leadership.
Done well, principal evaluation systems can be an important support to new and current principals, providing evidence of performance and an avenue for improvement. Just as teachers need the support of principals, principals need guidance and support from supervisors. But these supervisors (see The Principal Supervisor Role on page 5), unfortunately, are not all well prepared for the role of supporting and evaluating principals, particularly in the area of instructional leadership. According to a 2012 survey of principal supervisors commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, most of their professional development is focused on general leadership development, as opposed to equipping them with an in-depth understanding of how to identify and support effective instruction. Further, the Wallace Foundation study reports that “while a quarter of survey respondents indicated that they had received some sort of professional development from their state or state regional service center, interviews offered no evidence that states play any significant role in supporting or developing training targeted for principal supervisors.”

New America researched and analyzed principal evaluation and support systems in all 50 states and the District of Columbia in order to understand whether states are incorporating instructional leadership in their evaluation systems. Based on this research, we developed an interactive data visualization of instructional leadership standards across states, which can be accessed at https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/mapping-instructional-leadership/. This report, a complement to the data visualization, is based on our follow-up interviews with state education agencies (SEAs). Here, we describe the prevalence of instructional leadership standards in principal evaluation systems and examine if and how states are supporting principals in developing the necessary skills to be good instructional leaders through those systems. Starting with a brief description of the evolution of principal evaluation systems, we summarize our analysis of state principal evaluation and support systems, spotlight three promising state efforts, and offer key challenges and recommendations for states to advance principal instructional leadership in service of better teaching and learning.
The Instructional Leader Role

Over the last decade, the term *instructional leader* has worked its way into the vernacular of the education community to describe the role of school principals. What people actually mean when using this term, however, varies widely. Instructional leadership in prior research has been defined broadly as "those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning," and more specifically as a set of behaviors and actions generally focused on defining a school’s mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive learning climate.ii

Without a clear definition or guidance, principal instructional leadership can be—and is—interpreted in a variety of ways. But in the day-to-day management of schools, instructional leaders must have meaningful interactions with teachers and other instructional staff. They need to be providing feedback to teachers on their practice, supporting the alignment of instruction to curricular resources, and using data to inform professional learning for teachers.iii

But many principals are not trained to be experts in all of these areas, and typically have many other tasks on their desks that can draw them away from instructional leadership. They are leading and managing the non-instructional aspects of the school—schedules, budgets, community and family relationships, student safety, and discipline—which can lead to an overwhelming portfolio of responsibilities. For principal evaluation and support systems can provide clarity on principals’ roles and nudge them to prioritize instructional leadership.

---


ii For further reading on instructional leadership see Christine Neumerski, “Rethinking Instructional Leadership, a Review: What Do We Know about Principal, Teacher, and Coach Instructional Leadership, and Where Should We Go from Here?” *Educational Administration Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (April 2013): 310–347.


The Principal Supervisor Role

As principals’ roles have evolved and expanded to focus more on instructional leadership, so too have those who supervise, support, and evaluate them. Principal supervisors—often the local education agency (LEA) superintendent or assistant superintendent in smaller LEAs, or a dedicated multi-principal supervisor role in larger LEAs—are tasked with evaluating principals on the practice component of their evaluation.1

Historically, principal supervisors have been tasked with ensuring that principals and their schools comply with state and local policies. But recent research shows that principal supervisors can have a positive impact on student outcomes by evaluating instructional leadership skills, coaching and giving feedback, identifying professional learning that can help support teacher practice, and helping principals access needed district and state resources.2 Based on this research, the Wallace Foundation and the Council of Chief State School Officers worked with a 12-person committee of educators in 2015 to develop standards for principal supervisors that are grounded in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) that states can choose to adopt.3

Standards are necessary but not enough. Principal supervisors themselves need targeted professional development so that they are better prepared to coach and give feedback to principals that is effective and relevant to their role as instructional leaders. According to a 2012 survey of principal supervisors conducted by the Wallace Foundation, while the top five tasks that they reported performing were visiting schools, convening principals to discuss instructional issues, evaluating principals, coaching principals, and conducting professional development with principals, there was wide variation in job descriptions, titles, responsibilities, and professional development for supervisors.4

---


2 State principal evaluation systems are typically broken up into two components. Roughly half is a qualitative component based on principal practice and the other half is based on some measure of student academic outcomes.


4 Ibid.

Over the last decade, teacher evaluation has dominated the education reform agenda, and with good reason. Research has demonstrated that teachers are the most important school-based factor for student achievement. This research—combined with evidence that differences in teacher performance were not being identified by schools—served as a catalyst for the Obama administration’s Race to the Top grant competition and its No Child Left Behind waiver policies. Together, these pushed states to revamp teacher evaluation policies to make them more detailed assessments of educator practice and associated student outcomes. But the investment in reforming teacher evaluation and support has not had as great an impact as hoped. A study of teacher performance ratings across 24 states that had reformed their teacher evaluation systems by 2014–15 found that teachers rated “unsatisfactory” were still less than 1 percent.

Investments of federal funds have also been focused on teachers rather than on principals. Local education agencies (LEAs) have primarily used federal funding for improving instruction for the development of teachers, despite being able to use funds for school leader development as well. A U.S. Department of Education survey on the use of ESSA Title II, Part A funds shows that three-quarters of districts did not invest any funds in professional development for principals in 2015–16.

Federal policymakers’ attention has now shifted to the importance of school leaders, and particularly their role in supporting teaching and learning through instructional leadership. Under Title II, Part A of ESSA, the government has provided states the option to set aside funds to support principals in developing instructional leadership skills and behaviors. And states are readily shifting to evaluating and supporting principals, although perhaps in a different way than they have with teachers. While states were initially more focused on the fidelity and implementation of teacher evaluation over teacher support, the opposite seems to be true when it comes to principals. Based on our research, states seem more focused on trying to support principals in their role as instructional leaders, including providing feedback and support to teachers, and less on how to ensure principal supervisors are holding principals to a consistently high bar in their own formal evaluations. In Florida and Missouri, the SEA staff mentioned providing support to principals and their supervisors but emphasized that these efforts were to bolster continued learning in support of instructional leadership, rather than merely to help improve the quality of principal evaluations.
This shift to a focus on principals as instructional leaders is an important step toward improving teaching and learning. The focus on teacher evaluation alone effectively told principals what to do—evaluate teachers based on state-determined systems—without really enabling them to improve their own practice to better support teachers. Principal evaluation systems that focus on instructional leadership can be an avenue for providing critical feedback and support, if these systems include standards that provide clarity on principal roles and responsibilities, and guide supervisors in how best to support principal growth in this area. And while states are including the assessment of instructional leadership skills and behaviors in principal evaluation systems—such as the ability to oversee the alignment of curricula to state academic standards and ensure that professional development enhances the practice of staff members—there is variation in how they are defining instructional leadership and how they are supporting implementation.

DEFINING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

We began this research by reviewing each state’s principal evaluation and support system with a focus on the state-designed or -approved principal practice evaluation instrument in order to understand whether states are incorporating instructional leadership in their evaluation systems.16 (See Appendix A for our methodology.) We found that roughly half of states have an explicit instructional leadership standard17 in the evaluation instrument, while the other half have similar standards that differ slightly in name but also convey a commitment to evaluating a principal’s role in supporting instruction (e.g., teaching and learning, developing all students, culture of learning). For the purpose of this research, we refer to these similar standards as implicit instructional leadership standards.

While all states include some measure of instructional leadership, there is wide state-to-state variability in how this is labeled and defined in evaluation systems. For example, Georgia’s Instructional Leadership Performance Standard says, “The leader fosters the success of all students by facilitating the development, communications, implementation, and evaluation of a shared vision of teaching and learning that leads to school improvement.” New Mexico’s Instructional Leadership Domain says, “The principal promotes the success of all students by maintaining a
culture that supports student achievement, high quality instruction, and professional development to meet the diverse learning needs of the school community” and includes the following indicators to assess performance on that standard:

1.1 Works with all members of the school community to make quality instruction a prime focus.

1.2 Uses accountability literacy in making decisions about student success and achievement.

1.3 Evaluates teachers using the Three-Tiered Licensure Performance Evaluation to promote high quality teaching and professional learning.

1.4 Incorporates the diversity of the student population and history of the school community in making curricular and school policy decisions.

As examples, New Mexico and Georgia illustrate the diversity and scope of language used to define how principals are evaluated as instructional leaders.

Most states (37) attempt to account for how principals are supporting teachers in their instructional leadership standard, but there is also variability in how that is defined and how much detail is included. For example, Virginia and Maine mention activities related to teacher support in their instructional leadership standards but vary in the scope of language. Virginia’s instructional leadership standard includes the following sample indicators to assess support for teachers:19

- Works collaboratively with staff to identify student needs and to design, revise, and monitor instruction to ensure effective delivery of the required curriculum.
- Provides teachers with resources for the successful implementation of effective instructional strategies.
- Supports professional development and instructional practices that incorporate the use of achievement data and result in increased student progress.
- Participates in professional development alongside teachers when instructional strategies are being taught for future implementation.
- Demonstrates the importance of professional development by providing adequate time and resources for teachers and staff to participate in professional learning (i.e., peer observation, mentoring, coaching, study groups, learning teams).
- Evaluates the impact professional development has on the staff/school improvement and student academic progress.

Maine’s instructional leadership standard makes mention of activities related to teacher support but includes less detail: “the building administrator supervises instruction” and “the building administrator monitors and evaluates the impact of the instructional program.” The details for every state standard are included in our data visualization.

The variability in definitions and content of instructional standards led us to explore whether the same level of variability exists in practice. In order to better understand how these systems are being implemented at the state and local level, we examined how states are supporting principals and their supervisors in the implementation of these systems, and whether that support is focused on building instructional leadership capacity.
SUPPORTING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Based on our review of all SEA websites, email responses from 11 states, and phone interviews with staff from 28 SEAs, we learned that states are supporting instructional leadership in a variety of ways and to different people. Nearly all states, for example, are providing some level of training and resource guides to evaluators on evaluation systems. Some are organizing principal networks, leadership academies, and induction and mentoring programs, while others are adding more staff or creating partnerships to provide individualized support to leaders at the school and LEA level. States also differ in to whom they are providing supports, with most providing direct support to principals but some moving toward providing support to principals and principal supervisors.

Most states (44) are providing training and online resource guides that accompany evaluation instruments (see Figure 1). For example, Colorado’s state education department received feedback from supervisors of non-core subject classroom teachers (physical education teachers, special education teachers, early childhood education teachers) that they needed “practical ideas guides” as companions to rubrics to guide teachers and their supervisors in better understanding evaluation in those specific contexts and ensuring more valid and reliable evaluations. In response, the SEA generated guides that correspond to the standards and elements evaluated in the teacher rubric, and provide examples of practices that may be observed during classroom observation, as well as specific artifacts that evaluators should look for when conducting observations.

Similarly, most states (43) are supporting principal supervisors by providing resources, such as evaluation guidebooks, to help with their implementation of principal evaluation and support systems (see Figure 1). New Mexico, for example, developed a School Leader Evaluation Guidance Workbook for principal supervisors that includes an overview of three principal evaluation components, including an assessment of feedback to teachers. The “observations” component of a principal’s evaluation is based on how and how well he or she is evaluating teachers and teacher outcomes. Principal supervisors randomly review feedback that has been provided to teachers, and assess whether principals provided “quality, constructive feedback that teachers can use to improve their practice.”

Some states (14) are also providing more in-depth supports such as leadership academies and mentoring programs (see Figure 2). Ten states provide these for principals and four states provide these for principals and their supervisors.
For example, Idaho is supporting early-career principals through an Idaho Principal Mentoring Project where six mentors—retired superintendents and principals—are working with 32 principals in 2017–18 around four instructional leadership areas: interpersonal and facilitation skills, teacher observation and feedback, effective school-level and classroom-level practices, and use of data to improve instruction. During the program, mentors receive training three times a year and make one to two school site visits per quarter, conduct phone calls with principals twice a month, and provide virtual mentoring as needed. Additionally, principals and mentors attend three in-person institutes hosted by the Idaho State Department of Education.

States are also adding capacity through additional staff or partnerships to provide individualized support to leaders at the school and LEA level (see Figure 3). Two states do this for principals and four states do this for principals and their supervisors. Following are three state profiles—Missouri, Minnesota, and Texas—that are providing this kind of in-depth support.

**Spotlight on Missouri’s Leadership Development System**

As a previous LEA superintendent, Jim Masters, director of educator evaluation and training at the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, explained that several factors cause principal turnover: physical, emotional, and psychological demands of the position and the lack of ongoing support. And while effective mentoring can help principals through their early career, generally, after those first couple of years, principals do not have access to broad-based, widely available support. Masters said that his state’s goal is to build a system of continuous support that will cultivate leadership capacity over the course of an entire administrative career.
To do this, the SEA created the Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS), which Masters described as “seeking to create a comprehensive and progressive sequence of professional learning for principals, from aspiring to retiring.” The MLDS is broken up into four career stages that include differentiated support for principals: 1) Aspiring Leader (degree seeking candidates), 2) Emerging Leader (first and second year principals), 3) Developing Leader (principals with three to roughly six years of experience), and 4) Transformational Leader (beyond six years of experience with an eye toward district-level leadership).  

By using the ESSA Title II, Part A optional 3 percent set aside for school leaders, the state has hired nine leadership development specialists to work directly with school principals to provide training and support in mastering leadership competencies within the MLDS. These specialists, who work out of regional professional development centers, are primarily former principals or superintendents and they bring varying content, grade-level, and school context backgrounds to the work. The SEA provided specialists with three two-day trainings to address content knowledge and facilitation skills where they observed presentations and practiced and received feedback from a session facilitator.

Masters explained that Missouri started with the design of the Emerging Leader program but is working its way through the MLDS continuum. It is also collaborating with a group of higher education institutions volunteering to review their administrator preparation through the lens of the MLDS to identify the extent to which their coursework is developing principals who possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected at the Aspiring Leader level. The MLDS is in its second year of implementation, with the specialists working with approximately 680 administrators who are mix of emerging level principals, their mentors, and other experienced principals. The state has completed the content of the Developing Leader program and started rolling this out in late January; it will start designing content for the Transformational Leader level in the spring. The goal is to train and develop all school leaders at scale in a more comprehensive and coordinated manner through the MLDS stages.

The content for each level of the MLDS is organized into learning “experiences” and “treatments.” Learning experiences are broken up into categories such as recognizing and developing excellent instruction or observing and providing growth-evoking feedback. Each learning experience, or category, includes a set of treatments that are designed to cultivate specific competencies aligned to the National Policy Board for Educational Administration’s Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL).

Even though the MLDS program is voluntary, every new school principal in Missouri is required by state regulation to participate in a district-provided mentoring program during his or her first two years of administrator experience in order to upgrade the administrator certificate. Participation in the Emerging Leader series of MLDS satisfies that...
requirement. While an LEA can elect to pursue its own mentoring program, most LEAs are choosing to go through the MLDS Emerging Leader program. Masters anticipates that as first and second year principals go through the program, the relevance to practice and quality of learning will incentivize them to continue to participate in the next levels of training.

While Masters acknowledged that the MLDS currently does not attach to the principal evaluation system and is focused on leadership development more broadly, he believed it should enable principals to be more effective. Masters said that “a number of teachers have commented on the [greater] degree to which they are now having conversations with principals about their practice.”

Despite the lack of direct connection to the evaluation system, the nine specialists communicate with LEA superintendents to make them aware of what their principals have been working on. There is a survey for superintendents that asks about principal engagement and benefits they observe from their principals being in the program, and multiple surveys for principals that monitor to what extent the content is relevant and how they are implementing what they learned. Masters told us that a gratifying part of the program has been having superintendents call and say, “How do I do a better job at supporting principals while they are going through the [MLDS] learning experiences?” He expects that as MLDS implementation moves forward, the SEA may consider ways to support principal supervisors as well.

**Spotlight on Minnesota’s Principal Specialists**

During the 2012–13 school year, 17 LEAs in Minnesota piloted a state principal evaluation model. FHI 360, an independent research firm, studied the pilot with funding from the Bush Foundation in order to provide recommendations to the state based on surveys and interviews with principals and their evaluators. Based on those recommendations, and with continued foundation funding, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) began making changes to the state model in 2015. During this process, MDE also met with stakeholders, reviewed current research on principal development and evaluation, and received support from New Leaders. Michael Coty, principal development and evaluation specialist with MDE, explained that as part of the state model revision process, he began to dig deeper into the research around the importance of principal supervisors in building strong school leadership. After reviewing the Council of Chief State School Officers’ new standards for principal supervisors and the Wallace Foundation’s research on principal supervisors, it became clear to Coty that Minnesota needed to focus on supporting principal supervisors if it wanted to build instructional leadership capacity. So MDE developed targeted resources for principals and principal supervisors, including tools to support supervisors in collecting evidence and artifacts for principal evaluation, as well as its Guide to Coaching School Principals: Incorporating Coaching Strategies into Principal Development and Evaluation that is divided into four sections: 1) Principal Coaching as a Tool for Continual Improvement; 2) A Framework for Coaching Principals; 3) Tools for Coaching Principals; and 4) Growth-Focused Conversations.

But the state decided that it needed to go further and invest in additional human capital to provide support to principals and their supervisors. And with the changes to Title II, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, Minnesota now had the opportunity to direct federal funds toward this purpose. It chose to use the Title II, Part A 3 percent set-aside to hire four principal specialists based out of the state’s regional centers of excellence (RCE) to support principal evaluation implementation and growth. The specialists will be responsible for supporting principal supervisors and principals to build capacity in instructional coaching, hosting professional development sessions, creating networks and communities of practice, and developing resources for principals and their supervisors.
As part of Minnesota’s effort to support effective instructional coaching, together with the American Institutes for Research (AIR), it will also train the new principal specialists in using AIR’s Instructional Feedback Observation (IFO) process so that they can then train principal supervisors. Through this process, principal supervisors assess videos of principals’ post-observation discussions with teachers to identify strengths and areas for improvement in delivering instructional feedback.

Training for the four principal specialists took place in January with training for supervisors beginning in February. For the 2017–18 school year, participation in the IFO program is by invitation only: principal specialists invite two principal supervisors from each of the six Minnesota regions based on a combination of need for the training and relationships between the specialist and the supervisor. Those supervisors then each select two principals that they will work with directly. In 2018–19, MDE plans to open the IFO program to all principal supervisors, but given that the program will be voluntary, it plans to build demand through relationship building with LEAs and counts on participants talking with their colleagues about the program’s value.

The IFO program and the additional resources developed for principal supervisors were originally created as separate, stand-alone resources intended to meet specific needs, but the resources have been coordinated as a package through the new state principal evaluation model. The principal supervisor resources are linked throughout the principal evaluation model implementation guide, so LEAs that adopt the state model will see the resources integrated in the process of evaluation.

In order to get these resources into the hands of school and LEA leaders, MDE shares them in the commissioner’s newsletter to superintendents and through the executive directors of the state superintendents’ and principals’ associations. The resources are also linked to MDE’s web page on implementing growth-focused principal evaluation. But the primary way that resources will be shared and communicated with school and LEA leaders will be through the principal specialists.

**Spotlight on Texas’s Vertically Aligned Coaching Teams**

Texas has partnered with three nonprofit third-party providers—Relay, New Leaders, and Teaching Trust—to give instructional leadership training to principal supervisors, principals, and campus leaders, in order to build instructional leadership capacity across the state.

According to Tim Regal, director of instructional leadership at the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the state designed its educator evaluation system to promote growth and development by having opportunities for coaching and support during beginning-of-year, mid-year, and end-of-year conferences. But TEA was hearing feedback from principals and principal supervisors that they needed support in improving their coaching skills.

He said comments went along these lines: “this is great and we’re on board with this, but we just don’t have the skill set...we would love to be better coaches but we don’t know how to do it.” He continued, “despite their desire, they are just not spending a lot of time on it, likely because they are just not comfortable doing it.”

In addition to the need identified by principals and principal supervisors, Regal said that TEA “ran into research that just suggested that there is no more impactful use of an instructional leader’s time [than in coaching]—that’s whether it’s a principal supervisor working with a principal or a principal/campus leader working with teachers...So we saw that, and then we saw research that suggests that educators spend the least amount of their time doing [coaching].” As a result, TEA embarked on the three partnerships to better and more frequently support leaders’ coaching skills. Teaching Trust is working with four principal supervisors who oversee the 14 campuses in Fort Worth Independent School District (ISD). New Leaders is working in East Texas (Kilgore), where it is bringing together 10
predominantly rural LEAs. Relay Graduate School of Education is working in Houston with six LEAs—Beaumont, Fort Bend, Yes Prep Charter Network, Brazosport ISD, Lubbock ISD, and San Antonio ISD.

In all three locations, the partners are training vertically-aligned teams—principal supervisors, some of the principals that they supervise, and their campus leadership teams made up of assistant principals, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, and teachers—in the areas of data-driven instruction, common instructional strategies, observation, feedback, coaching, trust building, and leading change. This includes an intensive week-long summer training session with follow-up sessions. For example, if lesson plan review protocols were the focus of the last face-to-face session, then the partner will observe a feedback session that the campus leader is having with a teacher and follow that with feedback on how he or she could improve, giving an opportunity to practice. To sustain the work beyond the partnership, the state has also hired a manager of instructional leadership to work closely with the partner in each region. These three managers of instructional leadership coach and follow up with principal supervisors and use a practice rubric that helps focus coaching visits on the capacity they are trying to build.

Each partner is also assessing implementation throughout the year. In each location, it collects baseline data on the campus in different practice areas. For example, with data-driven instruction, it might collect data on things like alignment of formative assessments to the rigor of the “destination exam,” whether that is an annual state assessment or advanced placement exam. There are two different progress checks over the course of the year, one around January and one at the end of the school year.

For the 2017–18 school year, the three partners are working with 62 campuses across 17 districts, serving approximately 21 principal supervisors. While this support is valuable, Regal says that supporting the cost of these services beyond 2018–19 might be challenging. Currently, the partner contracts are funded with Title II, Part A funds, but Texas is in the process of merging its instructional leadership approach and school improvement approach, which could create an opportunity to fund this work with school improvement funds. According to Regal, instructional leadership questions are focused on what effective campuses and campus leaders are doing to produce great instruction in all classrooms and he believes these are largely the same questions the school improvement division should be asking too.

TEA’s longer-term goal is to learn from these three models over the next two years so that it can train staff to implement a model that can be customized to meet the needs of LEAs across regions. The state is sending staff from its regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) to participate in the programs so that they can be trained and share what they are learning across the sites. TEA wants to understand the obstacles and successes that LEAs are encountering as they implement these models and the implications for statewide implementation.
CHALLENGES TO SUPPORTING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Despite progress, states face a number of challenges in providing supports to principals and their supervisors in order to develop instructional leadership through principal evaluation systems.

First, while all states are using the term *instructional leadership* or something similar when they talk about principals, there is variation in the definitions and details they are using when evaluating principals, which makes it difficult to measure and support instructional leadership in a consistent way. Part of this variation is due to the level of control that states have over LEAs’ principal evaluation systems, and the degree to which LEAs have flexibility in designing their own systems. Some states require all LEAs to use a state-developed or -approved model, unless they request and receive approval to modify the model or design an alternate system. Other states offer the state-developed or -approved model as a suggestion, but allow LEAs to adapt the model or design their own system. In the latter case, some states have approval authority over LEA evaluation plans, while others do not (see Figure 4). Due to capacity issues, where LEAs have the choice to adopt the state model or design their own system, the state can provide support and resources but may not be able to tailor support to LEAs using a different model.

Because of the variability in state authority over evaluation systems, states may be may be focused on compliance monitoring. The public debate around teacher evaluation and support systems has made it logical for states to focus their efforts on these systems’ fidelity, including ensuring that principals assign valid and reliable observation scores to teachers. However, that focus alone is unlikely to result in improved teaching and learning. For evaluation systems to be effective, there should be a corresponding focus on providing teachers and principals direct and actionable feedback and coaching, coupled with professional learning opportunities relevant to improving teaching and learning.

A second challenge is limited state capacity and funding, a familiar problem for most departments of education. This environment where states have to make difficult choices between competing priorities makes it even more difficult to provide targeted support to each LEA. Some states have had to scale back support that they were previously providing due to reductions in staff or funding. In Rhode Island, for example, the SEA staff mentioned that the state used to do calibration training with evaluators, but due to capacity issues, it now only offers this training if an LEA requests it. Pennsylvania was also engaged in a series of principal evaluation trainings in partnership...
Figure 4 | State Control Over Local Evaluation Systems

All states generally fall into the following four categories:

**Tier 1:** LEAs design their own model with some guidance, but there is no state model and the state does not approve the model.

**Tier 2:** LEAs can adopt or adapt the state model, or design their own model, but the state does not have approval authority over the local model.

**Tier 3:** LEAs can adopt or adapt the state model, or design their own model, but the state has approval authority over the local model.

**Tier 4:** All LEAs in the state use the same model, unless they have approval from the state to alter the model or use an alternate model.
with regional education service agencies, but with state education budget cuts and the reduction of SEA staff, the regional education service agencies are now providing the ongoing training on their own for a fee.

As with the three highlighted examples—Missouri, Minnesota, and Texas—states are using federal Title II, Part A funds to support their work on building school leadership capacity. According to a 2017 Center on Education Policy survey of SEAs, 41 out of 45 states reported that it would be “very challenging” to provide professional development opportunities for principals if Title II, Part A funds were eliminated. If federal Title II funds decline, as has been recently proposed, it may be even more difficult for states to fund this kind of work, unless they are using other federal and state funds or they can access external funding, as Minnesota did through the local Bush Foundation.

A third challenge is the lack of research and validated tools for principal evaluation. States—and districts—are mostly left on their own to make decisions about evaluation design. And while states can draw on nationally available tools or learn from other states’ practices, a recent review of the evidence base on school leadership interventions by the RAND Corporation only identified two leader evaluation tools that “are grounded in rigorous prior research that supports the theory of action” and qualify as having tier IV evidence under ESSA. More research on validated tools for principal evaluation and on the design of systems generally—types of measures used and the distribution of weight between principal practice and student outcomes—could be helpful for states as they think through how to evaluate and support principals.

Finally, as principals are called to focus more intently on their role as instructional leaders, evaluation systems for principals still include responsibilities like managing fiscal and operational resources, setting the school vision, and building family and community relationships. Most states require or encourage the evaluation of school leaders to include performance on a wide array of varying responsibilities which require different skill sets. This varied portfolio of responsibilities, in addition to research on the importance of principals as instructional leaders, has led some schools and LEAs to implement distributed school leadership models. And some states have started to include distributed leadership in evaluation instruments. This raises questions about how flexible state evaluation rubrics and guidance can and should be in order to incorporate leadership structures that attempt to make the principal role more manageable and focused. How should evaluation systems change to account for distributed leadership models where principals delegate some of their responsibilities to others in the school? And if principals have delegated some responsibilities, should they still be evaluated on those aspects of the work?
Given the influence that principals can have on teacher practice and student achievement, we aimed to explore how states are defining and measuring instructional leadership through their principal evaluation instruments. We learned that all states are attempting to measure instructional leadership in some way although with a great deal of variability and no shared definition of the term. And while there is wide variation in states’ instructional leadership standards, we also learned that there is variation in how states are supporting implementation of these systems. While nearly all states are providing some level of training and resource guides to evaluators on evaluation systems, fewer states are providing more in-depth supports.

Moreover, states also differ in to whom they provide support. In some cases, they are providing support directly to principals and in other cases they are providing support to principals and their supervisors. While many states are thinking about how to scaffold principals’ roles in executing teacher evaluation and support systems, fewer are thinking about principal supervisors’ roles in implementing principal evaluation and support systems. But there are some signs that is changing. Minnesota and Texas are promising examples of states supporting principals and their supervisors so that supervisors can more effectively coach principals.

While there is still needed research on principal evaluation and support systems, ensuring that principals are meaningfully evaluated on their instructional leadership can help them grow their skills and knowledge in this area and can also improve teacher practice and ultimately student outcomes.

**Recommendations for States**

Although all states’ principal evaluation and support systems include some measure of instructional leadership, more clarity and consistency are needed within and across systems. State should take further action to support LEA leaders and improve on existing systems by providing resources to principals and their supervisors so that they are used as tools for growth and improvement, not just compliance.
States should:

1. **Build alignment and common language across systems for principals and principal supervisors.** Alignment across standards, evaluation instruments, and professional learning opportunities can help provide more clarity between standards, roles, and responsibilities. Maryland, for example, is electing to use its Title II, Part A set aside for professional learning targeted to principal supervisors, principals, and other school leaders that is aligned with the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). States could adopt the Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards that are already aligned to PSEL. States also could host group learning activities and training so that principals and their supervisors have a shared understanding of instructional leader expectations and how to meet those expectations.

2. **Ensure that LEA administrators, and especially principal supervisors, have a clear understanding of how to support principals as instructional leaders.** This can be done by developing targeted resources and supports for principal supervisors focused on coaching and giving feedback to principals that is directly aligned to improving teacher practice, as Minnesota has done, as well as providing curated and targeted resources and professional development opportunities that supervisors can recommend to principals. States can also support LEAs by:
   a. **Assisting LEAs in creating conditions for supervisors to give sufficient time and attention to growing principal leadership capacity.** States can provide guidance to LEAs on appropriate caseloads for principals. The George W. Bush Institute and New Leaders have recommended a formula for calculating the appropriate principal supervisor caseload. States can also provide resources that might help LEAs consider other staff members who might help support principals’ instructional leadership growth. Principals need opportunities to receive coaching and feedback directly related to their role as instructional leader, and this can be difficult if supervisors have large caseloads.
   b. **Providing training for supervisors on how to assess and guide principals on conducting valid and reliable teacher observations, and how to follow up with constructive feedback to improve teacher practice.** Arkansas, Kentucky, and Wyoming all enacted legislation in 2017 that eliminates the requirement for student growth data in administrator evaluations, and in the case of Kentucky, teacher evaluations as well. Training on how to conduct observations and give feedback on principal and teacher practice will be even more critical if states start stepping back from evaluating teachers and principals based on student performance data.
   c. **Making available templates of other instruments, such as surveys, that supervisors can use to collect valid and reliable feedback on instructional leadership performance from teachers and other staff to inform principal support.** This information would provide an additional lens on how principals are interacting with those they are responsible for supporting and could help inform formal evaluation and the types of professional development they need to improve their performance. In New Mexico, for example, principals’ evaluations include teacher surveys that account for 10 percent of their rating and reflect on their four competencies: instructional leadership, communication, professional development, and operations management.
3. Provide resources and guidance to LEAs on supporting principal instructional leadership even when all LEAs are not required to implement the same evaluation system. Recognizing that states may have less ability to support or enforce standards and expectations for school leaders if they do not have oversight or approval authority over LEA principal evaluation models, they can still provide exemplar resources and guidance that are available and easily accessible. Making high-quality resources available to LEAs that are closely aligned with the state-developed or -approved models could also encourage districts to adopt the state model.

4. Leverage the opportunities provided by ESSA to use federal funds for professional development for principals and their supervisors, particularly as the law now explicitly states that funds can be set aside for the development of other school leaders.\textsuperscript{59} While we recognize that Title II resources are already limited for teacher and principal professional development, supporting principal supervisors could be a way to support principals and teachers through evaluation and support systems that already exist. If states choose not to use the 3 percent set aside for this work, they should consider how other federal funding sources could be used to support principals.\textsuperscript{60}
Appendix A: Research Questions and Methodology

This paper set out to answer the following three questions: 1) Are states incorporating instructional leadership as one standard of their principal evaluation systems? 2) Does that standard attempt to assess the quality of principals’ evaluation of and ongoing support for teachers, including feedback on teacher practice, coaching, and connection to other meaningful professional development opportunities? and 3) What role are states playing in supporting district implementation of principal evaluation systems in the area of instructional leadership? We explored whether states provide districts with tools, training, or other resources to guide principal supervisors in their role to better evaluate and support principal ability to assess and support teacher practice.

In order to answer the first two questions, we conducted a scan of each state’s education agency website to review its principal evaluation and support system guidelines, with a specific focus on the state-designed or -approved principal practice evaluation instrument, and whether the instrument included an instructional leadership standard. The detailed findings of the scan are available through our interactive data visualization tool.

To explore the third question—the role that states are playing in supporting local education agency (LEA) implementation of principal evaluation systems in the area of instructional leadership—we reached out to all state education agencies (SEAs) via email in June 2017 with a set of questions (see Appendix B) centered around supporting implementation of principal evaluation. The questions explored whether states are providing LEAs with tools, training, or other resources to guide principal supervisors in their role to better evaluate and support principal ability to assess and support teacher practice. We also asked about how states are communicating and sharing such resources with LEA and school leaders.

We received responses from 39 SEAs and were able to conduct phone interviews with 28 of those agencies between July and November 2017. Based on these communications and our review of SEA websites, we identified themes in the types of support that states are providing, and we have highlighted three promising examples of how states are implementing those supports in this paper.

Appendix B: Sample of Questions Sent to SEAs

1. Can you confirm that districts are responsible for designing their own evaluation systems?

2. Other than the tools and templates on your evaluation and support website, does the state provide the district with tools, training, or other resources to guide principal supervisors in their role of evaluating principals' ability to assess and support teacher practice? If so, could you share those with us?

3. Does the state provide the district with tools, training, or other resources to guide principal supervisors in their role to better support principals' ability to assess and support teacher practice? If so, could you share those with us?

4. Is the state taking efforts to ensure these tools and resources are being shared with principals so that they are clear on expectations for their role and how those expectations will be assessed and supported? If so, how?
Appendix C: List of Telephone Interviews (conducted July–November 2017)

- Alabama State Department of Education: Mark Kirkemier, coordinator of educator effectiveness
- Arizona Department of Education: Steve Larson, director, Effective Teachers and Leaders
- Arkansas Department of Education: Jeremy Owoh, assistant commissioner of educator effectiveness
- Colorado Department of Education: Courtney Cabrera, manager, Educator Effectiveness
- Connecticut State Department of Education: Sharon Fuller, education consultant, Talent Office
- District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education: Etai Mizrav, manager, Education Policy and Compliance Division
- Florida Department of Education: Jason Graham, senior program director, Bureau of Educator Recruitment Development and Retention
- Georgia Department of Education: Cynthia Saxon, associate superintendent of teacher and leader effectiveness
- Idaho Department of Education: Tyson Carter, school improvement/educator effectiveness coordinator
- Illinois State Board of Education: Vince Camille, interim division supervisor, Educator Effectiveness Division
- Iowa Department of Education: Matt Ludwig, leadership consultant, School Leadership, Educator Evaluation, Competency-based Education, & Administrator Preparation
- Kansas State Department of Education: Bill Bagshaw, assistant director of accreditation and educator evaluation, Division of Learning Services
- Maryland State Department of Education: Tiara Booker-Dwyer, director, Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Ronald Noble, educator effectiveness manager
- Michigan Department of Education: Abbie Groff-Blaszak, director, Office of Educator Talent
- Minnesota Department of Education: Michael Coty, principal development and evaluation specialist, School Support Division
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Paul Katnik, assistant commissioner, Office of Educator Quality; Jim Masters, director of educator evaluation and training, Office of Educator Quality
- New Jersey Department of Education: Carl Blanchard, director, Office of Evaluation
- New Mexico Public Education Department: Matthew Montaño, deputy cabinet secretary, Teaching and Learning
- Oklahoma State Department of Education: Jaycie Smith, executive director of teacher and leadership development
- Oregon Department of Education: Brian Putnam, educator effectiveness specialist, Office of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
• Pennsylvania Department of Education: Leonard Sweeny, basic education associate, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education; David W. Volkman, executive deputy secretary, Office of the Secretary

• Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Carol Blanchette, chief of teaching and learning

• South Carolina Department of Education: Vicki Traufler, principal evaluation coordinator, Office of Educator Effectiveness and Leadership Development

• Tennessee Department of Education: Paul Fleming, assistant commissioner, Teachers and Leaders Division; Martha Moore, Director of Leader Effectiveness, Teachers and Leaders Division

• Texas Education Agency: Tim Regal, director, Instructional Leadership, Division of Educator Leadership and Quality

• Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction: Sue Anderson, director, Educator Effectiveness

• West Virginia Department of Education: Christine Miller, executive director, Student and School Support
Notes

1 Karen Seashore Louis, Kenneth Leithwood, Kyla L. Wahlstrom, and Stephen E. Anderson conducted a six-year study focused on leadership at the school, district, and state levels to study the links between leadership and student learning and found that effective school leadership is critical for improving student achievement. See their report, Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning: Final Report of Research Findings (St. Paul: University of Minnesota, July 2010), http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Investigating-the-Links-to-Improved-Student-Learning.pdf.

2 Gregory F. Branch, Eric A. Hanushek, and Steven G. Rivkin discuss the direct effects that teachers have on students versus the indirect effects that principals have on students. See their article “School Leaders Matter,” Education Next (Winter 2013): 62–69, http://hanushek.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Branch%2BHanushek%2BRivkin%202013%20EdNext%2013%281%29_0.pdf.


7 Ibid., 32.


11 Under Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, states are able to use the Supporting Effective Instruction State grants for the development of teachers and school leaders.


13 Title II, Part A of ESSA amounts to approximately $2 billion. The new 3 percent set aside for leaders amounts to $60 million total and a million or more for individual states. At the highest end, CA estimates its 3 percent set aside will amount to $7.2 million. For more on how states are leveraging this and other changes in ESSA, see the New Teacher Center brief: https://newteachercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/BKL-ESSA-1705-EN_final-1.pdf.
Kaylan Connally and Melissa Tooley discuss how multiple-measure teacher evaluations were intended to focus on accountability and support, but states were primarily focused on designing and implementing these systems for accountability. See their report, *Beyond Ratings: Re-envisioning State Teacher Evaluation Systems as Tools for Professional Growth* (Washington, DC: New America, March 2016), https://na-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/beyond-ratings.pdf.

Based on telephone interviews conducted with the Jason Graham (senior program director at the Florida Department of Education), interview with author, August 29, 2017, Jim Masters (director of educator evaluation and training at the Missouri Department of Education), interview with author, October 30, 2017.

State principal evaluation systems are typically broken up into two components. Roughly half is a qualitative component based on principal practice and the other half is based on some measure of student academic outcomes. New America conducted a scan of each state’s education agency website to review its principal evaluation and support systems, with a focus on the state-designed or -approved principal practice evaluation instrument in order to determine whether principals are being evaluated on instructional leadership.

In its state-designed or -approved principal practice evaluation instrument, not every state is using the term “standard.” Some use “domain,” “performance measure,” etc.

States also reference activities related to curriculum and instruction, evidence-based decision making, and the culture of learning. Each state includes some combination of these areas under its instructional standard.


While we collected information through these different sources, we realize that not all state initiatives and systems of support may be listed on SEA websites.


Ibid.


To date, Mike Rutherford, of the Rutherford Learning Group, has served as the lead consultant and specialist trainer in support of the implementation team. See [http://www.rutherfordlg.com/](http://www.rutherfordlg.com/).

There are approximately 280 Emerging Leader level principals (completing their first/second year as principal) and other experienced principals participating (some serving as mentors for those early-career principals and some experienced principals and assistant principals).

26


Superintendents typically serve as principal supervisors in Missouri.

The Bush Foundation awards grants to people and organizations in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and the 23 Native nations in the same geographic area working on community creativity, education, nation building, and social business ventures. See Bush Foundation, https://www.bushfoundation.org./


New Leaders is a national nonprofit organization that develops educators through leadership training and advocates for policies that advance strong school leadership. See New Leaders, http://newleaders.org/.


The state began piloting the program last year with 6 trainers and 11 superintendents.


Ibid.

Beyond a relationship that might already exist between the specialist and the principal supervisor, the need has come from supervisors who see instructional feedback as a priority in their districts. It might also come from a center advocate’s recommendation.


Relay Graduate School of Education, https://www.relay.edu/.


For follow-up, participants have two-day sessions every quarter with Relay, two-day sessions every six weeks with Teaching Trust, or a one-day session every month with New Leaders.

Two of the three managers of instructional leadership were principals that were in “improvement required” campuses and pulled their campuses out of that status and kept them out for several years. The third manager coached principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders on how to develop other teachers. All three individuals have been involved in school improvement efforts and have experience in systems approaches to improving instruction.

New America spent February through May researching and analyzing principal evaluation and support systems in all 50 states and the District of Columbia in order to understand whether states are incorporating instructional leadership in their evaluation systems. Based on this research, we developed an interactive data visualization of instructional leadership standards across states, which can be accessed at https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/instructional-leaderships-standards/.

Ibid.


Diane Stark Rentner, Nancy Kober, and Matthew Frizzell, Planning for Progress: States Reflect on Year One
The Trump administration has proposed eliminating funding for Title II, Part A of ESSA in fiscal year 2018 and 2019. The House Appropriations Committee followed suit and proposed eliminating funding for the program in July of 2017. ESSA provides an opportunity for states and districts to support school leadership through Title I funds but eliminating the targeted Title II funds would make it challenging for states to continue to fund this kind of work. As of February 2018, funding for the program had not been set for fiscal year 2018 and 2019.


Distributed leadership models can vary in form, but generally entail having other staff—teacher leaders and/or school administration teams—within the building take on some of the typical responsibilities of the principal so that the principal can have a more focused role. See Christine M. Neumerski, “Rethinking Instructional Leadership, a Review: What Do We Know About Principal, Teacher, and Coach Instructional Leadership, and Where Should We Go from Here?” Educational Administration Quarterly 49, no. 2 (2012): 310–347; and Melissa Tooley, From Frenzied to Focused: How School Staffing Models Can Support Principals as Instructional Leaders (Washington, DC: New America, July 2017), https://na-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/From-Frenzied-to-Focused.pdf.


Per the Every Student Succeeds Act, “school leader” is defined as “a principal, assistant principal, or other individual who is—(A) an employee or officer of an elementary school or secondary school, local educational agency, or other entity operating an elementary school or secondary school; and (B) responsible for the daily instructional leadership and managerial operations in the elementary school or secondary school building.” See https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf. Additionally, per the U.S. Department of Education’s non-regulatory guidance for Title II, Part A: “The ESEA [Elementary and Secondary Education Act] considers those [local education agency] staff, such as the principals’ supervisors, who actively mentor and support principals and by doing so are themselves ‘responsible for the school’s daily instructional leadership and managerial operations,’ to also be eligible for Title II, Part A funded support. (ESEA section 8101(44)).” See https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiipartaguidance.pdf.


This outreach included the Office of the State Superintendent in the District of Columbia.

Based on our review of state policies, we tailored the first question to reflect the level of flexibility that districts are given in implementing evaluation systems. For states with an optional model, we asked about the uptake from districts on the suggested/sample state model. For states with one state model that all districts use, we asked if any districts use a system other than the state model.
This report carries a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license, which permits re-use of New America content when proper attribution is provided. This means you are free to share and adapt New America’s work, or include our content in derivative works, under the following conditions:

- **Attribution.** You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

For the full legal code of this Creative Commons license, please visit [creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org).

If you have any questions about citing or reusing New America content, please visit [www.newamerica.org](http://www.newamerica.org).

All photos in this report are supplied by, and licensed to, [shutterstock.com](http://shutterstock.com) unless otherwise stated. Photos from federal government sources are used under section 105 of the Copyright Act.