

# Leveraging the Principal Supervisor Role

## A District Self Assessment

Principal supervisors can play a powerful role in boosting school quality by promoting instructional leadership among principals.<sup>1</sup> Over the past five years, a consensus has formed about the knowledge and skills principal supervisors need to successfully reach this goal.<sup>2</sup>

To help districts fully leverage the potentially powerful impact of principal supervisors, FourPoint Education Partners designed a four-point review to:

1. Assess how the principal supervisor role is defined and operationalized in a district.
2. Identify which principal coaching and supervision best practices are being implemented.
3. Identify barriers to principal supervisors having their intended impact.
4. Recommend ways in which a district can improve its support to and supervision of schools.

We've used our review framework to understand – and increase – the impact of principal supervisors in districts across the country. We invite you to similarly use these tools to reflect on how the principal supervisor role is structured and operating in your district – and what changes you might make to leverage it fully.

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Jerald, C. (2012). *Leading for Effective Teaching: How School Systems Can Support Principal Success*. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Council of Chief State School Officers (December 2015). *Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards*. Author.

## Principal Supervisor Dashboard

INDICATOR	Your District	Benchmark
<p><b>1. Number of Schools Per Principal Supervisor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many schools is each principal supervisor responsible for managing (you can use an average or list the actual numbers for each)?</li> </ul>		20
<p><b>2. Percentage of Principal Supervisors' Time Spent in Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many days a week and hours per day are principal supervisors in schools working with principals on instructional leadership?</li> <li>What responsibilities besides coaching and evaluating principals do principal supervisors have?</li> <li>To what extent do these responsibilities prevent principal supervisors from helping schools get better?</li> </ul>		50%
<p><b>3. Number of Improvement Initiatives Mandated by Central Office</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the district's non-negotiables for schools?</li> <li>To what extent do non-negotiables have the following characteristics: well-defined, understood by principals as being a "must do," part of schools' improvement plans, supported by the central office through professional development and coaching, and monitored for implementation and impact by the central office?</li> </ul>		3
<p><b>4. Percentage of Principals Who Understand and Value Supervisor Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do most principals understand and value the role of principal supervisor?</li> </ul>		75%

## District Indicators of Success

INDICATOR	1 Not Evident	2 Emerging	3 Effective	4 Exemplary
<p><b>1. The district has a clear theory of action for school improvement.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the district and its stakeholders have a clear understanding of where the district lies on the school-based management to centrally managed continuum?</li> <li>Do principals understand what the district's non-negotiables are and for what they will be held accountable?</li> </ul>				
<p><b>2. The principal supervisor role is clearly defined to be accountable for principal development and school improvement.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the district's principal supervisor role clearly defined as focused on supporting principals to be great instructional leaders, ensuring that schools are consistently improving student outcomes, and evaluating principals as instructional leaders?</li> </ul>				
<p><b>3. Principal supervisors use effective coaching strategies with principals.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do principal supervisors coach principals "on the redline?" In other words, do supervisors draw on a variety of approaches – from open-ended questions to prescriptive directives – to help principals meet their personal and school improvement goals?</li> </ul>				
<p><b>4. A high-quality performance management process is used to facilitate implementation of key initiatives.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are district non-negotiables monitored for implementation and impact based on pre-determined metrics for success?</li> <li>To what extent are the collected data used in some type of data consult, professional learning community, or performance management routine to ensure continuous improvement?<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>				

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Bryk, A. et al. (2015). *Learning to Improve: How America's Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better*. Harvard Education Press.



## Additional Discussion Questions



1. What are some of your district's strengths with regards to how it leverages the principal supervisor role to build instructional leadership in schools and, ultimately, to improve outcomes for all students?
2. What are some of the key challenges?
3. What will be your first priority to increase the leverage of the principal supervisor role?
4. What additional supports do you need in order to be successful?