

## **DESIGNING STRONG PRINCIPAL EVALUATION SYSTEMS IN MINNESOTA SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

### **PREPARED BY NEW LEADERS ON BEHALF OF THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Under Section 123B.147 of Minnesota Statute, Minnesota school districts “must develop and implement a performance-based system for annually evaluating school principals assigned to supervise a school building within the district.” Districts may choose to implement a model that is already developed – including a state example model that was developed by a committee of stakeholders in 2012 and is being piloted in the 2012-13 school year – or develop a unique model that meets all statutory requirements.

This document is intended for Minnesota public school districts that choose to design their own model. It provides recommendations on the design and implementation of principal evaluation systems, pursuant to the requirements of statute. The recommendations are drawn from the experience of New Leaders, a national non-profit focused on school leadership that has consulted with several states on the design and implementation of principal evaluation systems and has created an open-source principal evaluation model available for use at no cost to school districts.

Where you can find the New Leaders Principal Evaluation Handbook

<http://www.newleaders.org/newsreports/publications/principal-evaluation-handbook/>

What’s there: The New Leaders Principal Evaluation Handbook; The New Leaders Principal Evaluation Rubric; and Training modules to help districts put the model into practice

This document is organized into eight sections, mirroring the eight statutory requirements of an annual performance evaluation system for principals. We conclude with a comparison of our recommendations to the state example model. Before we offer recommendations specific to the statute, we would offer two general recommendations:

- 1. Pay as much attention to principal evaluation as you do to teacher evaluation –** Given the intense focus on teacher effectiveness, it is easy to overlook principal evaluation. We think this is a mistake, both because principals have a tremendous impact on student achievement and because of the critical role that principals play in improving teacher effectiveness.
- 2. Pay at least as much attention to implementation as to design –** We developed a freely-available model primarily because we think districts should spend their precious time focused on (1) ensuring that good training for principal evaluators is in place, and (2) implementing the evaluation system in a way that radically shifts the professional conversations between principals and the superintendents and assistant superintendents who supervise them. We believe that such a shift in the practice of principals and their managers will have a profound and positive effect on results for students in our public schools.

## 1. Substantive Areas of Focus in the Evaluation System

MN Statute: *“The annual evaluation must: (1) support and improve a principal's instructional leadership, organizational management, and professional development, and strengthen the principal's capacity in the areas of instruction, supervision, evaluation, and teacher development;”*

Central to any strong evaluation system is a rubric of practice that describes actions that principals take in alignment with agreed upon standards of practice. There are a number of freely-available and commercial rubrics that cover the domains of practice required under statute: instructional leadership, organizational management, professional development, supervision, evaluation, and teacher development. We recommend that districts use three questions to assess the quality and fit of any rubric:

- **Does the rubric focus on principal actions that have been shown to drive higher levels of student achievement?**

Principals do a lot of different things; the role demands it. Perhaps because of this, leadership practice rubrics often try to cover the waterfront. This is unfortunate because research tells us that some actions are more directly related to the core task of improving student achievement than are other actions. Keeping this in mind, we encourage districts to choose rubrics that include the following categories and not much more:

- ✓ Learning and Teaching: The actions a principal takes to drive dramatic student achievement gains through the development and support of effective teaching. Some key actions include implementing rigorous curriculum, implementing high-quality instructional practices, and monitoring data on student results.
- ✓ Shared Vision, School Culture and Family Engagement: The actions a principal takes to create a vision of high achievement supported by a culture of high expectations and family engagement. Some key actions include designing and implementing a vision that adults are accountable to supporting, developing cultural competence and a commitment to equity, and engaging families as partners.
- ✓ Strategic Planning and Systems: The actions a principal takes to manage and monitor school systems and operations. Some key actions include developing a strategic plan that addresses the most important challenges and has school resources aligned to it, and organizing time to maximize student learning and professional development.
- ✓ Talent Management: The actions a principal takes to develop and maintain a high-quality, effective teaching staff. Some key actions include finding and keeping excellent teachers, creating high-quality professional development structures, effectively evaluating teacher performance, and building a strong leadership team.

- ✓ **Personal Leadership and Growth:** The actions a principal takes to demonstrate effective leadership through self-reflection, change management and clear communication. Some key actions include demonstrating self-awareness, constructively managing change, and communicating openly and effectively.

It is important to choose a rubric that not only includes these critical leadership areas but also **does not add too many other areas**. Having a broader set of leadership areas can dilute the focus of the ones that are most important.

One additional note on the second category in the list above: many sets of standards (and their associated rubrics) separate vision, culture, and family engagement. We combine them because of the strong connections between vision and culture, and between culture and family engagement. If judging rubrics that separate these issues, we suggest that districts at least ensure a focus on school culture as an important and visible area of principal practice.

- **Is the language of the rubric clear and detailed enough to inform professional growth for principals?**

The rubric should be usable as developmental tool to help principals identify priority areas for their own professional growth that are aligned to the needs of their school. And it should equip those in a coaching role to help principals improve in their practice. To serve these purposes, the language of the rubric needs to be clear and describe actions that principals at different stages of professional growth take. Principals, their evaluators, and their coaches should be able to recognize current levels of practice in the rubric language, and the language describing higher levels of performance should provide a clear picture of what improved practice looks like. We recommend that districts choose rubrics that describe observable actions, rather than dispositions, of leaders. In addition, the rubric should offer examples of evidence that can be used to assess principals' performance.

- **Are there enough levels of performance to make meaningful judgments about the quality of principals' practice?**

Many rubrics divide performance into two categories representing satisfactory and unsatisfactory performance. This is insufficient to the task of making meaningful judgments about principals' practice. At the same time, too many levels of performance can dilute the meaning of each level. We recommend four levels:

- ✓ **Exemplary, or highly effective** – These leaders build the capacity of others and continuously demonstrate an expert level of performance on all of the principal standards. They are models for others; districts should expect the number of exemplary leaders to be relatively small.
- ✓ **Proficient, or effective** – These leaders consistently implement effective leadership practices and demonstrate an adept level of performance on almost

all of the principal standards. This is the anchor level of a good rubric, representing adequate performance for someone charged with leading a school.

- ✓ **Basic, or developing** – These leaders demonstrate the knowledge and awareness of effective leadership practices, but do not consistently or effectively execute those practices. They may demonstrate appropriate effort but show limited evidence of impact. Novice leaders may find that they are rated at this level in some standards as they are developing their practice.
- ✓ **Unsatisfactory, or ineffective** – These leaders have not demonstrated acceptable levels of performance on the principal standards. Their practice and outcomes are unacceptable and require immediate attention and monitoring.

Note that, with four levels, one represents adequate performance. Above that is a level to recognize excellence. Below adequate are two levels, one that signals priority areas for improvement and one that signals more serious concern about performance. Districts selecting rubrics with fewer levels should assess whether all of these situations are represented. Districts selecting rubrics with more levels should assess whether the added levels are worth the added complexity that will come in assessing individuals against the rubric (and in getting agreement among evaluators).

A note on implementation: In addition to selecting the right rubric, districts should remember that effective use of a rubric of practice requires careful training, so that evaluators and principals have a common understanding of the meaning of terms and the areas of focus. This is not a small endeavor and is best accomplished within a community of practice where participants can share experiences and ideas, be that within a district or in a consortium of districts.

*For additional resources, see pages 5-8 of the New Leaders Evaluation Handbook and the New Leaders Principal Evaluation Rubric.*

## 2. Formative and Summative Assessment

MN Statute: “*The annual evaluation must: ... (2) include formative and summative evaluations;*”

The statute appropriately requires evaluation to include both formative and summative assessment of principals’ performance. This is relevant to the assessment of leadership practice as well as the assessment of priority outcomes, notably student achievement.

### Formative Assessment

We recommend that evaluators and principals assess progress midway through the school year, when student assessment data are available for review and after the evaluator has conducted direct observations of principal practice (having completed at least a few observations is essential to the success of a mid-year review). Such a formative assessment process requires preparation:

- The principal should analyze available student achievement data and consider progress toward student learning priorities.
- The principal should reflect on the indicators of leadership practice selected as priority areas and determine whether their growth is on track or not.
- The evaluator should review evidence from the principal and evidence collected during observations, including feedback to the principal, to identify key themes for discussion.

Ideally, the principal and evaluator hold a mid-year formative conference, with explicit discussion of progress toward student learning priorities, as well as growth in the leadership practice priority areas. The conference is also an opportunity to discuss any changes in the context (e.g., a large influx of new students) that would support a shift in student learning priorities. At the conclusion of this mid-year conference, the evaluator provides formal feedback to the principal.

*For additional resources, see page 19 of the New Leaders Evaluation Handbook.*

### Summative Assessment

At the end of the evaluation cycle, evaluators need to provide each principal with a summative assessment of their performance. In designing an evaluation system, districts should ensure that the summative assessment includes, at least:

- ✓ A summary of all evidence collected over the course of the year
- ✓ A written description of strengths and growth areas for the principal
- ✓ A performance rating, based on all available evidence

- ✓ A face-to-face meeting to discuss all of the above

Many evaluation processes also allow or require principals to self-assess their performance. This can be useful both as a developmental exercise for principals and as evidence for evaluators to consider in their final ratings.

One of the most vexing issues facing evaluators is when to complete the summative assessment. Districts often need evaluation results to inform decisions about principal contracts and placements in the spring. But, at this point, some of the information needed to complete a summative assessment is missing. Indeed, it may be several months before student achievement data are available. If a rating in the spring would inform a contract or placement decision, then the evaluator should assign a rating based on current year’s practice and interim achievement data in addition to student outcomes and principal evaluation results from the previous year. In that case, the evaluator should then recalculate the administrator’s summative rating when all summative data for the current year are available.

As noted above, the summative assessment should include an overall performance rating. There are essentially two ways to arrive at an overall rating: a “numerical” and a “matrix” approach.

In the **numerical** approach each category counts as a certain percentage of the overall rating. For example, the state example model weights leadership practice at 50%, student outcomes at 35%, and survey results at 15%. Scores in each category are multiplied by these percentages and then added together for a final score. This is the most sensible approach for districts that keep student outcomes, broadly defined, at 35% of the overall rating.

For districts that can put all outcomes into two categories – one for practice and one for outcomes – we recommend a **matrix** approach. In this approach, a final rating comes from the combination of the two categories, as illustrated below (see also page 24 of the New Leaders Handbook).

| OVERALL SUMMATIVE RATING |   | Leadership Practice Rating |                     |                     |                            |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
|                          |   | 4                          | 3                   | 2                   | 1                          |
| Student Outcomes Rating  | 4 | Rate Exemplary             | Rate Exemplary      | Rate Proficient     | Gather further information |
|                          | 3 | Rate Exemplary             | Rate Proficient     | Rate Proficient     | Gather further information |
|                          | 2 | Rate Proficient            | Rate Basic          | Rate Basic          | Rate Unsatisfactory        |
|                          | 1 | Gather further information | Rate Unsatisfactory | Rate Unsatisfactory | Rate Unsatisfactory        |

We recommend this approach for a couple of reasons. One, it establishes a balance between practice and outcomes, requiring success on both in order to be deemed a proficient principal. And two, it provides a process for evaluators to seek out more information if there are wide

discrepancies between the assessment of a principal's practice and the outcomes they get with students. Such a process will, inevitably, drive toward greater consistency between rating of a principal's practice and the student outcomes that that principal helps to create.

*For additional resources, see pages 21-24 of the New Leaders Evaluation Handbook.*

### 3. Alignment with Job Description, Goals and Growth Plan

MN Statute: *"The annual evaluation must: ... (3) be consistent with a principal's job description, a district's long-term plans and goals, and the principal's own professional multiyear growth plans and goals, all of which must support the principal's leadership behaviors and practices, rigorous curriculum, school performance, and high-quality instruction;"*

In order to meet the requirement of consistency with a principal's job description, we recommend that job descriptions be amended to include language about the principal actions described in Section 1 of this document.

In order to meet the requirement of consistency with district plans and goals and principals' growth plans and goals, we suggest a robust annual cycle of evaluation (as described in the New Leaders Handbook). That cycle should begin with principals:

- Receiving and reviewing clear guidelines on the components of the evaluation and the evaluation process.
- Reviewing, analyzing and reflecting on all available student learning data and feedback about their leadership practices (including stakeholder feedback) to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement.
- Reviewing the district's student learning priorities for the year.

Next, the principal should identify the specific learning priorities for their school and develop a strategic school plan. More specifically, the principal should:

- Develop a strategic school plan in collaboration with other stakeholders that includes relevant, clear student learning priorities that are supported by data.
- Develop their evaluation plan by identifying priority areas for growth in their leadership practice that are aligned to their student learning priorities (we recommend that principals have no more than three priority areas for growth).
- Discuss their student learning targets and professional growth priorities with their evaluator.
- Reach agreement with their evaluator on a detailed evaluation plan to track their progress throughout the year. This plan should include a schedule for regular observations, evidence collection, feedback and supports throughout the year.

*For additional resources, see pages 18-19 of the New Leaders Evaluation Handbook.*

## 4. Observations

MN Statute: *“The annual evaluation must: ... (4) include on-the-job observations and previous evaluations;*

Statute requires direct observation of principal practice as part of the evaluation process. Periodic, purposeful school visits offer critical opportunities for evaluators to observe, collect evidence, and analyze the work of principals to facilitate ongoing feedback, dialogue about principal practice, and continuous improvement. Evaluators should provide timely feedback after each observation or collection of evidence.

We recommend the following process for observations as it ensures evaluators can make the most of their school site visits and collect the evidence needed to rate principal practice and support their professional development.

| Preparing   | Scheduling   | Observing   | Following-up   |
|---|--|---|--|
| Review background information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic school plan</li> <li>• Student learning targets</li> <li>• Staff learning priorities</li> <li>• Principal’s leadership priority areas</li> </ul> | Review school schedule to identify opportunities for evidence collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership team meetings</li> <li>• Professional learning sessions</li> <li>• Principals observing and providing feedback on teacher practice</li> </ul> | Recording events and principal actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay particular attention to actions associated with the principal’s leadership priority areas</li> <li>• Monitor the connections among student learning priorities, staff learning priorities, and the principal’s leadership priorities</li> </ul> | Provide detailed feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluator reviews and discusses the evidence with the principal during the mid-year formative review</li> <li>• Evaluator provides feedback to the principal citing evidence and current progress on their leadership priority areas</li> </ul> |

Critical to effective observation is recording evidence of principal practice. The evaluator should be intentional in gathering detailed, relevant evidence that specifically aligns to the principal’s student learning priorities and leadership practice priorities. For example, if the evaluator is observing classrooms for the quality of instruction and planning, evidence collection should include a review of lesson plans, professional learning plans, records of observations and feedback for teachers. The evaluator’s follow-up should include monitoring teachers’ progress.

Observation should be frequent for all principals, and should be more frequent for principals who are new to their district, school, the profession, or who have previously received ratings below proficient.

***For additional resources, see pages 20 and 27 of the New Leaders Evaluation Handbook.***

## 5. Surveys

MN Statute: *“The annual evaluation must: ... (5) allow surveys to help identify a principal's effectiveness, leadership skills and processes, and strengths and weaknesses in exercising leadership in pursuit of school success;*

Stakeholder feedback is an essential part of a strong evaluation system. Surveys are a common method of gathering stakeholder feedback about a principal's practice. There are numerous survey instruments, varying in cost and quality, from which districts might select to generate feedback and there are multiple ways to incorporate survey results into a principal's evaluation. We do not endorse any particular surveys, but we do note that some are available commercially and others are available as open-source resources.

We offer the following suggestions as a guide for deciding on how to best incorporate stakeholder feedback.

Determine whether it is more important to gather stakeholder feedback on principal actions (i.e., what principals do) or on the school practices that result from principal leadership. Consider the following categories of surveys:

- **Leadership practice surveys** focus directly on feedback related to a principal's performance and the impact on stakeholders. Leadership Practice Surveys for principals and other administrators are available, and there are also a number of instruments that are not specific to the education sector, but rather probe for information aligned with broader leadership competencies. Typically, leadership practice surveys for use in principal evaluations collect feedback from teachers and other staff members.
- **School practice surveys** capture feedback related to the key strategies, actions, and events at a school. They tend to focus on measuring awareness and impact from stakeholders, which can include faculty and staff, students, and parents.
- **School climate surveys** cover many of the same subjects as school practice surveys but are also designed to probe for perceptions from stakeholders on the school's prevailing attitudes, standards, and conditions. They are typically administered to all staff as well as to students and their family members.

Determine what leadership standards you want to assess with stakeholder feedback. Leadership practice surveys and school practice surveys tend to measure a relatively large number of leadership domains, while climate surveys can be more focused on issues of school culture. Determining the breadth of information you want to collect can help in your decision-making about what to administer and what portions of a survey to include in a principal's evaluation.

Determine whose feedback you want. The stakeholders surveyed should be those in the best position to provide meaningful feedback. Stakeholders solicited for feedback should include teachers and might also include parents, other staff, community members, and students. If surveyed populations include students, they can provide valuable input on school practices and climate.

Consider the burden to administer the survey. Some surveys are longer than others. Further, some are exclusively for use in assessing principal practice while others provide information useful to broader school improvement conversations. In order to minimize the burden on schools and stakeholders, the surveys chosen may be implemented for purposes more broad than administrator evaluation, such as part of teacher evaluation systems and school- or district-wide feedback and planning.

Ensure that the survey meets a basic threshold of rigor. Specifically, survey authors should be able to produce documentation indicating that (1) the survey measures what it is intended to measure (i.e., validity) and (2) survey findings are consistent over time and across users (e.g., reliability). Among the surveys available commercially and on an open-source basis, there is tremendous variability in validity and reliability. For districts that are considering designing their own surveys, you should be aware that establishing a basic level of rigor appropriate for an evaluation system that has employment consequences can be time-consuming and costly. For that reason, we recommend choosing from available surveys and we recommend careful review of the validity and reliability of surveys before making a final choice.

Administer the survey in such a way as to have adequate stakeholder representation. There are several strategies districts may choose to use to ensure success in this area, including careful timing of the survey administration during the year, incentivizing participation, and pursuing multiple means of soliciting responses.

Determine how survey results will be incorporated into a principal's evaluation. Survey results can be used in one of two ways: (1) as a distinct category or (2) as evidence that an evaluator uses along with other evidence to make a rating on a principal's practice. Many principal evaluation systems do the former, but we would caution that this can result in inaccurate ratings. For example, we have observed cases of principals who are working to turn around negative school cultures and who, by consequence, receive negative feedback from stakeholders who are resistant to change. In this case and others, principal evaluators should have the flexibility to review the feedback and consider it against other data and against the principal's goals before assigning ratings. Thus, we recommend that stakeholder feedback not be a separate category; rather, the survey results should be required evidence in the assessment of a principal's practice.

***For additional resources, see page 9 of the New Leaders Evaluation Handbook.***

## 6. Student Academic Growth and Achievement

*MN Statute: “The annual evaluation must: ... (6) use longitudinal data on student academic growth as 35 percent of the evaluation and incorporate district achievement goals and targets;*

Based on our understanding of the statute and the legislative intent behind it, student achievement must account for at least 35% of a principal’s evaluation rating but can account for more. We recommend that districts consider an equal balance of leadership practice and student outcomes, with the bulk of student outcomes based on growth measures.

We applaud the strong focus on growth in the statutory language, because growth is the best measure of a principal’s contribution to achievement. We recommend that districts maintain a strong emphasis on growth measures in their evaluation model. Indeed, if a district has adopted a value-added model of student growth (using historical data to make predictions about the amount of improvement to expect from groups of students and to compare actual improvement to these predictions), we recommend the use of those data even in place of the state’s growth measures.

To help districts create strong evaluation systems that meet these requirements, we suggest that districts follow these three steps (which are outlined in more detail in the New Leaders Handbook, pages 10-16):

1. Select the right measures. We recommend that principals be evaluated across four categories of measures:
  - a) Growth in core academic subjects. By growth, we mean measuring the scale score progress of individual students over time. In Minnesota, this is possible using state assessment data in math and reading.
  - b) Core subject results for subgroups of students needing special attention, such as English Learners or students in poverty
  - c) Results for non-tested subjects and grades, such as early grade reading assessments, capstone writing projects, or student portfolios
  - d) College and career readiness measures, most notably pass rates in gateway courses and graduation rates

The table below provides examples that are relevant to Minnesota, including components of the state’s Multiple Measures Rating (MMR). We recommend including the MMR measures because aligning principal evaluation to the state accountability system for schools has several advantages: (1) it brings coherence to the work of principals who are usually accountable for these school-wide measures, (2) it simplifies the process for districts to generate ratings in the evaluation system, and (3) and it allows for comparisons across schools and districts. In choosing among these example measures and other measures, districts should ensure that the measures not only align to the state accountability system, but also to district goals and targets.

|   | Elementary  | Middle   | High   |
|---|---|--|--|
| A.<br>Academics:<br>Growth<br>model<br>results for<br>core subjects       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State growth results in math (component of MMR)</li> <li>• State growth results in reading (component of MMR)</li> </ul> <p>Note: For high schools, the state’s MMR compares 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade scores in reading and 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade scores in math</p>  |  |  |
| B.<br>Academics:<br>Subgroup<br>results in<br>core subjects               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement gap reduction (component of MMR) in reading and math for students by race</li> <li>• Achievement gap reduction (component of MMR) in reading and math for English Learners</li> <li>• Achievement gap reduction (component of MMR) in reading and math for students receiving Free and Reduced Price Lunch</li> <li>• Achievement gap reduction (component of MMR) in reading and math for students with disabilities</li> </ul> |  |  |
| C.<br>Academics:<br>Results for<br>“non-tested”<br>grades and<br>subjects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten and grade 1 reading</li> <li>• Kindergarten and grade 1 math</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 8 capstone writing project</li> <li>• Grade 7 social studies/history portfolio</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 11 capstone writing project</li> <li>• Grade 12 student-chosen performance assessment (in social studies, arts, or other non-tested subject)</li> </ul> |
| D. College<br>and Career<br>Readiness                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passing grades in all subjects</li> <li>• Enrollment and pass rates in higher rigor courses (e.g. algebra)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit accumulation at the end of grade 10</li> <li>• Graduation rate (component of MMR)</li> </ul>   |

If district-level common assessments exist in subjects other than the state tested subjects and growth data can be generated from results on those assessments, districts should consider including those in the evaluation of a principal. The more grades and subjects included, the more one can make a comprehensive assessment about a principal’s performance in leading a school. If and when testing requirements are expanded to include multiple years in high school (currently, only 10<sup>th</sup> graders are assessed in reading and only 11<sup>th</sup> graders are assessed in math), districts should adjust the growth measures for high school principals.

2. Set the right targets. Each measure needs a target that is specific to the principal. We recommend that targets speak to growth over time whenever possible, for two reasons: (1) The core work of a principal is to move all students forward and accelerate learning for those most in need of improvement; and (2) Focusing on growth can help to incent talented principals to work in lower-performing schools.

Targets should meet a couple of basic criteria. First, they should be clear enough so that the principal and her supervisor know what success looks like. Second, they should be

both ambitious and attainable as demonstrated by the plan and resources that the principal puts against them. Here are examples, one each from the four categories described above.

| Measure   | Target  |
|---|---|
| <u>From Category A</u><br>Growth model results in math (in an elementary school)                    | The school-wide growth score in math demonstrates that the school exceeded expected growth for its students.  |
| <u>From Category B</u><br>ELA, math or science proficiency of English Learners (in a middle school) | Of the 25 English Learners starting grade 6 in the fall below proficiency in mathematics, all will move up one proficiency band (e.g. from below basic to basic, from basic to proficient) or remain at the proficient or advanced level on the spring administration of the state math assessment for grade 6. |
| <u>From Category C</u><br>Kindergarten and grade 1 reading  | Of the 30 students entering grade 1 reading below grade level as measured on the _____, at least 25 will either reach grade level or make 1.5 years of growth on the spring assessment of the _____.  |
| <u>From Category D</u><br>Credit accumulation in grade 10   | 95 % of students will complete grade 10 with at least half of the credits required to graduate upon completing grade 12   |

3. Determine how many targets need to be met to reach proficiency. Not all targets are equal. We believe strongly that outcome measures that are focused on individual student growth and can be measured reliably across schools should carry more weight than other measures. In the model outlined in our Handbook, attaining adequate student outcomes depends on meeting these targets, as well as meeting a subset of other targets.

*For additional resources, see pages 10-16 of the New Leaders Evaluation Handbook.*

## 7. Links to Professional Development

*MN Statute: “The annual evaluation must: ... (7) be linked to professional development that emphasizes improved teaching and learning, curriculum and instruction, student learning, and a collaborative professional culture;*

In section 3, we describe a recommended process for evaluation that begins with principals reflecting on their practice and, in discussion with their evaluators, establishing goals for professional growth. As part of that process, we recommend that the principal and evaluator agree on professional development activities designed to improve the principal’s practice in identified priority areas. (See the goal setting form in the New Leaders Handbook, page 26, for an example of how this can be documented.)

## 8. Improvement Plans for Principals Not Meeting Standards or Other Criteria

*MN Statute: “The annual evaluation must: ... (8) for principals not meeting standards of professional practice or other criteria under this subdivision, implement a plan to improve the principal's performance and specify the procedure and consequence if the principal's performance is not improved.*

The statute requires improvement plans for principals “not meeting standards of professional practice or other criteria.” In order to determine who needs an improvement plan, districts need to set a threshold for what constitutes adequate performance. There are essentially two decisions here:

1. Determine what level of overall performance is adequate. For example, in a system with four performance levels (see Section 1 of this document), the two two levels would be considered adequate performance.
2. Determine how many years of inadequate performance merits intervention. In a four-level system, any principal receiving the lowest rating should have an improvement plan. Any experienced principal receiving the second lowest rating for two consecutive years should have an improvement plan, but a district may want to have an improvement plan for that rating after one year.

## Comparison of State Example Model to New Leaders Recommendations

As noted earlier, a group of stakeholders from across Minnesota developed a state example model that meets the statutory requirements. Many aspects of that model are highly consistent with New Leaders’ recommendations, but there are three opportunities for increased consistency.

| <b>Statutory Component</b>                             | <b>State Example Model</b>  | <b>New Leaders Recommendations</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Substantive Areas of Focus in the Evaluation System | The model includes a rubric that assesses principal performance across five leadership domains    | Based on the recommendations in section 1 of this document, the current rubric could be even more focused on areas of leadership practice that drive student achievement (for example, recent research suggests the need for a stronger focus on building school culture) and could include more clear examples of evidence linked to leadership actions (the state example includes sources of evidence rather than examples of evidence). |
| 5. Surveys   | The model includes survey results as a distinct component.  | As described in section 5 of this document, we recommend that survey results serve as evidence to inform a leadership practice rating, rather than being a separate component.  |
| 6. Student Academic Growth and Achievement             | The model uses the statutory minimum of 35% of a principal’s evaluation tied to student outcomes. | As described in section 6, we recommend that student outcomes, taken broadly, should be half of a principal’s evaluation.<br><br>Also, as described in section 3, having two equally weighted categories (i.e., practice and outcomes) allows for a matrix approach for final ratings, which we consider to be a superior approach.   |

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New Leaders is very grateful for the opportunity to offer recommendations to support Minnesota districts in designing new evaluation systems. We also know that effective evaluation systems depend on high quality and well-supported implementation, including:

- Strong training and support of principal evaluators at the outset and during first year of implementation, providing them with opportunities to compare ratings and evidence and to prepare for mid-year and summative ratings
- A clear introduction of the new system, the process steps, the standards, and the associated tools
- Aligning principal professional development to the introduction of the new expectations
- Ongoing review of formative and summative ratings to ensure that the system is working to distinguish high performers and identify areas of growth

If, based on your review of this memo and the New Leaders Handbook, you would be interested in further support from New Leaders, please contact Matthew Kelemen at 415-470-1708 or [mkelemen@newleaders.org](mailto:mkelemen@newleaders.org).

**MINNESOTA STATUTE  
123B.147 PRINCIPALS.**

**Subdivision 1. Supervision of school building.**

Each public school building, as defined by section 120A.05, subdivisions 9, 11, and 13, in an independent district may be under the supervision of a principal who is assigned to that responsibility by the board of education in that district upon the recommendation of the superintendent of schools of that district. If pupils in kindergarten through grade 12 attend school in one building, one principal may supervise the building.

**Subd. 2. Valid license required.**

Each principal assigned the responsibility for the supervision of a school building shall hold a valid license in the assigned position of supervision and administration as established by the rules of the commissioner of education.

**Subd. 3. Duties; evaluation.**

(a) The principal shall provide administrative, supervisory, and instructional leadership services, under the supervision of the superintendent of schools of the district and according to the policies, rules, and regulations of the school board, for the planning, management, operation, and evaluation of the education program of the building or buildings to which the principal is assigned.

(b) To enhance a principal's leadership skills and support and improve teaching practices, school performance, and student achievement, a district must develop and implement a performance-based system for annually evaluating school principals assigned to supervise a school building within the district. The evaluation must be designed to improve teaching and learning by supporting the principal in shaping the school's professional environment and developing teacher quality, performance, and effectiveness. The annual evaluation must:

(1) support and improve a principal's instructional leadership, organizational management, and professional development, and strengthen the principal's capacity in the areas of instruction, supervision, evaluation, and teacher development;

(2) include formative and summative evaluations;

(3) be consistent with a principal's job description, a district's long-term plans and goals, and the principal's own professional multiyear growth plans and goals, all of which must support the principal's leadership behaviors and practices, rigorous curriculum, school performance, and high-quality instruction;

(4) include on-the-job observations and previous evaluations;

(5) allow surveys to help identify a principal's effectiveness, leadership skills and processes, and strengths and weaknesses in exercising leadership in pursuit of school success;

(6) use longitudinal data on student academic growth as 35 percent of the evaluation and incorporate district achievement goals and targets;

(7) be linked to professional development that emphasizes improved teaching and learning, curriculum and instruction, student learning, and a collaborative professional culture; and

(8) for principals not meeting standards of professional practice or other criteria under this subdivision, implement a plan to improve the principal's performance and specify the procedure and consequence if the principal's performance is not improved.

The provisions of this paragraph are intended to provide districts with sufficient flexibility to accommodate district needs and goals related to developing, supporting, and evaluating principals.

*Source: Minnesota Statutes*