



# Learning from Leadership • Principal Survey

University of Minnesota  
Center for Applied Research  
and Educational Improvement

University of Toronto  
Ontario Institute for  
Studies in Education

Commissioned by  
**The Wallace Foundation**

This survey is part of a comprehensive examination of how leadership influences student achievement. The largest study of its kind in the United States, it is being carried out jointly by teams of researchers at the University of Minnesota and the University of Toronto in nine states, 43 districts, and about 170 schools.

This survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. Please do not write your name on this survey. Your responses are confidential and your participation is entirely voluntary. The identification number on this survey will be used for data management purposes only. When we publish results of the research, we will never identify any particular school or district.

Please seal your survey in the 6”X9” envelope (provided) and then return completed Principal and Teacher Surveys, in the U.S. Priority Mail envelope provided, to: The University of Minnesota, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, 360 Education Sciences Building, 56 East River Road, Minneapolis, MN, 55455.

## A. Your Areas of Expertise

**The professional expertise that principals bring to the support of teaching and learning varies individually. Please rate your own level of expertise in the following areas:**

	Basic	Moderate	Good	Highly Developed
1. General teaching strategies				
2. Subject-specific instructional expertise (e.g., reading, mathematics)				
3. Coaching teacher efforts to implement new practices				
4. Analyzing and interpreting student assessment data				
5. Managing student behavior				
6. Developing unity and teamwork among teachers				
7. Developing teacher leadership for improvement				
8. Developing parent/community support and collaboration				
9. Motivating teachers and students to continuously improve				
10. Developing and coordinating school improvement plans				

## B. School Conditions

To what extent do you agree that ...						
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My school sets high standards for academic performance.						
2. Most students respect others who get good grades.						
3. Most students seek extra work so that they can get good grades.						
4. Most students try hard to improve on previous work.						
5. Academic achievement is recognized and acknowledged by teachers in my school.						
6. The learning environment in my school is orderly.						

To what extent do you agree that <i>most teachers</i> in your school ...						
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
7. Are able to accurately monitor the progress of their students.						
8. Use strategies which enable students to construct their own knowledge.						
9. Maintain a rapid pace of instruction in their classes.						
10. Minimize disruptions to instruction.						
11. Are successful in helping their students take charge of their own learning in age-appropriate ways.						
12. Base their instruction on a deep understanding of the content they are teaching.						

## C. School Leadership

Thinking about the school improvement initiative(s) that you consider your highest priority now, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:						
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. We collectively plan who will provide leadership for our initiative and how they will provide it.						
2. The distribution of leadership tasks for this initiative is "spontaneous." It is not planned but it usually works out well.						
3. The distribution of leadership tasks for this initiative is "spontaneous." It is not planned and it often leads to conflict and confusion.						
4. Leaders within individual divisions or departments coordinate their work carefully but this is not done across the school as a whole.						

Thinking about the same school improvement initiative, how often do you ...					
	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
5. Facilitate teacher access to professional expertise at the district office?					
6. Facilitate teacher access to professional expertise external to the district (e.g., education service center, university, consultants)?					
7. Enable teachers with assigned instructional leadership roles to train and assist other teachers. (e.g., literacy coach, grade team leader)?					
8. Enable teachers to support the development of each other's expertise?					
9. Provide training and assistance for teachers myself?					

To what extent do you agree that ...					
	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
10. My teachers and I generally believe that reflection and dialogue are essential for good decision making.					
11. Most good decisions are based on gut feelings.					
12. I trust the competence of my staff.					
13. People in this school have unrealistic beliefs about the leadership capacities of their colleagues.					
14. There is strong commitment in this school to a common set of shared goals.					
15. Competition is more productive than cooperation as an incentive for improving our practices.					

## D. District Leadership

To what extent do you agree that the district leaders who currently evaluate your performance or oversee your work ...					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Make me feel comfortable to try new things in my school.					
2. Take a personal interest in my professional development.					
3. Are available when I need to see him/her.					
4. Follow through on decisions we make together.					
5. Are very good at the job.					

To what extent do you agree that the central office administrator with whom you have the most contact ...					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. Identifies other's strengths and limitations.					
7. Accurately reads people's moods, feelings, or nonverbal cues.					
8. Gives others opportunities to speak their mind					
9. Accurately assesses the underlying or root causes of a person's problems.					
10. Pays attention and listens well.					
11. Asks questions to be sure they understand the person(s) they are working with.					
12. Is very likable					

How often do you ...				
	More than once a week	Once every week or two	Monthly	5 times a year or less
13. Individually meet and confer with the central office administrator with whom you have the most contact?				

How frequently do your district leaders ...					
	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
14. Communicate effectively about best practice in high priority areas of instruction?					
15. Provide quality staff development focused on high priority areas of instruction?					
16. Provide opportunities for me to work productively with my administrative colleagues from other schools?					

## D. District Leadership *(continued)*

How frequently do your district leaders ...					
	Very Rarely	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
17. Provide feedback to school administrators about the nature and quality of their leadership?					
18. Use student test data as a focus for conversations with school administrators about improving instruction?					

To what extent do you agree that your district leaders ...						
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
19. Communicate a clear vision for schools in this district.						
20. Build consensus for that vision among staff, parents and students.						
21. Have a detailed plan for improving instruction across the district.						
22. Clarify the steps that school administrators and teachers need to take to improve the quality of instruction.						
23. Set expectations for higher test scores than state averages.						
24. Clearly communicate expected standards for high priority areas of instruction.						
25. Hold schools accountable for working toward the district's standards.						
26. Are active and effective in supporting excellent instruction.						
27. Deepen my understanding of instructional leadership.						
28. Encourage administrators and teachers to act on what they have learned in their professional development.						
29. Praise my efforts to improve my instructional leadership.						
30. Provide coaches/mentors to help me work on aspects of my leadership that I am trying to improve.						
31. Help build and maintain a sense of community across the district.						
32. Encourage school administrators to work together to improve their instructional leadership.						

## D. District Leadership *(continued)*

To what extent do you agree that your district leaders ...						
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
33. Know what is going on in my school.						
34. Actively monitor the quality of instruction in this school.						
35. Work directly with school administrators who are struggling to improve their instructional leadership.						

## E. District Policy Conditions

To what extent do you agree that ...						
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Our district's goals are focused on student learning.						
2. Our district has explicit targets for student performance beyond NCLB targets.						
3. Our district has the capacity for reliable assessment of student and school performance.						
4. Our district incorporates student and school performance data in district-level decision making.						
5. Our district assists schools with the use of student and school performance data for school improvement planning.						
6. District personnel procedures help promote and retain our best staff.						
7. Our district fosters the flow of ideas throughout the district.						
8. Our district supports the conditions in schools (e.g., time, resources, leadership) for teacher collaboration on improving teaching and learning.						
9. Our district provides multiple opportunities for principal and teacher collaboration in district efforts to improve student achievement.						
10. I know about what's happening in other schools in the district.						
11. District initiatives support the use of specific instructional strategies.						

## E. District Policy Conditions *(continued)*

To what extent do you agree that ...						
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
12. Our district provides intensive professional development opportunities and support for teachers.						
13. The district uses student achievement data to determine teacher professional development needs and resources.						
14. School staffs in our district have the knowledge and skill they need to improve student learning						
15. In our district, continuous improvement is viewed by most staff as a necessary part of every job						
16. In our district, problems are viewed as issues to be solved, not as barriers to action						

## F. The State

To what extent do you agree that ...						
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. State standards stimulate additional professional learning in our school.						
2. State policies help us accomplish our school's learning objectives.						
3. The state gives schools freedom and flexibility to do their work.						
4. The state is likely to impose sanctions for non-compliance with their accountability requirements.						
5. The state communicates clearly with our district about educational policies.						

## G. Parents and Community

To what extent do you agree that ...						
	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
6. Parents and other community members are included on planning committees.						
7. Community members are responsive to requests for participation.						
8. Organized community groups (e.g., PTA, PTO) meet regularly to discuss school issues.						
9. Community members attend meetings to stay informed about our school.						

## H. Demographics

1. How many years have you worked as a principal or assistant principal? _____ years	
2. How many years have you worked in <i>this school</i> as a principal or assistant principal? _____ years	
3. How many <i>head</i> principals has your current school had in the past 10 years (include yourself, if applicable)? _____ principals	
4. How many students are enrolled in your school? _____ students	
5. How many students are enrolled in your school district? _____ students	
6. Your title: Principal <input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Principal <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Your position: Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Your gender: Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/>	9. Please indicate your race/ethnicity (mark all that apply): African-American (Non-Hispanic) <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Native American <input type="checkbox"/> White (Non-Hispanic) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/>

Other comments about leadership, school improvement, and student achievement in your district or school:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!