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Perceptions of Illinois Superintendents Regarding Implementation of Principal Evaluation Instruments after Senate Bill 7 Authorizations

Brian Anthony Kaye

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

PERCEPTIONS OF ILLINOIS SUPERINTENDENTS REGARDING
IMPLEMENTATION OF PRINCIPAL EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS
AFTER SENATE BILL SEVEN AUTHORIZATIONS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM IN ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

BY

BRIAN A. KAYE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2020

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ABSTRACT

The role of an elementary and middle school principal in Illinois is recognized for having a significant impact on student achievement and the success of a school community. As a result, greater emphasis is placed on the evaluation and professional development of the principals in Illinois. With the passage of Senate Bill 7 in Illinois the requirements for principal evaluations changed. The purpose of the research was to understand the actual versus the perceived use of the ISLLC principal leadership standards and whether the implementation of SB7 is having an impact on principal leadership.

Participants of this study included three hundred seventy-four K-8 principals and one hundred fifty superintendents in Illinois that completed an online survey. Then, three principals and two superintendents volunteered to participate in in-person interviews detailing their experiences with the principal evaluation process in their lived experience.

The findings in this study revealed a common experience among principals in Illinois as a result of SB7, the benefits of principals receiving feedback from their supervisors and a lack of professional development being offered to principals throughout Illinois that is connected to their evaluation.

CHAPTER I
THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The success of schools has traditionally been measured by student achievement on standardized tests allowing for comparison with other schools locally and nationally. Research on successful schools point to principals playing a significant role in student achievement, second only to teachers (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Because principals impact the entire student body, a valuable system to evaluate their effectiveness is critical to the welfare of the entire school community (Pound, 2013). These findings sparked a national desire to increase accountability for measuring the effectiveness of school leaders. Professional development is necessary for continuous improvement of leadership capacity (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis 2010). Now finding themselves under greater inspection, principals need standardized criteria by which to measure their effectiveness and identify areas of growth (Marzano et al., 2005). With greater emphasis on accountability and student performance, states are re-aligning practices of principal evaluations (Partnership for Learning 2010).

The purpose of the research is to understand the impact and application of the principal evaluation framework adopted as a result of Illinois Senate Bill Seven (SB7). The research will focus on superintendents who conduct evaluations of principals through the newly adopted requirements under the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). This

study will uncover the current implementation efforts of superintendents and analyze whether the new requirements target areas of improvement for principals to build their leadership capacity.

As instructional leaders, principals are responsible for delivering professional development to boost student achievement (Jenkins, 2009). However, the trend in responsibilities for principals nationally holds them accountable for a variety of charges, mainly shaping a vision in the school community (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005), creating a positive and welcoming climate (Golding et al., 2007), growing leaders from within the organization (Seashore Louis, Leithwood et al., 2004, pp. 81-82), handling data and personnel (Portin, Schneider et al., 2003, p. 14) and driving student achievement growth (Manna et al., 2015). The role of the principal is evolving and the policy changes in SB7 seek to set best practice standards for effective principal leadership behaviors. Attention needs to be given to developing a leader's capacity to fulfill the vast responsibilities included in developing teachers and impacting student achievement (Leithwood & Louis, 2004, p. 10).

One of the main responsibilities of an effective school leader is to focus on providing teachers with professional development to increase student achievement (Partnership for Learning, 2010). Principals also assess the ongoing implementation of new initiatives within the school, while always moving forward on prior school and district goals (DuFour & Mattos, 2013). Hull (2012) states,

More than a head disciplinarian or a glorified schedule-maker, the principal of today's school is a leader. While teachers may have the primary influence on student achievement, individual teachers cannot do it alone. An effective

principal is needed to maximize teachers' individual effectiveness as well as the school's effectiveness.

In a study conducted on the impact of effective principals, Branch, Hanushek, and Rivken (2013) found that effective school leaders increase the achievement of regular developing students between two and seven months of learning per year. Studies indicate that principals have a direct impact on school culture, teacher effectiveness, and teacher happiness (Lin, 2011). Unmistakably, the impact of the school leader is critical to student success. The focus to reform school leader evaluations includes the various responsibilities encompassing their impact on student achievement through the overall health and function of a school building. Additionally, a strong evaluation will ensure that the school leader is continuing to grow, support student achievement, and school health. Conducting meaningful evaluations is crucial to supporting their ongoing professional development. Principal evaluations are gaining attention because although high quality leadership does improve student achievement (Leithwood, 1994), the professional development and the principal evaluation process lacks focus toward a set criteria defining leadership qualities and expectations (Reeves, 2009; Goldring et al., 2010).

The superintendent of the school district evaluates public school leaders each year. Principals report that their evaluations are ineffective (Hull 2012). Contributing to this feeling, is the lack of standardization in the principal evaluation process throughout the United States which creates challenges for clear and effective principal practices (Fenton et al., 2010). I have experienced the transformation of principal evaluations over the past 13 years. I have received and been part of the principal evaluation for 11 years.

From my vantage point, Senate Bill Seven has provided the superintendent a set of expectations to observe and evaluate leadership on specific criteria. Prior to SB7, observations of my leadership practice did not include formal observations with a pre and post meeting to highlight strengths and identify areas of growth. Currently, Senate Bill Seven provides standards and expectations of effective principal leadership and holds superintendents accountable for specific evaluation timelines. Senate Bill Seven provides clearly defined components of the principal evaluation process. The value of the principal evaluation process provides an opportunity for principals to receive feedback from the district superintendent to build their leadership capacity. An effective principal evaluation provides clear and direct feedback associated with performance standards (Moore, 2009). When leadership criteria are connected to specific expectations, it provides a clear definition of best practice and direction for growth. The whole evaluation process, when driven by standards, sets a benchmark for defining effective school leadership. Though it is clear that effective evaluations are aligned to standards, there is a need for continued research on principal evaluations to ensure proper implementation and training of superintendents. I will seek to understand the current implementation of the new evaluation process initiated by the adoption of SB7.

Statement of the Problem

The following chapter will identify national policies addressing principal evaluations, local/state policies addressing principal evaluations, and criteria currently being used to evaluate principals. New national requirements seek to improve principal effectiveness through a research-based approach with rigorous standards in five categories (Marzano et al., 2005) including student achievement, continuous

improvement of teacher instruction, curriculum, collaboration and school climate.

Research on principal evaluations reveals that “...many principals...are never formally evaluated in any meaningful way” (NASSP, 2010). In this era of increased accountability, the public demands quality principals leading schools (Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Chung, & Ross, 2003). Certain practices involved in principal evaluations are negatively impacting meaningful evaluations such as inconsistent procedures, protocols, and tools used to document principal observations or effectiveness on the job. Additionally, throughout the nation, principal evaluations lack clear performance benchmarks (Goldring et al., 2014). In order to create a more impactful evaluation experience, the foundation for reforming principal evaluations centers on accountability, improving system performance, and detecting professional learning needs for principals in Illinois (Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan, 2012). Districts face rising pressure to improve the process of evaluating principals (Marzano et al., 2005). The person largely responsible for conducting principal evaluations is the superintendent. It is necessary for the superintendent to understand and implement the new evaluation system with fidelity. Research suggests that the new evaluation tool, when implemented with fidelity, will assist principals and superintendents in identifying how to increase student achievement, improve teacher effectiveness, and enhance principal leadership capacity (Brown-Sims, 2010). In a public school setting, local control is encouraged. However, using national guidelines and benchmarks will improve the principal evaluation system and provide consistency for comparing school leadership qualities (Fenton et al., 2010).

Research Questions

Research on principal evaluations states that "...many principals...are never formally evaluated in any meaningful way" (NASSP, 2010). I will investigate the implementation practices of current superintendents when evaluating principals.

The research questions that guide the research:

1. With the advent of SB7 and the requirement that all principals be annually evaluated, how do middle and elementary superintendents in Illinois evaluate their principals?
2. With the advent of SB7 and the required annual principal evaluations, how are superintendents providing professional development to support principal growth in leadership capacity?

National Principal Evaluation Policies

The purpose and value of evaluating educational programs and personnel is to identify and celebrate areas of strength and areas for improvement. In the education sector, change is at the heart of improvement. Recognizing areas of need through a strong evaluation system helps center the discussion on what needs to be done to improve the educational system. "...Educational reform initiatives in the U.S. now center on using achievement tests to hold teachers, districts and students accountable for their performance and as the impetus for improving performance" (Leithwood & Louis, 2004, p. 31). Historically, federal funds have been distributed through categorical grants allocating money to districts on need-based formulas (Beam & Conlan, 2002). States scheduled to receive federal funds have traditionally been provided funds automatically regardless of student performance on state assessments. Secretary Duncan's decision to

use a competitive grant process, by way of RTTT (Race to the Top), rather than use a formula to allocate money to states, is significant in the broader context of federal education policy (Duncan Interview, 2009). State applications to acquire RTTT funds were graded on a five hundred point scale according to the rigor of the reforms proposed and their compatibility with four administration priorities: developing common standards and assessments; improving teacher training, evaluation, and retention policies; creating better data systems; and adopting preferred school-turnaround strategies (U.S. Department of Education; McGinn, 2012, p. 139).

In order to gain access to the federal funds, states around the nation planned massive reforms and removed legal, statutory, or regulator barriers to link students' achievement data to teachers and principals for evaluation purposes (NASSP, 2010). The goal of these reforms ties directly to gaining access of the federal funds available through RTTT. Three challenges faced by RTTT funds are "...driving systemic change in a fragmented and decentralized education system, the newness of and political opposition to federal efforts to push systemic education reform on states, and the weakness of state and federal administrative capacity in education" (McGinn, 2012, p. 138). Many states rushed the grant process to gain access to grant funds and now find the new evaluation model challenging to implement with fidelity (McGinn, 2012).

With the adoption of Senate Bill Seven, principal evaluations have become the center of federal and state educational reform because the research directly supports the positive impact school leaders have upon increasing student achievement (McGinn, 2012). Under pressure to acquire available capital through RTTT funds, states were encouraged to write grants, implement reform more quickly, and in return, receive

substantial sums of money earmarked for school improvements. The RTTT initiative was designed to provide capital to school districts willing to initiate reforms. One reform requirement of SB7 states that principal evaluation procedures include student achievement provisions (Faulkner, 2012). Through national legislation and competition to acquire the available federal grants, the federal government sought to define principal responsibilities and outline expectations of effective school leaders. One criterion in the new principal evaluation process states, accepting Title One funds established criteria to include student growth on standardized assessments in principal evaluations. Linking student achievement to principal evaluations was a key factor in the education reform of SB7. As a method to control grant money and force states to advance their principal evaluations, the federal grants commanded student achievement be tied to leadership effectiveness. States were obligated to submit new principal evaluation procedures adhering to the new SB7 guidelines. Race to the Top required states to write definitions for effective and highly effective school leaders incorporating student achievement data in the evaluations (Clifford & Ross, 2011). States that received federal funds through RTTT were required to implement the new principal evaluation procedures by 2014-2015.

With a majority of states adopting new legislation regarding principal evaluation, the topic of principal evaluation has surfaced nationally. According to Clifford and Ross (2011), over thirty states wrote legislation to increase consistency in the administration of principal evaluations, aligning standards for principal evaluations, using evidence-based instruments for principal evaluations, and ensuring feedback be useful to principals.. Each state receiving grant funds is responsible for ensuring compliance of principal

evaluation procedures. Each school district is provided autonomy in selecting components such as the type of student assessments used and the weight of the percent toward the overall principal evaluation (Condon & Clifford, 2009).

Amid recent federal changes, states and school districts are pressured to obey rules of RTTT and NCLB (Duncan, 2012). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation focused on schools meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Schools not meeting growth targets were subject to increased state control. Overall, the national legislation reform sought to tie student achievement directly to principal evaluations. The desired outcome of the transformed principal evaluation system is increased feedback, improved student growth, holding principals accountable to specific standards for effective leadership, and defined yearly professional development for principals towards specific areas of improvement (Clifford & Ross, 2011). Following the guidelines of RTTT and SB7, states retained limited authority regarding the minimum percent student achievement would have upon the overall principal performance evaluation rating (Aberger et al., 2013). “Under federal policies such as NCLB and RTTT, a principal’s job security rests squarely upon his or her success in promoting and sustaining acceptable levels of student academic achievement” (Kearney & Sanders, 2011, p. 1).

State of Illinois Principal Evaluations

Governor Pat Quinn signed Senate Bill Seven into law on June 13, 2011. The State of Illinois General Assembly finds and declares that current performance evaluations do not sufficiently discriminate between effective and ineffective principals; [and] evaluations must include principal competencies (Illinois General Assembly, 2010). The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) requires all schools in Illinois to

change how a principal's performance is measured (Growth Through Learning). The members of the Performance Advisory Evaluation Council include teachers, school leaders, district leaders, university administrators, and the state board of education. The members proposed the Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders (ISBE, 2012) including mission and vision, managing systems change, improving instruction, building collaborative relationships, leading with integrity, and creating a culture of high expectations (ISBE, 2012). The State of Illinois adopted the new principal evaluation instrument developed by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC). The State Model consists of two sections: Section I: Evaluation of Principal Practice and Section II: Student Growth (ISBE 2). The student growth measure is a new element of principal evaluations and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) provided superintendents the authority to select a specific measure embedded within the evaluation (Growth Through learning).

Implementing the new evaluation model with fidelity has been a challenge for many districts because of mandates attached to receiving the funds (Wallace, 2015). Training superintendents and principals on the new evaluation components is critical to effective implementation. Superintendents are responsible for following principal evaluation procedures that include conducting observations, gathering evidence, and selecting student achievement data as a factor in determining the performance rating of the principal. "...Evaluator selection and training are crucial to fidelity of implementation and stakeholder buy-in during the first few years of system implementation" (Jacques & Clifford, 2012, p. 13). Quality instructional practices and principal leadership performance are directly impacted by principal evaluations that

include student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). The improved evaluation criteria will lead to increased leader effectiveness and hold principals accountable to specific objectives.

Evaluation of School Leaders

According to the Wallace Foundation (2015), there are four components to effective leadership training: high quality standards, high quality training, selective hiring and on-the-job support. Principals begin leading their school communities in all aspects whether they have experience leading or are new to the role. Principal preparation programs are key to readying principals for the vast responsibilities involved in leading a learning community. Quality principal leadership programs include internships that target leadership objectives and criteria for what makes an effective school leader. Supporting the internship objectives and gathering additional experience in the field of leadership development throughout the novice years as a principal will provide principals with more practice gaining skills. School leaders require training to analyze student growth and identify specific learning objectives for students to increase achievement and identify areas for teacher training along with searching for opportunities to enhance classroom curriculum.

Principal evaluations serve as the tool to help superintendents identify areas for leadership improvement. The principal evaluation seeks to provide principals with direction according to specific job descriptions, standards, and state guidelines (Vernon Township School District, 2015). Superintendents evaluating principals need clearly defined leadership standards to measure the effectiveness of their school leaders. Effective professional development for principals is targeted to support individual growth

and improve upon leadership practice (Mizell, 2010). Being able to reference a research-based list of criteria for effective school leadership qualities allows superintendents to identify skills and gather evidence on progress being made toward each standard.

Superintendents can utilize observation data and student achievement data to prioritize areas of leadership improvement for principals. Principals who are unable to meet the standards for professional practice and student achievement benchmarks will recognize areas of improvement and target goals for the next evaluation cycle. The purpose of the evaluation process and specific criteria for effective leadership is to identify leadership standards that need improvement in order to ultimately influence their positive impact on student growth.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of research and literature for this study highlights the evolving role of the school principal and the increase in accountability nationally. As more federal reform initiatives are placed on school districts, the principal is expected to play a more significant role in facilitating the changes for the staff, students, and community.

The definition of evaluation has ranged over time and in 1942 Ralph W. Tyler, the “father of educational evaluation,” is credited for describing educational evaluation as the complement between objectives and performance (Nowakowski, 1983). Among the varied definitions in educational literature, there are three agreed upon pieces of an educational evaluation of principals, “(a) the gathering and analysis of data (b) the use of judgment based on appropriate and defined criteria, and (c) the making of decisions with a view toward action” (Toler, 2006).

Development of Principal Evaluation Standards

School improvement efforts focus on principals because research indicates that principals have a significant influence on student achievement, second only to classroom teachers (Branch, 2013). The National Association for Secondary School Principals states, “It is imperative that there is a renewed investment to strengthen and support principals ...to ensure that leadership knowledge, skills and dispositions keep pace with students’ needs for twenty-first century skills and the nation’s ever-rising expectations of

education” (NASSP, 2010). In the era of standards and accountability, principal job expectations have evolved. Alignment of job expectations will provide better job satisfaction and effectiveness for school principals by reducing role conflict and consequent strain. The role of principals in the 1950s focused on managing the school building. Leading into the 1960s and 1970s, principals were expected to be more political and help support the implementation of federal policies (Hallinger & Bridges, 1997). In the 1980s, the role of principals changed and the title shifted from manager to leader. The title, “building leader” changed job expectations and directed principals to focus on student learning and achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). The US Secretary of Education issued “A Nation at Risk” in 1982. This report revealed failures and sought to use reforms to change schools at the national level (e.g., Carnegie Forum, 1986; Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996; Murphy, 1990; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1989; Thomson, 1993). The report placed fear in public schools and started a wave of federal reforms to support failing school systems.

In the 1980s and 1990s, educational research focused on the increased use of reforms to effect change. School leaders were charged with influencing the change process. Successful school principals were engaging in curriculum leadership, creating a positive learning environment, and demonstrating increased student achievement (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). As research expanded on the impact of principals in successful schools, the policy changes focused on greater accountability for principals to engage in curriculum leadership. This research triggered federal legislation to shift the principal role from building manager to building leader (Barth, 1990; Caldwell, 2002; Hall & Southworth, 1997; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Lam, 2002; Leithwood, 1994).

In 2001, President George W. Bush's education-reform, *No Child Left Behind*, was signed into law on January 8, 2002. This act pushed standardized testing and accountability for student outcomes ensuring all students meet learning targets (Klein, 2015). The impact of the school leader continued to show a positive relationship between an effective leader and increased student achievement. Realizing the impact of school leaders on student achievement it reinvigorated a national reform of the standards to identify effective principal evaluations and ensure all schools have effective leaders. According to an NASSP study, *Rethinking Principal Evaluation: A New Paradigm Informed by Research and Practice*, "...how principal evaluations are conducted may be even more important than the content of what the evaluations contain" (2010). School districts were provided autonomy to develop evaluation systems for principals or use the state model (NAESP, 2011). There was a perceived lack of accountability for principal effectiveness, and more importantly, no set standards for what makes an effective school leader (Hull 2012).

Table 1 shows the history of principal evaluation standards and the professional organizations influencing the criteria for effective principals. The chart displays principal evaluation changes over time.

Table 1

Principal Evaluation Standards

ORGANIZATION	YEAR	STANDARDS
Elementary and Secondary Education Act	1965	“War on Poverty” Impacted federal funds and achievement gaps.
No Child Left Behind Act	2001	Support disadvantaged students Set high standards and measurable achievement goals. Federal funds linked to state testing.
Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) a committee of Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)	1996	Defined standards for effective school leaders.
Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) a committee of Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)	2007	Updated Standards: Adopted by 43 states. Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) wrote six standards for principal leadership.
The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)	2008	Developed Six Standards for Leading Learning Communities
Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE): Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC)	2010	Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) Senate Bill 7 (SB7) & Race To The Top (RTTT)
Illinois Model for Principal Evaluation	2012	Section I: Evaluation of Principal Practice & Section II: Student Growth
Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)	2015	ISLLC Standards Update to reflect focus on Transformational Leaders:
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorized as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	2015	Replaced NCLB Modified standardized testing Narrow the federal role of government in local schooling decisions

“Principal evaluations are supposed to be objective, fair and rational” (Davis & Hensley, 2011). The origin of principal standards began with the Council of Chief State

School Officers (1996) guidelines to support a multifaceted view of the role of school principals. The standards were based upon criteria defining effective school leadership. Members recognized changes that were central to redefining the leadership skills of school administrators (Catano & Stronge, 2006, p. 384). In 2008, the Council of Chief State School Officers developed the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) to support states in identifying criteria to shape a clear picture of principal effectiveness (see Table 2).

Table 2

Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards 2008

Standard 1: Vision	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
Standard 2: School Culture	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
Standard 3: Organization	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
Standard 4: Community	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
Standard 5: Integrity	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
Standard 6: Advocacy	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

There are other organizations that have put forward standards for principal evaluations including, The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Personnel Evaluations (2010) which identified eight key aspects to include in principal evaluations:

- (1) Be designed with the direct involvement of principals and other constituents.
- (2) Be educative.
- (3) Be connected to district- and state-level systems.
- (4) Be rigorous, fair, and equitable.
- (5) Include multiple rating categories to differentiate performance.
- (6) Gather evidence of performance through multiple measures of practice.
- (7) Communicate results to principals consistently and with transparency.
- (8) Include training, support, and evaluation of principal evaluators.

Table 3

Comparison of Professional Standards for Educational Leadership (PSEL) 2015 to ISLLC 2008

PSEL (2015)	Comparison	ISLLC (2008)
STANDARD 1. MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.	Consistent	Standard 1: Vision A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

<p>STANDARD 2. ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL NORMS Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>Standard 2: School Culture A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.</p>
<p>STANDARD 3. EQUITY AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.</p>	<p>New focus on equity of opportunities for all students</p>	
<p>STANDARD 4. CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.</p>	<p>New focus on growing teacher leaders and teaching capacity of teachers</p>	
<p>STANDARD 5. COMMUNITY OF CARE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>Standard 5: Integrity A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.</p>
<p>STANDARD 6. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL</p>	<p>New focus on maintaining a professional working climate</p>	

<p>Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>		
<p>STANDARD 7. PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>Standard 6: Advocacy A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.</p>
<p>STANDARD 8. MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>	<p>New focus on meaningful community engagement</p>	<p>Standard 4: Community A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.</p>
<p>STANDARD 9. OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.</p>	<p>Consistent</p>	<p>Standard 3: Organization A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.</p>
<p>STANDARD 10. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being</p>	<p>New focus on professional development as instructional leader</p>	

...a consortium of stakeholder groups in educational leadership, created the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium to take up the challenging task of designing the first set of national standards for educational leaders. (Canole & Young, 2013, p. 5)

Not until the development of the ISLLC standards was there an attempt to have a common evaluation for principals in the United States (Clifford 2013). It is believed that the policy will make evaluations more consistent throughout the nation and standardize the criteria for effective school leadership. “Whether conducted by districts or at the state level, evaluator selection and training are crucial to fidelity of implementation and stakeholder buy-in during the first few years of system implementation” (Jacques & Clifford, 2012, p. 13). Because of the fast-paced reform initiatives and the push to link principal evaluations to student achievement, I am interested in studying the effectiveness of the new evaluation models in elementary school districts in Illinois. The development of quality evaluation procedures and processes are new and lack the necessary examination (Kearney & Sanders, 2011, p. 27, 2011).

In the era of increased accountability, it is in the best interest of superintendents to have common evaluation measures that compare the professional practices of school leaders. The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) wrote standards for Leading Learning Communities to provide direction for effective school principals both novice and experienced (Strong, 2008).

Realizing the potential of principal evaluation as a strategy for strengthening leadership and improving schools requires systemic change to ensure that

evaluation systems support valid performance results and that principals have a clear path to improve their performance and access to resources that strengthen their leadership. (NASSP 2010)

The United States Department of Education embraces the belief that school principals should be accountable for student achievement. They further defined that, “an effective principal as one whose students, overall and for each subgroup, achieve acceptable rates of student growth” (NASSP, 2010). The intent of adding student achievement was to focus on incentives instead of sanctions to drive state reform. To encourage a reflective evaluation process that is ongoing throughout the school year and effectively supports principals, evaluators need to discover opportunities for creating meaningful dialogue throughout the current school year to improve principals’ leadership capacity for the sake of all stakeholders. Both superintendents and principals stated that treatment of all stakeholders is critical in a school leadership position and has a significant impact on evaluation results. Standards provide principals with clear direction for achieving success, allowing for greater professional development opportunities, and comparing principal effectiveness among those using the same evaluation instrument within and across state lines.

States adopting these professional standards are responsible for ensuring that principals are evaluated fairly. National education organizations developed criteria to define the principal position and include components necessary for effective school leadership. Research indicates that before SB7, principal evaluations did not correlate directly with the given evaluation standards raising implementation fidelity concerns (Goldring et al., 2009; Heck & Marcoulides, 1996). According to the University Council

for Educational Administration (UCEA), states have the authority to regulate principal preparation programs and licensing requirements for individuals seeking to become school leaders (Anderson & Reynolds, 2015). Because states are charged with this responsibility, the UCEA compared leadership preparation and licensure programs. They discovered that states were putting more resources into the licensure certification and less energy into who was being selected for the principal preparation programs. The study suggests that each state incorporate policies to improve the principal selection process including: explicit selection process, program standards, clinically rich internship, university district partnerships, and program oversight (UCEA, 2015). With universal agreement on principal standards, all fifty states and the District of Columbia adopted the ISLLC standards or adapted them to align with their state-created standards, all of which will improve principal preparation programs. Most principal preparation programs require three years of teaching experience and all states mention experience in their requirements. With forty-six states requiring continuing education for license renewal, it is clear that our country values improving leadership (USEA, 2015). The UCEA study recommends that states focus on the requirements for acceptance into the principal preparation programs to strengthen the criteria for those that choose school leadership as a profession.

Not all educators support the ISLLC standards. “Anderson (2001) and English (2003) expressed concern that the ISLLC Standards reflect a business-oriented model that values efficiency and technical skills as means for improving student performance without considering contextual differences that influence outcomes for students” (Catano & Stronge, 2006, p. 380). “New comprehensive systems of education leadership

standards are only as good as their implementation” (CCSSO, 2008). Standards defining criteria for effective leadership are critical to improve instruction and learning. “The national standards paint a portrait of effective education leadership – the traits and objectives that all education leaders should share – the standards enable state policymakers to guide improvements” (CCSSO 2008). Gene Wilhoit, the executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) states that the ultimate goal of these standards, as with any set of education standards, is to raise student achievement.

ISLLC standards were written with representatives from states and professional associations in partnership with National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) in 1994-95 and published by CCSSO in 1996. The Wallace Foundation provided support to review the growing base of research on educational leadership and to disseminate the revised version in 2008. The former set of standards were too restrictive not allowing new skills for school leaders to be included. The ISLLC 2008 standards allow for more flexibility in how leadership preparation programs define and view leadership.

There is a limited capacity of school leaders to effectively lead (Wallace, 2005). Educational administration programs are graduating an increasing number of certified school leaders. These leaders are admitted and pass through the higher educational programs because of their performance on academic coursework rather than on a comprehensive assessment of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to successfully lead schools (NPBEA, 2001). NCAELP (National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership) recommends in-service programs promote

lifelong learning activities tailored to meet individual needs at various stages of a principal's career (Peterson, 2001; Young, 2002). The Wallace Foundation finds that adults learn best in situations that require the application of skills, knowledge and problem-solving strategies. Field based internships create authentic opportunities for school leaders to gain practice and self-reflect. "Adult learning is best accomplished when it is part of a socially cohesive activity structure that emphasize shared authority for learning, opportunities for collaboration, and teamwork in practice-oriented situations" (Barnett, Basom, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000). Today more than ninety percent of all administrators in credential programs require an internship experience. Ideally, strong internships provide candidates with an intense, extended opportunity to grapple with the day-to-day demands of school administrators under the watchful eye of an expert mentor.

Improving the instructional leadership of school leaders is a challenging process. "Leaders need to leverage teacher leaders to conduct the management roles to allow principals to focus on professional development and coaching teachers" (DeNisco, 2015, p. 21). A lack of communication skills, instructional knowledge, planning for change, and focused professional development – topics identified as essential characteristics of instructional leaders – impeded principals' efforts to be instructional leaders and do not provide principals with the support needed to promote instructional leadership (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). Principals need structured staff development and district support to be effective instructional leaders because most principals do not possess the necessary knowledge and skill (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010). "Effective instructional leadership by school principals tends to affect teachers holistically, that is, emotionally, intellectually, and behaviorally" (Blasé & Blasse, 2004, p. 163). According

to the report, *Operating in the Dark*, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) encourages state and district decision makers to select principal improvement interventions that are backed by well-designed and well-implemented research. The school leader position is too complex, isolating, and lacks ongoing support and development required to maintain and foster sustained commitment, thus a larger turnover has been noticed (School Leaders Network, 2009). It takes an average of five years to put a mobilizing vision in place, improve the teaching staff, and fully implement policies and practices that positively impact the school's performance. As principals become more experienced, those that stay tend to move to schools that are easier to run: schools with higher income, higher achieving students, and fewer minorities.

Why do principals leave the position? The high turnover rate of educational leaders nationwide points to the complexities, responsibilities, and relentless pressures of the job. Such turnover derails improvement efforts necessary for student learning (NPBEA, 2015). Principals identify the primary drivers of those exiting as increased workload, managerial tasks, expensive personal cost, long hours, impact on physical and psychological well-being, local and state policies that tie principal hands in making critical decisions, and profound isolation on the job. According to a survey, eighty percent of superintendents and sixty-nine percent of principals indicate that their leadership training is out of touch with the realities of today's districts (Hammond et al., 2005). Training programs need to be more selective in identifying promising leadership candidates. Increased emphasis on instructional leadership, improving integration of theory and practice, working effectively with school community, and internships with hands-on leadership opportunities will improve principal preparation programs.

Additional components of a more effective principal evaluation should include performance tasks, recording instructional practices of teachers, student work samples, and professional development. Principal preparation programs should also expose leaders to curriculum design, implementation, evaluation and refinement, strategic planning, data collection, analysis strategies, and ways of inspiring others with the vision that all children can learn at high levels (Hull, 2012). “Principals have the greatest impact in elementary schools, less over middle schools, and the least over high schools; principals in these schools are less likely to provide direct supervision and support to their teachers” (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). The influence of a principal lessens as the organization grows. In upper levels of education, the teachers are subject specific making it difficult for the building leader to have experience and specific knowledge in every content area. Utilizing additional leaders such as department chairs within the building helps fill that content gap.

According to the Wallace Foundation (2012), there are indicators of successful principals and their evaluation criteria. Highly effective principals are supported through objective and focused evaluations. Effective principal evaluations rely on job performance and less on the qualifications of principals’ resumes. Principals that provide teachers with instructional leadership are linked to improved student achievement at higher rates. Principals that show instructional leadership by setting a culture within the school that supports ongoing professional learning for individual teachers have a greater impact on student achievement. Highly effective leaders emphasize the value of research-based strategies, encourage teacher collaboration, and provide more time for teacher planning (Wallace Foundation, 2012). Differing assessment approaches should

be used to determine principal effectiveness including role-based, outcome-based, and structure-based formats (Catano & Strong, 2006). Leaders must ask how will this help our students excel as learners since district performance evaluation practices are inconsistent and provide little meaningful feedback to improve leadership practice (Clifford et al., 2012; NPBEA, 2015).

Illinois State Model for Evaluations

The Illinois State Board of Education wrote grants to claim federal funds. Feeling pressure to claim available money through federal grant funds, the state of Illinois passed Senate Bill Seven requiring all principal evaluation procedures include student achievement and professional development provisions (Faulkner, 2012). Governor Pat Quinn signed the Performance Evaluation Reform Act under SB7 into law on June 13, 2011. This act requires all schools in Illinois to alter how a principal's performance is measured (Growth Through Learning, Koch 2013). The Illinois State Board of Education adopted the use of the ISLLC standards allowing principals to be evaluated on school leadership standards developed and adopted in a collaborative effort by numerous states. The ISLLC directs states toward a shared vision for principal effectiveness. The Illinois Model for Principal Evaluation is built upon the foundation of Statute—105 ILCS 5/24A-15 and the PERA Administrative Rules. All statute requirements and administrative rules are embedded within the state model including Section I: Evaluation of Principal Practice and Section II: Student Growth (ISBE 2).

The ISLLC standards will serve as the foundation for an aligned system that prepares, licenses, develops, supports, and evaluates principals effectively (CCSSO, 2015). “One key objective of ISLLC 2015 is to challenge states, accrediting bodies,

preparation programs, districts and individual practitioners to heed the standards’ framework in answering several essential questions about educational leadership” (CCSSO, 2015). The ISLLC 2015 standards will also serve as the foundation for the principal supervisor standards. When compared to the 2008 standards, the new standards give more prominence to certain leadership domains such as a school’s instructional program, culture, and talent management. In addition, ISLLC 2015 reflects a clear logic of improvement-focused educational leadership. The standards are not isolated but are interdependent and integrated. In order to improve student outcomes in schools, the school leader will need specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions. A value of using the ISLLC standards is consistency in leadership standards. Data for principal evaluations is collected, through direct observation by the superintendent, in six standard areas of growth for principals. When an evaluation tool is inconsistently administered, there is unreliable data collected and used for analyzing a principal’s effectiveness.

The principal evaluation is designed to satisfy the State Board of Education’s statutory requirement, but more importantly serves as a resource for Illinois school districts work to incorporate student growth as a significant factor in the evaluation of principals. The *Guide to Implement Principal Preparation in Illinois* states that effective principal evaluation plans are grounded in the following purposes: (1) Accountability, (2) Improving system performance, and (3) Professional learning (2011). Given the charge to create a new evaluation system, PERA established a collaborative group of educators in the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council comprised of teachers, principals, superintendents and other interested stakeholders. This group advises the Illinois State Board of Education on the development and implementation of improved performance

evaluation systems and supports. PERA affirms that current evaluation systems are unable to positively differentiate between effective and ineffective principals. The new evaluation system for principals must be reliable, contribute to improved student achievement outcomes, and show improved staff development (Illinois General Assembly, 2010). The new principal evaluation tool adopted in Illinois includes: (1) Annual evaluation of all principals, (2) Specific duties, (3) Specific strengths and weaknesses, with supporting reasons, (4) Aligned with research-based standards, and (5) Use student growth data as a significant factor in rating principal performance.

The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) members advised ISBE regarding implementation date, student growth measures, and recommended a four-tier summative evaluation rating system. School districts are encouraged to combine other measures of student data to capture more capacities of the principal's job (NASSP, 2010). A significant addition to the current evaluation system is section two of the state model requiring student growth be added as a factor in principal evaluations. Illinois' sub-par system for evaluating principals according to "The Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders" (2012) includes the following areas: (1) Living a Mission and Vision Focused on Results, (2) Leading and Managing Systems Change, (3) Improving Teaching and Learning, (4) Building and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships, (5) Leading with Integrity and Professionalism, and (6) Creating and Sustaining a Culture of High Expectations.

The State of Illinois provides districts the autonomy to select aspects of their own evaluation systems. Senate Bill Seven brings a necessary shift to principal evaluations based on current research. Leithwood and Louis (2004) emphasize that hiring,

developing, and evaluating school leaders is essential for school achievement. A significant aspect of the SB7 reform was the use of student achievement data in principal evaluations. There was limited agreement on the professional practices incorporated in principal evaluations prior to SB7. Authors Catano and Strong (2006) contend that principal evaluations, "...should be fair and equitable; ...based upon what they are expected to do; [and] performance evaluation instruments should match the expectations framed within state and professional standards" (p. 385). Research indicates, "...district-developed principal evaluation systems lack validity and reliability" (Kearney & Sanders, 2011, p. 13). The "Guide to Implement the Principal Preparation in Illinois" states, successful leaders should assemble a quality teaching staff that transform into a learning community where adults and students learn and achieve at high levels (IPA/IASA, 2012). We need a system that is more quantifiable and holds principals and teachers more accountable. "A principal's job security rests squarely upon his or her success in promoting and sustaining acceptable levels of student academic achievement" (Kearney & Sanders, 2011, p. 1). Too often educators lack the professional development to properly analyze the assessment data to make decisions.

State standards can inform how schools and districts recruit and cultivate leaders. Strong school leaders build teams and distribute responsibilities among the building leadership. According to the CCSSO (2015), school leaders need to maintain a laser-like focus on student learning and continuous improvement in their day-to-day work. Educational leaders are equipped with the vital knowledge, skills, and dispositions to transform our schools into places that empower students to take ownership of their learning and emphasize the learning of content. Common leadership standards ensure

effective leadership practice. State policy makers, preparation programs, professional associations, professional learning providers, and individual practitioners now share a clear understanding of what is expected of education leaders.

Principals view their evaluation as, “having limited value for feedback, professional development, or accountability to school improvement” (Portin, Feldman, & Knapp, 2011). It is necessary to include all stakeholders impacted directly by principal leadership to create a balanced evaluation system (Kearney & Sanders, 2011, p. 19). Principals are expected to broker the often-conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, district office officials, unions, and state and federal agencies, and they need to be sensitive to the widening range of student needs” (Davis, 2005). As a reform effort, the state of Illinois designed professional development to ensure all principals have ongoing and consistent training.

The National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards, formerly the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC), developed standards to guide the preparation of aspiring education leaders. NELP will inform the process through which preparation programs seek accreditation from the council (CCSSO, 2015). “States have established policies on certification, licensure, and program accreditation as well as standard processes to validate and accredit administrator preparation programs. Through these official tools and strategies, states control entry into the field of educational administration” (Hale & Moorman, 2003, p. 4).

Role of Superintendent

NCLB is responsible for bringing several challenges to our nation’s superintendents including greater accountability, mandatory standardized testing, highly

qualified teacher requirements, and the pressure for schools to meet adequate yearly progress goals. Superintendents are responsible for setting a leadership tone throughout the school district, serving as a leadership guide, and are the primary evaluator for principals. A study of two hundred superintendents in California revealed perceptions of the evaluation process when superintendents supervise principals. Superintendents support principals in their leadership capacity and ensure each principal lives the mission and vision of the school board to support student achievement. Superintendents conduct comprehensive evaluations of principals and recommend/provide specific professional development to ensure quality leadership at the building level (NAESP, 2011). The amount of training new principals require can vary significantly. Principal evaluators throughout Illinois are required to enroll in training to conduct principal evaluations. Observations conducted by superintendents continue to be the most common method of collecting evidence. Direct observations conducted by superintendents are important to evaluate the school leader's mission and the communication of the school's vision (Peterson, 1999).

Principal evaluations are inconsistently implemented (Thomas, Holdaway, & Ward, 2000). In a study of 200 superintendents in California, superintendents acknowledged that public perception of principal effectiveness had an influence on the overall summative evaluation rating they gave principals. Principals identified feedback regarding their leadership capacity at the end of the school year with limited time to improve upon their evaluation results in the given evaluation year. Only one principal in the study stated that the evaluation process helped develop their leadership capacity. In the study, superintendents perceived their feedback to principals to be ongoing

throughout the school year and the feedback included specific criteria to support leadership capacity. Conversely, principals did not agree with this perception among superintendents. This study identified that the current evaluation system of principals lacks specificity, direction, and opportunities for growth. In a review of principal evaluation documents, there was not enough data and research collected in order for the information to be reliable and valid (Condon & Clifford, 2010; Goldring et al., 2009; Heck & Marcoulides, 1996). Districts provide principals support and guidance when struggling and identify a lack of principal preparation as a key reason that most principals are not leading successfully (Mader, 2016). This study will focus on the perceived role of the superintendent in principal evaluations and the professional development offered to principals.

Principals included in the survey indicated that their evaluation process was completed at the end of the school year. The principals overwhelmingly shared that waiting until the end of the school year for input and feedback was too late to have any valuable impact on the current school year. Not surprisingly, the lack of direction nationwide to support superintendents is unable to support a larger systemic change required to provide principals with effective professional development. An effective evaluation model includes collaboration between the superintendent and the principal in developing goals and expectations. The need for more professional development within the year is critical to support areas of weakness. The skills required to lead a school with twenty-first century challenges are beyond management. The principal preparation programs need to catch up with the current needs of students, staff, and the community (Hale & Moorman, 2003, p. 19). The professional development provided by

superintendents includes observations, document analysis, climate surveys and learning walks. To support student achievement, areas of growth need to be communicated directly to principals.

Superintendents identify their instructional leadership skills as the primary reason for being hired and rate communication as the most critical aspect of their position. Superintendents accept responsibility for evaluating principals on a yearly basis and delegate authority of running a school building to the school leaders (Faulkner, 2012). The role of principal encompasses multiple facets of leadership. “Too often, performance assessment practices have emphasized replacing principals of underperforming schools rather than improving principal leadership through professional development and learning” (NASSP, 2010). Data on building and fostering long-lasting relationships with board members, community members, administrator colleagues, teachers, parents, and students may be hard data to collect, but each of these connections are critical and do stress the importance of an evaluation that encompasses more than student growth. The practice of replacing underperforming school leaders creates turnover in schools that need more consistent leadership. In a study of two hundred superintendents in California, evidence supports that relationships have a higher correlation to determining future employment of the principal than their management skills. This evidence suggests the current model of principal evaluations need to be enhanced with focuses on specific leadership criteria and student growth.

The training for principal supervisors outlines timing for observations and specific leadership categories to provide the principal feedback. Some factors to consider when analyzing data collected in the evaluation process are the accessibility, quality, and

timeliness of data. Each of these factors has an impact on the interpretation of the data. How and when the evidence collected is shared with principals can have an impact on how the data is interpreted (9). The use of data is a process that requires the evaluator to interpret data and construct implications for the future (173). In addition to the observational skills and support of principal growth, the skills and dispositions successful superintendents display on a daily basis are empathy, direct communication, and creating a balance in their professional and personal lives. Effective superintendents make strategic and courageous career moves that diversify their experiences and further their ability to lead in different environments.

Principals perceive the position of superintendent to contain high stress, a hectic schedule, and constant conflict resulting from an inability to please all constituencies. Superintendents need the courage to tolerate and accept criticism while having the courage to say no (Boyland, 2013). Superintendents remain calm and positive in leading the school district while balancing personnel difficulties, safety concerns, bureaucracy, conflict between internal and external expectations, deteriorating and overcrowded facilities, community dissatisfaction, and a growing list of federal and state mandates (Glass et al., 2000; Trevino, Braley, Brown, & Slate, 2008).

Principal Roles and Responsibilities

Bombarded with multiple leadership theories, school principals experience role conflict and role overload as they work to fulfill the perceptions of expectations. The various interpretations on principal roles, from the 1950s managerial style to the 1980s and 1990s instructional leader style, has steered principal evaluations in a new direction. In the 1990s, the movement for tax payer accountability and accountability for principals

was increasingly evident. Over the past two decades, leadership in schools has defined multiple categories including: instructional leadership, facilitative leadership, transformational leadership, visionary leadership, overall school culture, and curriculum leadership. In a study conducted by Romanik (2010), there are different methods used to assess principal performance.

There are no strategies to estimate principal effectiveness that accurately capture the independent influence of principals on student test scores (Fuller & Hollingworth, 2014). The basic purpose of evaluation is, according to Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2011), “the identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation of one’s value in relation to those criteria” (p. 7). Perhaps most disheartening is that seventy-five percent of the states that have adopted a strategy to estimate principal effectiveness have chosen simplistic measurement tools.

Effective principals directly influence the quality of the classroom instructional environment through the strategic hiring, development, and retention of good teachers. “At the core of most definitions of leadership are two functions: providing direction and exercising influence” (Leithwood et al., 2004). Effective leaders are masters at keeping vision, mission, and goals at the forefront of everyone’s attention and at the center of everyone’s work. Principals believe that a systematic evaluation is needed throughout their career to examine their success (Stufflebeam & Nevo, 1993). Leaders in high performing schools devote considerable energy to the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision toward learning that is shared and supported by the school community (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, p. 10). This time is well spent when considering the impact effective leaders have on student achievement.

Additionally, districts that regularly assess the performance of newly hired principals and provide them with specific ongoing professional development retain their leaders over time. The continual mentoring allows principals to blossom and overcome weaknesses identified in their evaluations. The evaluation process is not a “gotcha” game, rather a system of support focused on growth. The kindest thing a supervisor can do for an underperforming administrator is give candid, evidence-based feedback and robust follow-up support. Strong superintendents will utilize the ISLLC standards to provide direction and influence their principals. Supervisors guilty of sugar-coating criticism and inflating scores to keep the peace end up missing the benefits of true collaborative conversations and leading a principal toward growth. This avoidance does not help an administrator improve nor does it subscribe to a growth mindset for learning. It is important to use principal standards and collect data from conversations as evidence to engage in productive discussions with principals around their responsibilities. This data will target areas of growth and celebrate areas of strength.

Principal Evaluation Systems

Two objectives must be met in order to strengthen school leadership: (1) build a strong pipeline of school leaders, and (2) support principals throughout their careers (Mendels & Lee, 2013). The purpose of principal evaluations must provide feedback to guide professional growth and help improve principal performance while raising student achievement (Association of California School Administrators, 2010). It is important to consider a differentiated style to accelerate success for all leaders by addressing individual professional development needs and intervening when there are performance issues. Current flaws in the principal evaluation process include absence of meaningful

and timely feedback, lack of consequences, absence of clear communication of criteria, standard protocols, and a failure to enhance principal motivation and improve performance. Principal ratings suffer the same problem of grade inflation that afflicts teacher evaluations. Most principals and educators are rated as top performers without the data to support that rating. While principal effectiveness is recognized as a vital factor in improving student achievement, schools rarely measure or use effectiveness ratings to inform decision making. For years, researchers have attempted to understand the relationship between leadership effectiveness and student achievement (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003). Researchers have now found that second to classroom teachers, principals have the highest impact on student achievement. Starting in the 1990s, schools focused on student achievement and accountability for all children. The question remains, what impact does an effective principal evaluation system have on increasing effective leadership, strengthening teaching, reaching school improvement goals, or enhancing student growth? Studies indicate that there is little connection between a principal's evaluation results and the quality of their work (Condon & Clifford, 2009). Unless we have an effective evaluation system that accurately differentiates performance, we simply cannot discern qualities of strong leader (Stronge et al., 2006). As a principal, my evaluation included observations conducted by the superintendent, performance evaluation criteria based on Robert Marzano's performance standards, and as a result of SB7, student growth. The inclusion of student growth and specific performance measures are a significant change in practice, revealing the true value of school leaders in improving student achievement. Leaders are now accountable for student growth.

According to a 2004 report, *A New Approach to Principal Preparation*, “There are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around in the absence of intervention by talented leaders. While other factors within the school also contribute to such turnarounds, leadership is the catalyst” (Cheney, Davis, Garrett, & Holleran, 2004). It is the combination of highly effective teaching and highly capable school leadership that will change outcomes for children in our schools. Students attending schools led by New Leaders for New School Principals have demonstrated academic achievement that is outpacing their peers by statistically significant margins (Martorell, Heaton, Gates, & Hamilton, 2010). These studies identify that strong leaders positively impact student achievement. Schools with high levels of principal retention typically have higher levels of teacher retention. Keeping high-quality principals in place, helps to keep strong teachers in a school. The United States is facing an exodus of qualified professionals (Gronn, 2002; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Pounder & Merrill, 2001). The principal position is more difficult and less desirable a career than ever (Educational Research Service, 2000, Fink & Brayman, 2006; Pounder & Merrill, 2001). To retain solid principals, we need to understand what characteristics define a quality school leader and how to improve upon current practices. Keeping effective principals require four essential elements: principal standards, high quality training, selective hiring and a combination of solid on the job support and performance evaluation (Mendels, 2012).

Leadership is complex and measuring leadership effectiveness demands using multiple forms of data for defensible, valid district decisions. Different ways to collect evidence on principals include observations, interviews, and student assessment; collect samples of principals’ work, survey principals, peers, teachers and community members

(Sanders, Kearney, & Vince, 2012). An effective principal evaluation system should be comprehensive, feasible, accurate, fair, useful, include multiple measures of impact on student achievement, and include multiple stakeholders' feedback (Clifford, Hansen, & Wraight, 2014). The following leadership practices are associated with schools that have high student achievement: (a) ambitious commonly accepted vision and mission; (b) engaging deeply with teachers and data on issues of students performance and instructional services quality; (c) managing resources; (d) creating physically, emotionally and cognitively safe learning environments; and (e) developing strong and respectful relationships with parents, communities and businesses. Evaluations of principals should stimulate and guide a school leader's professional development. The evaluation protocols should be aligned with important school and student outcomes. Feedback from multiple stakeholders enriches and strengthens an evaluation when collected from multiple sources including portfolios, self-assessments, 360-degree feedback, and outcome-based assessments.

According to a study by Gwinnett County Public Schools (2015), they identified that everything rises and falls on leadership. In 2006, Gwinnett County established a two-year program that paired retired principals with novices. The study used a three-pronged approach to ensure that leaders had the skills, knowledge, and authority to support needed drives at the school level. Little has been written on the role of superintendent as the supervisor of principals. The evaluation of principal performance is a legal requirement and a process which schools can use to improve principal performance. Sara Shelton writes that key evaluation elements and considerations for principal evaluations include: (a) purpose of evaluation, (b) what should be evaluated,

(c) involve multiple measures of performance, (d) assigned values of performance, (e) clear process, clear selection, and (f) specific training and support for evaluators (Evaluating School Principals, 2013). Successful principal evaluations, according to the Wallace Foundation research, focuses on observable behaviors, are based on state leadership standards, promote change necessary for school improvement, are reliable and tested measures, account for multiple contexts and circumstances, and are linked to professional development opportunities to address shortcomings identified in observations.

Principal evaluations should be rigorous, fair, equitable, transparent, and supportive while including direct involvement of the principal, connection to district and state level support systems, alignment to the educator performance assessments and multiple rating categories to differentiate performance (IPA & IASA, 2012). The evaluation process should also include training, support, and evaluation of principal evaluators so they can grow in their craft of observing and providing feedback to principals.

Evaluation conferences can be greatly enhanced if the supervisor and administrator fill out the rubrics in advance and then meet to compare one page at a time (Marshall, 2011). Discussion should aim for consensus based on actual evidence of the most accurate score for each criterion. Each method has benefits and constraints. People are motivated by goals that they find personally compelling and challenging, but achievable (e.g., Bandura, 1986; Ford, 1992; Locke, Latham & Eraz, 1988). Because clear agreement on the role of the principal is lacking, differing approaches to assessing principal effectiveness differed. The evaluation approaches debated were the following:

role-based, outcome-based, standards-based, and structured-based formats (Glasman & Heck, 1992). Strong instructional leaders are able to create and sustain a clear vision for learning, communicate school instructional goals, and garner school-wide commitment to those goals.

The current evaluation system in Illinois is derived from the 1996 Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium. The ISLLC is a committee comprised of the Council of Chief State School Officers who developed standards to evaluate principal effectiveness. At the onset of these standards, thirty-two education agencies and thirteen administrative associations collaborated to create the ISLLC standards (Bryant, Hessel, & Isernhagen, 2002). Prior to the ISLLC standards, school leaders were evaluated on criteria derived by individual states and districts. It became obvious that formal job assessment criteria for principals was lacking (Servais, 2006). Experts determined that effective evaluations of principals must include the impact of principals on all aspects of their leadership capacity. While holding principals accountable to the agreed-upon standards for effective leadership, the need for an improved evaluation tool was growing. New policy requires principals to be measured by more than one evaluation instrument. The evaluation must rely on multiple measures such as growth in student achievement, leadership competency assessments, and school climate surveys to create a more complete picture of principal effectiveness. The common practice of evaluating principals involves observations and summative assessments at the end of the school year. A significant downside to this approach is that it leaves no opportunity for remediation or professional development since the school year is complete (Condon & Clifford, 2009, p. 1). One assessment or observation a year is not enough to accurately

evaluate a school principal. Some superintendents have changed their frequency of evaluations to one per semester, quarterly, or prior to and after the academic school year. At the start of a school year, superintendents and principals need to establish clear expectations and goals for the year. Conversations to identify what will be assessed, who will help provide feedback, how the findings of the assessments or evaluations will be used, and the frequency with which assessments will occur will enhance the principal evaluation tool.

List of Quality Principal Evaluation Systems

In a review of literature by WEST ED: *The Policies and Practices of Principal Evaluation*, principal evaluations have generally been considered a district's local responsibility. ISLLC was envisioned as part of an effort to change the way educational administrators thought about leadership (McKerrow, Crawford, & Cornell, 2006). According to Portin (2009), most principal evaluation systems do not focus on instructional leadership, but instead emphasize various management responsibilities and leadership processes. Such reports suggest that many evaluation systems are narrow in scope and emphasize procedural efficiency rather than providing in-depth assessments of leadership practice and outcomes. In the next section, different models for principal evaluation will be identified. Each model has a different focus and each have their own benefits and constraints for supporting principal leadership growth. The criteria used to determine the importance of each system was defined by the National Association of Elementary School Principals in the article, *Rethinking Principal Evaluation: A New Paradigm Informed by Research and Practice* (2012). The evaluation tools were

evaluated for the criteria and identified whether this was a source of information collected in the assessment of principals. The six criteria areas are:

Criteria #1: Professional Growth & Learning

Criteria #2: Student Growth and Achievement

Criteria #3: School Planning & Progress

Criteria #4: School Culture

Criteria #5: Professional Qualities & Instructional Leadership

Criteria #6: Stakeholder Support & Engagement

The *Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education* (VAL-ED) was written in 2008 (Porter et al., 2010). It is an evidence based, multi-rating scale that assesses principals' learning centered leadership behaviors known to directly influence teacher performance and in turn, student learning. It also measures critical learning centered leadership behaviors for the purpose of diagnostic analysis performance feedback, progress monitoring, and professional development planning with input from the principal and the supervisor. This model has been used in forty states and is accepted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. It places value on the leadership behaviors of principals, the context of the environment the principal is leading, and their background. These two criteria influence principal leadership behavior (Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2009). A primary goal of the study was to identify whether or not principal evaluators were using leadership criteria defined by ISLLC standards. The leadership evaluation is mainly used to fulfill contractual obligations. In 1990, there were few districts providing formative feedback to uncover useful areas of growth. The Wallace Foundation funded the three-year VAL-ED study

focusing on leadership behaviors and practices (Goldring et al., 2009). The VAL-ED leadership framework distinguishes principal leadership in two areas that are used in the ISLLC framework standards. The key processes include group maintenance needs, task needs, and individual needs (Adair 1983).

In the 1980s, Hallinger and Murphy conducted research on principal evaluations studying the frequency of behaviors and how goals were communicated. This tool does not measure effectiveness, but rather frequency of instructional leadership behaviors by Heck, Larsen and Marcoulides (1990) and Heck and Marcoulides (1996).

In 2005, Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy developed the Instructional Leadership Inventory asking teachers to complete a survey and identify the frequency of their principal's behavior. This method removes the judgment of whether the behavior is necessary and leaves the responder to focus on the frequency of the behavior demonstrated by the principal (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Principal Talent Management encompasses the entire career of a principal including preparation, recruitment and selection, professional learning, performance evaluation, and compensation and incentives (American Institutes for Research, 2016).

The 360 degree leadership assessment allows principals to rate themselves in areas critical to their success (Kearney et al., 2012). Survey input and feedback from their staff and superiors target professional development.

The Leader's Effectiveness Evaluation System developed by Dr. James Stronge is a performance appraisal process that articulates principals' duties and responsibilities. This evaluation system uses benchmark behaviors, relationship between school administrators, student learning and growth data, along with other data sources. In

addition, principals document performance through self-evaluations, informal observations, school site visit, document log, school climate surveys, and goal setting (Stronge, 2012).

The Leadership Development Program (LDP) developed by Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) helps train leaders in collaboration, understanding systems, integrating multiple perspectives, and planning for higher levels of impact. LDP includes a pre-programmed assessment, 360 degree assessment, and five day training. The purpose is to address leadership tensions for mid to senior-level managers, encourage leaders to effectively manage complexity, and take wise and productive action amidst complex, rapidly changing conditions (Velsor, 2010).

McREL Principal Evaluation System is a formative, rubric-driven evaluation tool based on three major components of balanced leadership including twenty-one leadership behaviors. This evaluation helps districts recognize excellence in those who have mastered critical competencies and served as exemplars, role models, and coaches for others (Hoy, 2009).

Multidimensional Leadership Assessment System/Leadership Performance Matrix developed by Douglas Reeves at the Leadership and Learning Center provides a focus on student achievement and continues formative assessments for leaders at every level (Reeves, 2009).

MyLearningPlan Observation and Appraisal System (OASYS) is a web-based observation and appraisal management system that is integrated with Professional Development Management System (MyLearningPlan).

Principal Leadership Competencies/Principal Evaluation Rubric developed by Kim Marshall is a summative evaluation tool made up of multiple rubrics and gives principals' school-based administrators a year-end assessment with detailed guidance on how to improve (Marshall, 2011).

School Leadership Evaluation Model developed by Dr. Robert Marzano is an online professional development system that builds the competencies of effective school leaders and enables the evaluator to analyze leadership styles while determining areas for development and improvement. This evaluation system assists leaders in being highly effective which significantly impacts student growth and achievement over time (Marzano, 2012).

Each of these models have strengths for supporting principals through an evaluation process. However, each one is unique. Creating a universal principal evaluation tool will help all school leaders target their professional development and increase their capacity to lead. Clarifying and agreeing upon the sphere of influence that principals have is critical in supporting principals' growth. The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) is a significant advancement in learning, clarifying, and advertising universal standards for principals across the nation.

One of the significant differences between the school leader evaluations is the use of student growth as part of the evaluation criteria. Principal evaluations that incorporate student growth are of higher quality since principals are second only to teachers in having a direct impact on student achievement. Throughout this study, I will identify how student data is being used as part of the evaluation.

Table 4

Quality Principal Evaluation Systems (McKerrow, Crawford, & Cornell, 2006)

Quality Principal Evaluation System	Criteria #1: Professional Growth & Learning	Criteria #2: Student Growth & Achievement	Criteria #3: School Planning & Progress	Criteria #4: School Culture	Criteria #5: Professional Qualities & Instructional Leadership	Criteria #6: Stakeholder Support & Engagement
Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (Porter, 2008)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Instructional Leadership Inventory (Alig-Mielcarek & Hoy, 2005)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Principal Talent Management (AIR, 2016)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
360 degree leadership assessment (Kearney, 2012)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
The Leader's Effectiveness Evaluation System (Stronge, 2012)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leadership Development Program (Velsor, 2010)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
McREL Principal Evaluation System (Hoy, 2009)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Multidimensional Leadership Assessment System/ Leadership Performance Matrix (Reeves, 2009)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
MyLearning Plan Observation & Appraisal System (OASYS)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Principal Leadership Competencies/ Principal Evaluation Rubric (Marshall, 2011)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
School Leadership Evaluation Model (Marzano, 2012)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) (NPBEA, 2015)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research on principal evaluation states, "...many principals...are never formally evaluated in any meaningful way" (NASSP, 2010). I will investigate the implementation practices of current superintendents when evaluating principals.

The questions that will guide the research are:

1. With the advent of SB7, and the requirement that all principals be annually evaluated, how do middle and elementary superintendents in Illinois evaluate their principals?
2. With the advent of SB7, and the required annual principal evaluations, how are superintendents providing professional development to support principal growth in leadership capacity?

Research Design

I conducted research using a mixed method approach. Surveys of Illinois, K-8 superintendents and principals along with interviews of a select group among those surveyed were used for data. A mixed methodology study utilizes the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data which allowed me to combine statistical trends and lived experiences (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative survey of many superintendents and principals in Illinois explored the implementation of the evaluation procedures. A group

of superintendents and principals were identified from the survey results and then interviewed to gather evidence around the actual lived experiences of evaluating principals under SB7. The interviews provided details on superintendent and principal applications of the revised principal evaluation procedures and revealed their perceptions. A benefit to the mixed methods approach was that the data could be integrated throughout the research process (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Using an explanatory sequential design, I analyzed the quantitative data collected through a survey and the qualitative data collected through interviews to explain and provide meaning to the quantitative data (Creswell, 2014).

The advantages to using an online survey were ease of data entry and analysis (Muijs, 2010). Disadvantages to the online survey were risk of deleting the survey link provided in the email, collecting too much information and saturating the data, and inadvertently emailing unintended audiences who may complete the survey, further saturating the data, with unintended responses (Sue & Ritter, 2012). The online survey allowed for a quick and increased response rate over using paper surveys sent through the mail.

The interview process captured common recommendations superintendents offered principals to improve their leadership capacity. The qualitative information, collected through interviews, revealed suggested professional development opportunities afforded principals through the evaluation process. The structured questions allowed me to engage the participant during the interview more naturally. The research benefited from the collection of qualitative data through open-ended interviews which allowed me to capture dialogue from the superintendent and principal in their natural setting.

Interviews of superintendents will be compared and analyzed against interviews of principals. The goal of comparing principals and superintendents is to understand the actual versus the perceived use of the ISLLC standards. Superintendents and principals were selected for interviews to further explore and explain the actual and perceived use of the ISLLC standards. I selected superintendents and principals to interview based on survey samples where a principal and superintendent volunteered from the same district.

Sampling and Participants

The quantitative research was conducted in the spring and summer of 2018 including numerous elementary school districts throughout Illinois serving K-8 students. School districts in Illinois that serve only students in grade 9-12 were removed from the study. The participant pool included superintendents and principals working in Illinois school districts gathered from the Illinois Principals Association.

A total of 150 superintendent surveys were completed out of 547 emails sent. Eleven emails bounced, resulting in a net 536 surveys sent to current superintendents with a 28% response rate. Twelve of the 150 superintendents who responded indicated that they would be willing to participate in phase two of the research and agreed to be part of an interview. This question helped limit the number of possible superintendents selected for the interview.

A total of 374 principal surveys were completed of the 2,290 emails. Sixty-five emails bounced, resulting in a net 2,225 surveys sent to current principals with a 17% response rate. Fifty-three of the 374 principals who responded indicated that they would be willing to participate in phase two of the research and agreed to be interviewed.

I interviewed superintendents and principals from the same district. I believe that this allowed for additional insights into the implementation of the principal evaluation process and impacts of the professional development chosen to support principals under the same superintendent. I decided that the combination of superintendents and principals who share in the evaluation experience together will present additional information about the evaluation experience which will support the study.

This study was deemed to be of minimal risk to participants. The probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research was not greater than any ordinarily encountered in daily life, or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. Throughout the research process the research protection of the participants took precedence. The Internal Review Board regulations were followed. Additionally, protecting the participant with respect to ethical considerations were strictly followed. Abiding by the regulations according to the American Education Research Association (2011), all participants identities were protected, could opt out without consequences, would not receive consequences as a result of their responses, confidentiality would be maintained, would be given opportunities to clarify the research, and were guaranteed informed consent when participating. Non-discriminatory practices were followed to reduce any unknown prejudice or bias potentially impacting the process.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures

At the beginning of the survey and interview, a consent form (see Appendix A) was presented to the participant and their rights were provided. The process was voluntary for each participant. Copies of the consent form (see Appendix B) were

provided to the interviewees so the participants had evidence of agreement. My contact information was provided for questions or concerns about the process or research.

Phase 1: Quantitative Data Collection

I created an online survey (see Appendix D) and distributed it through email to all the K-8 superintendents and principals in Illinois. As of July 2017, there were 368 elementary districts in Illinois. I used the Illinois State Board of Education directory of elementary school principals obtained through the Illinois Principal Association. An invitation letter was sent with a link to the survey (refer to Appendix A). Providing a direct link to the survey in the letter allowed participants quick access. Participants gave consent by entering and beginning the survey. The survey was open for approximately thirty days. Two reminder emails were sent on the seventh and fourteenth days following the initial email to accommodate those who were unable to start and finish the survey (refer to Appendix C). This research involved human subjects in the study and is compliant with the United States Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations, 45 CFR § 46.102(2009).

Published surveys and interview questions from previous studies were used to strengthen the data collected from participants (Hull, 2012). Interview questions adapted from the research conducted by Jennifer Bethman, Washington State University (2015) and additional questions created by Chamberlain and Lavigne in a principal survey conducted in 2014 served as models for the questions in this study. Many of the questions used from previous studies are field-tested and reliable. Throughout the online survey and interview, participants had the ability to skip questions and abort the survey at any time providing a high degree of flexibility and control. The survey utilized three

forms of inquiry including demographic questions, a Likert-type scale to address the principal and superintendent perceptions of the evaluation process in Illinois, and a collection of open response questions that allowed for a more personalized response. The online survey provided organized and timely data covering a large area throughout Illinois, lending itself to a higher response rate than a paper survey. The Likert-type Scale included the following options: 4=strongly agree, 3=agree, 2=disagree, and 1=strongly disagree. A benefit of using a Likert-type scale was that the participants were more likely to make a decision (Gliem & Gliem 2003). An additional benefit of the Likert-type scale was the ability to analyze the data for central tendencies and measures of variability. Garson (2013) states the benefits of the Likert Scale include a universal way to collect data and ease of graphing results.

Open response questions were asked in the online survey to provide an opportunity for participants to give responses that were not addressed in the Likert-style survey questions and will be coded using emerging trends data (Saldana, 2013). Additional questions addressed participant perception of the evaluation process and whether they felt the process helped their professional development or supported their learning. The responses to the open-ended questions made visible the strengths of principal evaluations in Illinois and revealed the perceived importance of each evaluation category in the ISLLC. School districts in Illinois were provided the opportunity to create their own evaluation for principals. This portion of the survey allowed participants to identify what aspects of the principal evaluation process their school districts personalized.

Phase 2: Qualitative Data Collection

An email was sent to the principals and superintendents who volunteered from the same district (see Appendix E). A consent letter was also provided upon agreement of the interview to ensure willingness among all participants and to ensure their privacy (see Appendix F). The interviews (see Appendix G) were conducted in person and a semi-structured protocol was used which allowed for opportunities to ask questions based on responses. Interviews were conducted in the space where principals and evaluators meet in order to benefit from the emotions and feeling of the space. Each interview followed protocol and began with a script ensuring consistency in the implementation of the interview (see Appendix H). Conducting the interviews in the space where evaluation conversations took place helped evoke more memories of the actual experience (see Appendix G). The pilot sample interview helped strengthen the interview protocol and allowed me to gain feedback on bias and relevance of the questions (Desimone & LeFloch, 2004).

To ensure confidentiality I interviewed superintendents first and then their principals. I did not return to the participants after the initial interview to collect additional information. I understood that if a participant requested a second interview, I may be asked about how the participant data compared to information provided by principals.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the responses using descriptive statistics mean, median, mode, and standard deviation. Subgroups emerged from the demographic data collected (refer to Appendix D).

Notes were analytically coded after each interview to support the evidence collected which helped identify major findings (Creswell, 2014). Coding that took place using notes from each interview revealed categories and themes in the emerging data (Merriam, 2009). The transcribed notes were sent to each of the participants for their review (see Appendix J).

I had all five interviews transcribed. Using the written version of the interviews, I began with the two research questions. I analyzed each interview separately to find any responses that related to the principal evaluation process or professional development.

The contents of each interview were separated by the two research questions. I analyzed all the information related to the first research question and matched the response to a topic indicated within the principal evaluation process. All the responses related to the second research question were analyzed and labeled with the coordinating topic within professional development.

Upon further analysis of the responses for research question one I grouped the response topics by theme and the following themes emerged for all interviews related to the principal evaluation process: Planning, Implementing, Feedback, Evidence, and Reflecting.

Reliability and Validity

The protocols helped to ensure validity in collecting the evidence. A few steps that added to the validity of the study included the pilot testing process, keeping a reflexive journal, writing analytic notes in a memo format during the interview, and then analyzing the transcribed notes immediately following each interview. The data was then triangulated (Merriam, 2009).

I recognized the need to control ideological contamination and bias as interviews were conducted and tools were collected from principals and superintendents being interviewed. I controlled bias as a principal and experienced firsthand the implementation of SB7. I have experienced the principal evaluation process which did impact my ability to remain unbiased throughout the interview process, so a reflexive journal was used to capture thoughts, feelings and experiences. I experienced difficulty with maintaining eye contact during the interview while taking reflexive notes and began limiting notes to further engage with each participant.

Limitations of the Study

There are aspects of a research project that cannot be controlled by a researcher. It is important to set clear boundaries as a researcher with participants in the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

One significant limitation of the study was the reliance on participants to be honest in their reflection and reporting of the data. The possibility that the participant knowingly or unknowingly provided incorrect information is another limitation. An additional limitation was the method used to elicit survey responses. It allowed for comments by anyone who gained access to the survey link. Another limitation was respondents from the Illinois Principals Association, may have been individuals that enjoy the overall evaluation experience, or on the contrary, dislike the principal evaluation process.

I, a white male, served as an administrator in a K-8 elementary district with similar demographics as neighboring school districts. Some of the superintendents and principals who were interviewed for the research were from neighboring districts. I

maintained the reflexive journal to control for bias (see Appendix I). I experienced multiple years of being evaluated as a building principal under SB7. Two superintendents and one assistant superintendent have evaluated me. I value leadership, training, and transparency which was acknowledged in the reflexive journal as a bias when conducting interviews. I value transparency and speed in superintendents communicating areas of growth so that principals whose performance is identified as basic or needs improvement have the opportunity to grow during the current school year. I assume that all superintendents follow proper procedures under SB7. I am also interested in learning more about how the evaluation process supports principal leadership and whether the participants feel the evaluation process provides opportunities professional development. Lastly, I looked for outside influences that may have had an impact on the evaluation decisions of superintendents throughout the evaluation process.

Another limitation of the study, was that the information the participants shared may not have included information related to the evaluation process. When speaking with participants who had authority over another participant involved in the study, I had to ensure confidentiality. Regardless of the measures in place to protect participants, it is possible that principals shared less controversial information knowing their supervisor was also participating in this study. The selection of participants relied on those who self-identified voluntarily which may have favored a certain type of personality. Therefore, the research may be skewed in one direction because participation was voluntary. Multiple conversations with participants confirmed the interview date, time, and setting to ensure the participant remained interested and available to share their perceptions about their evaluation experience in Illinois (Seidman, 2006).

Participants were asked to think about their most recent evaluation cycle with their superintendent. This limited scope did not allow participants to freely speak about all of their leadership evaluations, narrowing responses. Information on the current year will be the focus for validity since it is the most recent. The interviews helped me know whether or not the participant perceived the process and related documentation as benefiting their leadership capacity.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Superintendent and Principal Interviews

Principal 1a

The interview was conducted in the principal's office after a regular school day. I was invited to sit at a round table. The principal and I engaged in dialogue before the interview, relaxing both parties. I began reading the necessary protocols to conduct the interview. The principal seemed relaxed and ready to begin. Throughout the interview the principal would reference materials or books and physically show me the tool or book being referenced. Conducting the interview in the building of the principal, served as a benefit and allowed the principal to access materials. Near the end of the interview, I recognized that it was extending well beyond the anticipated 30 minutes. A bird hit the window diverting the principal's attention. This served as a distraction and allowed us to transition to the final part of the interview.

During the interview, the principal focused on new surveys that were being implemented. The updated process for all administrators was being introduced by a colleague as part of their internship project. The new process included a timeline and templates for each step in the evaluation and was appreciated by the principal. The principal also identified a challenge in understanding the specific evidence required to

support each of the categories within the principal evaluation framework. They stated that they would like specific examples and guidance on those artifacts.

Principal 1b

The interview was conducted in the office of the principal during the school day. I anticipated there may be more interruptions because it took place during the school day. The principal and I engaged in dialogue to relax and prepare for the interview. During the interview, the superintendent entered the office and requested to speak with the principal briefly. The principal shared information about the culture of the building under the previous administration. The transition of leadership and its impact on how the principal began working with the staff informed the strategic plan to address specific areas of need including trust, communication, and follow-through. The principal articulated that a 360 survey was conducted this year to inform the superintendent and principal about perceptions in the community and staff. The survey was referenced on multiple occasions throughout the interview. The principal's frequent reference to the 360 survey data while discussing the evaluation was an indicator that the results of the survey seemed to carry significance. The principal shared that they had principal experience in two school districts. Throughout the interview, they would compare and reflect upon the school districts' processes. The differences between superintendents with regards to the evaluation process and procedures was also referenced. Additionally, the principal credited a colleague going through an internship for helping create and shape the current principal evaluation system in the district which included a timeline and templates for administrator pre-observations, observations, and post-observations. The principal would look and point in the direction of different materials in the office, but did

not get up to obtain those materials. Conducting the interview in the principal's office did seem to have a positive impact on the interview as they were able to recall pieces of the evaluation process and point to items located in the office.

Superintendent 1

The interview took place in the office of the superintendent. The superintendent invited me into the office and closed the door. The superintendent appeared relaxed and was ready to begin the interview quickly. The superintendent reflected on evaluating assistant principals as a principal. The superintendent used words such as "terrible" when describing the state modules for training administrator evaluators. The benefit of conducting the interview in a comfortable space was important and allowed the superintendent to be open throughout the interview. The superintendent quickly highlighted the conversations they had with their superintendent colleagues about the evaluation process and how to support one another. The superintendent shared that the process was enhanced this past school year because an intern helped to create a workflow. The superintendent felt the evaluation process was a complete waste of time. Halfway through the interview, the superintendent acknowledged a benefit of the process. The process helped create consistency in what principals submitted for their own reflection at the end of the school year. They also complimented the process for being spread throughout the school year. At the end of the interview, the superintendent was asked about improvements they would make and stated, "they would throw the process out the window." The superintendent shared that evaluating and coaching did not go together and wished they could separate the two pieces from the evaluation.

Principal 2

The interview was conducted in the principal's office during the day while the students were on summer break. The principal turned off the air conditioner knowing that I was planning to record the interview. Prior to sitting down, the principal provided me with a tour of the building and described construction that was to take place throughout the summer. The principal shared that they were going to have an assistant principal for the first time next school year and was actively interested in learning more about how to evaluate and provide support for the incoming administrator. The principal mentioned being evaluated by the superintendent and the assistant superintendent for human resources while serving as principal. Midway through the interview, the principal shared that they did not feel the evaluation process supported their professional development. The principal felt the process was a formality and not focused on their growth. Additionally, the principal shared that the two different evaluators created two different experiences, but the consistent criteria used to evaluate their progress was a helpful standard. The differing processes of the evaluators were not appreciated as they would have appreciated a similar process regardless of the evaluator. Near the end of the interview the principal appeared fatigued and began answering questions with brief responses.

Superintendent 2

The interview took place in the office of the superintendent. We exchanged introductions before quickly moving into the interview. The interview took place in the district office during a regular school day. Responses were brief, but direct. The superintendent identified that they felt the principal evaluation process was more

formative in nature and also identified that the procedures were important to follow. The district used an electronic evaluation system to track the completion of different tasks. The superintendent stated that they made time during their monthly leadership meetings to discuss fidelity of the evaluation process and provided time for conversation and reflection with the teachers they evaluated. The superintendent shared standards in place to support the professional development of the administration in their district. One challenge the superintendent identified was the inconsistent implementation among the different assistant superintendents. However, a benefit mentioned, was a relationship strengthened with a principal through an evaluation that engaged in reflective dialogue about professional practice. The superintendent identified that the most important thing in a district are strong building principals. Near the end of the interview, the superintendent asked to hear a question again and enhanced their answer. It was related to how the evaluation process had impacted their work as an instructional leader. They commented on how the continued experience they gained year after year helped strengthen their feedback to staff and their understanding of teacher needs. To finish the interview, the superintendent shared that too many principals were hired and left on their own to learn on the job without specific professional development provided or embedded. They shared an impression that once hired, principals were expected to know what and how to do the job without ongoing training.

Approach to Analysis

The themes that emerged from Research Question One were ordered in chronological order starting with planning and ending with reflecting. This was

purposeful because the process for evaluating principals begins officially in August with planning for the school year and finishes with reflecting on the year in June.

Question 1: With the advent of SB7 (Senate Bill Seven), and the requirement that all principals be annually evaluated, how do middle and elementary superintendents in Illinois evaluate their principals?



Figure 1. Research Question 1 Themes

The responses for Research Question Two were grouped by theme. The following themes emerged for all interviews related to professional development: Training, Implementing, and Dialogue/Reflecting.

The themes were ordered chronologically starting with training, then implementing, and finishing with dialogue and reflecting. This was purposeful because the process for providing professional development on the principal evaluation instrument begins with training, ensuring that all principals and superintendents are

knowledgeable about the process. Once all principals and superintendents have been properly trained and certified to evaluate principals in Illinois, they will implement the process and finalize with dialogue and reflecting.

Question 2: With the advent of SB7 (Senate Bill Seven), and the required annual principal evaluations, how are superintendents providing professional development to support principal growth in leadership capacity?

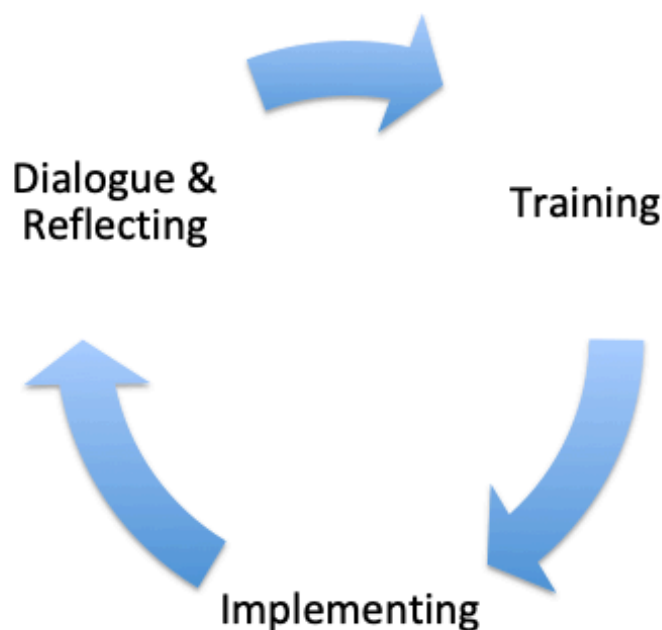


Figure 2. Research Question 2 Themes

Research Question 1: Planning

Planning emerged as a theme for Research Question One because a preponderance of the evidence shared by all three principals and both superintendents identified topics including discussion of goals, standards, engaging in pre-observations, establishing timelines, reviewing paperwork, reviewing evaluation criteria, selecting who to evaluate, asking principals to complete a self-reflection at the start of the year, and sharing any training needs. These subcategories were identified through all five

interviews. “Well, I think everybody wants to know on the front end what the criteria is,” stated Superintendent Two. Both principals and superintendents highlighted the importance of planning at the start of the school year with a discussion of goals, sharing of standards, and identifying the criteria that will be used for evaluating principals. Among 279 principals who answered the survey, 65% shared that superintendents evaluated all of the principals in their school district.

Another consistent aspect was how the planning took place. All parties identified that a in-person meetings were scheduled where evaluation discussions were shared. Timelines, criteria, goals, and self-reflection were standard parts of this meeting. “I’ve done Starbucks, I’ve done their office, I’ve done my office... Sometimes, it’s just random that it’s that way and, sometimes, it’s purposeful,” stated Superintendent One. Overall, a planning meeting was consistent among principals and superintendents. All parties met face-to-face in either the principal’s office, superintendent’s office or as a whole group of administrators.

All parties identified goals within the planning discussion for the school year. “...with this current superintendent, we’ve already started to identify goals for next year at the end of this year. So I think ongoing it’s more continual,” stated Principal One. Although establishing goals was consistent, how they were developed varied. Some variability was evident in the number of goals selected, whether goals were personalized, whether goals were pre-established, or how goals were connected to student and teacher performance.

Q16 During the 2017 - 2018 school year, I met with the superintendent in my district by October 1st to set targets for how principal performance will be evaluated?

Answered: 279 Skipped: 95

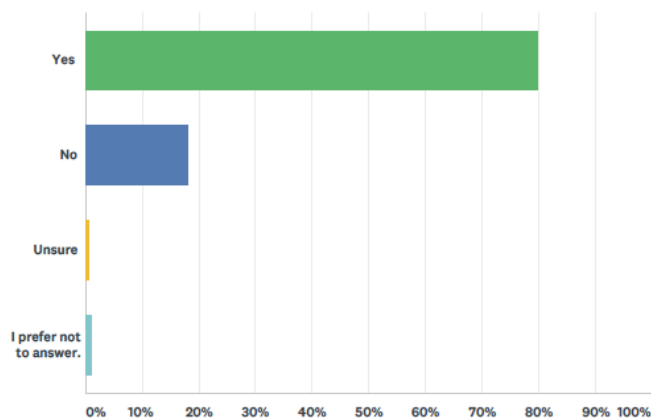


Figure 3. Principal met with superintendent before October 1st

More variability took place in how these discussions were recorded and the follow through. All three principals identified that their goals were not recorded from the discussion. In addition, they shared that there was no plan in place to address the goals throughout the year and no request that the observations be connected to the goals. The superintendents did not connect the goals with observations as part of the evaluation, however this may have been an expectation of principals going into the school year. The *Guide to Implementing Principal Performance Evaluation in Illinois* (2012) does not state that the goals need to be connected to the observations. Therefore, superintendents were not violating any evaluation agreements by observing leadership practices outside the specific goal areas.

Additional variability was revealed in the evaluation timeline. A specific timeline was shared at the beginning of the year. All three principals discussed how the timeline

was not followed for items including observation deadlines, evidence sharing from the observations, and arranging the summative conferences. “Having two different evaluators in my two years as principal, the timeliness or the specificity in that documentation is dependent on the person evaluating me,” stated Principal Three. Although a timeline was shared, the follow through on meeting deadlines was inconsistent. Eighty percent of principals shared that by October 1st they had met with their superintendents to set evaluation targets for the school year. The superintendents varied in their responses on adhering to meeting deadlines. One superintendent planned to meet all the deadlines, while the other did not place importance on meeting the deadlines. The superintendent who felt deadlines were not as important did place high value on the quality of the conversation with the principals, regardless of whether or not it was within the Illinois framework. The superintendents both shared timelines for the year with their principals signaling evidence that they planned to meet the deadlines, but in practice only one adhered to the parameters of the timeline.

Through the process of collecting and analyzing data, it was expected that some evaluation timelines would not adhere to the state guidelines. Revealing variability in timelines was expected. Discovering why timelines were not adhered to and how tasks were ultimately followed-up on was a goal of the investigation. Although timelines may not have been followed, the evaluator did collect evidence and share feedback with the principals to support their growth as educational leaders. Principals responded to the survey sharing 71% were formally observed between November 1st and February 1st of the school year.

Q16 During the 2017 - 2018 school year, I met with the superintendent in my district by October 1st to set targets for how principal performance will be evaluated?

Answered: 279 Skipped: 95

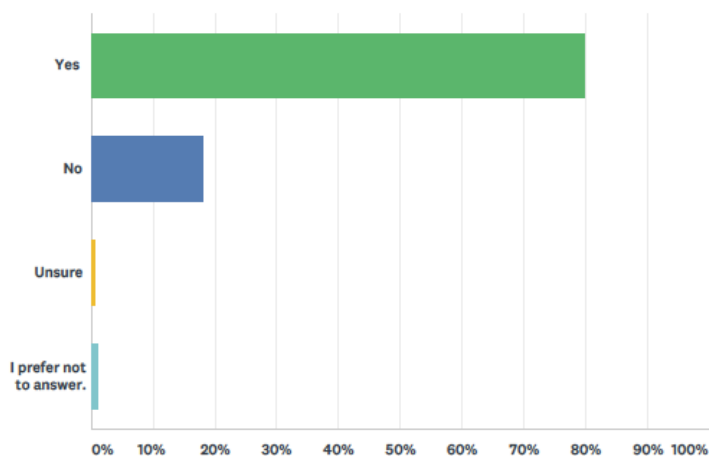


Figure 4. Principal met with superintendent before October 1st

Q17 During the 2017-2018 school year, I was formally observed two times between November 1st - February 1st?

Answered: 279 Skipped: 95

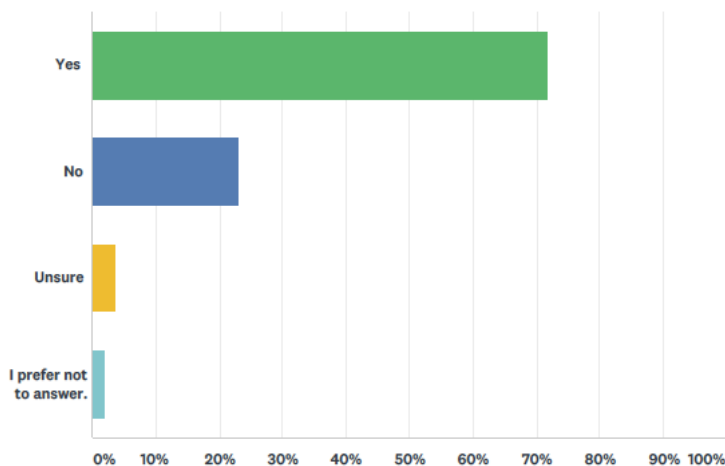


Figure 5. Principal formally observed between November 1st – February 1st

When the superintendents planned the specific observation of principals there was variability in expectations from the principals. This variability presented across both school districts. Principals were provided with district tools to record their observations for both formal and informal observations. The templates within one school district were provided electronically. The sharing of documents from superintendent to principal was done in multiple ways. One principal was provided with a paper copy of the feedback from the observation, while the other two were provided with an electronic version via email. This variability provided challenges when the superintendent was attempting to review all the observations conducted throughout the year for the summative evaluation. Since some were electronic, they were easy to find on the computer while the handwritten paper versions were more challenging to keep organized. Creating more challenges was the likelihood that the signed documents were not copied or provided to the principal. The district utilizing the electronic evaluation tool had all forms embedded within the system and all forms were electronically shared with time stamped signatures. The electronic evaluation tool made following deadlines easier. The electronic tool provided greater consistency in how documents were shared and tracked throughout the year.

Table 5

Evaluation Timeline

DOCUMENT	DUE DATE
Goal Setting Meeting	August 31 st – September 25 th
Self Assessment	February 1 st
Student Growth Rating	Measure Determined by October 30 th
Summative Conference	March 1 st

One aspect revealed, related to the importance of planning, was the ability for superintendents to see each principal's year-long evaluation plan. The superintendents identified times throughout the year to best conduct observations of principals in order to get the best impression of their leadership. Both superintendents began by sharing a timeline with the principals. One superintendent identified that they appreciated engaging in long-term ongoing conversation, giving feedback, listening, asking questions, guiding, and supporting their building leaders. They also shared that the evaluation process led to a decision on rehiring. They needed to begin planning for this conversation early to determine if the school leaders would be returning. Returning leaders could work on improvements, but superintendents of principals not being renewed needed time to plan for a replacement.

Accountability in meeting deadlines was a topic that emerged in both principal and superintendent interviews. "I'd like to, again, go back to scheduling observations that are really meaningful, aligned to my goals, and that the feedback from those activities would be meaningful to me and my practice. So, I think the quality of the

observation is a big part of it,” stated Principal Three. Principals appreciated knowing in advance when they were going to be observed and desired feedback with an opportunity for discussion. In some cases, the feedback was shared with no opportunity for discussion. In other cases, the observations were not pre-established and were identified after a meeting where superintendent and principal happened to be in the same meeting or presentation, hence taking advantage of the opportunity and using it as an observation. Principals did not appreciate this approach as they would have liked to have been more prepared. By February 15th, only 61% of the principals shared that they met with their superintendent to review their evaluation for the year. Principals voiced that they would like to have more input on the date and time of the observations since observations have a direct impact on their job status. Additionally, principals identified the benefits of planning for observations as engaging in dialogue with their superintendent, bouncing ideas off their evaluator, and bringing their best.

Principal Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q18 During the 2017-2018 school year, I met with the superintendent before February 15th to review a draft of the principal evaluation.

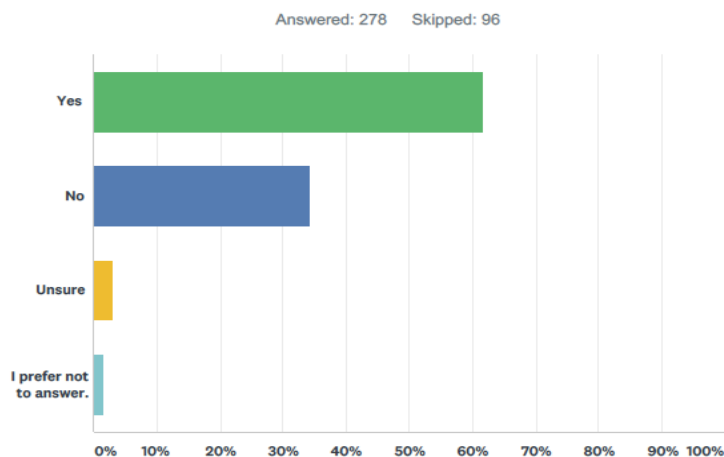


Figure 6. Principal met with superintendent before February 15th

Learning that principals would appreciate more pre-observation discussions was unexpected. In the survey, only 38% of the principals met with their superintendents prior to observations in order to identify areas of focus. In the current evaluation process, both formal and informal observations of principals are encouraged. However, principals clearly wanted more notification if an experience was going to be used as an observation. Principals shared that pre-observations took place in-person and over the phone. Principals who had established pre-observation discussions appreciated the dialogue and opportunity to adjust plans. When observations were conducted informally, or without advanced notice, they may have been convenient for the superintendent but it brought anxiety to the principal. Principals desired more advanced notice and time to plan for the observation.

Another topic that was consistent among the principals, was establishing whether the observations needed to be connected to the goal area. It was revealed that this was not clearly identified at the beginning of the year for all three principals. The principals assumed that the goal areas would also be the focus of the observation. Principals discovered that this was not an expectation of the superintendents, therefore, a misunderstanding was identified between superintendents and principals in both school districts.

Confusion existed around the evidence collected during observations, the purpose of goal setting, the expectations of the principal, and the need to provide evidence for the different components of the evaluation. There was variability in the criteria necessary to show superintendents evidence that a standard was met. This was not clearly established at the beginning of the year leaving principals questioning what to provide as evidence

for many standards. This further demonstrated the need for clear planning and communication at the start of the school year between both parties. The district utilizing the electronic evaluation tool shared documents between superintendents and principals. This allowed principals to provide written feedback within the document. It was unclear whether every section required evidence. The importance of planning was established through every conversation to determine evaluation criteria, a timeline, the roles of each person in the evaluation process, and expectations. This would have enhanced the experience for principals.

Principal Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q26 During the 2017-2018 school year, I provided comments within each of the Illinois Standards for School Leaders in the beginning of the year to help define targets for growth.

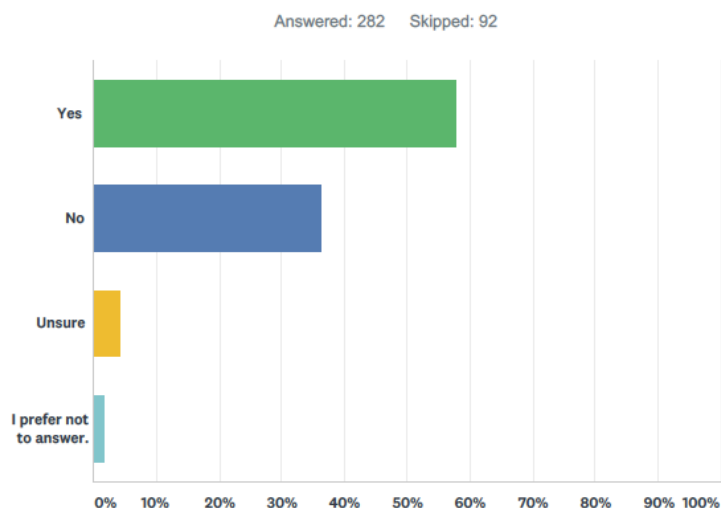


Figure 7. Principal provided superintendent with comments related to standards at beginning of the school year

Research Question 1: Implementing

Implementing components of the principal evaluation plan are critical to the success of principals and vital to the accountability of the principal evaluation plan. At the start of the school year, principals are expected to read and report on their current status within each component of the *Illinois Performance Standards*. The standards are listed in a rubric and principals must look them over each year to analyze their leadership and identify target areas for growth during the school year. Only 58% of the principals completed the rubric at the start of the school year. Similarly, only 58% of principals met with their superintendent by July 1st to review the work completed in the school year. From the beginning of the evaluation process to the end, implementation gaps were identified. All five administrators acknowledged that a formal or informal observation took place during the school year. One principal's experience observation was conducted in the morning during a late start meeting where professional learning communities (PLC) met from different buildings. The PLC was comprised of staff throughout the district. The principal did not feel that this was a true reflection of their leadership abilities because it did not encompass building members over which they had direct supervision. This variability in observations was why implementation of different components emerged as a topic. "The principal evaluation process, I don't use a whole lot. I do have a couple of required reflections that I have to complete and I guess I, in conversation with my evaluator, I kind of do some self-assessment," stated Principal Three. Implementation of the evaluation components identified in the state guidelines could help alleviate some of the confusion and help support leadership growth. According to *A Guide to Implementing Principal Performance Evaluation in Illinois*,

A school district may choose to adopt the rubric contained in the State Performance Evaluation Model for principals, developed pursuant to Section 24A-7 of the School Code, or it may develop its own rubric. Any school district that uses a rubric other than the rubric contained in the State Model shall establish a process to ensure that all principals, assistant principals, and principal evaluators are familiar with and understand the content of the rubric, the different levels of performance used for professional practice, and how the overall professional practice rating will be determined. (May 2012)

This language confirms the importance of principals understanding the rubric content.

Principal Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q21 During the 2017-2018 school year, by July 1st I met with the superintendent to review progress in the current year.

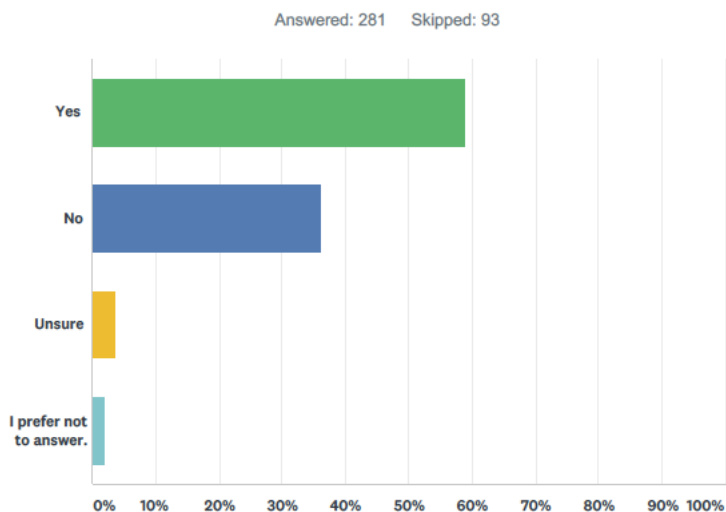


Figure 8. Principal met with superintendent to review progress by July 1st

All three principals confirmed that they were observed by their superintendent. There was consistency in the experience and implementation of the state guidelines. Principals received written feedback directly from the superintendent. The Illinois

Principal Evaluation Framework requires that written feedback be provided within ten days of the observation. According to the results of the survey, only 60% stated they received written feedback from the superintendent during the ten day period. Principals shared that there was strong implementation of what was expected to be completed in the full year-long cycle. All three principals were evaluated twice during the school year and had an end of year summative conversation with a final rating included. According to the survey results, 96% of the principals were provided with written communication identifying areas of strength. Similarly, 44% of the principals surveyed identified that written feedback from an observation included recommendations for professional learning.

Principal Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q30 During the 2017-2018 school year, I met with the superintendent within 10 principal work days of the observation.

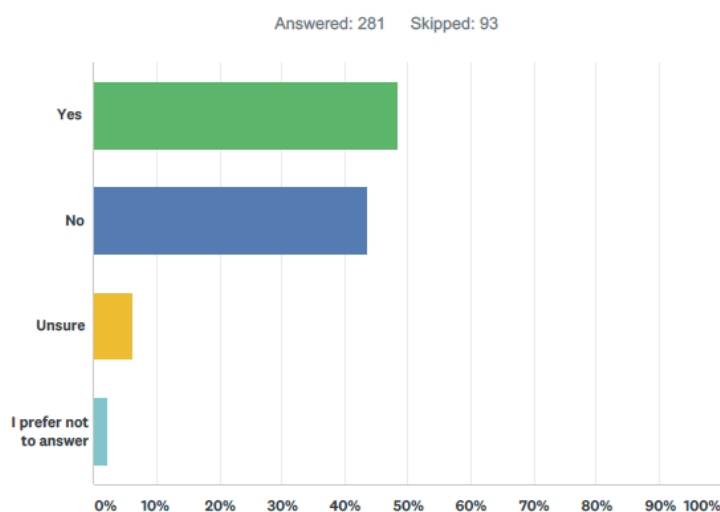


Figure 9. Principal met with superintendent within ten work days of observation

Some variability did exist in flexibility and choice in items considered for their observation. One superintendent suggested the principal model instructional strategies

when working with teachers and expected to observe those strategies. The principal noticed that in meetings led by the superintendent, the superintendent modeled instructional strategies they hoped to see principals use with teachers. The superintendent was intentional with the strategies and specifically mentioned that the strategies were being used to increase engagement of participants. The principal who shared this experience enjoyed seeing their superintendent engage in these practices and demonstrated through experience how the strategy was used with adults. According to the survey, 68% of principals shared that school-wide improvement initiatives were used during the formal observation process.

Principals consistently shared that there were two formal observations conducted during the course of a school year which all took place in their school buildings. Principals identified that the timing and activity to be observed did not always line up with the availability of the superintendent. This caused principals to select a less than desirable moment to be observed. Principal Three experienced having two different evaluators in the same district.

... in my two years as principal, the timeliness or specificity in that documentation is dependent on the person evaluating me. So, one year I got documentation that was much more specific, much more timely. The process was much more formal. And the second year it was a little loosey-goosey and I got things much after the fact. So, it just depends on the person.

Principals shared their desire to have more choice in when the observations took place. Sixty-two percent of principals' evaluators did not schedule more than the minimum two observations. The significance of each observation became greater when principals knew

only two observations would be conducted throughout the entire school year. Of the 255 principals who answered this question, 77% shared that the final evaluation rating of their leadership was an accurate reflection of their work.

Principal Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q17 During the 2017-2018 school year, I was formally observed two times between November 1st - February 1st?

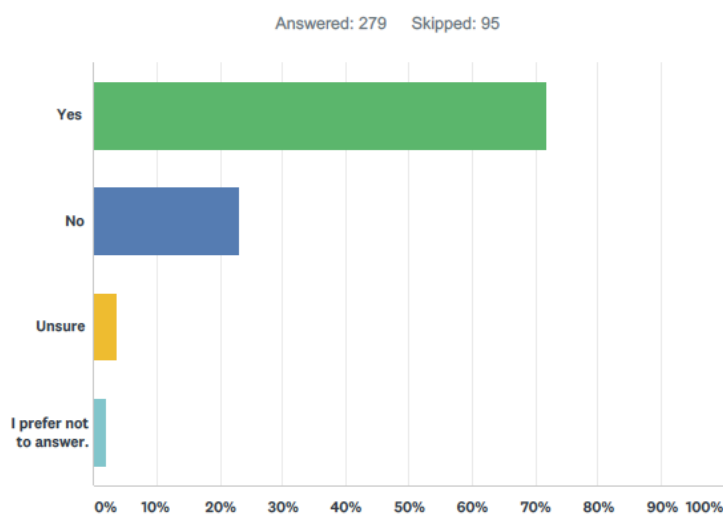


Figure 10. Principal formally observed two times

Another consistent part of the implementation was the feedback provided by superintendents after an informal or formal observation. All principals and superintendents acknowledged that providing feedback in person was part of the implementation process. Sixty percent of the principals shared that their superintendent provided written feedback within ten days of their observation. Sixty-three percent of the principals shared that the feedback received from their superintendent as part of the evaluation process, positively impacted their leadership practices.

Q32 During the 2017-2018 school year, I was provided with written feedback from the superintendent within 10 principal work days of the observation.

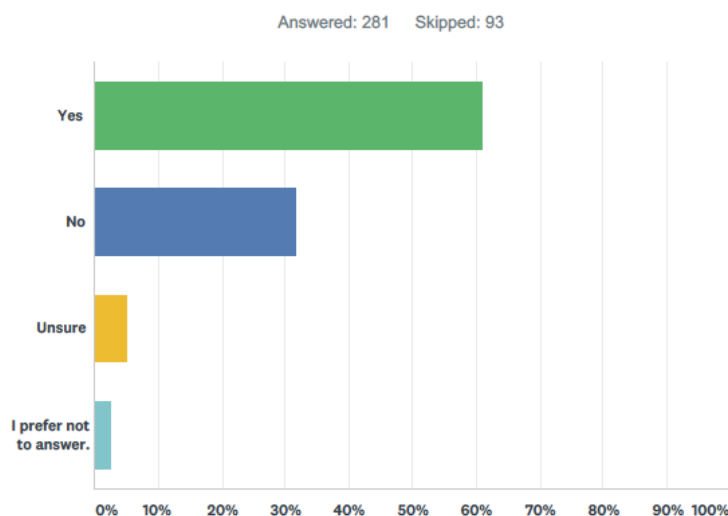


Figure 11. Principal provided feedback from superintendent within ten school days following observation

There was great variability in how the superintendents implemented different aspects of principal observations. One superintendent observed the principal in an activity that directly connected to one of the principal's goals for the school year. The other shared that they were specifically looking for an opportunity to observe evidence of a focus on student growth and collaborative practices. Principal Three shared an experience with the implementation of the feedback provided by their evaluation, "Other than the writeup, there's no standardized evidence."

Every time a principal was leading provided an opportunity for the superintendent to collect information related to the *Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders*. The superintendents shared that they were always mindful of the interactions they had

with principals, about principals, and how these conversations impacted different components of the rubric for principals. Superintendent Two shared,

In essence, I think you're always supervising people in one way or another and providing feedback. And I do think, ultimately, you can bring that in when you get to the objective tool, looking at the standards, that there is anecdotal evidence that that has occurred throughout the year, outside of the formal evaluations.

They attempted to record the value of these conversations in order to provide anecdotal evidence for an informal observation and to build evidence toward the summative evaluation.

Both superintendents identified that the greatest aspect of the evaluation was the conversation with principals about their leadership practices. They also valued how the evaluation process impacted teachers and supported student achievement. Superintendent Two stated,

The strength is all about the dialogue and the feedback, so any form, or any process, or any tool, if you're not doing that, I mean, that would describe whether the process is good or bad. So, to me, I mean, that's what it's all about.

There was great variability in understanding and appreciating the evaluation process as a tool for providing dialogue opportunities among superintendents and principals about instructional leadership. One superintendent stated their lack of support for the process, however throughout the interview it became apparent that they did value different pieces of the process. This superintendent did not correlate appreciated aspects of the evaluation process with the implementation of Senate Bill Seven or the requirement that principals be evaluated multiple times in a school year with feedback. According to *A Guide for*

Implementing Principal Performance Evaluations in Illinois (May 2012) the following timeline must be followed:

Table 6

State of Illinois Evaluation Timeline

By October 1 st	Principal and evaluator meet to set targets for how the principal's performance will be evaluated that school year with respect to Principal Practice and Student Growth. It is preferable that the principal and evaluator meet as soon as possible in a contract year.
Between November 1 st & February 1 st	Principal's evaluator conducts at minimum of two formal school site observations.
By February 15 th	Principal meets with the evaluator to review and discuss a draft of the principal's annual evaluation
By March 1 st	Principal's annual evaluation is submitted.
By July 1 st	Principal and evaluator meet to review what progress the principal has made with respect to the evaluation targets during the previous school year and begin to set evaluation targets for the next school year

The aspects of the Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan that both superintendents appreciated were the opportunities to observe their principals in action and provide them with direct feedback to help them grow as leaders. Both superintendents commented on the value of the reflective conversations with their principals. This dialogue gave the superintendent a purpose in supporting their building leaders. Senate Bill Seven provides superintendents with specific timelines for conducting observations of principals, the flexibility to add more observations if required, and includes specific rubric language for evaluating the practice of principals. The timeline provided by Senate Bill Seven, along with the rubric gives superintendents a consistent anchor by which principals can be evaluated. Senate Bill Seven also mandates the inclusion of student growth and both

superintendents followed the mandate, but did not believe that the inclusion of student growth was effective. According to *A Guide to Implementing Principal Performance Evaluation in Illinois* (May 2012)

There are two differences between the Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan (IPEP) and other options. First, when using IPEP a principal's evaluation is based on 25% - 30% student growth as compared to 50% student growth with the State Model. Secondly, IPEP is grounded in sound research on the principalship as well as in effective principal practice in Illinois. The Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan is described in the next section of this Guide.

The flaw that superintendents identified with student growth included the percent that the student growth must be attributed to the final summative evaluation.

Superintendent Two shared that the forms embedded in an electronic tool made the implementation of different forms easy to share. Data accessibility and quick form sharing was an advantage. Superintendent One did not have an electronic tool for warehousing evaluation documents, so there was great variability in the forms that were completed for the processes of the informal and formal observations.

One last topic that emerged from two of the principals was the benefit of inviting in the superintendent more often than required to obtain feedback. Inviting the superintendent to observe more often also had the benefit of building rapport with their evaluator. These two principals were thoughtful about bringing their evaluator into their school to share positive examples of teachers working with students outside of and in addition to the formal or informal observations. Adding extra observations whether formal or informal was not part of the process initiated by the superintendent. However,

it was a practice engaged in by two of the three principals. The principals were proud of the access they had to their superintendent at their smaller school district. The superintendent was located close to the building which allowed for more interaction and flexibility. A superintendent has many aspects of leadership to evaluate. There are thirty-nine elements within six standards. Effectively evaluating a principal is complicated. Superintendent Two shared,

the negative is the inconsistency of the fidelity to the process. The positive is the relationship building piece of being able to be in people's buildings, and being on top of what's going on in the buildings, and them feeling valued by knowing that you're taking an interest in them.

The superintendent must know the standards and be familiar with the elements to be effective. Principals should share in the experience and help the superintendents implement components of the evaluation. Principals can provide their own evidence and invite the superintendent to multiple observations for additional evidence collection.

Research Question 1: Feedback

All interviewees stated that feedback was discussed during goal setting, post-observations, and summative evaluations. Both superintendents felt giving feedback was the most important aspect of the evaluation process. All the work they put into the evaluation, revolved around the feedback they provided principals. Seventy-five percent of superintendents surveyed provided principals with a summative evaluation by March 1st as guidelines require. Twenty-five percent of principals surveyed did not receive timely feedback. According to *A Guide to Implementing Principal Performance Evaluation in Illinois* (May 2012), "Feedback from the formal observations shall be

provided in writing (electronic or paper) to the principal or assistant principal no later than 10 principal work days after the day on which the observation occurred.” Only 68% of principals received their summative evaluation by the state deadline. At the start of the evaluation cycle, principals are supposed to self-evaluate their performance using the *Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders Rubric* and bring this to the goal setting conference. Principal One stated,

I think in our summative we probably spent an hour talking, but maybe only five to ten minutes on this document, maybe fifteen. We went through the self-assessment a little bit to provide some reassurance to where some of the ratings would be, or different artifacts that might have been attached to that. But it was more aligned to some of those more informal discussions.

This statement identified variability in feedback timeliness.

Superintendent Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q19 During the 2017-2018 school year, I submitted principal evaluations to each principal before March 1st.

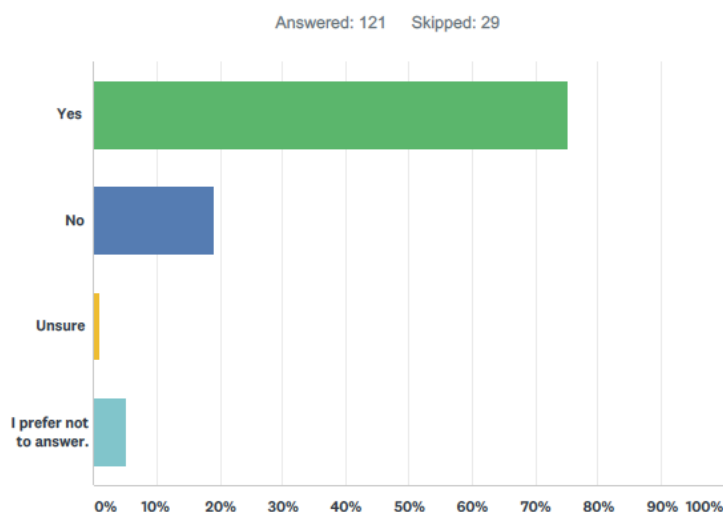


Figure 12. Superintendent met with principal to review progress by March 1st

Feedback was consistently provided within ten school days of the observation. The superintendents reported that 73% provided timely feedback. There was variability in how and when the feedback was provided. One superintendent used an online system where all the feedback was housed and shared with the principals. The other superintendent used their own system for providing feedback. The consistency of the online document and the ease with which the principal could refer back to previous observations was a positive aspect mentioned by the principal.

Superintendent Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q30 During the 2017-2018 school year, I met with all principals within 10 principal work days of their observation.

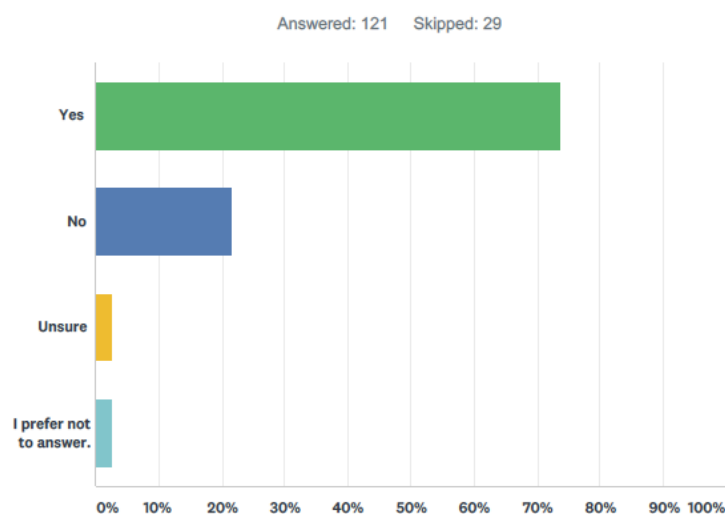


Figure 13. Superintendent met with principal within ten days after observation

One superintendent introduced the 360 degree evaluation process which allowed stakeholders to provide feedback to school district leaders. All of the principals who participated in 360 appreciated feedback provided in the evaluation. They conversely acknowledged that it was challenging to understand from which party the feedback was derived: staff, parents, students, colleagues, or evaluator. The feedback provided by

stakeholders was grouped together and given to principals. Principals consistently valued open communication. Each building's leadership team offered feedback to help identify target areas that impacted teacher and student achievement. Written feedback provided to principals was effective in helping them reflect upon their professional practice according to 100% of the responding superintendents.

There was variability in how feedback was provided by superintendent to principal. Principal Two shared, "...if it's on a piece of paper it's formally documented and then if you have a conversation and it's followed up with an email, to me that's formally documented [feedback]." Superintendents and principals sat down face-to-face to share dialogue and feedback. The other superintendent shared feedback via an electronic application and met with principals in their building. Both superintendents met with their principals in the school buildings. Meeting with principal, where they were most comfortable receiving the feedback helped to build rapport.

Consistency was also revealed in the summative evaluation feedback provided to principals. Superintendents' summative evaluation feedback connected to a score, but more importantly allowed conversations with principals about their craft and how to improve upon their already strong skills. Superintendent Two stated,

Well, I typically try to point out things that they have done with specificity. And so I don't just say, "Really good job," I try to say, well, the way that this activity actually connected to this idea, or whatever, so that it actually has some specificity to make them think. And there are times, too, when I've seen what they're trying to do and I know where they're trying to go, sometimes that helps

me identify resources that they may not be aware of that could help them do that.

And when that happens I try to provide some of those types of things too.

Superintendents desire sharing feedback with principals to help them grow in their leadership capacity benefitting all community stakeholders.

Variability emerged when one superintendent discussed next school year while the other superintendent recapped the current school year. Another variability was the identification of specific feedback categories provided by one superintendent in the areas of professional practice, student growth, and a narrative describing areas of strength and overall areas for growth. At the start of the year only 65% of the superintendents used the rubric to provide feedback for their principals. Similarly, only 69% of superintendents met with each principal to review goals for the upcoming school year at the end of the evaluation cycle. The variability in between superintendents and principals throughout Illinois is concerning.

Superintendent Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q20 At the start of the year, 2017-2018, I completed the Rubric for the Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders for each principal.

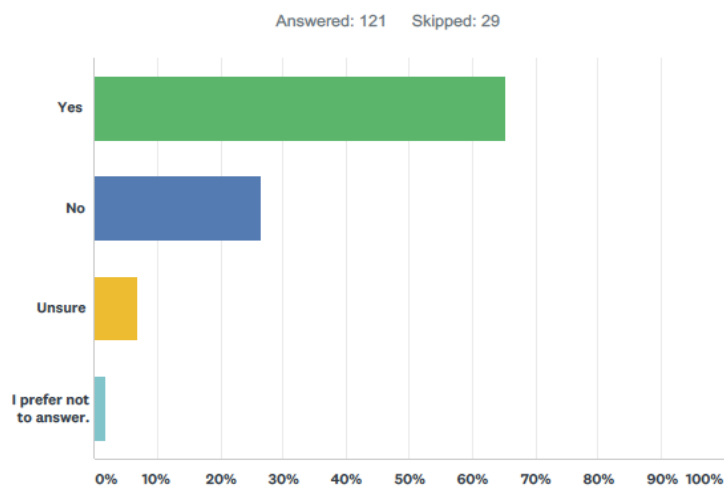


Figure 14. Superintendent completed rubric for principals at start of year

Written feedback to principals must be provided within ten days as stated in the law. Variability emerged in the length of time superintendents took to provide feedback. Superintendent Two mentioned that they try to provide written feedback as quickly as possible in order for the principal to know what caught the attention of the evaluator and how they interpreted what was observed. Providing the feedback in advance of the post-observation conversation ensured principals had time to process the feedback.

Superintendent One shared their views on providing feedback after an observation,

Well, I hate to write feedback, I would much rather sit and talk to people ... so, I hate that part of it. It just seemed so forced, and maybe that's because I'm more of an extrovert than an intellect. I would much rather just sit and talk to you about what's going on...

The other superintendent did not provide notes and interpretation until they were sitting down with the administrator after the observation, but well within the ten day timeline.

The variability in providing feedback revealed itself when principals shared that some received the evaluator notes in advance of the post-conversation and others received the notes either right before the meeting or when they arrived in the post-observation conversation. Thirty-three percent of superintendents surveyed spend ten or more hours on the evaluation process throughout the school year per principal. This is a heavy investment of time and supports the importance of this work and the significance of principal leadership on the culture and learning within the school building.

Superintendent One shared their feelings regarding the feedback structure that is in place as a result of Senate Bill Seven, "I think that the structure of the process itself is a strength: that it is spread out throughout the year, that it includes formal and informal ...

I don't have a problem with any of that stuff.” The last variability recognized in the area of providing feedback to principals was the specificity of the feedback connected to the rubric language. One superintendent connected feedback to the evaluation rubric with very specific language. Using rubric language, targeted feedback and helped principals understand areas of growth and how to improve. Eighty-six percent of the superintendents had confidence in the relevance of the feedback provided to each principal while only 65% of the principals reported having confidence in the feedback. Of the six standards within Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, 34% of superintendents identified Standard Four – Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment as being the most important. One superintendent focused on the rubric areas they identified as more important than others based on the impact of principals building collaborative environments, utilizing assessment, and impacting instructional strategies to increase student achievement.

Research Question 1: Evidence

Superintendents shared that they collected evidence during the formal and informal observations to validate the outcome of the summative evaluation. Principals collected evidence to help their superintendent validate different areas on the rubric that may or may not have been witnessed during the observations. Principal Two shared,

I just do a lot of self-reflection and self-evaluation. I've sent out surveys to staff to get feedback, [I] read between the lines of it and see where the grain of truth is, and everything that comes out [in the survey].

Q40 Principals have a variety of responsibilities, yet not limited to instructional leadership, operations, student performance accountability, and community involvement. In addition, there is also a range of faculty and student populations. Based on these dynamics and my perception, the evaluation I provided principals was an accurate recording of their leadership capacity this school year.

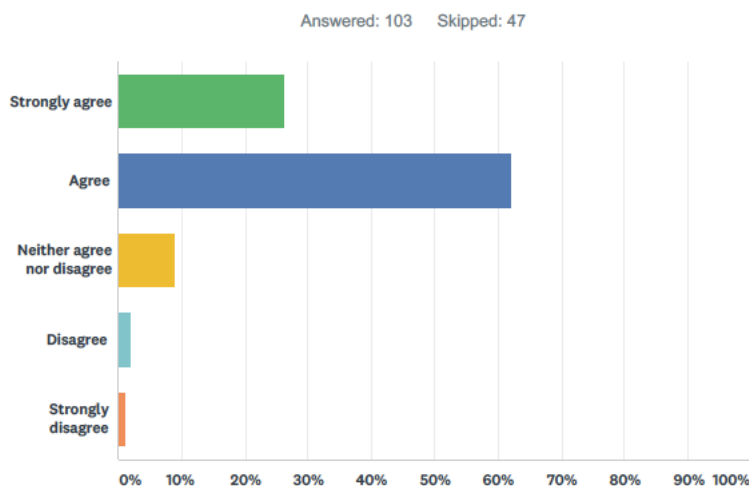


Figure 15. Superintendent provided principals with accurate recording of leadership capacity

Survey results revealed 76% of superintendents were provided with feedback from principals on all of the *Illinois Standards for School Leaders* to help define growth targets for the upcoming school year. Consistent with the superintendent's survey, the principals shared that only 65% of them provided evidence to their superintendent.

A consistent area of evidence used by principals was survey data collected from teachers and community members. All of the principals used the Five-Essential survey in some capacity. In addition, two principals used a 360 evaluation as evidence of their work. These surveys were given at least once a year and the results were compared from

year to year. Student assessments were identified by 48% of the superintendents as having a positive impact on the evaluation instrument.

Superintendent Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q23 During the 2017-2018 school year, principals provided evidence within each of the Illinois Standards for School Leaders in the beginning of the year to help define targets for growth.

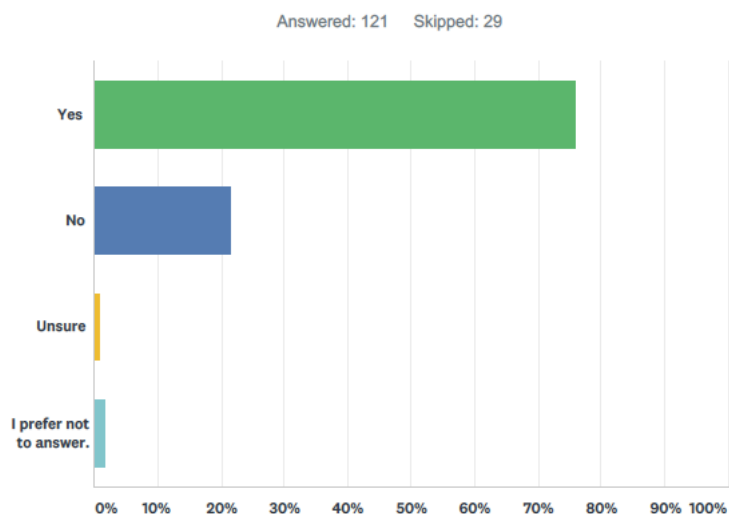


Figure 16. Principals provided evidence of learning targets at start of year

One survey that had variability was a survey Principal One adapted from the book, *School Culture Rewired*. This principal administered the survey multiple times in a school year looking for trends in the data that helped to pinpoint areas of growth within the current school year. Teachers knew the survey was important since it was provided three times in one school year. The building leadership team helped identify the questions that were included in the survey. According to the survey results, 73% of principals identified two priority goals for the school year and used survey results as one tool to identify these goal areas.

Only 50% of the principals believed the principal evaluation procedures were effective with regards to measuring principal leadership competency. It was critical that they provided additional evidence that could not be gathered during an observation. Sixty-five percent of principals shared feedback during the goal setting conference at the start of the year. All three principals interviewed felt obligated to collect and share evidence of their leadership as part of the evaluation cycle. They provided this evidence during the pre-observation, post-observation, and summative conversations. Principals shared that when arranging to meet with their superintendent they were not required to provide additional evidence during their post-observation or summative conference. The Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan (May 2012) suggests that principals, along with their evaluator, use the state sample documents *Principal Practice Worksheet*, *Professional Learning Plans and School Improvement Plans* as working documents to update after every post-observation conversation. Principal Two commented, “I would pull my superintendent into a classroom, to look at what this teacher just did with these kids and look at these kids... kind of more real evidence. I think that speaks as much as test scores do.” Throughout the interviews, these documents were never specifically identified as part of the overall process. The rubric was discussed, not as a running document, but as a tool to identify the strengths and areas of improvement in an isolated observation of the principal.

Superintendents are expected to observe principals and write feedback within ten working days. There is nothing in the law that specifically mandates principals bring evidence of their learning or growth to the observation. Principals are supposed to use the *Principal Practice Worksheet*, *Professional Learning Plans* and *School Improvement*

Plans as working documents to comment and reflect on throughout the year, but this did not emerge as a common practice during the interviews. According to *A Guide to Implementing Principal Performance Evaluation in Illinois* (May 2012),

When the performance evaluation is completed, the qualified evaluator shall meet with the principal...to inform the principal...of the rating given for the student growth and professional practice components of the evaluation and of the final performance evaluation rating received, and discuss the evidence used in making these determinations. The qualified evaluator shall discuss the strengths demonstrated by the principal...and identify specific areas of growth.

This document does not discuss materials that principals are encouraged or required to bring to the final summative conversation. If this evaluation is assumed to be a partnership, there should be support available and opportunities for principals to be trained on what is necessary to share as evidence for the standards. These documents were used as evidence at the end of the evaluation cycle during the summative evaluation. Parent communication and the Illinois School Report Card were identified by 96% of principals as being additional factors that were used to collect evidence of their leadership capacity.

Variability emerged in the amount and type of evidence that was brought to the post-observation and summative conversations. Some principals were in the habit of bringing evidence to the post-observation conversation, while all brought evidence to the summative conversation. Whether a principal brought evidence to the post-observation or summative discussions was largely dependent on a request from the evaluator or past experience in previous districts. Principal Two maintained a portfolio of evidence and

brought it to the summative conversation. Principals only brought evidence to the post-observation discussion if requested by the superintendent. One example provided by Principal One was a request by the superintendent to bring staff work samples that were completed as part of the observation of a principal leading staff in professional learning communities. Ninety-five percent of the principals reported that data was included in their observation and 96% reported that school culture and climate reports were used during the evaluation process. The information used in a principal's evaluation was complimented with their self-reflection and additional evidence provided at the post-observation and summative conferences. Superintendents shared there was a wide range of evidence brought by principals to the post-observation and summative evaluation conversations. They acknowledged a desire to build parameters and consistency to this part of the process.

Another inconsistent aspect was the collection of evidence from other district level administrators. Superintendent One made a point to collect evidence of principals working with the assistant superintendents for curriculum and instruction, business, human resources, maintenance, and special education. Superintendent One shared a philosophy of the evaluation process with regards to evidence collection stating, "So, the principal, I would say, is the primary gatherer of the artifact in our process." The collection of evidence from additional sources was all used to benefit the summative evaluation conversation. Superintendent Two also shared a philosophy of the gathering evidence process, "I think, share responsibility in the process. I don't think it's completely a one-way thing either direction." Eighty-eight percent of the superintendents shared that multiple measures of student growth were included in the principal evaluation

to compliment a well-rounded evaluation plan. There was variability between the principals' expectations to provide information and superintendents' expectations that this was a shared experience where both parties brought information. Principals addressed that this evaluation was conducted by the superintendent and their expectation was that the superintendent does a majority of the data collection and preparation for the conferences.

Senate Bill Seven also introduced student growth in the principal evaluation. According to *A Guide to Implementing Principal Performance Evaluation in Illinois* (May 2012), the state provides each district the flexibility to select options:

- Develop its own plan from scratch,
- Adopt or adapt the State Model for Principal Evaluation,
- Adopt or adapt a plan being implemented in another school district
- Adopt or adapt the Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan developed by the Illinois Principals Association & the Illinois Association of School Administrators.

There are two differences between the Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan (IPEP) and other options. First, when using IPEP a principal's evaluation is based on 25% - 30% student growth as compared to 50% student growth with the State Model. Secondly, IPEP is grounded in sound research on the principalship as well as in effective principal practice in Illinois (7).

It was alarming to see the variability of student growth percentage being used for the principal evaluation with superintendents reporting a range of 25% to 70% for the overall summative principal evaluation. This range was significant and dramatically impacted principal leadership capacity from one district to another. More variability took

place with the discussion of student growth used as part of the principal evaluation process. Superintendent One shared that they used student growth as part of the principal evaluation, but did not feel this evidence truly represented the work of a principal. The superintendent lacked confidence in including this as evidence in a principal evaluation.

The superintendent shared,

to be honest with you, I don't think anybody has the student growth piece figured out, and I think the student growth piece is problematic with teachers. I don't know how consistent it is, or reliable it is...everybody's struggling to figure out how to handle that piece of it, and I don't know that anybody's figured that out... it goes into their evaluations, and sometimes it affects them one way or the other in terms of their formal ratings.

Another topic that emerged was the benefit of providing evidence throughout the school year, outside of the required observations and summative evaluation conference. Principals and superintendents all commented on the benefits of on-going evidence collection and self-reflection. Building in additional checkpoints throughout the year was a desire among many principals and superintendents. A formal process for the on-going collection of evidence was apparent in principals that used the online tool for their evaluations. The opportunity to upload evidence was available, however, it was not something that the principal engaged in frequently. The principals who were more paper based, but did not use a specific system, did not have a formal opportunity to provide on-going evidence to their evaluator. However, they had greater access to their superintendent throughout the day and took advantage of the opportunity to invite the superintendent into their school more often to witness their leadership in action.

Principal Two shared,

the benefit of having my admin right here because when something really great is going on and I'll send them to the... or I'll be like, go to this classroom later and see this, which is I think a huge benefit to me.

These additional opportunities for interaction were used as evidence in the summative conference when compiling the data and determining a final summative rating.

More variability was revealed around discussions of what evidence to use for different parts of the principal rubric. Some principals collected evidence through surveys created within the school, while others collected evidence of professional learning communities they were building. Some principals collected evidence on teachers' school culture survey results, yet others studied how they spent time on school improvement plan. Building more clarity and consistency to the evidence emerged as a topic in the principal interviews. Superintendent Two shared that additional information was needed from principals because,

...based on what I see during the limited observations that I have, I also base a lot on the self-reflection conversation that we have and other checkpoints throughout the year, but they [principals] have opportunities to bring different things to the table, related to the work that they're doing.

Interestingly, only 26% of the superintendents felt very strongly about their evaluation of principal leadership capacity. Senate Bill Seven mandates a process for evaluating principals, however there are aspects of an evaluation cycle that are not mandated. Principals providing evidence is not specifically mandated. When both superintendent

and principal collect evidence throughout the year, it supports their leadership, growth, and helps create an overall more effective evaluation system.

A surprising 18% of principals did not identify goals for the upcoming school year. Senate Bill Seven states that the principals and evaluators are required to develop evaluation targets in two specific areas. These goals are selected for the level of impact they will have on a principal's ability to strengthen and build system capacity throughout the school improvement process. That said, the evidence that principal goals are specifically selected based on rubric criteria is lacking. The Principal Performance Evaluation in Illinois has good intentions with the inclusion of these goals. However, there is a need for greater training on what this part of the process looks like in order to be most effective for the principal and the evaluator.

Principal Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q25 During the 2017-2018 school year, I met and discussed with the superintendent two priority goals for the school's strategic plan that focus on improving student performance (student growth).

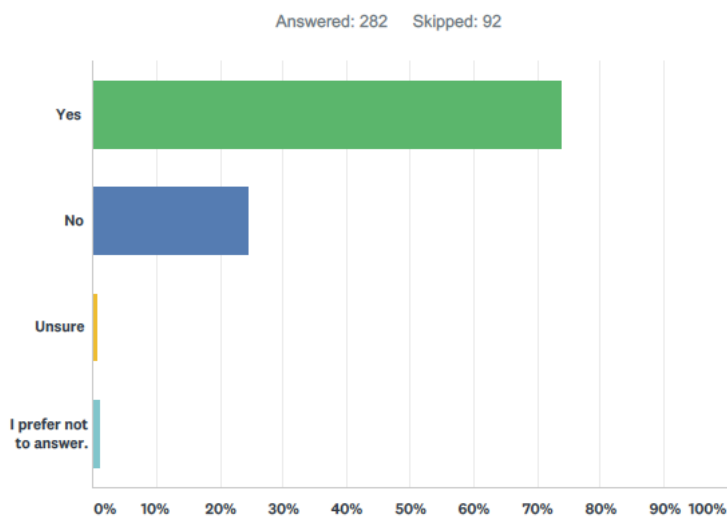


Figure 17. Principal discussed with superintendent two priority goals

Research Question 1: Reflecting

Reflecting emerged as a theme for research question one. Superintendents shared that reflection is the heart of helping principals improve their leadership ability.

Superintendent one shared,

you can have one-on-one conversations where the rubber really hits the road is when two principals talk to each other and say, “How are you doing that, because I am struggling with being visible,” “I am struggling with getting my communication done on time,” or “my budget done on time,” and I don’t think that ... I think we spend so much time in survival mode when we should be, perhaps, more in support mode. That would be a significant change that we’d love to embed.

Superintendents were consistent in articulating that principals need time to reflect on their leadership in order to process what needs to change and how to build upon the feedback. Only 69% of superintendents met with each principal by July 1st to review progress from the year and build toward the future. This variability in action and expectation needs to be explored. Superintendents consistently shared that the single most important aspect of a school district was the strength of their principals. Both superintendents shared that the principal evaluation process was valuable in supporting the growth of principals because strong principals are critical to the success of students and staff. Principal One shared,

Other than the formal part of the evaluation, it makes me think about the ethics a little bit more than I do on a daily basis. You look at the ISLLC standards and you read some of those a little bit, I do think about the ethics part of it...I do think

about that one a little bit more because it's a struggle to find an artifact, because it's kind of embedded in [the position].

A common theme that emerged from principals was wanting time to reflect, to work with their colleagues, and to engage in the self-reflection of the leadership rubric. When reflecting on use of the Illinois Standards for School Leaders, only 61% of superintendents reported that they provided principals with direct and explicit comments connected to the leadership rubric. This variability in practice and expectation needs to be improved. Principal One shared a challenge with the summative evaluation due date,

I think the self-assessment due by February 1st is kind of tricky, because I'm still finishing up some of the formal evaluations of the non-tenured staff and things.

So to look at an instructional goal I may not have been able to see that whole process.

Principals shared similar thoughts regarding how to show evidence within the ethics category. They stated that anecdotally they can share samples, but would like a concrete model of exemplar samples required in order to be considered distinguished.

Another aspect of variability among principals and superintendents was the timeliness of the evaluation components. One superintendent did not place value on observation timelines, while the other placed high value on meeting all evaluation deadlines. The three principals in this study were more comfortable following procedures and meeting deadlines. They shared that meeting deadlines was important and when they did not meet deadlines, they were uncomfortable. Principal Two reflected upon the new format when a colleague organized a more structured system for principal evaluations, he stated, "I think there was more participation from the principals and there

was more clarity.” All three principals shared their desire to be consistent with timelines and meeting deadlines. Adhering to guidelines and providing timely feedback is critical to the success of the principal and ultimately the staff and students they serve. Forty-five percent of the principals reported that they shared critical evidence of their teaching and learning during the summative conference. The evidence collected within the school year, if held until the end of the year, could not impact change during that school year. More opportunities for feedback would be a suggestion for improvement in the process.

Superintendent Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q24 During the 2017-2018 school year, by July 1st each principal met with me to set goal targets for the next school year.

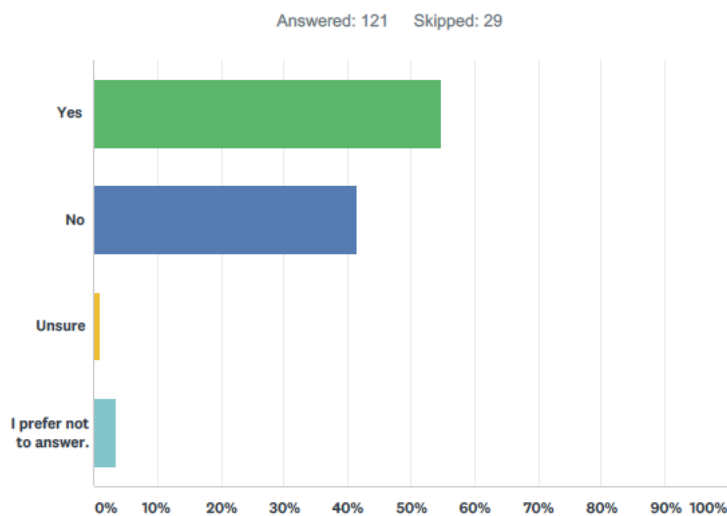


Figure 18. Principal met with superintendent by July 1st to set goals for next year

There was consistency in the conversation near the end of the year between superintendents and principals. Principal Two shared their reflection of the evaluation process was that of a shared experience,

It was a very conversational process. I think in terms of setting goals, I would always have ideas of what I wanted based on the strategic plan and aligning that, but always kind of an open door policy if I wanted to ask a question about it.

All principals engaged in formative conversations with their superintendents throughout the year and compiled all observations into one final summative conversation. There was some variability on when the meetings took place. Those who completed their summatives before the state deadline appreciated meeting the deadline, but felt uncomfortable reflecting on the year when final assessment data from students had not been finalized. Ninety percent of superintendents met prior to October 1st to set performance targets with their principals, while only 70% reported meeting with principals by February 1st to review the principal evaluation and provide feedback and guidance during the reflection. A group of superintendents shared that in their reflection of the principal evaluation process they found support among other superintendents' colleagues for finding new and improved strategies, processes, and procedures. There was consistency in how they reflected and who they reflected with in order to improve the principal evaluation process.

Another aspect that was consistent among the principals, similar to the superintendents, was the value of collegial conversations. The reflective conversations that took place during the learning meetings in the school district of Superintendent Two and Principal Three seemed to benefit all leaders. The meetings in the smaller school district of Principals One, Two and Superintendent One were also beneficial to the collective wisdom and experience of the leaders. Providing the time to reflect upon learning and leadership supported the overall growth of the district. Fifty-five percent of

principals agreed that the evaluation process was effective at measuring the principal's ability to focus school staff on teaching and student learning. This percentage needs to be improved in order to support principals' abilities to lead productively. Enhancing the evaluation tool and process should focus on what will help principals improve their ability to lead and not on how to capture evidence. We need to flip the idea of observation and evidence collection. When principals reflected on the process with other principal colleagues, they shared strategies to support one another in their instructional leadership. Building in more opportunities for reflection among principal colleagues is critical. Principal Two shared a desire to support principals throughout Illinois in the future stating, "the evaluation system looks different everywhere and is applied different, so maybe having some continuity of standards would just help principals moving in between positions with expectations and how to meet those expectations."

Superintendent Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q22 At the start of last school year, 2017-2018, each principal shared the results of their self-reflection (Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders) with me.

Answered: 121 Skipped: 29

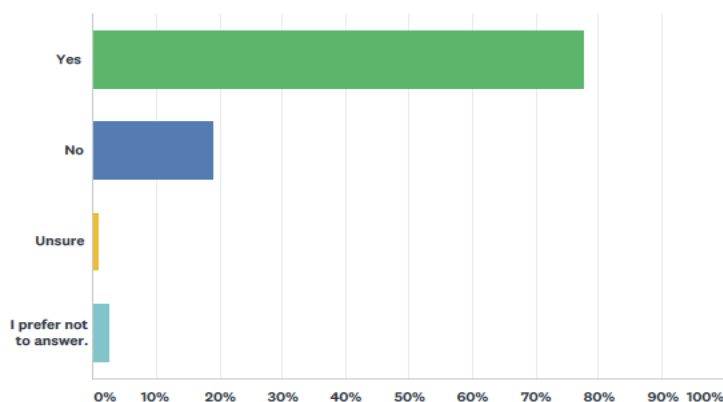


Figure 19. Principals shared with superintendent results of self-reflection

There was more variability in the requirements of each superintendent and what a principal was expected to bring to the summative conversation. Principal One shared the benefits of reflecting on the feedback shared by their superintendent,

Just acknowledgement of the work that's going on from someone that was in a building leadership role themselves for a number of years, and understands the various challenges that go with pushing a few changes, knowing that you're not going to get to all of them, and prioritizing what's the most important thing now, or what's the two most important things now for this time. We're not going to get to all of it in one year, or ten.

One of the principals was asked to bring and use their self-reflection as a guide for the summative conversation, while the other principals were not asked to bring their self-reflection rubric. If the power of reflection and value of the leadership standards are identified, we as educators need to prioritize the time and energy around opportunities for more reflection on practice and communication among school leaders. Operating in leadership silos will not support the growth and learning of our school communities.

Research Question 2: Training

Among the three principals and two superintendents interviewed, training was identified by one principal and both superintendents as rich parts of the evaluation experience. The interviews revealed two types of training: how to conduct principal evaluations and how to improve as an instructional leader. There was variability in the responses among the three principals. One identified specific training they received in observing and providing feedback to teachers for improved student engagement. The other two did not identify any specific training they received as principals to support

teachers. There was a total of 925 formal observations conducted between 131 superintendents. Twenty-nine percent of the superintendents surveyed experienced zero hours of training on the principal evaluation this school year. Superintendent One shared that their training to support principals through the evaluation process was, "...through the terrible modules, which were not at all helpful ... went through the re-certification workshop, which was not terrible, but not helpful ... and the one-day re-certification. Then, beyond that, on the job training." Seventy-eight percent of the superintendents had experience as a teacher, 51% as a principal and 66% as a district level administrator. If superintendents are relying on their past evaluation experiences as a principal and translating this into their current model of evaluating, it is critical that those who never served as principals know the process and expectations. Superintendent Two shared their experience with formal training for conducting principal evaluations,

Only formally through workshops, but I will say that I've got a cohort of friends and, as depressing as it sounds, when superintendents get together, we sometimes talk about exciting topics like evaluating our principals, and that is probably the more meaningful, more beneficial types of exchanges, when we all talk about 'Do you have an instrument that you like better than this,' 'Here's what I'm finding out about,' and 'Here's what I did that really worked.' Those conversations are not formal, of course, but are the ones that prove to be the most helpful.

Administrators are required by the Illinois State Board of Education to attend one Administrator Academy course throughout the school year in order to keep their license active and in good standing. According to *A Guide to Implementing Principal Performance Evaluation in Illinois* (May 2012), "If implemented effectively, the new

principal evaluation plan could be used as leverage to obtain the resources necessary to better support the professional development of principals and their school improvement initiatives.” In addition, the guide states,

After the principal’s annual evaluation is completed, the principal and evaluator should work together in monitoring the continued progress being made by the principal toward achieving the goals of the Professional Learning and School Improvement Plans. By July 1st, the principal’s accomplishments in this regard should be documented.

The fact that this language does not state principals’ accomplishments toward achieving goals are mandatory does not support principals’ growth. The courses offered may or may not focus on the evaluation process. Superintendent Two stated “... it’s available, but I wouldn’t spend my time on that. I’ve done more workshops on leadership, but nothing formal on the evaluation process.” Superintendent Two shared that outside the state required training for conducting principal evaluations, “the formal state training that’s required, but then I guess through my professional individual growth, I read a lot, a lot of Fullan work.” The training and focus of the superintendents were on leadership and not the evaluation process. Superintendent One shared, “I think that the support I do get is when I get feedback from the people I’m evaluating, and find out what’s helpful to them or not...” The inherent benefit of growing and learning to better evaluate the principals was provided through the feedback they received, not the training.

Superintendent Two shared that their school district administrators were working with a consultant from a national organization to provide training around the Successful Practices Network. Understanding the impact an administrator has on student learning

this Superintendent Two stated “we invest a lot in our administration and so we did a shared administrator academy.” The superintendent shared, “...the goal then we try to bring whatever it is that’s our priority back into our learning and our meetings, and so the principals know what the priorities are.”

Fifty-seven percent of superintendents stated that before a principal observation, a specific objective had been identified as the focus. Principal Two did not receive any professional development in the principal evaluation process and stated, “[they are] not aware of any specific professional development for principal standards.” This reveals that principals may not know that best practice is to identify specific areas of growth and target areas for feedback. Principal Three shared that the only training they had received in the evaluation process was the Principal Evaluation Modules. The law requires all principals to go through, Principal Evaluation Modules, in order to observe teachers. Principals engaged in professional discussions with their colleagues on a bi-monthly basis around a variety of topics during a leadership meeting. Leadership observations was a topic of discussion among colleagues. They valued this opportunity to discuss benefits, outcomes of the process and recommendations provided by their superintendent. General themes of the feedback were shared voluntarily by their colleagues for an open group discussion. This time was available to provide professional development on the evaluation process and target specific areas that had been identified in the principal observations within a school district. The three principals were consistent in their desire to engage in training that improved their leadership capacity and better informed their evaluation practices.

Q29 During the 2017-2018 school year, before each observation of a school principal a specific objective was identified for the focus of the observation.

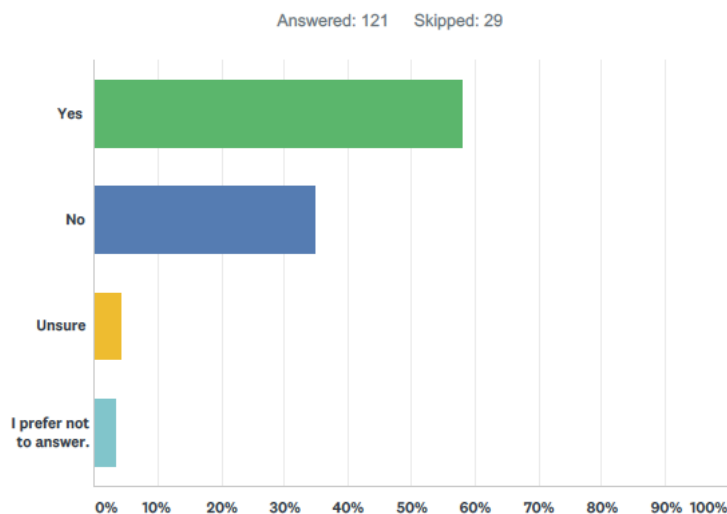


Figure 20. Principal provided objective before each observation

Principal One shared that the professional development training received “did a lot of really specific work on culture last year and I got a lot of specific feedback related to that, so it did maybe inform some of my next steps or future steps.” When the target was identified for this principal and the training and focus for the school year were targeted, there was a focus for the building staff. When asked if the feedback had any impact on the instructional leadership throughout the building, the principal stated, “Because it’s tied to my school improvement goals, which are both heavily based on instruction, I do feel like I get some feedback for that.” There was no consistency in the responses from principals regarding specific training received to improve the evaluation instrument of their leadership or their leadership capacity in supporting teachers and student achievement. What emerged in the area of training for leaders was their past

experience as teachers. Principal One identified two professional development experiences that influenced their work including the principal evaluation module training and the ATSR (Analyze Teaching for Student Results) training. Principal One shared that this previous training still informed their work when observing teachers and providing feedback. Principal Two said that they had not received any formal training in how to conduct principal evaluations or how to best support their superintendent in the evaluation process. Likewise, Principal Three did not receive any specific training in conducting the principal evaluation aside from the principal evaluation modules which were only completed in order to conduct evaluations of other administrators. Both Superintendent One and Two shared examples of training they and their leaders engaged in to improve the leadership capacity of their principals. Superintendent One stated,

They went through the terrible modules, which were not at all helpful ... went through the re-certification workshop, which was not terrible, but not helpful ... the one-day re-cert[ification]. Then, beyond that, on the job training ... picking things from my evaluations that worked when I was principal: the feedback that I had received, the types of perspectives that were shared with me, and then transferring what I've done with teachers over the years into that lens of leadership.

The consistency among both superintendents was the use of prior experience and training to inform their future work with principals.

Research Question 2: Implementing

Among all but one interviewee, there was consistency in feeling that the timeline was not a significant part of the principal evaluation process. Superintendent Two shared

experiences and emotions that emphasized evaluation process timelines be followed properly. “When consistently implemented [principal evaluation] and follow through occurs, professional learning is enhanced,” stated Superintendent Two. Feedback provided to principals during the evaluation process is intended to be implemented during the school year in order to see the growth and impact of the principal on teacher effectiveness and student growth. Principal Two stated, “Feedback propelled me to go back to school and understand that there are other principals out there and I’m not suffering alone.” Seventy-five percent of superintendents provided written feedback to their principals within ten days of their observation which is required by law. Forty-four percent of the principals shared that feedback they received from the superintendent included recommendations for professional learning, while 73% of the superintendents reported providing feedback with recommendations for professional learning. This inconsistency is alarming because 30% of the superintendents felt that their feedback included direction for professional learning. This was not identified by the principals. Superintendent Two shared,

I think you have to model [the implementation] for your principals, but I think that there’s value, because I think there’s a relationship piece that goes into just having regular contact with people. If I know what they’re getting and not getting, then I have to adjust my behavior accordingly.

This superintendent implemented professional development at a monthly leadership meeting in order to model specific strategies for principals. Although there was variability in the implementation of the timeline, there was consistency in the value of conducting observations and providing feedback to principals.

Eighty-two percent of the superintendents responded that the principal observation process was effective in helping support the leadership capacity of the principal, while only 71% of the principals felt this was effective. This inconsistency reveals that principals require more than what is currently being done. Superintendents may not be aware that what they perceive to be helpful in professional learning is not having the desired impact upon the principals they serve. Eighty percent of the superintendents shared the feedback they provided positively impacted principal leadership practices, while only 63% of principals agreed. This illustrates the need to focus on professional learning outcomes of the principal evaluation process. With only 63% of principals recognizing the value of professional learning and its impact on their leadership capacity, it is critical to identify what improvements are necessary. If valuable time is being given to the process of principal evaluations throughout Illinois, time should also be invested to ensure it is a productive use of time for principals, students, and superintendents. Implementing a regular check-in among superintendents and principals would help ensure these conversations take place for the benefit of all school leaders.

Superintendent Two shared, “so the evaluation of principals is a growth experience for me, by being able to gage my effectiveness based on how they’re performing. I hope that it models it enough that they will take the teacher evaluation process seriously.” One approach to providing principals with professional learning is through modeling. Although not specifically stated as professional learning, modeling is intentional training for principals. Conducting the principal observations was consistently important according to all interviewed. These observations helped facilitate a conversation around growth and building opportunities to celebrate principal

participation in their school community. The principals consistently agreed that feedback be connected to their goal areas. One variable that the principals identified was the implementation of when the observations take place. Principals consistently wanted more control over the time and activity observed since these insights were significant aspects of the final summative evaluation, which directly impacted position longevity.

There was great variability in implementing professional learning among superintendents and principals. Superintendent One stated,

Some [principals] need more support with management types of things: get [their] budget in on time, clean up [their] communication, but their relationships are great. Others have really good management styles, but their relationships are lacking. So, sometimes, the feedback is more directive, and sometimes it's more reflective.

The variability of responses this superintendent provided principals was absolutely necessary in order to give authentic credible feedback. Observations conducted of principals were individualized, as was feedback. Superintendents One and Two were consistent in sharing that their feedback to principals was timely and specific to the unique needs of each principal.

There was great variability in understanding the evaluation process and procedures. For example, principals identified that 78% have a clear understanding of student growth indicators included in their evaluation, while 94% of the superintendents shared that their principals had a clear understanding. The variability in responses is concerning and reveals a lack of understanding between the two groups. If superintendents clearly communicate the misunderstandings of professional development

needs among their principals, this specific concern could be cleared up quickly. A necessary aspect of the implementation of an effective evaluation plan is clarity from superintendents and principals regarding the process. Understanding that student growth is part of the principal evaluation, it would be expected that principals know how the percentage is determined. One suggestion is a feedback loop or opportunity for dialogue and reflection about the process throughout the year.

Principal Survey

SurveyMonkey

Q40 Principals have a variety of responsibilities, yet not limited to instructional leadership, operations, student performance accountability, and community involvement. In addition, there is also a range of faculty and student populations. Based on these dynamics and my perception, my evaluation was accurately recorded and reported.

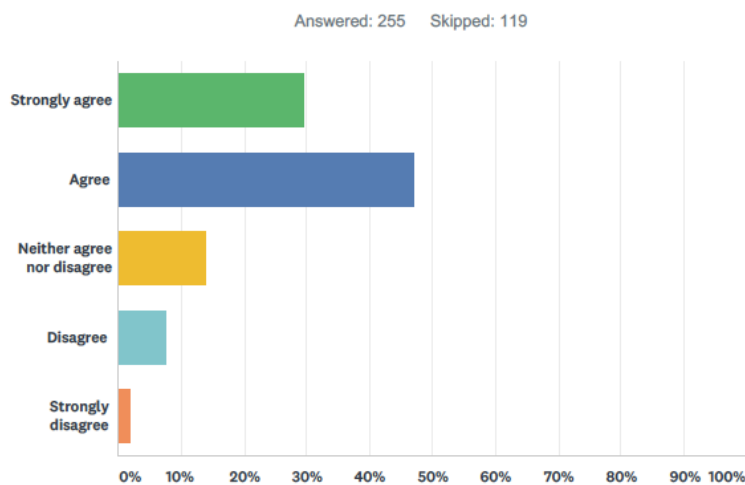


Figure 21. Principal evaluation accurately reflects performance

Overall, 76% of principals reported that their evaluation was an accurate reflection of their leadership, while 88% of superintendents reported that the principal evaluation was an accurate reflection of the principal's leadership capacity. This indicates that 12% of the principals did not feel that their evaluation was an accurate reflection of their work. This number may seem insignificant, but it represents principals,

the leaders of the school building, not having an appreciation for the evaluation. If superintendents expect principals to use their model and experience as a form of professional learning that can be replicated for the teachers they supervise, I worry about the problems it creates for our teachers, principals and communities. One consistency revealed in both of the superintendent interviews was the understanding that modeling the behavior was important. Superintendent Two stated,

I have to model what I want what I talk in being reflective leaders, being aware of that, trying to stay aware of ... trying to not just roll out the same presentation every time and create it new myself helps me to learn and grow, too. Capitalizing on their strengths, helping them break down barriers, helping them be less afraid to admit when they need help ... ask what can we do better as a leadership team at the district level to support you?

Principal three shared their experience with training related to the principal evaluation process stating,

... [superintendent] just checked in with me and reviewed that document with me a few times at the start of the year just to make sure I understood because it was a really big Excel spreadsheet. It was kind of a difficult spreadsheet to navigate. I don't think I need any professional development in the standards.

Principal Three revealed that the time spent on professional development around the evaluation process was procedural and did not invest in the standards. This is concerning since the principal also revealed that they do not require any standards support. While the length of the standards can be intimidating, the value is significant for the overall health and wellbeing of a school community.

Eighty-two percent of the superintendents and 71% of the principals identified that the principal evaluation process was effective in impacting school staff, teaching practices and student learning. The implementation of the evaluation process, according to the law, does allow multiple opportunities for feedback. The law does not specifically state how the implementation of feedback needs to occur. However, it is implied that through the evaluation process target areas will be identified in the Illinois Standards for School Leaders rubric and professional development will be implemented to support the areas of need. Principals in the survey stated that professional learning was dependent on the “quality of the evaluator,” “the goal setting and conversations are extremely beneficial,” “collegial conversations,” “learning can occur through feedback,” “I set new goals based on the feedback I receive from my superintendent as well as the needs of my students and faculty,” and “PD is happening regardless of the evaluation system.” There was consistency in the responses from principals regarding when professional learning take place, principal evaluation processes, and valuable conversations with superintendents. Although there was variability in the responses, principals shared that valuable professional learning hinged on superintendents’ efforts to include comments. Participants stated, “depends on how effective your superintendent is” and “it needs to be just like teacher feedback, meaningful, and not just going through the motions.” The survey results of superintendents revealed the following key areas of professional learning for principals “professional learning is key to building their [principal] capacity,” “focused PD,” “discussions are a valuable part of the process,” and “I believe learning comes from insight I share as well as their own self-assessment.” There was consistency in the survey comments among principals and superintendents describing the

value of implementing the principal evaluation process with fidelity and targeted feedback.

Research Question 2: Dialogue and Reflecting

The survey results revealed 48% of principals were evaluated twice, 24% were evaluated once, and 13% were never formally evaluated. These results highlight that SB7 was initiated to ensure that principals are evaluated during the school year. The benefit of evaluating principals during school is significant because of their impact on school communities' success. It is disappointing that 37% of the building leaders in Illinois were not evaluated according to state law. More needs to be done in order to hold superintendents accountable, but more importantly to ensure principals have the right support available to lead our school buildings properly. Ninety percent of superintendents shared verbal evidence with principals highlighting areas of strength. Only 80% of principals reported that verbal evidence was provided. It is promising new that dialogue between principals and superintendents is taking place after observations. This provides opportunities for feedback principals can use in their professional growth. Fifty percent of the principals and superintendents who responded to the survey indicated that professional development had a positive impact on their evaluation.

“Learning happens through dialogue and collaboration,” stated Superintendent Two. Being intentional with professional learning experiences and improving the functions of leadership teams, the superintendent stated that professional learning is part of an embedded leadership conversation throughout the year. We did a book study on leadership. I’m trying to make us a better team. We read *Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni this year because, again, I feel that I

can help them be better not by strengthening them as an individual, but strengthening all of us as a team so we can better support each other.

Both superintendents valued dialogue among educators. They shared that the success of school leaders was not only an individual practice, but an intentional act of connecting, communicating, and collaborating with other educators. When discussing a conversation between principal and superintendent, Principal One shared that the conversation had “Influence [on] how I conduct my job and the way I relate to my colleagues and the assistant principals I evaluate.” The power of the dialogue had an immediate impact on the leadership capacity of the principal, and in turn, staff and students.

Principal Two shared the benefits of open communication with their colleagues at leadership meetings,

talk[ing] openly with our admin colleagues about what we are dealing with at the moment and get feedback from my colleagues about how to approach the situation. There is always a reflective part of our meetings. Helps us open up and be more honest with one another. Helped me open up about the challenges I’ve faced in this position.

The principal also shared,

I have pretty regular access to another building principal, when we could find each other and find time to talk to each other. I also have really great access to my Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, so when I need support and ask for it, it’s usually readily available.

This immediate access to open dialogue with colleagues and their evaluator provided an open opportunity for ongoing support, direction and reflection.

Superintendents found the most beneficial elements of the principal evaluation process were the conversations about teaching and learning during the post conference, goal setting, and the summative conference. Principals identified the most beneficial aspects of the evaluation process were pre and post observations, reviewing the standards, the self-reflection document, individual meetings with the superintendent discussing leadership, and informal conversations throughout the year with their superintendent. Principal One shared the impact of dialogue around the work of their building leadership team stating, “Work with leadership team to address lowest areas on survey and saw improvement the following year.” By operating with the leadership team to address survey results, the team was able to positively impact student growth within the building. Principal One shared that professional learning around dialogue at leadership meetings include “...a book study together with the admin team...strengthen[ed] our leadership team.” Reflective superintendents benefitted from listening then building professional learning around what was being articulated by their principals, “I’ve seen them implement strategies that help teams to work together better and give better feedback.”

Superintendents and principals agreed that the goal setting conference at the start of the school year and the summative conference near the end of the school year were the two most common times evidence was shared. The consistency in these responses revealed strength in the conversations that took place during the goal setting and summative conference. Principal Two stated that, “[they] Would like more regular check-ins with the superintendent.” This statement revealed the value placed upon dialogue with their evaluator.

Dialogue and reflection were at the heart of growth according to Principal Two who shared,

my buildings and grounds supervisor has been awesome in helping me envision a little bit for my building and I think you're not really ever taught to think about your facilities in your principal training, so that was something he was super helpful with for me.

While there were benefits to working directly with the primary evaluator to receive feedback, the principal shared the value in dialogue with their district office colleagues who were also instrumental and supportive. Superintendent Two shared a reflection about a group of principals meetings in their district,

I think the fact that all of our meetings are learning meetings sends a message that we're a learning organization, and then hopefully they can learn from each other different ... We do model different protocols... we're hoping that it'll be a learning experience too, in terms of something that they can take back and replicate in their buildings if it fits their goals...

There was consistency among principals who participated frequent and quick informal observations scheduled throughout the year. Principal One shared that, "Anything to make the evaluation process more aligned with quick observations, more frequently that include claim, evidence, and impact. Recommend ten of these a year. More impactful and drive improvement and more responsive than two observations throughout the year." While the principals were consistent in their desire for frequent, quick and less formal feedback, Superintendent Two shared strategies they provided principals throughout the observation process in order to guide growth and learning,

I think it's also important for me to give them feedback on how they are perceived, broadly, whether it's just my perception, and then, lastly, I think I try to give them perspective of what I feel their building needs.

The survey revealed 74% of principals have been observed by their superintendent between four to eight years.

This indicated that the principals had experience with the evaluation system and a majority were not new to being observed. The survey also revealed 51% of the superintendents had been evaluating principals between six and twelve years. The data revealed a majority of the superintendents had experience in conducting principal evaluations prior to SB7. At the start of the year, there was consistency among superintendents and principals regarding superintendents' comments on each of the *Illinois Standards for School Leaders* growth targets. The survey revealed 90% of superintendents discussed two priority goals with the principal, while only 73% of principals responded that the conversation occurred. Variability in these responses revealed inconsistencies in practice. Further inconsistencies were revealed when comparing principals' and superintendents' responses. Only 48% of principals met with their superintendent within ten days of their observation, while 73% of superintendents stated this occurred. The inconsistency in reporting revealed a lack of adherence to the evaluation protocols. The value of meeting within ten school days is to ensure the observation details are shared while the observation is fresh in both minds. Any feedback that is observed and shared in the post-observation dialogue conversation can be reflected upon, acted upon, and improved in practice immediately. Delaying the dialogue between the superintendent and principal does not benefit the evaluation process. The survey

indicated that 60% of principals received written feedback within ten school days of the observation and further separated the two groups. Seventy-four percent of superintendents reported providing feedback within the ten day guideline.

Principal One shared a discussion with the superintendent “helped drive better school results.” The power of reflection and dialogue with the evaluator improved student outcomes. The same principal also shared that they “Want training on what to look for [during an observation of a teacher] ... during a parent/student conference over misbehavior and ... in an IEP meeting.” The principal recognized that these were not the usual places for a superintendent to observe leadership. They would have preferred feedback on how they were providing support, facilitating, and leading these meetings to best help teachers since this was a large part of their daily work.

Principal Two shared the impact of the evaluation process on their leadership stating conversations with the superintendent

Keep me centered on what my goals are and the path that I am taking. Good touch point to refocus my work and identify if what I’m doing applies to my goals. It was all impactful. Received positive feedback about strengths and what is going well. Throughout the year the superintendent will say “hey learning moment” in a very low key, casual conversation. He would follow that up with asking why I made that decision.

These reflective conversations between principals and superintendents are the essence of the principal evaluation tool. All three principals were consistent in sharing their desire for more consistent feedback from their superintendent to ensure they were making good decisions, celebrating success, and building a stronger rapport.

The state provides guidelines that are intended to be minimum standards for a principal evaluation. Each school district can enhance the evaluation process to meet their needs. Adding reflective conversations and informal observations are encouraged to support the leadership capacity of the building leaders. Principal One stated how it has impacted their support of teachers:

This approach has influenced how I approach my teachers to further their understanding of instructional practices since it is a non-threatening approach to reflect upon a decision that was made and to rethink the approach or impact it had on others including students and their learning.

This principal had grown and used the evaluation and reflective dialogue to change how they looked at teacher evaluations stating,

I use more questions to get things out of teachers. Trying to be a better listener and process what is being said. Being more reflective and thoughtful about how much to take on. Help me identify areas I really need to work

A principal evaluation tool that allows for this deep level of learning and reflection upon their leadership capacity is encouraging. Dialogue and reflection upon leadership skills is critical for growth. This principal shared that the informal feedback received from the superintendent was the most impactful experience of the evaluation process, “Instructionally the informal feedback has really impacted my work as an instructional leader. Those conversations I think are the most impactful. Just informal feedback because it applies to the day to day... natural interaction.” This feedback from Principal One was encouraging and provided helpful insight for future consideration of the principal evaluation instrument.

Superintendent One openly shared their thoughts about the evaluation timeline stating, “I would throw out the window.” I anticipated this along with negative feelings toward the principal evaluation process, but I was expecting it from a principal based on the results of the survey. To my surprise Superintendent One shared this reflection, “My biggest problem with evaluation is that it’s different than coaching, and you try to do both at the same time [combining the two] tends to just muddy the waters on all the rest of the conversation.” The superintendent continued to share the rationale behind their response,

I would much rather us stay focused on self-reflection, feedback, conversation, continuous improvement, than I would spend three hours on filling out forms [and] total up your sub-scores and give [principal] an average of seven, which equates to a three-point-something on the [rubric], and it’s worth 40% of your score.

It was evident that the superintendent was passionate about the benefits of reflection, feedback, and collaboration with their principals and not passionate about timelines, forms, and equations to determine a final summative rating for principals. They supported a more well-rounded approach to providing evidence based on conversation, data, feedback, reflection without requiring specific scores to be determined, and a final rating. They preferred the end result be “you’re hired or you’re fired.” Principal Three shared that the only part of the principal evaluation process they liked was, “My summative rating because it determines my future employment. The rest of the process, honestly, I feel like is a formality. It’s not really focused on my growth. To keep me employed for next year.”

Superintendent Two shared the value of conducting principal evaluations,

I can make decisions about how to effectively use my people when I know them better. I think that, in terms of some of our learning and teaching priorities, and when we develop our professional learning, and allocating resources, I think I learn, by seeing what they're wrestling with, where we need to invest in professional learning for our teachers. So I think that that drives some decision-making.

The superintendent also shared,

[in their experience as a principal evaluator]

I think I've gotten a little bit better at being able to have these conversations with people every time I do it. I mean, I know for a fact that when I first started I wasn't very good at it, but I think I am better at it now.

Finally, Superintendent Two shared,

when I share feedback with people and I see how they respond to feedback, or when I formulate that feedback and start to deepen my understanding of what their needs are... it just impacts my decision-making about trying to make sure we're doing the best we can to keep moving the organization forward.

The superintendent recognized that they too were learning and growing in their feedback and reflection skills to help sharpen principals. With practice, experience and reflection they are growing as a result of implementing the principal evaluation process.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

Study Insight

The fast-paced reform initiatives and push to link principal evaluations to student achievement compelled me to study the effectiveness of the new evaluation model in Illinois. This research examined how superintendents evaluate their K-8 Illinois principals under the new law Senate Bill Seven. The purpose of this study was to determine how closely superintendents follow the new laws under Senate Bill Seven when evaluating principals and how professional development is used to support principals in building their leadership capacity. Retaining effective principals requires four essential elements: principal standards, high-quality training, selective hiring, and a combination of solid on the job support and performance evaluation (Mendels, 2012). All principals should be evaluated properly and supported in their professional development. This begins with ensuring that the evaluation tools are being implemented with fidelity. An effective principal evaluation system should be comprehensive, feasible, accurate, fair, useful, include multiple measures of impact on student achievement, and include multiple stakeholders' feedback (Clifford et al., 2014). Sara Shelton writes that key evaluation elements and considerations for principal evaluations include: the purpose of evaluation, what should be evaluated, multiple measures of performance, assigned values of performance, clear process, clear selection, and specific

training and support for evaluators (Evaluating School Principals, 2013). This research examined the experiences of K-8 principals in Illinois using a mixed-methods approach consisting of superintendent and principal surveys and in-person interviews of three principals and two superintendents.

Discussion of the Results

The principal evaluation process involves multiple steps including direct observations, opportunities for reflection, and direct feedback from the evaluator. According to principals' perceptions, success of the evaluation process relies on frequent feedback. Superintendents need to provide communication consistently throughout the year to effectively support principal growth and development. Superintendents are responsible for conducting the observations and implementing the evaluation process with fidelity. The evaluation process should provide principals with specific opportunities for growth. This is a powerful responsibility of the superintendent as the principal has significant influence on school community. Simply implementing the requirements of Senate Bill Seven is not enough to significantly impact principal leadership capacity. Principals must be provided with frequent feedback on their leadership. Superintendents are charged with embedding ongoing professional development to not only influence principal leadership, but to successfully impact the entire organization.

The purpose of principal evaluations must be to identify areas of strength and, most importantly, growth. The superintendent is charged with providing feedback to guide professional growth and help to improve principal performance while raising student achievement (Association of California School Administrators, 2010). It is

critical that superintendents evaluate principals and provide specific feedback. Evaluations of principals should stimulate and guide school leaders' professional development. The evaluation protocols should be aligned with school and student outcomes. When evaluations are not linked to the performance standards, conducted with fidelity, or completed in a timely manner, principals are left wondering if evaluations are necessary or if they serve to support their leadership development. My desire as a school leader is to support principals in their leadership capacity by seeking to understand the lived experience of principal evaluations as a result of Senate Bill Seven. These surveys and interviews made it possible to understand the perceptions of superintendents and principals in Illinois, characteristics of the evaluation process, feedback provided to principals, and the impact on current leadership practices.

According to a National Association of Secondary School Principals study, *Rethinking Principal Evaluation: A New Paradigm Informed by Research and Practice* (2010), "...how principal evaluations are conducted may be even more important than the content of what the evaluations contain." With this in mind, I hoped to understand how the evaluations of principals were being conducted in Illinois. This study was unique to Illinois and the lived experiences of superintendents implementing the principal evaluation process. This mixed methodology approach was utilized because of the strengths the quantitative and qualitative data revealed, allowing me to combine statistical trends and lived experiences (Creswell, 2014).

Senate Bill Seven places a heavy focus on standardizing the principal evaluation. Evaluating the surveys and analyzing the interviews showed that superintendents are evaluating principals with the new tools provided by the state. However, a lack of

professional development is being targeted to support the continued growth of principals. It is clear that superintendents are aware of the laws required by Senate Bill Seven with regards to evaluating principals. The data does not support that all superintendents are meeting the requirements of Senate Bill Seven and implementing the evaluation process with fidelity. Analysis of the survey data revealed that superintendents are using the ISLLC standards. These standards were modified using *Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders* to measure principal leadership and implement the student growth component.

The survey data and interviews revealed a lack of professional development in two major areas. The first area where professional development was lacking was training superintendents in how to conduct thorough principal evaluations beyond state requirements. The second area where professional development was lacking was training superintendents on how to provide principals with ongoing professional development. The findings in the research may be unique to Illinois, but the results will offer insight to other superintendents and principals who engage in the evaluation process together.

Research Question 1

The surveys collected and the interviews conducted were enlightening on the practice of superintendents and principals in Illinois. Thirty percent of principals did not complete the requirements of conducting two observations. There were obvious outcomes that presented themselves in this study. One outcome was the principal evaluation process not being implemented with fidelity. This is concerning.

To capture the perception of Illinois principals and superintendents, the survey gathered specific answers from current school leaders. The in-person interviews of three

principals and two superintendents were extremely beneficial to the research. Their lived experiences combined with the survey data created a clear picture of the current perceptions among school leaders implementing principal evaluations. All five interviews took place in the office of each school leader and each identified strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation process from their experiences. Principals and superintendents identified aspects of the process they felt were most crucial. Most identified the reflection and conversation with their colleagues as the greatest benefit.

Among the varied definitions in the educational literature, there are three agreed-upon pieces of an educational principal evaluation: “(a) the gathering and analysis of data (b) the use of judgment based on appropriate and defined criteria, and (c) the making of decisions with a view toward action” (Toler, 2006). Principals and superintendents did not share specific areas of growth targeted after the observations. Principals did not identify superintendents’ recommendations for growth after an observation. Time was spent discussing strengths witnessed during the observation.

The timeline is important to the completion of the observations and feedback. However, the evidence indicated that not all superintendents were conducting the observations on time. This challenge was identified as a concern by two principals and one superintendent. Both districts participated in face-to-face interviews and followed the approved Illinois requirements for principal evaluations. Districts where superintendents did not follow protocol limited principals’ abilities to make timely leadership changes. The survey of principals revealed 23% were not observed twice by February 1st which is the state requirement. Similarly, 17% of the superintendents admitted they did not meet the state requirement of two principal observations before

February 1st. Principals are professionals and need to take ownership if their superintendent is not following the protocol of giving feedback, arranging face-to-face meetings, or following the timeline to meet the state requirements which are imperative to growth and development.

The evidence collected revealed that the evaluation process was perceived to be beneficial to principals and was supported by two principals in the interview. The evidence indicated that the process was collaborative and benefited their leadership capacity. Research indicates that before SB7, principal evaluations did not correlate directly with the given evaluation standards raising implementation fidelity concerns (Goldring et al., 2009; Heck & Marcoulides, 1996). Districts that regularly assess the performance of newly hired principals and provide them with specific ongoing professional development retain their leaders over time. Superintendents need to be more purposeful in their observations. Principals need to be more direct in asking for specific areas of feedback. Identifying specific areas with available data and feedback will help enhance the process and keep the observations focused on measurable growth.

The evidence indicated that superintendents were intentional in implementing the essential elements of evaluation including the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation. The research revealed that principals were positively impacted by conversations and reflections provided during the evaluation process. The research revealed that the requirements recommended by the state were what superintendents used as the standard. The overwhelming evidence revealed that principals did not benefit nor did they prefer to wait until the end of the school year for input and feedback regarding their leadership. Evidence suggests that to have a valuable impact on the current school

year, feedback should be provided more often. The principals shared a desire to use the feedback from the observations to influence the current school year. Unfortunately, the current process of evaluating principals and implementation does not allow for this practice to occur with regularity. The evidence suggests that principals need to request more opportunities for feedback. Twenty-three percent of principals were not observed twice during the school year. These principals were either not observed or only received one observation for the entire school year. This is simply not acceptable.

The evidence suggested that more needs to be done to train principals on the partnership aspects of their evaluation. None of the principals asked for additional observations or feedback from the superintendent. When asked if principals would like more feedback, the response was overwhelmingly positive yet the evidence suggested that principals were not seeking the additional feedback from their supervisor. Principals need to actively seek more frequent feedback from their superintendent. Principals should also be proactive in selecting the observation type.

Principals shared that observations were conducted in large group settings such as whole staff meetings, large group leadership meetings, grade-level meetings, and parent meetings. These opportunities did not lend themselves to observing the critical one-on-one interactions between principal and teacher, principal and parent, or principal and colleagues. These types of observations are critical in building meaningful relationships with their stakeholders. Evidence suggests that more careful consideration needs to be given to the selection of observations. Leaders must pursue all realms of their work asking how will this help our students excel as learners since district performance evaluation practices are inconsistent and provide little meaningful feedback to improve

leadership practice (Clifford et al., 2012; NPBEA, 2015). Principals should survey stakeholders to obtain more feedback.

Evidence indicates that student data on principal evaluations is not equitable in its use. With guidance, each district may select different pieces of data that meet requirements. They may decide the percentage that the student data makes up of the overall evaluation. Evidence indicates that the purposeful use of student data is not being implemented. If student data is going to be used as a component of the principal evaluation, principals should be observed in some capacity attempting to make a positive impact on the student scores. Evidence suggests that principals would like this approach, however, superintendents are not connecting their observations to student data.

Superintendents shared that they do not feel the timelines are necessary and would rather have open dialogue conversations with the principals. I believe the dates are necessary to ensure the evaluation takes place. However, I would like to see more robust measures taken to provide principals with feedback, direction, and professional development. The state requirement for principal evaluations focuses on compliance. The interview evidence indicated that the purpose of implementing the principal evaluation was to complete the evaluation and meet the compliance requirements. Time spent observing, recording evidence, and sharing feedback with principals is intended to provide feedback on specific areas of their leadership practice and rate the feedback according to the rubric. The ISLLC standards serve as the foundation for an aligned system that prepares, licenses, develops, supports, and evaluates principals effectively (CCSSO, 2015). The goal is to identify areas of strength and improvement, but what is currently being practiced is compliance with the law.

A high number of principals and superintendents responded to the survey, which indicates leader interest in perceptions of principal evaluations. All who participated in the interviews were familiar with the *Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders* and the student growth component of the evaluation. During the interviews, different standards were not referenced as being a challenge. How does one identify areas of growth if they are not using the performance standards with fidelity? Ensuring that those who have the responsibility of evaluating our principals are prepared to evaluate and develop our principals is critical.

Superintendents are aware of the standards. When asked to elaborate on standards principals could address in order to improve leadership, superintendents were unable to identify specific standards common among the principals they represent. Potential barriers to implementing different components of the evaluation are the myriad of responsibilities being asked of superintendents. To add principal evaluations to their plate is taxing. Some districts do utilize assistant superintendents to conduct principal evaluations. This brings implementation inconsistencies to the evaluations. It also brings opportunities for multiple principal evaluators to share strategies, as identified in the interview of one superintendent.

Another challenge to the implementation of the principal evaluation is the incorporation of principal goals. Each goal is individually written and could have a significant impact on the overall performance of the principal. While it is good practice to add individual goals, they create a barrier to the successful implementation of the evaluation rubric. The goals are inconsistent in complexity from principal to principal with no rubric to base the success. The value of using the ISLLC standards is

consistency when comparing principal leadership against agreed-upon standards of quality school leaders.

Research Question 2

The principal evaluation process in Illinois is designed to provide feedback to principals and help them identify their level of leadership in each of the identified standards. The goal of identifying their level of leadership in each standard is to help them work toward growth in the identified areas. The overall goal is to improve their leadership capacity through professional development. All three principals interviewed concluded that they were interested in more professional learning to increase their leadership capacity. It can also be concluded from the two superintendent interviews that they believe in the positive impact of the evaluation process and providing direct feedback to principals. The evaluation process has identified standards and levels of achievement toward meeting these standards. It does not have a roadmap for providing professional development in the areas where principals may be underperforming. Leithwood and Louis (2004) emphasize that the hiring, developing, and evaluating of school leaders is essential for school achievement. The practices of hiring and evaluating principals are working. What is lacking is the development of school leaders after they are hired. Superintendents are performing the evaluations and identifying areas of improvement, yet there is no reliable evidence showing that professional development is provided to principals.

The high turnover rate of educational leaders nationwide points to the complexities, responsibilities, and relentless pressures of the job. Such turnover derails improvement efforts necessary for student learning (NPBEA, 2015). Principals who are

not receiving the necessary growth and support are leaving the position. This causes the school district to spend more resources hiring another principal. Principals throughout Illinois attend Administrator Academy courses. Courses are self-selected and required each year. With the data that exists in the hands of the superintendents, and the available courses through Illinois, principals could be directed to take specific courses linked to the areas where there is room for growth. If principals are mandated to attend specific courses that match their areas of need this would enhance growth opportunities and further link the professional development to the identified principal leadership standards. The Administrator Academy courses require a plan of action in identifying how principals are going to use their newly-acquired learning. Illinois, however, has not provided an avenue for further reflection, updating, or monitoring implementation of what is learned. The accountability structure is absent and ineffectively focuses on compliance with the law and not the growth of the leader.

In the plan, principals are expected to identify specific areas tied to leadership standards. They are not expected to update stakeholders on growth or new learnings used to impact student achievement or teacher instruction. Taking additional courses in areas of growth could also be considered. PERA affirms that current evaluation systems are unable to positively differentiate between effective and ineffective principals. The new evaluation system for principals must be reliable, contribute to improved student achievement outcomes, and show improved staff development (Illinois General Assembly, 2010). The evaluation system is being implemented, but specific areas of professional development outside the required Administrator Academy courses are not

being offered. The current approach does not show improved professional development for principals.

Realizing the potential of principal evaluation as a strategy for strengthening leadership and improving schools requires systemic change to ensure that evaluation systems support valid performance results and that principals have a clear path to improve their performance and access to resources that strengthen their leadership. (NASSP, 2010)

Principals wanted more opportunities to learn from their superintendent and colleagues. They wanted opportunities to reflect upon their practice of leadership with colleagues, but were unable to identify specific areas of need. Principals did not view their evaluation document as a tool for identifying specific areas of growth. When asked what areas they were interested in learning more about, they all wanted strategies for efficiency.

Principals view their evaluation as “having limited value for feedback, professional development, or accountability to school improvement” (Portin, Feldman, & Knapp, 2011). If principals do not recognize links between the evaluation process and professional development, the practice needs change. Superintendents must enhance the principal evaluation process through direct and clear pathways to connect principals with professional learning opportunities. An onsite coaching model is necessary to support principals directly in their building. A leadership coach provided to superintendents can support their work dedicating their support toward principal leadership practices. It is apparent that professional development is not being targeted for principals. However, the

impact of the principal on student achievement is too great not to invest in strengthening the skills of principals.

School districts should personalize their professional development, increase the number of observations, and increase feedback opportunities for superintendents and principals to engage in professional development. The current evaluation process provides principals with feedback after two observations and the summative evaluation. A significant downside to using the requirements for principal evaluations is that it leaves little opportunity for remediation or professional development during the school year (Condon & Clifford, 2009, p. 1). Differing assessment approaches should be used to determine principal effectiveness including role-based, outcome-based, and structure-based formats (Catano & Strong, 2006). Districts that use the state standards need to consider supports for principals.

Implications on Principal Leadership

The implementation of SB7 has brought more attention to the use of the leadership standards for school leaders. Using a universal set of standards to define principal leadership is a great beginning to support principals. With guidance, principals can use the rubric to identify specific areas of growth and gear their professional development into specific areas on the rubric. Superintendents are provided with a state model evaluation system that includes the use of student growth measures. Districts did not enhance the state model, according to data. Instead, they used the state model without modifying items such as the percentage of student growth impacting the overall summative, conducting additional observations or requiring multiple evaluators.

The principal evaluation process is central in identifying the areas of growth for leaders and the school. The development of quality evaluation procedures and processes are new and lack the necessary examination (Kearney & Sanders, 2011, p. 27). I realize that in my current role as an assistant superintendent I can help support principals even though I am not serving as their direct supervisor. I can support their professional development, conduct additional observations, and continue to further analyze their student growth for ways to support their school community. Adding more frequent feedback does not have to rest on the superintendent. It was clear that deadlines were not always followed. Either the focus was not important, presumably because of too many superintendent responsibilities, or there was no accountability. Finding ways to support the implementation of the principal evaluation with fidelity is critical to the success of the process and impact on student achievement.

As superintendents continue to explore different ways to evaluate and support principals in their leadership capacity. It will be important to seek additional stakeholders in the process. The importance of feedback cannot be overstated or overlooked. Principals need more frequent opportunities for feedback and a structure to include other stakeholders. Superintendents should network with stakeholders. Stakeholders such as assistant superintendents, parent-teacher organization leaders, and teacher leaders within the school can provide observational feedback and speak directly to principal impact.

Highly effective leaders emphasize the value of research-based strategies, encourage teacher collaboration, and provide more time for teacher planning (Wallace Foundation, 2012). Providing teachers with the opportunity to give feedback is a natural

step in the process. When comparing principal and teacher evaluation processes, I am struck by the similarities in practice. It seems intentional that we are leaving out critical members from providing feedback. For example, when observing and evaluating teachers, the evaluation process does not include student voice just like the principal evaluation.

Educational administration programs are graduating an increasing number of certified school leaders on their academic performance rather than a comprehensive assessment of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to successfully lead schools (NPBEA, 2001). To enhance the principal evaluation process, I suggest changes to support superintendents in the implementation and design of providing professional development to principals. A change to consider is the need to train superintendents on how to support principals. Training on specific areas of the rubric with webinars can help principals go from good to great. Targeting specific principal needs is the responsibility of the superintendent and the rubric should be used to identify the supports necessary.

Principals need assistance in analyzing all the data to support their school community including the state testing information, Five Essential Survey, and any other data collected. Principals need to focus on student data and measure time spent on instructional leadership with teachers. A coach is recommended to provide direct one-on-one guidance and build a structure that allows the superintendent time to conduct the evaluation with fidelity each year. Creating a common vision for the school community and providing direct training for the superintendent is necessary to support principal leadership. Superintendents are not provided with yearly training on how to conduct principal evaluations. Principals are the recipients of this lackluster process.

Developing principals is not a primary role of the superintendent however, SB7 is providing some needed direction. Growth in principal evaluation mindset is evident from the implementation of SB7 with its focus on training and accountability. Although not all superintendents implemented this process with fidelity, they were aware of the need to conduct evaluations and provide feedback to principals regarding their performance based on standards. The fact that principals received feedback is a positive step. The superintendents shared that they do engage their colleagues in conversation about how best to support their principals. This is the time to develop a training plan for impacting principal leadership. Conducting evaluations may be one component of the process, but they need to focus on professional development for principal leadership practices. If we expect principals to lead the school culture and build teaching capacity then we need to do the same for our superintendents through professional development. Committing to professional development for superintendents will enhance principal leadership capacity.

Implications for Policy

Each observation conducted by a superintendent should focus on using data. This practice would greatly enhance the observation experience. Whether observing principals delivering professional development to teachers, leading a staff meeting, engaging with a team of teachers around student data, or observing the principal working with parents, a superintendent can use data to directly support the reason for the observation rather than just meeting a state requirement. Superintendents should be required to specifically identify rubric language to be observed and provide feedback based on data collected. Data should support growth. Linking future observations of

principals to data previously collected would enhance the observation focus. The data increases awareness of school values and how the principal can affect change.

More stakeholders need to be included in the evaluation process of principals. Including more stakeholders in the overall support of principals will enhance the process, add more data, and bring the whole community into the growth of the principal and school.

Training ensures superintendents are qualified to observe and provide feedback to principals. Monitoring the effectiveness of the evaluation needs to be enhanced. When an evaluation tool is inconsistently administered, the data collected may be unreliable. The superintendent may add to the evaluation process and include other opportunities for supporting principals with more evidence of their leadership capacity. Holding superintendents accountable for implementing principal evaluations is a critical component necessary to ensure our principals are getting the right support to help all students in their community.

Issues for Further Study

The research conducted on superintendents' perceptions regarding the implementation of principal evaluations highlighted other areas of continued exploration. District leaders are not implementing the evaluations with fidelity. Therefore, research is needed to identify if there is a link between a district that implements the principal evaluation instruments with fidelity and student achievement. Another study could try to connect teacher retention with principal evaluations implemented with fidelity. Another area to investigate is summative ratings and their effect on longevity in positions.

Principals must take courses to maintain their certification as school leaders. Research should be conducted to identify how the Administrator Academy courses are selected and what superintendents and principals are interested in improving. Course offerings should be enhanced to support school leaders. Further research on courses taken and their impact on student achievement would be beneficial.

Analysis of the actual documents used in the principal evaluation would be interesting research. Analyzing the most frequent components of the rubric where feedback is provided compared to components where no feedback is provided would be an interesting study. Further research of the evaluation documents could also reveal what evidence is used to determine the principal evaluation. Analyzing what was observed and linking it to the rubric would help tighten focus and find neglected areas in the observations and feedback. Researching the professional development programs that principals attend and the impact on principal leadership capacity may help determine the course's value.

Learning how additional stakeholders can enhance the principal evaluation process would be an interesting study. Another area of further research is identifying the impact of the principal on the community and student learning. This could be accomplished by collecting and analyzing data linked to the principals direct impact on the community and student learning. The Five Essential data could be analyzed to understand the principal's impact on teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Limitations

A limitation of the research is the total number of interviews completed for the second portion of the study. Including more district and building leaders in the interview portion of the study would provide more evidence to support findings.

Another limitation of the study is the lack of evidence collected on the professional development for principals. When asked the open-ended survey questions, superintendents and principals did not detail professional development they received toward the successful implementation of the evaluation tool. The interviews did further support the lack of professional development being offered to district and building leaders.

The length of the standards and complexity of the rubric is another limitation. The research could have focused on one specific area of the rubric standards and its impact on the principal evaluation process, instead of all six. Future studies should identify standards that have the most impact on principal leaders to limit the scope of subsequent evaluations.

While the research conducted did have limitations, it was successful in revealing perceptions of principals and superintendents surrounding the evaluation process. Another shift will be necessary to move from an era of compliance in evaluation standards to an era of effectiveness using new standards for demonstrating growth. Evaluating principal leadership will remain challenging because the role of the principal is vast, but principals are hungry to learn and make long lasting effective impacts on their school communities.

APPENDIX A

EMAIL PART ONE OF RESEARCH

Dear [Participant],

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research study being conducted by Brian A. Kaye, a Doctoral student at Loyola University Chicago under the supervision of Dr. Leanne Kallemeyn, a faculty member in the School of Education.

If you decide to participate you will be asked to complete the first section of the study that is an online survey. The research will focus on superintendents who conduct evaluations of principals. This section is designed to gather data about the implementation and procedures of the principal evaluation process, implementation, and documentation. Should you be deemed eligible for the full study, you will be asked to consent to a 60 minute in-person interview. All of your answers will be used for a scholarly purpose and will be kept completely confidential and anonymous by the researcher.

At this time, I would like to invite you to complete the Principal Evaluation Survey. In order to complete the survey, you will need to click on the LINK located in the email (Subject: Principal Evaluation Survey - B. Kaye Research Study).

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Brian A. Kaye
Doctoral Student - Loyola University of Chicago

Enclosure:
Consent Letter for Participation in Research

APPENDIX B
CONSENT SCRIPT SURVEY

Dear Colleague,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Administration and Supervision program at Loyola University, seeking your participation in my research project. For my dissertation, I am examining Illinois school leaders perceptions on the impact of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) on the evaluation of school leaders.

You have been selected to participate in this survey because you are a principal or superintendent who has been or will be evaluated based on the new evaluation policies in PERA. There are approximately 2200 elementary and middle-level principals and approximately 550 superintendents serving in K-8 school districts in Illinois who will receive this online survey requesting participation.

In addition, your school having some configuration of grades K-8, was mandated to participate in the state and district-wide student growth assessment. The results of the study may benefit you professionally by providing relevant information on the evaluation process of principals throughout Illinois.

Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, and you may choose to discontinue at any time by clicking on the exit button. To access the survey, please click on the links below. To ensure confidentiality, a unique and secure link has been created for you. No specific individual, school or district will be identified in my research. The results of the survey will be reported in summary format only, and there will not be any adverse effects or risks to you for participating in this study.

Survey completion time should be approximately 20 minutes. Please submit the finished survey by August 1, 2018. Your assistance in this research is greatly appreciated.

One question in the survey invites participants to volunteer for part-two of the research involving an in-person interview. Six participants will be selected for part two of the research and will be determined by emerging trends in the perception category of the online survey. If more participants volunteer than needed the researcher will email all who were not selected and thank them for their willingness to participate. The researcher will seek to interview stakeholders (principals and superintendents) at each end of the extreme, including those who report that the evaluation process is going well and those who report that the process is not working well. Emails will be sent to those who are selected to select an agreed upon a location that is most convenient for the interviewee.

Participants who are selected for the in-person interview will receive a \$25.00 gift card even if they choose not to answer specific questions during the interview.

This study has met the approval of my dissertation committee and the Loyola Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at bkaye@luc.edu. If you would like to speak with someone other than the researcher, you may contact Dr. Leanne Kallemeyn and lkallemeyn@luc.edu, the Loyola Institutional Review Board at irb@luc.edu, or the Assistant Director for Research Compliance 773.508.2689.

The act of completing this survey acknowledges consent in participating in the research. Thank you in advance for participating and providing your time and input to this study.

Sincerely,

Brian Kaye

Doctoral Student - Loyola University of Chicago

CLICK ON THIS LINK TO TAKE THE SURVEY:

Principal Survey

Superintendent Survey

OR COPY AND PASTE THE URL INTO YOUR INTERNET BROWSER:

Principal Survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NNJXPVR>

Superintendent Survey - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NNXNN7B>

APPENDIX C

EMAIL REMINDER PARTICIPATION LETTER AND SURVEY

Dear Colleague,

My name is Brian Kaye, a doctoral student in the Administration and Supervision Leadership Program and Loyola University. Approximately two weeks ago, I emailed you a survey requesting participation in my study. As I indicated in my invitation, your contribution is vital to ensure that there is sufficient information to make the results meaningful. This information may be useful to you, as well as to other school leaders interested in principal evaluations.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration to participate in this doctoral study. Please consider taking 20 minutes to complete the survey. I am grateful for your assistance in gathering additional information for the study.

For your convenience I have included the link to the survey. Please click on the link below to complete the survey by August 1, 2018.

Sincerely,

Brian Kaye

Doctoral Student - Loyola University of Chicago

CLICK ON THIS LINK TO TAKE THE SURVEY:

Principal Survey

Superintendent Survey

OR COPY AND PASTE THE URL INTO YOUR INTERNET BROWSER:

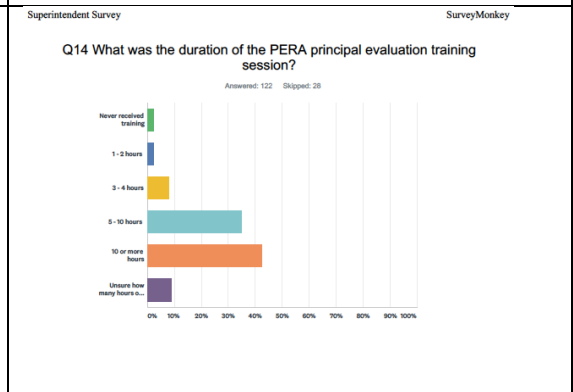
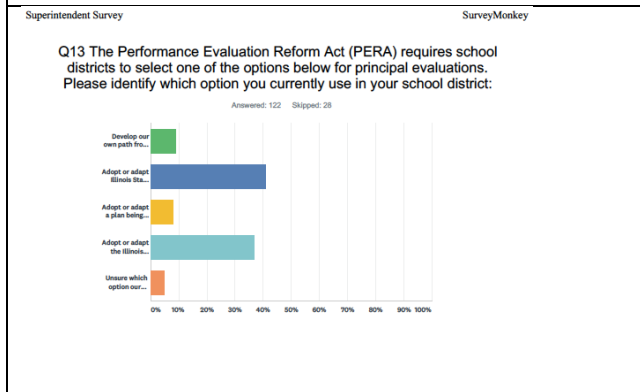
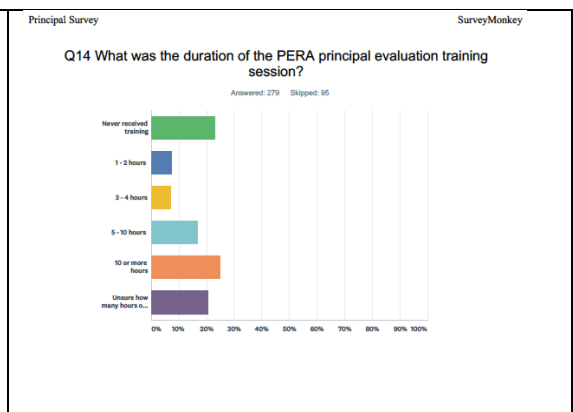
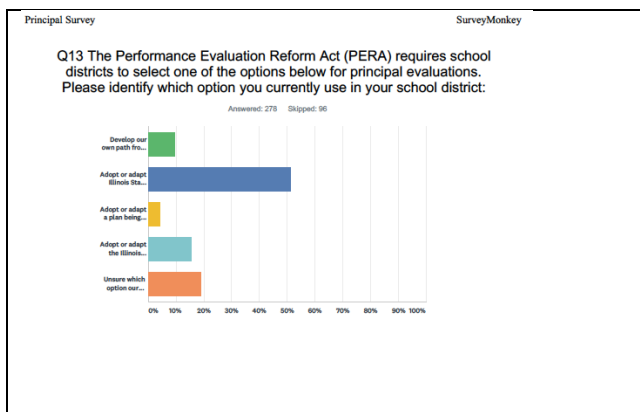
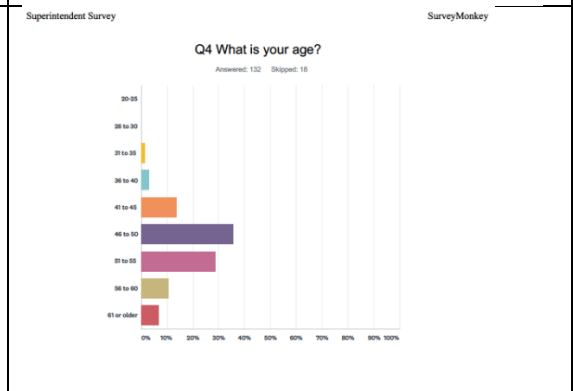
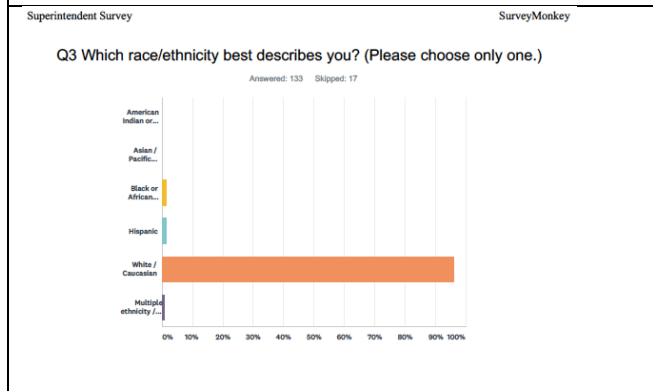
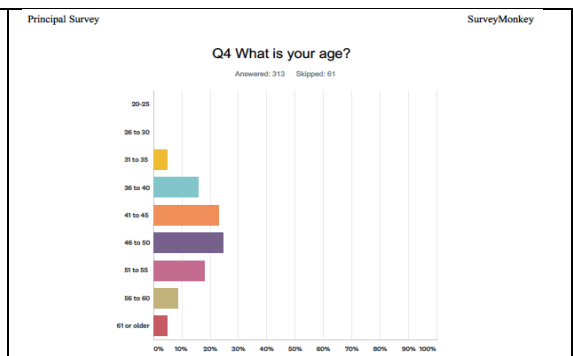
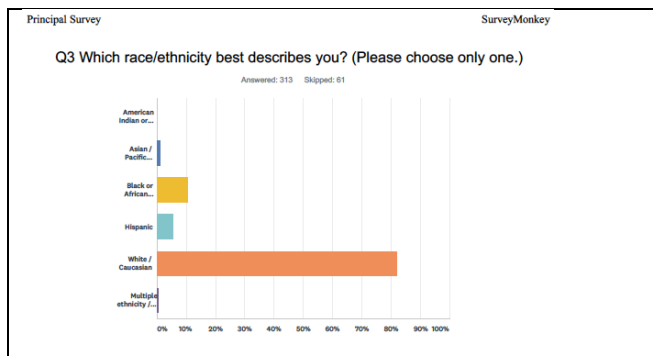
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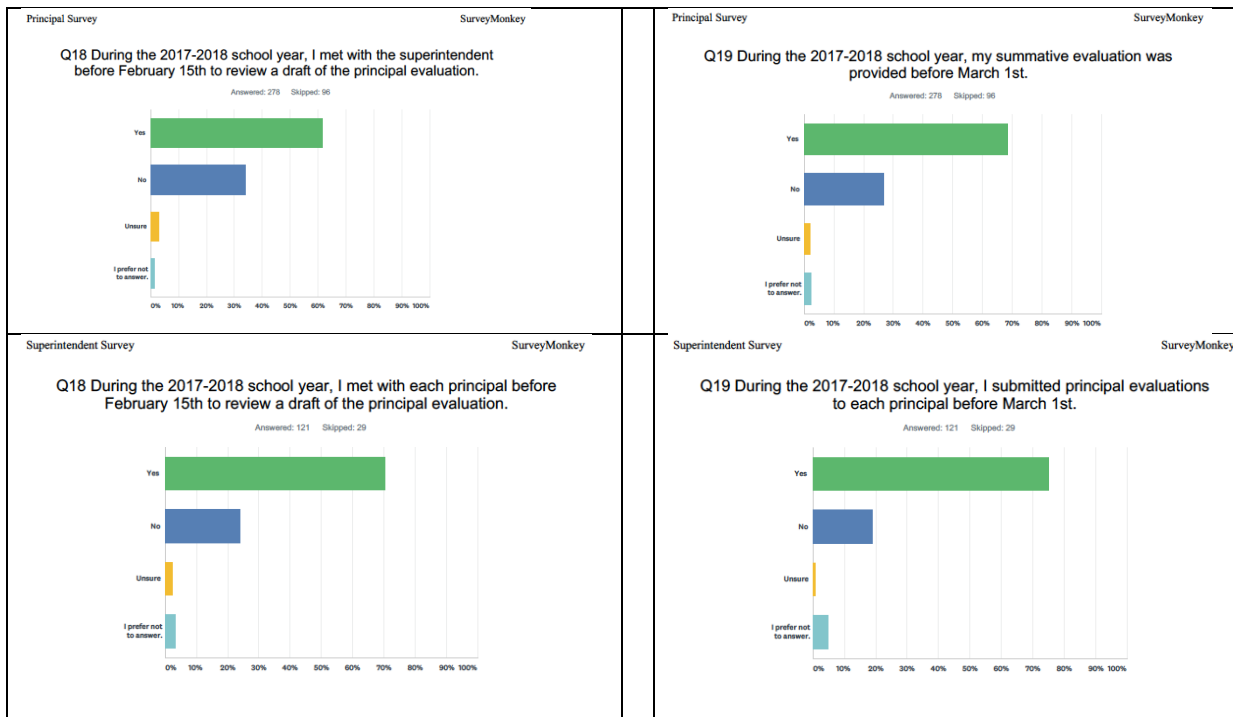
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APPENDIX D
SUPERINTENDENT AND PRINCIPAL ONLINE SURVEY

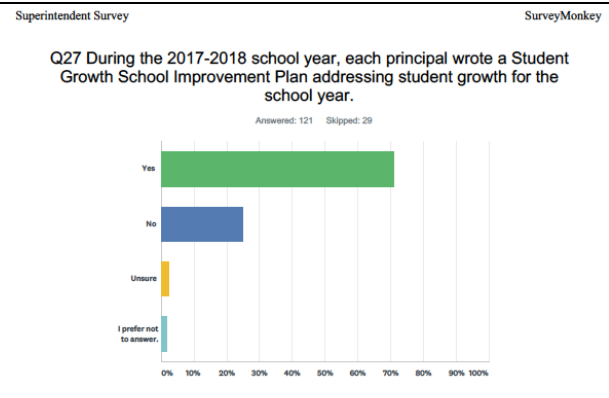
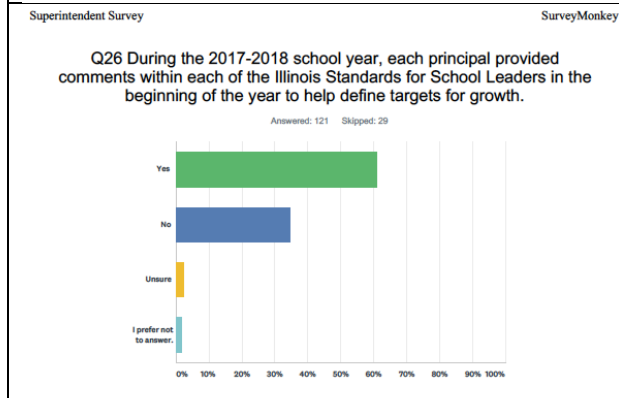
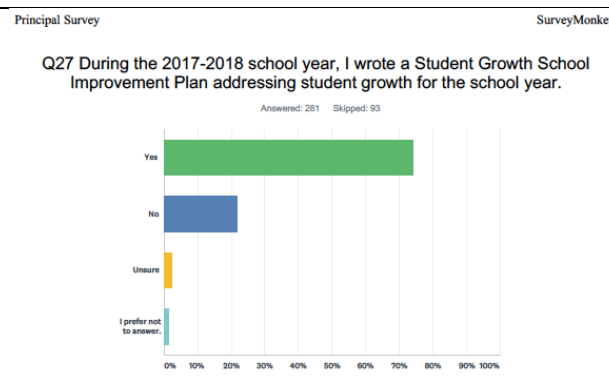
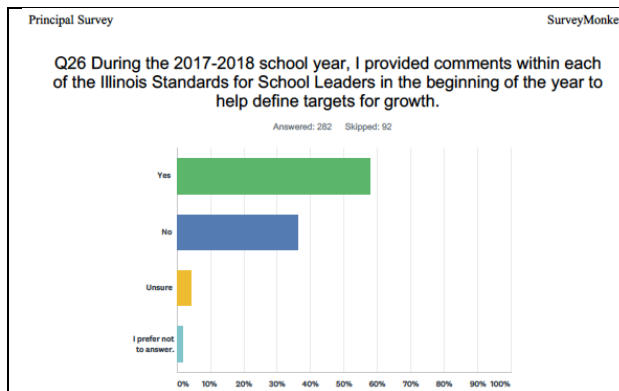
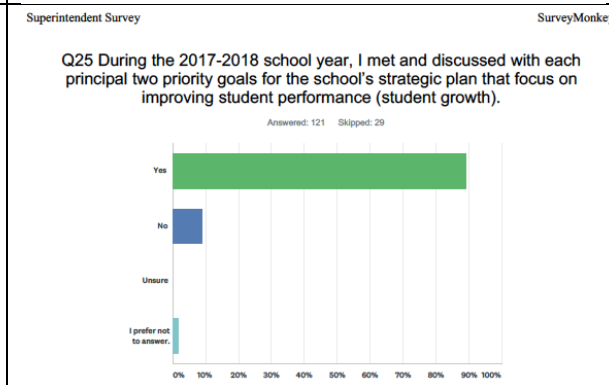
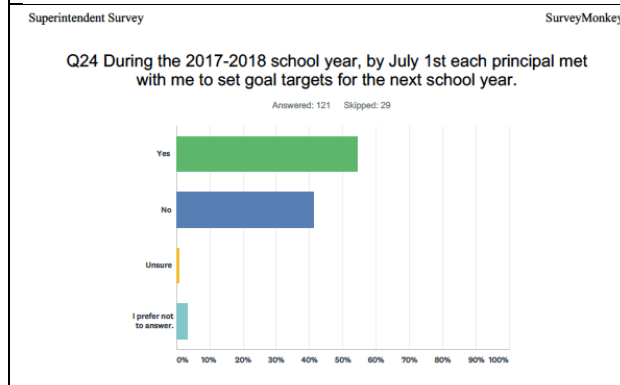
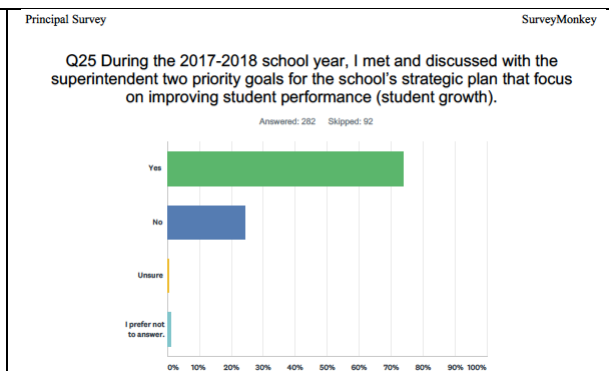
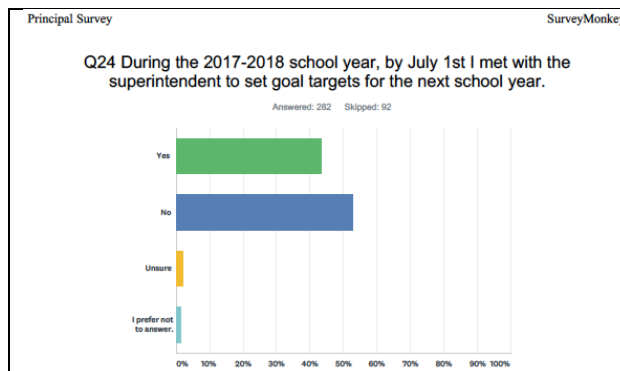
SUPERINTENDENT AND PRINCIPAL ONLINE SURVEY

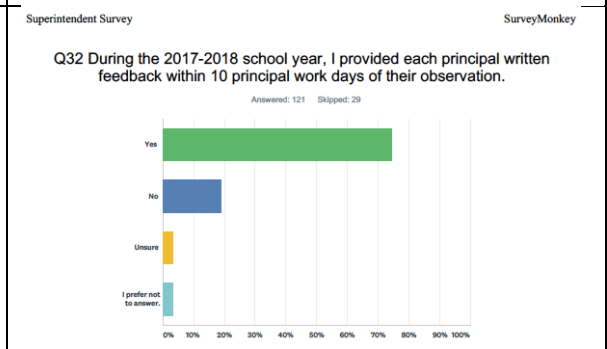
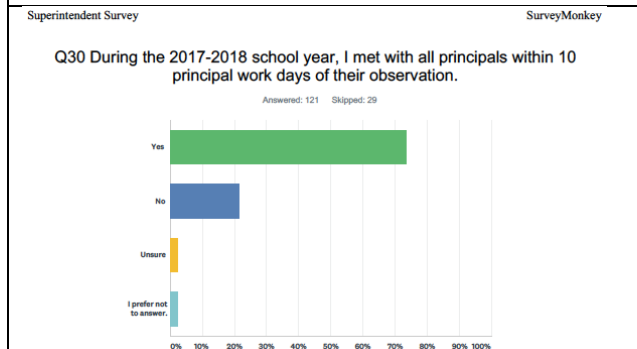
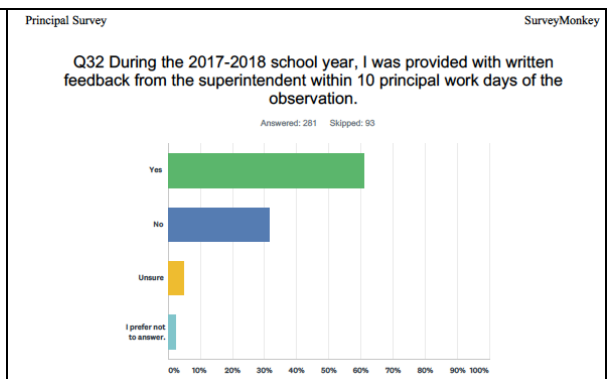
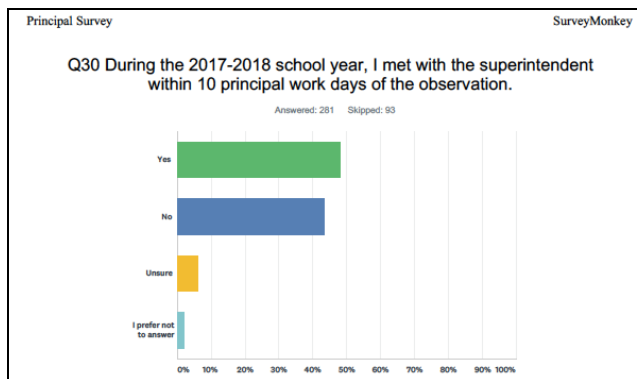
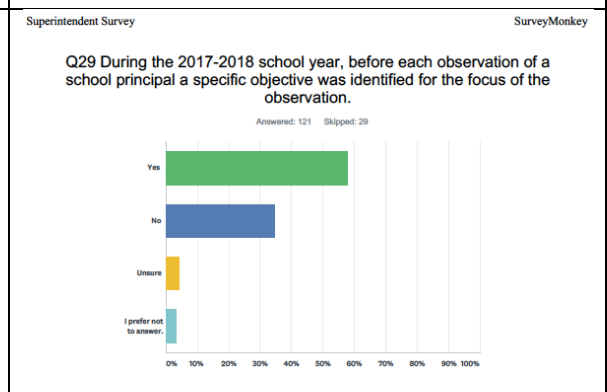
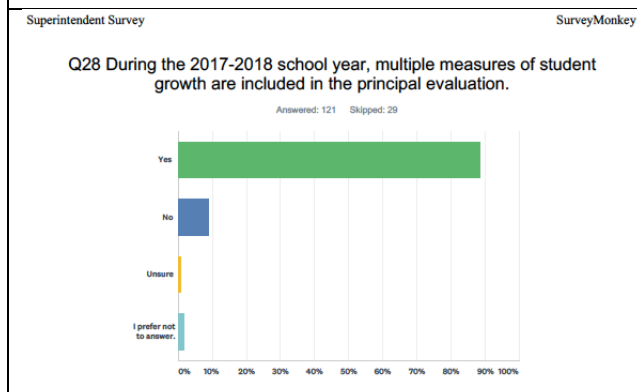
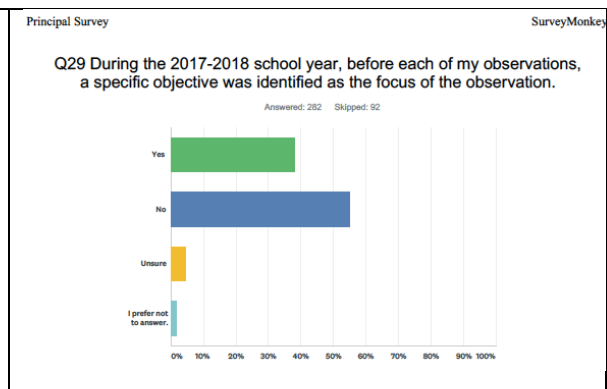
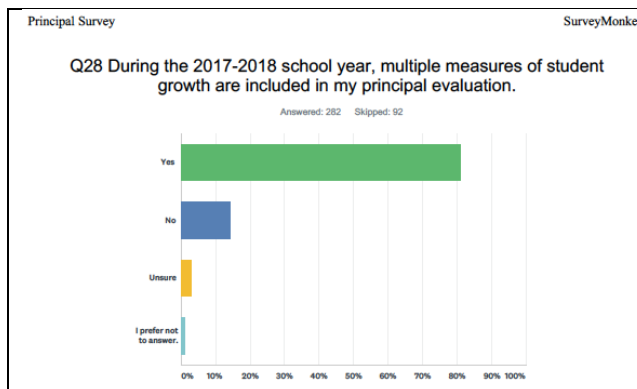
Participation in this survey is voluntary and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The purpose of this study is examining Illinois school leaders perceptions on the impact of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) on the evaluation of school leaders. There are no right or wrong answers and all information will be confidential. The study will assist current and future superintendents with successfully implementing the principal evaluation components effectively. Please answer each question with a true reflection of your thoughts and beliefs regarding the topics below.

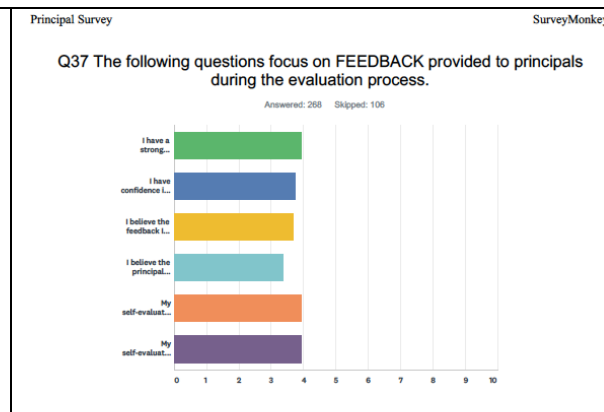
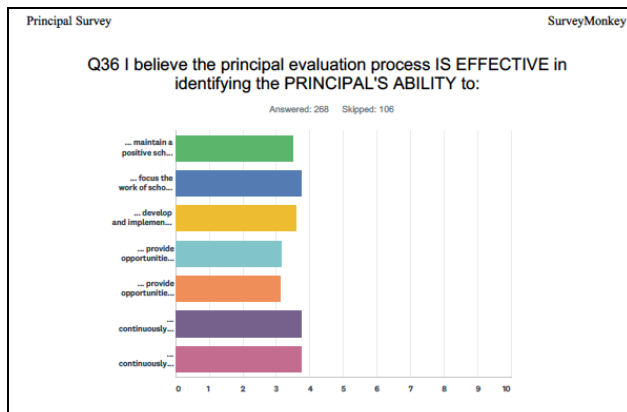
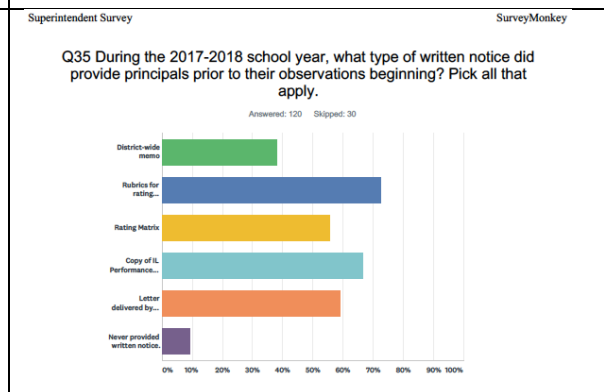
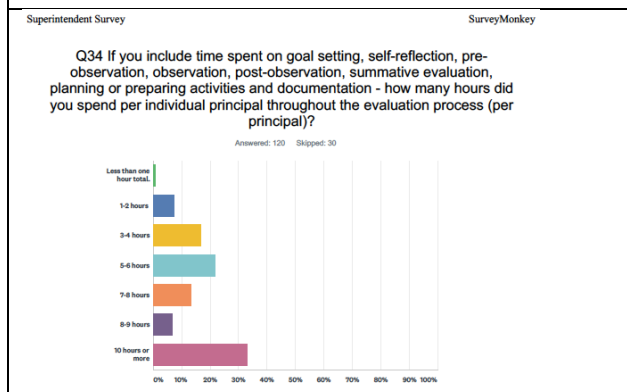
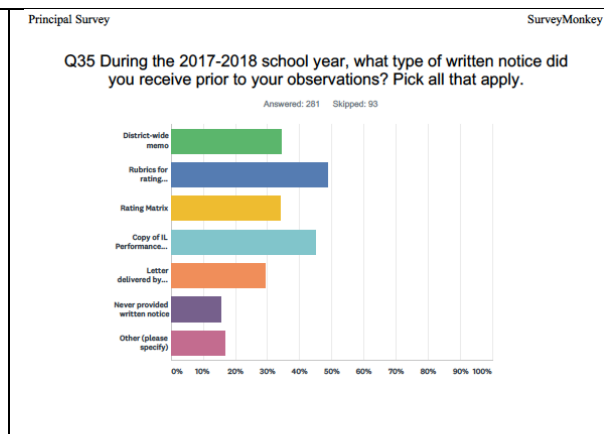
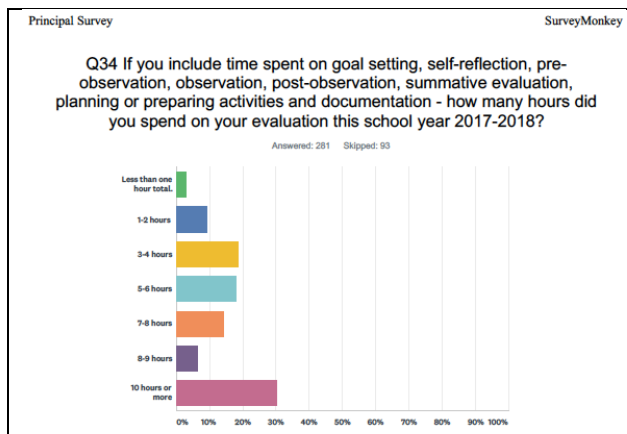


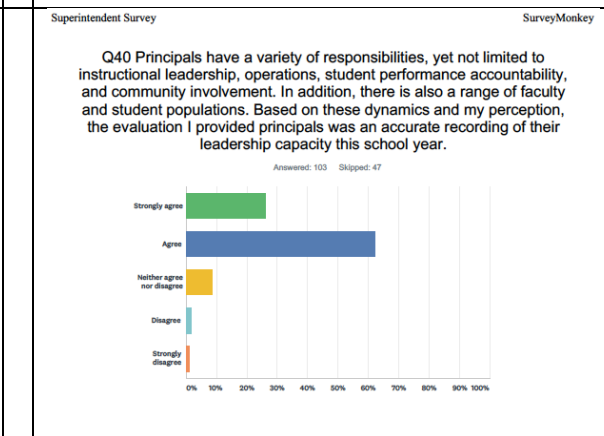
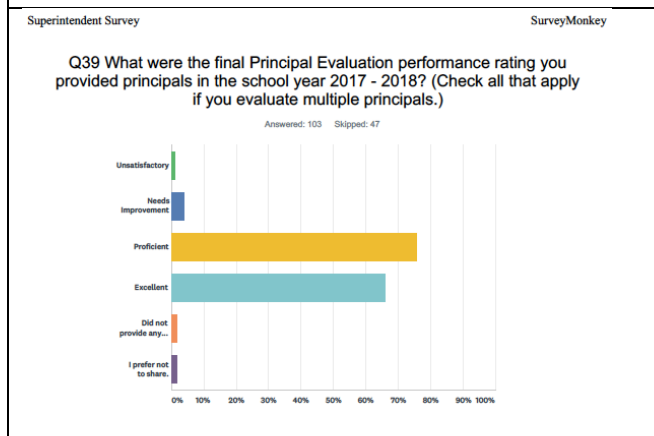
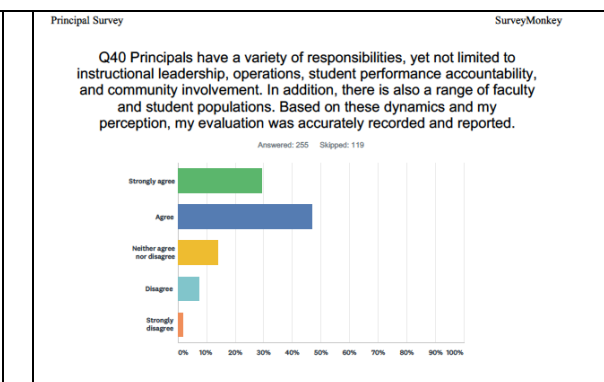
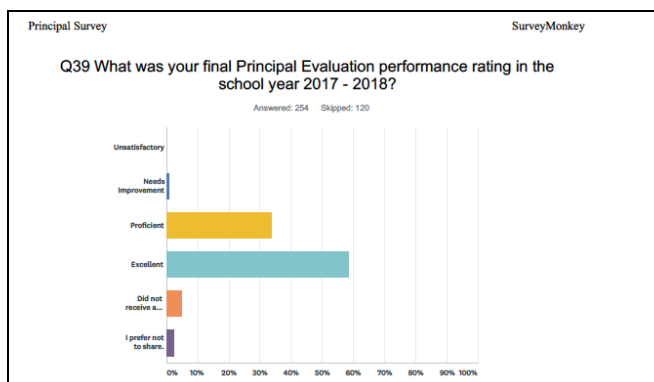
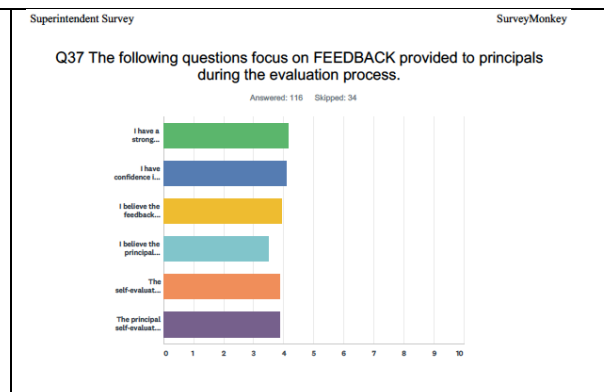
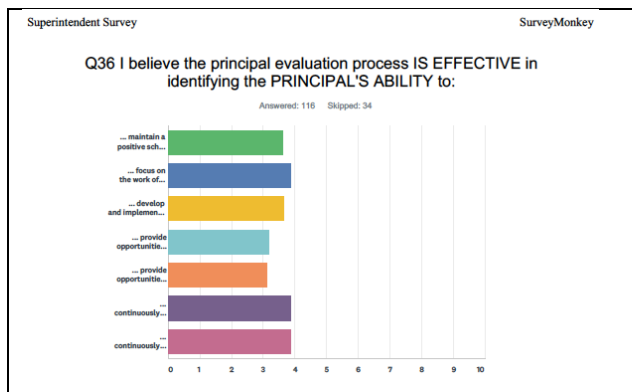


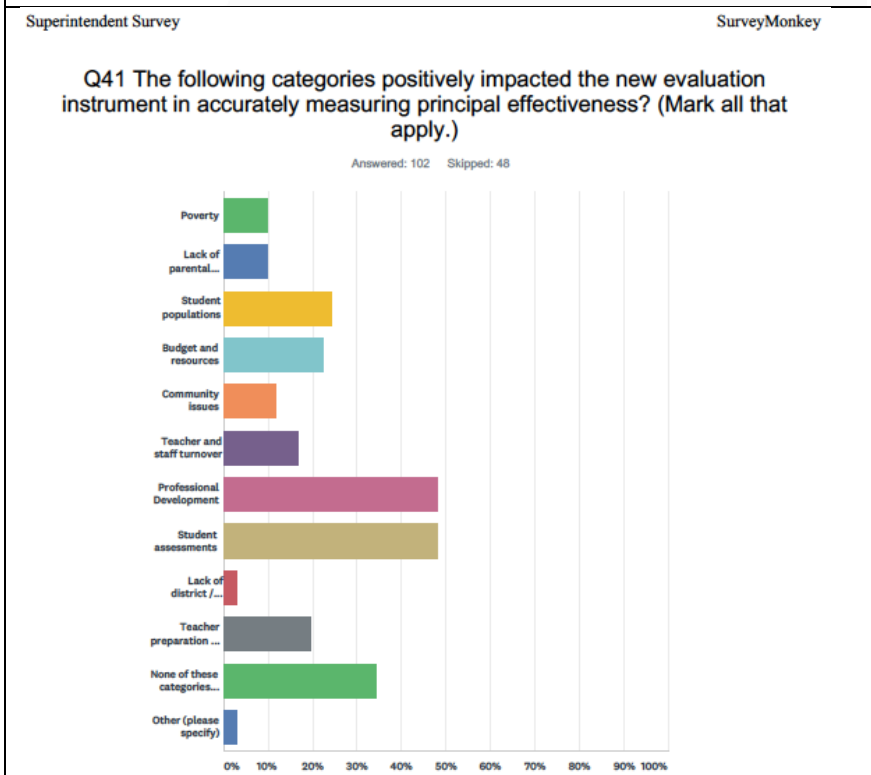
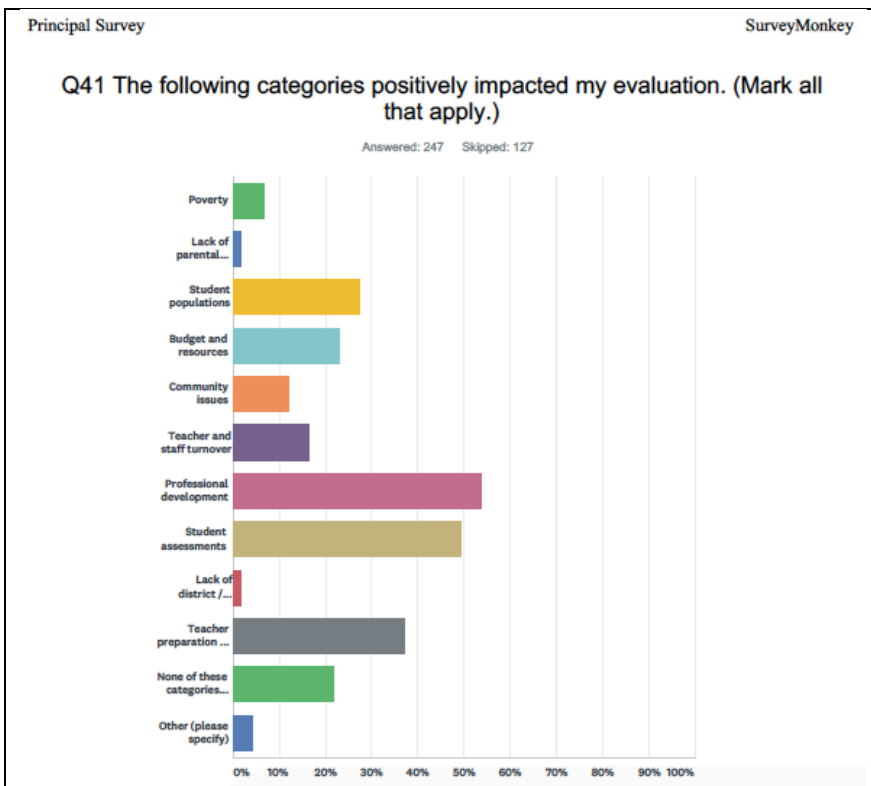


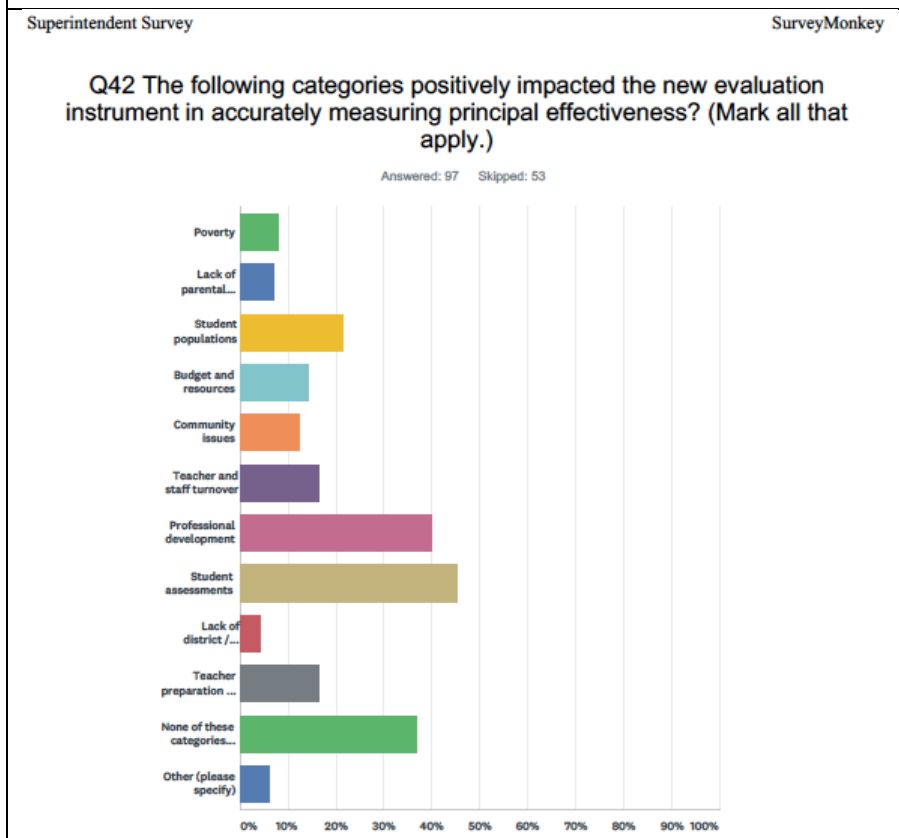
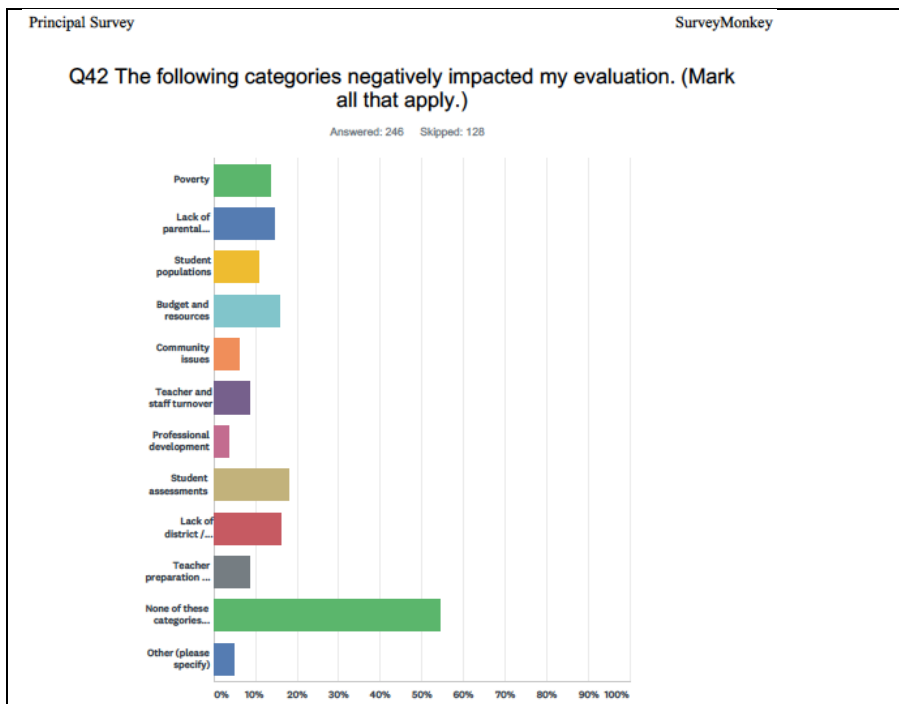


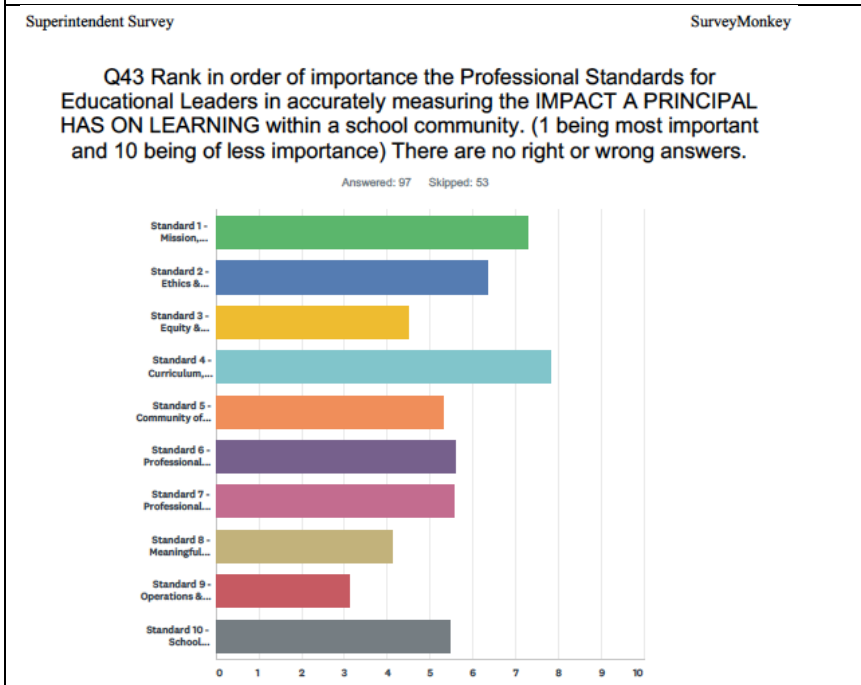
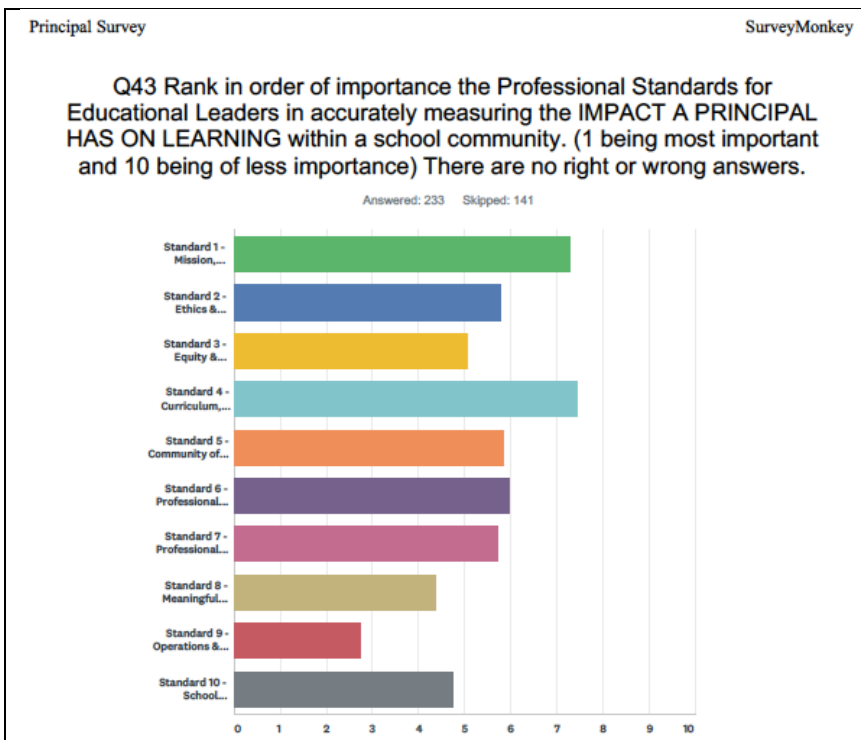


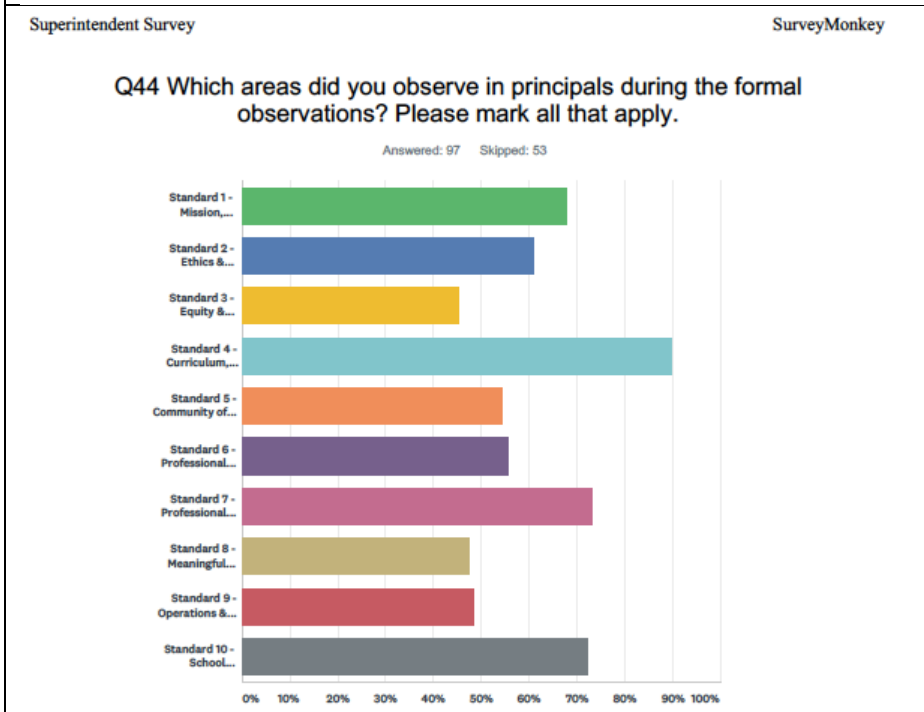
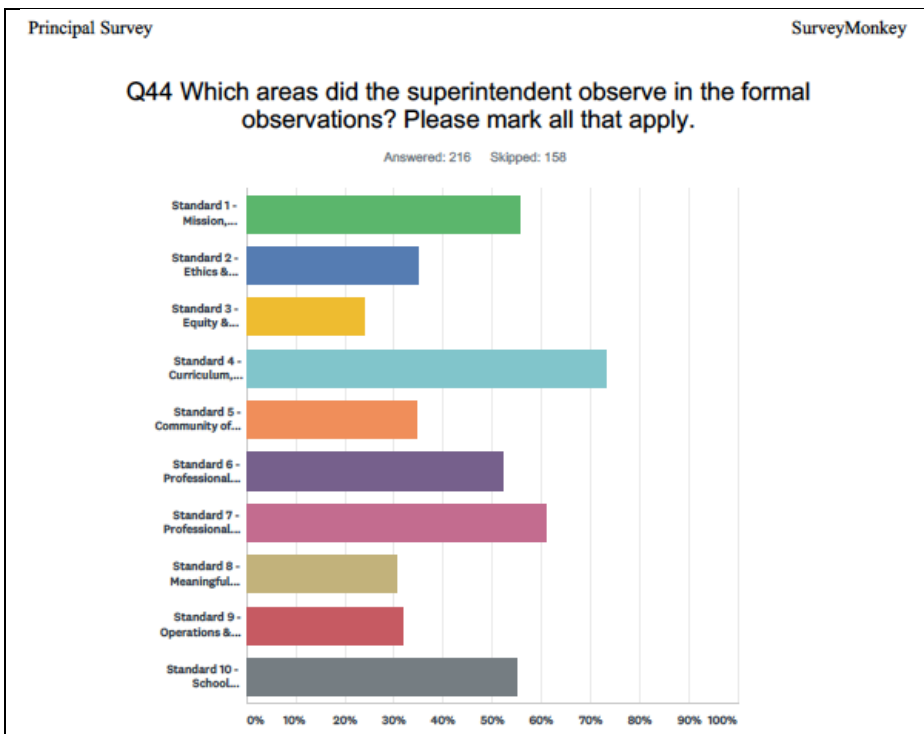


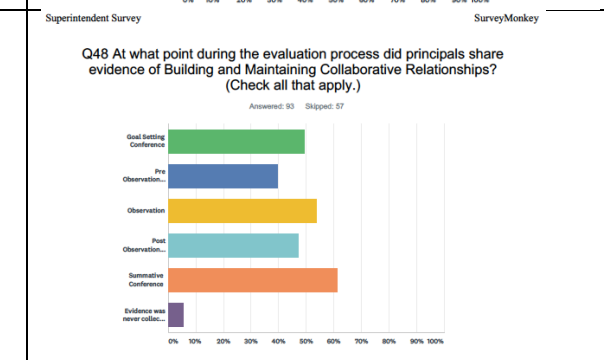
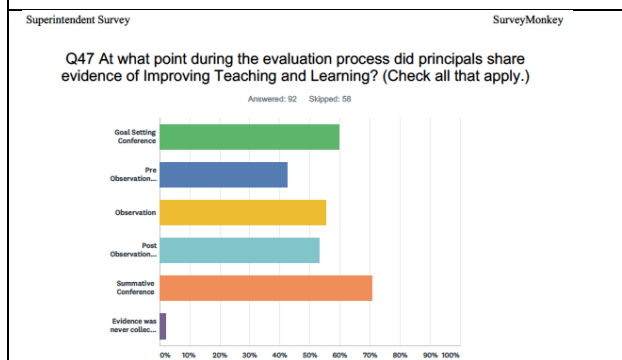
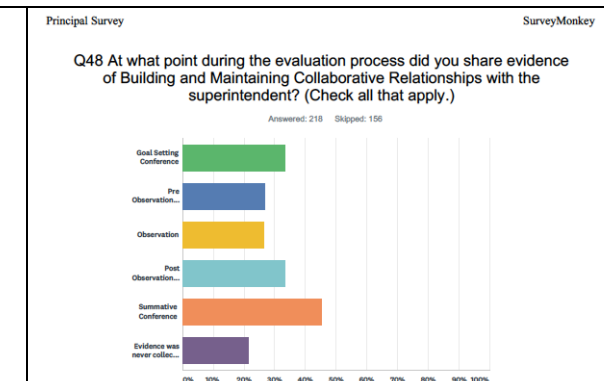
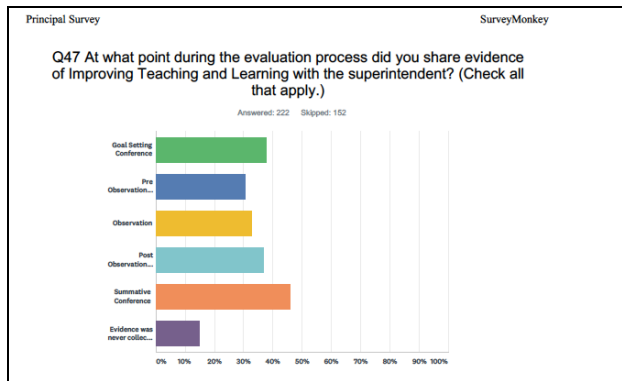
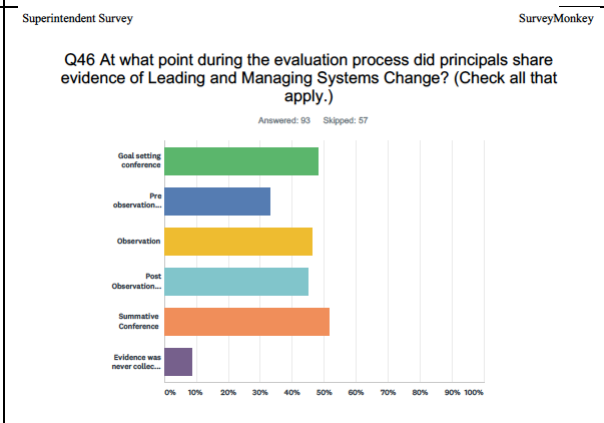
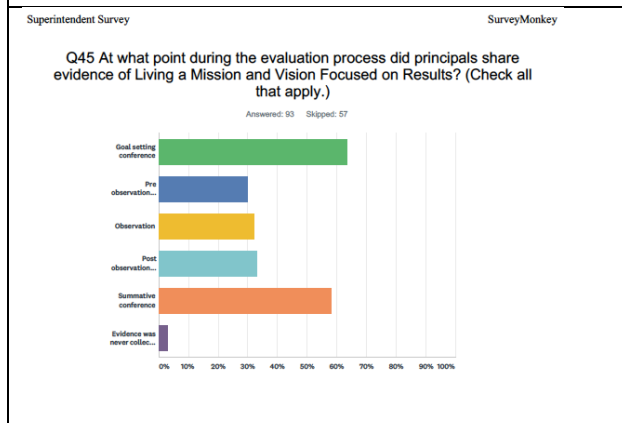
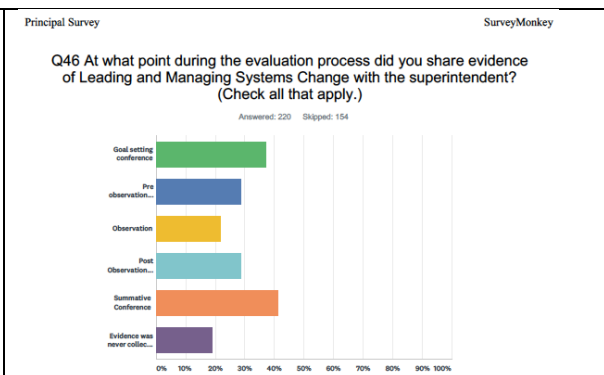
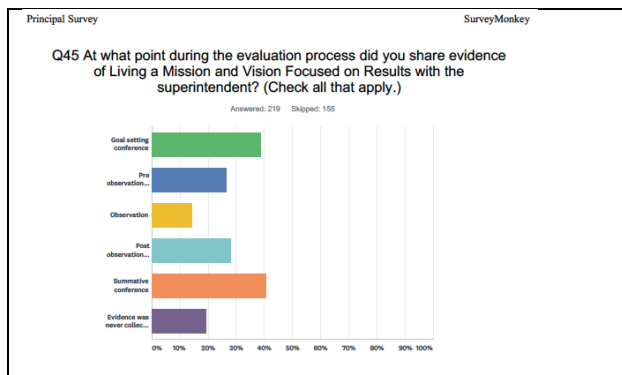


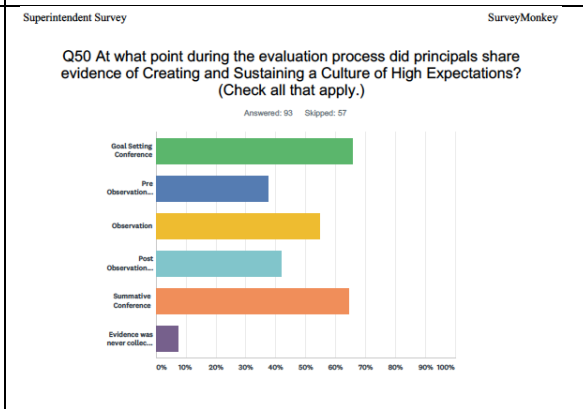
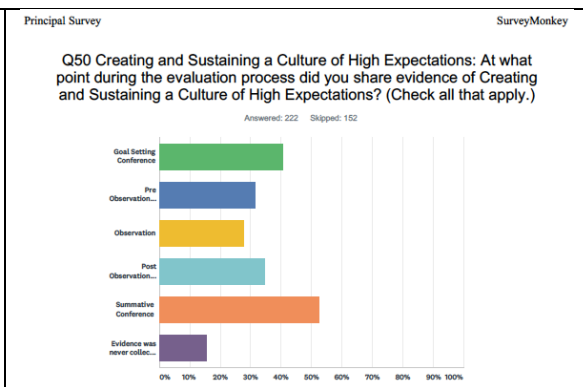
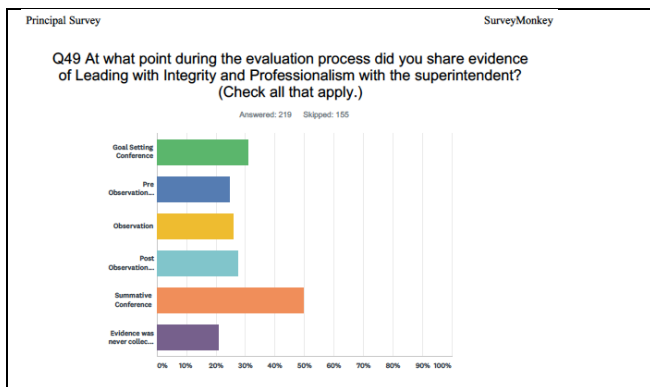












APPENDIX E
EMAIL PART TWO OF RESEARCH

Dear [Participant],

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the online survey Principal Evaluation Process being conducted by Brian A. Kaye for a dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Leanne Kallemeyn in the Department of Education at Loyola University of Chicago.

Based on your response to the online survey, I am interested in learning more about your experience with principal evaluations. The purpose of this letter is to seek your interest in a follow-up interview.

If you decide to participate you will be asked to consent to a 60 minute in-person interview. You will decide the location of the interview. If interested, an electronic interview may also be selected. All of your answers will be used for a scholarly purpose and will be kept completely confidential and anonymous by the researcher.

At this time, I would like to invite you to select a time that you are available on the calendar by clicking on this link [Brian Kaye's Available Times]. Please check your schedule when you have a moment and let me know when it will be best to interview you over the next 2-3 weeks for Part Two of the research.

Please know that I appreciate you assisting me in my research, especially with all that you have going on preparing for a school year. You will be compensated with a \$25 VISA gift card for your participation in Part Two of my research as a sign of appreciation.

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Brian A. Kaye
Doctoral Student - Loyola University of Chicago

Enclosure:
Consent Letter for Part Two of Research (Interview)

APPENDIX F

CONSENT LETTER FOR PART TWO OF RESEARCH

Researcher: Brian A. Kaye
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Leanne Kallemeyn

Introduction:

You are invited to participate in Part Two of a research study being conducted by Brian A. Kaye, a Doctoral student at Loyola University Chicago under the supervision of Dr. Leanne Kallemeyn, a faculty member in the School of Education.

You were selected as a possible participant in this portion of the research study because you are a current principal or superintendent in Illinois, and have participated in the principal evaluation as a principal or superintendent.

There are approximately 2200 elementary and middle-level principals who received the online survey requesting participation and approximately 550 superintendents serving in K-8 school districts in Illinois who also received the survey requesting participation. The researcher anticipates a 20% response to the survey data or 220 principal responses and 110 superintendent responses. Of those who volunteer for part two of the research, the researcher will select 3 principals and 3 superintendents to conduct an in-person interview.

Participants for the interview will be selected based on criteria including responses that favor the use of ISLLC standards and volunteers who desire to participate. Selection for an interview will also include participants who volunteer their contact information from emerging trends in the survey response.

Please read this form and ask questions before you agree to this portion of the study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is examining Illinois school leaders perceptions on the impact of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) on the evaluation of school leaders.

The components of the full study include: 1. Principal or superintendent survey (section 1) and a 60-minute interview (section 2).

Procedures:

It is important to note that the full study has two sections. This consent letter specifically relates to the first section of the study. If you decide to participate you will be asked to complete the first section of the study that is an online survey. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and it can be accessed online once you agree to participate in the study. This section is designed to gather data about the implementation and procedures of the principal evaluation. Should you be deemed eligible for the full study, you will be asked to consent to a 60 minute in-person interview. All of your answers will be used for a scholarly purpose and will be kept completely confidential and anonymous by the researcher.

Risks & Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Although the researcher will have access to the results, no linkage will be made between participants and their individual responses. Your identity, as a research participant, will not be used.

Your participation adds to the body of research in education. The study may specifically assist current and future superintendents with successfully implementing the principal evaluation components effectively. The study will benefit current and future superintendents and principals and research.

Compensation:

If you decide to take part in this portion of the study, you will receive a \$25 VISA gift card at the start of the interview (Part Two) for your participation even if you do not answer all the questions in the interview.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained in connection with this research study that can be identified with you will be disclosed only with your permission; your results will be kept confidential. In any written reports or publications, no one will be identified or identifiable and only group data will be presented.

Research results will be kept secure electronically using OneDrive where only the researcher will have access to the records while working on this project. Upon completion of the dissertation the researcher will destroy all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not you participate will not affect your future relations with Loyola University Chicago. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Individuals who are selected for the interview (3 principals and 3 superintendents) will receive a \$25.00 gift card even if they choose not to answer specific questions during the interview.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Brian A. Kaye, at bkaye@luc.edu or the faculty sponsor, Dr. Leanne Kallemeyn, at lkallemeyn@luc.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent:

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in the first section of this study. Your initials and your checking the box below indicate that you have read this information, your questions have been answered and you would like to participate in the first section of this study. Even after completing this form, please know that you may withdraw from the study at any time.

I consent to participate to Part TWO of the study.

I do not consent to participate in Part TWO of the study.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX G

SUPERINTENDENT AND PRINCIPAL IN-PERSON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions designed for the superintendent and principal interview questions have been adapted from the research conducted by Jennifer Bethman, Washington State University (2015). Throughout this interview information will be collected regarding superintendent experience as an evaluator of principals. Superintendents and principals will be asked to provide information about their background in education, the positions they have held in education, and any specific training they have had that supports their ability to conduct principal evaluations.

**Questions modified based on whether the interviewee is a principal or superintendent

1. Why did you express interest in participating in this study?
2. What is your background as a principal evaluator?
 - a. What type of training have you had in regard to principal evaluation?
 - b. How much support do you receive as a principal evaluator?
 - c. Whom do you receive support from?
 - d. What type of professional development do you believe you need in regard to the ISLLC or PSEL Standards, evaluation process, or components of the evaluation?
 - e. Have you attended any professional development on these topics yet this year or do you have plans to attend any training?
2. What is the process you will be using this year to evaluate principals?
 - a. Has the process changed?
 - b. What do you believe principals need to know about the principal evaluation criteria?
 - c. This year, when did you first begin talking with principals about the principal evaluation process?
 - d. Is there a self-evaluation completed by the principal?
 - e. Is there a goal setting process?
 - f. How was the process determined in your school district?
 - g. How is the evaluation process implemented differently for different principals?
 - h. What sources of evidence do you seek to gather during the evaluation process?
 - i. Who will collect the artifacts / evidence?
 - j. Was evidence collected throughout the year or submitted at the end?
 - k. How was the evidence collected and was it an accurate reflection of the work done by the principal?
 - l. How much time do the evaluator and principal spend working with together on topics that are directly aligned with principal evaluation?
 - m. How are the conversation held as part of the principal evaluation process structured?

3. When was the ISLLC or PSEL Standards framework first presented to the principals in your school district?
 - a. How did you present the ISLLC or PSEL Standards framework initially?
 - b. Why was that method chosen as the way to introduce the ISLLC or PSEL Standards?
 - c. What do you believe principals need to know about the Illinois principal evaluation criteria?

4. Please tell me about the specific paperwork and/or documents used during the evaluation process.
 - a. How is the conversation and documentation between you and the principal used before, during, and after evaluation process?
 - b. How much time do you and the principal spend working together on topics that are directly aligned with principal evaluation?
 - c. How is the process of principal evaluation monitored throughout the year?
 - d. What documentation is used?
 - e. What reminders are provided?
 - f. What sources of evidence will be gathered during the evaluation process?
 - g. Who will collect the artifacts/evidence?
 - h. As part of the principal evaluation process what evidence did you collect along the way?
 - i. Would you be willing to share any of those documents?

5. What type of professional development has been or will be offered to principals about the ISLLC or PSEL Standards framework, the evaluation process, or components of the evaluation?
 - a. What do you feel was most important and why?
 - b. How was the feedback provided to the principal?
 - c. Do you give feedback specific to criteria to the principal?
 - d. What was the impact of the feedback?
 - e. Is the evaluation process impacting the professional growth principals are engaging in?
 - f. Has the evaluation process impacted your decision to engage in professional growth?

6. What impact do you hope the principal evaluation process has on the way the principal completes their job?
 - a. During the evaluation process, what was provided to the principal to inform their work as an instructional leader?
 - b. What type of feedback have I given principals during the principal evaluation process?
 - c. As a result of the evaluation process, what actions have been taken by both the principal and myself?
 - d. Has the evaluation process impacted the principal's practice? Do you have any examples?

- e. What decisions do you believe were made by principals that were a result of the principal evaluation process?
 - f. How was feedback given to principals as part of the evaluation process? In writing, in person verbally or both?
7. To date, what are the strengths and weaknesses you have seen in the evaluation process you are using with principals?
- a. How well do you feel the principal evaluation process was implemented?
 - b. What factors do you think impacted the implementation process?
 - c. What determines if the feedback was formally documented?
 - d. What have been the challenges of the process?
 - e. What have been the advantages of the process?
 - f. What is the value of the process to you as the evaluator and district leader?
 - g. Would you describe the process as formative or summative? Please explain.
 - h. What type of feedback are you giving on each criterion? What is the impact of the feedback?
8. Can you name specific improvements in student learning and teacher effectiveness that you contribute, directly or indirectly, to the evaluation process? Explain with examples.
- a. What do you believe was the purpose for the principal evaluation? (Provide feedback, measure growth, determine support needed, improve teaching?)
 - b. What actions, practices, or protocols do you believe best help principal's improve their practice?
 - c. How successful do you believe the principal evaluation process was?
 - d. As you look forward to next year, what modifications or adjustments will you make to the current principal evaluation process? Why will you make those changes?
 - e. As a result of the evaluation process, what actions have you taken?
 - f. Were there decisions you made that you believe were a result of the principal evaluation process?
 - g. Do you believe you will change your practice based on the outcomes of your final evaluation? Why or why not?
 - h. How has the evaluation process impacted your practice? Please describe ways the process supports or helps you.

9. How well do you feel the principal evaluation process was implemented?
 - a. What factors do you think impacted the implementation of the process?
 - b. What performance information did you share during the evaluation process that has impacted your work as an instructional leader?
 - c. What feedback did you share during the principal evaluation process that you felt was most important and why?
 - d. As the district leader, how could you best support the work of principal's to improve their effectiveness?
 - e. What suggestions would you make for the improvement of the current process of principal evaluation?
 - f. Can you name some specific improvements in student learning and teacher effectiveness that you contribute, directly or indirectly, to the evaluation process? Explain with examples.

10. Is there anything else you would like to add that you believe would benefit this study?

APPENDIX H
CONSENT SCRIPT FOR SUPERINTENDENT AND PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW AND
SUPERINTENDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction

Welcome, [participant's name]. How are you?

Thank you again for participating in my study. Let's review the consent form together. Then, if you are still comfortable participating, I will ask you to sign it before we continue with the interview [continue after the consent form has been reviewed].

To maintain confidentiality, I ask you to choose a pseudonym before we begin our interview today. What would you like your pseudonym to be? Before we continue, do you have any questions? If additional questions arise later in the process, please ask at any time.

During the interview I will ask questions and ask for elaboration when necessary. This will be different than a typical "conversation." Please answer these questions to the best of your ability. I will be recording this interview using an audiotape and transcribing the interview for the data analysis portion of the study. Before I begin writing results from the interview, I will send you the transcript for what's called member checking, it's an opportunity for you to remove, alter, or augment your own words so you're comfortable with the work. No identifying information for you or your school will be included in the transcript and if you do say your school name, I will remove that from the transcript prior to the data analysis.

During the interview, you might feel that information is sensitive and you can request us to turn off the recorder so you can be candid in your response. In this case, I'll manually record the response. You also have the option to not answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with. My hope today is to learn more about your perceptions and experiences of the principal evaluation process as a principal or superintendent. The voices of principals and superintendents are important to contribute to this research on the topic of principal evaluations.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Are you ready to begin? Okay, let's get started.

SUPERINTENDENT / PRINCIPAL IN-PERSON INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant ID: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed. As with any part of this study, you can withdraw your consent to participate at any time and you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. Anything you say will not be connected with your name, the name of your school, or the name of your school district in any publications or presentations. I will audiotape your responses for my use only. First, I'll ask questions about how you provide feedback to your principal. Then, I will ask you about how you use the principal evaluations to make decisions. Finally I will ask you about principal evaluations in the larger aspect of performance and professional development. Your response to this interview will be kept in the researcher's home office in a locked filing cabinet and on the researcher's secure computer. Your identity will be kept using unique ID numbers and will never be released.

STATE PARTICIPANT ID NUMBER, DATE, NAME OF INTERVIEWER, AND "START INTERVIEW" FOR RECORDING DEVICES

Questions:

The following questions designed for the superintendent interview questions have been adapted from the research conducted by Jennifer Bethman, Washington State University (2015). Throughout this interview information will be collected regarding superintendent experience as an evaluator of principals. Superintendents will be asked to provide information about their background in education, the positions they have held in education, and any specific training they have had that supports their ability to conduct principal evaluations.

1. Why did you express interest in participating in this study?
2. What is your background as a principal evaluator?
 - a. What type of training have you had in regard to principal evaluation?
 - b. How much support do you receive as a principal evaluator?
 - c. Whom do you receive support from?

- d. What type of professional development do you believe you need in regard to the ISLLC or PSEL Standards, evaluation process, or components of the evaluation?
 - e. Have you attended any professional development on these topics yet this year or do you have plans to attend any training?
 3. What is the process you will be using this year to evaluate principals?
 - a. Has the process changed?
 - b. What do you believe principals need to know about the principal evaluation criteria?
 - c. This year, when did you first begin talking with principals about the principal evaluation process?
 - d. Is there a self-evaluation completed by the principal?
 - e. Is there a goal setting process?
 - f. How was the process determined in your school district?
 - g. How is the evaluation process implemented differently for different principals?
 - h. What sources of evidence do you seek to gather during the evaluation process?
 - i. Who will collect the artifacts / evidence?
 - j. Was evidence collected throughout the year or submitted at the end?
 - k. How was the evidence collected and was it an accurate reflection of the work done by the principal?
 - l. How much time do the evaluator and principal spend working with together on topics that are directly aligned with principal evaluation?
 - m. How are the conversation held as part of the principal evaluation process structured?
 4. When was the ISLLC or PSEL Standards framework first presented to the principals in your school district?
 - a. How did you present the ISLLC or PSEL Standards framework initially?
 - b. Why was that method chosen as the way to introduce the ISLLC or PSEL Standards?
 - c. What do you believe principals need to know about the Illinois principal evaluation criteria?
 5. Please tell me about the specific paperwork and/or documents used during the evaluation process.
 - a. How is the conversation and documentation between you and the principal used before, during, and after evaluation process?
 - b. How much time do you and the principal spend working together on topics that are directly aligned with principal evaluation?
 - c. How is the process of principal evaluation monitored throughout the year?
 - d. What documentation is used?
 - e. What reminders are provided?

- f. What sources of evidence will be gathered during the evaluation process?
 - g. Who will collect the artifacts/evidence?
 - h. As part of the principal evaluation process what evidence did you collect along the way?
 - i. Would you be willing to share any of those documents?
6. What type of professional development has been or will be offered to principals about the ISLLC or PSEL Standards framework, the evaluation process, or components of the evaluation?
- a. What do you feel was most important and why?
 - b. How was the feedback provided to the principal?
 - c. Do you give feedback specific to criteria to the principal?
 - d. What was the impact of the feedback?
 - e. Is the evaluation process impacting the professional growth principals are engaging in?
 - f. Has the evaluation process impacted your decision to engage in professional growth?
7. What impact do you hope the principal evaluation process has on the way the principal completes their job?
- a. During the evaluation process, what was provided to the principal to inform their work as an instructional leader?
 - b. What type of feedback have I given principals during the principal evaluation process?
 - c. As a result of the evaluation process, what actions have been taken by both the principal and myself?
 - d. Has the evaluation process impacted the principal's practice? Do you have any examples?
 - e. What decisions do you believe were made by principals that were a result of the principal evaluation process?
 - f. How was feedback given to principals as part of the evaluation process? In writing, in person verbally or both?
8. To date, what are the strengths and weaknesses you have seen in the evaluation process you are using with principals?
- a. How well do you feel the principal evaluation process was implemented?
 - b. What factors do you think impacted the implementation process?
 - c. What determines if the feedback was formally documented?
 - d. What have been the challenges of the process?
 - e. What have been the advantages of the process?
 - f. What is the value of the process to you as the evaluator and district leader?
 - g. Would you describe the process as formative or summative? Please explain.
 - h. What type of feedback are you giving on each criterion? What is the impact of the feedback?

9. Can you name specific improvements in student learning and teacher effectiveness that you attribute, directly or indirectly, to the evaluation process? Explain with examples.
 - a. What do you believe was the purpose for the principal evaluation? (Provide feedback, measure growth, determine support needed, improve teaching?)
 - b. What actions, practices, or protocols do you believe best help principal's improve their practice?
 - c. How successful do you believe the principal evaluation process was?
 - d. As you look forward to next year, what modifications or adjustments will you make to the current principal evaluation process? Why will you make those changes?
 - e. As a result of the evaluation process, what actions have you taken?
 - f. Were there decisions you made that you believe were a result of the principal evaluation process?
 - g. Do you believe you will change your practice based on the outcomes of your final evaluation? Why or why not?
 - h. How has the evaluation process impacted your practice? Please describe ways the process supports or helps you.

10. How well do you feel the principal evaluation process was implemented?
 - a. What factors do you think impacted the implementation of the process?
 - b. What performance information did you share during the evaluation process that has impacted your work as an instructional leader?
 - c. What feedback did you share during the principal evaluation process that you felt was most important and why?
 - d. As the district leader, how could you best support the work of principal's to improve their effectiveness?
 - e. What suggestions would you make for the improvement of the current process of principal evaluation?
 - f. Can you name some specific improvements in student learning and teacher effectiveness that you attribute, directly or indirectly, to the evaluation process? Explain with examples.

11. Is there anything else you would like to add that you believe would benefit this study?

Thank you very much for your time and all that you shared. Here is your \$25 gift card.

APPENDIX I
REFLEXIVE JOURNAL NOTES

PARTICIPANT ID: _____

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

OBSERVATIONS	REFLEXIVE NOTES	QUESTIONS / FOLLOW UP:

APPENDIX J

EMAIL INVITATION TO REVIEW TRANSCRIPT FROM INTERVIEW

Dear [Participant's name],

Thank you again so much for participating in my research study. By clicking the link below and entering your pseudonym for the password, you should now be able to view transcripts from your interview. I invite you to read them and let me know if there is anything you would like to add or clarify. If you have difficulty opening the files, please let me know.

This link will expire on [30 days from date email was sent]. As stated previously, the purpose of this study is examining Illinois school leaders perceptions on the impact of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) on the evaluation of school leaders.

The findings from this study will inform leaders regarding the data about the implementation of the principal evaluation focusing on the process, implementation, and documentation. Your participation adds to the body of research in education. The study may specifically assist current and future superintendents with successfully implementing the principal evaluation components effectively. The study will benefit current and future superintendents and principals and research.

Please email me at bkaye@sd25.org if you would like to provide additional thoughts, if there is anything here you would like to clarify, or if you have any questions. Thank you again so much for participating in this study.

INSERT LINK HERE [Link]

Sincerely,

Brian A. Kaye
Doctoral Candidate - Loyola University Chicago

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VITA

Brian was born and raised in Glen Ellyn, Illinois as the third child of his mother and father's four children. It was at this time Brian developed a passion for working with children which developed into a profession after earning an Associate's Degree from the College of DuPage and then a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from the University of Illinois in 1998. After earning his undergraduate degree, Brian joined Woodstock Junior High teaching Social Studies and Science for four years. During these years, he also continued to advance his studies and completed a Master of Education degree from Aurora University and a second Master of Education degree from Aurora University in Educational Leadership in 2002.

For the past 14 years, Brian has been served as a building administrator in Arlington Heights where he has been surrounded by world class educators inspiring Brian on his educational mission.

Brian currently resides in his home town of Glen Ellyn, Illinois. The completion of this dissertation is the result of many friends and family members making sacrifices to allow him to pursue this dream. Additionally, this would not have been possible without the support and motivation provided by his colleagues whose passion and strength guide Brian on his educational journey to support educational leaders throughout Illinois.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The Dissertation submitted by Brian Kaye has been read and approved by the following committee:

Leanne Kallemeyn, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

Felicia Stewart, Ph.D.
Clinical Assistant Professor, School of Education
Loyola University Chicago

Sarah Jerome, Ph.D.
Retired Superintendent
Arlington Heights School District 25