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An Explanation of the Supervisory Model used by Elementary Principal Supervisors in the State of Missouri

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The most direct route to improving students' educational outcomes is by improving teacher effectiveness (Hanuschek, 2008; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Teachers' ability to forge positive relationships with students, assess students' current levels of performance, and tailor instruction to meet students' needs increases learning at a greater rate than other variables (Stronge & Tucker, 2000). As a result, principals acting as instructional leaders is an important role emphasized in the literature and centers on the ability of principals to coach teachers and increase their instructional capacity (Hvidston, McKim, & Mette, 2016). Formative supervision, when compared to summative evaluation, provides principals the better strategy to improving teachers' instructional skills (Hvidston, Range, & McKim, 2015; Mette et al., 2017).

Past school accountability demands have highlighted the need for school leadership reform, including principals acting as instructional leaders (NCLB, 2002; USDOE, 2009). Logically, this accountability trickles down to district administrators charged with supervising and evaluating principals, described as principal supervisors throughout the remainder of this paper. The purpose of this paper is to highlight behaviors utilized by elementary principal supervisors in the Springfield Public School District (SPS), located in Springfield, Missouri as they supervise and evaluate principals. Specifically, the paper is an attempt to advance the professional discussion around one important question, (1) How are principals supervised and evaluated in one district? Attempting to answer this question is an important step in operationalizing guiding principles that can be shared with principal supervisors who are charged with building principals' leadership capacity.

In the past, there have been only 20 peer-reviewed articles published between 1980 and 2010 (Davis, Kearney, Sanders, Thomas, & Leon, 2011) focused on principal evaluations. More recently the supervision and evaluation of principals has often been disregarded with limited research (Fuller, Hollingworth, & Liu, 2015; Miller, 2014). Currently, the research into principal evaluation has been directed at improving the quality of principal supervisors, standards, and evaluation systems (Derrington, & Sharratt, 2008; Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rodgers, & Neel, 2018; New Leaders, 2012; Honig, 2012). The discussion of current practice regarding the

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supervision and evaluation of principal could be of benefit to principals, those who supervise principals, and university principal preparation programs.

Supervision versus Evaluation

Many researchers describe formative supervision and summative evaluation through the lens of improving and rating teachers (Hazi & Ricinski, 2009; Ponticell & Zepeda, 2004; Range, Scherz, Holt, & Young, 2011). Whereas formative supervision is characterized through growth-oriented experiences (coaching, professional reading, action research), summative evaluation is described as an accountability measure to ensure certain behaviors are present in the classroom (assignment of scores or values) (Robbins & Alvy, 1995). The antagonistic outcomes of both processes are described in detail in which formative supervision centers on supportive, trusting feedback to improve instruction while summative evaluation results in assigning merit to teachers' abilities as a way to determine future employment (Eady & Zepeda, 2007; Zepeda, 2012). In the current context of school reform, teacher formative supervision and summative evaluation have become interlocked, so teachers and policymakers see the processes as the same (Mette et al., 2017). Compounding this perception is the fact that both teacher supervision and summative evaluation are typically performed by the same individual, namely school principals (Range et al., 2011).

Similar to those responsible for teacher supervision and evaluation, those charged with supervising and evaluating principals are asked to undertake both formative supervision and summative evaluation, attempting to connect both processes in a coherent manner (Hvidston et al., 2015). Mette et al. (2017) described this dilemma by stating, "tension is noted between the desired collaborative, trusting relationship and conflicting functions when the supervisor is also an administrator (with responsibilities such as summative evaluation, resource allocation, and employment decisions) (p. 710). A critical factor in defusing the tension generated between formative supervision and summative evaluation is the development of trust between principals and principal supervisors (Derrington & Sanders, 2011; Okasana, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012; Saltzman, 2016). In fact, Derrington and Sanders characterize trust as "the glue of day-to day life in the supervisory partnership" (2011, p. 34). Elementary principal supervisors in SPS are charged with providing formative supervision (leadership capacity building) and summative evaluation (job retention) to all elementary principals. Elementary principal supervisors attempt to intertwine both processes so that frequent formative supervision allows principal supervisors to accurately assess principals' skills on standards and indicators.

Honig (2012) described principal supervisor formative supervision behaviors by supporting the improvement of principals' leadership capacity including modeling instructional leadership or brokering, which is "strategically bridging …or buffering [principals] from resources and influences…to support principals' engagement in instructional leadership" (p. 755). Anderson and Turnbull (2016) highlighted the positive relationship between principals and principal supervisors by describing formative supervision as "it's not sit down and have one meeting and be evaluated with feedback for next year because it's an all-the-time conversation" (p. 36). Additionally, Saltzman (2016) argued principal supervisors who routinely visited principals were able to accurately assess the culture and climate of schools and connect principals' leadership to teaching and students' learning.

Context for the Supervision and Evaluation of Principals in Springfield Public Schools

Springfield Public Schools (SPS) has approximately 24,000 students and 54% of the district's student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch rates. There are approximately 12,100 elementary students in SPS, and they attend 36 elementary schools, all supervised by a single principal (n=36). These elementary principals are supervised and evaluated by two elementary principal supervisors, the Executive Director of Elementary Learning and Director of Elementary Learning, offices of which are housed in the school district's central office. These two elementary principal supervisors visit principals at their schools at least one time per month throughout the school year.

Supervisory Practices for Principal Supervisors

The supervisory practices of principal supervisors in SPS will be presented in four sections. First, the role for principal supervisors will be described along with accompanying professional standards for their performance, setting the stage for the supervision and evaluation of principals. Second, the Key Constructs of SPS Principal Supervision and Evaluation will be explained including elements regarding the application of standards and indicators. Third, principal supervisor guiding questions and data sources will be detailed. Finally, principal supervisors' practices implementing principal supervision and evaluation will be discussed within the framework of instructional leadership.

Role of Elementary Principal Supervisors

The professional standards developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 2015) were used to guide SPS elementary principal supervisors' work of supervising and evaluating principals. The CCSSO standards displayed in Table 1 serve as guidelines for elementary principal supervisors as they monitor the leadership skills of principals, connecting the central office with principals (Superville, 2016). CCSSO standards and action steps which help define the role of elementary principal supervisors are noted in Table 1.

Table 1. CCSSO Principal Supervisor Standards

Standards
1. Principal supervisors dedicate their time to helping principals grow as instructional leaders.
2. Principal supervisors coach and support individual principals and engage in effective professional learning strategies to help principals grow as instructional leaders.
3. Principal supervisors use evidence of principals' effectiveness to determine necessary improvements in principals' practice to foster a positive educational environment that supports the diverse cultural and learning needs of students.
4. Principal supervisors engage principals in the formal district principal evaluation process in ways that help them grow as instructional leaders.
5. Principal supervisors advocate for and inform the coherence of organizational vision, policies and strategies to support schools and student learning.
6. Principal supervisors assist the district in ensuring the community of schools with which they engage are culturally/socially responsive and have equitable access to resources necessary for the success of each student.
7. Principal supervisors engage in their own development and continuous improvement to help principals grow as instructional leaders.

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8. Principal supervisors lead strategic change that continuously elevates the performance of schools and sustains high-quality educational programs and opportunities across the district.

The standards also highlight the need for principal supervisors to be engaged in their own professional development (Baker & Bloom, 2017). Although written in general terms, the standards outline many of the characteristics highlighted in the literature as instructional leadership behaviors, including supporting and growing teachers, planning professional learning, and monitoring student outcomes (Hvidston et al., 2016; Hvidston et al., 2015; Wallace Foundation, 2008). Additionally, the CCSSO standards focus on increasing student achievement and have a lesser emphasis on managerial principal behaviors which are unlikely to impact teacher effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2004).

SPS Model of Principal Supervision and Evaluation

The SPS principal supervision evaluation model includes six standards and 13 indicators on which all principals are assessed and is based on the Missouri Model for Educator Evaluation, created by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MO-DESE, n.d.). Table 2 displays the key constructs of the SPS principal supervision and evaluation model.

Table 2. Key Constructs of SPS Principal Supervision and Evaluation

Principal Evaluation Standards and Indicators	Principal Evaluation Steps for Principal Supervisors
Standard 1: Vision, Mission, and Goals Indicator 1: Establish the Mission, Vision, and Goals Indicator 2: Implement the Mission, Vision, and Goals	1. Identify indicators to be assessed 2. Determine baseline scores for indicators
Standard 2: Teaching and Learning Indicator 3: Promote Positive School Culture Indicator 4: Provide an Effective Instructional Program Indicator 5: Ensure Continuous Professional Learning	3. Develop a growth plan for indicators 4. Regularly provide feedback on indicators
Standard 3: Management of the Organizational Systems Indicator 6: Management the Organization Structure Indicator 7: Lead Personnel Indicator 8: Manage Resources	5. Determine a follow-up score for indicators
Standard 4: Collaboration with Families and Stakeholders Indicator 9: Collaborate with Families and other Community Members Indicator 10: Respond to Community Interest and Needs Indicator 11: Mobilize Community Resources Standard 5: Ethics and Integrity Indicator 12: Personal and Professional Responsibility	6. Complete the summative assessment 7. Reflect and plan
Standard 6: Professional Development Indicator 13: Increase Knowledge and Skills based on Best Practices	

As noted in Table 2, SPS principals are supervised and evaluated regarding their performance on six standards and 13 indicators. These standards range from establishing and implementing a mission and vision to increasing principals' capacity by seeking out professional development. As elementary principal supervisors visit schools to talk with principals about performance, they focus on one or two standards per visit. These standards are a vital factor for principals to understand as part of both the supervisory process and evaluation (Turnbull, Riley, & MacFarlane, 2013). Over the course of a school year, data are collected on all six standards and 13 indicators which are tallied to create principals' summative evaluation, in which principal's performance is rated as *Area of Concern*, *Growth Opportunity*, or *Meets Expectations*. Additionally, principals' holistic performance, which includes a summary of all standards and indicators, is rated as *Ineffective, Needs Improvement, Effective, Highly Effective,* or *Distinguished.*

In analyzing the steps followed by elementary principal supervisors noted in Table 2, all steps but two (steps five and six) are supported by the academic literature's definition of formative supervision (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2014; Zepeda, 2012). Conversely, steps five and six (*determine a follow-up score for indicators and complete the summative assessment*) require elementary principal supervisors to summarize data collected during supervision to evaluate principals' performance by assigning merit to their performance, tasks most closely aligned to evaluation (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Presenting the steps in sequential order, steps one through three asks principals (*identify indicators to be assessed, determine baseline scores for indicators,* and *develop a growth plan for indicators*), in consultation with their elementary principal supervisors, to self-select two or three growth standards and indicators, assess themselves using the evaluation rubric (Likert scaled items; 0 thru 2=Emerging, 3 thru 4=Developing, 5 thru 6 = proficient, and 7 = distinguished), and to develop a growth plan for how they plan to remediate identified weaknesses. Steps four and five (*regularly provide feedback on indicators* and *determine a follow-up score for indicators*) require elementary principal supervisors to collect formative data on all six leadership standards and 13 indicators to determine if principals are growing in each area. Step six (*complete the summative evaluation*) requires principals to meet with elementary principal supervisors so collected formative data can be aggregated into summative evaluations. Finally, step seven (*reflect and plan*) requires elementary principal supervisors to begin the steps again when principals and elementary principal supervisors select new growth standards and indicators for the following school year. When all steps are included, principal evaluation processes allow principals ownership in the process, align to standards, and use multiple measurements to assess competence. Similar to teacher supervision, principal supervision and evaluation is viewed as a cyclical process, one that begins and ends with reflection about growth (Range, Young, & Hvidston, 2013).

Table 3 displays questions that guide elementary principal supervisors' supervision and evaluation work as they engage in formative supervision of principals and includes data sources principal supervisors collect as they visit schools.

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Table 3. Principal Supervisor Guiding Questions and Data Sources

Principal Supervisor Guiding Questions	Principal Supervisor Potential Data Sources
Do principals clearly understand all standards and indicators?	Student achievement scores
	Teacher and patron survey results
How do principal supervisors get a clear, holistic picture of principals' performances?	Professional learning meeting agendas
	Discipline rates
How do principal supervisors collect objective rather than subjective data?	Classroom observation numbers
	Budget expenditures
How do principal supervisors best connect data to each standard and indicator?	School/community partnerships
	Evidence of shared decision making
How do principal supervisors ensure principals have a voice in their evaluation?	Evidence of service to the district/profession
	Daily/weekly e-mails
How can principal supervisors use the standards and indicators as reflection points for principals?	
How can principal supervisors ensure the evaluation step is perceived as fair?	

As seen in Table 3, the primary question that guides the work of principal supervisors as they apply supervision and evaluation to principals is to ensure principals understand the standards and indicators on which they are evaluated. Additional questions focus on supervision and evaluation being perceived by principals as fair and encouraging principals' ownership of the process. The willingness for principals to receive feedback from principal supervisors is based on a trusting and respectful relationship (Oksana, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012). Finally, an important fact is that principal supervisors work to collect both quantitative and qualitative data and data should be objective rather than subjective. Data collected by principal supervisors to provide evidence of growth on the six standards and 13 indicators comes from interactions with principals and from principals' own personal accounts as to what happens in their schools. As noted in Table 3, data sources include both academic measures (*test scores, discipline rates, observation numbers*) and affect measures (*teacher and patron survey results*).

A source of tension for elementary principal supervisors is the struggle in providing principals a "situational" style of supervision and evaluation, one that shifts from directing to delegating (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982). Most often, elementary principal supervisors utilize a coaching style in which two-way communication results in principals taking ownership in handling situations. Another important consideration is for elementary principal supervisors to align supervisory styles to the SPS district's mission, which is creating *Engaging, Relevant, and Personal* (ERP) schools and student experiences. The supervisory stance to support principals as they implement and oversee ERP schools is to encourage principals to show more initiative around innovative ideas and to take calculated risks.

The principal supervisors in this district also engage in a reflective process with principals who are being supervised to maintain a fair supervision and evaluation process. This reflective process also extends to frequent conversations between the principal supervisors with the goal of continuously improving and supporting the principals to ultimately support teacher growth and student achievement. The focus of improving the instructional leadership of principals is the area of concern for this process.

Theory to Practice Findings

For the purpose of this paper, additional detail is provided about how elementary principal supervisors collect formative supervision data that leads to the summative evaluation of one standard and one indicator. *Standard 2 (Teaching and Learning)*, *Indicator 4 (Provide an Effective Instructional Program)* requires principals exercise instructional leadership to focus on the improvement of instruction and assessment practices and use systems to assess effectiveness of practice and document sustained improvement and growth of staff and students.

To begin, elementary principal supervisors ask principals to describe their instructional focus for the school year, generally centered on literacy or numeracy and based on student achievement scores. Additionally, the conversation might include the school's professional learning plan for the year; along with ways that professional learning plan might be assessed. During elementary principal supervisors' monthly site visits, they ask principals how goal attainment towards this instructional focus is progressing. Qualitative and quantitative sources of data elementary principal supervisors might use to support a principal's self-assessment of this standard and indicator could be professional learning agendas, staff feedback about trainings, and literacy or numeracy growth scores on formative assessments.

Additionally, elementary principal supervisors monitor principals' classroom visits, which are electronically recorded in the SPS district's teacher evaluation system to monitor how many classroom visits principals have conducted. Finally, if principals have concerns with the performance of a teacher, elementary principal supervisors provide support to principals and collaboratively create a plan to improve the teacher. Should the teacher's performance result in a formal Educator Improvement Plan (EIP), elementary principal supervisors assist principals in writing the plan and make note of important benchmark dates so they can follow up with principals to ensure principals are holding the teacher accountable for improvement. The act of setting goals for an underperforming teacher and holding him or her accountable would also be noted by elementary principal supervisors in the principal's summative evaluation.

Conclusion

As the supervision and evaluation of principals is a vital component of effective and high performing schools, the supervisory process described in this article could be beneficial to other district principal supervisors. These educational leaders are engaged in a similar process of supervision and evaluation and reviewing this supervisory and evaluative process could provide relevancy while operationalizing guiding principles that could be shared among principal supervisors who are charged with building principals' leadership capacity. University principal preparation programs could also benefit from the perspective of practicing principal supervisors as universities prepare principal candidates for the rigors of the principalship and potential supervision and evaluation. Specifically, coursework could emphasis the attention given to standards, the application of instructional leadership, the process of frequent feedback, and continuous improvement.

Future research regarding the supervision and evaluation of principals could include both qualitative and quantitative data from the perspective of principals. Data points could include pre

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and post evaluation data and could be examined to determine if principals are benefiting from the supervision and are actually improving their instruction leadership. Additional research opportunities could be from the perspective of principal supervisors and possibly include the efficacy of feedback and the improvement of process.

In summary, the supervision and evaluation of principals is an important school reform conversation and holds promise to increasing student achievement (Connelly & Bartoletti, 2012; Leithwood et al., 2004). Additionally, the role of principal supervisors has increased in importance as they engage in formative supervision processes to collect adequate information on principals' performance and aggregate data collected to evaluate their growth on set standards and indicators (Corcoran et al., 2013). The answer to "How are principals supervised and evaluated in one district?" is similar to what teachers need. Principals benefit from frequent, timely feedback provided through formative supervision based on multiple measures of performance. As described in this paper, principal supervisors are required to apply formative supervision and summative evaluation to principals (Vitcov & Bloom, 2010), a model many school districts have adopted. The SPS model with 16 principals for each principal supervisor is in contrast to a caseload of just seven to nine principals in one district (Gill, 2013). An important consideration for principal supervisors could be reducing the number of principals to be supervised (Anderson & Turnbull, 2016; Goldring et al., 2018)). Linking supervision and evaluation into a seamless process is more effective if principal supervisors are able to provide principals ownership in their supervision and evaluation, evaluate performance based on standards and indicators, deliver feedback, develop trusting relationships, all by making frequent visits to principals' schools to further the application of principals' instructional leadership.

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