

2101(c)(4)(B)(viii): PD for principals on meeting challenging academic standards

Background

School leadership matters. Powerful evidence links improved student outcomes and higher teacher satisfaction with high quality principal leadership (Branch, Hunshek, & Rivkin, 2012; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppenescu, & Easton, 2010; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hattie 2015; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Without question, the role of the principal as manager has shifted to include the role of instructional leader, a leader who is focused on students and creating an environment conducive to equitable access to high quality teaching and learning for all (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). However, many principals have had little opportunity to learn, develop, and refine skills necessary to assume the role of instructional leader.

While high quality principal leadership has implications across all academic areas it is particularly critical in the area of mathematics. Beliefs about [mathematics] teaching, learning, and leadership directly influence decisions regarding school priorities, teacher professional development, and teacher leadership potential. Mathematics teaching is a complex interdisciplinary enterprise which demands teachers have knowledge of teaching and learning, knowledge of mathematics (CBMS 2012; Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008; P2A 2014), and a clear understanding of the developmental nature of how students learn mathematics and progress across grades (Daro, Mosher, & Corcoran, 2011; Sztjan, Confrey, Wilson, & Edington, 2012; P2A 2014). It is imperative that principals have sustained, high quality opportunities to learn, develop, and refine skills necessary to meet the demands of instructional leader.

Look Fors

State plans should seek to reimagine the design and improve the quality of professional support for

principals. Plans address the unique opportunity to draw from the growing interest in research in preparing and supporting principals as instructional leaders by describing ways in which SEAs will—

1. establish principal cohorts where principals are given support to learn, develop, and refine skills that are centered around attributes of instructional leadership;
2. initiate a process for continually refining the work of supporting principals as instructional leaders and incorporating current subject-specific research on best practices;
3. promote partnerships w/ IHEs and build capacity for Research Practice Partnerships in faculty who are deeply immersed in the research and able to translate research for principal audience;
4. develop models for specialized and sustained professional development in research informed teaching practices for mathematics including background information, communication tools, and practice; and
5. establish norms for non-evaluative professional conversations.

States with Promising Features

The following states were identified as a result of the Promising Features Survey in which 13 state plans were reviewed by mathematics leaders across the country. Related text from the full state plans mentioned below can be found in Tool #12 at <http://nctm.org/essatoolkit>.

- **Maryland** will provide professional learning and a support network to principals to build their capacity to become strong instructional leaders and assist them in the development and support of teacher leaders.
- **Utah** will continue to offer principals professional learning opportunities focused on effective, content-specific instructional practices, for example through STEM Academies focused on engaging K–8 administrators in understanding best instructional practices associated with mathematics, science, engineering, and technology.