The Challenge

Inasmuch as the research on principal leadership in general has developed into a growing body of thick scholarship, the research on principal-evaluation systems remains surprisingly thin. This is concerning given the fact that nearly 60% of a school's total impact on student achievement is attributable to effective teacher and principal practices (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010), with the impact of leadership alone being described by some as the single most important factor in moving schools forward (Fullan, 2010a). In brief, while highly effective leaders are essential to school reform efforts and the exercise of effective leadership practices has been shown to have a strong, measurable effect on student achievement, teaching quality, and schools, our current evaluation practices treat these key players as nonessential employees. So, what can we learn from the research that is available on principal-evaluation systems?

PRINCIPAL-EVALUATION RESEARCH

To begin with, several recent surveys and reviews of principal-evaluation systems and instruments have yielded important lessons from the field. For example, Douglas Reeves (2009) surveyed more than 500 leaders from 21 states and reviewed more than 300 evaluation instruments in order to assess both the qualities of the leadership evaluation instruments as well as the experience of leaders being evaluated within the context of their work. Reeves concluded, among other things, that standards were vaguely worded, that feedback was tardy at best and absent at worst, and that the evaluation process itself is unhelpful to the improvement of leadership practices.

Ellen Goldring and her associates (2008) analyzed 65 evaluation instruments in order to take a deep look at what and how districts evaluate principals. These authors found that there was little congruency in performance areas, format, and levels of specificity among the analyzed evaluation instruments. Furthermore, they discovered that the leadership qualities that matter the most (i.e., rigorous curriculum and quality instruction) were given the least coverage within the evaluation instruments. The authors concluded that, more often than not, the assessment of leadership practices was missing justification and documentation related to the utility, psychometric properties, and accuracy of the instruments.

Next, operating on the belief that principal voices should be present within the national, state, and local dialogue about the redesign of principal-evaluation instruments, Matthew Clifford and Steven Ross (2010) convened elementary, middle, and high school principals to outline a framework for principal evaluation. Based on their review of the research on principal evaluation, they recommended that principal evaluations include compound measures of student, school, and principal achievement and take into account the context of school environments.

Last, Davis , Kearney, Sanders, Thomas, & Leon (2011) conducted one of the more comprehensive reviews of the literature to determine what research reveals about principal-evaluation systems. The authors identified a number of important conclusions about the status and descriptions of principal-evaluation systems before moving to recommendations for and best practices in the design of more effective principal-evaluation systems. Although Davis et al. identified a dozen recommendations for more effective evaluations, three of those 12 stood out as they reflect similar conclusions to those that Matthew Clifford and Steven Ross found in their work: (1) evaluations should reflect multiple evidence-gathering methods, (2) evaluation systems should accommodate variations in school contexts and environments, and (3) the most effective principal evaluations are those that are focused on a few high-impact actions.

In addition to these findings, the research that we reviewed regarding the effects of principal evaluation revealed that, in general

- Principal-evaluation systems lack depth and also lack focus on the right things (Goldring et al., 2008; Seashore-Louis et al., 2010; Mitgang, Gill, & Cummins, 2013).
- Principals perceive performance evaluation as having limited usefulness in the areas of feedback, professional learning, and accountability to school improvement (Portin, Feldman, & Knapp, 2006).
- Principal-evaluation systems contain vague performance expectations and/or lack clear norms or performance standards (Goldring et al., 2008; Reeves, 2009).
- Principal-evaluation systems have not been implemented in ways that promote accurate judgments of principal effectiveness (Clifford & Ross, 2011; Davis et al., 2011).

- Principal-evaluation systems are typically one-size-fits-all systems that do not differentiate for different school contexts (Clifford & Ross, 2011; Davis et al., 2011; Mitgang et al., 2013).
- Principal-evaluation systems have not been tested for critical psychometric properties and are not based on the latest research on principal leadership practices (Clifford, Menon, Gangi, Condon, & Hornung, 2012; Davis et al., 2011).
- Many principal-evaluation systems, not unlike many other educational initiatives, are poorly implemented (Kimball, Milanowski, & McKinney, 2009).

Consequently, a major challenge is for principal leadership evaluation to be used effectively as a benchmark for personnel functions, as a means to leverage within school leaders' day-to-day performance those leadership practices that are most directly related to increases in student achievement, as a powerful communication tool for providing and securing both summative as well as formative feedback from and to a school leader, and as a means of setting organizational goals for school leaders' professional development. Clearly, our current principal-evaluation practices must change in order to maximize the impact of school leaders on learning and student achievement. It is time for a better and more focused principal-evaluation system!

POSITIVE EFFORTS THAT ARE RESHAPING THE PRINCIPAL-EVALUATION LANDSCAPE

Despite the generally dreadful state of principal evaluation, there have been several significant efforts in the right direction. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), for instance, has performed an extensive comprehensive and research-based review of principal and school effectiveness and has clearly articulated many of the practices in which leaders need to be engaged in order to succeed in the 21st century. Moreover, subsequent to the development of the ISLLC Standards in 1996, more than 40 states have adopted them in their entirety or as a template to guide policy-making or the development of their own specific leadership performance expectations. Thus, the ISLLC Standards have significantly reshaped the principal-evaluation landscape by focusing states and local education associations on principals' behaviors and actions.

In addition to the ISLLC Standards, two recent studies have clearly revealed the leadership qualities that are essential for improved student achievement and have dramatically changed the role of the principal. For example, Viviane Robinson and her colleagues (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008) have helped to shape the leadership evaluation landscape by clearly defining the type of leadership as well as the specific practices that have shown to have the most significant impact on student learning.

What they discovered was that a leader who focuses his or her attention on such practices as relentlessly pursuing clear goals; aligning and allocating available resources in the pursuit of those goals; planning, coordinating, and evaluating both the teaching as well as the curriculum; encouraging and joining in teacher learning and development; and ensuring an orderly and supportive learning environment is "likely to have more positive impacts on student achievement and well-being" (p. 668) than those who focus on other leadership practices (i.e., inspirational motivation, individualized support, accessibility, etc.), which tend to positively influence teacher attitudes but rarely have an impact on student outcomes. Therefore, district office leaders who are responsible for principal evaluation, along with principals themselves, must make certain that they plan for and ensure that frequent high-impact instructional leadership practices routinely occur within the school community in order to have the most significant impact on student learning and well-being (see the Resources section for a crosswalk of the ISLLC Standards to our framework).

Karen Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) join with Robinson et al. (2008) in helping educators understand the leadership practices that matter the most to teachers and therefore to students and their learning! This investigation helps shape principal-evaluation systems and is particularly noteworthy because of the size of its database (with inclusion of data from nine states, 43 school districts, and 180 schools), the use of multiple theoretical and methodological approaches to their research (with inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative data), and the comprehensive sources of leadership examined (with inclusion of data from the state, district, school, classroom, and community levels). The authors' six-year study attempted to describe successful educational leadership and to explain how such leadership can foster changes in professional practice, yielding improvements in student learning. Numerous findings and implications for policy and practice were reported; the most important finding, however, was that "leadership practices targeted directly at teachers' instruction (i.e., instructional leadership) have significant, although indirect, effects on student achievement" (p. 10).

The ISLLC Standards, Viviane Robinson's descriptions of leadership practices that matter the most, and Karen Seashore-Louis and colleagues' efforts to clarify the leadership actions that seem to lead to improved student learning all represent significant steps forward in our efforts to reform and improve principal-evaluation systems. Consequently, the findings of research on the current state of principal evaluation; the contributions from the ISLLC; the efforts of researchers such as Karen Seashore-Louis, Kenneth Leithwood, John Hattie, Viviane Robinson, and countless others; and our own practical experience as principals and central office leaders have reshaped our concepts of what an effective principal-evaluation framework looks like. What follows is a step-by-step description of how we created a single-criterion leadership evaluation framework.

CREATING A SINGLE-CRITERION PRINCIPAL-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

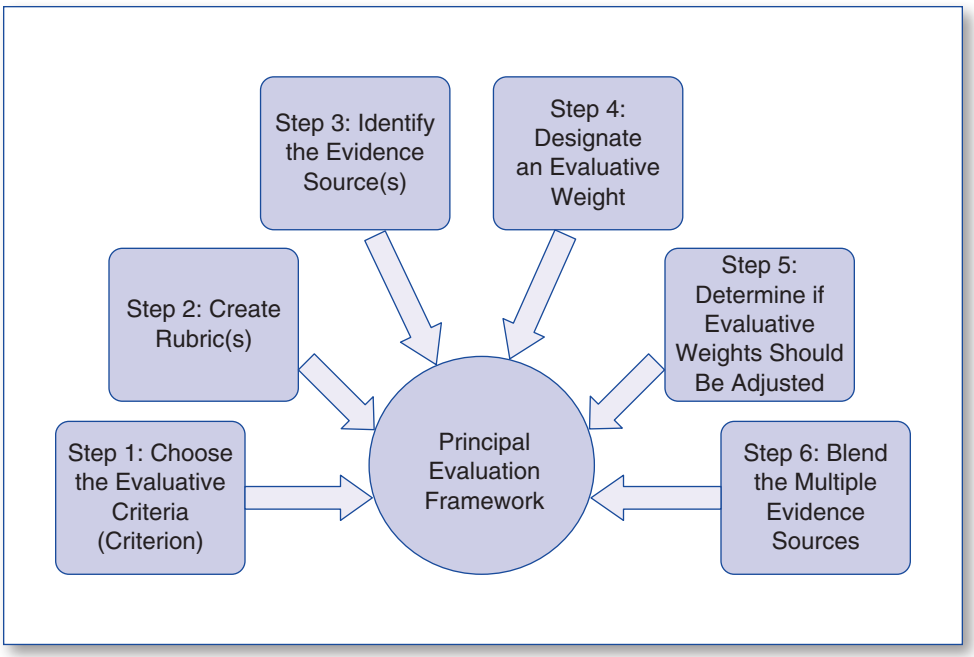
In the late summer of 2013, Corwin asked us to join a cadre of leaders selected from across the United States and the Canadian provinces to take part in a three-day Corwin Teacher-Evaluation Academy structured around the contents of a 2013 Corwin book entitled *Evaluating America's Teachers: Mission Possible?*, by Dr. W. James Popham. The Academy was taught by the author himself, a lively, passionate, learned, and witty gentleman, and his objective was to build capacity within a group of professional development consultants to be able to work with state departments and ministries of education, school districts, and school principals to help them avoid four serious mistakes found in the implementation of most teacher evaluation systems—mistakes that, if made, "can cripple a teacher-evaluation system" (p. 12). The three-day training session was very insightful. You probably are asking yourself why we are talking about teacher evaluation in a principal-evaluation book.

The reason we are talking about teacher evaluation is that the same five-step process that Dr. Popham utilizes in his book to develop a "weighted-evidence judgmental evaluation of teachers" (Popham, 2013, p. 36) reflects the steps that we went through to determine our leadership evaluation framework, with one small variation. We added a sixth step to Dr. Popham's work. These six steps include (1) choosing the evaluative criterion, (2) creating rubrics that describe what principals should be expected to know and be able to do within each criterion, (3) identifying the evidence source(s) to represent each evaluative criterion, (4) designating an evaluative weight to each evidence source selected, (5) determining whether any evaluative weights should be adjusted based on principal experience or school context, and (6) blending the multiple evidence sources into an overall judgment about a particular principal's quality. A depiction of the six steps is presented in Figure 1.1, followed by a description of each step.

Step 1: Choosing the Evaluative Criterion

There is a reason why the first step is the first step. Clearly, the single most important decision to be made as we attempt to construct an instrument to evaluate principals is the evaluative criteria for determining a principal's quality and their impact on adult and student learning and achievement. In reviewing the many different examples of principal evaluation currently in use, it is immediately obvious that districts focus on a mixture of performance areas when evaluating principals, with an assortment of designs at various levels of distinction (Goldring et al., 2008). The variety of leadership performance evaluations that districts use, however, generally have their origin in one of four national leadership standards bearers: (1) ISLLC Standards, (2) National Board Standards for Accomplished

Figure 1.1 Six Steps in Establishing a Single-Criterion Evaluation Framework



Principals, (3) the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education's Core Competencies and Key Processes (VAL-ED), or (4) leadership standards or frameworks developed by the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL) (Canole & Young, 2013). The performance expectations contained within ISLLC and National Board Standards are shown in Figure 1.2, and the performance expectations for VAL-ED and McREL are shown in Figure 1.3.

Once we retrieved these four sets of leadership performance expectations, we followed an inductive line of reasoning to detect patterns and regularities among the four sets of data to establish a rough draft synthesis of leadership expectations that we think is compact yet comprehensive. That is, we recorded each expectation verbatim onto a spreadsheet, read each repeatedly, grouped them together, merged items that were similar, and, based on a detailed analysis of the meaning of the items included, we developed a newly synthesized list. This rough draft synthesis is depicted in Figure 1.4.

Next, as we noted previously, given the fact that the authors of a number of current research studies on effective principal-evaluation systems argued for educational practitioners to narrow and deepen their focus on a few high-impact leadership practices (Goldring et al., 2008; Seashore-Louis et al., 2010; Davis et al., 2011) we filtered these seven leadership expectations

Figure 1.2 A Comparison of ISLLC and National Board Standards

ISLLC Standards	National Board Standards
• Setting a widely shared vision for learning • Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth • Ensuring effective management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment • Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources • Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner • Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context	• Lead with a sense of urgency and achieve the highest results for all students and adults • Lead and inspire the learning community to develop, articulate, and commit to a shared and compelling vision of the highest level of student achievement and adult instructional practice . . . and advance the mission through collaborate processes that focus and drive the organization toward that vision • Ensure that teaching and learning are the primary foci of the organization • Ensure that each student and each adult in the learning community is known and valued . . . develop systems so that individuals are supported socially, emotionally, and intellectually in development, learning, and achievement • Inspire and nurture a culture of high expectations, wherein actions support the common values and beliefs of the organization • Skillfully lead the design, development, and implementation of strategic management systems and processes that actualize the vision and mission • Consistently demonstrate a high degree of personal and professional ethics exemplified by justice, integrity, and equity • Effectively advocate internally and externally to advance the organization's vision and mission • Encourage leaders to act as humble lead learners who make their practice public and view their own learning as a foundational part of school leadership

through the research results reported by Robinson et al. (2008) to determine which aligned with the leadership practices that had been determined to have the greatest impact on student achievement. Why pay attention to this research in particular you ask? Plainly put, their research is highlighted in John Hattie's (2009) international best-selling educational book entitled

Figure 1.3 A Comparison of VAL-ED and McREL Performance Expectations

VAL-ED	McREL
• Core Components 1. High standards for student learning—The extent to which leadership ensures there are individual, team, and school goals for rigorous student academic and social learning 2. Rigorous curriculum—Ambitious academic content provided to all students in core academic subjects 3. Quality instruction—Effective instructional practices that maximize student academic and social learning 4. Culture of learning and professional behavior—Leadership ensures that there are integrated communities of professional practice in the service of student academic and social learning 5. Connections to external communities—Leading a school with high expectations and academic achievement for all students requires robust connections to the external community 6. Performance accountability—There is individual and collective responsibility among the leadership, faculty, students, and the community for achieving the rigorous student academic and social learning goals • Key Processes 7. Planning—Leaders articulate a shared direction and coherent policies, practices, and procedures 8. Implementing—Leaders put into practice the activities necessary to realize high standards for student performance 9. Supporting—Leaders create enabling conditions; they secure and use the financial, political, technological, and human resources necessary to promote academic and social learning	• Culture—Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation • Order—Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines • Discipline—Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus • Resources—Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs • Involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment—Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices • Focus—Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention • Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment—Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices • Visibility—Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students • Contingent rewards—Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments • Communication—Establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and among students • Outreach—Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders • Input—Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies • Affirmation—Recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges failures

VAL-ED	McREL
10. Advocating—Leaders promote the diverse needs of students within and beyond the school 11. Communicating—Leaders develop, utilize, and maintain systems of exchange among members of the school and with its external communities 12. Monitoring—Leaders systematically collect and analyze data to make judgments that guide decisions and actions for continuous improvement	• Relationship—Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff • Change agent—Is willing to challenge, and actively challenges, the status quo • Optimize—Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations • Ideals/beliefs—Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling • Monitors/evaluates—Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning • Flexibility—Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent • Situational awareness—Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems • Intellectual stimulation—Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture

Figure 1.4 Rough Draft Synthesis of Leadership Expectations

Synthesis of Leadership Expectations
1. Establishing a shared vision, goals, and expectations
2. Developing, utilizing, and maintaining effective systems of communication among members of the school and with its external communities
3. Strategic resourcing
4. Ensuring teacher and staff effectiveness
5. Leading and participating in teacher/leader learning and development
6. Providing an orderly, safe, and supportive environment
7. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner

Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement. Additionally, the findings reported by Robinson et al. (2008) were cited in many of the research studies that we reviewed for this book. In short, their research is highly respected within the field. The results of this winnowing process (i.e., removing less important items from a larger list of items) can be seen in Figure 1.5, where we list the five elements of enhanced leadership practice. We chose the word *element* over other alternatives (i.e., *domains, standards,* etc.) as we believed that this word underscores the fact that each

Figure 1.5 Five Elements of Enhanced Leadership Practice

Elements of Enhanced Leadership Practice ***Instructional Leadership Ability***	
Element	**Description**
Establishing a shared vision/mission, goals, and expectations	Involves the establishment, communication, and monitoring of performance as well as learning goals and expectations and the engagement of internal and external stakeholders in the process to achieve clarity and consensus in the vision and goals
Strategic resourcing	Involves linking the section and allocation of resources (i.e., money, people, and time) to the school's priority goals. Includes the recruitment, selection, and retention of staff with suitable expertise
Ensuring teacher and staff effectiveness	Includes the leader's direct involvement in supporting and evaluating teaching through frequent classroom observations, with feedback provided to and collected from teachers. Involves establishing a coherent instructional program, ongoing dialogue with teachers about the relationship between teaching and student achievement, and monitoring of student performance data to drive continuous program improvement
Leading and participating in teacher/leader learning and development	Involves leaders who both lead and participate with teachers in targeted professional development that is either formal or informal in nature
Providing an orderly, safe, and supportive environment	Involves creating an environment that provides assurances that teachers and students can focus on learning by setting and enforcing clear expectations, protecting teachers from outside pressures, and addressing staff conflict quickly and effectively

element is a fundamental, necessary part of the whole evaluation system and sufficiently conveys the scope and importance of a leader's work.

We settled on these five elements of leadership practices—practices that are associated with instructional leadership (Robinson et al., 2008)—because current research has concluded that the "mean effect size estimates for the impact of instructional leadership on student outcomes is three to four times greater than that of transformational leadership" (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 655). Specifically, the mean effect size (ES) for the impact of instructional leadership on student outcomes was 0.42, whereas the mean effect size for the impact of transformational leadership on student outcomes was 0.11 (Robinson, 2011). Effect size is a simple measure for quantifying the difference between two groups or the same group over time on a common scale. For example, an effect size of 0.40 indicates that the mean of the treated group is at the 66th percentile of the untreated group. That is, the average person in the treated group would score higher than 66% of the untreated group that was initially equivalent. As a general guide, an effect size of between 0.00 and 0.20 can be interpreted as showing no or weak effect; between 0.20 and 0.40, a small but possibly educationally significant effect; between 0.40 and 0.60, a moderate educationally significant effect; and greater than 0.60, a large and educationally significant effect.

Transformational leadership practices typically include such things as providing inspirational motivation, individualized support, direction, instructional support, monitoring of school activity, buffering staff from external demands, and accessibility. Although these transformational leadership practices are important, research suggests that they are not sufficient. In particular, Robinson et al. (2008) found that, while the transformational leadership practices had an impact on teacher attitudes, the effects generally failed to have an impact on student outcomes.

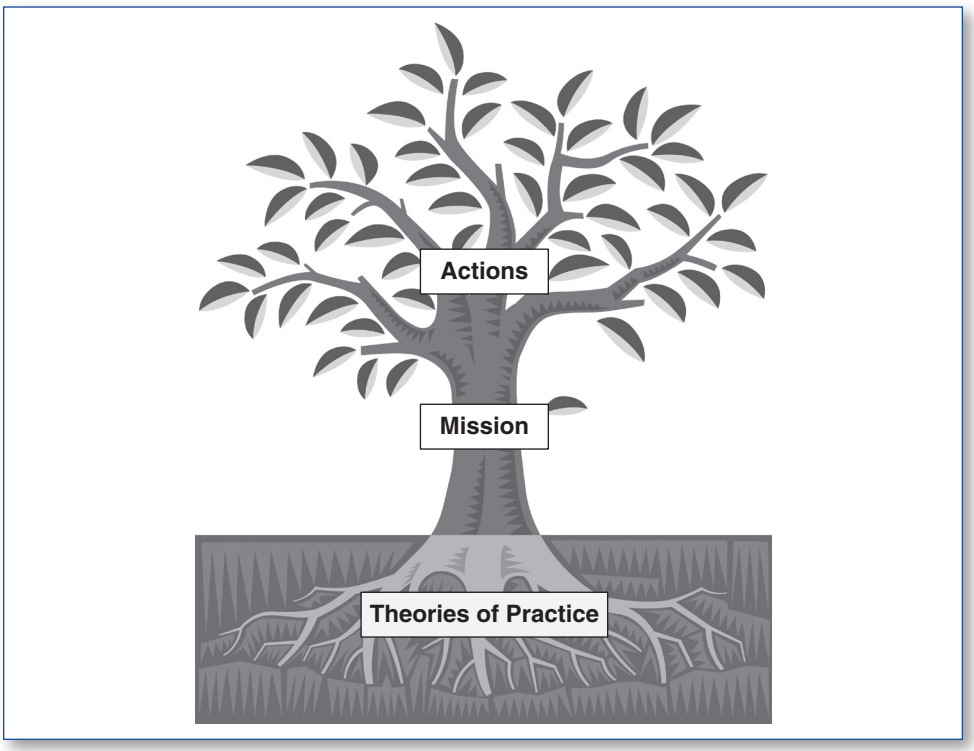
Moreover, as you can see when you compare Figure 1.5 with Figure 1.4, the list of leadership practices has been reduced from seven to five practices. We eliminated two practices: (1) developing, utilizing, and maintaining effective systems of communication among members of the school and with its external communities and (2) acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. On the surface, the omission of these two leadership practices may cause the reader some concern. So let us explain the reasoning behind that decision.

Clearly, effective leaders must establish strong communication links between internal and external members of the school community. After all, communication is without question an important leadership capability. However, we would argue that, in addition to being able to communicate effectively, effective leaders also must rely on a number of other important leadership practices (i.e., a clearly articulated set of theories of action that underpins their every action in school and guides them to apply leadership content knowledge to resolve problems while at the

same time building relational trust with students, staff, parents, and non-parent community members), which we discuss in greater detail in Chapter 2. In this sense, a leader's instructional leadership practices are like the branches of a living tree. These branches grow naturally out of a common trunk (representing their mission or a set of core beliefs or "mindsets" [Dweck, 2006] that guide their actions) and common roots (representing the theories of practice that give sustenance and life to their leadership practices). The relationship among theories of practice, mission, and leadership actions is depicted in Figure 1.6.

So, we decided to eliminate communication as a leadership practice because we agree with Viviane Robinson and her colleagues, who argued that this capability could be excluded as an instructional leadership practice because it is deeply embedded in all of the leadership elements (Robinson et al., 2008). In other words, effective leadership involves not only the task of decision-making but also the facilitation of staff discussions and the nurturing of trusting relationships that lead to shared solutions and good decision-making. In short, if leaders do not get the relationships right, it will be problematic for them to accomplish the task.

Figure 1.6 Relationship of Leadership Actions, Mission, and Theories of Practice



The second leadership practice that we eliminated was ethics. Inasmuch as we would strongly argue that high ethical standards for principals are necessary, we agree with the position taken by New Leaders for New Schools (2010), who stated that "this [matter] is best identified as a non-negotiable condition of employment" (p. 20) instead of as a stand-alone element with a range of performance levels. Therefore, we have removed these two items from the list and end Step 1 with five instructional leadership ability elements. More importantly, by winnowing down to five instructional leadership ability elements, we believe that we have effectively addressed the research finding that principal-evaluation systems typically lack depth and also lack focus on the right things (Goldring et al., 2008; Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). A focus on these five dimensions of instructional leadership ability, representing elements of a single criterion, is a focus on the right things.

Step 2: Creating Rubrics for Each Dimension

You will recall from our earlier comments that a second criticism of principal-evaluation systems was that many systems contain vague performance expectations and/or lack clear norms or performance standards (Goldring et al., 2008; Reeves, 2009). Step 2 calls for us to address this issue. Consequently, we have developed five rubrics (see Chapter 3 for details), one for each of the five instructional leadership elements, that make up the single criterion for instructional leadership ability. That is, we provide rich narrative descriptions (rubrics) of the instructional leadership performance elements themselves along with clear "word picture descriptions" (Hall & Hord, 2011, p. 48) of each dimension to deepen and enrich the reader's understanding of what each is expecting the school leader to know and be able to do—the expectations of instructional leadership ability.

Toward that end, the next five chapters, each one dedicated to a thorough development of a single instructional leadership ability element, is organized into four parts: A Rationale and Description of the particular element, the Evidence of Impact for that element, a chapter Summary, and a Rubric for the element. That is, for each element, a rubric has been created, made up of rich descriptions of leadership practice that are situated along a continuum ranging from exemplary practice on one end to not meeting standards of practice on the other. Additionally, these descriptions of practice are further subdivided into the components of the element or its critical attributes, and several possible authentic examples of what the instructional leadership ability practice looks like according to the degree of proficiency being practiced in order to invite self-assessment and formative feedback. There are four levels of performance: exemplary, proficient, progressing, and not meeting expectations (see Chapter 2 for a general explanation of each performance level). The rubric template can be seen in Figure 1.7.

Figure 1.7 Element Rubric Template

Name of Element				
	Exemplary	Proficient	Progressing	Not Meeting Expectations
Rubric Language	Descriptions of leadership practice			
Critical Attributes	Essential elements of the element			
Real-World Examples	Authentic examples of what the practice looks like			

Step 3: Identifying the Evidence Source(s)

Several groups of researchers have argued that principal evaluations should reflect multiple evidence-gathering methods (Davis et al., 2011; Clifford & Ross, 2011; Sanders, Kearney, & Vince, 2012) in order to capture the scope and complexity of new expectations. Consequently, this section describes the process that we went through to identify the evidence sources that would appropriately represent the established evaluative criteria. Identifying sources of evidence is important work in that the evaluative criteria themselves become consequential only when leader evaluators denote how a leader's performance status with respect to a given evaluative criterion will be determined.

A number of authors and researchers helped to shape our thinking as we worked our way through this step. For example, a joint Principal Evaluation Committee of practicing principals (i.e., representatives of elementary, middle, and high school principals who are members of the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals) convened in 2010 to outline a framework for principal evaluation (Clifford & Ross, 2010). The committee's suggested evaluations included multiple measures of student, school, and principal success that place value on the context of the school environment. Clifford and Ross identified six key domains within their ideal principal-evaluation system and identified measurement examples as a part of each domain. For instance, within the fifth domain, entitled

Professional Qualities and Instructional Leadership, they list the following measurement examples:

- "Portfolio artifacts of principal performance aligned to state, district or national professional standards;
- The degree to which a principal achieved goals from the previous year's professional growth plan;
- Observations of principal practice;
- Providing actionable feedback to teachers to improve practice;
- 360-degree surveys of faculty, staff and evaluators; and
- Self-reflections from principals" (p. 20)

Next, the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) principal-evaluation system includes "an evidence-based, multi-rater rating scale that assesses principals' learning-centered leadership behaviors known to directly influence teachers' performance, and in turn students' learning" (Porter et al., 2008, p. 5). The VAL-ED survey instrument asks each respondent to consider the item describing a principal's behavior and, ahead of rating the principal on his or her effectiveness on that item, directs the respondent to identify what sources of evidence he or she used to make the rating. The sources of evidence that respondents can select include:

- Reports from others
- Personal observations
- School documents
- School projects or activities
- Other sources
- No evidence

The third system is the New Leaders for New Schools (2010) principal-evaluation system. Like the prior two evaluation systems, this system also promotes the use of multiple sources of evidence by principal managers in their assessment of principals. While the authors of this evaluation system support the use of multiple sources of evidence, they "do not offer a particular bundle of sources of evidence" (p. 24); rather, they recommend "some promising and useful options" (p. 24) for educational practitioners, such as

- Direct observation of leadership practice
- Surveys of parent perceptions
- Surveys of teacher perceptions
- School quality reviews
- Student performance data (especially in nontested grades)

Perhaps the most helpful document that we reviewed was the report from WestEd (Sanders et al., 2012), entitled *Using Multiple Forms of Data in*

Principal Evaluations: An Overview with Examples. Essentially, the authors provide an explanation about the use of multiple forms of data relative to principal-evaluation systems. The authors also present hypothetical examples as to how to use multiple forms of data that give states, districts, and organizations a range of options to consider when designing their own principal-evaluation system. Last, they provide a review of several leadership evaluation examples from the field (i.e., Arizona Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness, Colorado Principal Evaluation Framework, Florida Personnel Evaluation System, Maryland Educator Evaluation System, New Leaders Principal Evaluation System, New York City Principal Performance Review, Tennessee Teacher and Principal Evaluation Policy, and Washington D.C. Public Schools Effectiveness Assessment System for School-Based Personnel: IMPACT) and how they incorporated multiple forms of data within their respective principal-evaluation systems.

Based on our review of the aforementioned documents as well as our practical experience, we decided to operationalize the elements of instructional leadership ability by relying on five specific sources of evidence, namely, (1) *student learning* as reflected by changes in the scores of a school's students on the current end-of-year statewide accountability tests and the scores of those students on previously administered versions of these tests and teacher-made assessments; (2) *teacher effectiveness* as reflected in the percentage of teachers for whom a principal is responsible who make "effective" gains in student achievement results and the percentage of teachers who are evaluated as effective; (3) *teacher, student, and parent ratings* of a principal's instructional leadership ability as collected three times a year via brief, anonymously completed rating forms; (4) *professional growth* as measured by the degree to which a principal achieved goals from the current year's *Deliberate Practice* plan; and, (5) *leadership assessment* as measured by a supervisor's qualitative rating and observations.

Step 4: Designating an Evaluative Weight

The fourth major task in developing the instructional leadership ability framework calls for the weighting of each evidence source selected. In other words, for all the evidence sources that we have selected to represent the instructional leadership ability criterion, we must make judgments regarding how much evaluative weight we should give to each of those sources toward an overall evaluation judgment. For instance, the New York City framework stipulates that student achievement accounts for 32% of the total, principal goals for 31%, teacher effectiveness for 22%, and district goals 15%. The District of Columbia Public Schools requires that 50% of the total come from student achievement and 50% come from the six Leadership Framework Standards (i.e., 25% from the instruction standard and 15% each for the talent, school culture, operations, family

and community, and personal leadership standards). The Colorado principal-evaluation model specifies that 50% of the principal-evaluation be based on the six professional Quality Standards: strategic leadership, instructional leadership, school cultural and equity leadership, human resource leadership, managerial leadership, and external development leadership. The other half of a principal's evaluation is based on the seventh Quality Standard, which measures the academic growth of students in their school.

Based on our observations from research and our own practice, we designed our principal-evaluation system with the following suggested evaluative weights (see Figure 1.8):

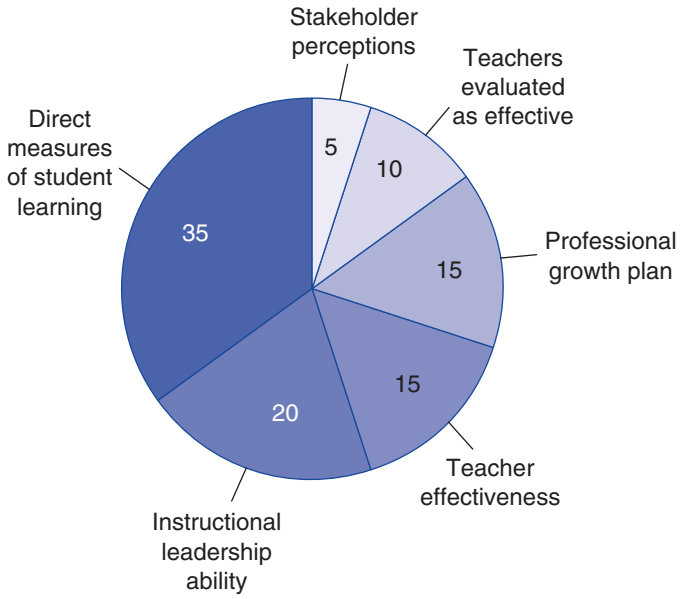
- 35% on direct measures of student learning as reflected in changes in the scores of a school's students on the current end-of-year statewide accountability assessment and those students' scores on previously administered versions of these tests in addition to classroom-based assessments;
- 15% on teacher effectiveness in improving student achievement;
- 10% on the percentage of teachers evaluated as effective;
- 5% on teacher, student, and parent ratings of the leader's performance;
- 15% on the leader's professional growth (Deliberate Practice); and
- 20% on instructional leadership ability assessment

This distribution of evaluative weights accomplishes a number of important goals. First, it makes improving student achievement, measured directly and as a result of teachers, 60% of the total evaluation (35% from direct measures of student achievement and 25% from teacher effectiveness). Second, it underscores the important function of school leaders to recruit, retain, and support effective teachers. Third, it values the importance of feedback from others' perspectives, which are intended to illuminate our judgments about a leader's instructional leadership ability because leaders' actions are not always perceived in the same manner in which they were intended. Fourth, it places appropriate emphasis on the continuous efforts of leaders to improve their practices against the critical elements of leadership practices. Last, it serves to focus school leaders' work on the right stuff, specifically, instructional leadership—those practices that have been proven to have the greatest impact on student performance.

Step 5: Determining if Evaluative Weights Should Be Adjusted

Step 5 calls for a personalized judgment about whether evaluative weights should be adjusted to take into account such context-related issues as community environments, school environments that are in need of transformation (i.e., low expectations for students and toxic adult attitudes), level of principal expertise (i.e., novice versus veteran), school level (i.e., elementary,

Figure 1.8 Evaluative Weight



middle, high school), size of school, and school setting (urban versus rural). In an effort to provide direction to school districts as to how they can foster improvements in teaching and learning, Karen Seashore-Louis et al. (2010) observed that policies may need to be individualized to order to recognize "the importance of different school contexts, whether they are a result of demographic characteristics, administrator experience, school size, or school level. One-size-fits all policies will not" (p. 215) build confidence in the staff to meet very local needs.

A number of studies that we reviewed support the idea that district policies, including principal-evaluation policies, need to flex relative to individual school contexts (Davis et al., 2011; Portin et al., 2006; Clifford & Ross, 2010). Most notable, however, were the recommendations from New Leaders for New Schools (2010), which supported the research findings in a fairly straightforward manner. Specifically, they identified three specific ways in which school systems might suitably adjust expectations and still hold performance expectations at a high level: (1) differentiate for level of leadership expertise (i.e., novice versus veteran) so that principal managers can place more weight on "the accomplishment of leadership expectations and less on student achievement results" (p. 25), (2) differentiate for the school level in an effort to address the inherent differences between the jobs of a secondary school

principal and an elementary school principal, and (3) differentiate evaluative weights based on the school's position on the improvement continuum, that is, whether the school is just beginning to establish school practices to counter toxic cultures and ineffective adult actions or whether the school has highly refined adult practices that adequately support all levels of student achievement. We believe that the three simple, candid, research-based approaches that New Leaders for New Schools suggest as a way to differentiate evaluative weights make practical sense, and therefore we have applied them to our framework.

Step 6: Blending the Multiple Evidence Sources

The final task in this six-step process required us to pull all of the pieces together so that a final, overall evaluation of a leader can be made. Inasmuch as this blending of evaluative evidence can be played out on a variety of levels of complexity, we suggest employing a very straightforward approach, as reflected in Figure 1.9. You will notice that this approach consists of a number of different features. First, each of the five measures is arranged in a tabular format. The evaluative weights for all five evidence measures are presented in the form of percentages in parentheses, immediately to the right of the label for each measure. For example, Measures of Student Learning has an evaluative weight of 35%. Second, you will also see that three of the five measures (Measures 1, 2, and 5) include multiple evidence sources, whereas the other two (Measures 3 and 4) use a single evidence source. In total, then, we are employing eight evidence sources. Third, the far right column reflects the number of points out of 100 potential points that could be earned by the leader for each evidence source. Last, at the very bottom of Figure 1.9, you will see that we have provided a qualitative scale for determining overall instructional leadership ability.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we reviewed some of the key research to date on principal evaluation. Although this research has been found to be lacking in quantity, the quality of the conclusions being made within this research is sufficient enough to suggest that improvements are long overdue. However, several bright spots in this rather dismal picture were highlighted. Clearly, the continuing efforts of organizations such as The Council of Chief State School Officers, National Board for Professional Teaching, Vanderbilt University, the National Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals as well as researchers such as Matthew Clifford, Steven Ross, Ellen Goldring, Joseph Murphy, Karen Seashore-Louis, Kenneth Leithwood, and Viviane Robinson to provide leadership in this area are helping to positively reshape the leadership evaluation landscape. These organizations

Figure 1.9 Summative Evaluation

Instructional Leadership Ability Summative Evaluation			
Name:	**School:**	**Date:**	
1. Measures of Student Learning (Evaluative Weight = 35%)			
Growth in State Assessments		out of	25
Classroom-Based Assessments		out of	10
Subtotal		**out of**	**35**
2. Measures of Teacher Effectiveness (Evaluative Weight = 25%)			
Improving Student Achievement (percent ≥0.40 ES)		out of	15
Teachers Evaluated as Effective		out of	10
Subtotal		**out of**	**25**
3. Measures of Others' Ratings of Leader's Performance (Evaluative Weight = 5%)			
Teacher, Student, and Parent Survey Ratings		out of	5
Subtotal		**out of**	**5**
4. Measures of Leader's Professional Growth (Evaluative Weight = 15%)			
Deliberate Practice		out of	15
Subtotal		**out of**	**15**
5. Measures of Instructional Leadership Ability Assessment (Evaluative Weight = 20%)			
Instructional Leadership Ability Assessment		out of	15
Observation			5
Subtotal		**out of**	**20**
GRAND TOTAL =		**out of**	**100**
District-Designated Overall Instructional Leadership Ability Categories: Exemplary = 91 or more out of 100, Proficient = 75 to 90, Progressing = 64 to 74, Not Meeting Expectations = Less than 64			

and authors helped to crystallize our views on principal evaluation, which we presented in a six-step process. Each of the six steps that we went through were discussed, and decisions leading up to the establishment of a single-criterion leadership evaluation system were revealed.