

How States Can Ensure Schools Have Principals Who Advance Teaching and Learning*

In seeking to improve education for all students, state policymakers often overlook the key role of the school principal as a driver of effective teaching and learning. There's no single formula for better state policy regarding principals because each state is unique, but three sets of considerations can help direct policymaking.

*From *Developing Excellent School Principals to Advance Teaching and Learning: Considerations for State Policy*, by Paul Manna.



Assessing State and Local Contexts

- Varied state governance structures and politics
- Diverse locales
- Different capacities to implement policy
- Web of current state mandates affecting principals

Sound policymaking rests on understanding basics about a state and its localities: how different state agencies wield authority and interact with one another; the variety of urban, suburban and rural communities; state and local capabilities to carry out change; and state mandates already shaping the principal's job.



Considering Policy Levers

- Setting principal standards
- Recruiting aspiring principals
- Overseeing principal preparation
- Licensing principals
- Supporting professional development
- Evaluating principals

States have formal and informal powers to develop more effective principals, from setting standards for the profession to strengthening training, licensure and evaluation.



Setting Agendas

- Principals' contributions little understood
- Principals a low priority on crowded state agendas
- Yet principals can be multipliers of effective teaching

Principals merit a more prominent place on state education policy agendas because of their powerful and singular role in improving education school-wide.