

Performance Assessment of Residency Principal Interns on Washington Standard 5 Knowledge and Skills

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Abstract

There needs to be a shift from the “report card” type reporting of principal work to an assessment that looks at meaningful measures of the results of leaders’ work. According to research studies (Bridges, 1982; Davis, 2005), assessments tend to rely on leadership traits or characteristics (inputs) rather than meaningful measures of the results of the leaders work (outcomes).

The target of assessment should be to look at the leadership in relation to learning. To determine whether the 2011-12 interns are having a positive impact on students learning, we adopted Standard 5 Knowledge and Skills statements to assess interns’ leadership abilities. The interns self-assessed themselves in spring 2012, and then two weeks later their building supervisors were asked to assess the interns. The result showed no significant difference between the mean scores of the interns to that of the supervising principal.

Introduction

School administrators who can lead students to success in schools are in high demand. The current situation of education demands more accountability of all who are responsible for educating our nation’s children. The families, communities and systems of higher education would like to see students perform at higher levels and be prepared to enter the “real world;” whether their path is education or the job force. Student success rate in school makes a student more competitive in today’s struggling economy. What is being done about the accountability of school administration and their abilities to help students succeed? Many states have adopted the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards known to many as the ISLLC standards.

Most importantly there is a need for school leaders that have the capacity and foresight to usher students, teachers and communities into the 21st century and beyond (“Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC,” 2008). ISSLC standards are the basis for the reformation

of school administrators as instructional leaders. We are looking at the creation of effective performance standards that are designed to measure the success of school leaders and strengthen educational leadership as a whole (“Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC,” 2008).

The ISLLC standards themselves focus on the concepts that develop effective leaders. More than ever principals are in the hot seat to improve teaching and learning (Wallace Foundation, 2009). Principals need to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special program administrators and expert overseers of legal, contractual and policy mandates and initiatives. Effective leadership is vital to the success of a school (Wallace Foundation, 2009).

A school has a slim chance of creating and sustaining high-quality learning environments without a skilled and committed leader. A leader to help shape the teaching and learning going on within that school’s walls (Wallace Foundation, 2009). School administrators are shifting from building managers to learning leaders. Learning leaders must be held accountable by the ISLLC standards, which in turn support the learning and assessment needs of the teachers and the students under that principal’s tutelage.

With the new reformation of what a school leader is, there is also much debate about assessment. Why is assessment so challenging in education? The issues seem to lie within the fact that there is so much history, decentralized structure and widely varying local politics in public education (Wallace Foundation, 2009). This is also enveloped by the ideas about what leaders should be prioritizing in their schools. It is without question that the various outside entities affecting public education have made it difficult to reach an agreement about what should be assessed and what educational leaders should emphasize the most. School leaders are expected to improve their performance throughout their careers, which in turn strengthens the curriculum being taught and raises the percentage of student success. But how do we know if the right information is being gathered about the effectiveness of their behaviors and actions as leaders?

School leaders can no longer be assessed managers of buildings; they must also be assessed according to the ISLLC standards set that help them exhibit behaviors as leaders of learning that are effective (Wallace Foundation, 2009).

The extent to which current assessment practices relate to what principals do, how and whether they relate to accepted leadership standards, and what the supervisor has as useful data besides just test scores to assess principals’ performance is widely varied (Wallace Foundation, 2009). There is a current worry about the variation that exists in assessment processes. Assessments for principals are conducted very differently by school districts, with no clear norms or performance standards (Wallace Foundation, 2009). The inconsistency lies in the assessments that are developed, the leadership standards that are used and if the measures are valid and reliable. Very few of the current assessment strategies have a conceptual framework based on how leaders improve student learning (Wallace Foundation, 2009).

Assessment of leadership is needed in order to hold the leaders of our schools accountable for the standards that are being set forth across the nation (a huge increase in adopting the ISLLC standards in higher education as a pre-requisite for new leaders in the school system). Leadership assessment needs to produce different information about the implementation and application of the ISLLC standards. There needs to be a variety of purposes and outputs evaluated for different people to use (Portin, 2006). There needs to be an alignment of purposes,

practices and a goal of improving leadership, classroom teaching and student learning. This alignment will allow a critical and valid evaluation of the powerful role that assessment will play in emerging and sustaining an effective school system.

ISLLC Standards: Originally founded to provide state-of-the-art leadership development programs for school leaders, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) has expanded its outreach into the development of standards for school leaders. The most recent ISLLC's six standards are developed through the support and work of the Council of Chief State School Officers in collaboration with other notable national organizations such as National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). Each of the six standards provides knowledge requirements, dispositions/attitudes that must be manifested by the accomplishment of the behaviors reflecting the knowledge and the behavior performances that could be observed.

Method

All spring 2012 interns participated in the self-assessment study while 9 of the interns' building supervisors responded to the assessment questionnaire. To determine whether the 2011-12 interns are having a positive impact on students learning, we adopted Standard 5 Knowledge and Skills statements to assess interns' leadership abilities. The interns self-assessed themselves in spring 2012, and then two weeks later their building supervisors were asked to assess the interns. They were asked to "Choose how frequently you engaged in the behavior described by the statement during the internship experience" with a scale of 1= Never, 2 = Seldom, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often and 5 = Always.

The essence of this convenient sample study was to determine whether there was a significant difference between principal interns perception of their performance when compared to that of their building supervisors. The study was limited to those dimensions measured by instrument: Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Planning with Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, and Engaging Communities.

The data for the two groups was averaged and entered into SPSS using a *t*-test to test for significant differences between principal interns' perception of their performance on Standard 5-Knowledge and skills to that of the building supervisors. The level of significance to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis was set at .05.

Results

The mid-quarter survey data was entered into SPSS and an independent sample *t*-test was conducted. The group category presents "1" for principal interns and "2" for building supervisors. The chart below shows the descriptive statistics of the variables for the two groups.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

| | Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|-------|----|--------|----------------|-----------------|
| Creating a Culture: <i>Influence, establish and sustain a school culture conducive to continuous improvement for students and staff:</i> | | | | | |
| Q1 - Articulate and model a shared belief vision for continuous improvement and lifelong learning within the entire school. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.6000 | .51640 | .16330 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.6667 | .50000 | .16667 |
| Q2 Promote and model an atmosphere of inclusiveness, equity and respect among students, staff and community. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.7000 | .48305 | .15275 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.7778 | .44096 | .14699 |
| Q3 - Develop and model an atmosphere of personal responsibility, trust and collaboration among students and staff. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.7000 | .48305 | .15275 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.8889 | .33333 | .11111 |
| Q4 - Understand the needs and strengths of the individuals and groups in the school. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.5000 | .52705 | .16667 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.5556 | .52705 | .17568 |
| Q5 - Use authentic assessment data, including self-appraisal, to measure culture and inform action of individuals, groups and the school system. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.2000 | .63246 | .20000 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.4444 | .88192 | .29397 |
| Ensuring School Safety: <i>Lead the development and annual update of a comprehensive safe schools plan that includes prevention, intervention, crisis response and recovery.</i> | | | | | |
| Q6 - Supervise teachers' instructional practices, classroom management and discipline to ensure a safe classroom environment. | 1.00 | 10 | 3.6000 | .69921 | .22111 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.0000 | .86603 | .28868 |
| Q7 - Develop open communication systems that allow for proactive identification and intervention of potential incidents. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.4000 | .51640 | .16330 |
| | 2.00 | 8 | 4.6250 | .74402 | .26305 |
| Q8 - Communicate so that students, parents and community members are confident the school is safe. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.4000 | .69921 | .22111 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.7778 | .44096 | .14699 |
| Planning with Data: <i>Lead the development, implementation and evaluation of the data-driven plan for improvement of student achievement:</i> | | | | | |
| Q9 - Clearly communicate the elements of the school improvement plan with constituent groups (staff, parents, board and community). | 1.00 | 10 | 4.0000 | .94281 | .29814 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.4444 | .72648 | .24216 |
| Q10 - Collaborate, problem-solve and build consensus with individuals and groups. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.6000 | .51640 | .16330 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.4444 | .72648 | .24216 |
| Aligning Curriculum: <i>Assist instructional staff in aligning curriculum, instruction and assessment with state and local learning goals:</i> | | | | | |
| Q11 - Use a variety of assessments to diagnose learning needs and to design appropriate learning interventions to improve success on state, local and classroom measures. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.4000 | .69921 | .22111 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.5556 | .72648 | .24216 |
| Q12 - Assist in adjusting to and accepting curriculum, instruction and assessment changes. | 1.00 | 10 | 3.8000 | .63246 | .20000 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.5556 | .72648 | .24216 |

| | | | | | |
|--|------|----|--------|---------|--------|
| Q13 - Engage instructional staff in frequent conversations/reflection about classroom practice. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.2000 | .63246 | .20000 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.5556 | .72648 | .24216 |
| Improving Instruction: <i>Monitor, assist and evaluate staff implementation of the school improvement plan, effective instructing and assessment practices.</i> | | | | | |
| Q14 - Engage each staff member in their appropriate implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). | 1.00 | 10 | 3.4000 | 1.07497 | .33993 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.1111 | .92796 | .30932 |
| Q15 - Use a variety of data to inform and support decisions about instruction and assessment of learning. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.2000 | .78881 | .24944 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.5556 | .72648 | .24216 |
| Managing Resources: <i>Manage human and fiscal resources to accomplish student achievement goals:</i> | | | | | |
| Q16 - Possess knowledge of laws related to special areas (e.g. ASB, special programs, grants). | 1.00 | 10 | 3.9000 | .99443 | .31447 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.3333 | 1.00000 | .33333 |
| Q17 - Have knowledge of effective practices as well as rules and regulations related to staff supervision, coaching and evaluation. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.0000 | .81650 | .25820 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.2222 | .97183 | .32394 |
| Q18 - Effectively address difficult issues and conduct difficult discussions. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.0000 | .81650 | .25820 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.1111 | .78174 | .26058 |
| Engaging Communities: <i>Communicate and partner with school community members to promote student learning:</i> | | | | | |
| Q19 - Partner and collaborate with administrative colleagues. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.7000 | .48305 | .15275 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.7778 | .44096 | .14699 |
| Q20 - Share leadership based upon situation and need. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.5000 | .70711 | .22361 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.6667 | .50000 | .16667 |
| Q21 - Use a variety of vehicles and tools to communicate about student learning with constituents, both within and outside of the school. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.2000 | .42164 | .13333 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.0000 | 1.22474 | .40825 |
| Q22 - Gather and use relevant data regarding community responses to student learning and their attitudes about the school. | 1.00 | 10 | 3.9000 | .87560 | .27689 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.1111 | 1.26930 | .42310 |
| Q23 - Partner and collaborate with administrative colleagues. | 1.00 | 10 | 4.7000 | .48305 | .15275 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 4.7778 | .44096 | .14699 |

An independent-sample t test was calculated comparing the mean score of the subjects identified in the study. No significant was found ($t(17) = -.835, p > .05$) The mean of the interns ($m = 97.60, sd = 12.97$) was not significantly difference from the mean of the supervising principal ($m = 103, sd = 15.20$). See tables 2 and 3 below. Due to the size of the sample, the effect size may have had an impact between the two groups. “The effect size is a standard measure that can be calculated from any number of statistical output.” Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis there is no difference in scores between interns and building supervisors.

Table 2
Group Statistics

| | VAR00002 | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|------|-----------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| VAR3 | 1.00 | 10 | 97.6000 | 12.97176 | 4.10203 |
| | 2.00 | 9 | 103.0000 | 15.20691 | 5.06897 |

Table 3
Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|--------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--|---------|
| VAR | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2- tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| 3 | Equal variances assumed | .191 | .668 | -.835 | 17 | .415 | -5.40000 | 6.46376 | - 19.03733 | 8.23733 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -.828 | 15.862 | .420 | -5.40000 | 6.52082 | - 19.23330 | 8.43330 |

Discussion

This study is the first research attempt of ascertaining information with regards to the Washington Standard Five-Knowledge and Skills. The data results did not show any significant difference between the interns' perception of their performance on Standard V—Knowledge and Skills when compared to the perception of their supervisors. The interns recognize their own strengths, challenges, values, and beliefs. They are reflective about the work they do and evaluate the effect of their work on learners. They know what they believe about how learners learn and the role of the teacher. They support personal growth, self-awareness, and positive self-concept in learners. They set high standards but then support learners in their achievement of them. The interns respect and value individual and cultural differences. The interns establish empathic, cooperative relationships with and among learners which lead to student growth.

The results show that the interns engage learners in exploration, critical and divergent thinking, and problem solving. They promote multiple and global perspectives in the activities they arrange. They participate in the community of scholars who devote their energies to improved educational opportunities for all learners. The interns remain current in their disciplinary fields and in the art and science of pedagogy. They behave professionally within the school environment and in the community.

The findings of this study, which support the attempts made by the State of Washington to redesign school administrator programs to better meet the needs of teaching staff are

producing positive results. The findings also suggest that the implementation of data driven and results-oriented curriculum is achieving impressive success rates in Washington State than expected, as the pre-service administrators in this study demonstrate attainment of program outcomes and meet state approval expectations.

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