



Bringing Oakland Together for Our Students

D. Every School Has a Great Leader

Questions:

1. What is a school leader's role in creating conditions to support teachers?
2. What qualities and skills must school leaders possess to support great teaching?
3. How much autonomy must school leaders have to lead great schools?
4. How important are a school leader's expectations of teachers? Students?

Why this Matters:

- **Principal as Catalyst:** Principals drive effectiveness through their role as managers – including teacher hiring, evaluation, dismissal, retention, and professional and leadership development, as well as by providing instructional leadership.²⁰ “By ensuring that essential support systems are present, effective principals build instructional capacity, increase teacher effectiveness, and foster the creation and development of a dedicated, stable instructional team.”²¹
- **Sustained Reform:** Sustained reform at high poverty schools is possible when principals...have the ability to make decisions with agility, especially in times of crisis – specific to time, people, money, and program.²² “Leadership is a necessary condition for effective reform relative to the school-level, the teacher-level, and the student-level factors” associated with student achievement.²³
- **Mission-driven Leadership:** A 2009 evaluation of Oakland's small schools found that having “[m]ission-driven principals who are proactively recruited and/or mentored to serve at their schools” was a key characteristic of effectively functioning and productive schools.²⁴

Notes on the Current Reality in OUSD:

- **Lack of Evaluation:** Principals are evaluated using the collective-bargaining evaluation system. However, OUSD reported that in 2009-10, 59% of principals were not evaluated at all.²⁵
- **Results-Based Budgeting (RBB):** In OUSD, the principal has a great deal of influence over a site's budget due to RBB. “In 2008 RBB, 84% of the district's general purpose funds went directly to school sites and gave each school community the flexibility to decide how it spent its dollars.”²⁶ In December 2009, 86% of OUSD principals affirmed their support for RBB and site-based decision-making.
- **Need for Increased District Support:** Due to funding cuts, OUSD no longer provides all new principals with an Operations Support Coach at each site. Instead, Regional Network Executive Officers and Network Executive Officers support principals, and professional development takes place at bi-monthly network leadership meetings.²⁷ Additional support is also given through organizations such as UC Berkeley's Principal Leadership Institute, New Leaders for New Schools, National Equity Project, and Oakland Schools Foundation.

20 Principal Effectiveness: A New Principalship to Drive Student Achievement, Teacher Effectiveness, and School Turnaround, New Leaders for New Schools (2009) pg 6.

21 Futernick, Ken, (2007). Possible Dream, Retaining California's Teachers so all Students Learn, pg.63.

22 Calkins, Andrew, et. al. (2007). “The Turnaround Challenge.” Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, available at http://www.massinsight.org/publications/turnaround/51/file/1/pubs/2010/04/15/TheTurnaroundChallenge_MainReport.pdf. Accessed 30 March 2011.

23 Marzano, Robert, (2003) What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action, pg.172

24 Vasudeva, Ash, et. al. (2009). “Oakland Unified School District New Small Schools Initiative Evaluation,” Stanford University School Redesign Network, pg. 38, available at http://srmls.org/resources/publications/ousd/docs/ousd_final_report.pdf. Accessed 30 March 2011.

25 Superintendent's Report. Oakland Unified School District. October 13, 2010.

26 Oakland Unified School District: Knowledge Capture Project: Results Based Budgeting, pg. 1, available at publicportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/.../lib/.../ousd_RBB_caselet_rev1.pdf.

27 Superintendent's Report. Oakland Unified School District. October 13, 2010.