

Adapting the Framework for Assistant Principals

Although the AWSP Leadership Framework is written for school principals and their supervisors, it can be easily adapted for principals to use to evaluate assistant principals, vice principals, deans of students, and other entry-level leadership roles. These positions are critical in that they are often stepping stones for an administrative career. Further, these positions serve as important linchpins in the school. Without strong and effective assistants, the principal cannot be successful, particularly at the secondary level. As one publication recently noted,

[T]he assistant principalship holds a critical position in education organizations for several reasons. First, it is a frequent entry-level position for administrative careers. A majority of assistant principals expect to move upward in administration. For this reason, assistant principalships often provide opportunities for observing and interacting with supervisors and learning the behaviors necessary for professional advancement. Second, assistant principals maintain the norms and rules of the school culture. They are usually the first ones to handle the most difficult disciplinary problems. Social issues such as poverty, racism, and family disruption help define the world in which assistant principals find themselves.... [Further,] assistant principals must frequently play the role of mediator, addressing the conflicts that emerge among teachers, students, and community.¹

Thus, the evaluation of assistant principals cannot be taken lightly. Effective mentoring provided early in the administrator's career can lead to a lifetime of successful advancement, whereas inadequate mentoring and insufficient support can easily deter future leaders from the principalship.

Aim of Evaluating Assistant Principals

Given the assistant principal's unique role in the school, the AWSP Leadership Framework must be adapted to effectively evaluate the work of assistant principals. The aim of evaluating assistant principals, however, is no different from that of evaluating

principals. Assistant principals must be evaluated on the basis of their performance in each of the eight criteria. However, in addition to focusing on the day-to-day practices that define the assistant principal's work, it is imperative that the principal also provide opportunities for the assistant principal to share his or her long-term professional growth goals, as well as an opportunity to provide the principal with ideas about expanding his or her responsibilities to support increased confidence as a building administrator. The aim of evaluating assistant principals is to nurture them toward their next professional goal while honing their skills as instructional leaders.



Defining the Assistant Principal's Authority

As the principal prepares to evaluate his or her assistant principal, it is important that the assistant principal's scope of authority be considered relative to the performance criteria. As with principals, it is unrealistic and unproductive to hold an assistant principal accountable for that which he or she lacks authority. Questions that building administrator teams might want to address as they consider assistant principal evaluations:

- What leadership responsibilities have I asked the assistant principal to assume?
- To what extent have I provided clear expectations for the assistant principal and/or modeled for them the type of leadership that I expect?
- To what extent have I provided support to the assistant principal (e.g., training, mentoring, professional development, modeling)?
- How frequently have I discussed the assistant

principal's practice with them? What was the substance of the conversation?

- How has the assistant principal received the support I have offered them?

Mentoring Assistant Principals

The evaluation provides an important opportunity for the principal to mentor the assistant principal toward his or her larger professional goals. Mentoring is compatible with supervision; in fact, effective supervisors often serve as mentors. How a principal approaches this task will depend on his or her relationship with the assistant principal, as well as his or her hopes for the conversation. The User's Guide presumes that the evaluation conversation is about asking questions related to the assistant principal's current goals, as well as identifying his or her long-term professional goals. The following questions illustrate how a principal might approach this task:

- What are your current career goals and how can I help you achieve them?
- Where do you see yourself in three to five years?
- What experiences or leadership opportunities can I provide that would help you advance your professional capacities or develop new skills?
- What professional learning opportunities have you identified for the coming year?
- How might I provide additional resources (e.g., books, readings) to guide your professional development and expand your professional repertoire?
- What leadership responsibilities would you be interested in assuming to help you develop and/or expand your professional repertoire?

An Example from the Field

We asked Shannon Ritter, assistant principal at Marshall Middle School in the Olympia School District, to share her thoughts about how she and her principal used the AWSP Leadership Framework for her own evaluation and the sources of evidence that she was able to retrieve. What follows is her reflections on how this framework might apply to assistant principals. We've provided a list of artifacts that would be used as the foundation for

evidence-based discussions. We've also provided guiding questions to help all administrators move away from simply collecting "artifacts." Assistant principals must draw connections from the artifacts of their daily work to the evidence of increased student achievement as a result of their work.

A few things to remember or consider:

- Some criteria will be easier to measure with more responsibilities based on position.
- Evidence collected in one area may be transferable to other areas.
- How do I modify my responsibilities to meet the requirements and show evidence, especially in areas where evidence may be more difficult to measure?
- How does my work as an assistant principal support . . . ?

1. C. A. Marshall & R. M. Hooley, 2006, *The Assistant Principal: Leadership Choices and Challenges*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press, p. 2.

Criterion 1: Creating a Culture

School administrators, including assistant principals, play a critical role in creating a positive school culture that promotes the ongoing improvement of learning and teaching for students and staff. It is important to ensure a balance between instructional leadership and management while providing support for students, staff and families. Areas of evidence might include:

Artifacts	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Improvement Plan (SIP) • TPEP collaborative process • Associated Student Body (ASB) adviser • Athletic director • Fundraising and assemblies • Professional development: Leadership meetings, late-start collaborations • WEB Day: 8th-grade student leaders • PBIS: Common area lessons and refresher lessons, positive office referrals, pride slips, student rewards • Quarterly award celebrations • Progressive discipline • Attendance monitoring • Schedules: Master schedule, bell schedule, student classes • Student, staff and parent recognition • New teacher support • Para educator monthly meetings • Parent communication 	<p>What connections can be made to the list of artifacts that illustrate the creation of a positive school culture that promotes the ongoing improvement of teaching and learning for students and staff?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have student discipline incidents and the number of suspensions been reduced? • Is the intervention schedule reducing failure? • Do climate surveys indicate PBIS is creating a positive culture? • Has PLC time led to instructional changes in the classroom? • How has the master schedule improved success for all stakeholders?

Criterion 2: Ensuring School Safety

School administrators, including assistant principals, and key school personnel must work collaboratively to ensure a safe and secure learning environment in order for staff to maximize student achievement. Areas of evidence might include:

Artifacts	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive discipline and consistent procedures including special education • Supervision duties, monthly drills and clear emergency plans • PBIS: Start of the year lessons and refresher lessons after breaks • HIB classroom presentations and schedule • Knowledge and communication of safety plans/legal requirements • Monitoring of attendance/BECCA • Custodial staff included in security measures • Partnership with school resource officer and Thurston County Juvenile Court personnel • Incident reporting forms • Monthly safety tips: Staff and para educator meetings 	<p>What connections can be made to the list of artifacts that illustrate the creation of a safe and secure learning environment for all stakeholders?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have student discipline incidents and the number of suspensions been reduced? • Do climate surveys indicate PBIS is fostering a safe environment? • Has feedback from emergency drills been used to modify procedures and plans? • Have HIB-related occurrences been reduced?

Criterion 3: Planning with Data

School administrators, including assistant principals, lead the development, implementation, and evaluation of data-driven plans for increasing student achievement. In order to increase student achievement, multiple student data points must be used and analyzed. Areas of evidence might include:

Artifacts	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late-start collaboration, professional development, staff meetings, PLC, conferences • Master schedule and class placement • Special education and LAP allocations • Progress monitoring: MAP testing, CBA data • Monitoring discipline: Need for PBIS modifications and celebrations • LAP student placement, monitoring and collaboration • Interventions: RTI, MMS Academy (20 min. class daily for students failing multiple classes) • Student check-ins: Attendance, grades, discipline 	<p>What connections can be made to the list of artifacts that illustrate an increase in student achievement as a result of using data-driven improvement efforts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has PLC time led to instructional changes in the classroom that resulted in increased student achievement? • How has data been used to create the master schedule? • Are resources placed according to the greatest needs in the building? • How is PBIS data being cycled back into planning and modifying the school improvement plan? • New programs have been created as a result of data, but how have those programs led to increased student achievement?

Criterion 4: Aligning Curriculum

School administrators, including assistant principals, can assist staff in working to better align the curriculum, their instruction, and assessments with state and local district learning goals. Areas of evidence might include:

Artifacts	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPEP collaboration process • Reading comprehension conference: ELA team • Departmentalize: Math and Science • Blocking: ELA and SS • Special education and LAP support classes collaboration • Enrichment rotations • Common Core State Standards training • Late-start PLC collaboration: CFA and CBA work • Professional development: Building Academic Vocabulary workshop 	<p>What connections can be made to the list of artifacts that illustrate the alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessments?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has PLC time led to instructional changes in the classroom, curriculum alignment and the creation and use of common assessments? • What data is being gathered to show that alignment efforts have resulted in increased student achievement? • Are department or grade-level teams aligned in procedures, expectations, grading practices, etc.? • Do the building goals reflect a common focus on improving alignment horizontally and vertically?

Criterion 5: Improving Instruction

This criterion is critical for administrators, including assistant principals, as they work with teachers to enhance their professional practice. Monitoring, assisting, and evaluating effective instruction and assessment practices in order to improve instruction is at the heart of TPEP. Areas of evidence might include:

Artifacts	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Improvement Plan • Data carousels/wall • TPEP: Observations process and student growth goals • Data walks • Instructional goals: Depth of knowledge • Late-start collaboration: CFA and CBA work • Professional development: Building Academic Vocabulary workshop • Reading comprehension conference: ELA team 	<p>What connections can be made to the list of artifacts that illustrate instructional improvements have resulted in increased student achievement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a common definition and practice of good instruction? • Are research-based instructional strategies evident throughout the building? • What data feedback systems are being used to modify instruction as needed? • Have those systems resulted in increased student achievement? • Has PLC time led to instructional changes in the classroom that have resulted in increased student achievement in individual classrooms and across the system?

Criterion 6: Managing Resources

School administrators, including assistant principals, must manage both staff and fiscal resources to support student achievement and legal responsibilities. Areas of evidence might include:

Artifacts	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District LAP coordinator • Hiring protocol • Para educator allocations/schedules • Medicaid match building coordinator • ASB budget and fundraising • ASB student store • Athletics: Oversee athletic director, coaching staff, transportation, officials, supervision • Technology grant team member 	<p>What connections can be made to the list of artifacts that illustrate that resources are appropriately placed to support increased student achievement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the master schedule adult-centered or student-centered? • Does the master schedule support the needs of students or the needs of itinerant staff? • Do teachers have a shared load of the entire spectrum of the student population? • Are the best teachers working with the hi-cap students or low-performing students? • What systems are in place to monitor and track resources? • Do expenditures support the mission, vision and SIP?

Criterion 7: Engaging Communities

School administrators, including assistant principals, who partner with the school community are better able to support and promote student achievement. Areas of evidence might include:

Artifacts	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate parent/staff/student meetings, including conferences • Parent communication: Phone calls, emails, letters, meetings • Parent group: Meetings and sponsored events: 5K Predication Run and Spring Fling Activity Night • Orientation, curriculum night, activity events and nights, volunteers • Quarterly award celebrations • Supervision of theater productions, band, orchestra, and choir concerts • Website updates, contributions to newsletters, social media • Participation in school district musical and Harlem ambassadors charity basketball game • Partnership with Thurston County Food Bank Pantry: Friday Food Bags 	<p>What connections can be made to the list of artifacts that illustrate a partnership with the community to promote increased student achievement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What survey data is collected and used to modify programs and practices? • What systems are in place to solicit and engage the community in school-related decisions? • What tools are used to measure the effectiveness of school communications? • What programs are modified, adjusted and/or created to meet the needs of the various stakeholders?

Criterion 8: Closing the Gap

School administrators, including assistant principals, demonstrating commitment can play an integral part in closing the achievement gap as they work collaboratively with school personnel. Areas of evidence might include:

Artifacts	Evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment of LAP teachers/students • MMS Academy (AP-led, daily, targeted support for students failing two or more classes) • Monitoring of discipline, including parents meetings and SRO/Juvenile Court personnel collaboration • Monitoring of attendance, including parent meetings and SRO/Juvenile Court personnel collaboration • School-to-school collaboration: Incoming and exiting students (elementary to middle and middle to high school) • Special education transition meetings: Elementary to middle • Late-start collaboration: At-risk student identification and action plan • Professional development: Building Academic Vocabulary workshop • Reading comprehension conference: ELA Team • Data carousels/wall: Identification of top three areas of concern • Progress monitoring: CFAs and MAP testing 	<p>What connections can be made to the list of artifacts that illustrate a commitment to closing the achievement gap?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What alternatives to out-of-school suspension have been created to reduce lost instructional time and improve behavior? • How has PLC time resulted in the identification of and targeted effort to reduce achievement gaps? • How have strategically placed resources reduced achievement gaps? • What programs have been implemented and resulted in increased student achievement? • How are systems and structures modified throughout the year in order to reduce the achievement gap?