



Cultivating Leadership: Coaching, Supporting, and Developing Schools Leaders in the Medford Public Schools

Citation

Milaschewski, Thomas William. 2021. Cultivating Leadership: Coaching, Supporting, and Developing Schools Leaders in the Medford Public Schools. Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

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Cultivating Leadership: Coaching, Supporting, and Developing Schools Leaders in the Medford
Public Schools

Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.) Capstone

Submitted by Thomas Milaschewski

To the Harvard Graduate School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Education Leadership.

April 2021

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Dedication

To my amazing children – Makenna, Olivia, Jocelyn, and Benjamin:

We're all counting on you to make this world a better place! I love you!

Acknowledgements

To Sarah: Thank you for all of your love, support, and selfless sacrifice for our family and I. I love you!

To Makenna, Olivia, Jocelyn, and Benjamin: Thank you for making me the most blessed man in this world. I love you!

To my parents: Thank you for your lifelong support and all of the sacrifices you made to provide me with the best educational experiences possible. I love you!

To my siblings: Thanks for always being there, through the good times and the bad, and always bringing out the fun and laughter in this world. I love you!

To Gigi: Thank you for always believing in me and opening the doors to so many educational opportunities. I love you!

To my amazing mentors at HGSE - Mary, Drew, Jim, DJS, Paul: Thank you for all of the mentorship, coaching, support, and advocacy you've provided me over the years. I am deeply appreciative!

To Marice: Thank you for providing the best residency experience I could have imagined. Your influence has made me a better person and leader. I am so thankful for you!

To the amazing team in Medford – Peter, Suzanne, Dave, and Joan: Thank you for all of the joys, laughs, and challenges from this past year. I learned so much from each of you!

To the Medford Principals: Thank you for your kindness, generosity, and support throughout this year. I've been inspired by all of your leadership and how you've led during the most challenging of circumstances.

To C9: Thank you for all of the ways that you've pushed me to grow as a person and as a leader. Our students need leaders like you!

To my former colleagues: Thank you for pushing, supporting, and challenging me to be the best educational leader that I can be. I feel so fortunate to have been shaped by some of the best educators and people I could imagine.

To my former students: You have all inspired me more than you can imagine and you are the reason that I am so deeply committed to this work. I love seeing and hearing about your life accomplishments!

Abstract

We know that school leadership really matters. More specifically, school leadership really matters in improving student outcomes. Given this impact, districts must consider how they prepare their school leaders to lead for improved student outcomes. In a 2021 report furnished by the Wallace Foundation, in addition to citing the critical importance of strong principal leadership, the report cites the development of principals as potentially a district's strongest lever in improving student outcomes (Grissom, Egalite, Lindsay). If principals really matter and how principals are developed really matters, then how does a district best lead this work? How can a district best support, coach, and develop principal talent to improve student outcomes? Furthermore, how can a district do this during the midst of a global pandemic, especially when it requires a complete shift in how things have been done for decades?

The Superintendent of the Medford (MA) Public Schools charged me with developing a strategy and plan for how district principals are coached, supported, and developed as a way to ultimately improve student outcomes. This Capstone chronicles the development of a new, three-pronged approach that utilizes 1:1 instructional coaching, communities of practice, and a designated space for operational issues to improve the effectiveness and collaboration of district principals. This Capstone analyzes the process of leading change during the time of COVID-19 and in a context entangled in the status-quo.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....3

Acknowledgements.....4

Abstract.....5

Introduction.....7

Review of Knowledge for Action.....12

Theory of Action.....29

Description, Evidence, and Analysis of Strategic Project.....30

Implications for Self.....63

Implications for Site.....67

Implications for Sector.....71

Conclusion.....75

Bibliography.....77

Artifact A: Medford Public Schools’ 2017-2019 MCAS Data Analysis.....80

Artifact B: 2021-2021 Network PD Schedule.....81

Artifact C: Network PD Agendas82

Artifact D: Network PD Session Feedback.....100

Artifact E: 1:1 Coaching Cycle – Sample Learning Plan.....113

Artifact F: 1:1 Coaching Cycle – Sample Observation Meeting.....115

Introduction

MPS District Context

The Medford Public Schools (MPS), located about five miles outside of Boston (MA), serves over 4,200 students across four elementary schools, two middle schools, one comprehensive high school, one vocational high school, and one alternative high school. An analysis of achievement data on DESE’s “State and District Profiles” reveals that over the past decade, Medford has consistently performed right around the state averages in academic achievement and growth on state-wide MCAS exams. Medford students are generally *achieving* around or slightly below state averages in ELA and Math, as measured through “Meeting or Exceeding Expectations” rates. At the same time, Medford students are generally *growing* around or slightly above state averages in ELA and Math, as evident through “Student Growth Percentiles.” In general, MCAS results suggest that Medford students are generally achieving and growing academically at rates consistent with state averages. More detailed information regarding student achievement in Medford can be found in Appendix A of this Capstone. In terms of student demographics, more than half of Medford students (59.1%) identify as white, another quarter is evenly split between Black (12.5%) and Hispanic (13.1%) students, with much smaller populations of students identifying as Asian (9.8%) or Native American, Pacific Islander, or Multi-Race (5.6% combined). Also, Medford’s percentages of English Learners (10.8%), Students with Disabilities (19.7%), and Economically Disadvantaged students (31.2%) closely mirror state averages.

MPS District Leadership Context

In 2018, Dr. Marice Edouard-Vince became Superintendent of the Medford Public Schools. The former Superintendent, Mr. Roy Belson had worked in MPS for fifty years, with

twenty-three of those years as its Superintendent. While Dr. Edouard-Vincent has already worked alongside two Mayors during her two and a half years as Superintendent, Mr. Belson's tenure as Superintendent coincided with the twenty-eight-year stint of Mr. Michael McGlynn, who served as the Mayor of Medford from 1988-2016.

During my entry interviews in Medford, several community members and staff emphasized that this unprecedented consistency in city leadership between Superintendent Belson and Mayor McGlynn, who also served as the School Committee Chair, led to a strong sense of stability within the community. One parent shared that "these two were always on the same page. The city became very accustomed to the way they worked as leaders. Therefore, as a result of the consistency and collaboration between the two, it never felt like there was a problem that couldn't be solved. At the same time, it felt like there was a strong appetite to always keep things the way they were, regardless if they were good or bad."

During my entry interviews, many shared how this leadership led to stability, many also lamented how this consistency has constrained the current city leadership—and particularly the school district—from making changes from past practice. During my interviews with over fifty stakeholders during my entry interview process, over half of the respondents addressed this challenge of leading change as the biggest challenge facing the district, using phrases such as "status quo," "resistant," or "stuck in the same ways."

Under Superintendent Edouard-Vincent, the district has undergone several phases of reorganizing central office roles and responsibilities, with the goal of leading to improved efficiency and the reduction of redundancies. The central office consolidated several staff positions, redistributed some administrators' duties, and developed a few new operational roles. Currently, the district's Senior Leadership Team is comprised of the Superintendent, the Assistant

Superintendent for Elementary Education, the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, and the Director of Pupil Services.

Marking a stark contrast to the longevity of the previous Superintendent and his team, whose Senior Leadership Team consisted of two Assistant Superintendents with a combined 40 years in their roles, the current Senior Leadership Team members are rather new to their roles, with each of the five members having served between 3 months and 2.5 years. While many of these administrators know the Medford context deeply, they also bring fresh ideas and perspectives into their roles. Since many of the new ideas push for some type of change, a strong tension exists with these new ideas and the “status quo” or a strong protection of the way things have always been. As the Superintendent shared in many conversations, this tension sits at the foundation of all of Medford’s district improvement efforts.

MPS Leadership Development – The Gap

During her two-year tenure, Dr. Edouard-Vincent has launched a variety of initiatives and structures aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in Medford. At the same time, she has intentionally maintained several of the previously existing instructional initiatives and structures, either due to their effectiveness or as part of managing a longer-term change process, including the professional development structure for principals which she describes as a major area of both challenge and opportunity. More specifically, there is no current structure or strategy for individual coaching of principals, nor is there an intentional structure or strategy for building a network of support for principals. In terms of development, MPS principals currently have formal professional development once a month where they receive logistical updates from the administrative team. Senior leadership team members have emphasized that the current PD

structure for principals, which also includes district coordinators and directors, focuses solely on logistics and does not focus on improving their operational or instructional capacity. One Assistant Superintendent described it as “about 40-50 people shoved in a room for several hours and read things that could have been put in an email.” As shared by the district Superintendent, “people would just stand up and share something from their respective departments...principals didn’t walk away with something that improves their practice...this is one of our biggest weaknesses.”

The Superintendent also noted that this structure fostered “a lack of urgency” and did not convey “a sense of purpose.” Also, on a related note, there is no current professional development structure in place for assistant principals either. As one Assistant Superintendent explained, “The Assistant Principals feel like they are just there to do discipline and that’s their only job. This is reflected in the lack of PD that has been made available to them.” Overall, due to the lack of a structure for coaching and supporting school leaders and with a current professional development structure that does not focus on instruction, MPS is missing a major opportunity to improve the instructional leadership capacity of school leaders, both principals and assistant principals, as a critical lever to improve student outcomes.

The Strategic Project

Closing this gap in leadership coaching, support, and development could make our principals more collaborative and effective in improving instruction, ultimately improving student outcomes. In order to close this gap, this strategic project outlines a strategy and approach for how principals and assistant principals are coached, supported, and developed within the Medford Public Schools. In addition to improving the overall effectiveness and collaboration of district principals, this strategic project aims at building the capacity of central office administrators,

particularly district Assistant Superintendents, to lead this work. Both Assistant Superintendents have expressed that leading this type of work would be new for them, with one Assistant Superintendent emphasizing that they have never been a part of high-quality principal coaching, professional development, or a network of support. For this work to be sustained beyond this year, it is critical that central office administrators know how to lead the work, that they see the value in this work, and that they commit the appropriate resources, most importantly their time and effort, to continue this work moving forward. Therefore, this strategic project not only represents a goal of improving principal capacity but also a focus on building the capacity of a district office to lead and sustain this work.

We have created a three-pronged structure for how principals in the Medford Public Schools will be coached, supported, and developed. An overview of this structure is outlined below:

- **Prong 1:** *1:1 Coaching* - Principals will engage in 1:1 coaching, grounded in inquiry cycles, with their supervisors around 1-3 collaboratively developed, instructionally-focused professional practice goals.
- **Prong 2:** *Network PD* - Principals and assistant principals will participate in Network Professional Development, aimed at building a community of practice where leaders share best leadership practices around teaching and learning, support each other through instructional leadership challenges, and reflect and collaborate on issues facing their respective school communities.
- **Prong 3:** *Senior Leadership's Administrator Team (SLATE)* - In these informal principal work groups focused on “nuts and bolts” issues, school leaders will support one another and problem-solve with colleagues on similar, operationally-based issues.

This strategic project is built on research and best practices around designing and leading coaching cycles and improvement networks. Anchoring our own learning, collaboration, and leadership in Meredith Honig's text *Supervising Principals for Instructional Leadership: A Teaching and Learning Approach*, our team of principal supervisors guide principals through coaching cycles to develop their instructional leadership capacity and build communities of practices aimed at leveraging the collective expertise of the group to support one another's leadership. Given the stark contrast that this Strategic Project represents compared to current practice, research around change management, particularly in light of the COVID-19 context, deeply influences the design and facilitation of this new three-pronged approach.

Guiding Question

How does a central office best support, coach, and develop the instructional leadership skills of school leaders?

Review of Knowledge for Action (RKA)

As a former principal, principal mentor, and principal coach, much of my professional background connects to principal-level leadership, particularly instructional leadership. I've learned many of the structures that best facilitate principal growth and development in relation to instructional leadership and also many of the conditions that are required to support it. As I initially set out on my strategic project, I reviewed research, literature, and best practices relating to how to effectively develop the instructional capacity of school leaders. This research around structures and conditions remains a critical piece of my RKA. However, as I started to move my strategic project into action, I realized that I would need to learn more about a district's role in this work. Solely focusing on building principal capacity, without researching the role of central

office in effectively leading this work, would be missing a significant component of research. In other words, the best structures and requisite conditions for building principal instructional leadership skills do not operate in isolation but instead live within a particular district context and possibly as part of a larger district improvement effort.

As someone new to a central office role, I have never had to think about how districts, as a whole, can effectively support the instructional leadership development of principals across an entire system. Furthermore, I've certainly never thought about what it looks like to lead this type of improvement work in the context of a global pandemic. Therefore, to guide my work of supporting, coaching, and developing the instructional leadership skills of school leaders in the Medford Public Schools during the time of COVID-19, I focused my research on three distinct questions:

- What does the research say about the role of central office in supporting principal instructional leadership development?
- What does it look like to support principal instructional leadership development? What structures can be used to best facilitate this work and what conditions are required to enable it?
- What does the research say about leading change in the times of challenge and crisis?

What does the research say about the role of central office in supporting principal instructional leadership development?

The instructional leadership of principals plays a critical role in shaping student achievement outcomes. In describing the results from their six-year research study, researchers Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010) note that “leadership is second only to

classroom instruction as an influence on student learning...To date, we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership” (p. 9).

Some research has taken this analysis a bit deeper by quantifying the potential impact of strong instructional leadership on student outcomes. For example, in their work “Balanced Leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement,” Waters, Marzano, and McNulty suggest that a highly effective principal has shown to increase standardized test outcomes by up to 10 percentile points in one year (2003, p. 3). Highlighting this same theme, in a study published in *Education Next* titled “School Leaders Matter: Measuring the impact of effective principals,” Branch, Rivkin, and Hanushek emphasize that “highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year; ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount” (2012, para. 3). While this study also lists teacher quality as the greatest influence on student learning outcomes, the authors detail the heightened impact of principal quality as it impacts students across an entire school. Overall, high-quality principal leadership significantly impacts student achievement outcomes. As a result, as outlined in a recent study by the Wallace Foundation, “it is difficult to envision an investment in K–12 education with a higher ceiling on its potential return than improving school leadership” (2021, p.xiv).

Given this impact, districts must think strategically around their role in supporting principal instructional leadership development in their efforts to improve student outcomes. As districts develop a strategy for supporting principal instructional leadership development, they must find ways to carve out time and space for this work and also enact structures that lead to

leadership growth. In terms of the time, one critical, technical component requires districts to actually create specific times for leadership work, regardless of what that support may look like. Without intentionally creating this time, and holding it protected, the day-to-day needs and urgencies of school leadership can overtake this time allocated for support and development (NewSchools Venture Fund, 2008). After allocating and protecting this time for principal support and development, districts must strategize around what this support looks like in action. In broad terms, in a report outlining ways to support principal development, Sutchter et al. (2018) emphasize the importance of utilizing collaborative structures that enable shared learning and leverage the expertise of principals. Research also supports structures that utilize group problem solving and that individualize support for each principal (NewSchools Venture Fund). In addition, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2017) recommends that this support includes academic study, leadership reflection, and simulation activities. While each district needs to develop specific structures that fit within their own unique context, research corroborates the importance of districts creating time for principal support and building support structures that are grounded in collaborative learning and reflection.

Across all of the of the potential structures that a district could use to develop principal instructional leadership, in their text “Supervising Principals for Instructional Leadership,” Honig and Rainey identify a “teaching and learning” approach as the key dynamic in determining the success of a principal supervisor’s efforts to improve the instructional capacity of principals. In the table below, Honig and Rainey provide a framework for codifying particular teaching moves to be used by principal supervisors that facilitate this “teaching and learning” approach.

Teaching and Learning Approach

Teaching Move	Description
Fostering learners' agency	<p>Moves that help learners operate with progressively more independence or agency in leading their own learning, for example, by assisting learners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess their own proficiency with new practices ● Develop and implement their own professional learning plan; and ● Identify and pursue learning supports on the job
Joint work moves	<p>Moves that help learners embrace new challenging work as a defined set of practices that they and their colleagues collectively value, for example, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using a specific shared definition of the new work as common guides for their growth; and ● Learning alongside learners and opening up their own practice
Modeling	<p>Demonstrations of new work practices using metacognitive strategies - explicit explanations of what they are modeling and why.</p>
Talk moves	<p>Forms of talk that engage learners in making sense of what new work entails and how to engage in it, for example, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Verbally challenging learners' understandings of situations ● Offering competing theories about underlying problems and potential solutions; and ● Prompting learners to question long-standing practices that have not been effective
Brokering	<p>Bridging moves that connect learners to new ideas, understandings, and other resources to advance their learning. Buffering moves that protect learners from potentially unproductive external interruptions to their learning</p>
Recognizing all learners as learning resources	<p>Moves that help each learner learn from and teach the others in their learning community, identify as on a trajectory toward mastery, and understand learning as an ongoing developmental process for all</p>
Differentiation	<p>Moves that meet each learner where they are, for example, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using evidence to understand each learner's strengths and areas for growth, and how they vary, and ● Setting and tailoring assistance in ways that build on learners' strengths to leverage their growth in weaker areas
<p>* Note: Reproduced from Honig & Rainey (2020)</p>	

Within any potential structure, these eight teaching moves support a shift to principal supervisors supporting the instructional leadership growth and development of principals.

Principal supervisors can utilize each of these teaching moves across various structures.

Unfortunately, this research around supporting principal instructional leadership development starkly contrasts what support currently looks like across many U.S. districts. Providing an overview of what principal support currently looks like in most contexts, Honig and Rainey summarize their research and studies and emphasize how support for most principals focuses entirely on operations, logistics, and compliance. For example, they provide an example, reflective of the landscape of principal leadership development, of one principal in their studies whose PD consisted of meeting with other principals in a room, once a month, to discuss logistical and compliance measures, which connects very closely to the previous model in Medford. Both in research and in my own experience in several districts, much of current support for principals falls in the operational and logistical world without a commitment or strategy to improving principal instructional leadership. Overall, while research highlights the critical role of districts in creating the space and structures for this work, we know that this does not happen consistently in districts across our country. How can districts close this gap in effectively supporting principal instructional leadership development? What does it look like in practice to support principal instructional leadership development?

What does it look like to support principal instructional leadership development? What structures can be used to best facilitate this work and what conditions are required to enable it?

My review of research around the previous question highlights the importance of enacting structures that foster collaboration and shared sense-making of principals, require continuous self-reflection of leadership practices, and enable the use of “teaching and learning moves” during the facilitation of that structure. Throughout my research of potential structures that could meet that criteria, I was continually drawn towards two distinct structures: Principal Convenings and 1:1 Coaching. In this section, I will outline the research around the design and impact of these two structures.

Principal Convenings

Honig and Rainey’s reference to “principal convenings” connect to a broad scope of literature around improvement networks. Whether they operate as principal convenings, professional learning communities, or principal networks, these structures all serve as a types of improvement networks, or, “Networks that involve collaboration around common problems using a systematic approach to continuous improvement” (Cannata, Redding, Brown, Joshi, & Rutledge, 2017; Kerr et al., 2003; Peurach & Glazer, 2012). Each of the various forms of improvement networks fall under this same umbrella as they are “intentionally formed, highly structured, and aim to address a high leverage practical problem” (Russell, 2017, p. 4). These types of improvement networks have demonstrated the potential to improve the skills of participants, both within and outside of the education system. According to Barletta, Comes, Perkal, Shumaker, Wallenstein, and Yang’s “Networks for School Improvement: A Review of the Literature,” these improvement networks have produced positive results across many different sectors, both public and private. More specifically, they emphasize the positive impact of these networks within the education setting, noting that “there is evidence that improvement

networks are associated with leadership development, empowerment of professionals across all levels of a school, collaborative problem solving, and overall faculty performance” (p. 16).

In addition to some of the broad outcomes of improvement networks in schools, various forms of improvement networks can play a vital role in the development of principal capacity. First, improvement networks can help principals solve complex and challenging problems, often addressing issues of adaptive leadership. Drawing on the expertise, perspectives, and thinking of members across the group, members are able to address problems in a more comprehensive and holistic way (Bryk, Gomez, & Grunow, 2010; Peurach, 2016; Smith & Wohlstetter, 2001). Secondly, improvement networks can enable principals to infuse research and best practices into the strategic planning process. Without a network of support, principals are often required to operate from their own experiences and biases. Drawing on research and best practices allows principals to generate ideas and solutions that have proven to have more success (Johnson, Moeller, & Holsapple, 2013; Russell et al., 2017). Improvement networks also allow for the quick dissemination of information and practice across a particular context, improving the likelihood of efficient implementation of promising practices across an entire district (Bryk et al., 2013; Hannan et al., 2015). Lastly, over time, improvement networks can create the structure for principals to engage in the continuous improvement process on their own, with success, without needing additional support from the district outside the network of participants (Kerr et al., 2003).

Ultimately, this development of principal capacity can play a strong role in improving student outcomes. In an article titled “Making Space for Principals to Collaborate: School Leaders who form communities of practice are empowered to address challenges in their district,” James Hilton Harrell describes his facilitation of a community of practice for 15

principals in Oakland (CA) and how it led to his conclusion that “when principals are empowered to collaborate, they create the conditions that teachers and students need to thrive” (2019, para. 14). Hilton Harrell cited a 442 percent increase in year-over-year achievement for African-American students as one example of the impact of this group on student outcomes.

Despite the research backing the potential positive impact, principal improvement networks rarely sit as a core part of principal support in districts across the country. Umekubo and Chrispeels outline four distinct steps that districts can take to create improvement networks for principals:

1. Create informal opportunities and formal structures for principals to network and work together toward common goals, recognizing that such joint action builds trust over time.
2. Encourage each principal cohort to articulate its own plan of action (for example, monthly walk-throughs of one another's schools, study groups to deepen content or pedagogical knowledge, or teacher exchanges across the cohorts).
3. Organize the district central office to support cohorts in problem solving—but be careful not to hamstring cohorts with rules, regulations, and superfluous hierarchies.
4. Celebrate cohort achievements and successes and facilitate cross-cohort sharing.

(Umekubo & Chrispeels, 2013, para. 18)

Given that these communities of practice require people to collaborate together as part of a team, there must be a level of psychological safety in the space in order for principals to feel comfortable enough to share best practices and engage in open conversations around their respective challenges. In 2015, Google completed a study of their teams in search of the specific qualities that led to team effectiveness, and out of the five qualities they identified that contributed to team effectiveness, psychological safety was “far and away the most important of

the five” (Rozovsky, 2015, para. 6). Supporting well-known research from Amy Edmondson, a Professor in the Harvard Business School, “studies show that psychological safety allows for moderate risk-taking, speaking your mind, creativity, and sticking your neck out without fear of having it cut off — just the types of behavior that lead to market breakthroughs” (Delizonna, 2017, para. 1). For this type of community of practice to be effective, participants must demonstrate risk-taking, creativity, and a willingness to speak their mind and stick their neck out. As a result, leaders of this work must be mindful about how they build the psychological safety of the group. In an article for the Harvard Business Review titled “High-Performing Teams Need Psychological Safety. Here’s How to Create It,” Laura Delizonna suggests that leaders can build psychological safety by approaching conflict as a collaborator, not an adversary, speaking human to human, anticipating reactions and planning countermoves, and replacing blame with curiosity.

While these actions provide some broad considerations for leaders as they try to build psychological safety in their respective groups, Edmondson also provides specific guidance on how psychological safety can be built in a virtual space, specifically Zoom, which is relevant for many due to the current COVID-19 context. For example, when encouraging participation, Edmondson suggests using the Yes/No feature or anonymous poll feature, as this could elicit responses from everyone instead of just those who self-select by raising their hand. She recommends utilizing the Poll and Chat features to generate conversation and engagement, while being mindful of setting expectations for how they are both used. She encourages the use of breakout rooms as a place for participants to share ideas, as they would most likely be more comfortable testing ideas out in a small space before bringing them forward in a larger group. She also recommends thinking strategically about when to use the audio-only feature and when

to encourage participants to have only the speaker's face as the only one on display, considering the impact of several factors, including potential distractions, length of screen time, and heightened self-consciousness about appearance. Lastly, Edmondson encourages leaders to connect with members before and after meetings to hear their perspectives, use a variety of strategies, including anonymous polling and one-on-one interviews, to gain participant feedback, and to try out a variety of different tools and strategies to engage participants in the virtual setting (Edmondson & Daley, 2020). Edmondson's guidelines provide leaders with critical insights on how to approach virtual communities of practice with psychological safety at the core.

Overall, when designed and facilitated effectively, research supports the use of improvement networks, or communities of practice, as a strong lever in improving principal instructional practice.

1:1 Coaching Cycles

Principals benefit tremendously from targeted coaching, yet often do not have access to this type of learning opportunity. Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, author of "Leverage Leadership," emphasizes that principals learn best from face-to-face coaching and support from their supervisors yet suggests that "principals get less of this practice and feedback than leaders in almost any other profession" (2012, p. 273). Honig and Rainey share a similar view on the critical importance of principal coaching, particularly due to its job-embedded nature, like training is for doctors and other professions as they learn on-the-job alongside mentors. Honig and Rainey confirm that school principals "like other professionals, especially benefit from authentic, sustained, job-embedded professional learning opportunities - those available while

principals are leading their schools in real time, rather than delivered through workshops outside their regular work” (p. 22). Further supporting this belief in the impact of principal coaching, the New York City Leadership Academy, which according to their website has supported thousands of leaders across 200 different school districts, suggests that school leadership coaching is the best tool for supporting principals in their leadership development (p. 13).

Principal coaching, based off cycles of inquiry, provides this opportunity for principals to receive on-the-job, face-to-face, authentic coaching from their principal supervisors. For example, in their article written for the National Association of Elementary School Principals titled “Celebrate the Power of Coaching: Support school leaders’ growth through job-embedded coaching and inquiry,” Donna Anderson-Davis and Diane Smith share how all leaders in the Highline (WA) Public Schools participated in job-embedded, inquiry-based, coaching cycles with their principal supervisors. In addition to outlining the positive impact this approach had on the principals within Highline Public Schools, they theorize that all school leaders benefit tremendously from coaching, based on inquiry cycles, as they provide a structure for principals and principal supervisors to work collaboratively to improve instructional quality. More specifically, they note that an inquiry cycle process provided the opportunity for principals to reflect on their practice, develop a targeted learning plan to improve their practice, and engage in the process of continuous improvement with the support, coaching, and collaboration of a principal supervisor. The authors provide an example of one principal, as a result of 1:1 coaching, who strengthened her skill in identifying instructional strengths of teachers and building on those strengths to improve overall teacher effectiveness.

In a different context, Matthew Militelo and Sharon Rallis, writing for the International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, highlight the potentially game-changing impact

of collaborative inquiry-action cycles on principal practice. For example, in describing the impact of principal inquiry cycles, they suggest that “meeting local, state, and national goals of improved student learning begins with local inquiry and action,” (2009, p. 4), as it pushes principals to think strategically about improvement, to recognize the complexities and challenges of their own unique context, and to hold themselves and the school community accountable for improvement. Following a similar structure of collaborative inquiry-action cycles, the Transformational Leadership Coaching Team has coached over 100 school leaders within the Oakland Unified School District. Within the schools that received this type of leadership coaching, the Academic Performance Index score, which is the primary metric used to measure school performance in California, has risen by an average of 74 points per year. Given that the average growth during one particular year was 26 points for the entire Oakland Unified School District, schools receiving this type of coaching demonstrated impressive outcomes. While impossible to attribute solely to leadership coaching, several school leaders in Oakland Unified expressed their utmost acclamation of this coaching on their leadership practice. For example, after receiving the California Distinguished School Award for their work in accelerating student achievement outcomes and closing achievement gaps, Montera Middle School Principal Russom Mesfun attributed “this transformation in large part to the leadership coaching he received” (2011, para. 3). These examples illuminate the potential impact of inquiry cycles on principal instructional practice.

Despite the support for 1:1 principal coaching as a promising practice, limited research exists around the direct link between principal coaching and improvements in student outcomes. For example, the New York City Leadership Academy suggest “while no one has yet produced research directly linking principal coaching to student outcomes, we know from our own practice

that the school leaders we work with value their coaching experience highly...Last year in NYC, 92% of the 400 principals we coached agreed that has led to improvements in classroom instruction in their schools” (2018, p. 14). Therefore, while it is difficult to make causal or direct links between principal coaching and student outcomes without this strong body of qualitative research, examples of how this targeted coaching can impact principal effectiveness, and therefore impact student outcomes, are particularly promising. Given these examples, 1:1 principal coaching represents a potentially strong lever for improving principal instructional practice, particularly when this coaching is grounded in the structure of an inquiry cycle. 1:1 coaching provides a job-embedded opportunity for principals to learn, grow, and practice instructional leadership in collaboration with their principal supervisor. Furthermore, situating this coaching in the structure of an inquiry cycle, principals are required to think critically and reflectively about their instructional leadership practices in light of the various challenges and factors unique to their own context.

As districts consider the use of instructional coaching, they must take into account the dual role of coach and evaluator that a principal supervisor would likely need to play, especially given some literature suggesting that combining evaluation and coaching can be counterproductive. Therefore, to effectively balance these roles, principal supervisors must be able to balance accountability through the evaluation process and support through the coaching cycle. For example, the Minnesota Department of Education suggests that district leaders should serve as both coaches and evaluators and that these dual roles are actually critical to the success of principal growth and the effectiveness of the evaluation system. As principal supervisors navigate these dual roles, the Minnesota Department of Education highlights the critical importance of trust and relationship building and suggest “when district leaders are able to

establish relationships with school principals based on trust and a shared commitment to professional growth, the evaluation process will have the greatest positive impact on principal practice, school systems and structures, school-based programs, and student supports” (2016, p. 6). Overall, while principal coaching has demonstrated some promise in improving student outcomes, principal supervisors must build trust and strong relationships to effectively navigate the dual role of coach and evaluator.

What does the research say about leading change in the times of challenge and crisis?

While research supports improvement networks and 1:1 coaching as potential high-leverage structures for improving principal instructional practice, it is important to analyze this work as part of a change process, especially when it marks a difference in how a district has approached coaching, supporting, and developing principals from the past. In addition, given our current COVID-19 context, it is critical to analyze leading and managing change during times of challenge or crisis.

In advance of Harvard’s Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) 2020 Institute, a joint initiative between the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Harvard Business School aimed at improving the leadership capacity of the largest urban school districts across the United States, Co-Chairs John Kim and Jen Cheatham asked all district teams to read two core texts in preparation for their work, which was held remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions. First, they asked all participants to read the introduction of John Kotter and Dan Cohen’s “The Heart of Change,” calling it a “classic” on change management. With all 12 PELP districts facing various systems-level challenges, the text provides an analysis of how change happens and outlines the steps of a change process. In outlining change, Kotter and Cohen provide an overview of the

eight stages of the change process, including increasing urgency, building the guiding team, getting the vision right, communicating for buy-in, empowering action, creating short-term wins, not letting up, and making changes stick. In a presentation to PELP participants, John Kim adapted Kotter and Cohen's framework and provided additional context for each step of this change through the lens of school district leadership. This framework is described in more detail in the Description, Evidence, and Analysis of Strategic Project section of this Capstone.

While the aforementioned framework outlines some of the phases and action steps within the change process, the second required PELP text, Gianpiero Petriglieri's "The Psychology Behind Effective Crisis Leadership," gets at some of the psychology within leading a change process during COVID-19. Petriglieri argues that while most suggest that having a clear and convincing vision is what constitutes strong leadership, this is not enough in times of crisis. He posits that the "limitations of such visionary leadership become painfully obvious in times of crisis, uncertainty, or radical change....what we need is a type of holding, so that we can move purposefully" (2020, para. 3). Petriglieri describes holding, a psychology term, as the way that a person, "often an authority figure, *contains* and *interprets* what's happening in times of uncertainty. Containing refers to the ability to soothe distress and interpreting to the ability to help others make sense of a confusing predicament" (para. 4). Therefore, as leaders think about managing a change process, especially during a time of crisis, they must be mindful of how they are "holding." Petriglieri describes how it is essential that organizations demonstrate both institutional holding and interpersonal holding. In terms of institutional holding, organizations must implement policies, procedures, and practices that reassure people that the organization is there to support them throughout this crisis. Without putting these structures in place, it is difficult for people to truly feel held during a crisis. Once an organization puts these structures

in place as a way of pushing for institutional holding, they can focus on interpersonal holding. Leaders must model interpersonal holding through acknowledging feelings and emotions, giving people permission to express their feelings, ideas, and perspectives without ramifications, and encouraging people to demonstrate creativity in how they view the present and the future.

In order to effectively lead a change process in light of a crisis, leaders must do more than create a holding space. In an article titled “What Good Leadership Looks Like During This Pandemic,” Michaela Kerrissey and Amy Edmondson share four lessons for good leadership through their analysis of several world leaders across various organizations, including New Zealand’s Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and National Basketball Commissioner Adam Silver. These four lessons include acting with urgency, communicating with transparency, responding productively to missteps, and engaging in constant updating. While these lessons sound straightforward, Kerrissey and Edmondson argue that they work in direct contrast with most of our instinctive tendencies during a crisis. For example, acting with urgency contrasts our desire to wait for additional information and communicating with transparency acts against our desire to downplay threat and minimize bad news. In addition, responding productively to missteps requires us to avoid our tendency to explain our thinking more clearly or double down on our thinking, and engaging in constant updating contrasts the path of staying the course.

In this closing of each of their articles, Petriglieri and Kerrissey/Edmondson each provide an additional takeaway about crisis leadership. Petriglieri offers that “people never forget how managers treated them when they were facing loss. And we will remember how our institutions, managers, and peers, held us through this crisis — or failed to...It is tempting to resort to command and control in a crisis, but it is leaders who hold instead that help us work through it. (para.17). Kerrissey and Edmondson add that “leadership in an uncertain, fast-moving crisis

means making oneself available to feel what it is like to be in another's shoes - to lead with empathy.” Overall, while Kotter/Cohen and Kim's work provide guidance on managing the change process, Petriglieri and Kerriseey/Edmondson each share critical insights that must be considered at each stage of the change process when leading during a crisis. Leaders must create a holding space, leaders must communicate with transparency, act with urgency, respond productively to missteps, and engage in constant updating. Perhaps most importantly, leaders must lead with empathy at the forefront.

Theory of Action

If I support our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents to implement coaching cycles with principals that are grounded in a teaching and learning approach, aligned to the MPS Strategic Plan, driven by what principals express they need, and grounded in our current COVID-19 context, then school principals will strengthen their instructional leadership and problem-solving skills.

If I support our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents to design and facilitate Network PD grounded in a teaching and learning approach and with an intentional focus on building psychological safety, then school principals will more consistently share best practices and ideas, collaboratively address challenges and problems of practice, and feel more connected to other school principals.

If I meet regularly with our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents to assess our progress, reflect on our challenges and successes, adjust our plans in response to data, and to incorporate research and best practices into our collaboration, then we will learn and improve how to

effectively support MPS principals and refine the MPS model of principal professional development.

So if we've learned how to build coaching cycles and communities of practice, and our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents see the value of the work and want it to continue, and the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents commit the required resources, then MPS school leader professional development will be sustainable over time and ultimately MPS principals will be more collaborative and effective **so that student achievement increases across MPS.**

Description, Evidence, and Analysis of the Strategic Project

Developing the Strategic Plan

My strategic plan focuses on improving how principals are coached, supported, and developed within the Medford Public Schools. The idea for this strategic project was born out of my entry interviews during my first month in Medford in June of 2020. During these interviews, particularly with Superintendent Dr. Edouard-Vincent, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Peter Cushing, and Assistant Superintendent Ms. Suzanne Galusi, the gap of coaching and support for principals continued to surface in conversations. Through these conversations, I learned that the Medford Public Schools did not yet have a clear strategy for developing the instructional leadership skills of principals through individual coaching, professional development, or support networks, therefore missing an opportunity to strengthen principal instructional capacity as a way to improve academic outcomes for students. Throughout all of my conversations with Dr. Edouard-Vincent, she was clear in identifying this as a major issue facing the district and equally

as clear in identifying this as a major opportunity to improve our district. Given my background as a principal and in coaching and supporting principals, Dr. Edouard-Vincent suggested that I consider taking on this gap, and opportunity, as my core strategic project. Given my passion for principal leadership and my future professional goal of supporting principal leadership as a district Superintendent, I enthusiastically agreed to focus on redesigning how principals are coached, supported, and developed within the Medford Public Schools as my strategic project.

While we agreed to this topic of my strategic project in early July, I did not actually begin leading this work until the beginning of October. Between July and October, I deeply researched the questions posed in my RKA around structures that best build principal instructional leadership capacity, a district's role in building and sustaining these structures, and also what it could look like to lead improvement work during times of crisis given the global COVID-19 pandemic that has caused worldwide shutdowns of schools and businesses and infected over 126 million people across the globe as of March of 2021. Throughout July, August, and September, while completing this research, I worked side-by-side with our district leadership team, focusing all of our attention on the reopening of schools. In the midst of all of the challenges associated with reopening, from appropriately staffing buildings, to developing safety protocols, to building both remote and hybrid learning models, we intentionally focused all of our attention on what was needed to safely open our buildings. At the same time, given everything on the plate of our principals, introducing a new structure for how they were coached or supported amidst these initial reopening efforts did not seem like a reasonable or effective approach.

Once we started getting students back into our schools in late September and early October, Dr. Edouard-Vincent emphasized that we would need to start to make a pivot, as a district, from focusing purely on reopening operations to regaining a focus on instruction. More

specifically, if we wanted our students to make academic and social/emotional gains this year, we could not stay in a space of focusing entirely on operations and logistics, but instead had to get back to our core business of teaching and learning. Dr. Edouard-Vincent stated how this strategic project provides us with an ideal opportunity to begin to make this shift.

In early October, in a meeting with Dr. Edouard-Vincent, Dr. Cushing, and Ms. Galusi, I outlined my proposal for how we could approach the coaching, support, and development of principals in the Medford Public Schools based on the research I had completed over the several months preceding. All three of the leaders enthusiastically supported the structure and rationale of the three-pronged structure I proposed to replace the once-a-month logistical meeting that previously existed as the professional development for principals. The three prongs consist of 1:1 coaching cycles, network PD, and SLATE meetings. The table below highlights the frequency and description of each of the prongs of this structure.

2020-2021 Medford Public Schools Three-Pronged Leadership Development Structure

Structure	Frequency	Description
1:1 Coaching Cycles	1-2/month x 1 hour	One-on-one coaching will focus on the specific, individualized goals developed collaboratively between the school leader and district administration. These goals will be the same goals identified in the principal evaluation and be a central focus in the School Improvement Plan. These visits are intended to collect evidence and data that illustrate progress or impediments toward these goals. At the end of each semester, we will meet to review assessment results, discuss progress toward the goal, and review evidence/data collected during the cycle.

Network PD	2/month x 1.75 hours	<p>Network PD will focus on building a community of practice amongst school leaders. We will spend some time early defining our focus areas for our work. Through Network PD, school leaders will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Share best practices and ideas focused on teaching and learning 2) Collaboratively address challenges and problems of practice 3) Engage in dialogue, sharing, and collaboration around topics of principal interest and relevance
Senior Leadership’s Administrator Team (SLATE)	3-4/month as scheduled by groups	These will be informal principal work groups focused on “nuts and bolts” issues. The goal is to support one another and problem-solve with colleagues on similar, operationally based, issues.

In this same meeting, after reviewing this three-pronged structure, we began discussing some of the potential content within each of the three prongs. For example, Dr. Edouard-Vincent noted how the content needs to connect to the Medford Public Schools’ District Strategic Plan. In the spring of 2020, the Medford Public Schools developed a strategic plan, with the four focus areas of Fostering Student Growth and Achievement, Fostering Collaborative Relationships, Fostering Equitable Learning Relationships, and Fostering a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment. Within each of these four areas, the plan includes several initiatives that would be enacted to live out that specific focus. While the official approval of this strategic plan by the Medford School Committee has been delayed primarily due to the pandemic, Dr. Edouard-Vincent affirmed how aligning our work to this plan would be critical in bringing some coherence to all of the work across the district.

In this meeting, we discussed how in a typical, or non-COVID-19 year, we would align this work closely with the specific “initiatives” outlined within the District Strategic Plan. However, focusing solely on the specific “initiatives,” all of which were identified pre-COVID,

would not take into account a new context for instructional leadership that requires principals to navigate a health crisis, operate schools differently to meet hybrid/remote schedules, and take on new and different initiatives that reflect the COVID-19 context. Therefore, we decided that the content within each of these prongs needed to align to the first broad focus area from the District Strategic Plan (Fostering Student Growth and Achievement), given the close connection between principal instructional leadership and improving student growth and achievement. Furthermore, we knew it was not enough to align to the strategic plan that was developed pre-COVID-19, but we needed the COVID-19 context to be at the foundation of our content and approach. In a context that has undoubtedly raised the level of instructional leadership challenge and complexity for our school principals, we agreed that it was critical that we are responsive to our context and tailor our supports and coaching to align with what principals need to lead their respective school communities to success this year. Therefore, with this approach, we believed that the content for how we coach, support, and develop principals would be aligned to the district's focus of fostering student growth and achievement and grounded in the current COVID-19 context.

Leading the Strategic Project

After finalizing the structure and the focus of our content within this first meeting, our team started diving into each of the three distinct prongs within our structure – Senior Leadership Administrators' Team (SLATE), Network PD, 1:1 Coaching Cycles.

Leading the Strategic Project - Senior Leadership Administrators' Team (SLATE)

While part of the three-pronged approach to developing, coaching, and supporting MPS school leaders, I did not oversee the SLATE component of this work. Given that this prong focused entirely on “nuts and bolts” and operational issues, the Superintendent hopes that in the future some of this non-instructional work can be handled through email or through a memo. However, given the quantity of operational challenges associated with the COVID-19 context, and also to maintain some consistency from the past for principals as they dive into new forms of coaching and support, we felt it made sense to keep this prong in place for this year. This prong is managed entirely by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations in collaboration with the other two Assistant Superintendents. Given that this does not play a core part in my Strategic Project, I will not dive deeper into this specific prong in this Capstone.

Leading the Strategic Project - Network PD

We launched our Network PD to principals and assistant principals, together, on October 21st within the Medford High School Bistro. As with all of the Network PD sessions, I collaboratively designed and facilitated this session alongside our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents. This initial meeting followed a series of planning meetings held between Dr. Cushing, Ms. Galusi, and I where we outlined the overall approach and structure for Network PD and also the specific content for our October 21st session. As the facilitator of these planning meetings, I prepared the agenda for our team and facilitated our sessions.

In these initial planning sessions, we decided that Principals and Assistant Principals would trade off each Wednesday to engage in Network PD. For example, one week focuses on principals, while the next week focuses on assistant principals, demonstrating our commitment to developing

the leadership of all school leaders in Medford. In these planning meetings, we articulated and drafted the goals driving Network PD, including supporting principals by building a community of practice where school leaders share best practice and ideas around teaching and learning, collaboratively addressing challenges and problems of practice, and engaging in dialogue, sharing, and collaboration around topics of principal interest and relevance. In these planning sessions, we utilized the research around communities of practice to build agendas that enabled collaboration across common problems, provided opportunities for discussion and conversation around high leverage challenges, created opportunities for developing new ideas and solutions, and allowed for the dissemination of best practices. In addition, we emphasized our own use of Honig and Rainey’s “teaching and learning” moves as facilitators. For example, in terms of “joint work moves,” in our initial meeting, our Assistant Superintendents shared their own areas for growth and provided an overview of their plans to improve in that area, demonstrating a commitment to learning alongside and with the principals. In our second meeting, utilizing the “brokering” strategy, we brought in research around the psychology of crisis leadership, and had principals analyze the key arguments from the authors, connect them to their own contexts, and dive into conversations with colleagues about the implications of this research on their leadership. Also, to use the teaching and learning strategy of “identifying all group members as learning resources,” we highlighted the work of a particular principal in refining his school improvement plan, and he spoke at a session about how he leveraged community voice to build out a plan representative of the views of the entire community. Also, to use each member as a learning resource, each principal had the opportunity to share a problem of practice with their colleagues and engage in problem analysis and solving through the Consultancy Protocol. Furthermore, given the critical importance of psychological safety, we utilized Edmondson’s strategies around building psychology safety

through various Zoom tools and discussed the need for us, as the leaders and facilitators, to approach conflict through collaboration, to show empathy in our interactions, and to ensure that we modeled vulnerability.

Overall, by the middle of February, we had led 12 total Network PD sessions totaling 20.5 hours. More specifically, 3 sessions were collaborative sessions held for both principals and assistant principals together while 5 were held solely for principals and 4 were held solely for Assistant Principals. A schedule for Network PD can be found in the Appendix B of this Capstone. In our two initial Network PD meetings, school leaders worked to define their visions for success for the 2020-2021 school year, explicitly connected those visions to the Medford Public Schools District Strategic Plan, and reflected on their own leadership practice, specifically areas that they would need to grow in to lead their school communities to achieve these visions. School leaders then turned these reflections of areas for growth into specific goals for their own professional practice. Dr. Edouard-Vincent, Dr. Cushing, Ms. Galusi and I used these professional practice goals to drive the content of 1:1 coaching cycles. After the initial Network PD meetings, our sessions focused on text-based conversations around issues of crisis leadership and instructional leadership, and our collaborative work utilized protocol-based opportunities for collaboration. For example, in almost every session, school leaders engaged in either the sharing of problems of practice using Consultancy Protocol or in analyzing successes through the Success Analysis Protocol. The texts, protocols, and structure that we used for each of these meetings can be found in the meeting agendas in Appendix C of this Capstone.

Leading the Strategic Project - 1:1 Coaching Cycles

In our planning meetings in early October, Dr. Edouard-Vincent, Dr. Cushing, Ms. Galusi and I decided that each principal will participate in a 1:1 coaching cycle with their direct supervisor, either the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education or the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education. On a related note, two assistant principals asked to participate in a coaching cycle with someone from the district's Senior Leadership Team, so I lead these coaching cycles directly. Directly leading these two cycles also provides me with the opportunity to model both the planning and facilitation of coaching cycles for the Assistant Superintendents. The Superintendent has also committed to leading this same structure of 1:1 coaching cycles in her supervision of each of these two Assistant Superintendents.

Within this structure, my major focus is on developing the capacity of our Assistant Superintendents to lead this work independently. For both Assistant Superintendents, this work is new. While the Superintendent has emphasized the importance of this work and they have both expressed a desire to learn, neither in their previous roles nor in their current district roles have they facilitated principal coaching cycles. As a result, my role has been to support them in leading these coaching cycles effectively, pushing them to see the value in this work as a form of buy-in, both for this year and beyond, and also to support them in allocating the required resources to lead this work effectively. To frame and organize the 1:1 coaching process, research supported the use of an inquiry cycle, and we utilize Honig and Rainey's "Cycle of Inquiry," identified through the graphic below.



- Step 1: Self-assess
- Step 2: Develop a learning plan
- Step 3: Plan to track your progress
- Step 4: Take action
- Step 5: Re-assess and begin again

Overall, we launched 1:1 coaching cycles with each of the 9 district principals and also 2 district assistant principals. Out of these 11 cycles, five were within Step 3 and six were within Step 4 by the middle of February. Each principal supervisor took responsibility for leading their own 1:1 coaching cycle with their respective school leaders. Therefore, outside of the two 1:1 coaching cycles that I facilitated directly, my role in these cycles was to support each principal supervisor in preparing for coaching cycle meetings and debriefing meetings to discuss challenges and next steps. Below, I outline what our work has looked like within each of these steps of the cycle. In the upcoming sections of this Capstone, I share reflections on some of the factors that led to both the challenges and successes within the launch of 1:1 coaching cycles.

Step 1: Self-Assess. The process of 1:1 coaching cycles began when school leaders outlined their responses to the prompt “What does success look like for your school communities in the 2020-2021 school year?” during the first Network PD session in October. After crafting these visions for success, school leaders then assessed themselves against the [Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation: School Level Administrator Rubric](#). In these self-assessments, leaders identified particular areas where they would need to grow in order to lead their school communities forward and deliver on the visions for success, ensured these areas aligned with the “Fostering Student Achievement and Growth” focus area within the District Strategic Plan, and

provided evidence to support their rationale. School leaders then turned these areas of growth into SMART goals for their own professional leadership, and these SMART goals serve at the foundation of the content for 1:1 coaching cycles. As a result of the aforementioned foundational work, principals developed goals that are grounded to the current COVID-19 context, aligned to the District Strategic Plan, and reflective of what they express they need.

Step 2: Develop a learning plan. After brainstorming these goals, each principal met with their principal supervisor to finalize the goals and to collaboratively develop a learning plan around their goal. Principals were required to narrow their work into 2-3 distinct goals to ensure focus and to enable them to go deeper into a particular area during the coaching cycle. In partnership, each principal and assistant principal completed a learning plan that charted out a clear plan for moving forward. Utilizing resources and opportunities that the principal and Assistant Superintendent developed in tandem, they set mutually agreed-upon growth goals for the end of the cycle. An example of these learning plans can be found in Appendix E of this Capstone.

Step 3: Plan to track your progress. During these initial meetings, principals outlined measurements they would use to track their progress on their leadership goals and determine a plan to capture relevant data in support. During each check-in meeting during the coaching cycle, the principal and Assistant Superintendent discussed the data that the principal collected in order to analyze progress and determine next steps. In addition, these measurements pushed principals to be self-reflective about their own progress and hold themselves accountable for gathering the data to show evidence of progress towards their learning goal. Overall, this data and evidence of progress drove both the collaboration between the principal and Assistant Superintendent as well as the principals' efforts for self-improvement. An example of this progress tracking through a check-in meeting can be found in Appendix F of this Capstone.

Step 4: Take action. The taking action phase required work from both the principal and the Assistant Superintendent. During this phase, the principals held themselves accountable for diving into the resources and opportunities outlined in their learning plan during Step 2. They collected evidence on their progress, as outlined in Step 3, and prepared to analyze their progress with the Assistant Superintendent. Our principal supervisor team committed to meeting with principals to discuss their progress at least once a month.

As the Assistant Superintendents met with principals to analyze progress, they focused on ensuring that the principals are following through with their learning plan and collecting data to demonstrate their progress towards these goals. In these meetings, Assistant Superintendents worked to take on a teaching and learning approach. As described in the RKA, Honig and Rainey emphasized that the best results from 1:1 coaching comes in scenarios where the principal supervisors take on a teaching and learning stance. Honig and Rainey shared that taking on a teaching and learning stance meant that principal supervisors did two things. First, they supported principals to drive their own learning. In the 1:1 coaching meetings, Assistant Superintendents tried not to situate themselves as the driver of the principals' learning but, instead, enabled principals to drive their own learning with the support and coaching of the Assistant Superintendent. Secondly, Assistant Superintendents framed their 1:1 coaching meetings based off specific teaching and learning moves. As an example, this meant that Assistant Superintendents modeled ways of thinking and approaching complex tasks, used talk moves to probe principals on their strategic thinking, and differentiated potential supports and resources to align with each principals' capacity and context.

Step 5: Reassess and begin again. This reassessment and start of a new cycle transpires at two levels. First, this happens in the coaching cycle between the principal and the Assistant

Superintendent. The principal and Assistant Superintendent collaboratively analyze data demonstrating progress towards targets, discuss what led to those outcomes and why, and create a path for moving forward. The second level of reassessment and beginning again sits between myself, our Superintendent, and Assistant Superintendent. Given that this project building the capacity of the Assistant Superintendents is at the core of this work, we meet as a team to reassess our progress. However, given that none of our coaching cycles have reached stage 5 yet, my analysis on Step 5 and moving this work forward are addressed in the upcoming sections of this capstone.

Principal Supervisor Meetings

As referenced in the sections relating to Network PD and 1:1 Coaching, our team of principal supervisors, specifically the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, and I, meet regularly to assess our progress, reflect on our challenges and successes, adjust our plans in response to data, and incorporate research and best practices into our work. As a collective, these meetings help us to learn and improve how we support MPS principals and guide our work in continuing to refine our model. Given some of the time constraints and challenges relating to COVID-19, we did not create a standing meeting time for Principal Supervisor meetings and instead relied on routine informal meetings and communication. I share additional reflections on this approach in the upcoming section of this Capstone.

Evidence

As I reflect on the degree to which we have accomplished the objectives of the Strategic Project, I believe that we are on track to deliver on the outputs that I documented within the Theory

of Action. For example, we have started to implement coaching cycles with principals that are aligned to the MPS Strategic Plan, driven by what principals express they need, and situated in our current COVID-19 context. We have designed and facilitated Network PD grounded in research around communities of practice and with an intentional focus on building psychological safety. In addition, I have met with our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to assess our progress, reflect on our challenges and successes, adjust our plans in response to data, and to incorporate research and best practices into our collaboration. Lastly, through collaboration, coaching, and feedback, I have supported our leadership team to be able to lead this type of work on their own, which is imperative if we are to meet the goals outlined in the strategic project. Overall, given that we have executed in these areas, I feel that we are on track to deliver on the goals, or the “then” statements from the Theory of Action.

While we may be on track to meet the goals outlined in the project, it is difficult to measure how well we have actually delivered on these outputs without looking at outcomes. Given that this work centers around principal instructional leadership, in the long-term it would be critical to measure impact through student achievement outcomes. However, given that this Strategic Project is still at the rather early stages of implementation, I am relying on formative assessment data from our principals and assistant principals to provide evidence of our progress towards the “then” statements in my Theory of Action. In order to measure the progress of our work, we will utilize following formative measurements:

- 1) Plus/Delta feedback from Network PD
- 2) Interviews with Principals
- 3) Interviews with Principal Supervisors (Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents)

Measurements 2 and 3 were completed in the middle of February and measurement 1 was collected at the end of each weekly Network PD session. Collectively, these measurements are critical as

they allow principals and principal supervisors to share their voices, ideas, and perspectives on this new professional development format. In addition to assessing the progress of our work, the data from these measurements inform the recommendations provided in the Implications sections of this Capstone.

Measurement 1: Plus/Delta feedback from Network PD

Principals are asked to complete a brief “plus/delta” feedback survey at the end of every session. This measurement provides us with the most in-the-moment or formative data and all of the survey responses are included in Appendix D of this Capstone. The survey asks school leaders to respond to three simple questions:

1. What worked in today’s session that we should continue to do?
2. What could we do better in our next session?
3. Any other thoughts/comments/questions/concerns that you would like to share?

This survey serves as a formative assessment to keep a pulse on the perspectives of school leaders. As we see trends in things that are working, we try to continue to build off them. For example, during the first few sessions, multiple participants shared that they appreciated having a core text/resource to ground our conversations, and therefore, we have started to build this as a consistent part of our practice. Also, as we see trends in things that we could do better, we make adjustments for our future sessions. For example, after our second session, many participants expressed how they felt uncomfortable with the amount of people in one physical space, raising concerns about social distancing and potential virus transmission. After hearing this feedback, we’ve moved to a full remote approach for the time being and have received positive feedback about how this has both raised the comfort level for many in the group and reduced the amount of time that leaders physically spend out of their buildings. The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and I review each plus/delta form and collaboratively discuss how the feedback,

both positive and negative, impacts our future sessions. At the beginning of each session, we share out the feedback that everyone provided and discuss the adjustments we made as a result.

As evident in the included survey data, the feedback from Network PD has been overwhelmingly positive, specifically around the clear and consistent structure, the opportunity to share ideas and best practices, and the opportunity to engage in conversation around topics of interest and importance. Below are several quotes that reflect these themes:

- Collaboration across the schools is what I would say was the most successful part of the meeting. I do not have the opportunity often to speak with leaders in other buildings to bounce ideas off of and/or share best practices. (November 25, 2020)
- Rich conversations all around. I just want to thank everyone for their supportive and collaborative nature. (December 16, 2020)
- The consultancy protocol was an efficient way to get lots of information/questions out in a short amount of time. The breakout rooms continue to be effective ways to collaborate and provide multiple viewpoints in a short time. (January 6, 2021)
- The continued collaboration with my coworkers is invaluable. The honesty to share our challenges in a safe space makes this work so pivotal for me...The format for these conversations works well. (January 6, 2021)
- A leadership team that is willing to listen, model expectations of professional practice, and able to create opportunities for further collaboration will succeed in raising the bar for all -keep moving forward with these positive experiences. (January 6, 2021)

Overall, this feedback has provided us with an initial signal that we are on the right track with our approach, content, and facilitation of Network PD, and we will continue to make minor tweaks in response to feedback raised by the group.

Measurement 2: Interviews with Principals/Assistant Principals

In the middle of February, I interviewed each of the principals and assistant principals to discuss their views on our progress towards the goals of this strategic project. To frame the conversation, I asked each of the three leaders the same questions:

1. As you think about this new professional development structure (Network PD, 1:1 Coaching, SLATE), what's working in terms of how we coach, support, and develop school leaders in Medford?
2. As you think about this new professional development structure, what could we do to better support, coach, and develop school leaders in Medford?
3. Are there any other thoughts/comments/questions/concerns that you would like to share?

As a whole, the group demonstrated enthusiasm about these new structures and optimism about how they could continue to evolve in the future. Most of the positive feedback revolved around two major themes: continuous learning and collaboration. For example, below are several quotes that reflect these themes from several different school leaders:

- The best part of the new professional development structure, quite frankly, is that we've stayed committed to doing it and the message has been that it is important, sacred time with each other. It is so easy to let PD for administrators slide and focus on more immediate issues, but the long-term benefit to the district for having a more skillful leadership team that itself is committed to learning and growing is beyond measure.
- For me personally, the chance to connect with colleagues and brainstorm solutions to common problems has been invaluable. Administrators can often feel isolated, especially singletons without direct peers in their buildings, such as principals and assistant principals. A sense of identity with a larger group that is united in purpose is a powerful thing.
- The PD for administrators this past year has been a very positive development for the district and for me personally. It has created stronger relationships with other teammates that I did not previously know, made me feel like I was making greater contributions to the district by providing me a vehicle to support colleagues, and provided me with feedback which has enabled me to increase my skill level as an educational leader and understand the overall big picture from a district level perspective.
- The Network PD helped normalize problems and bring together principals & APs in a way that they would not normally coalesce around specific problems. Principals are problem solvers by nature, but they are not necessarily in regular, ongoing collaboration with other principals in the effort to solve those problems; I think many risk falling into a "lone ranger" of leadership, especially when access to other principals or assistant principals is limited.
- I have found that these structured opportunities have exposed me to sound approaches to leading my school community. In addition, the professional development structure has infused applicable strategies based on new research. I have found that this structure has enabled us to come together to be a community of learners.

- This format allows us to operate as a team but also teaches us individual skills needed to become better in our roles.
- While I will say that it was an adjustment, especially during such strange times in our daily schedule and work structures, it has proven to be beneficial for my own growth as a 4th year Principal.

While the group provided overwhelmingly positive feedback around Network PD, the feedback around 1:1 coaching was not as consistently positive. Some leaders noted the positive impact of 1:1 coaching on their practice while others suggested that it did not have as strong of an impact. All of the feedback for improvement relating to 1:1 coaching connected to the theme of time, with some principals expressing how it was sometimes difficult to find time for 1:1 coaching meetings. Others expressed a difficulty in evaluating the 1:1 coaching cycle structure as they are still very early in the cycle and have only had 1-2 meetings. In terms of opportunities for growth within this new approach to school leader development, all of the comments from school leaders related to continuing this work moving forward. More specifically, several school leaders noted the need to carve out time for this work and to clearly define the focus of this next iteration of principal development. Given that we used Wednesdays, our full-remote days, for this PD, principals wondered how we could sustain it within a more traditional, post-pandemic schedule. For example, one assistant principal shared “I began to look forward to these sessions on Wednesdays, mainly because I knew in most cases I could shut into my office and participate in the session without worrying about something immediate and pressing that would pull me away,” raising questions on how we could maintain this focus while other pressing issues came up for leaders during the day. Also, in terms of defining a focus, one principal asked that as we map out the next steps of this PD, we think about how we would answer the following “what is the end goal of the PD? Is it to develop a community of skillful educational leaders? Is it to solve problems facing the district? Is it to team build? Is it all three? For it to be sustained at a

high level it will need both purpose and outcomes.” Lastly, the third major theme of opportunities to growth related to communities of practice as several principals and assistant principals expressed the possibilities of partnering with local districts to involve other school leaders and expand opportunities for collaboration and innovation. Overall, interviews with school leaders revealed a strong sense of enthusiasm about our work and approach and how it impacted their practice. Furthermore, these interviews revealed several considerations, ideas, and possibilities for continuing this work and making it more effective for leaders moving forward.

Measurement 3: Interviews with Principal Supervisors (Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents)

In the middle of February, I met with each of the principal supervisors (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education) to discuss their views on our progress towards the goals of this strategic project. To frame the conversation, I asked each of the three leaders the same questions:

1. As you think about this new professional development structure (Network PD, 1:1 Coaching, SLATE), what’s working in terms of how we coach, support, and develop school leaders in Medford?
2. As you think about this new professional development structure, what could we do to better support, coach, and develop school leaders in Medford?
3. Are there any other thoughts/comments/questions/concerns that you would like to share?

In summary, the group of principal supervisors expressed enthusiasm about our new approach to coaching, developing, and supporting district principals. One supervisor shared, “I think we are on the right track in Medford. I think it’s important that we continue the work that we started this year.” Another supervisor added “these three new professional development structures put into place have been widely successful...this needs to continue... the importance of this time and these

meetings is too important to let slip.” In addition to these sentiments expressing their overall enthusiasm for our progress, other comments included:

- These sessions are working because they allow the time and space for leaders to listen, learn, and collaborate for growth...these discussions can then be targeted to focus on academic outcomes for students and building a stronger culture across the district.
- The new structure promotes greater collaboration and it is designed to foster and build transparency amongst colleagues. When administrators are given the opportunity to share a problem of practice that requires the individual to be vulnerable it requires a great amount of trust. Through increasing Relational Trust the district as an organization becomes stronger... A key flaw of the previous professional development structure was that it eliminated or did not take into account the valuable contributions of the assistant principals... Through intentionally incorporating every single administrator in the new professional development structure, it has allowed the district as an organization to grow, to be better and to build upon one another's strengths.
- All administrators are being given an opportunity to speak, to share, to agree, and to disagree in a safe environment that is committed to their learning and growth as professionals.
- What has been working well, and we have the direct feedback to support it, is that school leaders feel heard and valued. They are enjoying that time biweekly can be spent with colleagues discussing articles and topics that are top of mind and/or impacting their roles. Having the time to obtain guidance relevant to their positions has been quite beneficial to their role this year.
- It gave me the time to sit with each one and discuss their goals and vision for the year ahead. This 1:1 coaching will also need to continue in the personal manner it has occurred this year.

In terms of areas for growth, two themes emerged from these interviews: a lingering sense of “newness” with 1:1 coaching cycles and the need to gradually release responsibility of the work to others. First, two of the supervisors alluded to the fact that coaching cycles were new to them. For example, one supervisor noted that “out of the 3 development structures, this is personally the one I need to spend the most time growing” while another shared “1:1 coaching in a formal sense is not something I have had the chance to work on until recently.” Secondly, one supervisor shared “the next phase of work must involve the gradual release of PD ownership to all the administrators.

In an ideal setting, once all the administrators have had an opportunity to go through a coaching cycle and present a problem of practice to their peers, then they should be able to lead future PD sessions. The work that is taking place right now is manageable and replicable.”

Overall, the interviews with principal supervisors suggest that we are on track with our work of supporting principals through this new structure. At the same time, these interviews uncover both missed opportunities from this year to deepen this work and also future opportunities to take this work to the next level. I will address these missed opportunities and future opportunities in the upcoming sections of this Capstone.

The Why

In summary, the outcomes and process of this Strategic Project include some major successes and also some missed opportunities. In terms of successes, our Senior Leadership Team has built the foundation of principal professional development in the district which will impact the instructional capacity of leaders, the collaborative culture amongst the group, and ultimately student achievement outcomes. At the same time, in retrospect, the process of designing and rolling out this new professional development structure for school leaders included missed opportunities that have impacted the Strategic Project’s overall effectiveness and outlook for the future.

Throughout the Strategic Project, I’ve utilized several frameworks to help me make leadership decisions and to make sense of why things transpired the way they did, both for the positive and also the not so positive. For example, I’ve consistently referenced Heifetz’s framework around technical vs. adaptive change to guide my planning, as I aimed to push our Senior Leadership Team and principals into the challenging, messy work of adaptive leadership. I utilized Mark Moore’s Strategic Triangle, analyzing ways that I could increase the legitimacy

and support for the project, how to build the operational capacity of our organization to lead this work, and how to create value in this work for both our Senior Leadership Team and principals. In addition, I consistently thought about the PELP Coherence Framework and bringing coherence to each phase of leading this improvement effort. While all of these frameworks, and many others, played a role in shaping my work and my analysis of what happened, I have decided to utilize an adapted version of Dr. John Kotter’s “8-Step Process for Accelerating Change” to help explain why the project developed in the ways that it did through this Analysis section. This adapted version of the framework was presented to all PELP participants during the 2020 PELP Summer Online Series by PELP Co-Chair and HBS Professor John J-H Kim.



*Note: Adapted from the "8-Step Process for Accelerating Change" by Dr. John Kotter, Center for Creative Leadership, Harvard Business Review, McKinsey and Company, "Change Monster" by Jeanie Duck, Lewin’s 3-Stage Model of Change

I have decided to use this adapted framework at the core of my analysis for several different reasons. First, this adapted framework connects directly to a change process with a district audience in mind. As described in the Introduction of this Capstone, my Strategic Project marked a significant change for how things had been done in Medford for decades. Given that this Strategic Project required such a shift, especially in the context of COVID-19, using a framework about leading change can be particularly enlightening. Secondly, the adapted version of this framework not only includes each of the 8 steps for leading change but also puts several “Leadership Enablers” at the center of this framework. In the Medford context, these “Leadership Enablers” played a critical role at each phase of leading this change process and can provide additional depth in analyzing the Strategic Project. Lastly, as a PELP facilitator over the past two years, I have come to deeply trust the resources and supports provided through the program as I both lead and analyze district level change. More specifically, I utilized this same adapted framework in Medford throughout our planning of the reopening of schools and found it to be extremely helpful in guiding our decision making, analyzing our successes and challenges, and making sense of how things played out in the manner that they did. In this section, I will analyze why the Strategic Project turned out the way it has through the lens of this adapted version of Dr. John Kotter’s “8-Step Process for Accelerating Change.”

“Leadership Enablers”

To guide a district through a change process, Kim argued that districts must focus on four core “Leadership Enablers,” listed at the center of the framework:

1. Communicate and Motivate
2. Remain Steadfast and Focused

3. Role Model the Change
4. Be Engaged and Connected.

First, district leaders must communicate and motivate. They must be relentless in communicating their vision for change and their progress, express optimism and enthusiasm about the potential outcomes, and be fully transparent about the changes ahead. Kim outlined that districts must remain steadfast and focused and avoid getting pulled away or distracted from the core vision. Districts, especially central office leaders, need to role model the change, and demonstrate the type of actions and mindsets that they want to see from the rest of the community. Lastly, Kim asserted that districts must be engaged and connected throughout the planning and execution phases of the work.

8-Step Process

In addition to listing out the “Leadership Enablers” required to facilitate change, this adapted framework lists an 8-step process for leading change. The 8-steps include:

1. Create a Sense of Urgency
2. Build a Guiding Coalition
3. Form a Strategic Vision and Initiatives
4. Enlist a Volunteer Army
5. Enable Action by Removing Barriers
6. Generate Short-Term Wins
7. Sustain Acceleration
8. Institute Change

To effectively lead a change process, district leaders must be able to live out each of the “Leadership Enablers” within each of the 8-steps outlined in the adapted framework. Therefore, in my analysis, I will analyze the Strategic Project step-by-step, with the 4 “Leadership Enablers” influencing the analysis at each of the steps.

Step 1: Create a Sense of Urgency.

Within my first few days in the Medford Public Schools, Dr. Edouard-Vincent outlined some of the major challenges with the professional development for district principals and expressed an urgent desire to change these practices. Our two instructional Assistant Superintendents, one who had just transitioned out of a principal role in Medford and the other who had just finished his first year in the district, expressed similar concerns about the principal professional development structure and our need to revamp this structure. Also, during my entry interview process, many principals expressed principal professional development as an area for growth, and they hoped for improvement in this area. Therefore, a strong sense of urgency already existed amongst those who would be leading this work, and some of those on the receiving end of this work, since the start of the Strategic Project. Furthermore, the context of COVID-19 provided a unique opportunity to do things differently, as leaders were facing urgent challenges they had never seen before and did not possess any structured systems of support to navigate these challenges.

Step 2: Build a Guiding Coalition

Given that this Strategic Project tied directly to principal leadership, I knew from the onset that the three leaders who supervise principals – the Superintendent and our two

instructional Assistant Superintendents – would play a critical role in developing and leading this project. Furthermore, since each of these leaders had expressed a strong urgency for taking on this work, it became clear that the four of us would work closely together and form a guiding coalition for leading this work. The four of us committed to designing, leading, and facilitating this work together.

As we embarked on this work, we connected with principals to hear their ideas and thoughts about what they thought they needed for professional development. Overwhelmingly, principals emphasized how they wanted the chance to collaborate and learn from one another, especially given the new realities, challenges, and opportunities posed by COVID-19. Therefore, while we did not include principals as part of the guiding coalition in developing the specific professional development structures we would use, we did use their voices and perspective to shape our approach. Since many principals had expressed that the current model did not work for them, we anticipated that they would be open to any sort of new approach or structure that aligned with the general criteria they had outlined. Also, I hypothesized that a few principals were accustomed to the previous structure of principal professional development and did not necessarily see a need to pivot away, and therefore it would be easier to show them a different model in action than to try to convince them of one in advance. For example, in summarizing their main argument from their text “The Heart of Change,” Kotter and Cohen suggest “The single most important message in this book is very simple. People change what they do less because they are given *analysis* that shifts their *thinking* than because they are *shown* a truth that influences their *feelings*” (2021, p.1). I was confident that the new structures would make people *feel* positively about the new approach to leadership development, and therefore, felt that we would gain buy-in from all principals once we started our collaborative work. Furthermore, due

to COVID-19, I knew that principals were extremely busy planning for the reopening of schools and reasoned that they would appreciate the Senior Leadership Team taking the lead on addressing a gap that many of them had identified and building structures that aligned with what they expressed they needed.

While I believe that we ultimately gained buy-in from principals through our approach, my development of a guiding coalition without principal voice was a missed opportunity. If I had enlisted principals as part of the guiding coalition, instead of using their ideas and perspectives to shape the approach of the coalition, we could have built stronger structures that most closely aligned to the needs of principals. At the same time, we could have avoided some of the potential missteps and challenges we faced later on in the change process and modeled for principals the critical importance of bringing in the ideas and voices of those who will be most impacted during an improvement process. This approach would have aligned closely with the argument that Susan Moore Johnson, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has made in much of her research that within all improvement efforts people need to be the agents of change, not the objects of change. While she speaks consistently of this through the lens of teachers, especially in her text “Where Teachers Thrive: Organizing Schools for Success,” this same theme would have carried well in this context with principals and situated them as agents of this change.

Step 3: Form a Strategic Vision and Initiatives.

Throughout the summer and early fall, our guiding coalition came together to map out the qualities we wanted to see in our plan, the approaches we would live out as the plan moved forward, and some of the critical content to focus on within the plan. In terms of qualities, we

decided that our plan would need to have purpose and urgency, that it would be feasible to implement in a COVID-19 context, and that it utilized collaboration as the mechanism for improvement. These qualities aligned with what principals expressed they were looking for within any professional development structure. In terms of our approach in leading the plan, we committed to modeling best practices and also to consistently using principal feedback for improvement. Lastly, in terms of content, we decided that our plan needed to focus on instruction while staying grounded in the COVID-19 context.

In reflection, these decisions and commitments ultimately served at the foundation of our success as they provided us with a strategic vision. Without these formative conversations, we may still have agreed upon a particular structure to use for principal PD (1:1 coaching and Network PD), but we would not have been calibrated on the qualities, approaches, or content that drove our work. Furthermore, these conversations allowed us to situate our approach within the unique Medford context, the relevant COVID-19 context, and also within the needs of our principals. This collaborative work from our guiding coalition was critical in ensuring that our specific structures, 1:1 coaching and Network PD, aligned with our strategic vision for what quality principal professional development in Medford would look like.

Step 4: Enlist a Volunteer Army.

As we started the roll out of our new plan, we knew that many principals would have questions about why we changed our principal professional development model and what professional development would look like moving forward. In our first three Network PD meetings, Dr. Edouard-Vincent expressed the limitations of the current PD model and passionately discussed the new approach that we would take, one that would build on the

expertise of the people in the room, one that would focus on collaboration, and one that would connect directly to improvements in teaching and learning. Dr. Edouard-Vincent also emphasized how COVID-19 presented us with an opportunity to think about things differently and that these new structures would play a critical role in helping principals to navigate all of the challenges associated with leading during the time of a pandemic. Through her communication, Dr. Edouard-Vincent was able to generate a sense of urgency within principals through consistently and compellingly messaging to principals what needed to change and boldly outlining a path forward.

While this initial communication spurred some enthusiasm and interest from principals, we knew that we needed to enlist principals as leaders in our plan. Therefore, within our Network PD, we began to provide volunteer opportunities for principals to take the lead on various parts of our work, from facilitating protocols, to highlighting best practices to share with colleagues, or sharing problems of practice they faced in their school communities. Gradually shifting some of these responsibilities over to principals served as a turning point in building a community where principals felt like Network PD was something that was valuable for their practice instead as a compliance mechanism. While our Senior Leadership Team created the space for principals to build this community, it was the quality of support, coaching, and analysis that principals provided one another around challenges, best practices, and leadership dilemmas that ultimately led to the success of Network PD.

Step 5: Enable Action by Removing Barriers.

After we began the roll out of our plan, we intentionally set out to remove barriers that stood in the way of our progress. One of our best strategies for identifying and removing barriers

was to gain consistent feedback from principals. In their feedback, principals would often identify barriers and potential ways around them. For example, in one of our earliest Network PD sessions, several principals noted how the in-person setting made them feel unsafe due to COVID-19. While many principals wanted to remain in-person for Network PD, we decided to shift to a full virtual format as a way to remove a barrier that was prohibiting someone from participating fully. We also attempted to stay engaged and connected to principals' views by having informal conversations with principals about their thoughts, concerns, and ways to make our work more effective. Our commitment to keeping a pulse on potential barriers through principal feedback proved critical in removing obstacles in the way of our progress.

While feedback allowed us to remove several barriers for principals, our Senior Leadership Team faced three significant barriers that impeded our ability to lead this work as effectively as possible. First, while we mapped out a schedule for the full year for Network PD, we decided to schedule our 1:1 coaching meetings on an ongoing basis with principals. As schedules became more crammed and COVID-19 related issues consistently surfaced, scheduling 1:1 coaching cycles became a challenge. In this situation, the technical component of scheduling these meetings impeded our ability to dive into the critical adaptive leadership work. Secondly, as our district continued to face more COVID-19 related issues, such as student and staff COVID-19 testing, mandated mask-wearing protocols, and new HVAC requirements, the more time our Senior Leadership Team committed to operations and logistics during our weekly meeting. While this was necessary to address the heightened and critical operational needs, this took away from our focus on instruction by limiting the time our team had to discuss critical instructional updates. As a result, our Senior Leadership Team missed opportunities to calibrate our instructional leadership practices and to analyze some of the instructional trends we noticed

from both 1:1 coaching and Network PD. Lastly, in addition to impacting what made it on the agenda for our Senior Leadership Team meetings, the operational needs related to COVID-19 limited the number of meetings the four members of our guiding coalition had to discuss our work and make adjustments in response to feedback. This was particularly impactful on our coaching cycles, where this practice was new to both Assistant Superintendents. Therefore, since we weren't often meeting to collaborate and align our practices around coaching cycles, both Assistant Superintendents were required to learn how to facilitate effective coaching cycles primarily through reading Honig and Rainey's text independently. Had we created the time for collaborating around coaching cycles, particularly given Dr. Edouard-Vincent's expertise in this area, we would have positioned our Assistant Superintendents for success and more consistently led higher-quality coaching cycles across the district. Overall, while we were still able to lead our 1:1 coaching cycles and Network PD with some success, we certainly were not as cohesive and aligned as we could have been if we had more time to connect and were more intentional about building the capacity of the entire team to lead high-quality coaching cycles.

Step 6: Generate Short-Term Wins

Our ability to generate and recognize some short-term wins has led to some significant momentum for our plan moving forward. Within Network PD, we consistently gathered principal feedback and shared the responses back out as a way to model transparency. As evident through the feedback in this Appendix, the feedback throughout Network PD was overwhelmingly positive, which has been critical in gaining support and buy-in from the principals as a collective. Also, every principal has volunteered at least once to share a particular problem of practice they grappled with in their school community that implicates them as a

leader. Given that this type of task requires vulnerability, we believe that we were able to build a community with some level of psychological safety among the principals. In addition, several principals noted that they are using what they learned about crisis leadership within their own school communities, specifically trying to create “holding spaces” for their staff, engaging in constant updating, and leading with empathy at the forefront.

Within 1:1 coaching, many of the cycles set the stage for instructional improvements within various school communities. For example, stemming directly from the work within one coaching cycle, one middle school community has embarked on a pilot in implementing more restorative justice practices, including restorative circles and restorative conferences, through a partnership with a community organization. In a separate cycle, as a completely new practice, a principal and AP team have committed to collaborative classroom walkthroughs as a practice to calibrate their instructional feedback. In order to support this team in finding time to lead these walkthroughs, one of the Assistant Superintendents and I cover the school building for them while they take on this instructional work. This also serves as one of the many examples I could use to highlight our team’s commitment to being a role model in the change and in staying connected to what’s happening.

Also, unlike in Network PD where groups of people come together and facilitation can be shared among multiple people, 1:1 instructional coaching cycles primarily involve two people: the principal and the principal supervisor. As our Senior Leadership Team started out in the facilitation of 1:1 coaching cycles, we approached this structure as a type of “divide and conquer” structure instead of the collaborative one we utilized through Network PD. More specifically, each of our Senior Leadership Team members would meet with their respective principals and we would come together and discuss trends as we were able. However, as we

moved later into late January and early February, we realized that this structure could be much more effective if we also approached it through a collaborative lens. Therefore, we set out to approach this in a more collaborative way by co-facilitating coaching sessions, setting aside time to discuss next steps from sessions, and connecting our coaching work to research through conversations around Honig’s text. As we became more collaborative through this structure, we felt that we became more effective and that there was stronger coherence among the instructional improvement efforts happening within each of the school communities, but we missed an opportunity to capitalize on the impact of collaboration earlier on in each cycle.

In addition to the short-term wins stemming from 1:1 coaching and Network PD, our guiding coalition has experienced some wins that are leading to a sense of momentum in our work. For example, our Superintendent has modeled the 1:1 coaching process with the Assistant Superintendents, our Senior Leadership Team has sought out written feedback from principals and used the feedback to make adjustments to our practice, and our guiding coalition has consistently co-developed and co-facilitated each of our Network PD sessions. In addition to serving as short-term wins, these small successes model the Senior Leadership Team’s commitment to collaboration, feedback, and continuous improvement.

Step 7: Sustain Acceleration & Step 8: Institute Change

Given that this project has only spanned over a 4-month period and that there is still much work to be done to move it forward, I address ideas for how to sustain acceleration and institute change within the “Implications for Sector” section of this Capstone. In short, I believe that the district has an opportunity to build on the positive momentum of the work thus far and

fully realize the vision of this project. In addition, I believe this plan can continue to evolve over time while becoming part of the district's DNA.

Implications for Self

While I could fill up many more pages outlining what I've learned about myself as a leader through my time in the Medford Public Schools, for the purpose of this capstone I will highlight two examples that connect directly to the content of this capstone.

Example 1: Personal Relationships in a COVID-19 Context

Relationships play a critical role in moving a change effort forward. Throughout my career in education, I've been able to build strong professional relationships with various stakeholders. These relationships have been at the core of the work of leading improvement, as I believe that it is difficult to mobilize, lead, and inspire those around you without a relationship. It is with that sentiment that I have placed relationship building at the core of how I operate as a leader.

Relationship building looked much different this year for me in Medford due to two major factors. First, due to the restrictions stemming COVID-19, I could not meet or interact with people face-to-face in the way that I had become accustomed to as a leader. More specifically, I had to think creatively about how to build relationships primarily through other formats, such as Zoom and phone calls. Secondly, in my role as a Superintendent Resident, I was not provided with any formal, positional authority. In my previous role as a principal, many people would want to build a relationship with me as a way to build a connection with their boss and possibly as a way to influence the thinking of an organization. However, without this formal authority as a Superintendent Resident, I needed to be especially proactive in building

relationships and could not rely on others to see the value in building a relationship with someone without formal authority in a temporary position.

Despite these two major obstacles, I was able to build really strong professional relationships with both district leadership and school principals and those relationships were an integral part in being able to move the work of this project forward. As I reflect on the process of building these relationships, I've learned that as someone with strong interpersonal skills, I've relied mostly on in-person strategies for developing rapport and connection. This year, as I've been forced to widen my toolkit and approach for building relationships that are not in-person settings, I've realized that it would benefit me to bring these same approaches to my future work in a post-pandemic setting. More specifically, in order to build stronger relationships, I need to think about how I can leverage email, video calls, phone calls, and other ways to build and strengthen relationships. Also, in a similar way, the strategies that I used to build relationships in a position without formal authority would also bode me well in roles where I possess strong positional authority. For example, strategies such as offering to support or help with the smallest of opportunities, sending handwritten notes of acknowledgment or appreciation, or reaching out to stakeholders just to hear their ideas or feedback would work especially well in roles with positional authority.

Overall, due to my role and COVID-19, I had to explore how to build strong relationships in a non-traditional setting. I should not look to a post-pandemic context as a way to revert back to how I built relationships with people when provided in-person opportunities and positional authority. While I had generally had success with my previous approaches to relationship building, using what I've learned as a leader this year and embedding it as a constant part of my leadership practice would make me a stronger relationship builder, and leader, moving forward.

Example 2: Problem Solving and Urgency

Throughout my career in educational leadership, I've prided myself on solving problems in an urgent fashion. In many cases, this approach has fared well for me. For example, as a principal, when problems would arise in the school, I would address them as efficiently as I could, often receiving the appreciation of students, staff, and families for solving problems quickly. While I believe that there is certainly a time for solving problems with this commitment to urgency, I've also learned how in many cases, my urgency has actually impeded the opportunity for a better solution or approach that may take time to develop. I've learned that when I act with such urgency to solve problems and don't take the time to deeply understand all of the layers or nuances of the problem, I am often solving an adaptive problem with a technical solution.

This strategic project provided me with the ideal opportunity to practice the approach of deeply understanding an adaptive problem before attempting to solve it. Within my first week of stepping into my role in Medford, Dr. Edouard-Vincent detailed the void of an effective strategy or structure to develop the instructional leadership of district principals. Furthermore, she articulated her willingness for me to begin this work and to start to address the issue.

Admittedly, a major part of me wanted to dive right in alongside Dr. Edouard-Vincent to develop and implement a strategy that would address this gap immediately. However, I made a conscious decision to take a step back to learn. I took time to learn about the Medford context, specifically how and why the district approached leadership development in the way that it did. I took time to learn the perspectives of district leadership and principals in how they see the district's approach to developing leaders and to learn about their hopes for what it could look like. I took time to deeply analyze research and best practices from around the country in what high quality

principal development could look like. Overall, resisting my temptation, I took the time to better understand the context, the problem, and possibilities before moving into solution-mode.

This approach paid major dividends as we were able to design and develop a strategy and structure for developing leaders that has gained some encouraging traction within the district. Had I jumped to solutions before this analysis, I'm not convinced that my recommendations would have aligned to the unique Medford context, addressed the root problems, or incorporated research or best practices in the solutions. As I analyze my learning from this approach, I could narrow it into two major takeaways. First, while there is certainly a time and place for decisive and efficient problem solving, it is critical that I recognize these types of problems compared to ones that require a much more thoughtful and methodical problem-solving approach. I must hold myself accountable to taking a step back when solving problems to analyze and deeply understand the context, the problem, and the potential approaches for moving forward. I have found that I am more effective as a leader when I even take a few moments to pause and run through this type of analysis. Secondly, I have come to believe that a slower pace and urgency can coexist. During a visit with several EdLD colleagues to Gwinnett County (GA) Public Schools, a two-time winner of the prestigious Broad Prize, Gwinnett County Director of Innovation and Program Implementation Dr. Babak Mostaghimi shared that part of the district's success in sustaining implementation in initiatives has been their ability to approach the process with "slow urgency." He described how moving at a methodical pace does not mean that urgency does not exist, but instead allows for the effective and sustained implementation of a solution that addresses the urgency of the problem. In the case of the strategic project outlined in this Capstone, a more methodical approach to closing this gap in leadership development did not

reflect a lack of urgency around the problem. Instead, the pace of addressing this problem enabled us to implement a solution that has showed major promise and potential.

Overall, as a leader, when faced with a problem, I need to continue to hold myself accountable to taking a step back to ensure that I approach it with the appropriate pacing and in a way that will ensure a sustained solution. The urgent problems that I will inevitably face as a leader require this type of discipline and thoughtfulness in problem solving.

Implications for Site

This strategic project set out to build a strong foundation for redesigning how principals in the Medford Public Schools are coached, supported, and developed. Given the strong feedback from both principals and central office administrators regarding this new principal professional development structure, I believe that the district has an opportunity build on some of these initial successes and take this work to the next level. Therefore, in order to not only sustain this work but to actually deepen it, I have three major recommendations for the Medford Public Schools:

1. Entrust Principals in Designing and Leading Network PD
2. Deepen 1:1 Instructional Coaching Cycles
3. Commit Space to Instructional Leadership Development

Recommendation 1: Entrust Principals in Designing and Leading Network PD

Given that principals do the “heavy lifting” in this structure, that the Senior Leadership Team has modeled how to facilitate effective Network PD, and that the Senior Leadership Team has gradually provided increased responsibility in this structure to principals, I recommend that the Senior Leadership Team entrust the principals with the design and facilitation of Network

PD. As the Senior Leadership Team turns this structure over to principals, they should provide expectations around the content, process, and communication of this structure. First, principals should design the content objectives of Network PD to align with those from this year, notably sharing best practices, discussing problems of practice, and analyzing leadership dilemmas. Not only do these content objectives align with research around effective communities of practice, but they have been well-received by Medford Public School principals. Secondly, while principals should be empowered to add their own touch to the process, they should be expected to meet bi-weekly, form written agendas, share leadership responsibilities, and utilize protocols and texts to frame discussions. Throughout this year, we have modeled each of these process expectations and gradually provided principals with more ownership of the process, preparing them to lead this work on their own. Lastly, it should be expected that principals take on the stance of continuous improvement. As we have in Network PD this year, principals should provide feedback about what is working and not working as a way to continue to improve their collaborative work. Grounding the work in principal feedback will help ensure that the structure continues to respond to the unique needs of each of the school leaders.

Entrusting principals to take over the design and facilitation of Network PD does not mean that the Senior Leadership Team should become uninvolved in this structure. Principals should be expected to consistently update the Senior Leadership Team on their work. Furthermore, as appropriate, members of the Senior Leadership Team should attend Network PD sessions and offer to be a support or resource whenever needed. While the responsibilities of designing and facilitating Network PD sessions will now shift to principals, the Senior Leadership Team must stay engaged and connected with this structure and oversee its implementation.

Recommendation 2: Deepen 1:1 Instructional Coaching Cycles

I recommend that the Senior Leadership Team deepen the 1:1 Instructional Coaching Cycle structure through three distinct approaches. First, principal supervisors, namely the two instructional Assistant Superintendents and the Superintendent, should commit to attending several coaching sessions with one another. This will allow principal supervisors to each exchange ideas, stay connected with the content within each cycle, and provide feedback to each other on their approach and facilitation. This approach would also symbolize both a sense of unity among principal supervisors and a commitment from each of them to improve their practice. Secondly, the principal supervisors should set in stone a bi-weekly meeting to discuss progress, challenges, and successes from each of the coaching cycles. Creating this space for principal supervisors to collaborate is critical in order to identify trends from across the schools, calibrate on their practice, and stay up-to-speed with content from each cycle. Furthermore, given that these cycles sit at the core of instructional improvement, this collaboration amongst principal supervisors is critical in ensuring coherence of instructional improvement efforts across the district. Lastly, the Senior Leadership Team should consider expanding 1:1 instructional coaching cycles to include supervisors, directors, and coordinators. While this Strategic Project focuses on the development of school leaders, Dr. Edouard-Vincent has continually expressed her commitment to developing the instructional leadership capacity of other district leaders. Given that this structure has generated initial support and that several district leaders now know how to facilitate the cycle, the opportunity seems ripe to extend this type of development opportunity for other district leaders. This approach would strengthen lines of instructional collaboration between the Senior Leadership Team and district coordinators, directors, and supervisors, as this process is inherently built around instructional leadership. In addition, this

approach would preclude the district from having to re-invent the wheel and would demonstrate a clear strategy in how the district develops all leaders, both at the school and district level.

Recommendation 3: Commit Space to Instructional Leadership Development

While a post-pandemic context may reduce the need to focus so much on new operational initiatives, it is impossible to predict what new opportunities or challenges this context may bring. Therefore, I recommend that the Senior Leadership Team create the space for instructional leadership within the confines of the current district structures through three major commitments. First, the Senior Leadership Team should commit to placing instructional-related matters on the weekly meeting agenda. While COVID-19 related operations and logistics have driven the agendas for weekly Senior Leadership Team meetings, as necessitated due to COVID-19 related logistics, the Senior Leadership Team needs to use the structure of the weekly meetings to ensure instructional coherence and the progress of the various instructional initiatives across the district, including 1:1 coaching cycles and Network PD. Secondly, in order to continue to draw a line between instruction and operations, the district should commit to continuing the SLATE structure to approach logistical, operational, and nuts and bolts related challenges. This structure is not only essential for the efficiency and quality of operational systems, but it has enabled principals to focus solely on instruction through Network PD and 1:1 coaching as they know the separate structure to take on critical operational issues. Given Medford's history of focusing primarily on operational leadership instead of instructional leadership, drawing this line between structures is especially important. Lastly, the Senior Leadership Team should work with principals to set the schedule for both Network PD and 1:1 coaching cycles prior to the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Even though we were dealing

with the schedules of over 20 people at one time, creating the space for Network PD proved rather simple as the schedule was set and agreed upon at the start of the school year. On the other hand, in several instances, we hit challenges in finding the time and space for 1:1 coaching cycles as they were scheduled as the year progressed and other commitments filled people's schedules. Therefore, to ensure the requisite time for instructional leadership development through 1:1 coaching and Network PD, the Senior Leadership Team should commit to the technical task of booking and scheduling all meetings throughout the year prior to the start of the school year.

Implications for Sector

While most of the analysis from this Strategic Project aligns specifically with the Medford context, there are several connections that can be made with the American preK-12 education sector at large. In this section, I will analyze two of these connections and analyze the implications on the education sector.

Connection 1: Post-Pandemic Leadership

“Leadership would be a safe undertaking if your organizations and communities only faced problems for which they already knew solutions (Heifetz, R. & Linsky, M., 2002, p. 13).”

All school districts across our country, including Medford, will be forced to think about what education and leadership looks like in a post-pandemic context. Districts must resist the temptation to revert back to “business as usual” and instead use what they have learned to create a new and better “normal.” Districts will need to create strategies for closing social, emotional, and academic gaps, re-evaluate both their curriculum and pedagogy in a world with an ever-

increasing divergence of opinions, and determine the role that technology and innovation will play in any improvement effort. At the foundation of all of these dilemmas and challenges live school leaders who will be responsible with envisioning, facilitating, and leading a post-pandemic education for our students, staff, and families. Simply put, our school leaders will face problems that neither they nor their colleagues have faced for which there are no known solutions. As implied from the Heifetz and Linsky quote above, this places our school leaders in an incredibly difficult situation.

While the post-pandemic outlook for school leaders may appear daunting, it is critical to remember that these same school leaders facing a post-pandemic education world are the same ones who guided all of our schools through the pandemic. Back in the summer of 2020, school leaders braced for the unknown, and step-by-step led schools through all of the unanticipated challenges, obstacles, and barriers facing our schools. In the Medford context, it was the perseverance, leadership, commitment, and perhaps most importantly, collaboration, of each of our principals that guided our community and schools through the pandemic.

As evident through the feedback shared by many Medford principals, it was the collaboration with their colleagues and supervisors that inspired them to try an innovative approach, to take on a new strategy for solving a problem, or to look at a dilemma with a different lens. This quality of collaboration occurred as a result of two professional development structures with collaboration at their core: 1:1 coaching cycles and Network PD. While this collaboration was critical as principals navigated the unknowns of the pandemic, I believe that this type of collaboration amongst school leaders will be just as important as principals begin to take on the challenges and unknowns in a post-pandemic world.

Therefore, now more than ever, districts need to invest in building structures that push for collaboration with both their colleagues and supervisors. In many cases, high-performing principals will seek out opportunities for collaboration without needing a structure from central office. However, it is critical that districts provide the opportunity and space for every principal to gain the benefits of collaboration. Now is not the time to approach principal professional development through a pure operational lens, through a top-down approach, or in school-specific silos. Instead, now is the time for districts to equip principals with what they need to approach the unknowns of the post-pandemic world, with a network of collaborative peers, a collaborative supervisor, and a time and space to collaboratively analyze and address problems with no known solution. Across our system, now is the time to invest in collaboration for our school leaders.

Connection 2: Central Office Transformation

“Another predictable pattern from our research and experience is that when central offices aim to transform principal supervision absent other aligned shifts throughout the central office, principal supervisors become exhausted and sometimes frustrated from swimming against the tide of central office business as usual. That pattern leads to principal supervisor burnout, turnover, and, in some cases, regression to traditional forms of principal supervision. Educational leaders can plan to avoid that disappointing future by engaging in fuller central office transformation” (Honig and Rainey, pg. 111).

Many districts, like Medford, spend a great deal of time and effort thinking about the best way to approach professional development for principals. For districts taking on this work, it could be valuable to explore some of the research around central office transformation, as some of the research highlights improvements in principal supervision as a starting place for larger

central office transformation. For example, in their text titled “Supervising Principals for Instructional Leadership: A Teaching and Learning Approach,” Honig and Rainey recommend starting the process of transforming central office with a focus of developing principal instructional leadership skills through coaching and support provided by principal supervisors. In describing the potential impact of beginning with this focus, they argue that this focus can serve as a catalyst in shifting the role of central office from one that focuses on compliance and operations to one that focuses deeply on teaching and learning. In their study of districts taking on this work, they emphasize “an underlying tenet of the transformation efforts in all of the districts was to rebuild every central office function, in tandem, in ways that supported high-quality instructional leadership and teaching and learning in each of their schools” (p. 16). Therefore, they argue that truly enabling and supporting principals to effectively improve teaching and learning requires more than just building principal capacity. It requires a complete shift of how the district operates and how it supports the work of the principals. For example, this could include a district’s Human Resource Department streamlining hiring processes and paperwork requirements for school leaders, or a district Technology Department developing systems to prioritize responsiveness to teachers with in-the-moment technology needs and concerns. These examples illuminate the ways in which districts can think creatively and strategically around transforming a district to not only focus on supporting the needs of schools and school leaders but to prioritize the improvement of teaching and learning. As a result, districts looking at improving their development of principals could also benefit from analyzing research around central office transformation to potentially identify other ways to better support the needs of schools and their teachers and students.

Conclusion

Principal leadership plays a foundational role in shaping student outcomes. As a result of this impact, districts must invest in the leadership development of school leaders. As summarized in the Wallace Foundation Report “How Principals Affect Students and Schools” (2021, p. xiv), “it is difficult to envision an investment in K-12 education with a higher ceiling on its potential return than improving school leadership.” The strategic project outlined in this Capstone attempts to improve student outcomes in the Medford Public Schools by investing in the development, support, and coaching of school leaders.

Marking a stark contrast to the previous professional development model for school leaders, which focused primarily on logistics and operations, this strategic project set out to improve school leadership by focusing on the development of instructional leadership skills of school leaders within the Medford Public Schools. In order to make this shift, I collaborated with the Medford Public Schools’ Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, and principals to develop a new, three-pronged structure for how leaders in Medford would be coached, supported, and developed. Grounded in research around effective principal development, these three prongs included 1:1 coaching, communities of practice, and separate operation/logistics meetings. The development and facilitation of this new structure also reflected research around crisis leadership and change management, as the project not only entailed a major change from past practice but also took place during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, our team attempted to build and facilitate high-quality learning opportunities for our school leaders while also acknowledging the challenges and opportunities of leading change during a time of crisis.

As a whole, district leadership, principals, and I were encouraged by our progress. According to both district leadership and principals, our new approach and structures facilitated collaboration between school and district leaders, leveraged the expertise and skill of leaders to support one another, and directed a commitment to instructional improvement in a COVID-19 context that also required a strong focus on operational leadership. Given that this strategic project is still at the beginning phases of what it could be, our district leadership and principals are optimistic that our collaborative work has built a foundation for principal development to evolve and improve in the Medford Public Schools. Moving forward, the Medford Public Schools has an opportunity to use this foundation to empower school leaders to support one another in their improvement efforts and better target individual leader needs through quality coaching. Regardless of how this moves forward, the Medford Public Schools now possesses some of the foundational structures and, perhaps more importantly, a collaborative leadership culture that can set the stage for principal leadership development. As we know, this work can ultimately play the most critical of roles in improving student outcomes.

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Artifacts/Appendix

Appendix A: Medford Public Schools' 2017-2019 MCAS Data Analysis

2019 MCAS Results	Medford % Meeting or Exceeding Expectations	Medford vs. State Average: % Meeting or Exceeding Expectations	Student Growth Percentile (SGP)	Medford vs. State: SGP Comparison
ELA Grades 3-8	48	-4%	50.8	+.8
ELA Grade 10	62	+1%	50.9	+.9
Math Grades 3-8	40	-9%	51.8	+1.8
Math Grade 10	56	-3%	49.9	-.1

2018 MCAS Results	Medford % Meeting or Exceeding Expectations	Medford vs. State Average: % Meeting or Exceeding Expectations	Student Growth Percentile (SGP)	Medford vs. State: SGP Comparison
ELA Grades 3-8	49	-2%	51.6	+1.6
ELA Grade 10	90	-1%	57.5	+7.5
Math Grades 3-8	40	-8%	53.7	+3.7
Math Grade 10	72	-6%	50.2	+2

2017 MCAS Results	Medford % Meeting or Exceeding Expectations	Medford vs. State Average: % Meeting or Exceeding Expectations	Student Growth Percentile (SGP)	Medford vs. State: SGP Comparison
ELA Grades 3-8	45	-4%	52	+2
ELA Grade 10	91	No difference	70	+20
Math Grades 3-8	36	-12%	53	+3
Math Grade 10	77	-2%	61	+11

Appendix B: 2020-2021 Network PD Schedule

Date (9:00am-10:45am)	Group
10/21	ALL
10/28	ALL
11/4	Principals
11/11	Veterans Day
11/18	Principals
11/25	Aps
12/2	Principals
12/9	Aps
12/16	ALL
1/6	Principals
1/13	APs (Rescheduled due to HS tours)
1/20	Principals (No school)
1/27	Aps
2/3	Principals
2/10	Aps
2/24	Principals
3/3	Aps
3/10	Principals
3/17	Aps
3/24	Principals
3/31	Aps
4/7	Principals
4/14	Aps
4/28	Principals
5/5	Aps
5/12	Principals
5/19	Aps
5/26	Principals
6/2	Aps
6/9	ALL

Appendix C: Network PD Agendas

October 21st – Principals and Assistant Principals

School Leader PD - Initial Meeting Agenda		
Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2020		
Time: 9:00-10:30am		
Location: MHS Bistro		
Topics:	Attendees:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting the foundation for school leader PD 	Facilitator: Recorder: Timekeeper:	
Meeting Objectives:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a shared understanding of MPS’ approach to school leader professional development for the 2020-2021 school year • Share ideas and needs for PD content • Connect PD work to school leader and school community goals 		
To prepare for this meeting, please:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on some of your goals (for your school community and you as a leader) for the 2020-2021 school year • Review MPS District Strategic Plan 		
Agenda		
Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:15	10 min.	Icebreaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you reflect on the first month of school... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What’s one major success for your school community? ○ What’s one major challenge you’re facing as a leader or school community?
9:15-9:30	15 min.	Overview of 2020-2021 School Leader Professional Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen instructional and adaptive leadership skills to improve our school communities ○ Create a community of practice amongst our school leaders

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communicate around logistical and operational issues facing our school communities • Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1:1 Coaching ○ Network PD ○ SLATE • Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Driven by what you need ○ Grounded in current COVID-19 context ○ Aligned to MPS District Strategic Plan
9:30-9:50	20 min.	<p>Discussion of Network PD content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given our current COVID-19 context and the goals outlined in the MPS District Strategic Plan, what PD content do you need?
9:50-10:15	25 min.	<p>Initial Goal Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does success look like for us at the end of the 2020-2021 school year? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This will be at the foundation of your own leadership goals (SMART) and school community goals (SIP) ○ Aligned to MPS Strategic Plan ○ Positions you for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond • What are the biggest challenges standing in your way of these goals?
10:15-10:25	10 min.	<p>Tentative Schedules</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one coaching/support • Network PD • SLATE
10:25-10:30	5 min.	Closing and Next Steps

October 28 – Principals and Assistant Principals

<p>School Leader PD - 10/28/20 Meeting Agenda</p> <p>Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2020</p> <p>Time: 9:00-10:45am</p> <p>Location: MHS Bistro</p>	
<p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis Leadership 	<p>Attendees:</p> <p>Facilitator:</p> <p>Recorder:</p> <p>Timekeeper:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining Success 		
<p>Meeting Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in collaborative conversation around strategies for crisis leadership Continue defining “success” for 2020-2021 school year, at school and individual leader levels 		
<p>To prepare for this meeting, please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be prepared to discuss one of the two following articles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Are You Leading Through the Crisis or Managing the Response?” “The Psychology Behind Effective Crisis Leadership” 		
<p>Agenda</p>		
Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:15	10 min.	Icebreaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find someone you haven’t spoken to in the past month and... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss one personal win from the past few weeks Discuss one professional win from the past few weeks
9:15-9:20	5 min.	Overview of 10/21 Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen instructional and adaptive leadership skills to improve our school communities Create a community of practice amongst our school leaders Communicate around logistical and operational issues facing our school communities Review Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:1 Coaching Network PD SLATE Review Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Driven by what you need Grounded in current COVID-19 context Aligned to MPS District Strategic Plan

9:20-9:45	25 min.	<p>Crisis Leadership Conversation (Based off of articles)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In groups of 3, discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the author’s main arguments about crisis leadership? ○ What points do we agree with or disagree with? What is the author missing? ○ What connections do you make from the text to your leadership within your school community?
9:45-10:20	35 min.	<p>Goal Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does success look like for us at the end of the 2020-2021 school year? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This will be at the foundation of your own leadership goals (SMART) and school community goals (SIP) ○ Aligned to MPS Strategic Plan ○ Positions you for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond • What are the biggest challenges standing in your way of these goals?
10:30-10:40	15 min.	<p>School teams share-out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the themes from your definitions of success/goals?
10:40-10:45	10 min.	<p>Closing and Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review schedules moving forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One-on-one coaching/support ○ Network PD ○ SLATE • Feedback on the session • Next Session: 11/4 - 2020-2021 School Improvement Plans (SIP); SMART goals • Bring: DRAFT Professional Practice Goal (After 11/4 session, Assistant Superintendents will meet with principals to discuss DRAFT Professional Practice Goals) <p>Transactional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Messenger • COVID Receipts/PO’s

November 4, 2020 - Principals

<p>School Leader PD - 11/4/20 Meeting Agenda Date: Wednesday, November 4, 2020 Time: 9:00-10:45am Location: Virtual (https://harvard.zoom.us/j/3232552591)</p>
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Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Improvement Plans SMART Goal 		Attendees: Facilitator: Recorder: Timekeeper:
Meeting Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline expectations for School Improvement Plans and school leader SMART goals Connect success planning to SIPs and SMART goals 		
To prepare for this meeting, please: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review feedback from 10/28 session Bring current draft of SIP 		
Agenda		
Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:30	15 min. (Small Group) 10 min. (Whole Group)	Icebreaker - Connections to our Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there anything you would like to get off your chest, share, or discuss? What are the implications of our context on your school communities?
9:30-9:35	5 min.	Review of 10/28 Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content Feedback Adjustments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep: Structure (staying on agenda), Collaboration (sharing ideas, thoughts, practices), Content (articles and sharing) Change: Setting (social distancing, virtual experience, cold room)
9:35-10:10	35 min.	SMART Goal Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are your current areas of strength and areas for growth? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation Rubric Goals serve at foundation of 1:1 coaching cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align to MPS District Strategic Plan

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow SMART criteria
10:10-10:30	20 min.	<p>School Improvement Plan Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft due by: December 4 ○ Process include collaboration of School Council ○ This years' SIPs vs. next years' SIPs
10:30-10:40	10 min.	<p>Closing and Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review schedules moving forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One-on-one coaching/support ○ Network PD ○ SLATE • Feedback on the session • Next Session: 11/18 - Network PD (Principals) • Assistant Superintendents will meet with principals to discuss DRAFT Professional Practice Goals during the week of 11/9-11/13

November 18, 2020 - Principals

<p>School Leader PD - 11/18/20 Meeting Agenda</p> <p>Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020</p> <p>Time: 9:00-10:45am</p> <p>Location: Virtual (https://harvard.zoom.us/j/3232552591)</p>	
<p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis Leadership • 1:1 Coaching Cycles • Sharing MPS Best Practices 	<p>Attendees:</p> <p>Facilitator:</p> <p>Recorder:</p> <p>Timekeeper:</p>
<p>Meeting Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss best practices relating to crisis leadership • Develop shared understanding of goals and process of 1:1 coaching cycles • Share MPS best practices relating to school reopening 	
<p>To prepare for this meeting, please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review feedback from 11/4 session • Read What Good Leadership Looks Like During This Pandemic 	

- Be prepared to share one “best practice” from your school community this year, and be prepared to discuss what made this practice so successful

Agenda		
Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:10	5 min.	Icebreaker - How are you feeling?
9:10-9:15	5 min.	Review of 11/4 Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of Strength/Areas of Growth • SIPs • Feedback/Adjustments
9:15-9:25	10 min.	Review of Inquiry Cycle Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self assess - Data Analysis • Develop a learning plan - Goal Setting • Plan to track your progress - How will you know • Take action - Implement new approaches • Reassess and begin again
9:25-9:45	20 min.	Crisis Leadership Discussion through “ What Good Leadership Looks Like During This Pandemic ” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol: Thoughts, Questions, Epiphanies (TQE Protocol)
9:45-10:40	55 min.	Sharing of MPS Best Practices relating to reopening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol: Success Analysis Protocol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The presenter tells the story of his or her success, in as much detail as she/he can remember. The group takes notes. (4 minutes) ○ The rest of the group asks clarifying questions about the details of the success in order to fill in any information the group needs to be helpful to the presenter. (2 minutes) ○ Group members discuss what they heard the presenter say, and offer additional insights and analysis of the success. The presenter is silent and takes notes. (4 minutes) ○ Presenter reflects on the group’s discussion about what made this so successful. (1 minute) ○ The group then discusses briefly how what they have learned might be applied to all of their work. (1 minutes)
10:40-10:45	5 min.	Closing and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review schedules moving forward

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One-on-one coaching/support ○ Network PD ○ SLATE • Feedback on the session • Next Session: 12/2 - Network PD (Principals)
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November 25, 2020 – Assistant Principals

School Leader PD - 11/25/20 Meeting Agenda		
Date: Wednesday, November 25, 2020		
Time: 9:00-10:45am		
Location: Virtual (https://harvard.zoom.us/j/3232552591)		
Topics:	Attendees:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crisis Leadership • Inquiry Cycles • Sharing MPS Best Practices 	Facilitator: Recorder: Timekeeper:	
Meeting Objectives:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss best practices relating to crisis leadership • Develop shared understanding of goals and process of 1:1 coaching cycles • Share MPS best practices relating to school reopening 		
To prepare for this meeting, please:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review feedback from 10/28 session • Read What Good Leadership Looks Like During This Pandemic • Be prepared to share one “best practice” from your school community this year, and be prepared to discuss what made this practice so successful 		
Agenda		
Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:10	5 min.	Icebreaker - How are you feeling?
9:10-9:15	5 min.	Review of 10/28 Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of Success • SIPs (Due 12/4) • Feedback/Adjustments
9:15-9:25	10 min.	Review of Inquiry Cycle Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self assess - Data Analysis

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a learning plan - Goal Setting • Plan to track your progress - How will you know • Take action - Implement new approaches • Reassess and begin again
9:25-9:45	20 min.	<p>Crisis Leadership Discussion through “What Good Leadership Looks Like During This Pandemic”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol: Thoughts, Questions, Epiphanies (TQE Protocol)
9:45-10:40	55 min.	<p>Sharing of MPS Best Practices relating to reopening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol: Success Analysis Protocol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The presenter tells the story of his or her success, in as much detail as she/he can remember. The group takes notes. (4 minutes) ○ The rest of the group asks clarifying questions about the details of the success in order to fill in any information the group needs to be helpful to the presenter. (2 minutes) ○ Group members discuss what they heard the presenter say, and offer additional insights and analysis of the success. The presenter is silent and takes notes. (3 minutes) ○ Presenter reflects on the group’s discussion about what made this so successful. (1 minute) ○ The group then discusses briefly how what they have learned might be applied to all of their work. (1 minutes)
10:40-10:45	5 min.	<p>Closing and Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on the session • Next Session: 12/9 - Network PD (Assistant Principals)

November 2, 2020 - Principals

<p>School Leader PD - 12/2/20 Meeting Agenda</p> <p>Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2020</p> <p>Time: 9:00-10:45am</p> <p>Location: Virtual (https://harvard.zoom.us/j/3232552591)</p>	
<p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Effective Teams • Problems of practice 	<p>Attendees:</p> <p>Facilitator:</p> <p>Recorder:</p> <p>Timekeeper:</p>
<p>Meeting Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop shared understanding of the importance of psychological safety on teams and how to build it 	

- Collaboratively analyze MPS problems of practice and support one another in effectively addressing them

To prepare for this meeting, please:

- Review [feedback from 11/18 session](#)
- Read [The Five Keys to a Successful Google Team](#)
- Read [High Performing Teams Need Psychological Safety: Here's How to Build It](#)
- *Optional:* Read [How to Foster Psychological Safety in Virtual Meetings](#)

Agenda

Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:10	5 min.	Icebreaker
9:10-9:15	5 min.	Review of 11/4 Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry Cycles, Crisis Leadership Discussion, Sharing of Best Practices • Feedback/Adjustments
9:15-9:35	20 min.	Building Psychological Safety Discussion (based off the articles) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What arguments, ideas, or thoughts from the articles resonate with you most? • What are the implications of this research on how you lead and oversee teams within your communities?
9:35-10:40	65 min.	Sharing of MPS Problems of Practice relating to reopening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol: Modified Success Analysis Protocol (same as 11/4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The presenter shares the problem of practice, in as much detail as she/he can remember. The group takes notes. (3 minutes) ○ The rest of the group asks clarifying questions about the details of the success in order to fill in any information the group needs to be helpful to the presenter. (3 minutes) ○ Group members discuss what they heard the presenter say, and offer insights, analysis, and thoughts of the problem of practice. The presenter is silent and takes notes. (8 minutes) ○ Presenter reflects on the group's discussion about what made this so successful. (1 minute)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The group then discusses briefly how what they have learned might be applied to all of their work. (1 minutes)
10:40-10:45	5 min.	<p>Closing and Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review schedules moving forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One-on-one coaching/support ○ Network PD ○ SLATE • Feedback on the session • Next Session: 12/16 - Network PD (Principals and APs)

December 9, 2020 – Assistant Principals

<p>School Leader PD - 12/9/20 Meeting Agenda</p> <p>Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020</p> <p>Time: 9:00-10:45am</p> <p>Location: Virtual (https://harvard.zoom.us/j/3232552591)</p>		
<p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Effective Teams • Problems of practice 	<p>Attendees:</p> <p>Facilitator:</p> <p>Recorder:</p> <p>Timekeeper:</p>	
<p>Meeting Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop shared understanding of the importance of psychological safety on teams and how to build it • Collaboratively analyze MPS problems of practice and support one another in effectively addressing them 		
<p>To prepare for this meeting, please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review feedback from 11/25 session • Read The Five Keys to a Successful Google Team • Read High Performing Teams Need Psychological Safety: Here’s How to Build It • <i>Optional:</i> Read How to Foster Psychological Safety in Virtual Meetings 		
Agenda		
Time	Minutes	Activity

9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:10	5 min.	Icebreaker
9:10-9:15	5 min.	Review of 11/25 Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry Cycles, Crisis Leadership Discussion, Sharing of Best Practices • Feedback/Adjustments
9:15-9:35	20 min.	Building Psychological Safety Discussion (based off the articles) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What arguments, ideas, or thoughts from the articles resonate with you most? • What are the implications of this research on how you lead and oversee teams within your communities?
9:35-10:40	65 min.	Sharing of MPS Problems of Practice relating to reopening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol: Modified Success Analysis Protocol (same as 11/25) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The presenter shares the problem of practice, in as much detail as she/he can remember. The group takes notes. (3 minutes) ○ The rest of the group asks clarifying questions about the details of the success in order to fill in any information the group needs to be helpful to the presenter. (3 minutes) ○ Group members discuss what they heard the presenter say, and offer insights, analysis, and thoughts of the problem of practice. The presenter is silent and takes notes. (8 minutes) ○ Presenter reflects on the group's discussion about what made this so successful. (1 minute) ○ The group then discusses briefly how what they have learned might be applied to all of their work. (1 minutes)
10:40-10:45	5 min.	Closing and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on the session • Next Session: 12/16 - Network PD (Principals and APs)

December 16, 2020 – Principals and Assistant Principals

<p>School Leader PD - 12/16/20 Meeting Agenda Date: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 Time: 9:00-10:45am Location: Virtual (https://harvard.zoom.us/j/3232552591)</p>
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Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on the Year • Survey Data Analysis 	Attendees: Facilitator: Recorder: Timekeeper:
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Meeting Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share leadership appreciations from the year thus far • Collaboratively analyze teacher and family survey data to make adjustments for new year

To prepare for this meeting, please: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review feedback from previous sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Assistant Principals (from 12/9) ◦ Principals (from 12/2) • Be prepared to share 1 appreciation of your teammate • Complete quick survey with your feedback from start of year
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Agenda

Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:20	15 min.	Icebreaker - Appreciations!
9:20-9:25	5 min.	Review of 11/25 Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Safety/Team Health • Problems of Practice
9:25-10:35	70 min.	Survey Data Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 1: Review family survey data independently and look for trends (15 minutes) • Step 2: Review staff survey data independently and look for trends (10 minutes) • Step 3: Collaboratively discuss trends and patterns from data and identify: (20 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 2-5 trends/patterns that could be addressed ◦ “Quick wins” that require little effort yet address issue raised • Step 4: Devise plan to communicate trends from data and respond to trends/quick-wins (20 minutes) • Step 5: Open debrief of process, discuss next steps (5 minutes)

10:35-10:45	10 min.	Team Share-Outs
10:45		Closing and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on the session • Next Session: 1/6 - Network PD (Principals)

January 6, 2021 - Principals

School Leader PD - 1/6/21 Meeting Agenda Date: Wednesday, January 6, 2020 Time: 9:00-10:45am Location: Virtual (https://harvard.zoom.us/j/3232552591)		
Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems of Practice 	Attendees: Facilitator: Recorder: Timekeeper:	
Meeting Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboratively analyze, discuss, and reflect on leadership problems of practice 		
To prepare for this meeting, please: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required: None • Optional: Review Consultancy Protocol (This link is very detailed and gives the rationale for why this protocol is used, what each phase of the protocol looks like, and tips for effective facilitation). 		
Agenda		
Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:15	10 min.	Icebreaker - New Year Goals!
9:15-9:20	5 min.	Review of 12/16 Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the Session • Family/Staff Survey Analysis • District Leadership Survey Results
9:20-10:00	40 min.	Problem of Practice - Whole Group Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultancy Protocol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Framing the Problem (5 minutes) ○ Clarifying the Problem (5 minutes) ○ Probing Questions (8 minutes) ○ Discussion of the Problem (15 minutes) ○ Reflection on the Conversation (5 minutes)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reflection on Process (2 minutes)
10:00-10:45	45 min.	Problems of Practice - Small Group Discussions
10:45		Closing and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on the session • Next Session: 1/20 - Network PD (Principals)

January 27, 2021 – Assistant Principals

School Leader PD - 1/27/21 Meeting Agenda Date: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 Time: 9:00-10:45am Location: Virtual (https://harvard.zoom.us/j/3232552591)		
Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems of Practice 	Attendees: Facilitator: Recorder: Timekeeper:	
Meeting Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboratively analyze, discuss, and reflect on leadership problems of practice 		
To prepare for this meeting, please: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required: None • Optional: Review Consultancy Protocol (This link is very detailed and gives the rationale for why this protocol is used, what each phase of the protocol looks like, and tips for effective facilitation). 		
Agenda		
Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:15	10 min.	Icebreaker - New Year Goals!
9:15-9:20	5 min.	Review of 12/16 Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the Session • Family/Staff Survey Analysis • District Leadership Survey Results

9:20-10:00	40 min.	Problem of Practice - Whole Group Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultancy Protocol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Framing the Problem (5 minutes) ○ Clarifying the Problem (5 minutes) ○ Probing Questions (8 minutes) ○ Discussion of the Problem (15 minutes) ○ Reflection on the Conversation (5 minutes) ○ Reflection on Process (2 minutes)
10:00-10:45	45 min.	Problems of Practice - Small Group Discussions
10:45		Closing and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on the session • Next Session: 2/10 - Network PD (Assistant Principals)

February 3, 2021 - Principals

School Leader PD - 2/3/21 Meeting Agenda		
Date: Wednesday, February 3, 2021		
Time: 9:00-10:45am		
Location: Virtual (https://harvard.zoom.us/j/3232552591)		
Topics:	Attendees:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems of Practice • Check-ins 	Facilitator: Recorder: Timekeeper:	
Meeting Objectives:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboratively analyze, discuss, and reflect on leadership problems of practice • Check in on progress/challenges within individual school communities 		
To prepare for this meeting, please:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required: None 		
Agenda		
Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:15	10 min.	Icebreaker
9:15-9:25	10 min.	Review of 1/6 Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the Session • Consultancies (Craig, Diane, Mike)

9:25-10:00	35 min.	<p>Top of Mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the biggest challenges your school community is facing right now? • What are some of the things that are working well within your school community right now? • What are the big things on your mind as we head into the second half of the school year?
10:00-10:40	40 min.	<p>Problem of Practice - Small Group Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultancy Protocol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Framing the Problem (5 minutes) ○ Clarifying the Problem (5 minutes) ○ Probing Questions (8 minutes) ○ Discussion of the Problem (15 minutes) ○ Reflection on the Conversation (5 minutes) ○ Reflection on Process (2 minutes)
10:40-10:45	5 min.	<p>Closing and Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on the session • Next Session: 2/24 - Network PD (Principals)

February 10, 2021

<p>School Leader PD - 2/10/21 Meeting Agenda</p> <p>Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2021</p> <p>Time: 9:00-10:45am</p> <p>Location: Virtual (https://harvard.zoom.us/j/3232552591)</p>		
<p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems of Practice • Check-ins 	<p>Attendees:</p> <p>Facilitator:</p> <p>Recorder:</p> <p>Timekeeper:</p>	
<p>Meeting Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboratively analyze, discuss, and reflect on leadership problems of practice • Check in on progress/challenges within individual school communities 		
<p>To prepare for this meeting, please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required: None 		
<p>Agenda</p>		
Time	Minutes	Activity
9:00-9:05	5 min.	Introduction and Welcome
9:05-9:15	10 min.	Icebreaker

9:15-9:25	10 min.	<p>Review of 1/27 Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Feedback</u> from the Session (None submitted) • Consultancies (Doreen, Dave, Andy)
9:25-10:00	35 min.	<p>Top of Mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the biggest challenges your school community is facing right now? • What are some of the things that are working well within your school community right now? • What are the big things on your mind as we head into the second half of the school year?
10:00-10:40	40 min.	<p>Problem of Practice - Small Group Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Consultancy Protocol</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Framing the Problem (5 minutes) ○ Clarifying the Problem (5 minutes) ○ Probing Questions (8 minutes) ○ Discussion of the Problem (15 minutes) ○ Reflection on the Conversation (5 minutes) ○ Reflection on Process (2 minutes)
10:40-10:45	5 min.	<p>Closing and Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Feedback on the session</u> • Next Session: 3/3 - Network PD (Principals)

Appendix D: Network PD Session Feedback

October 28, 2020

What worked in today's session that we should continue to do?	What could we do better in our next session?	Any other thoughts/questions/concerns/comments that you would like to share?
I enjoy the sharing of educational literature and having conversations based around the articles.	N/A	I do WIN block assemblies on Wednesdays typically around this time. Is there any chance that we could do some of these sessions in the afternoons on Wednesdays every once in a while? Thanks.
Break Out Sessions to chat are very helpful and informative.	Coffee???? A little bit warmer in the room.	It's just really hard to hear some people, even in the room. I think we all need to get used to talking LOUD.
I think breakouts with different groups is good for Principals to hear things from different perspectives.	You are doing a great job keeping to the agenda. Towards the end we digress and discuss things that can be done at another meeting. If we are going to continue can we add time to the agenda?	Groups are concerned how we are social distancing when we combine into smaller groups to communicate.
sticking to a structured, time bound agenda with clearly outlined activities, sharing the facilitation among Central Office admin	keep it going...it feels like a well thought out PD/Instructional model	appreciate the effort in moving us forward as we navigate through teaching/learning during a pandemic
I have enjoyed working with people at the 3 different levels. This allows me to have a fresh and different prospective then I would have had. Sharing a personal and professional win for this week, reaffirms that we are making progress. As a new administrator, being able to work through goals together relieves some of the stress.	I felt disconnected to the Zoom participants. Perhaps project them on the screen would help make it easier for the to participate. Socially distancing and wearing masks makes it hard to hear and understanding people across the room. .	PLEASE find a warmer room to work in ;).

<p>Keep on schedule and keep it focused on what matters to us as a group</p>	<p>Nothing really</p>	<p>Before we all continue on our SIPs, we should all limit them to 3 goals, have one in common such as effective communication and keeping everyone safe and 2 manageable ones following ACES- we need to keep that as a focus otherwise it was a waste of time in creating, I personally think it a good document to create goals from and we should be more aligned when possible.</p> <p>Just an idea and thank you for everything.</p> <p>Hot coffee is a must in that room lol.</p>
<p>It was nice to connect with peers.</p>	<p>Better virtual option. It would be helpful if more members had their computers on with the Zoom so we can see faces and hear better without having to be carried around. It may mean muting and unmuting.</p> <p>Honestly, after coming off a 14 day quarantine, it is concerning to watch the interactions, movement, and physical spacing in the room. It makes me feel highly uncomfortable to observe the closeness at which people are meeting.</p>	<p>The first email we received about last Wednesday, seemed like we were planning for PD but then, it became actual PD. Now we have a weekly (or bi-weekly) meeting for an hour and 45 minutes when we are also trying to keep up with the time that is needed for communicating and tracking our students, families, and teachers (which takes much more time than when in person). It just all feels very overwhelming and a bit unclear.</p>
<p>What worked for me during this session was better defining our school goals for this year.</p>	<p>The room was exceptionally cold. My New England blood has not yet kicked in.</p>	<p>Since this year brings up more questions than answers, maybe we can collate then discuss each weeks pressing question or dilemma.</p>
<p>Connecting with peers is always a good thing - but could be virtual. I appreciate the thoughtful agenda and tasks to help lead us in our work of school improvement and individual goal setting.</p>	<p>I was uncomfortable with the lack of social distancing. While I appreciate the time with my peers, being asked to move (3) different times to different people for an icebreaker, then discussion of article, and then a closing activity, I was not ok with that. Actually, this is not a good practice in these times, we should not be co-mingling when it's not necessary. Also, in that room, it is difficult to hear people, voices carry, masks make it difficult to hear, and people were not 6 feet away from each other.</p>	<p>The virtual component needs to be better managed for those people that do not join in person. There will be times that I will need to attend virtually, and the current mode is not great, I think we can do better.</p>
<p>Reading the articles and sharing insights and perceptions.</p>	<p>More advance notice if there are assignment required.</p>	<p>I'd like to suggest that the PD be online and not in person. Having all of the district school leaders</p>

		in close contact could be disastrous if someone tests positive.
I liked meeting with school based teams and then with elementary admin. We have similar concerns.	More time to discuss in small groups--Elementary and Secondary(separated)	It's great to chat about the issues we are seeing in the schools at present . The teaches are anxious, and we are trying to maintain a calm for both teachers and students. So far Grades K-4 are happy and excited to be back in person. Many members of the staff that feel overwhelmed. So many new things happening every day--schedules, changes etc
I would appreciate it if we could continue reading and sharing professional articles maybe even initiating a book club.	If we could maybe try to meet in a warmer space that may be helpful, but otherwise I would say these sessions are very well organized and implemented effectively.	I enjoy the time we take to mix up the groupings during these sessions. It gives me an opportunity to hear how the different schools are solving similar issues my school is dealing with in different ways. I am a true collaborator at heart and appreciate the time allotted to us as school leaders to meet on a regular basis to learn and grow.
It was beneficial to meet with leaders from other buildings and levels to see how they view leading through a crisis. It was reassuring to know that even veteran leadership is dealing with some of the same challenges that I am facing.	As a new building leader, it would be helpful to have some of the veteran leaders share out some of their school improvement plans to gain insight into their thought process. I have many ideas about school improvement plans for the Curtis-Tufts, but I feel that there are aspects that I might be overlooking and want to make sure that I truly "zoom" far enough out to see the biggest picture possible.	I just want to thank you all for establishing these PD opportunities. When taking over a new role, and being the only leadership member in the building, it can sometimes feel like being on an island down in South Medford and it helps to build a sense of belonging. It is also helpful to be able to see all of the work that goes into the daily operations of other buildings and has a grounding affect to know that some of the challenges I face on a logistic level are minimal compared to other larger settings.
The time spent in small groups and sharing ideas is very helpful. I don't know if names are attached to these feedback forms, but I'm never a fan of submitting anonymous feedback, so if there isn't a name attached this is Steve B.	I would like to see us steer people away from focusing on this moment in time as an aberration and move the conversation to how it is giving us an opportunity to improve going forward. In other words, what elements from this can we envision as something we will continue to use in the future? Whether those elements be facility related, leadership lessons, technology related, community engagement and communication related.....we should identify them and use them as building blocks of any vision and or goals we are currently developing.	I love getting together as a leadership group. It is extremely valuable. That being said, there is, no matter how we slice it, a hierarchy when it comes to organizational design which impacts group dynamics. Assistant principals, for example, may be more at liberty to discuss issues without principals present. Conversely, principals may be more at liberty to discuss certain issues without assistant principals present. Therefore, it is important that the district follow through with giving people in lateral positions an opportunity to meet. This in no way minimizes the importance of having the full leadership group meet, and I am happy to see that happening.
Collaboration between school	I am a bit concerned with the number of people in that particular space. Maybe we can	No, I appreciate these sessions. Thanks!

leaders, particularly across grade levels.	have two concurrent meetings in two spaces (same meeting, same agenda) and utilize some tech to display the remote group.	
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November 4, 2020

What worked in today's session that we should continue to do?	What could we do better in our next session?	Any other thoughts/questions/concerns/comments that you would like to share?
I love how the agenda is followed and timeframe is as accurate as possible. I also thought the asynchronous breakout was great to do tasks.	Nothing! I appreciate the ability to be open and speaking frankly.	Can we as principals get an overview of what is discussed with APs so that we are on the same page?
I actually enjoyed the format in that we were provided examples of Areas of Growth and then time to work on our own. This helped by NOT having to find the time later on in our day or having to do it as "homework."	I have no suggestions.	I think since the work on the SIP from last year was cut short and knowing it needs to be revised to align with the District Strategic Plan, getting a template soon would really help reduce my anxiety. THANKS.
Time to collaborate with others	Not sure	<p>We need a template for the SIP and I think they should be cohort and sweet this year.</p> <p>As far as the rubric I understand the focus on Standard 1 but there is so much inconsistency of practice and what we want teachers to do. When I got here no one had ever had a post conference before, we should having guiding questions/principles for staff, define a baseline/calibrate what we want to see from teachers, questions we should all ask, I have 15 questions I ask every time and some did come from the books from last year on Supervision. The standards that most reflect our work are II.A1-3, III.A1-2, B.1-2, C.1, D.1 these are at the forefront of our daily work.</p> <p>Lastly and my apologies, I would be more than happy to provide PD on grading and homework. As a principal I would like to be able to set the percentages for grading as each department varies and as of last year my survey revealed over 30% of my grades were solely based on effort aka HW and CP. I got push</p>

		back last year from some coordinators but if we want equity for all we need to aligned.
Utilizing breakout rooms with open-ended guiding questions allowed participants to share what was uppermost in their minds.	Though the session topic was SMART goals and SIP, I wonder if we could branch out to other topics, possibly submitting questions that our staff frequently raise and we anticipate that need to be addressed sooner rather than later. For example, teachers are anxious about the "switch date" from hybrid to remote and vice versa and the fallout (planning, scheduling, new links from new teachers). Report cards and how to grade students is a hot topic and finally the lack of work submitted by students from their asynchronous days. I'm sure this last is more grade-level specific.	Thank you for taking feedback - we'll be using this approach with our staff soon!
breakout sessions are always helpful to discuss in detail expectations of SIP and also to connect to our context (icebreaker)	Most of us are very anxious about the Evaluations will be done this year. it is difficult to evaluate remote vs hybrid. Equity?? ALSO-- as we move forward, our biggest concern is keeping the kids and staff safe, maintaining a calm environment and using strategies to close the achievement gap. Again-- remote 5 days vs 2 days hybrid	The idea of beginning again with SMART goals and SIP is worrisome. We need to use ACE as a platform and perhaps develop SMART goals that would be feasible across the district . We are in a pandemic so we can't be doing the normal things we would do each year when developing our goals and expectations.

November 18, 2020 Feedback

What worked in today's session that we should continue to do?	What could we do better in our next session?	Any other thoughts/questions/concerns/comments that you would like to share?
The educational articles and the rich discussions to unpack the key takeaways; the opportunities to collaborate and share	N/A	

best practices with colleagues and to be provided with honest feedback.		
The protocols for discussion. Helped to keep the conversation focused and on task.	Hmmm, can't think of one...maybe time in a bathroom break? But I know we can go as needed. Just had to give an answer, right?! :-)	I really liked the TQE method. One concern, the teacher in the article used grading for those who did not participate in her class, simple participate and did not participate...but how to make sure our staff DOES indeed participate. We can't grade them and should it be a part of the evaluative process??? I have tried similar strategies and sometimes I get crickets when it goes time to share out. I am open to suggestions as to how to get more staff truly invested in being involved when using a method such as TQE. THANK YOU for today!
Breakout rooms are great to "dig deep" into the topic. I like how we discuss, give examples and then share. Starting with an icebreaker always sets the tone. I have used some of ours at my own staff meetings.	Perhaps we could break out by grade level. We tend to have similar issues/concerns	It is helpful that we come together bi-weekly. We are our own best fans and optimists. We are survivors!
The ability to converse with principals regarding how we each handle similar situations.	Nothing that I can think of.	I will say it again we need a playbook for emergency situations, I have a very good one from my last school that we can just modify.
Collaboration across the schools is what I would say was the most successful part of the meeting. I do not have the opportunity often to speak with leaders in other buildings to bounce ideas off of and/or share best practices.	I would appreciate more time allotted at the end of the meeting to share out and reflect. :)	

November 28, 2020

What worked in today's session that we should continue to do?	What could we do better in our next session?	Any other thoughts/questions/concerns/comments that you would like to share?
Timebound break out sessions with clear expectations and protocols	When presenting only information (inquiry cycle), give 1-2 min for us to read, then ask	Felt like the vibe in this meeting was really positive...hope to keep that up...

	clarifying questions....no need to read slides to us...	
Great to have frequent break outs with different groups. This way, basically all of us could interact with one another at some point. Also, I like how we used more time for practice-related discussions, and a little less time for the article. Nice icebreaker as well!	Honestly, this was my favorite PD so far, and I think the virtual format, varied breakout groups, tight agenda, and very positive focus was helpful. One suggestion: If we don't already have Wednesday 12/23 scheduled for the next PD, I would suggest using that date (maybe in exchange for another date). With no students in the buildings, Wednesdays are easier days for everyone, as you know, and a "Wednesday before vacation" is optimal as the odds are that everyone is in a good mood (like today!)	Thank you to the central admin team for coming and participating very actively in the discussions. We respect your time as well, so perhaps two or three central admin come to each of these (in other words, does not have to be every single one) but this is of course your call!
The breakout sessions with colleagues worked great. I wish we could have gathered in person, but the breakout sessions really went about as well as they could have. Also, it is great to have central administration join the groups. It gives us the time and ability to connect with you, which goes a long way at strengthening bonds and relationships that are vital to the culture and success of the district.	Difficult to say because this session went very well. Perhaps at some point in time take actual problems the district or schools in the district are facing and use the breakout sessions for us to brainstorm potential solutions. The energy of today's meeting was fantastic, and harnessing it while it is at that level might be a good move.	The meeting was certainly full of positive energy and I think that folks came away from it feeling ready to take that positive energy to their individual buildings.
I appreciated the time with the other Assistant Principals in the district. It's a really good group.	The time management of the meeting and breakout sessions was very good, however, because I am a bit of a talker, I wish we had a little more time for some of the discussion with each other.	At the end of the meeting, it was mentioned that these are good opportunities to stop and meet with peers, but feeling that there are other items that need our attention and action at the same time. It is really hard to shake the nagging urge to be doing other things during this PD time. But, maybe that is the point, time for reflection and peer discussion is also an important aspect of our roles; it's just

		challenging to put aside that pull for the hour and 45 minutes.
Breakout rooms, fidelity to schedule	Topics that pertain to our current situation - how to evaluate remotely	

December 2, 2020

What worked in today's session that we should continue to do?	What could we do better in our next session?	Any other thoughts/questions/concerns/comments that you would like to share?
I enjoy the discussions on the academic readings as well as the conversations about real world problems/solutions with colleagues.	N/A	
Problems of Practice	Can we start to circle back on the work that has been discussed instead of new material to close up those discussions and/or game plan.	
Articles were great reading! The discussions were rich and so many ideas were shared	A bit more mixing of the groups. i was with some o the same people for all breakouts	Articles that we have discussed to date have all related to "big business". Maybe articles that deal with school districts instead of high performing teams in companies/corporations
As always, I appreciated the opportunity to connect with leaders at different grade levels and hear different perspectives that they bring to the table. The breakout rooms and protocols fostered powerful conversations and provide multiple sets of eyes to have a chance to analyze a problem from many angles.	It would be helpful from my perspective to have the same people in the same breakout rooms for our next meeting. Being able to have another building leader invested over the course of _____ (a month/quarter/semester/year) might be helpful. I find it helpful to hear how others are problem-solving and pivoting to meet the needs of their students and being part of a collaborative group works with how my brain processes these complex situations.	It was nice to have all of the upper central team rotating through the groups so that there were again, more perspectives.

December 9, 2020

What worked in today's session that we should continue to do?	What could we do better in our next session?	Any other thoughts/questions/concerns/comments that you would like to share?

I am growing to enjoy the "Success Analysis Protocol" activity and would ask that that particular activity, with varied breakout groups, be part of each of these sessions. I think 3 group members total would be best.	Focus on one article to read, perhaps one that captures the "theme" of the session.	Perhaps tie the reading article's key theme to the type of problem we analyze in the "Success Analysis Protocol" activity.
Incorporating the success analysis protocol for discussions	How to build a culture of psychological safety was timely as were those previously discussed and in readings so far--and presented for us as school leaders to incorporate and develop in teams we lead and are a part of--they would be reinforced and supported on my level with an example of how these are incorporated in the thought process or step in nurturing culture.	Would it be possible to schedule these at 12 on Wednesdays? Wednesday mornings are the only time I can consistently meet with teacher teams to discuss students and issues, and this has been an important step in open communication during these times; also, WIN block assemblies occur in the morning.
Using the Success Analysis Protocol and sharing a problem of practice relating to reopening was fruitful. It does help to bring on other's perspectives.	Since the amount of time each administrative level gets to meet is limited , I would like to see more Elementary-Middle and High school break out times. This will allow us to discuss current pending issues that are affecting our schools.	I would like to have more guidance with the attendance issues addressed for both remote and hybrid . In the past issues that were resolved by a truant officer is no longer being addressed as fully as they could be. e.g. If it has come to our attention that a student is no longer living in the Medford district the officer would physically check that address' mailbox or contact the landlord.
Breakout rooms are still working well	Coffee/Bathroom Break	I am feeling very concerned with supporting teachers around students who have been disengaged and how to support a teacher if a student starts to show back up.

December 16, 2020

What worked in today's session that we should continue to do?	What could we do better in our next session?	Any other thoughts/questions/concerns/comments that you would like to share?
Loved having the time to review the survey with my AP and decide how we can make some of these comments easy wins. We did!	More of this type of work. During the day, it is sometimes difficult to connect as we are covering classes, lunches and making sure are teachers are supported by visiting	What a great icebreaker!! I will use it with faculty -grade level team members and why they appreciate each other)

	classrooms and offer to help in the classrooms if needed	
It was powerful to work with the entire High School team and to be able to look for trends within the survey data. Inspecting family and staff responses on a side-by-side basis was informative and a great opportunity to reflect on the varying perspectives.	I do not have any suggestions at this time.	Rich conversations all around. I just want to thank everyone for their supportive and collaborative nature.
Sharing our feelings about our colleagues was a nice change, especially when we are filtering feedback that might/probably contains some complaints! I hope the feedback is useful and reflects how hard everyone is working!	It made sense for us to take the time to create a plan, though we were asked to wait to share. Next time, I would suggest having a general outline of what/how to share info so we can continue the task while we had time. It makes sense to outline expectations.	Please keep the spirit of the season in your heart and know what you are doing is inspiring and impactful.

January 6, 2021

What worked in today's session that we should continue to do?	What could we do better in our next session?	Any other thoughts/questions/concerns/comments that you would like to share?
Continue with Problems of Practice and use today's format for discussion	Have 3 problems and use breakout rooms. Now we know how to follow the protocol so we wouldn't need the "whole group training" module	I liked the fact that Secondary Admin joined Elem breakout room
Consultancy protocol	No suggestions today	No
The consultancy protocol was an efficient way get lots of information/questions out in a short amount of time. The breakout rooms continue to be effective ways to collaborate and provide multiple viewpoints in a short time.	I have no suggestions at this time.	I wish that I had joined in with the lower grade level's problem of practice so that I could have expanded my greater understanding of the district. I immediately flocked to Mike's problem of practice because it pertains to my school and some of the challenges that I face. Upon reflection, it might have been helpful to flip/flop breakout rooms after a set amount of time so that the volunteers could get two sets of questions and perspectives.
Creating time to share problems of practice and using the consultancy process	keep reinforcing it is a safe space	more opportunities to have joint sessions with principals and APs to share expectations and level protocols
The modeling of the consultancy protocol was helpful especially in keeping	I would like to have heard some of the	Our breakout room discussed the overwhelming issues around student attendance. I would like to see some more discussion around this problem.

within the guidelines for our breakout rooms.	outcomes from the other breakout rooms.	
The continued collaboration with my coworkers is invaluable. The honesty to share our challenges in a safe space makes this work so pivotal for me as a new administrator. The format for these conversations works well.	I would like to discuss how these sessions fit into the long term focus for our district.	
I appreciated doing the first consult as a full group. There are many knowledgeable voices within this group so it helped to both practice the protocol and be able to hear from members of different levels.	Continue to find approaches that we can turn around and use when meeting with our own teachers/staff. My principal and I utilized the consultancy protocol in our last meeting with staff and it felt like it went well.	
Like most new endeavors, modeling what is expected is useful. Very much appreciated the time spent demonstrating the protocol, though, like the students, when we broke into two separate groups we deviated!!! Sorry! With continuous modeling, I'm sure we'll get there! :)	Each week has offered new protocols and discussions that prompt deeper thought. Would it make sense to continue the "topics" using different protocols? I hate to see these conversations end and then not revisited. Feedback from teachers also ask for time to dig deeper into a topic.	A leadership team that is willing to listen, model expectations of professional practice, and able to create opportunities for further collaboration will succeed in raising the bar for all- keep moving forward with these positive experiences and thank you for your hard work.
Identifying a few admins to prepare beforehand a topic to present.	This particular protocol had a section that felt a little long (the 15 minute discussion part). Maybe reduce to 10.	Thanks!

February 3, 2021

What worked in today's session that we should continue to do?	What could we do better in our next session?	Any other thoughts/questions/concerns/comments that you would like to share?
Problems of Practice are many!! However, it is comforting to know we	Continue this process. I liked the whole group concept with each of us	We have shared many great ideas and good advice

share many of the same problems	contributing before breakout rooms	
The sharing of the glows and grows of each building.	Share out the information from the second breakout room that we were not apart of.	

February 10, 2021

continue the segment of discussion of problems of practice		
I enjoy the consultancy protocol. Also, since we have a smaller number of APs, it is totally doable to have "full group" sharing of ideas, such as what we did today. That was useful as a way of hearing perspectives from everyone.	- Preferred time: 8:00 am would be best (8:00-9:45) - 9:00-10:45 is also fine from my perspective as well (this is Dave B.) - Afternoon will not be good, as High School APs often schedule meetings after 12 noon (since that's when all our teachers are available Wednesdays).	- Again, appreciating these sessions more and more. In fact, at our twice-weekly AP meetings, we are starting to think that we could bring forward our own questions to this group. So, thank you again and good strategic planning on your part!
I believe the Consultancy Protocol is a productive component for these meetings.	I would like to see work done on topics such as attendance issues .	The 9:00 am-10:45 am time slot works for me, since I schedule my 504 meetings after 11:00a.m.
Consultancy Protocol is a really good process to go through. I did not feel able to volunteer for today's consultancy because my big things feel too big or too systemic to be able to drill down on and articulate in this particular process. However, having three minutes to talk about the big things on our minds gave me that opportunity to voice one of them, which was helpful.	I am lucky that my high school team have a really good thing going because the issues they have brought to the consultancy over these past two weeks are things we talk about consistently. This has given me the ability to join on with the other group and learn from the administrators at other grade levels. I just feel a little guilty about not going with my peers... it's a me issue.	This time for meeting is working well for me now. At first it felt a bit hectic, as does any change in scheduling, but now I have a system in place and it is working. Speaking of change, a future topic that may be helpful is focused work on Change Management. So much of this year has been managing the constant changes that come and understanding how to make changes and earn stakeholder buy-in (even when the changes are happening quickly). It is a bit of a business focused model, but can be extremely helpful to consider in terms of our own ability to accept change as well as our process for making changes.
Please keep the same time. We probably only have this year for this type of collaboration and it is refreshing to do it at a time when we are able to put aside some of the more pressing	I wonder if it makes sense to do a follow-up on some of the problems that were presented.	Appreciate the ability to share and hear others' concerns, especially knowing that central admin are also acknowledging the potential issues and working on long-term plans. Thank you!!!

tasks and be more present. I like the option of choosing the topic of interest and the adherence to the protocol.		
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Appendix E: 1:1 Coaching Cycle - Sample Learning Plan

2020-2021 MG Coaching Cycle Learning Plan

Focus Area 1: Instructional Leadership

Focus Indicators: 1D1, 1D2, 1D3, 1D4

Goal: Consistently provide effective and timely supervision in alignment with state regulations and contract provisions, including:

1. Ensuring that educators pursue meaningful, actionable, and measurable professional practice and student learning goals.
2. Making frequent unannounced visits to classrooms and giving targeted and constructive feedback to teachers.
3. Exercising sound judgment in assigning ratings for performance.
4. Reviewing alignment between judgment about practice and data about student learning, growth, or achievement when evaluating and rating educators and understands that the supervisor has the responsibility to confirm the rating in cases in which a discrepancy exists.

Initial Learning Opportunities to Pursue (Between Coaching Cycle Meetings 1 and 2)

- Visit an average of 5 classrooms per week (in person or virtually classes) (*November to June*)
- Read the contract language around evaluation (*Before winter break*)
- Discuss the contract language with Union Representative (EO) & School Leader (AO) to check for understanding, discuss areas of importance, and identify potential pitfalls (*Before winter break*)
- Review tutorials provided by TeachPoint to gain better understanding of navigating the online portal through the lens of a school leader (*Before winter break*)
- Once a month complete classroom walkthroughs collaboratively with principal (SD) and discuss potential areas of feedback to provide teachers (no need to provide feedback, just discuss what next steps/feedback could be to calibrate) (*November to June*)
- Collaboratively observe classrooms with Admin. Candidate (AH) and discuss potential feedback (*Before winter break*)

Focus Area 2: Management and Operations

Focus Indicators: 2D1

Goal: Oversee training and implementation of all school 504s in compliance with state and federal laws and mandates, school committee policies, and collective bargaining agreements.

Initial Learning Opportunities to Pursue (Between Meetings 1 and 2)

- Meet with two district Assistant Principals to review their approach and strategy in overseeing school 504s (*Prior to winter break*)
- After meeting with two APs, follow up with one AP to check your understanding, identify potential challenge areas, and discuss any further advice for overseeing this body of work (*Prior to winter break*)

Focus Area 3: Family and Community Engagement

Focus Indicators: 3A1, 3A2

Goal: Welcome and encourage every family to become active participants in the classroom and school community

Initial Learning Opportunities to Pursue (Between Meetings 1 and 2)

- Visit Boys and Girls Club to develop deeper understanding of the context of where many of your students attend after school programming

Appendix F: 1:1 Coaching Cycle - Sample Observation Meeting

2020-2021 Coaching Cycle Learning Plan - 1/11 Meeting

Focus Area 1: Restorative Justice/Restorative Practices

Reminder of End of Year Goals:

1. Build own background understanding of language, practices, and implementation around restorative justice
2. Partner with district personnel interested in this work to develop an understanding of the Medford context around restorative practices
3. Implement restorative justice practices within the School X community
4. Share best practices from School X implementation to colleagues through walkthroughs, 1:1 support/conversations, and PD sessions
5. Host meeting with relevant stakeholders, including district Superintendent, to map out future and potential of this work across the district

Reminder of Interim Goal 1: Complete prior to January 11 meeting

- T and S will each research potential resources, programs, and people that could help build S's background understanding of language, practices, and implementation around restorative justice

Notes from 1/11 Meeting:

S Connections:

CW (she is a good resource and could also push this work at the HS - make this coherent)

- Plan from Cathedral
- Guide from consultant for schools

SS

- Connection to Pathways to Restorative Communities
 - Provided 3 options for consulting/partnership

T Connections:

AB - local consultant in this work

LB - local principal leading this work

BPS Director of Restorative Justice - local district admin. Leading this work

Next Steps from 1/11 Meeting, complete prior to 2/22 meeting:

- Handpick pilot team that can handle this work (School X) - S
- Organize Admin. Training (atleast between HS and two middle schools) - S
 - This would position us to go bigger for next year, and wouldn't be too big with funding or biting off too much.
- Contact Advantages to Pathways to Restorative Communities - S
 1. Local and flexible
 2. SS has been to their training and thought it was extremely high quality
 3. Potential trained all of the Malden Public Schools
- Organize district funding - T