



Supporting Principals

How might restructuring district leadership strengthen leadership practice?

Leading through Service and Serving through Leadership

The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership says, “A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong...The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.”



Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

1. Prioritize equity.

2. Start from within.

3. Measure what matters.

4. Go local.

5. Follow the money.

6. Start early.

7. Monitor implementation of standards.

8. Value people.

9. Improve conditions for learning.

10. Give students options.



In **one** minute...

Please share (with an elbow partner) something you've done to develop someone in the last 30 days.

What does the research say?

Research has shown that strong principals are integral to strong schools and to raising the quality of teaching.

Numerous studies have pointed to the importance of effective leaders for teacher satisfaction, teacher retention, school climate, parent engagement, and student achievement.

Principal supervisors are a potential point of leverage for supporting and developing principals, but relatively few districts have invested in such efforts.

What's important?

“Your greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important.” -Charles E. Hummel, *Tyranny of the Urgent*

Multiple studies confirm high-quality teachers and leaders drive student achievement. Yet, research confirms people typically choose to address urgent items over tasks with less pressing deadlines, even if the latter promise a bigger reward. What often gets crowded out is thinking beyond human resources as a function and instead thinking about talent management as a coherent, strategic system and an important and worthy investment.

-John J-H Kim, *Editor, District Management Journal, Spring 2019*

Superintendents' responses and questions during the 2019 Minnesota School Boards Association conference indicate...

- **Awareness** of the demands and challenges of the principal role
- **Desire** to provide support and professional development
- **Willingness** to invest in supporting principals

Principal Supervisor Initiative (PSI)

Motivated by an effort to increase student learning and achievement by improving principal effectiveness

Sought to help districts transform a position traditionally focused on administration, operations, and compliance to one dedicated to developing and supporting principals to improve instruction in schools

Hypothesis: Changing the role of principal supervisors from overseeing administration and operations to providing instructional leadership can drive improvement in principal effectiveness.

Five Core Components of PSI

1. **Revising** the principal supervisors' **job description** to focus on instructional leadership
2. **Reducing** principal supervisors' **span of control** (the number of principals they oversee) and changing how supervisors are assigned to principals)
3. **Training** supervisors **and developing** their **capacity** to support principals
4. **Developing systems** to identify and train new supervisors (succession planning)
5. **Strengthening central office structures** to support and sustain changes in the principal supervisor's role



ISD 197 – West St. Paul, Mendota, Eagan

West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools

Early Learning (Birth-5)

Garlough Environmental (K-4)

Mendota Elementary (K-4)

Moreland Arts and Health (K-4)

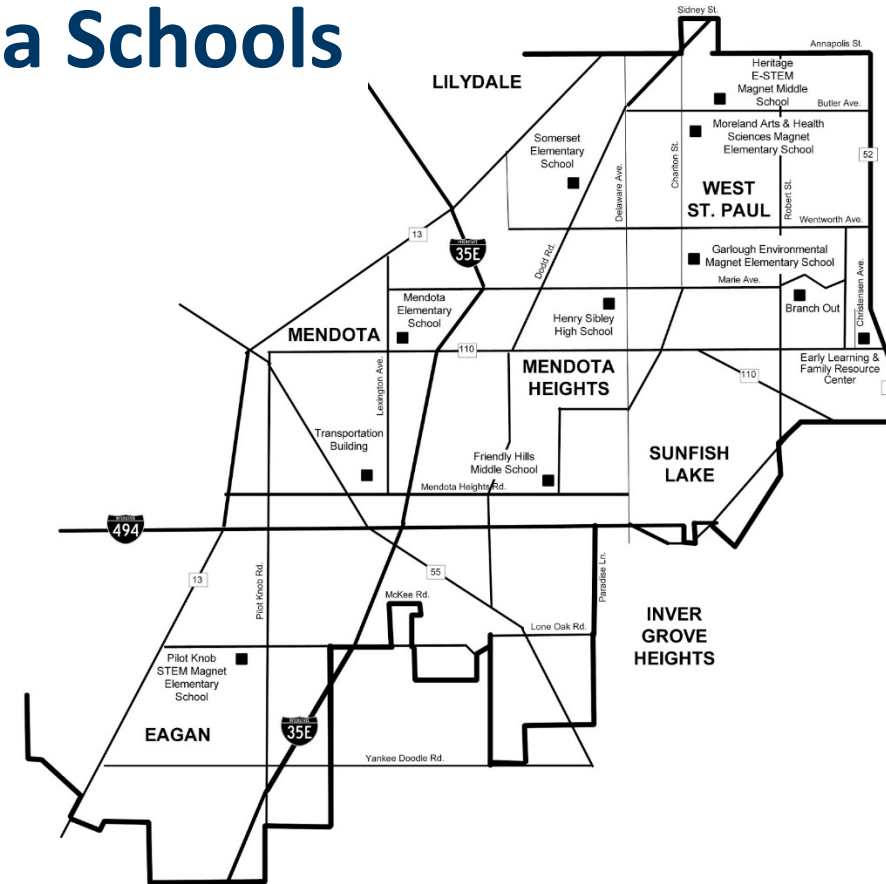
Pilot Knob STEM (K-4)

Somerset Elementary (K-4)

Friendly Hills Middle School (5-8)

Heritage E-STEM (5-8)

Henry Sibley High School (9-12)

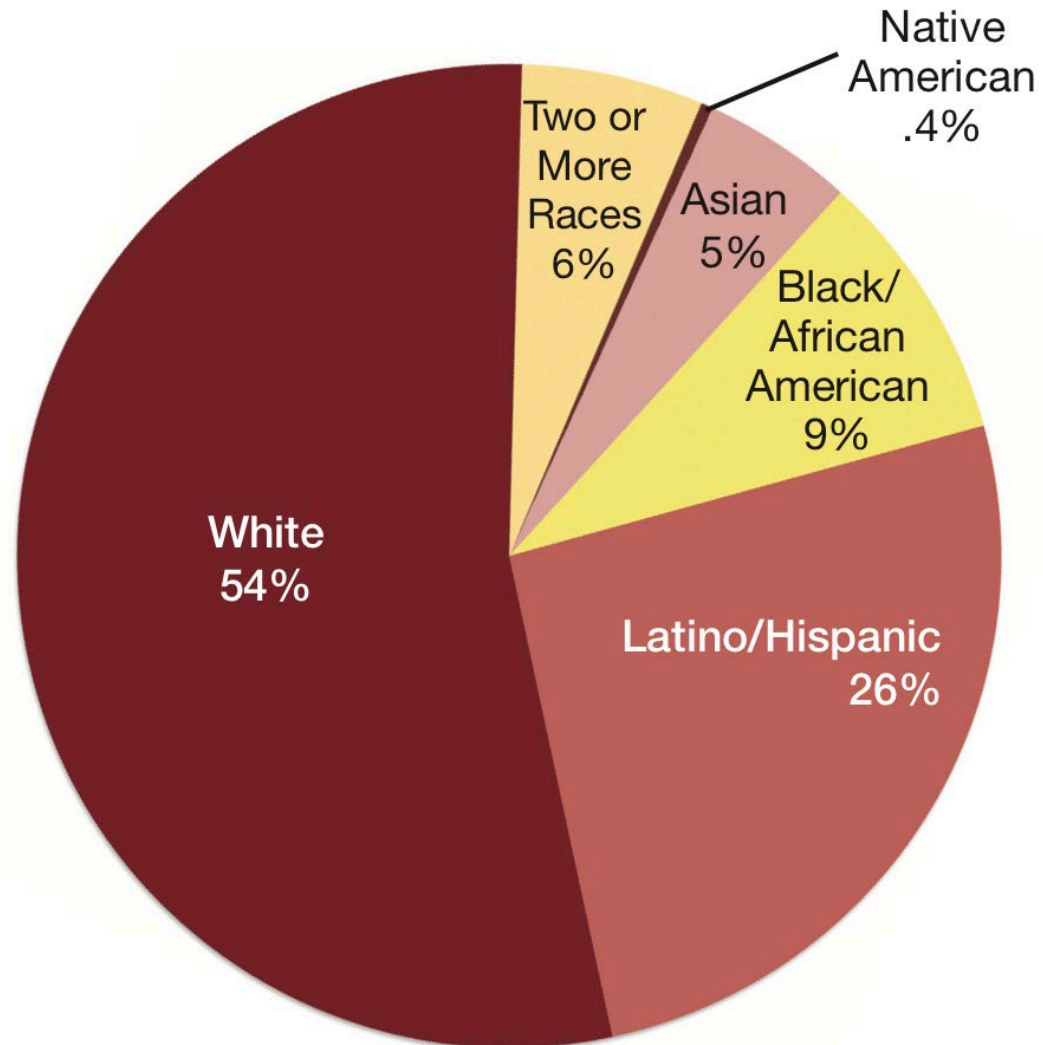


(STEM = science, technology, engineering and mathematics)

About Us



- Serves more than 5,000 students from the communities of Eagan, Inver Grove Heights, Lilydale, Mendota, Mendota Heights, Sunfish lake, and West St. Paul
- 98% of residents feel School District 197 provides a safe and secure environment for students
- 92% of recent graduates plan to attend a two- or four-year college, university, or technical school
- 88% of recent graduates participated in co-curricular activities during high school
- In 2018, the community approved a \$117 million bond referendum, which is funding much-needed renovations and additions at all





What changes are we making?

- Reorganization of cabinet structure to include a principal supervisor
- Refocusing of cabinet's work-SWAT team approach (SWAT=Strengths – Weakness – Assets – Threat)
- Use of Minnesota Principals Academy and other leadership development programs
- Rehaul Principal Evaluation System



What are we learning and what are our next steps?

- Stopping creep is as important as the initial job description
- Spending time focused on developing relationships between and among principals and cabinet members is more important than protocols.
- Involve at least pairs of leaders in leadership development, create opportunities to share, tie to existing efforts, incorporate choice
- Principal evaluation systems are a clear example of “Go slow to go fast.”



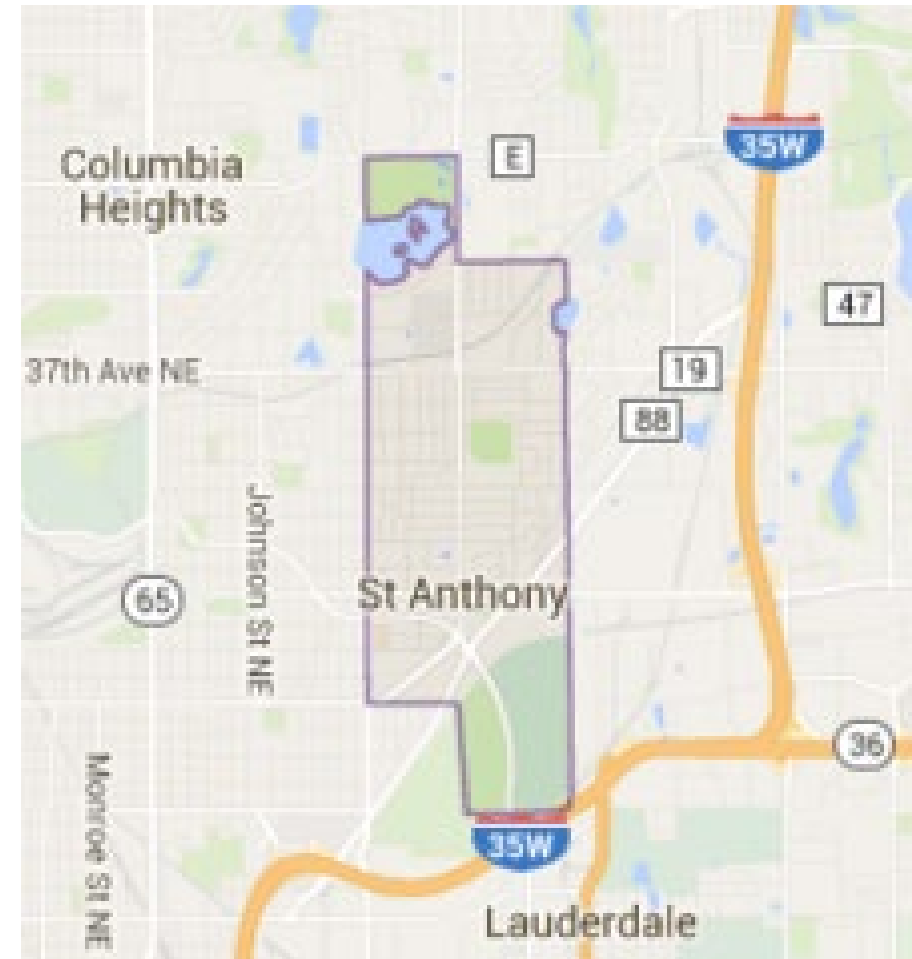
St. Anthony/New Brighton Schools

Wilshire Park Elementary (K-5)

St. Anthony Middle (6-8)

St. Anthony Village High (9-12)

Community Services (PK)



- First-ring suburb of Minneapolis
- Roughly 40% of students enrolled do not live within the school boundaries
- Tradition of high academic success
- High School is often a recipient of national recognitions for scoring well on standardized assessments and college entrance exams
- For being a metro school – St. Anthony-New Brighton is small – smallest geographic district in the state.

Race / Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Hispanic or Latino	130	7.1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	0.5%
Asian	141	7.7%
Black or African-American	222	12.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3	0.2%
White	1,204	65.5%
Two or more races	127	6.9%
All students	1,837	100%

What changes are we making?

- Process to create a system to support principals and teachers.
- Accountability chart (small district)
- Strategic directions
- Budget based on values

What are we learning and what are our next steps?

- More support at the district level
- Dean support at elementary school
- Instructional coaches at each building
- Overt discussion about why principals matter...

Looking ahead: Areas for continued focus

Developing a common definition of instructional leadership

Identifying a balance between supervisors' central office involvement and time spent in schools

Developing internal capacity to provide high quality, job-embedded training and support for supervisors

Developing and refining approaches to identify and train new supervisors

Continuing to shift central office departments toward a school-centered culture

Maintaining existing momentum in the changes to the principal supervisor role

Additional challenges

Clarifying value of and connections between development and evaluation?

Shifting mindset from supervision to coaching and development?

Re-examining how we evaluate principals and principal supervisors?

How do we define and describe principal effectiveness?

References and Resources

Goldring E. B., Grissom J. A., Rubin, M., Rogers, Laura K., Neel, M., and Clark, M. [A New Role For Principal Supervisors: Evidence from Six Districts in the Principal Supervisor Initiative](#), Vanderbilt University/Mathematica Policy Research

Micheaux, D.J. and Parvin, J.L., [Principal Evaluation As a Tool for Growth](#), The Learning Professional, April 2018.



Questions?



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