



# Strengthening the Principal Pipeline

Leveraging policy to support principal quality

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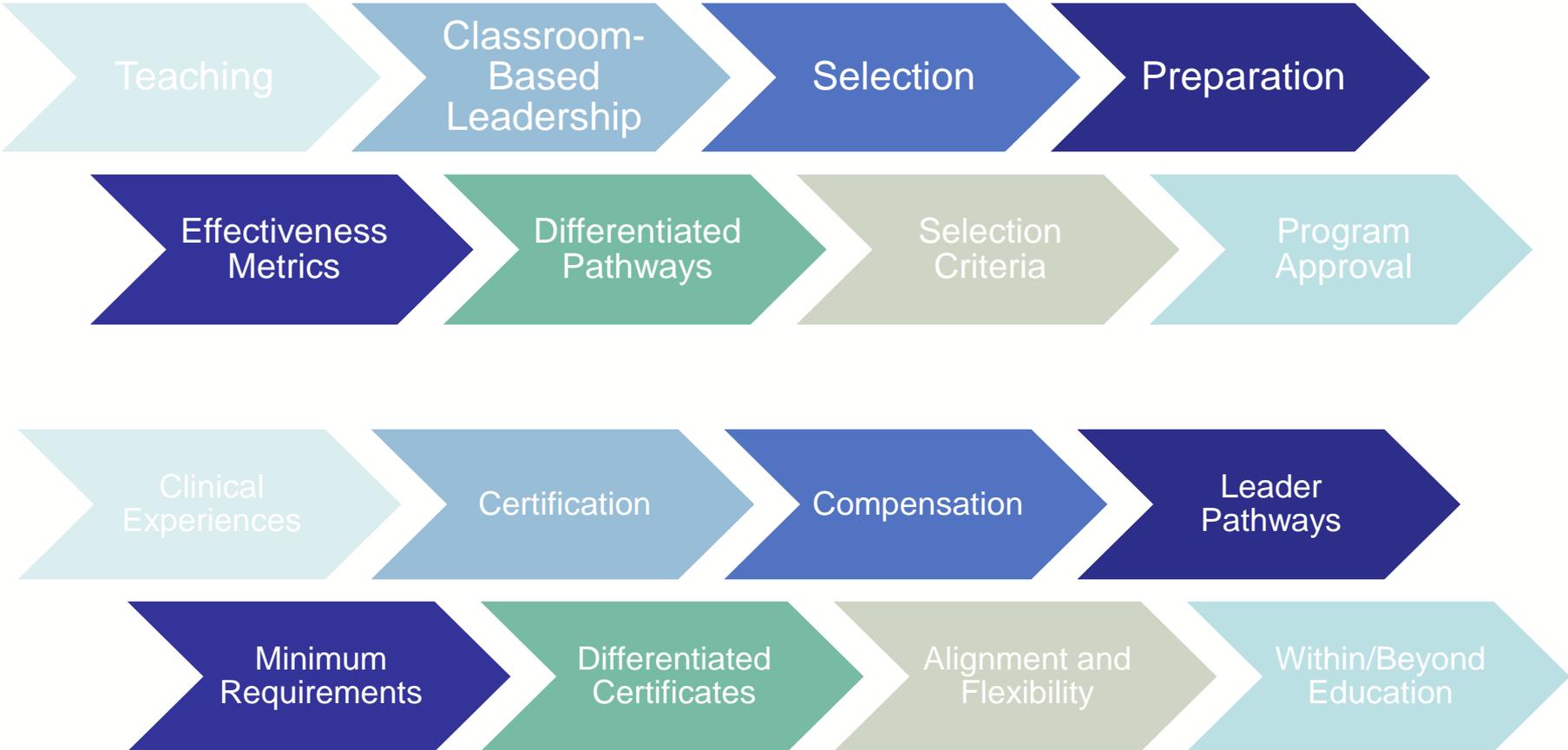
# Why Principals?

- Principals account for about a **quarter** of a school's effect on **student achievement**.
- Schools can **turn around** under great leadership—and not without it.
- Principals set the **tone** for schools, including fostering culture, selecting staff, establishing teaching assignments and schedules, and myriad other factors that affect **working conditions** for teachers.
- States can approach principal support in ways distinct from teacher supports, which can be more **efficient**.

# Principals and Equity Planning

- **Equity is not just a teacher issue.** Principals need not only be equitably distributed throughout the state, they need to be key players in increasing equitable access to teachers.
- **Leveraging the role of the principal is feasible for states.** Many states have focused on principals of late, but states can address their principals for a fraction of the cost and a multiplicative impact.
- **Investing in leadership gives teachers a place to go.** Not all teachers will become principals, but unlocking leadership pathways can make teaching roles more attractive.

# The Pipeline



# The Stakeholder Process

There is one golden rule of policy as a lever  
for change:

It isn't worth a tinker's dam if it's  
implemented poorly.



# PRINCIPAL STATE POLICY REVIEW, PLANNING, AND IMPLEMENTATION TOOL

National Governors Association Center for Best Practices

## INTRODUCTION AND HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

Governors' offices interested in building strong principal pipelines should use the *Principal State Policy Review, Planning, and Implementation Tool* to revisit their current principal policies and work toward an enhanced version of a state principal policy system that recruits, trains, develops, and supports school leaders in a coordinated way and at scale. This tool seeks to help state policymakers work across offices, roles, and responsibilities to enhance the individual components of the principal pipeline but more importantly, to work with and support districts in developing, implementing, and sustaining an overall principal pipeline system reflective of effective policy and practice. This tool will help states ask the right questions of the right people and at the right times. In terms of the principal pipeline, states have several powerful policy and regulatory levers at their disposal, including preparation program approval (e.g. coursework, learning experiences, and faculty qualifications), standards for licensure (both initial certification and recertification), and collecting and monitoring data to determine if school leaders are effective on the job (Briggs et. al., 2013). State-level influence, including that of the governor's office, over the principal pipeline can take many forms—state policymakers interested in enhancing principal effectiveness may work with legislators to redefine the expectations for preparation programs or choose to build upon existing statutory authority to further define those expectations by working with the state board of education on revised regulations (New Leaders, 2012b). Furthermore, governors' offices may set an ambitious agenda to elevate principal policies across the state and then invest in that agenda as well as require outcomes from particular initiatives and programs focused on principals.

This tool includes the following five sections:

- + **Self-assessment and Building a Policy Steering Committee:** Critical questions to help gauge a state's readiness to pursue work in the area of principal policy reform as well as an opportunity for the state to consider and plan how they might launch the effort, which representatives need to be at the table, and strategies for developing and sustaining a steering committee and set of relationships that will support the work in an ongoing way.
- + **Data Gathering and Goal Identification:** A framework for the governor's office and steering committee members to gather and analyze data focused on school leaders across the state, and identify policy and practice problem areas to pursue.
- + **Developing or Adapting a State Vision and Framework:** Guidance and questions to support the state's efforts to establish a set of standards and pipeline components, and define how they work together (or should work together).
- + **Policy Review:** A process whereby the state team takes stock of current principal policies.
- + **Action Plan for Change:** An outline and priority guide for addressing policy deficiencies or gaps in order to achieve the state's framework or vision. This section also includes a section designed to help the state develop specific strategies for moving forward its action plan and to ensure that policies are working as intended and/or are effective.

# Key Steps in the Tool

- **Self-assessment and Building a Policy Steering Committee:** This section includes critical questions to help states gauge their readiness to pursue work in the area of principal policy reform. It also includes an opportunity for the state to consider strategies for developing and sustaining a steering committee and set of relationships that will support the work in an ongoing way.
- **Developing or Adapting a State Vision and Framework:** This section includes guidance and questions to establish a set of standards and principal pipeline components, and define how they work together (or should work together).

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- **Policy Review:** A process whereby the state team takes stock of current principal policies.
- **Action Plan for Change:** An outline and priority guide for addressing policy deficiencies or gaps in order to achieve the state's framework or vision. This section is also designed to help states develop specific strategies for moving forward an action plan to address policy gaps and areas of need.

# Instructions

- Break into small groups of 3-4 people representing more than one state.
- Review and populate one section of the tool (assigned).
- Report out:
  - How did you find this section of the tool? What were the strengths and weaknesses?
  - How might this tool (in part or whole) be used by states to map out their plans for addressing the principal pipeline toward a more equitable distribution of effective school leaders?