Research Brief

Principals Retention

Question: What strategies will help with the retention of principals?

Summary of Findings:
Many districts are struggling with the problem of administrator retention. Hoffman (2004) identifies some of the reasons for this:
  Increased accountability expectations.
  Diminished or static levels of resources to support reform efforts.
  Greater administrator vulnerability to sanctions.
  The complex demands of government and the community.
  The sometimes slight or negligible difference between teacher and administrator compensation when viewed on a per diem basis.
  The necessity for leaders to spend a great deal of time meeting the demands of the job.
  Media coverage of public education's occasional errors; little coverage of our frequent successes.
  Chronic stress.

Districts are looking to supportive structures such as coaching, professional development, mentoring, and induction programs to support new and novice principals. Peterson & Kelley (2001) identify some of the successful strategies for keeping the leaders we need:
  Encourage the creation of cohort groups of potential principal candidates within a district or a consortium of neighboring districts. The groups would offer training, discussion and work with experienced principals. The cohort would continue as a support system for new principals.
  Increase formal and informal opportunities for networking among new principals, and between experienced and new or aspiring principals.
  Implement the concept of a master principal, similar to that of the master teacher, with that person responsible for mentoring new principals.
  Provide opportunities for teachers and other staff members who are potential candidates for the principalship to learn more about the position. These opportunities should include time for training, as well as conversations with current principals.
  Provide opportunities for teachers who are good candidates for the principalship to assume leadership roles in the school.
  Offer internships for those interested in the principalship.

Lovely (2004) recommends helping new principals develop the following skill in order to be successful:
  Develop the capacity to handle a world full of brief encounters.
  Maintain a repertoire of cognitive and interpersonal skills to tackle varied assignments and constituencies.
  Learn to function under fragmented circumstances.

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Aiken (2002) interviewed a dozen principals who had successfully navigated the induction process and who were now regarded as particularly effective. Reflecting on their induction experiences, these principals identified five key needs that characterize the induction period:

> The need to find one's voice and vision;
> The need to form alliances and networks;
> The need to develop a leadership persona;
> The need to find a balance between custodianship and innovation; and
> The need to make connections with the larger community.

Online Resources:

Building resilient leaders: many universities and school districts are creating support mechanisms that increase administrator resiliency and lead to greater retention
Leadership,!Sept-Oct, 2004 !by Jay N. Hoffman
Many California school districts are experiencing difficulty in finding, training and retaining administrators at all levels of the organization. Resiliency among school leaders can be enhanced through the creation of supportive structures and norms within school districts. Attention to team-building, effective coaching and the creation of a culture that challenges, energizes and rewards leaders appear to be helpful in enhancing the resiliency of school leaders. Ongoing professional growth also appears to be a key factor in building resiliency. In addition to professional growth related to the nuts and bolts of school operations. Further leadership study in the areas of organizational theory, organizational development and the politics of education might contribute to additional insights on the part of educational leaders.
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HUL/is_1_34/ai_n6358525

Inducting School Leaders. ERIC Digest.
Lashway, Larry
If experienced principals find their jobs to be exhausting and stressful-and most surveys indicate they do-then what is it like for newcomers? Not surprisingly, words such as "lost," "overwhelmed," and "shell-shocked" pervade the literature on first-year principals. Traditionally, rookie principals have been left to sink or swim. Having completed a university training program, they are presumed to be prepared, and get little direction beyond bland encouragement or an occasional practical tip. But that attitude is changing as schools realize that a scarcity of high-quality principals means promising leaders should not only be energetically recruited but carefully nurtured once they're on board.
ERIC#: ED479074
http://www.ericdigests.org/2004-1/leaders.htm

Transforming School Leadership
Leadership, Jan, 2001 !by Kent Peterson,!& Carolyn Kelley
U.S. schools are facing one of the most massive transformations of leadership in a century. By some

estimates, more than half of all principals are expected to retire in the next five years. So schools and districts will have the unique opportunity and the significant challenge of recruiting, selecting, training and motivating an entirely new group of leaders. This turnover of administrators, though, is occurring at a time of decreasing applications and concerns about the difficulties of the job. This article identifies exemplary programs across the country.
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HUL/is_3_30/ai_69202119

The Socialization of New Principals: Another Perspective on Principal Retention.
Aiken, Judith A.**;**!
Education Leadership Review, v3 n1 p32-40 Win 2002
Report of a study on the socialization of new principals in one state's school. The goal was to discover how the principals learned about the culture of their schools and their places in them and the experiences that shaped their social and cultural transitions.
ERIC #: EJ659194
http://www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ659194&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=eric_accno&_pageLabel=RecordDetails&objectId=0900000b80003f74

Scaffolding For New Leaders: Coaching And Mentoring Helps Rookie Principals Grow On The Job And Gain Confidence
School Administrator, June, 2004 !by Suzette Lovely
Imagine heading to the Department of Motor Vehicles on your 16th birthday and trying to pass the driving test without any behind-the-wheel training. One might understand all the legal and technical elements in the driver's ed manual, but operating a car safely and skillfully is likely to be a disaster. As educators, we are keenly aware that the most powerful learning occurs when authentic experiences are embedded into the curriculum. In many professions today some kind of simulated learning is required before licensure can occur. That's true of teachers, doctors, pilots and police officers. In the principalship, however, prospective leaders are expected to conquer the motorway without any behind-the-wheel experience. University programs alone never will be enough to prepare principals for the day-to-day challenges of the job.
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JSD/is_6_61/ai_n6123850

Mentoring matters! Through San Diego's mentor program, principals address the practical application of instructional issues with the input of a trusted colleague
Leadership, !Jan-Feb, 2002 !by Carol Kuhl Barry, !Jan Kaneko
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0HUL/is_3_31/ai_82092513

Saving the Principal: The Evolution of Initiatives That Made a Difference in the Recruitment and Retention of School Leadership.
Zellner, Luana;!Jinkins, Deborah;!Gideon, Barbara;!Doughty, Sharon;!McNamara, Patricia**;**!
This qualitative study looks at the impact on the participants of 2 grant-supported initiatives over a 4-

year period. The initiatives aimed at ways to improve the recruiting and mentoring of new school administrators, and ways to support experienced administrators throughout their careers. Principal-preparation programs need to stress the following: (1) leadership practices: future leaders need opportunities to engage in planning, developing, directing, and implementing school programs; (2) support networks: administrators need mentoring and continuous support throughout their careers; (3) linking theory to practice: those in line for principalship need contextual experiences in developing leadership skills; mere managerial activities are not enough to prepare one to be a principal.
ERIC #: ED467670
http://www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&eric_viewStyle=list&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=principal+administrator+retention&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=eric_metadata&eric_pageSize=50&eric_displayNtriever=false&eric_displayStartCount=1&_pageLabel=RecordDetails&objectId=0900000b801766b6

The Loneliest Job in Town: Sculpting the Recruitment and Retention of the Principal.
Zellner, Luana;!Ward, Sharon M.;!McNamara, Patty;!Gideon, Barbara;!Camacho, Sissy;!Edgewood, Sharon Doughty;!
This research summary examines the results of three initiatives that changed leadership training for principalship. All three initiatives focused on the skills school administrators need to be successful and emphasized mentoring leadership and leadership practice. This paper summarizes the lessons learned from the three initiatives, which include: Exemplary principals views themselves as instructional leaders and facilitators; they base their decision-making on the vision and goals of the learning community; and they participate in shared decision-making and on-going professional renewal. Additionally, participants in the three initiatives reported that for the future success of the profession, preparation for school leadership must include systematic professional renewal, mentoring, and peer support throughout the career of the principal.
ERIC #: ED468348
http://www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&eric_viewStyle=list&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=principal+administrator+retention&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=eric_metadata&eric_pageSize=50&eric_displayNtriever=false&eric_displayStartCount=1&_pageLabel=RecordDetails&objectId=0900000b80176fb6

Developing the Effective Principal: Hiring, Evaluation, and Retention Practices for the Superintendent.
Whaley, Jamie, Ed.;!
School principals are asked nowadays to be a curriculum manager, staff motivator and evaluator, business manager, public-relations representative, safety expert, disciplinarian, site manager, and the list goes on. This resource contains a broad array of tools and information, including exhibits, forms, handouts, and charts that can be used to maximize principals' talents in the myriad roles they play.

The Principals' Partnership
http://www.principalspartnership.com/
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http://www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&eric_viewStyle=list&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=principal+administrator+retention&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=eric_metadata&eric_pageSize=50&eric_displayNtriever=false&eric_displayStartCount=1&_pageLabel=RecordDetails&objectId=0900000b80179533

Date: 5/2/2005   Submitted By: Mike Muir, Maine Center for Meaningful Engaged Learning

http://www.principalspartnership.com/