Learning Sciences
MARZANO CENTER
TEACHER & LEADER EVALUATION

Marzano District Leader Evaluation System

Prepared by Learning Sciences Marzano Center for Teacher and Leader Evaluation

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OUR MISSION

The Learning Sciences Marzano Center for Teacher and Leader Evaluation promotes excellence in public education by providing and developing next-generation teacher and leader evaluation tools and training. Built on a foundation of expert research into best practices under the direction of national researcher and author Dr. Robert J. Marzano, the Marzano Center identifies, develops, and disseminates cutting-edge resources in educational best practices. Our goal is to support teachers to be highly effective, life-long learners, and in doing so, to significantly impact student growth and achievement over time.

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Introduction

This report is a description of the Marzano District Leader Evaluation System designed by Dr. Robert J. Marzano in partnership with Learning Sciences International for the Marzano Center. The model is based on an extensive review of the extant literature about district leader/administrator leadership. While it can be used independently, the Marzano District Leader Evaluation System is designed to be used in close conjunction with the Marzano School Leader Evaluation Model and the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model. The Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model is based on the comprehensive instructional model detailed in the *Art and Science of Teaching* (see Marzano, 2007; Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011).

The Marzano evaluation models are integrated, cascading evaluation systems designed with improved student learning as the ultimate goal. In *Teacher Evaluation that Makes a Difference* (in press), Marzano and Toth suggest

> that the effectiveness of teacher evaluation is influenced by the effectiveness of school leader evaluation, which, in turn, is influenced by the effectiveness of district leader evaluation. . . . Student learning is not influenced by teacher effectiveness alone; rather, a chain of influences -- beginning with an effective district evaluation system, which influences the quality of district, school, and teacher leaders, which are themselves influenced by their respective evaluation systems -- combined to affect the quality of student learning. (p.136)

Based on research that indicates that the actions and behavior of district administrators do have an influence on student learning, the design of the district leader evaluation model began with a survey of the research on district administrator competence. From this review of the research literature, specific district leader actions and behaviors were identified that, historically, have had a relationship with student achievement.

The Review of Literature

Five primary documents were used in the review of literature: (1) the Wallace Foundation Study, *Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning: Final Report of Research Findings* (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010); (2) the study *What Works in Oklahoma Schools*(Marzano Research Laboratory, 2011); (3) *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results*, the Marzano,

Waters, and McNulty (2005) meta-analysis of school leadership; (4) *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action,* the Marzano (2003) study of school effectiveness; and (5) *District Leadership that Works: Striking the Right Balance,* Marzano and Waters (2009).

The Wallace Study

The most current and comprehensive study on the relationship between school administrator behaviors and actions and student academic achievement is the report funded by the Wallace Foundation and cooperatively conducted by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at The University of Toronto (Louis et al., 2010). This multiyear study, titled *Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*, involved survey data from 8,391 teachers and 471 school administrators; interview data from 581 teachers and administrators, 304 district level educators, and 124 state personnel; and observational data from 312 classrooms. Student achievement data for literacy and mathematics in elementary and secondary schools were also obtained using scores on state tests designed to measure Adequate Yearly Progress as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. To date, this study stands as the seminal examination of the relationship between school leader actions and behaviors and student academic achievement.

Marzano and Toth (in press) write, "to a great extent, the Wallace Foundation study corroborated the findings of previous research showing that both school and district leadership can influence student achievement (albeit indirectly)."

At the district level, the authors [Louis, et al., (2010)] found that district leaders "should consider school leaders' collective sense of efficacy for school improvement to be among the most important resources available to them for increasing student achievement" (p. 147). The study found that district leadership, school leader-ship, teacher actions, and student achievement represent a complex system of interacting influences. When all elements within this system are operating in concert, the effectiveness of K–12 schooling is maximized (p.140).

The Wallace study identified necessary leadership factors that impact student learning and offered recommendations which included:

- Empowering principals regarding their efforts and abilities to improve their schools
- Focusing on instruction
- Using data to guide decisions
- Assigning emphasis to the improvement of student achievement
- Emphasizing teamwork and professionalism
- Ensuring that teachers and school administrators have access to resources that strengthen their professional skills (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010)

What Works in Oklahoma Schools

The study of what works in Oklahoma schools was conducted by Marzano Research Laboratory for the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) over the 2009/2010 school year and the 2010/2011 school year. This study was conducted to determine those elements that are related to being classified as an *improvement school* (i.e., a school that needs improvement) as opposed to a school that is not classified as needing improvement (i.e., schools not on improvement status). Fifty-nine matched elementary, middle, and high schools were involved in the study. Of those 59 schools, 32 were classified as needing improvement and 27 were not. Survey data from teachers, administrators, students, and parents were used in the study along with on-site observations of teachers, interviews with administrators, and videotapes of classroom activities. State test data in mathematics and English language arts were the primary dependent variable when examining the effects of specific elements. From the 59 matched schools, 1,117 teachers, 13,373 students, and 516 parents were involved. General results indicated that specific actions on the part of administrators are statistically related to student academic achievement.

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty Meta-Analysis of School Leadership

Published in *School Leadership that Works* (Marzano et al., 2005), the purpose of the meta-analysis was to examine the research literature from 1978 to 2001 on those school leadership factors that have a statistically significant relationship with student achievement. More than 300 studies were examined, and 69 met the criteria for inclusion, one of which was that student achievement data were correlated with school administrator actions, or that correlations could be computed from the data available. In all, 2,802 K−12 schools were involved in the studies synthesized, with an estimated 14,000 teachers and 1,400,000 students. The overall finding was that school leadership has a statistically significant relationship with student achievement. Such leadership can be explained as 21 specific types of actions and behaviors enacted by school leaders.

The Marzano Study of School Effectiveness

The Marzano study of effective schools was published in *What Works in Schools* (Marzano, 2003). Although it did not focus specifically on school leadership, the study did specify 11 factors that schools must attend to if they are to enhance student achievement and the school leadership implications regarding those 11 factors:

- School-level Factors
- A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
- Challenging Goals and Effective Feedback
- Parent and Community Involvement
- Safe and Orderly Environment
- Teacher-Level Factors
- Instructional Strategies
- Classroom Management
- Classroom Curriculum Design

While these eleven factors have been identified as influential for student achievement, leadership for these factors is also a necessary condition for effective reform relative to the school-level, the teacher-level, and the student-level factors. In *What Works in Schools*, Marzano writes that "leadership could be considered the single most important aspect of effective school reform" (2003, p. 172).

District Leadership that Works: Striking the Right Balance

In their meta-analysis of 27 studies completed or reported between 1970 and 2003, Marzano and Waters (2009) conclude that district leadership has a measurable and definable relationship with student achievement. The authors note that their findings stand "in sharp contrast to the notion that district administration is a part of an amorphous blob that soaks up valuable resources without adding value to a district's effectiveness. To the contrary, these findings suggest that when district leaders are carrying out their leadership responsibilities effectively, student achievement across the district is positively affected" (p. 5).

Marzano and Toth (in press) cite further district research findings *in Teacher Evaluation that Makes a Difference (p. 139):*

- Problem-solving orientations and actions at the district level are associated with higher degrees of program implementation and continuation at the school level (Louis, Rosenblum, & Molitor, 1981)
- Effective schools are often located in districts where improving teaching and learning is a high priority (Berman et al., 1981; Rosenholtz, 1989)
- District leadership can be a positive force for change in schools (Elmore & Burney, 1997)
- Districts can play a positive role in leveraging policies and resources to support local reforms Fuhrman & Elmore, 1990; Spillane, 1996; Togneri & Anderson, 2003)

The Model

Based on the review of the research literature briefly outlined above, 21 categories of district leader actions and behaviors were identified. These 21 categories were organized into six domains: (1) a data-driven focus to support student achievement, (2) continuous support for improvement of instruction, (3) continuous support for a guaranteed and viable curriculum, (4) cooperation and collaboration, (5) district climate, and (6) resource allocation.

I. A Data-Driven Focus to Support Student Achievement

(1) The district leader ensures clear and measurable goals are established for all relevant areas of responsibility that are focused on critical needs for improving student achievement and the needed operational support at the district, school, and individual student level.

(2) The district leader ensures data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor the progress toward district, school, and individual student goals.

(3) The district leader ensures each district goal receives appropriate district, school-level, and classroom-level support to help all students meet individual achievement goals when data indicate interventions are needed.

II. Continuous Support for Improvement of Instruction

(1) The district leader provides a clear vision regarding the district instructional model and how to guide personnel and schools in operationalizing the model.

(2) The district leader effectively supports and retains school and department leaders who continually enhance their leadership skills through reflection and professional growth plans.

(3) The district leader ensures that district and school leaders provide clear ongoing evaluations of performance strengths and weaknesses for personnel in their area of responsibility that are consistent with student achievement and operational data.

(4) The district leader ensures that personnel are provided with job-embedded professional development that is directly related to their growth plans.

III. Continuous Support for a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

(1) The district leader ensures that curriculum and assessment initiatives, and supporting operational practices, at the district and school levels adhere to federal, state, and district standards.

(2) The district leader ensures that district level programs, curricular, and operational initiatives are focused enough that they can be adequately addressed in the time available to the district and schools.

(3) The district leader ensures that students are provided with the opportunity to access educational programs and learn critical content.

IV. Cooperation and Collaboration

(1) The district leader establishes clear guidelines regarding the areas for which schools are expected to follow explicit district guidance and the areas for which schools have autonomy of decision making.

(2) The district leader ensures that constituents (e.g. school board, administrators, teachers, students, and parents) perceive the district as a collaborative and cooperative workplace.

(3) The district leader ensures that constituents (e.g. school board, administrators, teachers, students, and parents) have effective ways to provide input to the district.

(4) The district leader ensures leadership development and responsibilities are appropriately delegated and shared.

V. District Climate

(1) The district leader is recognized as a leader (in his or her area of responsibility) who continually improves his or her professional practice.

(2) The district leader has the trust of constituents (e.g. school board, administrators, teachers, students, and parents) that his or her actions are guided by what is best for all student populations and the district.

(3) The district leader ensures constituents (e.g. school board, administrators, teachers, students, and parents) perceive the district as safe and orderly.

(4) The district leader acknowledges the success of the whole district, as well as individual schools and employees within the district.

VI. Resource Allocation

(1) The district leader manages the fiscal resources of the district in a way that focuses on effective instruction and achievement of all students and optimal district operations.

2) The district leader manages the technological resources of the district in such a way that focuses on effective instruction and the achievement of all students and optimal efficiency throughout the district.

(3) The district leader manages the organization, operations, instructional programs and initiatives in ways to maximize the use of resources to promote effective instruction and achievement of all students.

Scales

For each of the 21 elements within the six domains, scales have been developed along with example evidences of success. To illustrate, consider element 1 ("The district leader ensures clear and measurable goals are established for all relevant areas of responsibility that are focused on critical needs for improving student achievement and the needed operational support at the district, school,

and individual student level") of Domain I (A Data-Driven Focus to Support Student Achievement).
Figure 1 provides the scale for this element.

I: A Data-Driven Focus to Support Student Achievement

(1) *The district leader ensures clear and measurable goals are established for all relevant areas of responsibility that are focused on critical needs for improving student achievement and the needed operational support at the district, school, and individual student level.*

Innovating	Applying	Developing	Beginning	Not Using
The district leader ensures adjustments are made or new strategies are created so that all personnel know and attend to the achievement and operational goals	The district leader ensures clear and measurable goals are established for all relevant areas of responsibility that are focused on critical needs regarding improving student achievement and the operations to support student achievement at the district, school, and individual student level _and_ monitors the extent to which personnel know and attend to these goals	The district leader ensures clear and measurable goals are established for all relevant areas of responsibility that are focused on critical needs regarding improving student achievement and the operations to support student achievement at the district, school, and individual student level	The district leader attempts to ensure clear and measurable goals for all relevant areas of responsibility but does not complete the task or does so partially	The district leader does not attempt to ensure clear and measurable goals for all relevant areas of responsibility

To understand the logic of this scale and all others in the system, it is best to begin with "Applying," which has a score value of 3. A score of "Applying" can be considered the level of performance that indicates proficiency regarding the element. In this case, the district leader ensures that clear and measurable goals are established for all relevant areas of responsibility that are focused on critical needs regarding improving student achievement and the operations to support student achievement.

In short, the district leader ensures goals have been set for critical needs and that the necessary operations to support student achievement are in place and monitored. Above this level is "Innovating," which has a score value of 4. Here, in addition to score 3 actions and behaviors, the district leader ensures adjustments are made or new strategies are created. This level is usually associated with exceptional or excellent performance regarding the element. "Developing" is a step below the target of "Applying." It has a score value of 2 and indicates that the district leader ensures clear, measurable goals with specific timelines regarding improving student achievement are established but does not monitor to ensure goals are understood. This level of performance is usually associated with needing improvement regarding the element. Below this level is "Beginning," which has a score value of 1. Here the district leader attempts to ensure clear, measurable goals with specific timelines focused on critical needs regarding improving student achievement are established but does not complete the task or does so only partially. This level of performance is usually considered unsatisfactory. The lowest level on the scale is "Not Using," which has a score value of 0. Here the district leader does not even attempt to ensure clear and measurable goals for all relevant areas of responsibility. This level is also considered unsatisfactory.

Conclusion

The system described here is offered as a comprehensive, cascading approach to district leader evaluation that is coordinated and compatible with the Marzano School Leader Evaluation Model, the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model, and the Marzano Center Non-Instructional Support Personnel Evaluation Form. Learning Sciences Marzano Center for Teacher and Leader Evaluation can assist districts in further development and implementation of the model in collaboration with district and school leaders.

It is important to note that the model presented in this report employs scales and parts of scales developed by Robert J. Marzano and Learning Sciences Marzano Center for Teacher and Leader Evaluation. The copyright to these previously developed scales is held exclusively by Dr. Robert J.

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To download a PDF of the full scales for the new Marzano District Leader Evaluation Model, visit MarzanoCenter.com. For a comprehensive overview of the professional development and implementation services offered by Learning Sciences Marzano Center, visit www.MarzanoCenter.com, or call 1.877.411.7114.

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