



MPS Post-Shadowing Principal Interview Protocol

PRE-INTERVIEW

- i) *Re-introduce the Study:* Our study is looking at the career paths and work lives of principals and teachers. Members of our team are shadowing principals at schools throughout the district to get a clearer idea of the tasks that principals do. This interview helps us with this as well and helps us to understand the reasons you chose to pursue a principalship, the path you took to this particular school, and your goals for the school.
- ii) *Ask for permission to record the principals' responses. If principal agrees, turn on recorder and ask principal to state his/her name, school, and that he/she agrees to be recorded.*

QUESTIONS ABOUT TODAY'S OBSERVATIONS

- 1) First, I'd like to get a sense of your full day today.

What was the first school-related thing that you did this morning?
What time was that?
What other school-related things did you do this morning before I arrived?
What time did you arrive at school?

- 2) What about yesterday afternoon... (*Note: on Monday ask about Friday afternoon*)

What did you do yesterday afternoon after the school day had ended?
What time did you leave school?
What was the very last school-related thing you did yesterday?
What time was that?

- 3) Was today a typical school day for you?

In what ways was today not typical?

- 4) What about on weekends...

What are the typical hours you spend on school-related work on the weekend?
What sorts of activities do you do during that time?
Can you tell me what school related activities you did last weekend?

QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Now, I'd like to turn to questions about your role as a principal.

5) What do you see as the **primary role** of the principal?

Are you able to have enough time and flexibility to act in this role?

Is there a team of leaders (either informal or formal) in your school to help you?

What kinds of capacities does this team have?

Are they able to deal effectively with many of the day-to-day issues that arise?

Can you give me an example of this?

Are there issues that arise that they can't deal with and you have to?

Can you give me an example?

6) What does **instructional leadership** look like in your school?

How does what you do influence what goes on in the classroom?

Can you give me a specific example of a time you successfully supported instructional opportunities for students?

Could you give me specific examples of how you structure your school to support teachers?

How do other leaders (either formal or informal) contribute to instructional leadership in your school?

Do you know where your teachers go to get help when they need it? Could you give me an example of one teacher and where he or she gets the help he/she needs?

We know that you find out about what is going on in your school from a variety of sources such as talking to students, parents, teachers; visiting classrooms; and looking at student test scores. Could you give me an example of how you used information from these different sources to make a particular decision about what happened in your schools?

7) Would you tell me about how you staff your school...

Can you describe to me the process you used to hire your most recent new teachers?

How do find teachers?

What characteristics of teachers are you looking for?

How do you convince the ones you like to come to your school?

What is the process of assigning teachers to classes?

Do teachers get any say? In what way?

What do you do to retain teachers?

Do you target your retention efforts at certain teachers?

Which teachers? In what way do you target these efforts?

How do teachers get leadership roles in the school? Can you give me an example?

Do you try to encourage ineffective teachers to leave?

Can you give me a specific example? When did this happen?

Do you feel supported by the district when you would like to remove a teacher?

QUESTIONS ABOUT VISION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Next, I'd like to turn to questions about your vision for the school

8) What are your goals as a principal?

What are your plans for the school in the short-run?

Do you have a vision for where you would like it to be by January or the end of the school year?

What are you doing to try to get it there?

What about for the longer-term?

9) How do you pursue your vision for the school?

How can you tell if you are making progress towards achieving your vision?

What kind of evidence do you look for?

Are there barriers to success in pursuing your vision? What are they?

Are there supports either within the school or external to the school that are particularly helpful to you?

What does the district, in particular, do either to support or hinder your goals?

If principal mentions professional development — What is most useful about the district's professional development?

During the current school year, are there people outside of school who have helped you garner resources for your school? Who are they (names, positions) and how have they helped. *Try for 3+*

QUESTIONS ABOUT PATH TO PRINCIPALSHIP

10) Finally, I'd like to ask you about how you became a principal...

When did you decide you wanted to become a principal?

Why did you choose to become a principal?

Was there someone in particular who encouraged you to become a principal?

What formal principal education did you have?

When was your first job as a principal?

At how many schools have you been principal?

For how long have you been a principal at this school?

11) Can you tell me about what experiences (either work experiences or educational experiences) helped **prepare** you to become a principal?

Did teaching help you prepare to be a principal? In what ways did it help?

How about any other roles such as an AP or a curriculum specialist? In what ways did those roles help?

When you first became a principal, what did you have to learn to become more effective?

How did you gain those skills?

Did you or do you have a mentor? If yes, how does your mentor help you?

In what areas do you feel you still need to work on being more effective?

How are you trying to improve those areas?

Looking back, what experiences do you wish you would have had? What would have been helpful?

12) How did you end up being a principal at this school?

Why did you choose to work at this particular school?

If it was a choice, what was appealing about this school?

In the upcoming years, do you want to stay here or work at a different school?

What is appealing about that other school?

What would you want to know about a new school before deciding to be a principal there?