



## SFUSD 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. We are so grateful for your time.
- ii) *Thank You and Confidentiality Assurance (You can use your own words, but here's some sample language.):*  
Thank you again for allowing me to record this interview. As a reminder, everything that is said today will remain completely confidential. No one from the district will ever hear the recording or see the notes I am taking, and I won't discuss what I hear today with anyone else outside of the research team. Only the research team at IREPP will listen to the recording. We will never identify you or use your name or the name of your school in any of our reports. So now that we are clear about the confidential nature of this interview, I am going to turn on the recorder and ask you to state your name, the school and that you agree to be recorded.

### QUESTIONS ABOUT TODAY'S OBSERVATIONS

- 1) Since I only get to observe you for part of the day, I'd like to get a sense of your full day.
  - a) As an example, what school-related things did you do this morning before I arrived?
  - b) Briefly, what did you do yesterday afternoon after the school day had ended?
  - c) Was today a typical school day for you?

### QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

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

#### 2) What do you see as the primary role of the principal?

*If principal only mentions his/her use of leadership team here, probe further to determine what his/her primary role is as principal.*



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### 3) What does instructional leadership look like in your school?

- a) How does what you do influence what goes on in the classroom?
- b) *If they discuss their role with teachers in the example above, then ask specifically about students: Can you give me a specific example of a time you successfully supported instructional opportunities for students?*  
*If they discuss students in their example above, then ask about teachers: Could you give me specific examples of how you structure your school to support teachers?*
- c) How do other leaders (either formal or informal) contribute to instructional leadership in your school?
- d) What can principals do to get teachers to work together well?  
Can you give me an example of something that you have done in this regard?

### 4) Can you name a few activities that you do in your role as **MANAGER** of the school?

- a) Of your management activities, which do you think are the most critical for a high-functioning school?
- b) Are there any activities you do that shouldn't really be part of the principal's responsibilities?



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**5) We know there is a formal district process for staffing schools. We are interested in learning more about how you personally work to find teachers...**

- a) What characteristics of teachers are you looking for?  
How do you convince the ones you like to come to your school?
- b) Are there some teaching positions that you have a particularly hard time filling?  
Are you ultimately able to fill these positions to your satisfaction? How?
- c) Is teacher retention a problem in your school?  
Is the problem worse in particular subjects or grade levels?
- d) What do you do to retain teachers?
- e) Do you target your retention efforts at certain teachers?  
Which teachers? In what way do you target these efforts?

**6) What does professional development look like at your school?**

- a) Generally how useful is it?
- b) Can you talk about positive experiences with PD when it has been effective?
- c) How about experiences with PD that have not been as effective?
- d) What would you like to see more of?  
What are some of your constraints to providing this?
- e) To what extent do you control the types of PD at your school?  
To what extent is it decided by the district?



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### 7) What do you do if you have a teacher who isn't performing as well as you think is necessary?

- a) Does the district give you any help? What kind?
- b) Do you ever use formal evaluations to help with this process?
- c) Do you try to encourage ineffective teachers to leave? How do you do this?  
Can you give me a specific example? When did this happen?
- d) Tell me about how you use PAR (peer-assistance and review) at your school.  
Can you describe to us the support PAR gives you?  
What do you think of PAR as a tool for helping dismiss or improve teachers?  
Have you ever referred a teacher to PAR? If yes, what happened? If the teacher successfully completed PAR, did his/her practice improve?

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*If it has been 30 minutes, tell the principal you would like to respect his/her time and can stop now. However, if s/he has 5-10 minutes more, you have a couple more questions about his/her vision for the school and personal path to the principalship.*

### QUESTIONS ABOUT VISION

Almost done, I'd like to turn to questions about your vision for the school.

### 8) What are your goals for the school?

- a) How are you pursuing these goals in the short-run?
- b) What about for the longer-term?
- c) How can you tell if you are making progress towards achieving your vision?
- d) Are there barriers to success in pursuing your vision? What are they?
- e) Are there supports either within the school or outside of the school that are particularly helpful to you?
- f) What does the district, in particular, do either to support or hinder your goals?



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### QUESTIONS ABOUT PATH TO PRINCIPALSHIP

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

- a) When did you first decide you wanted to become a principal?
- b) Why did you choose to become a principal?
- c) Was there someone in particular who encouraged you to become a principal?
- d) What formal principal education did you have?
- e) When was your first job as a principal?
- f) At how many schools have you been principal?
- g) For how long have you been a principal at this school?
- h) How did you come to be a principal in this school?
- i) Are there others schools in which you would prefer to be a principal?
- j) Can you tell me about what experiences (either work experiences or educational experiences) helped **prepare** you to become a principal?
- k) When you first became a principal, what did you have to learn to become more effective?
- l) How did you gain those skills?
- m) Did you or do you have a mentor? If yes, how does your mentor help you?
- n) In what areas do you feel you still need to work on being more effective?
- o) How are you trying to improve those areas?
- p) Looking back, what experiences do you wish you would have had? What would have been helpful?