

Appendix B2. QTEA Principal Interview Topic Guide

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1st meeting (week of Sept 28)

- Please tell me about your background
 - How did you become a principal in this school?

- What are your goals for the school?
 - How do these goals fit into the district’s strategic plan?
 - How are you pursuing these goals in the short-run?
 - What about for the longer-term?
 - How can you tell if you are making progress towards achieving your vision?
 - Are there barriers to success in pursuing your vision? What are they?
 - Are there supports either within the school or outside of the school that are particularly helpful to you?
 - What does the district, in particular, do either to support or hinder your goals?

- Changing gears a bit, I would like to ask about the staff configuration in this school.
 - In middle/high school: How are staff configured? (Probe for planning periods, PD days, Small Learning Communities, grade- or subject-level teams.)
 - Now I would like to talk a little about the specific kinds of staff working in your school:

	How Many?	Notes (i.e., what subject? or what do they do? What are their roles?)
Number other administrators		
Support staff (master teachers, resource teachers, IRFs, etc.)		
Total number of teachers		
Number of New (Certified) Teachers		
Number of Interns		
Number of Tenured Teachers participating in PAR		

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- I would like to talk a bit about each of the teachers that you hired for positions in your school this year. (For each teacher):
 - What position was open?
 - What was the process for hiring the teacher currently in the role?
 - When did you post the position?
 - How many applications did you get?
 - How did you find the teachers? (Internal application, new applicant, consolidated, etc.)
 - When did you meet with the candidates?
 - What characteristics were you looking for? How did you determine if this teacher was a good fit?
 - Did you end up getting the teacher you wanted?
 - If yes, how did you convince him/her to come to your school?
 - If no, do you have a sense for why?
 - Are you happy with the person who is currently teaching in that role?

- Do you have any teachers currently whose performance you are unhappy with, or that you would prefer don't come back? (For each teacher):
 - In what subject?
 - How many years of teaching experience?
 - How many years has s/he been in the school?
 - What were the circumstances under which the teacher came to the school? (Probe for recruitment process)
 - Why are you unhappy with this teacher's performance?
 - How do you deal with this teacher? (Probe for extra support, counseling out, PAR referral, evaluation.)

- We've talked about your specific personnel challenges in this year, but stepping back:
 - 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?
 - Is teacher retention a problem in your school?
 - Is the problem worse in particular subjects or grade levels?
 - 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?

- Has this year been any different from last year in your ability to recruit and retain teachers?

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2nd meeting (week of Nov 16)

- Have there been any big changes in the school since the last time we met, or any major challenges you have been facing?

SUPPORT

- Professional development
 - What is your school's professional development plan?
 - Probe for detail on specific plans, targeted efforts, meeting times, etc.
 - Generally how useful is it?
 - How was it decided what would be covered?
 - Do all teachers receive the same PD? If not, how is it different? How is it determined?
 - Can you talk about positive experiences with PD when it has been effective?
 - How about experiences with PD that have not been as effective?
 - What would you like to see more of?
 - What are some of your constraints to providing this?
 - To what extent do you control the types of PD at your school?
 - To what extent is it decided by the district?
 - How is your school using the additional PD hours allocated under Prop A?
 - Is the additional PD perceived as useful? Is it helping you reach instructional goals that we talked about last time?
- Master teachers
 - Do you have master teachers working in this school? How many? Who?
 - How were they hired? Were you involved? What was the process like?
 - What are they doing in the schools?
 - Is the work of the master teacher perceived as useful? How are they contributing to your school's improvement plan?
 - Does the master teacher help you address the needs of your struggling teachers? Your new teachers?
- Support for new teachers
 - What are the various supports for new teachers?
 - How effective are each?
 - Do you think new teachers have the supports they need?
 - Are these systems well aligned?

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- Evaluation
 - What do you perceive is the role of formal evaluations?
 - Comfort level with evals
 - Role for underperforming teachers
 - How many do you have on this cycle?
 - What determines the schedule for evaluation?
 - How do you decide what summary rating to give teachers?
 - What do you hope to happen as a result of the evals?
 - Have there been any changes in the time you have been in this school or district in the way you use evaluation?

SALARY INCREASES

- Salary changes
 - Are you aware of the salary increases provided by Prop A?
 - How knowledgeable do you think the teachers in your school are of the salary increases provided by Prop A?
 - To your knowledge, do teachers talk about the district-wide salary increases?
 - Do you think the salary increase will help you retain high quality teachers in this school?
- Targeted bonuses
 - (If school is hard-to-staff) Are teachers inside this school aware of the bonuses? How have they been made aware?
 - Are teachers in your school eligible for the hard-to-fill subjects bonuses? How many? Which subjects/teachers?
 - Are the eligible teachers aware that they will receive the bonuses?
 - Do you have teachers who will receive the retention bonuses this year? How many? To your knowledge, are they aware of the incentives?
 - Do teachers talk about the incentives? Did your new hires this year talk about the incentives? How do they know?
 - Do you think the incentives will help you retain high quality teachers in this school?

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3rd meeting (week of Jan 18)

- What has the focus of your school been since the last time we met?
 - Anything big events capturing your attention?
 - Have you worked at all on issues of staffing? (hiring, firing, planning for next year?)
 - Municipal secretary problem
- Evaluations – how did they go?
 - For new teachers
 - For the teachers you have identified as needing additional support
 - Are you happy with teachers’ performance?
 - What was the distribution of ratings and how did you decide to rate teachers that way?
 - Do principals feel confident evaluating teachers? Sending them to PAR? How are evaluations being used and is this changing over time? (Principals’ use of the “needs improvement” rating)
 - What kind of support do you get around evaluation?
 - Are there teachers in your school that will now be referred to PAR due to your summary evaluation rating?
 - With teachers that are not performing at a high level, how do you use the evaluation process to help?
 - Suggest additional PD or support? In school/external?
 - Do you consider referring a teacher to PAR?
 - Do you consider suggesting that a teacher participates in PAR on a voluntary basis?
 - Do you try to encourage ineffective teachers to leave? How do you do this?
- PAR
 - Have you ever referred teachers to PAR?
 - Do you have any teachers participating now?
 - Would you consider referring teachers?
 - What are your general thoughts on the program
 - As a rehabilitation strategy?
 - To remove teachers
 - There have been some changes this year (easier entry, harder to successfully complete, no re-entry); do you think these changes will help you?
 - Has the UBC school site referred teachers? If so, what are the circumstances under which this happens?
- Budget for 2010-11
 - What are you expecting? How are you preparing?
- School site council
 - How does it work?
 - Who is on it? What are meetings like?

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- School improvement incentives
 - Are you aware of the program elements?
 - Are teachers aware of the program elements?
 - Were you involved in creating the program elements?
 - How likely do you think it is that your school would win the award?
 - Is your school working toward winning the award? What?
 - How will you decide how to use the award if you win it? Have there been discussions about this yet?

- Any awareness of new positions for next year?
 - March deadline for announcing?
 - What are you doing to prepare, if you know that there are vacancies on the horizon?

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Final meeting (week of May 3)

- Budget
 - What will be cut next year?
 - Positions? Programs?
 - How did you decide?
 - District? School site council?
- Staffing
 - Layoff notices?
 - Did you have any say?
 - Are these teachers that you would not/like to leave?
 - Actual layoffs
 - Teachers leaving – why?
 - Targeted subjects
 - Hard-to-staff
 - Hard-to-fill
 - Do teachers in this school get bonuses? In what subjects?
 - Retention bonus
- Update on status of previously identified underperforming teachers
 - Will they be returning next year
 - What is your long-term plan for these individuals?
- PAR
 - Easier entry
 - Higher standard? Do you know about it?
 - No reentry
 - Voluntary participation
- Professional development
 - APD
 - Are some kinds of PD better than others?
 - Prop A PD – are teachers using the hours?
 - What is it good for?
- Stepping back, what is needed in your district/school?
 - What would you need to improve teacher quality and student achievement?