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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How Many?</th>
<th>Notes (i.e., what subject? or what do they do? What are their roles?)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number other administrators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support staff (master teachers, resource teachers, IRFs, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of New (Certified) Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Interns</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Tenured Teachers participating in PAR</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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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
  o What do you perceive is the role of formal evaluations?
  o Comfort level with evals
  o Role for underperforming teachers
  o How many do you have on this cycle?
  o What determines the schedule for evaluation?
  o How do you decide what summary rating to give teachers?
  o What do you hope to happen as a result of the evals?
  o 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
  o 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?
  o To your knowledge, do teachers talk about the district-wide salary increases?
  o Do you think the salary increase will help you retain high quality teachers in this school?

• Targeted bonuses
  o (If school is hard-to-staff) Are teachers inside this school aware of the bonuses? How have they been made aware?
  o 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?
  o Do you have teachers who will receive the retention bonuses this year? How many? To your knowledge, are they aware of the incentives?
  o Do teachers talk about the incentives? Did your new hires this year talk about the incentives? How do they know?
  o 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?
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?