

Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System Principal Observation and Evaluation

Principal observation represents a key source of information about school leadership behaviors and practices. Observation allows principal evaluators to see principals in action: leading activities, monitoring and providing feedback on educator performance, collaboratively analyzing data, resolving conflicts, building consensus, or modifying and developing school improvement plans.

Although principal observation provides a prime source of information for timely, specific feedback, it is not always clear what should be observed and when observations should occur. Observing principal practice is not as intuitive as observing a teacher carrying out instruction in a classroom. School leadership behaviors can be observed in many different contexts and the time parameters around observable events are generally not fixed. Each context provides useful information about practice, but given the variety of leadership scenarios, where should principal evaluators focus observation activities?

This document provides a brief review of the principal observation requirements of the Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness (EE) System and includes suggestions for efficient and high impact observations. The requirements and strategies also pertain to assistant/associate principal (AP) evaluations.

Common Roles for the Principal or AP Evaluator

Evaluators of Principals

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendents
- Directors of Instruction / Teaching and Learning
- Human Resources Directors
- Principals (licensed as Supt or with School Board approval)

Evaluators of APs

- Building Principal or other Principal
- Superintendent
- Directors of Instruction / Teaching and Learning
- Human Resources Directors

Requirement review

School Visits and Other Evaluation Evidence Sources

During an Effectiveness Cycle, evaluators of principals will carry out observations and collect documents or artifacts that demonstrate performance according to the 21 components of the [Wisconsin Framework for Principal Leadership](#). Evaluators of Assistant Principals will have to collect evidence through observations and artifacts of 11 core components, regardless of the AP’s assignment. The AP, though, may have an additional 2 required components if they are an evaluator of teachers. Further, any of the other remaining components from the Wisconsin Framework for Principal Leadership can be included in the Effectiveness Cycle to help the AP match his or her role to the components.

Effectiveness Cycles can last for anywhere between one and three years. The final year of an Effectiveness Cycle is referred to as the Summary Year. If an Effectiveness Cycle is one year long, that year is considered the Summary Year. If the Effectiveness Cycle is longer than one year, the other years are referred to as Supporting Years.

The minimum observation-related requirements during a Summary Year includes one (1) Announced School Visit with pre-observation planning and post-observation discussion and two (2) Sampling Visits. It is not unusual to see more frequent school visits beyond the minimum. Direct observations should be a primary focus of the announced school visit, but also can be part of the shorter school sampling-visits.

Evaluators may also conduct optional observations during Supporting Years. Observation data from announced school visits, sampling visits and other evidence sources are needed to accurately assess leadership performance and provide growth-oriented feedback.

Announced School Visit

Scheduling the announced school visit is important to make sure that the evaluator sees the leader in action. The length of time is not prescribed, but should last long enough to provide detailed feedback and adequately assess leadership on relevant components. For example, the evaluator may want to observe the principal or AP leading a learning team meeting or data preview meeting for the length of the meeting (i.e., 40-60 minutes).

Examples of Announced School Visits observations could include:

- Leader facilitating a team, department or content group meeting
- Leader conducting staff professional development
- Leader presenting to the school board, a parent group, or other stakeholder group
- Leader generating input on school improvement priorities
- Leader facilitating a teacher evaluation meeting

Sampling Visits

Evaluators conduct a minimum of two (2) additional Sampling Visits (shorter observations) during the Summary Year. The shorter observations are opportunities to see the leader during daily leadership practice and can help provide additional detail for feedback and appraisal. Sampling visits may be announced or unannounced, and don't always focus on seeing the principal or AP as the lead person carrying out an activity. The leader may be participating in a meeting led by another staff member, observing a grade-level discussion, monitoring the halls or public entrances during transition times, or conducting learning walks. The sampling visits represent a snapshot of typical leader practice. Even though they are short in duration, these opportunities allow evaluators to ask the leader what they are seeing, how the leader will use the information to provide feedback, and how the information relates to school improvement priorities. Sampling visits can also be used to visit the school area and gather evidence on the impact of the school leader's work.

Examples of opportunities for Sampling Visits observations could include:

- Leader monitoring hallways, transportation areas, or other public areas during transition times
- Leader carrying out game or event management
- Leader managing a student discipline issue in the moment
- Leader resolving a staff disagreement
- Leader conducting formative learning walks
- Dropping in on any pre-planned event that might also be a good opportunity for a longer observation

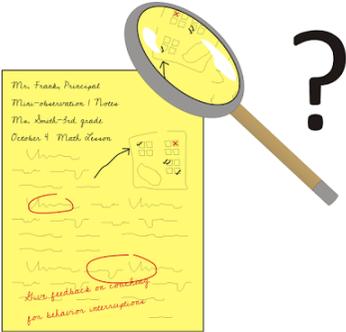
Gathering Evidence through Observations and Artifacts

One important thing to note is that documenting a principal's practices can be done through two different methods: directly observing a principal in action, or by gathering artifacts of his or her work and "extracting" evidence from the artifact that shows the impact of the principal. In either case, the important thing to focus on is the evidence contained within an observation event or artifact, which can provide for rich information about key leadership behaviors and competencies.

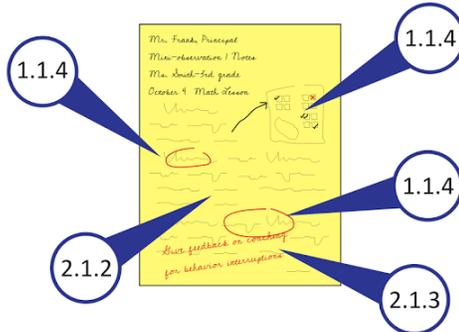
It's also important to remember that observation events and artifacts are not scored individually. Philosophically, this means:

1. Observations (and Artifacts) contain Evidence;
2. Evidence can be tagged or aligned to a Component;
3. Performance on a Component can be scored based on the degree to which the evidence aligns to the critical attributes of a rubric.

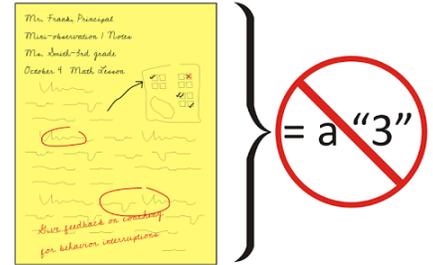
Observations (events, including videos of events)	Artifacts (documents, notes, work products, etc.)
Focus is on critical and careful observation of the educator’s practices, seeking out evidence of multiple components within an observation event, and aligning observable actions to a component with high fidelity.	Focus is on identifying “high-leverage” artifacts that contain a large amount of evidence for a number of different components and aligning the evidence to a component with high fidelity.



A High-Leverage Artifact is an opportunity to find high-quality evidence of Principal Practices.



Principal evaluators should “mine” a High-Leverage Artifact or Observation for evidence contained within the Artifact and align the evidence to a component.



High-Leverage Artifacts shouldn’t just be assigned a score without looking at the evidence contained inside.

Tips and considerations for conducting Principal observations

Focus on what’s “important” and what’s “immediate”. The “important” aspects of the principal’s role as an instructional leader can sometimes be overwhelmed by the “immediate” needs or tasks that tend to pop up. To maximize impact and relevance of feedback, it is helpful to identify the “important” and ask principals on what do they most desire feedback and during what events would they most like to be observed. (Asking for this feedback is a great topic for a principal’s orientation or EEP meeting). To support Announced School Visits, set a schedule and identify events with the greatest potential to see specific components (the “important”), and also be prepared to take advantage of the things that may pop up (the “immediate”) that also serve as good opportunities for a Sampling Visit.

Manipulate time and/or be invisible. Superintendents and district administrators can’t be everywhere at once. Additionally, the presence of a district leader may affect how the principal or the people interacting with the principal behave. One way around this is to remove the physical presence of the superintendent. For instance, principals could record themselves in action and send links/videos for their evaluators to review, especially at times when the superintendent is not available. Give principals the opportunity to document their behaviors (such as taping a faculty meeting or a presentation to parents) and submit that documentation for your review.

Combine High-Leverage Observation Events with High-Leverage Artifacts. High leverage observations and artifacts have the following characteristics: (a) spans multiple components; (b) focuses on district or school improvement priorities; (c) demonstrates a normal part of leadership work. Seeking out high-leverage artifacts that are also products from observable work done by the principal can lead to a much greater yield when mining evidence.

Here are some examples of combined High-Leverage Observations events along with some of the High-Leverage Artifacts that may come from that work. This is not an exhaustive list, just a few ideas to get started.

<i>Example of an observation event / artifact, or combined observations with high-leverage artifacts:</i>	<i>Aligns easily to these multiple components:</i>
Short observation of a presentation to the faculty with presentation handouts created after the principal attended a recent workshop or conference.	1.1.4 Educator Development and Learning 2.1.1 Professionalism
Observe a building staff meeting focused on the creation of a building-level school improvement process, and take photos of the chart papers from the walls during a data walk.	1.1.5 Distributed Leadership 1.2.1 Mission and Vision 1.2.2 Student Achievement Focus 1.2.3 Staff Collaboration 1.2.4 School-wide Use of Data 2.1.2 Time Management and Priority Setting 2.1.3 Use of Feedback for Improvement 2.1.4 Initiative and Persistence
AP or Principal Supporting and/or facilitating a school-wide learning plan or PLC group	1.1.4 Educator Development and Learning 1.1.5 Distributed Leadership 1.2.2 Student Achievement Focus 1.2.3 Staff Collaboration 2.1.1 Professionalism
Principal videotapes themselves hosting a post-observation feedback meeting between themselves and a teacher; superintendent documents the coaching and feedback provided by the principal	1.1.3 Observation and Performance Evaluation 1.1.4 Educator Development and Learning
School leadership team meeting to ensure that observations and feedback are timely, and check for consistent use and interpretation of rubrics	1.1.3 Observation and Performance Evaluation 2.1.2 Time Management and Priority Setting
Principal or AP monitoring morning arrival of students, which have included recent student-bus driver, and parent-safety officer conflicts	2.3.1 Learning Environment Management 2.2.3 Conflict Management and Resolution 2.2.4 Consensus Building