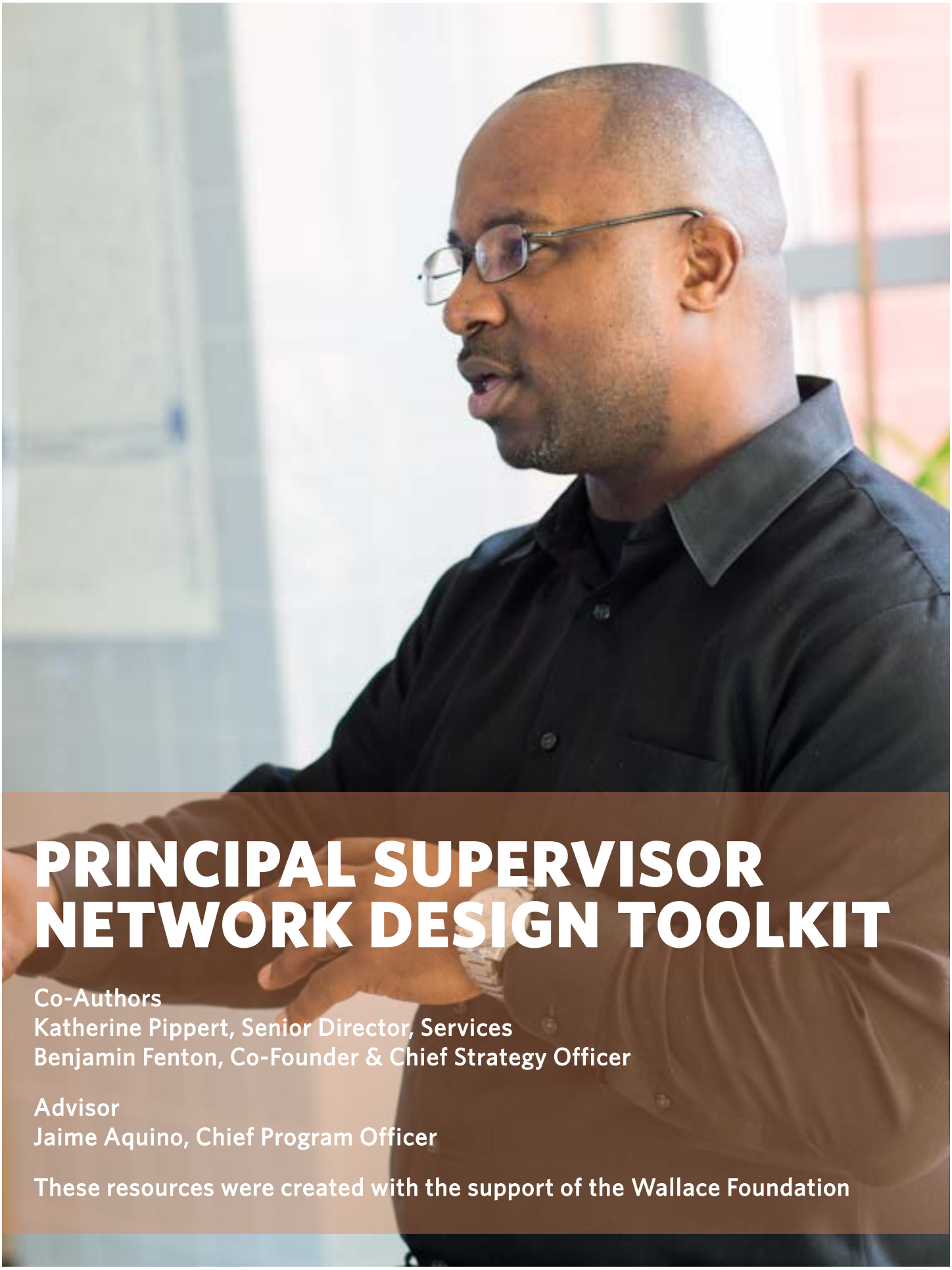

PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR NETWORK DESIGN TOOLKIT

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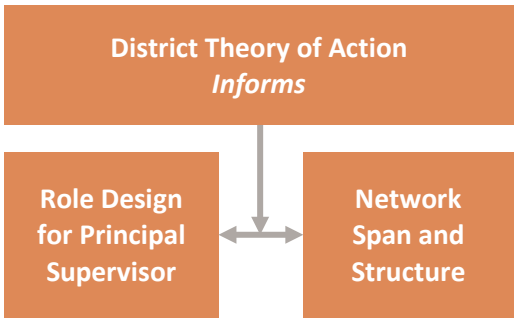
New Leaders

Principal Supervisor Network Design Overview

Principal supervisors play a crucial role in principal and school success, and the design of their networks – the portfolio of schools they lead - deeply impacts their effectiveness. Ideally, a district's priorities and its theory of action drive both the design of the principal supervisor role and the composition of the networks. Increasingly, districts are focused on schools as the unit of change for students and are aligning all systems, roles, and incentives to this focus. To establish school conditions that lead to improved student outcomes., districts must ensure leadership is in place at both the principal and the principal supervisor level.

The Changing the Principal Supervisor Role and Network Design

Many districts are revisiting the design of school networks in parallel with a redefinition of the principal supervisor role. These districts recognize that the principal supervisor role is foundational to systemic change because these leaders can deeply engage at a school-by-school level to ensure that district-wide priorities and initiatives translate into practice and impact. At the same time, principal supervisors serve as senior leaders in the system, with intimate knowledge of district strategy, priorities, and decision-making and a broad command of information and resources across the system.



In these districts, the redefinition means that now **a principal supervisor's primary focus is supporting, developing, and evaluating the principals they manage**. By ensuring that these functions are seen as a continuum of talent development, districts are connecting the principal supervisor's responsibility for formal evaluation of the principals in his or her network with a focus on building the skills and efficacy of those principals. Additionally, principal actions are deeply tied to the context and strategic priorities of the particular school that each principal leads. Because of this, principal supervisors must know both their principals and their schools: the students, the community, the history, and the results. And principal supervisors must pull from a deep personal leadership toolkit as well as other district and partner resources to support the school and its plan - as led by the principal. The design of principal supervisor networks must enable this deep engagement so that principal supervisors can focus on the resources and priority actions that will move student achievement within them.

A secondary, and crucial, role for principal supervisors is as an intermediary between schools and the central office. Principal supervisors should have a hand in shaping and then implementing district-wide policy, processes, and strategies. In particular, they can bring insight into how district-wide decisions will play out on the ground in schools and classrooms. Principal supervisors must then play an important role in implementation, navigating the tension between the importance of district-wide consistency in implementation and a necessary push towards differentiation and flexibility in each school's context. Principal supervisors also also provide important information to the district central offices about policy implementation and conditions in the schools. Because the role principal supervisors play in connecting central decisions, resources, and expectations to the schools is so crucial, any approach to designing principal supervisor networks must take into account the time required to play this intermediary role.

The last major function of the principal supervisor is one that should be minimized within their role but is still important; **principal supervisors will have some responsibilities as a compliance monitor for district processes**. As the principals' managers, principal supervisors will need to have a role in ensuring principals follow through on important compliance tasks for the district, and they can help principals make connections between required processes and school priorities whenever possible. But in general the district should find ways to organize other resources to ensure schools are meeting deadlines, reporting compliance data, and completing processes that are necessary but not strategic.

Overview of Network Design Questions

Establishing Span (Number of Schools) and Structure (Composition of Schools in the Network)

The principal supervisor role and the networks they manage are the primary means for translating district-wide strategies and initiatives into implementation on the ground. A network design should be the best meeting point of the strategic direction of the district and the reality in the field for stakeholders in the school: staff, community and—ultimately—students. **The purpose of these design principles is to codify learning from New Leaders' research about the considerations districts should attend to when designing networks, in order to form the basis of tools designed to aid districts in these efforts.**

Principal supervisor networks are not designed absent context; any new network structure has to be informed by the district's theory of action and strategic priorities, as well as by the constraints on the ground. When designing a new network structure, it is important to take into account the district context and history as well as the current school management structure. Districts may also want to consider the potential principal supervisor pool: what skill sets and experiences are principal supervisors likely to have? What will they already know and what will they be learning? How can networks be designed so that their size and composition make them feasible managerial structures, with the success of these potential managers in mind? This, too, may impact network design.

Several design questions are raised as districts recast the principal supervisor role and the networks they lead. The first three questions have to do with balancing expectations for the Principal Supervisor role in order to determine the *span* of the networks – how many schools will be included in each network. These three questions should be examined holistically, through an iterative process that considers whether each element ensures the job is feasible and that principal supervisors are set up—through the design of their role and their networks—to successfully impact school and student outcomes.

Top Down/Bottom Up Design

Network design has to reflect strategic alignment: What is our theory of action? What are the big levers we are pulling district-wide? What are the biggest barriers to student outcomes we facing and addressing?

Network design also has to reflect considerations of management and conditions on the ground: What will create the conditions for success for principal supervisors—and the schools they manage?

Design Questions: Span of the Networks

A. **How many schools in a network? *Asked another way,* What will be the ratio of principal supervisors to schools? Will network size vary based on school or principal profiles?**

B. **How will other supports to schools and management touch-points with schools be aligned to networks? Are there additional team members on the network team and, if so, what are their roles?**

C. **What are the other central-office focused responsibilities principal supervisors will have as senior leaders within the district and as representatives of the school-based perspective?**

Once targets are set for network *span*, districts can begin to design network *structure*, determining which schools will be in each network.

Design Question: Structure of the Networks

A. **How will schools be grouped into the networks? Based on which design priorities and informed by what school and student data?**

Overview: Network Design Considerations

Network Span of Control

A. How many schools in a network? What will be the ratio of principal supervisors to schools?	B. What other district-wide policy and procedure-setting responsibilities will principal supervisors have, as both senior district leaders and representatives of the school-based perspective in the central office?	C. How will resources be accessed by the networks? Are there other team members?
Starting with a target ratio of no more than 12 schools per principal supervisor, districts should establish their own firm guideline for the span of control for principals, weighing district conditions with decisions around questions #1, 2, and 3. In addition to overall recommendations for network size, districts should consider decreasing caseloads in specific networks based on the following criteria: • Number of low-performing schools in the network, which need additional, intensive support. • Number of middle and high schools in the network, which may require specialization and additional support. • Principal supervisor's level of experience, where newer principal supervisors may need a smaller case load while learning the job.	Principal supervisors serve a crucial leadership role bridging district-wide priorities and policy with their actual implementation at the school-level. Districts have to navigate the right structures and forums to give principal supervisors and—through them—their schools a voice in the formation of these strategies, but they must also protect principal supervisors' time for direct engagement with and management of their network. Some potential areas of input include: • District-wide instructional priorities and support – programs and staff development resources. • Human capital practices, especially hiring, evaluation, and talent development. • Budget practices and priorities • Community engagement and district-wide policies on student attendance, engagement, and discipline.	Principal supervisors serve in a connector role, supporting schools in implementing district-wide priorities and initiatives and matching resources to differentiated school needs. As part of central office redesign, districts should consider: • What areas require dedicated resources for schools and networks? • Which team members—if any—should report directly to the principal supervisor as part of the network team? • Which team members from other departments should have a "matrix" reporting role to the principal supervisor? • What role—if any—should principal supervisors have in brokering connections to central office resources? How is this formalized in the district structure?

Network Structure

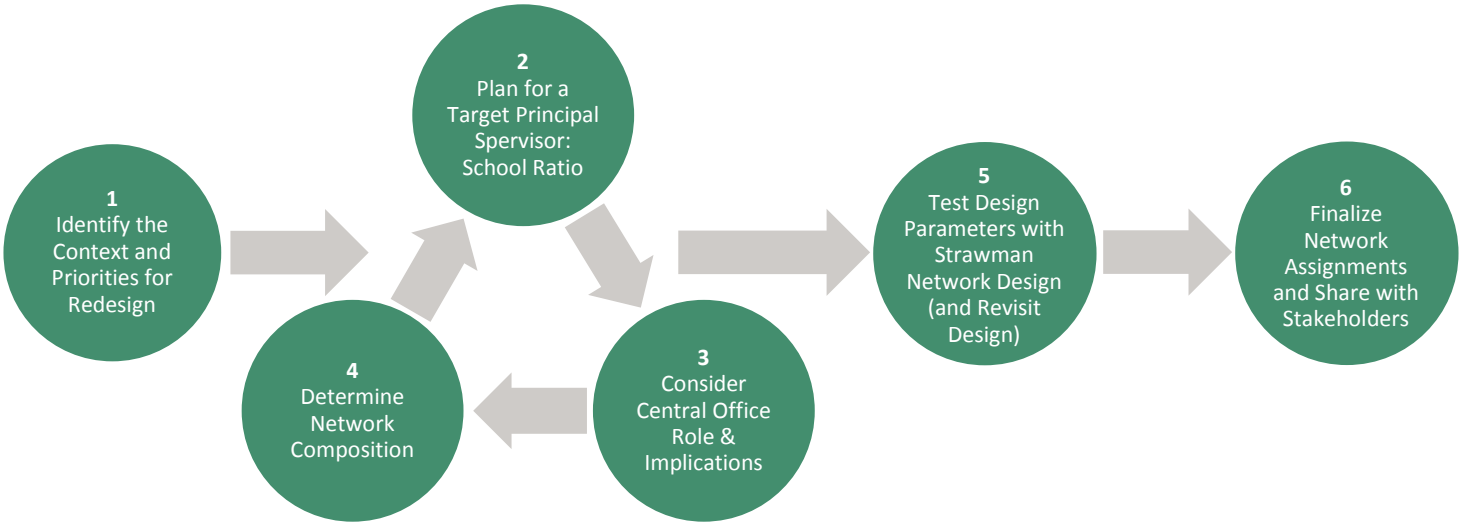
D. How will schools be grouped into networks?
Districts should match their network structure to their theory of action for school-level change and their strategic priorities, as well as conditions on the ground, considering first what the overriding design principle will be (first tier considerations) and then other factors for confirming the network structure: First Tier: Grade-level or feeder pattern structure as the overall design principle, and will there be any networks "carved out" of this overall architecture based on specific needs? Second Tier: Within the overall network architecture, what are the impacts of considering: • Student outcomes and school performance—either heterogeneous or homogeneous network structures? • Geographic networks? Once networks are determined, these considerations should also guide the matching of principal supervisors and networks.

Overview of Network Design Process and Tools

Process Flow, Tools, and Roles for Planning

Each district will have to tailor its network design process to meet specific needs for expediency and stakeholder engagement, and to recognize established design constraints within which planning must occur. Some districts may sequence design questions differently or start with some considerations as set principles instead of open questions. In many cases, the design process will be iterative, with one set of considerations or decisions impacting working assumptions that have already been established.

Overview: Network Design Process



Process Flow: Network Design

Step	1. Identify the context	2. Plan for a target principal supervisor: school ratio	3. Consider central office implications	4. Determine network structure prioritization	5. Test strawman networks	6. Finalize and share the new network structure
Tools	Network Design Vision and Context Template	Span of Control Modeling Tool Ratio Worksheet (embedded in this document)	Principal Supervisor Central Office Role Worksheet	Network Design and Implications Template		
Use Case	Facilitated group discussion with decision-makers and crucial stakeholders; consensus around the starting point, goals, and context for network design.	Target setting by decision-makers: Consensus creation for the rationale and target for network size reduction as a goal.	Facilitated group discussion OR small group strawman creation for input. Can map from existing redesign role description or capture new thinking.	Facilitated discussion to create design principles for strawman network design; review by decision-makers and stakeholders as relevant.	Based on initial design decisions and weighing other considerations for the networks, staff create two to three possible network configurations to test for alignment to district theory of action and for feasibility for implementation.	District leaders finalize network decisions; communication decisions to central office, schools, and other stakeholders.

1. Identify the Context

Districts should begin the network design process by first clarifying their overall theory of action and then discussing what implications that theory of action has for the role of the principal supervisor. The Network Design Vision and Context Template provides an organizing tool for those discussions, beginning with the summary of the district's theory of Action. The template also helps districts envision the future state for their principal supervisor roles and compare that future state vision to the current reality.

2. Plan for a target principal supervisor to schools ratio

Based on research and consensus recommendations across the field, districts should begin thinking about network design with a target ratio of no more than 12 schools per principal supervisor. Generally speaking, as a beginning point for network design, this ratio ensures that principal supervisors have a reasonable span of control, small enough for principal supervisors to become deeply familiar with each of his schools and their leadership but also large enough to have some meaningful sharing of best practices and an impactful management footprint for the principal supervisor. This ratio incorporates some important assumptions about the best way to organize a Principal Supervisor's responsibilities, namely prioritizing time spent in schools working directly with principals.

At the same time, the other considerations below—as well as the realities on the ground—may cause a district to deviate somewhat from the network size guidelines, or plan to move towards the district ideal over time as new expectations for the role are instituted.

Districts should also begin the network design process by examining the research and recommendations for network size and determining a target ratio because this will help to guide other design considerations. This target ratio serves as a foundational touch-point for creating networks that support meaningful impact on student outcomes and as a corrective to the design pressures that tend to push up ratios or crowd out direct school engagement for principal supervisors.

In the report *Leading for Effective Teaching*, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation lays out a formula that captures considerations for developing a target for a principal supervisor's span of control.[1]

From *Leading for Effective Teaching*:

Figure 10. Estimating an Appropriate Instructional Leadership Director (ILD) Span of Control

$$\frac{\text{Work hours per month} \times \text{Percentage of schedule outside of central office for school visits}}{\left(\text{Average hours per school visit} + \text{Average travel time between schools}\right) \times \text{Goal for average number of visits per school per month}} = \text{Span of control (principals per ILD)}$$

For more information about network span recommendations, see pp. 36-37 of the Gates Foundation report *Leading for Effective Teaching.*

While this formula is a helpful starting point for setting the expectation that network size will decrease, districts also have to answer important questions in order to estimate the second part of the numerator: "Percentage of schedule outside of central office for school visits." And that includes defining carefully the percentage of time principal supervisors operate within the central office—literally and figuratively—in order to be effective in their role as principal managers and liaisons with central office functions and resources.

[1] Jerald, Craig. "Leading for Effective Teaching: How School Systems Can Support Principal Success." Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012.

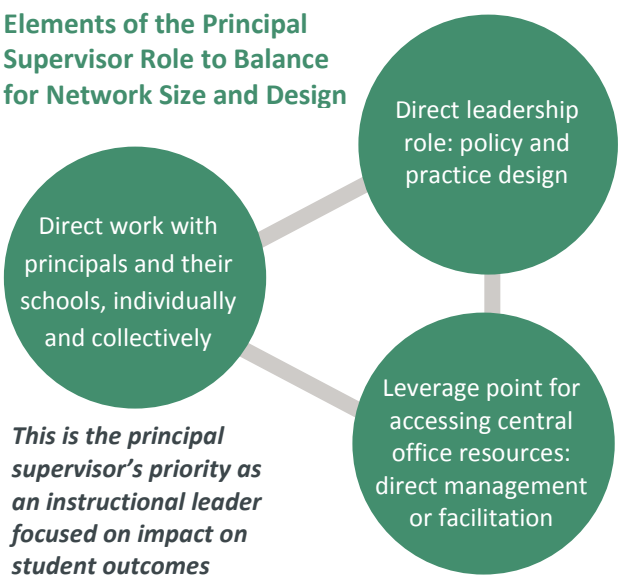
3. Consider central office responsibility implications

As school districts set the span of control for their principal supervisors, they not only need to think about the number of principals directly managed, but also about the range of other central office responsibilities and staff management responsibilities that also fall on principal supervisors. The content and guiding questions in this section of the document and the Principal Supervisor Central Office Role Worksheet provide recommendations and resources for districts to use in clarifying those additional responsibilities. Once this step is complete, districts can return to their span of control modeling tool in step two to confirm whether the span of control is still realistic given the expectations and estimated work hours required for these responsibilities.

Central Office Management and Leadership Responsibilities: At the same time principal supervisors must be primarily focused on direct work with the principals and schools in their network, they should have some aspect of their role that involves informing district-wide policy and planning for implementation. Principal supervisors serve as a crucial connector because they function both in a district leadership role with the ability to engage cabinet-level leadership and maintain real involvement at the district point of service: the school, and even the classroom. Together with the principalship, this role is a fulcrum where policy turns into implementation, and where lessons from implementation are brought back to district decision-makers, resources, and central office functions.

Once districts determine exactly what role principal supervisors will play in informing, understanding, and leading implementation of district-wide initiatives, there are also important considerations for managing the feasibility of that role. Some successful strategies for implementing these decisions include:

- Establishing a regular meeting for policy and practice changes to be brought before the principal supervisor team for input and for information before implementation.
- Managing requests for principal supervisor input by carefully assigning specific advisory roles on district-wide practice to each member of the principal supervisor cohort, so that each individual's contribution is focused but the principal supervisor voice—and that of school leaders—is represented across a wide range of issues.



Resource Management and Engagement: Finally, an important consideration for network design is determining how the network accesses resources. Who else—other than the network principals—will report directly to a principal supervisor? How will the principal supervisor or the principals in their network access additional resources? Will the principal supervisor have a parallel leader who will manage these support resources? Or will these support resources remain part of the central office structure even if affiliated with specific networks or schools?

Supporting principal supervisors in keeping their focus on the critical few things means clarifying (1) where they will be directly involved, (2) where they will facilitate or access engagement by other district personnel or offices, and (3) where they will have a minimal role in order to maintain their focus elsewhere. The support resources that are most closely aligned to instructional priorities and talent development are the ones that principal supervisors will need to have the clearest and most direct access to within the central office. If principal supervisors are engaged in all of the domains below, there is significant risk that non-instructional domains will take precedence.

Domains of Support	Options for Management/Coordination
• **Instructional Coaching and Content Expertise:** Oftentimes within a specific content area (Math or ELA specialist or coordinator, ELL resource, etc.) and positioned as a "coach" for deep intervention in classroom practice as needed. Frequently a front-line resource for district instructional priorities. • **Human Resources:** Resource serving as staffing support for teaching vacancies, within district guidance and process. Also a resource for the principal and principal supervisor for human resource and employee relations questions. • **Facilities and Operations:** Resource for addressing facilities and operational needs, oftentimes coordinating other centralized resources in this area. • **Budget:** Supporting principals and principal supervisors in determining and managing the budget, within district guidance and process. • **Family and Community Engagement:** Supporting schools in building cultures of engagement with families and other school stakeholders in service of student outcomes. • **Principal Coaching and Support:** In districts where the principal supervisor is not serving as the only resource for individualized principal development.	• **Direct report to principal supervisor**: Specialists serve on the network team and are deployed by the principal supervisor against network goals and needs; maintain relationship—perhaps a dotted line reporting structure—with the appropriate central office function for resources, training, and alignment across the district within their domain • **Direct report to central office:** With a dotted line to specific networks and principal supervisors, to ensure customer-service focus on specific schools and facilitate an understanding of specific and ongoing needs. In this structure, it can be helpful for principal supervisors and their networks to meet with their designated network support team as a whole two to three times each year, so that network-specific and school-specific challenges can be addressed across multiple support dimensions. • Specialized central office resource focused on a particular domain or initiative or with a particular area of expertise, **accessed on an as-needed basis** by the principal supervisor as a resource in a particular way.

These factors are part of larger questions about central office design in service of a school-centered organizational design, and considerations for balancing design in these areas include:

- ***Ensuring principals and principal supervisors have access*** to the information, resources, and technical support they need to follow through on their school goals and priorities.
- ***Network-specific alignment:*** Balancing the efficiency and contextualized support that results from assigning specific individuals to support specific networks with the flexibility and district-wide perspective gained by having a centralized support team for critical functions.
- ***Managerial authority but also requirements:*** Considering the management and training requirements that can tip the balance either towards putting resources on a network team or keeping them centrally aligned.

When designing how networks will work with representatives from crucial central office functions, the driving consideration should be the district's theory of action and the aligned strategic priorities—in general, those areas of school support that are most closely aligned with the priorities of principal supervisors. There is an inherent tension between the principal supervisors as a key locus for ensuring consistency in district-wide implementation efforts and their role in differentiating strategy and implementation within a set of schools they know deeply, thus designing network teams and other points of interaction requires prioritization.

Assuming a district theory of action that prioritizes instructional focus for schools and instructional leadership as the driving action for both principals and principal supervisors, we recommend design of both network teams and other connection points along the following lines:

	Direct Reporting Structure Within the Network	Specific Affiliation with Network Team(s) [Dotted Line Reporting]	Central Office Resource on Call
Definition & Rationale	Members of the network "team" reporting directly to the principal supervisor (or, in some cases where network teams are larger, to his/her designee on the team), with the principal supervisor guiding each team member's priorities according to principal and school needs and network-wide priorities. These team members maintain a strong focus on their network schools and support for network-wide strategy, at the same time that they are highly trained and supported by central office functions within their area of specialization. Direct reporting relationships for some resources allow principal supervisors to direct those resources against the principal supervisor's managerial priorities for the district and to back up her plans for supporting principals and schools with specific and immediate support beyond what she can provide on her own.	Central office team members who serve in roles with a school-level interface and support specific functions or processes. Whenever possible, these individuals should be matched to one to two networks with which they will work directly, so that individuals have some opportunity to learn network and school priorities, needs, and context. Regular cross-functional meetings for each network will allow these resources to coordinate their engagement and reinforce a dotted – or matrix – relationship with principal supervisors. At the same time, principal supervisors are spared the significant managerial responsibilities that come from having these resources directly assigned to their team. Principals should be encouraged to go directly to these resources as needed, and central offices should work to ensure that support is efficient and strategic, so that principal and principal supervisor focus remains on domains of instructional leadership.	Some central office resources focus on specific—and relatively infrequent—circumstances or processes. These central office resources should be known to principal supervisors, who may be called in to help principals navigate one-off or infrequent management challenges, but may be specialized enough to provide support as needed across the district.
Example Roles	• Instructional resources (ELA Coach, for example) • Leadership Coaches for principals, in districts where principal supervisors are supported in this function • In some districts with a particularly strong focus on talent management as part of the theory of action, a true human capital strategist may also serve on the team • *(See below for notes on operational facilitators on the team)*	• Finance and budget specialists • Operations and facilities support • Family and community engagement specialists • Student services specialists • *In some cases,* school staffing specialists	• Legal and employee relations specialists

Even as districts move to design principal supervisor roles and network teams that reflect instructional leadership as the overriding priority, some districts have found that having operational capacity on the network team can be a strategy for helping the principal supervisor maintain the focus on instruction. Several districts have done this by creating a direct report position on the network team that coordinates with operational functions to ensure that schools' needs are met without having to raise the questions to the principal supervisor. These network positions are most effective when they are created together with changes in central office functions and culture, so that processes and expectations are streamlined and aligned, and schools have clear lines of accountability and support.

Other districts have created positions that focus specifically on managing around systemic complexities or inefficiencies, designing a network position of "barrier breaker" to serve as a resource for addressing school-level challenges with district-wide offices or processes or creating a deputy role to manage inefficient coordination needs or cumbersome central processes for principal supervisors. These can be important interim step as districts move to align central office functions with the theory of action that supports a focus on effective instructional practice at the school level. We strongly recommend, however, that this serves only as an interim measure, and that districts undertake the challenging work of true alignment between central office functions and school- and network needs, so that systems are working in support of principal and principal supervisor efforts and not against them. Regardless of final decisions about reporting structure and access to principal supervisors and principals, districts should be cautious and thorough in design: clarity in terms of roles and mutual responsibilities is foundational to success in the principal supervisor role—as well as for other central office functions with close connections to networks and schools.

Profiles of Network Design from Districts

New Leaders recommendations for span and structure are based on research as well as discussions with practitioners, both within large districts and from support organizations who work with their principal supervisors and central offices. While most districts are still in the process of building the principal supervisor role, their networks, and central office relationships to schools to best fit district strategy, several districts are far enough along in implementation to serve as helpful models. In general, in order to design the principal supervisor role and the networks they manage to be effective, districts have followed the steps outlined in this overview:

(1) **Shrinking** each principal supervisor's span of control.

(2) **Focusing** principal supervisor responsibilities—and time—on instructional leadership in the schools.

(3) **Organizing** central office functions and network teams to minimize non-instructional responsibilities and barriers to focusing on school-facing work.

District Examples from Practice

Each of the districts listed below have moved to decrease principal supervisors' span of control, to redesign their role to focus on instructional leadership and time in schools, and to reorient central offices' interactions with principal supervisors and their schools. Within these general parameters, they have also built structures and systems with some differences and variances, illustrating the importance of context and specific purpose in the design of the principal supervisor role and their networks.

Here are a few examples of district structures that generally align with our recommendations:

Denver Public Schools

- Network teams in Denver have both an Instructional Superintendent (the principal supervisor) and a Deputy Instructional Superintendent. These two individuals are responsible for a geographically based network. The Instructional Superintendent and his or her deputy each oversee seven to eight schools, and the creation of the deputy role was a key strategy for the district to decrease managerial loads. Although both the Instructional Superintendent and the Deputy Instructional Superintendent coach and evaluate principals, the Instructional Superintendent, as principal supervisor, has some responsibility for all of the schools in the network.
- The district has identified leadership priorities and tasked principal supervisors with focusing primarily on the instructional leadership. According to one Instructional Superintendent interviewed: "Develop effective leaders. That's my whole job. To ensure an effective and intentional leader in every building."
- To facilitate this focus on instructional leadership and talent development, each network has either a Data Partner or School Improvement Partner who reports to the Instructional Superintendent and, in addition to supporting schools, serves as a bridge between the network and central office departments. Having a dedicated person on the team to manage liaison relationships allows the principal supervisor and deputy to focus on instructional leadership in the schools.
- Central office functions are focused on building a customer service, consultant-like mindset. This means that central office teams are focused on being out in schools more often, which builds relationships and helps to ensure that these team members are focused on schools' needs.

Tulsa Public Schools

- In Tulsa, schools are assigned to eight portfolios of seven to eight schools each, organized around a variety of considerations and characteristics. This represents a deliberate decrease in the span of control for the Instructional Leadership Directors (principal supervisors) from earlier models, and this was the driving factor in the redesign, ensuring that principals have more direct contact with their supervisors. The principal supervisors serve as advocates at central office for each of the schools.
- Instructional Leadership Directors report up through the Deputy Superintendent and focus primarily on academics and accountability; other support structures are organized under a separate cabinet-level function led by the Chief of Staff.
- Central office leadership and staff meet together with individual principals and their Instructional Leadership Directors to set goals, identify needs, and solve problems holistically. Networks have affiliated support staff, such as a Business Partner and a Human Resources Partner, but these team members report directly to their respective department. Other support functions are assigned to specific schools as part of a "service portfolio."

Cleveland Public Schools

- Cleveland has taken significant steps to decrease the span of control for its principal supervisors, in order to recast their role as focused on school-level engagement and principal development, especially as instructional leaders. By increasing the number of principal supervisors, Cleveland has gone from a ratio of one principal supervisor for 23 schools to having each principal supervisor manage between 10 to 17 schools, and the variability in network size reflects differences in the support needs of schools and the strengths and tenure of their principals.
- Principal supervisors have been identified from within the internal leadership ranks and outside hires have been brought in to fill out the initial cohort in the redesigned role; the district has invested significant resources in supporting these principal supervisors through monthly community of practice meetings and school visits to build a shared understanding of the role, strong school practices, and instructional leadership expectations. District leadership has continued to refine the role and related systems and processes—including relationships with central office functions—in response to feedback from the principal supervisors themselves.
- Cleveland is in the process of realigning and redesigning roles in the central office to align responsibilities to school-focused support. As a first step, Cleveland established an operational role on the network teams to serve as a "barrier breaker," providing principal supervisors with a team member who can serve as a mediator for schools with challenges that require central office attention. After some redesign of central functions, Cleveland moved to budget and human resources specialists assigned to specific networks and reporting into their central office functions.

Taking a Different Approach

In some cases school districts have faced the same challenges and opportunities for the principal supervisor role but have organized the position, networks, and central office functions very differently. This has been a response to conditions on the ground, including the specific strengths of the principal supervisor team members and the status of central office redesign.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools

- Networks in Charlotte—led by Community Superintendents—vary in size, but many on the larger side, with as many as 31 schools. This span is made manageable by introducing the role of Executive Director into each network team. These Executive Directors serve as deputies, and they can also observe principals and schools and provide support to them, although all formal managerial authority remains with the Community Superintendents.
- Content specialists and a human resource specialist on each network team further augment the support resources Community Superintendents can access for the schools they lead.
- While Community Superintendents can work to leverage central office functions on behalf of their schools, in many cases we learned that central offices still work "around" the Community Superintendents and their networks.

Hillsborough County Public Schools

- The eight principal supervisors in Hillsborough, called Area Leadership Directors, have a larger span, with each managing approximately 25 schools. One strategy for sustaining this larger network is to assign a principal coach to each network, so that Area Leadership Directors have an additional resource for developing the principals they manage, evaluate, and support.
- Each Area Leadership Director coordinates an Area Leadership Team, comprised of staff from different central office divisions. Rather than decreasing span of control by hiring more principal supervisors, HPS's strategy is to build a support team comprised of staff from different central office divisions around each principal supervisor. The Area Leadership Director can deploy the resources as he or she sees fit. This team structure serves to better align district services to schools and principals, and to reduce duplication of effort.
- Each Area Leadership Team meets weekly to synchronize their work and share observations from school visits. Further, each Area Leadership Team has a Coordinator, whose primary responsibility is to interact with central office departments.

4. Determine network structure prioritization

Together with determining principal supervisor role parameters and establishing a target span for the networks, districts can begin to design the networks' composition, determining which schools are grouped together under each principal supervisor. Designing networks requires districts to balance a number of considerations to ensure feasibility. We recommend that districts determine both an overriding design principle and then balance other considerations to maximize alignment to district priorities as well as feasibility. The Network Design and Implications Template, as well as the content in this section and section five, will help districts identify the specific schools for each network and test the implications of those selections.

First Tier Decision: The Overall Architecture of the Networks

The first design consideration districts must weigh is whether to organize networks around schools with similar grade level bands or schools in aligned feeder patterns. These are mutually exclusive design considerations, and most districts have a strong perspective on how to approach horizontal (grade-level) versus vertical (feeder pattern) alignment.

Grade level bands are the most frequent approach to determining the overall architecture of networks and the one we recommend. This approach supports clustering of schools that frequently share a number of other characteristics. Because the fundamental structure, context, and needs of elementary schools are so different from middle and high schools, networks that take grade level configurations into consideration allow principal supervisors to specialize their management within a school type matched to their expertise. Schools with the same grade-level structures frequently face similar instructional and operational opportunities and challenges. In most cases, we recommend that districts take this as a first-order design principle. The alternative is that networks can be organized primarily to reflect **feeder patterns**, a structure that often matches existing formal or informal "networks" within the district. Grouping schools by feeder patterns allows principal supervisors to encourage vertical alignment among schools at the elementary, middle and high school levels, taking a holistic look at the strategies and cumulative results for student preparation and, ultimately, readiness for college and career. Feeder pattern grouping can be helpful in facilitating community engagement, if that is an important part of the principal supervisor's role.

Grade Level	Feeder Pattern
Key Benefits: ● Clustering schools with those having the same grade levels allows principal supervisors to tailor their support and network priorities to the specific instructional strategies and content that will impact student outcomes at that level. ● Principal Supervisors can become deep experts on the instructional expectations of their focal schools and on building capacity in those areas. Schools with the same grade levels often have other similarities (student body and faculty size, facilities realities, etc.) that can make this a way to allow principal supervisors to achieve efficiencies in their management. ● Principal supervisors have demonstrated success as principals themselves and can better translate their experience to guidance within the network if schools have the same grade levels. **Potential Issues to Address:** ● Potential for inequitable caseloads for principal supervisors, especially if there is no corresponding differentiation of the network size, because elementary school management can often be less complex than upper school support. ● This can perpetuate disconnects between schools at different grade levels, if this is a challenge for the district. ● There is the potential for geographic dispersion. ● There is the potential that, within the network schools, needs for support, resources available, and instructional models will differ greatly.	**Key Benefits:** ● Grouping schools by feeder patterns allows principal supervisors to encourage vertical alignment among schools at the elementary, middle and high school levels, taking a holistic look at the strategies and cumulative results for student preparation and, ultimately, readiness for college and career. ● Feeder patterns also often represent other formal and informal affiliations among schools. ● Feeder pattern grouping can be helpful in facilitating community engagement, if that is an important part of the principal supervisor's role. **Potential Issues to Address:** ● Potential for inequitable caseloads for principal supervisors if more challenging schools are clustered in specific feeder patterns, as is often the case. ● Feeder patterns may be too complex or weak to be a meaningful consideration for network design. ● Principal supervisors must have a broad knowledgebase of school practices in order to effectively manage schools across the PreK-12 continuum.

Grade Level	Feeder Pattern
Questions to Consider: ● Is the district focused on strategies specifically targeted to elementary, middle, or high schools? ● Is there a strong focus on grade-level content rigor and standards as a lever for district improvement? ● Is there historical precedent for grouping schools together as elementary, middle or high school? ● Has the district identified a specific type of school (for example, middle schools and preparing students for high school readiness) as representing a particular challenge or opportunity?	**Questions to Consider:** ● Is there an explicit district focus on vertical alignment among schools? ● Has the district prioritized transition points between elementary and middle or middle and high schools as specific barriers to student outcomes? ● Is there historical precedence for this type of alignment or helpful informal relationships among schools in the same feeder patterns that could be reflected in the network design?

"Carve-Outs" and a note about Organizing around Shared Needs

Even as a primary design approach is determined, districts may have strong reasons to "carve out" a specific subset of schools to put in a specific network structure. Some districts have organized a subset of their networks around particular shared needs across schools, including distinctions about governance in an earned-autonomy model, support in cases of a strategic focus of resources and management strategies on underperforming schools, or needs of themed schools with distinct curricular models or external partnerships that drive affiliation. Some districts will create a network that includes schools that serve similar populations in order to meet the student and community's specific needs. Grouping schools in this way allows principal supervisors to focus their leadership on schools with a specific—and shared—set of priorities, constraints, and/or governance and management considerations. In situations where schools share an engaged partner organization supporting their model, grouping similar schools can streamline management and support alignment.

In cases where districts organize *all* of their networks around specific school models as the overarching design principle—as opposed to carving out a small subset—this is usually driven by a theory of action that seeks a wide diversity of school models as a primary strategy for school improvement. In many of these cases, principals have a role in choosing the network with which they affiliate. While this model matches the district theory of action in these cases, for most districts, their theory of action includes district-wide priorities and strategies, and there is a greater weight on continuity across schools and alignment of resources. This means an important element of the network structure is its role supporting consistent and high-quality implementation city-wide. For that reason, we recommend that school affiliation by performance level, instructional model, or other factors should not, in most cases, be a consideration across the entire district but better serves as a rationale for specialization of one or two networks.

5. Test strawman network designs

Once districts have determined the overarching principle for network design—whether grade-level grouping or feeder pattern structures—and identified any specific network "carve-outs," there are other considerations that represent a second tier of design criteria. Depending on the size of the district, these criteria may be ways to test the implications of networks designed based on the primary design considerations or—where the number of schools to group in networks is particularly large—they may serve as additional design criteria to that will further inform networks. These factors have to be weighed for their relative importance and then tested in practice through the creation of "strawman" network structures that can be reviewed for feasibility.

These include **Student Outcomes and School Performance Levels** and **Geographic Considerations**, as described in the following table:

Student Outcomes and School Performance Levels: Homogeneous Networks *(Creating networks that group schools with similar performance profiles)*	**Student Outcomes and School Performance Levels: Heterogeneous Networks** *(Creating networks with schools at a range of performance levels)*	**Geographic Networks**
Key Benefits: ● This design principle can be particularly attractive where specific resources, supports, and expectations are directed at schools based on tiering their performance. Principal supervisors can share best practices and facilitate connections efficiently across a network facing similar challenges in raising student achievement outcomes. ● Research has shown that principals need to make different leadership moves to address schools at various levels of functionality, and a principal supervisor who is familiar with best practice strategies for a school at a specific level can tailor their support to principals in that way. ● This structure can facilitate support and learning among principals in that network and allow the principal supervisors to advocate for specific policies or resources to the central office. ● Oftentimes, this consideration is especially important for schools in turnaround or lowest-performing designations, where the level of district engagement in management—but also resources—can be very distinct. For this reason, this consideration often drives a specific "carve-out" network for the lowest-performing schools, rather than broader design considerations. **Issues to Address:** ● Unless assignment to a tier of underperforming schools is accompanied by a lower caseload for the principal supervisor, there is the possibility that principal supervisors will not have equitable roles. ● This design limits engagement and learning between higher-performing principals and their developing peers. **Questions to Consider:** ● Is there a district strategy to focus resources on low-performing schools to reflect in network design? ● Does the district have a distinct management strategy for low-performing schools (ex. limits on autonomy) that should be reflected in network design?	**Key Benefits:** ● Networks with schools that include a diverse set of performance levels, strengths, and challenges provide learning opportunities and a wide range of examples of effective practices. ● Principal supervisors can benefit from managing schools with a broad range of needs and challenges: it allows them to differentiate their support and helps ensure "fair" managerial loads across the principal supervisor corps. **Issues to Address:** ● Principal supervisors may be drawn into "fire-fighter" mode, focusing their time and energy—and that of the network resources—on the highest-need principals and schools while neglecting other, growing schools. **Questions to Consider:** ● Are there reasons to facilitate learning across diverse schools within the district? ● How important is it to "balance" the challenges of schools within each network to ensure equitable managerial loads for principal supervisors?	**Key Benefits:** ● Considering geography leads to networks that enable principal supervisor engagement at the schools. A network that is not too geographically dispersed facilitates frequent school visits, an important part of the principal supervisor expectations because it is a lever for their impact and success. This also makes cross-network learning more efficient and probable. ● Geography can also be a proxy for other similarities among schools: communities served or local resources available. Most often, geography is an effective secondary consideration. Districts should prioritize other factors and then look at geographic implications. **Issues to Address:** ● This consideration is most frequently not reflective of district priorities or differentiation among schools along meaningful distinctions. **Questions to Consider:** ● How important are logistical considerations in network design? How much does a dispersed network impact things like travel time? ● Is there historical precedent for this consideration? Are there existing relationships among nearby schools?

When weighing these considerations, districts will find it helpful to apply these priorities as design principles to create two to three strawman network designs, and then examine those potential structures for alignment, feasibility, and implicit challenges. In addition to reflecting the district's perspective and relative prioritization of the above considerations, the final and best model may be a hybrid of these priorities, reflecting real world implementation realities. For this reason, proof-testing possible designs is an important step before confirming the final structure. In general, it is important to review network options for implications:

- **Unintended impacts on another priority**. For example, grouping by school performance levels might lead to networks that are so geographically dispersed that school visits become inefficient and impractical. This is why testing out models in practice—and against a map—is so important!
- **Considerations of "fairness"** across the principal supervisor corps based on variability within the networks in any of the criteria listed above. In some ways, differentials in the difficulty level of a network can be a support for principal supervisor differentiation. For example, someone new to the role or the district should NOT start out managing the most "difficult" network. At the same time, principal supervisors will be interested in the level of fairness across the network assignments, particularly as their performance is measured against the same bar and/or if their support is the same.

As network designs are tested, districts also have to ensure that the networks represent a feasible managerial load for the principal supervisors, allowing them to engage deeply in school-facing work with principals. If a specific network in the design is considered too challenging because of the particular composition of the schools (low-performing schools, high schools, complex external partnerships, *etc.*), the district has several options to address this:

- Decrease the size of the network, reducing the number of schools so that principal supervisors can invest deeply in a smaller number of principals and schools with particular challenges.
- Adjust the network composition, so that challenging schools are balanced in the portfolio with stronger principals or more stable schools, so that principals can differentiate their support.
- Increase the support offered to the network by augmenting the network team with additional support staff to be deployed by the principal supervisor, either through direct team assignment or a dotted-line affiliation. (It's important to note that if this is the strategy, districts need to ensure that the additional support doesn't itself make the managerial load of the principal supervisor impossible.)

A note in Principal/Stakeholder role in Network Design

In general, it can be helpful to inform or consult with some crucial stakeholder groups, including sitting principals, on network design during the process. Some districts have even given principals some agency in informing the networks to which they are assigned. This is especially relevant if there is strong theory of action from the district that this is crucial to the principal role and if schools have clear themes or thematic groupings or principals can opt in to certain kinds of focus areas and supports. For implementation to be successful, districts should consider a joint agreement between district and school around instructional needs and priorities matched to what a particular network can provide. At the same time, district leadership should consider the implications of principal choice on the explicit management role of principal supervisors who will be accountable for the performance of the principals who chose them.

Applying these concepts

Once a network structure has been designed and the district leadership has answered the critical questions of governance and network design, it is important to note that districts often approach change in this area as a multi-year process, with change over time ultimately resulting in the optimal structure. Moving to a new network structure is fundamentally a change management exercise that requires transitioning critical team members, operational flows, and resources from the current systems for managing schools' performance and connecting schools to resources and expectations in a new structure.

Network design often comes hand-in-glove with assigning specific principal supervisors to those networks, and at times, the profile of a particular principal supervisor can even inform the final composition of a network. Principal supervisors can be matched based on their leadership experience, leading a network of the type of schools that they led as a principal. We recommend that the principal supervisor hiring process (covered elsewhere) be designed in such a way that it yields information about a new principal supervisor's experience, skills, and disposition and supports the art of the match.

Districts should also consider how long to leave specific network structures in place. There are significant benefits to committing to leave networks in place for at least two years. This allows principal supervisors to invest deeply in knowing their specific schools and facilitates meaningful coaching relationships between principal supervisors and their principals, as well as learning communities across principals in a network.

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New Leaders

Principal Supervisor Network Design Tool #1: District Vision and Context

For use as part of a facilitated discussion to ensure shared understanding of the strategic objectives of the network redesign and the current state.

Theory of Action and Strategic Alignment for the Networks

District Theory of Action and Implications for the Principal Supervisor's Priorities	Principal's Role in Executing Priorities and Expectations for School-Level Change	Potential Implications for Principal Supervisor Management and Network Design
Ex. Instructional leadership and support for principal's instructional priorities, such as Common Core implementation as a lever for increased rigor.	*Ex. Principal as lead implementer of Common Core curricula, through levers of school leadership tea engagement and prioritization in school-based professional development plan.*	*Ex. Principal supervisor has sign-off on network professional development plans; school visits focus on checking implementation in practice.* *Network design may need to consider exempt schools or those with special partnerships supporting implementation.*

Current State: Profile of a Principal Supervisor Today

Use this portion of the tool as a graphic organizer to capture team thoughts or break into small groups to create first responses to each question and then build on those with feedback and additional input from the rest of the team to build a collective profile of a principal supervisor in your district today.

1. What are the key responsibilities of the principal supervisor today?	3. What is the span of control for principal supervisors? How are the schools in their management portfolio determined?	5. How do principal supervisors inform the creation of district policy and processes? How do they receive the information and resources they need to manage implementation of these policies and processes?
2. How do principal supervisors spend most of their time?	4. Is the principal supervisor role conceived of and messaged as one of (1) support, (2) accountability, (3) or both, to principals, peers, and central office staff?	6. What are all the different ways (formal and informal) that principal supervisors access resources for the schools they manage?

Future State: Profile of a Principal Supervisor As Designed

This portion of the tool should capture a summary of decisions made throughout the network design process, supported by the other tools and district processes.

1. What will the key responsibilities of the principal supervisor be?	3. What will be the span of control for principal supervisors? How are the schools in their management portfolio determined?	5. How do principal supervisors inform the creation of district policy and processes? How do they receive the information and resources they need to manage implementation of these policies and processes?
2. How should principal supervisors spend most of their time?	**4. Is the principal supervisor role conceived of and messaged as one of (1) support, (2) accountability, (3) or both, to principals, peers, and central office staff?**	**6. What are all the different ways (formal and informal) that principal supervisors access resources for the schools they manage?**

Deltas: Theory of Action and Today's Principal Supervisor Profile

Once you've captured the key elements of the current principal supervisor role and their portfolio of schools, as well as the desired future state, capture implications for your strategic direction based on the district strategic priorities and theory of action:

Deltas: What are the biggest gaps between the future requirements and the current state?	**Enablers:** Where are the places of alignment or examples of 'low hanging fruit' for matching the current and future state?	**Barriers:** Where are the current realities and future expectations furthest apart? What are going to be the hardest changes, and why?

New Leaders

Template: Network Design and Implications Template

The network design process will be iterative and requires the design team to balance considerations. This tool guides the design team through:

Step 1: Exploring district priorities and context together with the design criteria

Step 2: Choosing the overarching design principle and defining success metrics for other design considerations

Step 3: Creating strawman networks

Step 4: Proof testing network designs for alignment to strategic priorities and feasibility

Step 1: District Priorities and Network Design Criteria

The purpose of this first exercise is to allow the network design team to explore each of the design criteria in the context of both the current state and the future design of the principal supervisor's role. Refer to the *Design and Context Map* (Tool 1) your team has already created to capture the district priorities and their implications for principal supervisors and their networks. Spend in group discussion to determine potential considerations and questions related to each of the design criteria as they apply to your district priorities and their implications. For additional context for the considerations listed here, see *Network Design Guidance*, pp. 11-14, or the summary chart of considerations for network design in the Appendix of this document.

Design Criteria	**District Priorities: Implications for Principal Supervisor Focus and Network Design** ***Referring to Tool #1 (Design and Context Map), capture implications of the plan in organizing the schools according to each consideration. For guiding questions for each criteria, refer to the charts in the appendix.***	
	Current State (Page 2 of Tool 1): What do we need to consider about the current state of school groupings in weighing the impact and feasibility of future network designs based on each of the design criteria listed below?	Future State: What do we need to consider about our plans for the district and for the principal supervisor role in weighing the impact and feasibility of future network designs based on each of the design criteria listed below?
First Tier: Overarching Design Principles		
Grade Level		
Feeder Patterns		
"Carve-Out" Considerations *(any small number of schools that require special grouping outside of grade-level or feeder-pattern structure)*		
Second Tier: Further Design Considerations		
Student Outcomes + Performance Levels (Homogeneous or Heterogeneous Groupings)		
Geographic Networks		
Other, district-specific criterion as applicable		

Step 2: Choosing the Overarching Design Principle and Defining Success for Other Design Considerations

Based on the considerations above, districts should choose an overarching design principle for networks: will they be organized based on grade-level bands or feeder patterns? Questions to consider include:

Tier 1: Overarching Design Principles

Grade Level Bands	Feeder Patterns
• Is the district focused on strategies specifically focused on elementary, middle, or high schools? • Is there a strong focus on grade-level-specific content rigor and standards as a lever for district improvement? • Is there historical precedent for grouping schools together as elementary, middle or high schools? • Has the district identified a specific type of school (for example, middle schools and preparing students for high school readiness) as representing a particular challenge—or opportunity?	• Is there an explicit district focus on vertical alignment among schools? • Has the district prioritized transition points between elementary and middle or middle and high schools as specific barriers to student outcomes? • Is there historical precedence for this type of alignment or helpful informal relationships among schools in the same feeder patterns that could be reflected in the network design?

In general, districts will see strong reasons to pursue one or the other of these overarching design principles, and the majority of districts will move forward with networks organized around grade-level bands.

Once the first tier direction is determined, other criteria will be factored in to further inform network structure design. These other considerations, weighed and prioritized, also become important means for testing possible network structures: for example, if we prioritize establishing networks by clustering schools with those that have the same grade levels, what are the implications for variability of school performance and student outcomes across the networks? Are the networks manageable geographically, or are they too widely disbursed across the city? What if we sorted first by grade level and then geographic proximity?

Tier 2: Additional Design Criteria and other Considerations

Student Outcomes and School Performance Levels: Homogeneous Networks *(Creating networks that group schools with similar performance profiles)*	**Student Outcomes and School Performance Levels: Heterogeneous Networks** *(Creating networks that deliberately include schools at a range of performance levels)*	**Geographic Proximity**
Questions to Consider: • Is there a district strategy to focus resources on low-performing schools which should be reflected in network design? • Does the district have a distinct management strategy for low-performing schools (ex. limits on autonomy) that should be reflected in network design? • How should this criterion be evaluated in the form of 1-2 metrics that can be determined about potential networks modeled in the strawman analysis?	Questions to Consider: • Are there reasons to facilitate learning across diverse schools within the district? • How important is it to "balance" the challenges of schools within each network to ensure equitable managerial loads for principal supervisors?	Questions to Consider: • How important are logistical considerations in network design? How much does a dispersed network impact things like travel time? • Is there historical precedent for this consideration? Are there existing informal or formal relationships among nearby schools?
Example metrics if student outcomes and school performance is a secondary consideration: • Percentage of networks where no more than XX% of the schools are in the lowest-performing category and at least XX% are in the highest • Percentage of networks where at least XX% showed positive gains (defined as XXXX) in student outcomes last year		Example metric if geographic alignment is a secondary consideration: • Percentage of networks with a span of farthest distance between schools that is no more than X miles

Step 3: Creating Strawman Network Designs

Once the design criteria have been weighed and the design team has determined metrics for each, the district should create two to three potential network designs to test for feasibility and alignment to district priorities. For each model, the district design team should analyze the resulting implications for each design criteria by the metrics defined above. These strawman network designs will be tested for both their alignment to district priorities and for the feasibility of their implementation.

The strawman process is crucial when network design criteria are created by collective agreement and in alignment with district priorities, but there are a few other scenarios where this process of explicit design, testing assumptions, and illuminating implications may be helpful. For example, if there is a lack of consensus around the design criteria, creating diverse scenarios and examining its real world implications for other considerations may help build consensus, or at least understanding, to advance decision-making. Or, if a particular stakeholder group is especially invested in the status quo or in another specific design priority, testing the implications of a design built around these factors may illuminate the challenges and support the rationale for moving in a new or different direction.

Side-by-Side Comparison of Strawman Network Designs

Criteria for Consideration	Guiding Question and Metric(s)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Student outcomes and performance levels	Guiding Question and Metric definition	%age of networks meeting metric	%age of networks meeting metric	%age of networks meeting metric
Geographic considerations	Guiding Question and Metric definition	%age of networks meeting metric	%age of networks meeting metric	%age of networks meeting metric
Varying performance levels across networks	**What are the implications of this model for maintaining equity in role demands across the principal supervisor corps?** Metric: Percent of networks where no more than 50% of schools are at the lowest performance level and at least 10% are at the highest Metric: Percent of networks where 10% or more of the schools are demonstrating positive achievement gains (as defined in district context)	%age of networks meeting metric	%age of networks meeting metric	%age of networks meeting metric
Other	Guiding Question and Metric definition	%age of networks meeting metric	%age of networks meeting metric	%age of networks meeting metric
Other	Guiding Question and Metric definition	%age of networks meeting metric	%age of networks meeting metric	%age of networks meeting metric

Step 4: Proof-testing network designs for alignment to strategic priorities and feasibility

Proof testing possible designs is an important step before confirming the final structure. In general, it is important to review network options for implications:

- **Unintended impacts on another priority**. For example, grouping by school performance levels might lead to networks that are so geographically dispersed that school visits become inefficient and impractical. This is why testing out models in practice—and against a map—is so important!
- **Considerations of "fairness"** across the principal supervisor corps based on variability within the networks in any of the criteria listed above. In some ways, differences in the difficulty level of a network can support differentiation of principal supervisor responsibilities. For example, someone new to the role or the district should not start out managing the most "difficult" network. At the same time, principal supervisors will be interested in the level of fairness across the network assignments, particularly if their performance is measured against the same bar and/or if their support is the same.

1. Network Design Overall: Alignment and Feasibility

After designing strawman network structures and examining the implications of each model, plot each option for (1) alignment to strategic priorities and (2) ease of implementation and weigh the results before making a decision on an overarching design. Alignment considerations are captured in the metrics for each potential model and in the answers to the questions examined for each design criteria. Feasibility considerations include variability in the metrics across the networks (for example, do some networks represent a significantly smaller geographic area than others?), significance of the differences between the proposed model and the current state, and political considerations.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities High → Low		
	Ease of Implementation Low → High	

2. Options for Adjusting Models and Matching Networks to Principal Supervisors

As network designs are tested, districts also have to ensure that the networks represent a feasible managerial load for the principal supervisors, allowing them to engage deeply in school-facing work with principals. If a specific network in the design is considered too challenging because of the particular composition of the schools (low-performing schools, high schools, complex external partnerships, *etc.*), the district has several options to address this:

- **Decrease the size of the network**, reducing the number of schools so that principal supervisors can invest deeply in a smaller number of principals and schools with particular challenges.
- **Adjust the network composition**, so that challenging schools are balanced in the portfolio with stronger principals or more stable schools, so that principals can differentiate their support.
- **Increase the support offered** to the network by augmenting the network team with additional support staff to be deployed by the principal supervisor, either through direct team assignment or a dotted-line affiliation. (It's important to note that if this is the strategy, districts need to ensure that the additional support doesn't itself make the managerial load of the principal supervisor impossible.)

The final network design also has to match the portfolio of principal supervisors the district has—or plans to hire—so that each network, with its specific makeup of schools and support needs, has the leadership that it requires to ensure principals and schools are adequately managed and supported. If the principal supervisor cohort is largely in place as network design is completed, it may be important to the district leadership to at least tentatively explore the implications of matching specific networks to actual principal supervisors in a structure similar to the one below:

Network	**Network Profile:** *School types and support needs*	**Principal Supervisor**	**Principal Supervisor Profile:** *Strengths and experience, as well as areas of growth*	**Strength of Match** *and potential areas of needed additional support for the principal supervisor or the network*
Network 1				
Network 2				
Network 3				
Network 4				

Appendix: Summary Chart of Considerations for Network Design

First Tier Design Criteria

Grade Level	Feeder Pattern
Key benefits: • Clustering schools with those having the same grade levels allows principal supervisors to tailor their support and network priorities to the specific instructional strategies and content that will impact student outcomes at that level. • Principal supervisors can become deep experts on the instructional expectations of their focal schools and on building capacity in those areas. Schools with the same grade levels often have other similarities (student body and faculty size, facilities realities, etc.) that can make this a way to allow principal supervisors to achieve efficiencies in their management. • Principal supervisors have demonstrated success as principals themselves and can better translate their experience to guidance within the network if schools have the same grade levels. Potential issues to address: • Potential for inequitable caseloads for principal supervisors, especially if there is no corresponding differentiation of the network size, because elementary school management can often be less complex than upper school support. • This can perpetuate disconnects between schools at different grade levels, if this is a challenge for the district. • There is the potential for geographic dispersion. • There is the potential that, within the network schools, needs for support, resources available, and instructional models will differ greatly.	Key benefits: • Grouping schools by feeder patterns allows principal supervisors to encourage vertical alignment among schools at the elementary, middle and high school levels, taking a holistic look at the strategies and cumulative results for student preparation and, ultimately, readiness for college and career. • Feeder patterns also often represent other formal and informal affiliations among schools. • Feeder pattern grouping can be helpful in facilitating community engagement, if that is an important part of the principal supervisor's role. Potential issues to address: • Potential for inequitable caseloads for principal supervisors if more challenging schools are clustered in specific feeder patterns, as is often the case. • Feeder patterns may be too complex or weak to be a meaningful consideration for network design. • Principal supervisors must have a broad knowledgebase of school practices in order to effectively manage schools across the PreK-12 continuum.
Questions to consider: • Is the district focused on strategies specifically focused on elementary, middle, or high schools? • Is there a strong focus on grade-level-specific content rigor and standards as a lever for district improvement? • Is there historical precedent for grouping schools together as elementary, middle or high school? • Has the district identified a specific type of schools (for example, middle schools and preparing students for high school readiness) as representing a particular challenge—or opportunity?	Questions to consider: • Is there an explicit district focus on vertical alignment among schools? • Has the district prioritized transition points between elementary and middle or middle and high schools as specific barriers to student outcomes? • Is there historical precedence for this type of alignment or helpful informal relationships among schools in the same feeder patterns that could be reflected in the network design?

Additional Design Criteria and Considerations

Student Outcomes and School Performance Levels: Homogeneous Networks *(Creating networks that group schools with similar performance profiles)*	**Student Outcomes and School Performance Levels: Heterogeneous Networks** *(Creating networks that deliberately include schools at a range of performance levels)*	**Geographic Networks**
Key benefits: • This design principle can be particularly attractive where specific resources, supports, and expectations are directed at schools based on tiering their performance. Principal supervisors can share best practices and facilitate resource connections in an efficient way across a network with similar performance levels which are facing similar challenges in raising student achievement outcomes. • Research has shown that principals need to make different leadership moves to address schools at various levels of functionality, and a principal supervisor who is familiar with best practice strategies for a school at a specific level can tailor their support to principals in that way. • This structure can facilitate support and learning among principals in that network and allow the principal supervisors to advocate for specific policies or resources to the central office. • Often times, this consideration is especially important for schools in turnaround or lowest-performing designations, where the level of district engagement in management—but also resources—can be very distinct. Issues to address: • Unless assignment to a tier of underperforming schools is accompanied by a lower caseload for the principal supervisor, there is the possibility that principal supervisors will not have equitable roles. • This design limits engagement and learning between higher-performing principals and schools and their developing peers.	Key benefits: • Networks with schools that include a diverse set of performance levels, strengths, and challenges provide learning opportunities and a wide range of examples of effective practices. • Principal supervisors can benefit from managing schools with a broad range of needs and challenges, allowing them to differentiate their support and helping ensure "fair" managerial loads across the principal supervisor corps. Issues to address: • Principal supervisors may be drawn into "fire-fighter" mode, focusing their time and energy—and that of the network resources—on the highest-need principals and schools while neglecting other, growing schools.	Key benefits: • Taking into account geography results in networks that enable principal supervisor engagement at the schools. A network that is not too geographically dispersed facilitates frequent school visits, an important part of principal supervisor responsibilities because they are a lever for impact and success. This also makes cross-network learning more efficient and possible as well. • Geography can also be a proxy for other similarities among schools: communities served or local resources available. Most often, geography is an effective secondary consideration. Districts should prioritize other factors and then look at geographic implications Issues to address: • This consideration is most frequently not reflective of district priorities or differentiation among schools along meaningful distinctions.
Questions to consider: • Is there a district strategy to focus resources on low-performing schools which should be reflected in network design? • Does the district have a distinct management strategy for low-performing schools (ex. limits on autonomy) that should be reflected in network design? • How should this criterion be evaluated in the form of one to two metrics that can be determined about potential networks modeled in the strawman analysis?	Questions to consider: • Are there reasons to facilitate learning across diverse schools within the district? • How important is it to "balance" the challenges of schools within each network to ensure equitable managerial loads for principal supervisors?	Questions to consider: • How important are logistical considerations in network design? How much does a dispersed network impact things like travel time? • Is there historical precedent for this consideration? Are there existing informal or formal relationships among nearby schools?

New Leaders

Principal Supervisor: Central Office Roles and Connections

Where will principal supervisors be called to exercise their leadership in the central office domain?

Strategic Priorities (from Tool #1, Context Map)	**Role for Principal Supervisors in Policy, Practice, and Process formation**	**Role for Principal Supervisors as Pivotal Managers for Implementation** of These Priorities (*understanding priorities, expectations and leadership messages, and following through on implementation*)
	Estimated Hours/Week and Percentage of Principal Supervisor time: Click here to enter text.	Estimated Hours/Week and Percentage of Principal Supervisor time: Click here to enter text.

How will principals and schools access resources throughout the district, and what will the principal supervisor's role be in that process?

Domain for Support	Priorities for the Upcoming Year	Delivery Method for Support (*personnel and their reporting structure*)	Role for Principal Supervisor	Estimated Hours/Month for Principal Supervisor; % of Principal Supervisor's time
Instructional coaching and content expertise: Often within a specific content area (Math or ELA specialist or coordinator, ELL resource, etc.) and positioned as a "coach" for deep intervention in classroom practice as needed. Frequently a front-line resource for district instructional priorities.				
Human Resources: Resource serving as staffing support for teaching vacancies, within district guidance and process. Also a resource for the principal and principal supervisor for human resource and employee relations questions.				
Facilities and Operations: Resource for addressing facilities and operational needs, often coordinating other centralized resources in this area.				
Budget: Supporting principals and principal supervisors in determining and managing the budget, within district guidance and process.				
Family and Community Engagement: Supporting schools in building cultures of engagement with families and other school stakeholders in service of student outcomes.				
Principal coaching and support: In districts where the principal supervisor is not serving as the only resource for individualized principal development.				