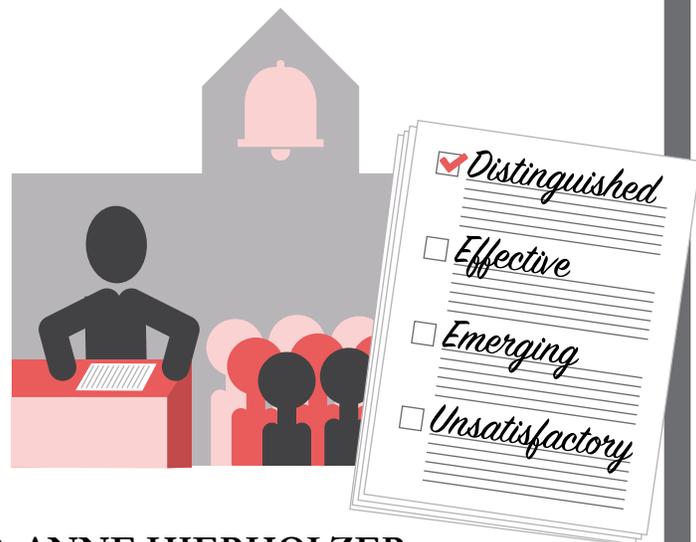


Do Principal Evaluation Scores Predict School Achievement Results?



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NOVEMBER 2015

What was the purpose of this study?

Every year, principals in Mississippi are evaluated using the Mississippi Principal Evaluation System (MPES) to determine how well they are leading their school and improving student achievement. In this study, we sought to understand the relationship between principals' MPES results and schoolwide student outcomes. More specifically, we wanted to know if principal evaluations accurately predict schools' accountability ratings.

This study attempted to address four main questions:

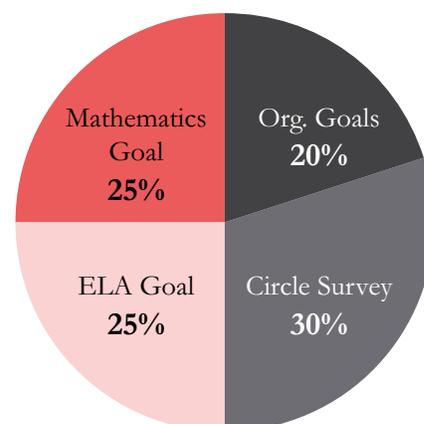
1. What is the relationship between principals' evaluation scores and schoolwide student outcomes? Do students in schools with highly-rated principals have higher levels of achievement?
2. How does the rigor of the goals set by principals relate to their evaluation scores? Do principals who set ambitious goals achieve them more often than principals who set less ambitious goals?
3. What is the relationship between a principal's survey ratings and schoolwide student outcomes? As part of their yearly evaluation, principals rate themselves and are rated by their staff and supervisors through surveys. Do principals who are rated more highly on these surveys achieve better schoolwide student outcomes?
4. What characteristics do Mississippi's best-performing schools and principals have in common?

How are principals evaluated in Mississippi?

The MPES is composed of three metrics:

1. Student achievement in mathematics and English/language arts (ELA). Goals for improvement in both areas are set by the principals, in consultation with their supervisors.
2. Progress toward school goals, with one goal measuring student progress toward academic improvement and the other goal addressing some other area in need of improvement, such as attendance or discipline. These goals also are set by the principals, in consultation with their supervisors.

Components and Corresponding Weights of MPES Final Scores



3. Surveys rating the principal's performance from teachers, supervisors, and the principals themselves. Surveys are developed, administered, and reported to supervisors by a third party to ensure anonymity of responses.

Results from all these sources are self-reported to the Mississippi Department of Education and combined to give the principal a final MPES score. Scores are expressed as 1 (Unsatisfactory), 2 (Emerging), 3 (Effective), or 4 (Distinguished).

It is important to note that principals set, report, and quantify their own goals, in consultation with their supervisors. Because principals have so much autonomy over their evaluation process and goals are targeted to each school's specific needs, evaluation results cannot be compared from school to school or from district to district. For example, Principal X might have received a 3.5 for his or her final MPES score, while Principal Y received a 3.3. Although Principal X's score is higher, we cannot say whether Principal X is truly more effective than Principal Y because goals and achievement standards likely differ between the two principals.

How was this study conducted?

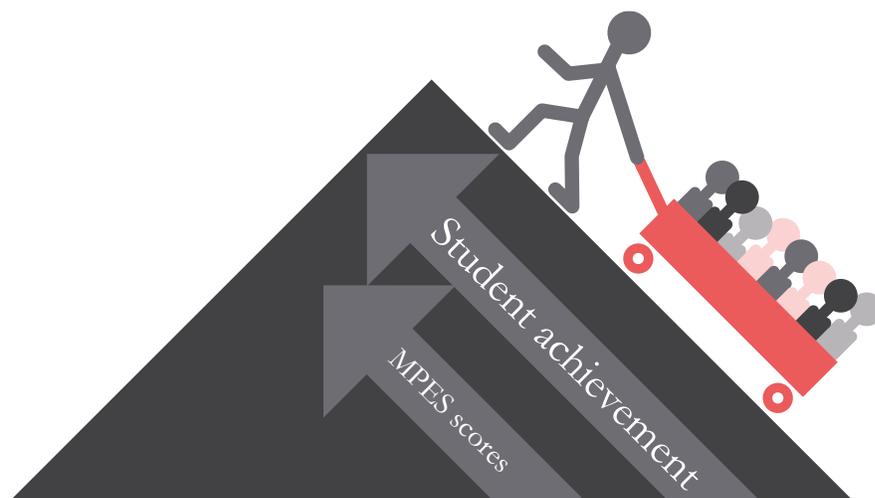
We examined data from 792 principal evaluations from the 2013-2014 school year. These principals represented 627 schools in 96 districts across Mississippi.

This project investigated the relationships between MPES data and school accountability grades (as expressed on the state's A to F school accountability scale). We also looked to see how MPES results might be related to other school characteristics, such as percentage of students qualifying for free-reduced lunch (FRL) and school/district enrollment. Using multiple linear regression techniques, we examined whether principal evaluation results helped explain school accountability grades.

In addition, interviews were conducted with principals from A-rated schools. These principals were asked to describe the strategies and techniques they employ to bring success to their schools.

What were the results of the study?

- On average, Mississippi principals were rated Effective, and the average school grade was between D and C.
- Results from principal evaluations and schoolwide student achievement were found to be linked. School accountability grades were positively correlated with principals' MPES scores, meaning that the higher a school's accountability grade, the higher its principal's MPES score tends to be. Factors such as FRL percentage, district enrollment, and school enrollment were not found to be linked to principals' final MPES score.

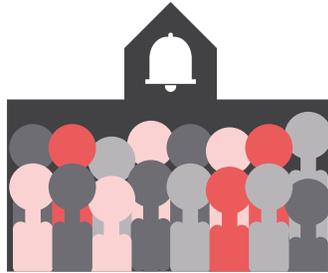


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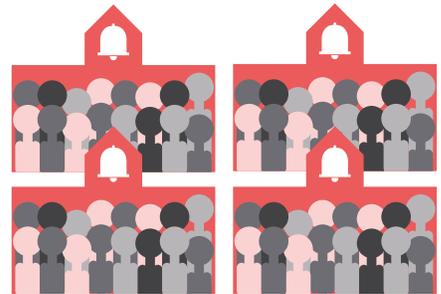
Not correlated with MPES scores:



FRL Percentage

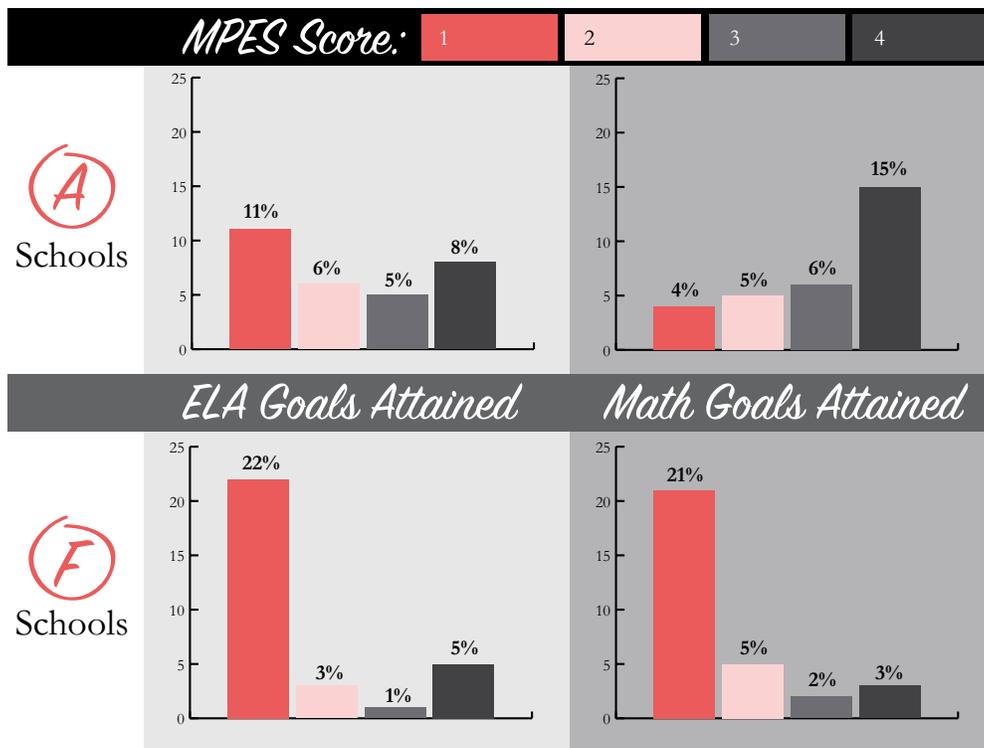


School Enrollment



District Enrollment

- High school principals tended to have higher MPES scores than middle or elementary school principals.
- Of the individual components that make up the MPES, principals tended to receive the highest scores on the staff survey and the lowest scores on the ELA student achievement goal. Of the three groups that completed surveys rating principal performance, supervisors tended to rate principals the lowest.
- Principals at A schools were more likely to meet or exceed their goals for student academic achievement when compared to principals at F schools. However, principals from F schools tended to aim for larger increases in student achievement levels than principals from A schools.



- Principals from F schools were far more likely to set goals for their campus relating to student discipline than principals at A schools.

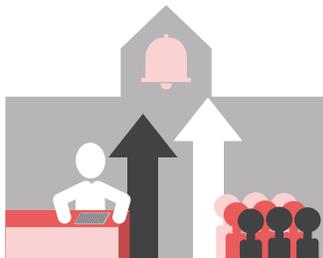
Type of Organizational Goal	A School	F School
Student Discipline	5	24
Student Achievement	16	13
Parent Involvement	4	4
Student Absences/Tardiness	7	8
Teacher Absences/Tardiness	9	8

- A subset of principals from both A and F schools appeared to lack understanding on how to calculate percentage increases or decreases in student achievement scores. This may have caused their progress toward goals to be reported inaccurately.
- In interviews with principals from A schools, they reported intentionally implementing evidence-based leadership practices, including developing teacher leaders, supporting teacher collaboration, communicating high standards for all students, and fostering family and community involvement.

How can the study results be translated into action?

- Overall, the MPES seems to reliably capture whether a principal is having a positive impact on schoolwide student achievement, as measured primarily by student achievement on standardized tests, which means the MPES is a reliable evaluation tool.
- If MPES scores are to be compared across schools, then guidelines for the rigor of goals, quantifying goal achievement, and methods of calculating achievement should be established.
- Principals from schools at all levels should be encouraged to set statistically significant goals for student achievement, which would further improve the validity of cross-school comparisons. Principals may require increased guidance on setting statistically accurate goals. In particular, training on calculating percentage increases and decreases would be beneficial.
- Principals from A schools who implement the evidence-based leadership practices reported above may be exemplary models, and including their best practices in training and professional development may benefit all principals in the state.

- ✓ Rely on MPES as a trustworthy indicator
- ✓ Increase principal guidance and goal-setting structure
- ✓ Set statistically significant goals



The higher the overall MPES score, the higher the school is likely to rate.



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This research was funded in part by the Mississippi Department of Education. The content is the responsibility of the Research and Curriculum Unit and does not necessarily represent the official views of the Mississippi Department of Education.