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CENTER FOR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

12TH EDITION

Program Providers

District and State Partners

Principal Preparation Program Self-Study Toolkit

For use in developing, assessing, and improving principal preparation programs

- Candidate Admissions
- Coursework
- Pedagogy-Andragogy
- Clinical Practice
- Performance Assessment
- Graduate Performance Outcomes

Effective Training and Preparation

Highly Effective School Leaders

Education Development Center (EDC) is a global nonprofit that designs, implements, and evaluates programs to improve education, health, and economic opportunity worldwide, with a focus on vulnerable and underserved populations. Learn more about our work at edc.org.

This Toolkit is funded by The Wallace Foundation, whose mission is to foster equity and improvements in learning and enrichment for young people, and in the arts for everyone. Learn more about their work at wallacefoundation.org.

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

Since 2004, the Quality Measures Center for Program Assessment and Technical Assistance at EDC has championed and supported excellence in the preparation of school principals. Our work revolves around a detailed vision for high-quality principal preparation, drawn from current research and articulated through the rubric of program domains and indicators at the heart of this self-study toolkit. We engage principal preparation program faculty and their district and state partners in conducting evidence-based self-assessments of program quality, using that rubric as a guide. Quality Measures tools and protocols support self-study teams' reflection, dialogue, and identification of areas for improvement.

At the Quality Measures (QM) Center, our commitment to training and supporting principals flows directly from our commitment to achieving equitable educational opportunities for all students. Principals play a critical role in identifying and dismantling systemic inequities and building conditions and capacities for equitable, culturally responsive instruction within their schools. Therefore, programs that prepare principals must help them develop the skills and knowledge to lead with equity at the center. The 11th edition of the *Quality Measures™ Principal Preparation Self-Study Toolkit* (*QM Program Toolkit*) brought that commitment to preparing equity-centered school leaders to the fore, elevating a commitment woven into the fabric of the toolkit since its beginning. Substantial changes in that edition focused on equity at two levels: every domain was adjusted to include steps that programs can take to promote *high-quality, equitable experiences for candidates while in the program* as well as to *prepare those candidates to become equity-centered leaders* upon graduation. In addition, we added a set of discussion questions that self-study teams may use to deepen conversations about equity and the preparation of equity-centered leaders.

This 12th edition of the *QM Program Toolkit* is updated to incorporate findings from recent research by the Learning Policy Institute and the RAND Corporation about high quality principal preparation as well as feedback from university- and district-based advisors. It includes updates to the introductory text as well as minor changes to each domain.

The 12th edition also draws on the knowledge and insights of many people. The contents are drawn from the research base regarding effective, equity-centered principal preparation, including hundreds of research studies, white papers, and frameworks. The toolkit has been informed and improved over the years by multiple rounds of feedback from esteemed colleagues who are deeply knowledgeable about principal preparation and committed to equity; we are grateful for those many contributors and cannot thank them all here.

We are enduringly grateful to Cheryl King for founding the Quality Measures Center at EDC and developing the Quality Measures (QM) tools and processes over the span of 10 editions and more than 15 years. Her powerful intellectual leadership built a strong foundation for QM.

Thank you to our university-based principal preparation program advisors, who offered feedback on the 12th edition updates:

Orientation to the QM Program Toolkit

Education Development Center, with support from The Wallace Foundation, is pleased to introduce the 12th edition of Quality Measures evidence-based tools and protocols. The *QM Program Toolkit* is designed for principal preparation program faculty and their district partners to use for critical reflection and improvement planning.

At the heart of this toolkit is a rubric for each of the following program domains:

1. Candidate Admissions
2. Coursework
3. Pedagogy-Andragogy
4. Clinical Practice
5. Performance Assessment
6. Graduate Performance Outcomes

Each domain identifies five to seven indicators of high-quality practice. Each indicator is described with detailed and specific criteria. Taken together, these criteria offer a comprehensive description of high-quality preparation of equity-centered principals. A brief summary of the key research and frameworks that inform each of the domains begins on page 13. The rubric of domains and indicators begins on page 17. This toolkit also includes detailed instructions on how to generate program self-ratings using the rubric, beginning on page 7. Recommendations for how state leaders might leverage the QM tools and processes to improve principal preparation at scale appear in Appendix B: Using Quality Measures as a Lever for State-wide Improvement in Principal Preparation.

Using the Toolkit for Evidence-Based Self-Assessment

The QM Program Toolkit is designed to be used by principal preparation program self-study teams as a basis for interactive, collaborative reflection on the program's current design and implementation. Self-study teams are typically composed of program faculty, affiliated school district representatives, and other program stakeholders. A complete self-study consists of four parts:

1. **Facilitated orientation** for the self-study team that is designed to build a shared understanding of QM domains and indicators[1] and to brainstorm examples of relevant evidence for each
2. **Period of several weeks**, during which the self-study team assembles program artifacts that provide evidence of current practice relative to each indicator and assign **preliminary ratings**
3. **Facilitated Evidence Synthesis Meeting**, during which the team reviews preliminary ratings and evidence, stakeholders serve as critical friends, and the team determines final ratings
4. **Presentation of findings and recommendations**, during which the team considers next steps for programmatic improvement.

QM Process Facilitation

The Quality Measures Center at EDC offers users trained peer facilitators to moderate the program self-study from a position of neutrality. Facilitators help self-study teams do the following:

- Understand the goals, objectives, and process for conducting a QM program self-study
- Make plans for efficiently and effectively assembling evidence
- Manage difficult conversations and differences of opinion
- Submit self-study data for organization and interpretation
- Understand initial reports of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for next steps
- Access examples of exemplary practice using the *QM Exemplar Catalog*

Under certain conditions, a program may opt to use the *QM Program Toolkit* to engage in a process of self-study without the support of a trained QM facilitator. For example, a program may have already completed a professionally facilitated process and is interested in using the tool as a resource for team discussions of selected program domains. The tool can also be used effectively as a framework for program design or redesign. The complete *QM Program Toolkit* is a publicly available document that can be downloaded from the Quality Measures Center website, qualitymeasures.org or wallacefoundation.org for independent use by program teams.

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[1] A glossary of terms beginning on page 23 offers the QM Center's definitions for key terms used in this toolkit. We suggest that self-study teams review and discuss the glossary to build a shared understanding of the QM domains and indicators and to reflect on how their understanding of key terms may differ from the meanings offered here, given the context and structure of their programs.

For more information about enlisting the support of a trained QM facilitator to work with your self-study team, please contact the Quality Measures Center at qmcenter@edc.org or visit the Quality Measures Center website: qualitymeasures.org.

Determining Preliminary Self-Ratings Using the Quality Measures Rubric

In preparation for the Evidence Synthesis meeting, self-study teams of stakeholders carefully examine program artifacts that relate to each indicator and its criteria. This *QM Program Toolkit* includes a rubric for each of the following program domains:

1. Candidate Admissions
2. Coursework
3. Pedagogy-Andragogy
4. Clinical Practice
5. Performance Assessment
6. Graduate Performance Outcomes

Each of the six domains identifies specific indicators of high-quality program practice, drawn from current research. Each indicator is described with clear and specific criteria to support team discussions and self-ratings. In examining these artifacts, or "evidence," the self-study teams must consider a series of questions to determine a preliminary rating for each indicator. The Quality Measures Preliminary Ratings Sheet is designed to support these initial conversations.

STEP 1: Determining the Preliminary Rating

The self-rating for each indicator is determined by two factors: (1) the extent to which the program artifacts provide evidence that the program *meets the criteria* associated with that indicator and (2) whether those criteria are met consistently across the entire *program or system.* Therefore, in determining the preliminary rating for each indicator, self-study teams must ask themselves two questions: (1) To what extent does the evidence demonstrate the criteria for this indicator? and (2) Does the evidence demonstrate the criteria program-wide?

To what extent does the evidence demonstrate the criteria for this indicator?

Each indicator within the QM rubric includes specific criteria for high-quality programs. Self-study teams must read these criteria carefully and decide, based on the evidence at hand, the extent to which the program currently meets them. Does the evidence presented demonstrate ALL of the criteria for the indicator, MOST of the criteria, SOME of the criteria, or FEW/NONE of the criteria?

Does the evidence demonstrate the criteria program-wide?

When considering the program artifacts that the self-study team has assembled as evidence, it is important to consider not only whether the evidence demonstrates all the criteria in the indicator but also whether the evidence represents *the entire program.*

Does the evidence demonstrate that the criteria are met *program-wide*, for example across all courses or all clinical placement sites? Or does the evidence relate to isolated pockets of the program, for example only one course or one district partnership? To warrant a strong self-rating, the evidence must go beyond individual courses, faculty members, or site placements to demonstrate consistency across the entire program.

The answers to these two questions determine the number rating that the self-assessment team assigns the program's design or implementation for that indicator, from Level 4 (highest) to Level 1 (lowest).

- Level 4: the program meets ALL criteria for the indicator
- Level 3: the program meets MOST criteria for the indicator
- Level 2: the program meets SOME criteria for the indicator
- Level 1: the program meets FEW/NONE of the criteria for the indicator

STEP 2: Distinguishing Evidence of Design and Evidence of Implementation

The next question a self-study team should consider when examining the program artifacts that relate to a given indicator is whether they are evidence of program design or implementation.

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Are the artifacts evidence of the program's design or its implementation?

Evidence of design includes artifacts that demonstrate how the program is *supposed to* operate. This includes planning documents such as curriculum maps, syllabi, and mentor handbooks. Evidence of design is by far the most common type of evidence. Most self-study teams rely heavily on evidence of design in assessing their programs.

Evidence of implementation includes artifacts or data that demonstrate how that design fared when *put into action*. Such evidence might include findings from a candidate survey, spreadsheets of performance assessment results, or examples of coaching feedback provided to candidates. This type of evidence may be harder to come by, but it provides invaluable information about the quality of the program *as delivered* and experienced by candidates.

Why is the distinction between program design and program implementation important?

A strong design is the foundation of a high-quality principal preparation program, just like a strong lesson plan is the foundation for a strong lesson. However, just like a strong lesson plan does not guarantee effective teaching or student learning, a well-designed program does not guarantee a high-quality experience for candidates. Let's use Indicator 4.4, Clinical Coaching, as an example. The indicator specifies that candidates' clinical coaching should include *"regular opportunities for reflection and feedback."* In designing clinical experiences, programs may create handbooks for clinical faculty that specify how, and how often, those opportunities for candidate reflection and feedback should occur. These handbooks tell clinical coaches what they are expected to do. They are evidence of program design. However, sometimes circumstances prevent those opportunities for reflection and feedback from occurring. Conflicting responsibilities may cause a clinical coach to miss or cut short scheduled meetings. A coach may offer vague, infrequent feedback or give advice rather than encouraging reflection. In those cases, a strong program design is met with weaker implementation.

The Evidence Strength Continuum, below, offers further guidance on how to determine indicator ratings based on whether the artifacts provided are evidence of design or evidence of implementation.

EVIDENCE STRENGTH	TYPE 1: EVIDENCE OF DESIGN	TYPE 2: EVIDENCE OF IMPLEMENTATION
LEVEL 4 *Strongest*	Artifacts demonstrate that ALL indicator criteria have been met, program-wide, **at the design-level**.	Artifacts demonstrate successful program-wide **implementation** of ALL of the indicator criteria.
LEVEL 3 *Stronger*	Artifacts demonstrate that MOST indicator criteria have been met, program-wide, **at the design-level**.	Artifacts demonstrate successful program-wide **implementation** of MOST of the indicator criteria.
LEVEL 2 *Strong*	Artifacts demonstrate that SOME indicator criteria have been met, program-wide, **at the design-level**.	Artifacts demonstrate successful program-wide **implementation** of SOME of the indicator criteria.
LEVEL 1 *Weak*	Artifacts demonstrate that FEW or NO indicator criteria have been met, program-wide, **at the design-level**.	Artifacts do not yet demonstrate **implementation** of the indicator criteria.

Equity-Centered Discussion Prompts

In reviewing evidence and determining preliminary ratings, self-study teams may choose to use the discussion prompts included as Appendix A. These prompts are designed to deepen conversations about the program's approach to preparing equity-centered leaders and the consistency with which that approach is being implemented. We recommend that the self-study team use these prompts in a conversation prior to the facilitated Evidence Synthesis Meeting, during which they will determine final ratings.

Program Domains and Indicators at a Glance

1: CANDIDATE ADMISSIONS

1. Program Mission, Vision, and Goals
2. Marketing Strategies
3. Recruitment Practices
4. Applicant Screening and Selection
5. Assessment of Applicants' Leadership Potential
6. Candidate Selection
7. Peer Support

2: COURSEWORK

1. Standards
2. Learning Goals
3. Course Design
4. Course Content
5. Course Materials
6. Course Sequence
7. Course Consistency

3: PEDAGOGY-ANDRAGOGY

1. Access
2. Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices
3. Active Learning Strategies
4. Integration with Clinical Experience
5. Reflective Practices
6. Exemplars
7. Formative Feedback

4: CLINICAL PRACTICE

1. Clinical Design
2. Clinical Placements
3. Clinical Quality
4. Clinical Coaching
5. Clinical Supervision
6. Clinical Evaluation

5: PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

1. Candidate Performance Goals
2. Assessment Purpose
3. Assessment Quality
4. Assessment Methods
5. Communication of Assessment Results
6. Assessment Impact
7. Exit Assessment

6: GRADUATE PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

1. State Certification
2. Job Placement and Retention
3. Job Performance
4. Continuous Improvement
5. Leadership Context

Quality Measures' Theory of Change

At the Quality Measures Center, we believe that if school leader preparation programs engage in periodic self-study using the *Quality Measures Principal Preparation Program Self-Study Toolkit* (*QM Program Toolkit*), then their programs will improve over time and produce equity-centered graduates who will, in turn, positively impact the schools, teachers, and students with whom they work.
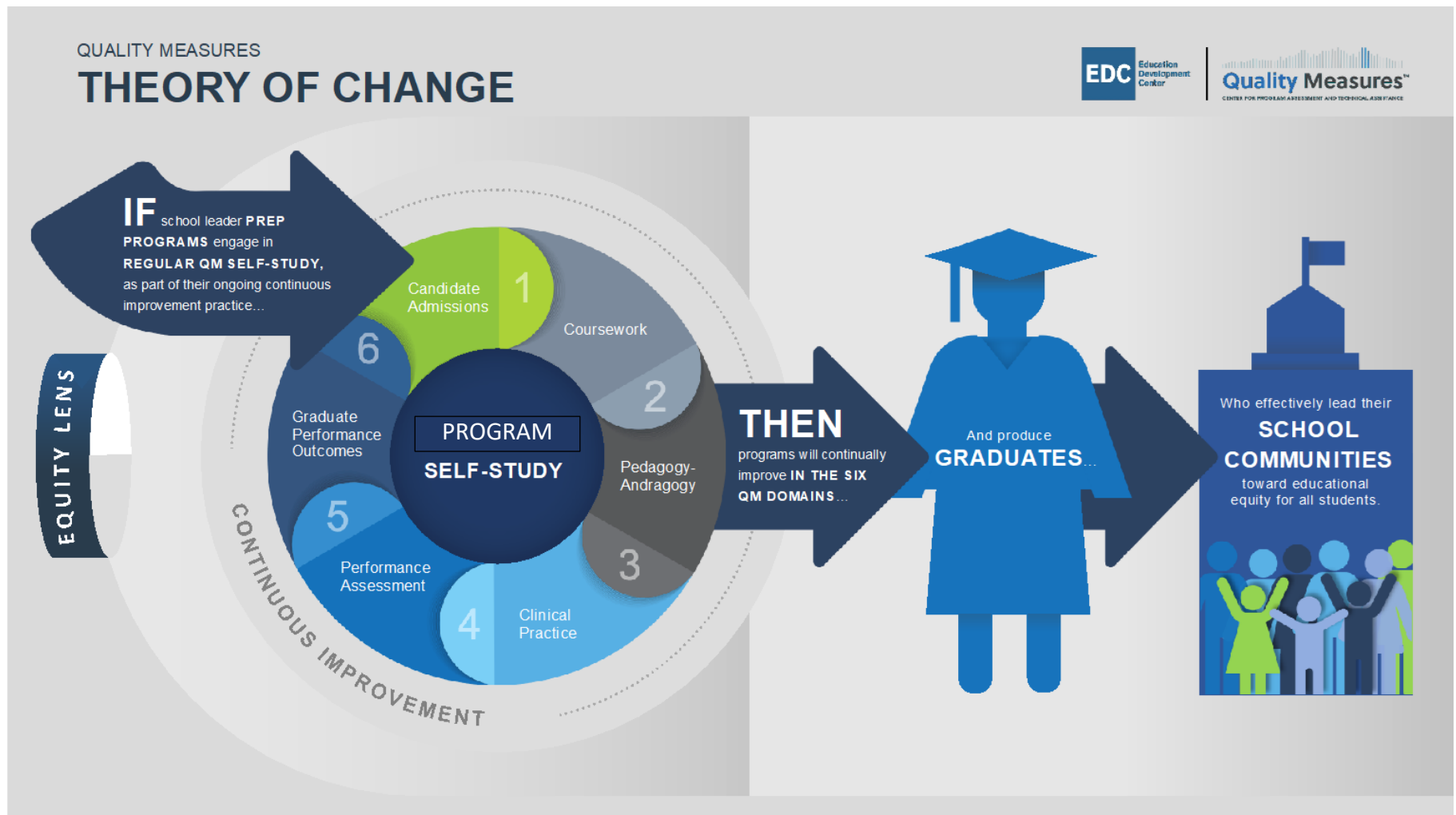
The Research Behind the Quality Measures Domains and Indicators

The Quality Measures rubric of program domains and indicators together articulate a detailed vision for high-quality principal preparation, carefully based and built on research. It draws on nearly two decades of research about high-quality principal preparation, in general, and the preparation of equity-centered principals. More detail about the research behind the rubric follows.

Preparing Equity-Centered Principals: A National Imperative

Principals matter. While this is not new information, a growing body of research in recent decades has helped us understand precisely *how* and *how much* a good principal can make a difference in students' lives. A 2004 Wallace Foundation study found that leadership was second only to teaching among in-school factors that affect student learning (Leithwood et al., 2004). This study supported an informal consensus about the importance of principals and sparked renewed interest in principal leadership as a topic of research. Nearly two decades later, a Wallace Foundation-funded systematic synthesis of research on principals' effect on student learning concluded that principals significantly influence not only student achievement but other important aspects of the student experience as well. The researchers concluded, "It is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership" (Grissom et al., 2021). At the same time, our nation is keenly aware of the pervasive and persistent opportunity gaps in many schools and districts. These differences in opportunities, resources, and access to high-quality teachers lead to differences in student learning and retention. Principals face the challenge of ensuring that each and every student has access to the support they need. To meet this challenge, principals must be equity-centered leaders.

Equity-centered leaders ensure excellence, equity, and a quality learning experience for every child, in every classroom, every day. They model and set direction; they shape an environment where equity and excellence are the standard for everything; they develop people personally and professionally; and they make the organization "work" so that teachers and school-site staff can engage in effective teaching, learning, and support (Grissom et al, 2021; Leithwood et al., 2004; Rimmer, n.d.). Equity-centered leaders seek to mitigate disparities by addressing structural and systemic conditions, processes, and barriers that exacerbate societal inequities (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017). Such leaders continually cultivate a deep understanding of their own biases, ask tough questions, and call out inequities, even when it is uncomfortable (ASCD, 2019). Research indicates that while such equity-centered leadership is important to improving inequitable student outcomes, most principal preparation programs are not yet organized to effectively teach it (Wang, 2018; Brunsma et al., 2013; Hawley & James, 2010), and most graduates are unprepared to enact it (Miller & Martin, 2015; Kutash et al., 2010).

Equity-Centered Principal Preparation

Investments in equity-centered principal leadership must begin with preparation (Mendels, 2016). But what does high-quality preparation of equity-centered school leaders look like? A growing body of research, seeded by Linda Darling-Hammond and her colleagues in 2007, begins to answer this question by detailing the structures and practices that yield well-prepared principals, in general. Additional research, frameworks, and thought pieces relate specifically to how to build the necessary capacities for principals to identify and address issues of equity in their schools and districts. The six program domains and 39 indicators in this toolkit are drawn from these two overlapping bodies of literature: research on high-quality principal preparation, in general, and on how to prepare equity-centered leaders, specifically. Because the current body of empirical research about how to effectively prepare equity-centered school leaders is nascent, they also reflect best practices put forth by thought leaders in the field and captured through standards, playbooks, field guides, and other resources. A summary of the lessons derived from these sources, organized around the six Quality Measures program domains, appears below.

Candidate Admissions

Recent research confirms that while the public school principalship has become more racially and ethnically diverse, it does not yet match the racial and ethnic diversity among students (Grissom et al., 2021). Therefore, a deliberate approach to candidate recruitment and selection is an essential first step in building a diverse and capable corps of future principals (Mitgang, 2012; Sanchez et al., 2008). This process should be grounded in an equity-centered mission, vision, and goals, developed collaboratively by program stakeholders, including district partners (University Council for Educational Administration, 2019; New York State Education Department [NYSED], n.d.; Wang et al, 2022). Exemplary programs seek to recruit a racially, culturally, and gender diverse group of applicants who demonstrate a commitment to equity (Crow & Whiteman, 2016), and high-quality candidate selection processes probe to determine if applicants have the needed experience, leadership skills, aptitudes, and dispositions to achieve partner districts' goals. Ideally, district partners have a voice in candidate admission criteria and the final selection of candidates (Orr et al., 2010; Winn et al., 2016; Wang et al, 2022). In addition, admitting candidates in cohorts supports the formation of critical peer support networks (Darling-Hammond et al, 2022).

Coursework

Universities are making a critical shift toward more coordination among faculty to ensure constructive alignment among learning goals, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks. McMahon and Thakore (2006) found that such alignment leads to fairer, more reliable assessments; facilitates continuous improvement of course designs and contents; and deepens candidate learning. Similarly, Darling-Hammond and colleagues found that "curricular coherence, linking goals, learning activities, and assessments" (2007, p. 42) were evident in exemplary programs, while Wang and colleagues noted the importance of aligning that content with district needs (2022). Well-balanced programs include rigorous, research-based content (Young et al., 2021) related to instructional leadership; school improvement; family and community relations; management; and organizational culture (Winn et al., 2016). A growing body of research has shown that skills in these areas are hallmarks of effective principals (Grissom et al., 2021).

A growing body of literature examines how programs organize coursework specifically to teach equity and social justice. First, the school leadership standards driving curriculum and assessment should provide candidates with specific and measurable descriptions of relevant leadership actions consistent with promoting educational equity (Honig & Walsh, 2018). Furthermore, principal preparation programs should include content that helps candidates understand systemic inequities (Kemp-Graham, 2015); analyze existing policies with an equity lens (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018); and practice engaging people in conversations around equity issues (Cochran et al., 2020; Goldring et al., 2021). Candidates need practice in self-reflection about their own identities and implicit biases (NYSED, n.d.). Programs must integrate social justice throughout the program rather than isolating it to one course (Diem & Carpenter, 2012). Ensuring that candidates will graduate and be ready to lead for equity also requires developing faculty members' capacities to teach an equity-centered curriculum (Khalifa et al., 2016). Programs must engage program faculty and stakeholders in articulating a shared commitment to equity and regularly conduct curriculum audits to ensure cultural responsiveness and equity (NYSED, n.d.).

Pedagogy-Andragogy

To ensure equitable access for all program candidates, the program must offer classes at convenient times and in convenient locations (Winn et al., 2016). Strong teaching practices for adults are built on adult learning theories in which content is contextually driven; include problem-based and on-the-job learning activities; supply candidates with coaching, mentoring, and peer networking opportunities; and gradually release candidates to rely more on their own inquiry and problem-solving abilities (Crow & Whiteman, 2016; Davis et al., 2013). This involves creating course experiences that mirror the expectations of a practicing administrator, such as field-based projects, problem-based learning, action research or inquiry projects, and case studies (Winn et al., 2016). In addition, program faculty must model the equitable and culturally responsive teaching practices that they hope the candidates will promote in the schools they eventually lead. This requires that faculty examine their own implicit biases and relationships to equity (Cabrera et al, 2016), periodically review and update their pedagogical practices for culturally responsive teaching, and support one another in learning new ways to teach (Waite, 2021, NYSED, n.d.).

Clinical Practice

Clinical practice is a form of experiential learning in which candidates apply knowledge and theory learned in courses to real-world, professional settings. These experiences give candidates the opportunity to gain valuable applied knowledge and make connections to experienced professionals in the districts where they may eventually lead. High-quality clinical practice experiences rely on strong district partnerships and are co-designed by program faculty, district leaders, and the candidates themselves (Sherman & Crum, 2009; Winn et al., 2016; Herman Woo et al., 2022). Clinical experiences incorporate "learning while doing," combining practical experiences with reflection and feedback (Honig & Walsh, 2018) and offering opportunities to connect learned theory with specific, practical leadership actions (Dentith & Peterlin, 2011). During clinical practice, candidates are supported in their development by site-based and program-based staff, including leadership coaches, site-based mentors, and clinical administrative supervisors (Cosner & De Voto, 2023).

Specifically, clinical experiences should offer candidates opportunities to analyze authentic data with an equity lens (Herman et al., 2017); identify appropriate entry points for making change (Guerra et al., 2013); and consider the connection between equity and resource allocation (ERS, n.d.). Candidate learning and performance goals should be very clear (Clayton & Myran, 2013) and candidates should be carefully matched with clinical mentors who have demonstrated success in equity-centered school leadership and trained in high-quality coaching and feedback (Winn et al., 2016). Furthermore, programs should seek to place candidates in a range of settings in which they support teachers to work with students of diverse backgrounds (NYSED, n.d.).

Performance Assessment

Effective principals are informed by deep content and contextual knowledge, but they enact their roles by *doing*. Therefore, high-quality principal preparation programs assess not only what candidates are learning but also how proficiently they translate that learning into action. Performance-based assessments provide the most accurate measure of candidates' application of leadership learning (Young et al., 2021). These performance assessments are designed to measure the specific school leadership performance standards that form the basis for the program's curriculum (Honig & Walsh, 2018). They are used to evaluate whether candidates have acquired specific skill sets that are the building blocks of strong leadership practice and allow program faculty to adjust their instruction if needed. Ideally, these performance assessments occur throughout the program, are tied to specific milestones and benchmarks, and are offered in different contexts and modalities to ensure candidates multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency (NYSED, n.d.; Winn et al., 2016). Program faculty must take steps to ensure that the assessments themselves are equitable and culturally responsive and to eliminate bias in their scoring (NYSED, n.d.; Waite, 2021).

Graduate Performance Outcomes

The ultimate goal of any principal preparation program is to adequately prepare candidates for the challenges of school leadership. Therefore, in assessing the quality of their program, faculty must look outward for evidence that graduates are succeeding as principals. Specific examples of such evidence include candidate performance on state certification exams, hiring, retention and job performance (Grissom et al., 2021; Darling-Hammond et al, 2022). Disaggregating those data by candidates' demographic characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) allows program faculty to identify and address variation, further ensuring equitable preparation within the program. Exemplary programs embrace continuous improvement processes, engaging in continuous cycles of collaborative inquiry to inform the design of the program and ensure the high-quality preparation of leaders (Young et al, 2021). Successful continuous improvement processes are enabled by systems for collecting, housing, and analyzing data; expectations for faculty to participate; regular, protected meeting times; and a designated leader (Cosner, 2020).

QM Rubrics and Discussion Prompts

The rubrics are organized by each of the six QM program domains: 1) Candidate Admissions, 2) Coursework, 3) Pedagogy-Andragogy, 4) Clinical Practice, 5) Performance Assessment, and 6) Graduate Performance Outcomes. Below each program domain rubric, there is a brief list of evidence examples to prompt teams' discussion and discernment between *evidence of design* (how the program is *designed to operate*) and *evidence of implementation* (how the program is *currently delivered and experienced by candidates*). Below the evidence examples for each domain, there are equity-centered discussion prompts for self-study teams to use when discussing their preliminary program self-ratings. The purpose of these discussion prompts is to deepen team discussions about equity within the program and the development of equity-centered leaders.

Domain 1: Candidate Admissions

	QM Indicators	QM Criteria
1	**Program Mission, Vision, and Goals**	The program's equity-centered mission, vision, and goals are developed by a diverse and inclusive panel of program partners, including district partners. These elements intentionally guide the program's candidate admissions and overall strategic planning, resource allocation, and processes of continuous improvement.
2	**Marketing Strategies**	Program and district partners develop and maintain outreach strategies to attract candidates that reflect the diverse student populations they will serve. Marketing strategies are responsive to current and future needs for school principals in the region and the priorities of partner districts. These plans display the program's equity-centered mission, vision, and goals and highlight the program's unique strengths and offerings.
3	**Recruitment Practices**	Faculty and district partners co-develop focused recruitment practices to attract applicants who demonstrate commitment to participating in an equity-centered program and whose skills and philosophies are consistent with district needs. Practices include direct outreach and publicity through a variety of modes (e.g., social media, website, and virtual or in-person events).
4	**Applicant Screening and Selection**	In addition to the university's minimum admission requirements, the program has explicit candidate selection criteria that align with the program's mission and partner districts' priorities. The program and selection team seek to identify and mitigate bias in the process by periodically examining applicant barriers to application and selection and identifying potential solutions to reduce those barriers. The program provides resources and supports for candidate selection members to engage in self-reflection about their own biases.
5	**Assessment of Applicants' Leadership Potential**	As part of the selection process, screened applicants participate in a combination of activities designed to assess their potential as effective equity-centered school leaders. These may include applicant interviews, presentations, simulations, and role-play that require a demonstration of cognitive skills (e.g., communication, problem-solving) and dispositions (e.g., growth mindset, strengths-based thinking).

Domain 1: Candidate Admissions

QM Indicators		QM Criteria
6	Candidate Selection	In making final decisions about candidate selection, a diverse and inclusive panel of program team members and other partners considers evidence of applicants' commitment to equity, demonstrated leadership skills and potential, and whether partner districts view them as potential hires.
7	Peer Support	The program has systems and structures to help candidates develop peer support networks (e.g., a cohort structure).

Domain 1: Candidate Admissions

Evidence of DESIGN might Include…		Evidence of IMPLEMENTATION might Include…	
• Correspondence between faculty and district personnel	• Selection criteria	• Recruitment plan based on school leader vacancy projections	• Marketing materials • Candidate admissions scoring data compiled across raters

Domain 1: Candidate Admissions

Team Discussion Prompts

- How does our program define equity? Equity-centered leadership?
- In what ways do the program's mission, vision, values, and goals address preparing equity-centered leaders?
- How does the program assess and analyze the current and future staffing needs of the partnering districts?
- What are the student demographics in partnering school districts (e.g., race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status)? The teacher demographics? How do they align with the demographics of program candidates and graduates?
- What strategies is the program using to attract diverse candidates? How well do those strategies work? How do we know?
- Who is involved in the recruitment and selection of potential applicants? To what extent do they represent the diversity of candidates the program is trying to attract?
- What strategies does the program use to mitigate biases in the recruitment and selection processes?
- What do we look for to determine a candidate's commitment to equity? What are the opportunities to look for those things in our selection process?
- Are there patterns (by race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.) in who gets admitted to the program and who does not? What are the common barriers to admission and matriculation? How relevant are those barriers to applicants' leadership potential?

Domain 2: Coursework

QM Indicators		QM Criteria
1	**Standards**	Courses are based on specific, measurable, and comprehensive school leader performance standards, which include an explicit commitment to equity-centered leadership and align with national professional standards, (e.g., PSEL, NELP) and with partner districts' leadership standards.
2	**Learning Goals**	Courses articulate clear learning goals for candidates, aligned with professional standards as well as regional and local needs. These learning goals promote transformative and deep learning that develop candidates' equity-centered leadership skills and behaviors.
3	**Course Design**	The design of each course explicitly connects learning goals, course content, and course assessments. To ensure these connections and to provide deeper learning experiences for all candidates, program faculty and district partners regularly audit and improve course designs.
4	**Course Content**	Course content applies an equity lens to instructional leadership, school improvement, family and community relations, management, and organizational culture. Courses include content that helps candidates understand systemic inequities, analyze policy and practice with an equity lens, and practice engaging others in conversations around equity issues.
5	**Course Materials**	Course materials are culturally responsive, reflect diverse authorship, and are inclusive of multiple perspectives. Program faculty conduct regular audits of course materials to ensure they include timely, relevant, rigorous, and research-based sources on equity-centered leadership.
6	**Course Sequence**	The program's courses reflect broad themes grounded in the program's core beliefs and values. Courses are intentionally sequenced to ensure that concepts and skills build upon each other in a structured progression of learning, with a focus on equity-centered leadership embedded throughout.
7	**Course Consistency**	Systems and structures are in place to ensure that course content, key assessments, assessment criteria, and grading conventions are consistent within the same course even when taught by different instructors.

Domain 2: Coursework

Evidence of DESIGN might Include…		Evidence of IMPLEMENTATION might Include…	
• Syllabi, course descriptions	• Curriculum maps	• Compiled feedback from course evaluation surveys	• Updated course materials
• Candidate learning goals	• Course evaluation survey		• Samples of student work
• Standards, rubrics, crosswalks	• Handbooks	• Artifacts from course audits	

Domain 2: Coursework

Team Discussion Prompts

- Where (or how) does equity-centered leadership show up in the program's leadership standards?
- How are our equity-centered learning goals reflected within the courses?
- What is the program's approach to ensuring that materials in every course are culturally responsive and inclusive of multiple perspectives? What resources or support do faculty have in this area?
- Is educational equity addressed as a stand-alone area of focus or is it threaded throughout the program?
- How are the following topics explored or integrated throughout our program: Diversity? Equity? Inclusion?

Domain 3: Pedagogy-Andragogy

	QM Indicators	QM Criteria
1	**Access**	Courses are offered at convenient times and in convenient locations and formats (e.g., online, in-person, or hybrid) to ensure equitable access for all program candidates. Candidates are notified about participation requirements ahead of time, including any required in-person events.
2	**Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices**	Program faculty employ culturally responsive teaching practices in their courses to meet each learner's needs. To support this, faculty engage in ongoing professional learning focused on their relationships to equity, identification of implicit biases, and what culturally responsive teaching entails.
3	**Active Learning Strategies**	Instructors engage candidates in course content through active learning strategies (e.g., project-based or case-based instruction, simulations, action research) that require an equity lens and expose candidates to a variety of issues and school contexts.
4	**Integration with Clinical Experience**	Coursework is intentionally and strategically aligned with clinical experiences to support candidates' integration of research, theory, and practice.
5	**Reflective Practices**	Courses incorporate frequent opportunities for reflection—including reflection on candidates' implicit biases and equity mindsets—to develop the essential habits of self-examination, ongoing personal growth, and continuous improvement of practice.

Domain 3: Pedagogy-Andragogy

	QM Indicators	QM Criteria
6	**Exemplars**	Courses provide candidates with exemplars of equity-oriented and research-based or innovative practice for use in reflecting upon and refining specific leadership competencies. Program faculty and district partners regularly review exemplars to ensure they are current and relevant.
7	**Formative Feedback**	Through regular, structured, and coordinated opportunities, program faculty and relevant partners provide formative feedback to candidates. The feedback guides each candidate's progress toward learning and performance goals. Program faculty use the formative feedback to identify gaps in instruction and make mid-course corrections as needed.

Domain 3: Pedagogy-Andragogy

Evidence of DESIGN might Include…		Evidence of IMPLEMENTATION might Include…	
• Course syllabi • Course assignments	• Exemplars • Assessment rubrics	• Candidate reflections • Formative assessment feedback to candidates	• Course adjustments in response to formative data • Aggregated student work

Domain 3: Pedagogy-Andragogy

Team Discussion Prompts

- How do program faculty define "equitable" and "culturally responsive"?
- What equitable and/or culturally responsive pedagogical practices do faculty use in their classrooms? To what extent are these practices present in all courses? How do we know?
- In what ways do the learning activities provide candidates with opportunities to identify inequities and engage others in addressing them?
- To what extent do the learning activities engage candidates in considering the needs of diverse learners and systemically marginalized groups?
- In what ways does the program support candidates' reflection on their implicit biases? Equity mindsets? To what extent is this a practice program-wide?
- How are exemplars selected? And by whom?
- What opportunities exist for candidates to co-design their learning experiences?

Domain 4: Clinical Practice

QM Indicators		QM Criteria
1	**Clinical Design**	Clinical designs are developed collaboratively by program faculty, district partners, and candidates and articulate specific learning and performance goals for each candidate. High-quality clinical designs incorporate "learning while doing," combining practical experiences with structured reflection and feedback; regularly offer opportunities to connect theory with practice; and require candidates to authentically address challenges that require adaptive leadership.
2	**Clinical Placements**	Program faculty and district partners collaborate to ensure that candidates' clinical placements are at schools well-positioned to support their development as equity-centered leaders, with attention to specific candidate learning needs, diversifying their experiences, and exposing candidates to skilled guidance from site-based mentors, clinical supervisors, and coaches.
3	**Clinical Quality**	Program faculty and district partners have developed a shared understanding of the components of a high-quality clinical experience, and they closely monitor each candidate's experience to ensure that quality is met.
4	**Clinical Coaching**	Throughout the clinical experience, candidates receive personalized, culturally responsive clinical coaching which includes regular opportunities for reflection and feedback. Programs train coaches in a preferred coaching model to ensure that all candidates receive a consistent, coherent, and high-quality coaching experience. Coaches encourage each candidate to reflect on specific practices of equity-centered leadership, such as how they are implementing culturally responsive practices and supporting systemically marginalized students.
5	**Clinical Supervision**	Candidates receive personalized, culturally responsive clinical supervision throughout their clinical experience. Supervisors regularly communicate with each candidate and their relevant program and clinical faculty to closely understand and support the candidate's leadership development needs. Supervisors provide specific, actionable feedback on the candidate's practices of equity-centered leadership.
6	**Clinical Evaluation**	Evaluations of candidates' performance in the clinical experience align with the specific learning and performance goals identified for and by each candidate. Evaluations include assessments from multiple people who worked with the candidate, such as site-based mentors, leadership coaches, clinical supervisors, school site faculty, and candidates themselves.

Domain 4: Clinical Practice

Evidence of DESIGN might Include…	Evidence of IMPLEMENTATION might Include…
- Handbooks - Observation templates - Standards, rubrics - Clinical evaluation form	- Cohort performance reports - Candidate performance reports - Coaching records - Candidate activity logs or reflection journals - Candidate survey data

Domain 4: Clinical Practice

Team Discussion Prompts

- What voice do district partners and candidates have in designing clinical experiences?
- In what ways do the clinical experiences allow candidates to identify and address current, site-specific issues of equity?
- What strategies does the program use to diversify the clinical experiences for candidates, ensuring they have opportunities to observe and practice equity-focused leadership in different school contexts?
- How are the clinical placement sites vetted? Do the school site supervisors and mentors have a proven track record of dismantling inequities and improving access and outcomes for all students, especially those from systemically marginalized groups?
- How is coaching differentiated for each candidate's learning needs?
- How does the program ensure that each candidate receives equally high-quality feedback and coaching support?
- What strategies does the program use to mitigate biases in clinical evaluations?
- How does the program gather information from clinical sites to gain a better understanding of the local district needs and the necessary leadership skills needed to respond to those needs?

Domain 5: Performance Assessment

QM Indicators		QM Criteria
1	**Candidate Performance Goals**	Candidate performance goals, including specific mid-program benchmarks or milestones, are clearly articulated and align with both the program's leadership performance standards and district partners' leadership performance standards.

Domain 5: Performance Assessment

QM Indicators		QM Criteria
2	Assessment Purpose	Performance assessments in courses, clinical practice, and independent projects offer candidates opportunities to demonstrate developing leader capacities, and their abilities to practice equity-centered leadership, as evidence of their progress toward performance goals.
3	Assessment Quality	Performance assessments are tightly linked to candidate performance goals; are culturally responsive; are designed to promote learning; and make candidate success criteria explicit, enabling feedback and promoting self-assessment. Program faculty and other relevant partners or collaborators regularly review and improve the quality of the assessments.
4	Assessment Methods	To ensure a reliable and equitable approach to inferring candidates' current level of proficiency in relation to the performance goals, performance assessments occur in multiple contexts and modalities, with a variety of assessors.
5	Communication of Assessment Results	Assessors provide timely and specific feedback about candidate performance to the candidate, as well as to relevant program and clinical faculty, in a format that is easy to understand.
6	Assessment Impact	Candidates regularly use performance assessment data to self-reflect on their progress toward performance goals and co-develop plans for continued growth with program faculty and other collaborators (e.g., site-based mentors and/or coaches) where appropriate.
7	Exit Assessment	To graduate, candidates must demonstrate competency in the program's leadership performance standards. When candidates do not demonstrate all required competencies, program faculty and district partners identify barriers, provide specific feedback, and offer relevant supports to help them meet those competencies in a future exit assessment.

Domain 5: Performance Assessment

Evidence of DESIGN might Include…		Evidence of IMPLEMENTATION might Include…	
• Syllabus • Performance assessments	• Standards, crosswalk documents • Assessment rubrics	• Cohort performance reports • Candidate performance reports	• Candidate reflections and growth goals • Remediation plan

Domain 5: Performance Assessment

Team Discussion Prompts
• To what extent do program assessments evaluate candidates' equity-centered leadership skills and behaviors? Is this happening program-wide?   • What strategies does the program use to mitigate biases in assessing candidates' progress?   • How are the candidate performance goals determined? And by whom?   • Do the performance goals include those related to equity-centered leadership?   • How are performance goals and criteria made explicit and accessible for each candidate in the program?   • Do the candidates' performance assessment results lead to programmatic changes and improvement? If so, how?

Domain 6: Graduate Performance Outcomes

QM Indicators		QM Criteria
1	State Certification	Program graduates are eligible for state certification or licensure or advancement to the next stage of the certification process. If the state has a leadership licensure exam, all graduates pass it before or upon completion of the program. Program faculty regularly review exam results, disaggregated by graduates' demographic characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender), to understand and address patterns and trends.
2	Job Placement and Retention	Program graduates actively seek leadership roles and are hired as assistant principals, principals, or other site- or district- based leaders within a year of graduation and remain in leadership roles for at least three years. Program faculty regularly review graduate job placement and retention rates, disaggregated by graduates' demographic characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender), and work with district partners to understand and address patterns and trends.
3	Job Performance	Program graduates placed in leadership positions either meet or exceed district performance expectations, including expectations for equity-centered leadership, during their induction period. Program faculty regularly review graduate job performance data, disaggregated by graduates' demographic characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender), to understand and address patterns and trends.
4	Continuous Improvement	Program faculty regularly and consistently engage in cycles of program-level continuous improvement, drawing on multiple sources of data (e.g., candidate or graduate surveys, candidates' clinical evaluations, course evaluations, etc.) to identify areas for program improvement. Systems and structures are in place for collecting, housing, and analyzing data and for collaboratively generating, implementing, and assessing related plans for program improvement.
5	Leadership Context	Program faculty regularly seek feedback from district partners regarding district needs, local context, and graduate performance and adjust relevant aspects of the program in response.

Domain 6: Graduate Performance Outcomes

Evidence of DESIGN might Include…		Evidence of IMPLEMENTATION might Include…	
• State certification requirements/checklist • State-approved program verification form • Program exit survey	• List of graduates • University/school district MOU • Survey to employers of first-year leaders	• District job performance reports and analysis • Analysis of graduate efficacy survey results with implications for program improvement	• State certification exam data, disaggregated • Map of graduate placements • Leader tracking system queries and results with analysis

Domain 6: Graduate Performance Outcomes

Team Discussion Prompts

- What information does the program track to know how students are doing within the program? Who looks at it and how often?
- In what ways does the program assess graduates' job performance once they are working school leaders? What kinds of data might shed light on this question if district performance evaluation data are not available?
- In what ways does the program disaggregate these data to look for trends and patterns? Who looks at the disaggregated data and how often?
- What systems and structures does the program use to support faculty's growth and reflection on issues of equity?
- In what ways do the program and district partners work together to ensure alignment between the graduates' approach to equity-centered leadership and the districts' goals and priorities?

Glossary of Terms

This glossary of terms is included here as a quick reference tool for self-study teams engaged in examining their leader preparation program practices using the Quality Measures rubrics. The glossary is intended to assist teams in developing a shared understanding of indicators associated with each program domain. Every program and program context is different, and teams may need to adapt the language to fit their unique contexts.

Active learning. An approach to instruction that engages students in constructing knowledge, engaging in higher-order thinking, and practicing metacognition, or thinking about their own thinking (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Brame, 2016).

Adaptive leadership challenges. Ronald Heifetz (1994) distinguishes between *technical* leadership challenges with straightforward solutions (e.g., increasing Wi-Fi bandwidth or organizing the bus schedule) and *adaptive* leadership challenges. Adaptive challenges are complex issues for which solutions are currently unknown, and which can only be addressed through changes in people's values, beliefs, and habits (e.g., rolling out a new curriculum or dismantling an inequitable system of academic tracking; Heifetz, 1994).

Benchmark. Used here as a specific level of performance that serves as the minimum expectation for candidates at a particular point in time or a developmental progression (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation [CAEP], n.d.).

Candidate performance goals. The specific and observable aspects of leadership behavior to be accomplished by the end of the course of study or as interim indicators of progress along the way.

Clinical coaching. Dedicated time clinical coaches spend observing and providing feedback to candidates on both accomplishments and areas for improvement. Clinical coaching includes intentional support in the candidate's application of theory to experience. This coaching is usually separate from the clinical evaluation process and ideally follows a clear coaching model in which the coach has been trained by the preparation program or the district.

Clinical design. Refers to the essential elements of an effective experiential learning experience that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional school setting. Essential elements include learning goals that drive the learning experience and supervision by a professional with relevant background in the field. The overall clinical design balances the candidate's learning goals with the organization's (school's) needs. Candidates' clinical experiences may be part-time or full-time ones.

Clinical evaluation. The assessment of the candidate's progress toward the learning and performance goals identified at the beginning of the clinical experience. Typically, supervisors are asked to evaluate candidates at the midpoint and end of the clinical experience.

Clinical placements. Refers to the P-12 schools in which candidates complete the experiential segment of their school leader preparation and training and the site-based support teams (supervisor, mentor, and/or coach) that support them.

Clinical practice. Includes field-based leadership practical experiences or internships that provide candidates with an intensive and extensive opportunity to engage in authentic leadership tasks related to their learning and performance goals. Candidates are immersed in the learning community and are provided opportunities to develop and demonstrate competence in the professional roles for which they are preparing (adapted from National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2018). Also referred to as *clinical experience*.

Clinical supervision. Administrative guidance and oversight provided to candidates during the clinical experience. The supervisor may be based in a program or in a district. Responsibilities may include helping to determine the candidate's placement, conducting an orientation, conducting coach and mentor training, co-developing candidate learning goals, meeting with and observing the candidate regularly to evaluate performance and determine if needs and goals are being met, and assessing the success of the clinical design.

Coach. Provides observation, feedback, and consultation to candidates to help accelerate leadership learning. Coaches are typically provided by the principal preparation program, but they can be provided by the district. See mentor and supervisor to learn more about the distinction between these roles.

Coaching model. A defined approach to coaching principal candidates that is based on a theory about how leaders develop and the role of the coach in supporting that development. The coaching model should provide guidance to coaches on the purpose of coaching, how to form a productive relationship, problem identification and goal setting, problem-solving, and the mechanisms by which the coach will foster the desired outcomes (Carey et al., 2011). An *equity-centered coaching model* focuses on approaches to decision-making, culture building, and strategic planning that aim to create more equitable educational environments.

Commitments. The values, beliefs, dispositions, morals, and professional ethics that drive an educational leader's behaviors (NPBEA, 2018).

Competency. A statement that describes the desired knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Used here, competencies define the applied skills and knowledge that will allow the candidates to perform successfully as leaders.

Constructive alignment. Refers to the process for devising teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks to directly address the intended learning outcomes.

Continuous improvement. Continuous improvement is an applied science that emphasizes innovation, rapid and iterative cycle testing in the field, and scaling to generate learning about what changes produce improvements in particular contexts. Through continuous improvement, stakeholders address a specific problem using iterative cycles to test potential solutions to the identified problem. The

outcomes of each cycle inform the revision, development, and fine-tuning of practices. People who engage in the continuous improvement process identify specific problems, develop proposed solutions, test them in real contexts, collect and study data on their effectiveness, and then make decisions based on what they learn (Institute for Healthcare Improvement, 2015; Shakman et al., 2017; Wang & Fabillar, 2019).

Course materials. Textbooks, readings, presentations, and other instructional materials used during a course.

Course sequence. Refers to a set of interrelated courses and learning experiences that are logically sequenced (vertically aligned); guided by a common framework for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning climate; and pursued over a sustained period.

Culture. An individual's culture refers to the multiple dimensions of their identity -- such as race, socioeconomic background, gender expression, language, sexual orientation, nationality, or religion -- that influence they make meaning of the world around them (NYSED, 2018). Used more broadly, culture describes how we live daily in terms of our language, religion, food, traditions, values, political and social affiliations, etc. (The Leadership Academy [TLA], 2021).

Cultural responsiveness. "Cultural responsiveness is not a practice; it's what informs our practice so that we can make better teaching choices for eliciting, engaging, motivating, supporting, and expanding the intellectual capacity of ALL our students" (Hammond, 2014, vii). Cultural responsiveness is the ability to learn from and relate respectfully to people from one's own and other cultures. For educators, it means having an awareness of one's own cultural identity and views and the ability to learn, build on, and celebrate the varying cultural and community norms of students and their families. See *culturally responsive leadership* and *culturally responsive teaching*.

Culturally responsive leadership. Culturally responsive leaders have a strong understanding of the dimensions and impact of cultural constructs in society and are committed to cultivating and deepening their own cultural competence and that of the adults they lead. They believe in the academic success of all students and center student learning and academic rigor across every school, classroom, and learning environment in their system, and they cultivate sociopolitical consciousness in students and educators (TLA, 2021). Khalifa, Gooden, and Davis (2016) observed that culturally responsive leaders need to continuously support minoritized students through an examination of their assumptions about race and culture. Further, they argue that as demographics continue to shift, so should leadership practices that respond to student needs, understanding that it is "deleterious for students to have their cultural identities rejected in school and unacknowledged as integral to student learning" (p.14).

Culturally responsive teaching. Also referred to as *culturally responsive pedagogy* or *culturally responsive instruction*. Geneva Gay (2010) defined *culturally responsive teaching* as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). Gay (2010) identified six key practices of culturally responsive teaching: (1) high expectations for all students; (2) engaging students' cultural knowledges, experiences, practices, and perspectives; (3) bridging gaps between home and school practices; (4) seeking to educate the whole child; (5) identifying and

leveraging students' strengths to transform education; and (6) critically questioning normative schooling practices, content, and assessments. Gay (2013) further advocated that culturally responsive teaching requires disrupting deficit perspectives and subtractive conceptions of students from minoritized backgrounds, their families, and their communities. More information about culturally responsive teaching can be found [here](#).

Disaggregation. A process of separating data sets into subsets to allow for comparison that might reveal patterns or trends to inform continuous improvement. For example, candidate experience, performance, and graduate outcome data commonly are disaggregated according to demographic characteristics such as race, ethnicity, and gender.

Dispositions. The habits of professional action that underlie a leader's performance. A leader's dispositions reflect their values, beliefs, and professional attitudes and ethics and are demonstrated through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities. These behaviors affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the leader's own professional growth (NBPEA, 2018).

District partners. Used here, any school district that actively collaborates with the leader preparation program in training and supporting leader candidates. District partners may participate in recruitment and selection; provide clinical site placements, clinical mentors, coaches, or supervisors; and/or provide adjunct program faculty. District partners typically are a subset of the districts in the program's local service area that may end up hiring program graduates.

Diverse. Includes people who represent a range of individual differences (e.g., personality, interests, learning modalities, and life experiences) or group differences (e.g., race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, nationality, language, religion, political affiliation, and socioeconomic background).

Equity. Fairness and justice in the way people are treated. Educational equity refers to both processes and outcomes. Educational leaders support equity when they work to eliminate prejudice and barriers based on individual student and demographic characteristics (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) and ensure that each student has the resources and supports necessary to succeed (NPBEA, 2018).

Equity-centered school leaders. Equity-centered leaders seek to ensure excellence, equity, and a quality learning experience for every child in every classroom every day. They model and set direction; they shape an environment where equity and excellence are the standard for everything; they develop people personally and professionally; and they make the organization "work" so that teachers and school-site staff can engage in effective teaching, learning, and support (Leithwood et al, 2004; Rimmer, n.d.). Equity-centered leaders seek to mitigate disparities by addressing structural and systemic conditions, processes, and barriers that exacerbate societal inequities (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2017). Such leaders continually cultivate a deep understanding of their own biases, acknowledge how their own experiences influence their actions and beliefs, ask tough questions, and call out inequities, even when it is uncomfortable (ASCD, 2019).

Equity lens. A way of examining culture, policies, programs, practices, and processes with the explicit goal of understanding their equitable and inequitable aspects.

Exemplar. Used here, a model of effective or innovative practice. Exemplars demonstrate what is possible and offer a concrete image of what success looks like.

Exit assessment. A final, comprehensive assessment that candidates must pass to graduate from a program.

Exit competencies. A general statement that describes the desired knowledge, skills, and behaviors of a candidate graduating from a program (or completing a course). Competencies commonly define the applied skills and knowledge that enable people to successfully perform in professional, educational, and other life contexts.

Formative assessment. Provides feedback to teachers and learners throughout the teaching and learning process about what is working, what is not working, and what the student and the teacher should do next to improve.

Formative feedback. Ongoing feedback based on periodic assessments of candidate learning and performance that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning.

Implicit bias. Attitudes or stereotypes that subconsciously affect our understanding, actions, and decisions. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Implicit bias results from the human tendency to process information based on unconscious associations and feelings, even when these are contrary to one's conscious or declared beliefs (Staats et al., 2015; TLA, 2021).

Inclusive. Including and integrating all people and groups in activities, organizations, political processes, etc., especially those who have been systemically excluded and/or have experienced discrimination.

Indicators. Measurable qualities that track the progress of the program, initiative, or activity toward the intended outcome(s) and help assess whether the intended outcome(s) have been achieved. Indicators can be both qualitative and quantitative.

Key assessments. A series of formative assessments designed to track candidates' learning and performance throughout the program. These assessments are developed to complement one another, are tied to the program standards and candidate learning and performance goals, and are administered at pre-determined times during the program (e.g., at the end of specific courses). Program faculty may periodically examine key assessment data to monitor candidate progress and course effectiveness.

Leader performance goals. See candidate performance goals.

Leadership licensure exam. A specialized assessment that many states require graduates of principal preparation programs to pass before they can become licensed or certified as school administrators. For example, Massachusetts requires a passing score on the Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL) and Kentucky requires passing scores on the School Leaders Licensure Assessment and the Kentucky Specialty Test of Instructional and Administrative Practices.

Learning goals. Brief statements that describe what students will be expected to learn by the end of school year, course, unit, lesson, project, or class period as a result of the instruction. Learning goals help create a shared understanding and focus for student learning and guide the development of formative and summative assessments.

Local or district context. The broader organizational, social, economic, and political environment in which a program operates and includes program relationships, capacity, and other factors outside of the control of the program. Some contextual factors include community needs and assets; community economic, social, and demographic characteristics; state and district policies; and the presence of similar or complementary preparation programs (United Way, 2016).

Mentor. A site-based school administrator, such as the principal at the candidate's clinical placement site, whose role is to provide the candidate with frequent guidance and support during the clinical experience and who serves as a model for leadership learning. See coach and supervisor to learn more about the distinction between these roles.

Milestones. See benchmarks.

Pedagogy-andragogy: Used here, *pedagogy* refers to the field of study that deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools, while *andragogy* refers to the art or science of teaching adults. Andragogy is based on a conception of adults as self-directed and autonomous learners and teachers as facilitators of learning.

Performance assessment. Used here, assessments that require candidates to demonstrate proficiency related to leadership performance goals. These product- and behavior-based measurements occur in authentic settings or emulate real-life contexts or conditions in which specific knowledge or skills are applied (CAEP, n.d.).

Performance benchmarks. See benchmarks.

Performance goals. See candidate performance goals.

Proficiencies. Demonstrated ability to perform all or some part of what is described by standards (CAEP, n.d.).

Program faculty. The personnel, including both employees and partners of the leader preparation program, who support, develop and assess a candidate's knowledge, skills, and/or professional dispositions within the scope of the program. Note that this may include full-time, adjunct, academic, or clinical faculty. Leader preparation programs may also include personnel referred to by the terms *coaches*, *mentors*, *supervisors*, or *development team members* (CAEP, n.d.).

Program graduate. A person who has met all the requirements of the program and who receives documentation of having met the program's requirements, which may take the form of a degree, institutional certificate, program credential, transcript, or other written proof (NPBEA, 2018).

Program mission, vision, and goals.
- A *program mission* is a public declaration of the program's purpose and major organizational commitments. A program mission may describe the day-to-day operational objectives, its instructional values, or its public commitments to the candidates and community the program serves.
- A *program vision* is a public declaration describing the program's high-level goals for the future, that is, what they hope to achieve if they successfully fulfill their organizational purpose or mission. A vision statement may describe the program's loftiest ideals, its core organizational values, its long-term objectives, or what it hopes its candidates will learn or be capable of doing after graduating.
- *Program goals* are statements that describe what a program intends to accomplish or to become over the next several years. Goals describe the strategic, long-term program targets or directions of development. They also provide the basis for decisions about the nature, scope, and relative priorities of various activities in a program. Goals are used in planning, implementation, and assessment and should help move the program to attain its vision (Head Start, 2019; University of Central Florida, 2008).

Program-wide. Used here to describe practices that are consistent across all courses or all school site placements, as opposed to being present in only some courses or site placements.

School leader performance standards. Comprehensive, written expectations describing the behaviors of effective school leaders. Standards may be written in broad terms with components that further explain their meaning (CAEP, n.d.). These may be developed by a professional organization (e.g., the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders or PSEL); a state education agency (e.g., Massachusetts School-Level Administrator Rubric); or a district (e.g., the Los Angeles Unified School District School Leadership Framework).

Self-study. An evidence-based process of self-examination. Used here, *self-study* refers to the process that a team of leader preparation program stakeholders undergoes to self-assess its practices against the Quality Measures indicators of high-quality principal preparation.

Stakeholders. As used here, *stakeholders* include those who contribute to, and are affected by, the program. Stakeholders may include full- and part-time program faculty; administrators in partner districts who participate in program recruitment, selection, course instruction, clinical experience, or assessment; current program candidates; recent graduates; state officials charged with preparation program oversight or approval; and others. Note: In this toolkit, relevant stakeholders will vary by program and are determined by each self-study team.

State certification. A license that allows a program graduate to work as an administrator in a public school. The certification process is different for each state, but most states require an in-depth analysis of a potential administrator's background, as well as exams that test their knowledge of running a school.

Students. Children and youth attending P–12 schools, as distinguished from candidates enrolled in leadership preparation programs.

Summative assessment. Measures the extent to which the learner has accomplished the intended learning outcomes and contributes to the final grade. It is most often used at the end of a course of study to quantify learning achievement and provide data for determining the next level of study.

Supervisor. An administrator whose role is to oversee organizational aspects of the clinical experience, such as clinical placements, coaching assignments, coach and mentor training, and candidate assessment. The supervisor may be district-based or program-based and typically works in collaboration with coaches and mentors. Supervisors may provide candidate feedback. See coach and mentor to learn more about the distinction between these roles.

System-wide. A system is a set of interconnected activities, programs, and organizations that combine with the external environment to form a complex whole. In the context of a principal preparation program, the system in which it operates may include other educator preparation programs run by the program provider; the district partnerships that support recruitment, clinical preparation, and the hiring of graduates; and the state policies related to principal preparation. In examining evidence of program quality as part of a Quality Measures self-study, evidence is deemed to be *system-wide* when it demonstrates that the criteria are met not just within the program but with respect to the other parts of that system. For example, a practice might be codified across the entire system of university-based preparation programs, or it might be standard in every clinical site placement regardless of district or school.

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A comprehensive list of the references that have informed every past edition of the *Quality Measures Principal Preparation Self-Study Toolkit* can be found on EDC's website here.

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Appendix A: Equity-Centered Discussion Prompts

These discussion prompts are a supplementary resource designed for self-study teams to use alongside the Quality Measures rubric during the determination of preliminary ratings. Their purpose is to deepen discussions about equity within the program and the development of equity-centered leaders. We have grouped them according to the most relevant QM domain.

Domain 1: Candidate Admissions
• How does our program define equity? Equity-centered leadership?   • In what ways do the program's mission, vision, values, and goals address preparing equity-centered leaders?   • How does the program assess and analyze the current and future staffing needs of the partnering districts?   • What are the student demographics in partnering school districts (e.g., race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status)? The teacher demographics? How do they align with the demographics of program candidates and graduates?   • What strategies is the program using to attract diverse candidates? How well do those strategies work? How do we know?   • What stakeholders are involved in the recruitment and selection of potential applicants? To what extent do they represent the diversity of candidates the program is trying to attract?   • What strategies does the program use to mitigate biases in the recruitment and selection processes?   • What do we look for to determine a candidate's commitment to equity? What are the opportunities to look for those things in our selection process?   • Are there patterns (by race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.) in who gets admitted to the program and who does not? What are the   common barriers to admission and matriculation? How relevant are those barriers to applicants' leadership potential?

Domain 2: Course Content
• Where (or how) does equity-centered leadership show up in the program's leadership standards?   • How are our equity-centered learning goals reflected within the courses?   • What is the program's approach to ensuring that materials in every course are culturally responsive and inclusive of multiple perspectives? What resources or support do faculty have in this area?   • Is educational equity addressed as a stand-alone area of focus or is it threaded throughout the program?   • How are the following topics explored or integrated throughout our program: Diversity? Equity? Inclusion?

Domain 3: Pedagogy-Andragogy

- How do program faculty define "equitable" and "culturally responsive"?
- What equitable and/or culturally responsive pedagogical practices do faculty use in their classrooms? To what extent are these practices present in all courses? How do we know?
- In what ways do the learning activities provide candidates with opportunities to identify inequities and engage others in addressing them?
- To what extent do the learning activities engage candidates in considering the needs of diverse learners and systemically marginalized groups?
- In what ways does the program support candidates' reflection on their implicit biases? Equity mindsets? To what extent is this a practice program-wide?
- How are exemplars selected? And by whom?
- What opportunities exist for candidates to co-design their learning experiences?

Domain 4: Clinical Practice

- What voice do district partners and candidates have in designing clinical experiences?
- In what ways do the clinical experiences allow candidates to identify and address current, site-specific issues of equity?
- What strategies does the program use to diversify the clinical experiences for candidates, ensuring they have opportunities to observe and practice equity-focused leadership in different school contexts?
- How are the clinical placement sites vetted? Do the school site supervisors and mentors have a proven track record of dismantling inequities and improving access and outcomes for all students, especially those from systemically marginalized groups?
- How is coaching differentiated for each candidate's learning needs?
- How does the program ensure that each candidate receives equally high-quality feedback and coaching support?
- What strategies does the program use to mitigate biases in clinical evaluations?
- How does the program gather information from clinical sites to gain a better understanding of the local district needs and the necessary leadership skills needed to respond to those needs?

Domain 5: Performance Assessment

- To what extent do program assessments evaluate candidates' equity-centered leadership skills and behaviors? Is this happening program-wide?
- What strategies does the program use to mitigate biases in assessing candidates' progress?
- How are the candidate performance goals determined? And by whom?
- Do the performance goals include those related to equity-centered leadership?
- How are performance goals and criteria made explicit and accessible for each candidate in the program?
- Do the candidates' performance assessment results lead to programmatic changes and improvement? If so, how?

Domain 6: Graduate Performance Outcomes

- What information does the program track to know how students are doing within the program? Who looks at it and how often?
- In what ways does the program assess graduates' job performance once they are working school leaders? What kinds of data might shed light on this question if district performance evaluation data are not available?
- In what ways does the program disaggregate these data to look for trends and patterns? Who looks at the disaggregated data and how often?
- What systems and structures does the program use to support faculty's growth and reflection on issues of equity?
- In what ways do the program and district partners work together to ensure alignment between the graduates' approach to equity-centered leadership and the districts' goals and priorities?

Appendix B: Using Quality Measures as a Lever for State-Wide Improvement in Principal Preparation

In the *Quality Measures* self-assessment process, principal preparation programs and their district partners assess their current offerings against research-based, effective practice and collaboratively plan improvements. This process, when used by individual programs, is designed to lead to program-level improvements. When used simultaneously across many programs in the same state, it can foster cross-program collaboration, raise the bar for program quality, spread best practices, and inform policy. Described below are four inter-related suggestions for how state-level leaders might leverage the Quality Measures tools and processes to foster improvement in principal preparation at scale.

Use the Quality Measures self-assessment process to build a shared, state-wide understanding about what high-quality principal preparation entails.

At the heart of the *QM Program Toolkit* is a detailed description of high-quality, equity-centered principal preparation. The description is organized into six domains and 39 indicators of practice. When state officials invite cohorts of principal preparation programs to engage in a facilitated, collaborative self-assessment in relation to those indicators, they build those teams' understanding of program quality. Faculty within and across participating programs develop a shared language for discussing principal preparation and a shared vision for what is possible. The Quality Measures exemplar catalog provides concrete examples of strong practice as guideposts for improvement. This contributes to a shared understanding, state-wide, of what high-quality principal preparation looks like and a shared commitment to pursuing that vision.

Sample activities:
- Support cohorts of principal preparation programs and their stakeholders in conducting facilitated self-studies using the Quality Measures tools and processes.
- Offer opportunities for participating programs to convene and discuss their relative strengths, growth areas, and improvement plans in relation to the indicators.
- Create ways for programs to share best practices and innovations related to the Quality Measures indicators.
- Hold periodic meetings with all the principal preparation programs across the state to highlight strides participating programs have made in improving their programs. Invite district partners to share their lessons and perspectives.
- Create guidelines and policies for preparation program effectiveness that are aligned to the Quality Measures indicators.

Use the Quality Measures self-assessment process to cultivate strong partnerships among principal preparation programs and the districts they serve.

Preparing effective school principals is a collective endeavor. It requires strong partnerships between principal preparation programs and the districts they serve. Strong program-district partnerships ensure that programs recruit candidates whose skills and experience align with district hiring needs; that course content supports district priorities; that clinical experiences extend and apply course content; and that program performance assessments align with district performance assessments.

When principal preparation programs engage in the Quality Measures self-assessment process, they assemble self-study teams that include program faculty, district partners, and other stakeholders to closely examine the program. This collaborative inquiry engages program faculty and district partners in conversation about their goals for candidate learning and their respective roles in achieving those goals, ultimately strengthening their partnerships.

Sample activities:
- Support principal preparation programs in authentically engaging district partners in their Quality Measures self-study teams.
- Support a professional learning community of program/district partner teams focused specifically on strengthening partnerships.[2]
- Bring program and district representatives together for input into state policy related to principal preparation and support.

Use aggregated and de-identified Quality Measures self-study findings to identify areas for state-wide professional development and support.

The Quality Measures self-assessment process, when used at scale by programs across the state, yields valuable information for state-level leaders. Each program's self-study team generates evidence-based self-ratings in relation to the Quality Measures indicators of program quality. These self-ratings guide the individual programs in celebrating strengths and planning for improvement. When de-identified and compiled in the aggregate, they provide valuable information to state agencies about what is currently working well in principal preparation across the state, and where programs may need additional professional development and support. This can help guide the state education agency's resource allocation and planning.

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[2] In addition to the Quality Measures Program Toolkit, the QM Center offers a separate tool – and facilitated self-study process – focused specifically on program-district partnerships. Find it at qualitymeasures.org/resources.

Sample activities:
- Allow programs that have participated in the Quality Measures self-assessment process to keep their individual team ratings confidential but devise a strategy for collecting and compiling de-identified self-ratings.
- Aggregate those self-ratings and look across the data for trends in programs' self-identified strengths and common areas for improvement.
- Meet with program leaders to understand the barriers they face related to the common areas for improvement. Seek their insight into how the state agency might support them in these areas.
- Develop and publicize relevant professional development or make funding available for programs and districts to do so.

Design coherent policies and structures for principal preparation program oversight, grounded in Quality Measures' indicators of high-quality principal preparation.

State education agencies set policies such as licensing criteria for school leaders, certification standards and systems of oversight for preparation programs and leader performance evaluation systems. It is critical that these policies align with one another, so that principals are licensed according to the same criteria as they were taught in their preparation programs, and similarly evaluated on the job. Importantly, all these criteria should reflect state-approved standards for school leaders, which, in turn, support the state's overall vision for education and for school leaders.

States can help maintain alignment between the content of principal preparation programs and the needs of the districts they serve by ensuring that program approval relies on several key Quality Measures indicators of quality: strong partnerships between preparation programs and their district partners; evidence of continuous improvement processes; and evidence of programs' responsiveness to district needs and context.

Sample activities:
- Review the current policies for principal licensure, preparation program content, and principal performance evaluations to determine the degree to which they are aligned with one another and with state school leadership standards.
- Review NELP and the *QM Program Toolkit* to identify areas that might be added to current certification and program approval standards.
- Develop course approval procedures that ensure fidelity with the state leader standards.