

## WF Memo 3: Analysis of ECPI Progress Reports (Year 3)

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### **RQ: What are the areas that districts are making progress?**

Grantees made considerable progress across domain areas. In Domain 1, grantees gathered input from cross-functional groups and parents to develop standards around equity and leadership. They also began to integrate these documents across the district. In Domain 2, grantees collaborated with university partners to ensure that principal prep programs were responsive to district needs and context and redesigning clinical experiences to incorporate equity-centered assignments. In Domain 3, grantees made concerted efforts to expand the hiring pool, incorporate feedback loops to prospective leaders, and revise performance tasks. In Domain 4, grantees provided many forms of professional development and mentoring to school leaders and utilized evaluation tools to varying degrees. In Domain 5, grantees focused on building the capacity of principal supervisors, at times employing a common theory of action to align expectations. In Domain 6, grantees explored use cases and developed infrastructure to set up leader data systems, either in-house or with an external partner. In Domain 7, grantees took a wide range of actions to develop long-term systems and ensure sustainability, including developing frameworks, strategic plans, and memorandums of agreement with university partners; starting the process of creating an internal principal prep program; and strengthening succession planning.

- Excerpt: *“Moving into Year 3, we leveraged the insights gathered during Year 2 input sessions, facilitating seamless integration of this work across various offices within the organization.” (Baltimore)*
- Excerpt: *“The LC/PPS teams have had regular, productive meetings focused on piloting a new clinical practice model that includes supported sub-time for candidates to get out of their context and experience authentic, hands-on leadership experiences in multiple settings.” (Portland)*
- Excerpt: *“The revised VP pool introduces a transformative change by allowing candidates to apply on a monthly basis... For those not selected, constructive feedback is provided, affording them the opportunity to enhance their skills and knowledge for future applications. Importantly, the adjusted pool dates empower principals with a more extensive and diverse candidate pool throughout the year.” (Fresno)*
- Excerpt: *“Leaders are provided with hands-on experiences during meetings where they identify the qualities of effective instruction and then engage in leadership walks where they observe classrooms, debrief and apply their learning.” (San Antonio)*
- Excerpt: *“Our Chief of Schools, working closely with principal supervisors, will focus on the refinement of coaching strategies used by the supervisors... We envision building*

*capacity through shared problems of practice and through the calibration of coaching strategies.” (Jefferson County)*

- Excerpt: *“The IT, ARET, and Human Resources teams have shared data and collaborated to compile information in one area and shared the files with the contractor so that they can mock up a dashboard that will assist the district in identifying current and projected future leader vacancies.” (San Antonio)*
- Excerpt: *“We started the work in year 2 with the creation of our Strategic Plan, Always Learning. This included robust engagement from all sectors of the district, staff and community members.” (Baltimore)*

In terms of the *Implementing for Sustainability* Framework, grantees took many actions in the areas of aligning institutional elements, communicating clarity in intent, and maintaining priority. For example, grantees attended to the coherence of their pipeline initiatives across different stakeholders and developed stronger workflows. Also, they dedicated tremendous resources to communicating their commitment to equity across the district and to the broader community. Furthermore, they maintained priority by establishing a steady cadence of meetings with different partners and teams, including Domain Lead meetings.

- Excerpt: *“We have opted to have our meetings include working deeper on a mini problem of practice so we get the nuts and bolts of the check-ins, then get into a deeper conversation about a grapple that we are having within one of the domains or taking the results of a survey that has an impact on our work.” (Portland)*
- Excerpt: *“Our Diversity, Equity, and Poverty Division publishes a district-wide magazine publication, that is also shared with the public, called *Envision Equity*. We used the magazine to communicate and share stories from our pipeline work.” (Jefferson County)*
- Excerpt: *“We have established a regular cadence of meetings and a member of the research team joined and actively participated in one of our DPT meetings, facilitating a reflection about our Year 2 work and accomplishments.” (San Antonio)*

### **RQ: What are the kinds of challenges they are facing and toward what?**

Grantees described a few challenges as they integrate equity as a value and practice across the district. The most common is the logistical challenge of inadequate time, and relatedly, the structural challenge of bandwidth. Additionally, shifting practices and adopting new technologies can be challenging because they require “buy-in” or endorsements from different stakeholders, including the superintendent and deputy superintendent, and can be time-consuming. Lastly, another challenge emerged around consistency and quality control in the principal preparation program and in the onboarding of principal supervisors.

- Excerpt: *“Some of the challenges included finding time due to schedules and feedback overload, receiving conflicting feedback, creating documentation systems that are clear and consistent, establishing processes to turnkey feedback into revision, and having multiple validation tests for the changes.” (DC)*

- Excerpt: *“A challenge we encountered was the onboarding and induction of new Principal Supervisors in a short amount of time. Often, new supervisors are appointed and quickly assume their new responsibilities.” (Jefferson County)*
- Excerpt: *“Courses in the program have been instructed by varying faculty and did not have consistent vertical and horizontal alignment... One of our initial challenges was buy-in and support of our work from all offices.” (Baltimore)*

**RQ: What kinds of support do districts ask of Wallace and why (what and for what end)?**

Grantees articulated gratitude for the combination of technical assistance (TA) and research team support they have received from Wallace. Many worked with Crocus on use case development and NUL on work plans and strategy, including supporting leaders of color through affinity groups. Research teams have contributed to District Partnership Team (DPT) meetings by bringing in colleagues engaged in similar work and by sharing research results, which has propelled the work forward. In terms of needs, a few grantees expressed wanting more guidance on maximizing TA offerings and on emerging needs, such as a differentiated communication strategy for different audiences and formats and incorporating uses of AI into leadership preparation.

- Excerpt: *“Continued connection with people or resources in the network who have done the subsidized clinical practice model well, including information on both the EPP and district sides. Specifically, we seek to know how it is funded and what infrastructures are in place to support it on the district and the EPP side.” (Portland)*
- Excerpt: *“Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents unique, unexplored opportunities. How can we capitalize upon AI by incorporating it into the preparation of equity-centered leaders and utilize it as a tool to help enhance leadership practices?” (San Antonio)*

**RQ: What do they see as the most influential lessons learned or actions taken?**

At the end of Year 3, grantees shared converging lessons around embedding equity across teams and refining implementation through intentional design of evaluation metrics. Expanding the reach of the equity work requires clear assignment of ownership and opportunities for personalization across different roles, which can in turn drive engagement across the district. In particular, a few grantees spotlighted the crucial role of superintendents and the significance of extending the bench to assistant principals as they propel this equity work forward. Furthermore, embedding the leader profile and definition of equity-centered leaders across the district is anticipated to yield greater retention of staff and attract a more diverse pool of candidates.

- Excerpt: *“As we are currently implementing what was envisioned in Years 1 and 2, we recognize the importance of assessing it now versus later so that timely adjustments are informed by data.” (DC)*
- Excerpt: *“Having an equity framework is not enough. The framework must be socialized and this cannot be done by simply explaining the components. Each leader, not just campus administrators, must be able to make personal connections to the framework*

*and easily share and discuss how their leadership and the choices they make on a daily basis are grounded in equity.” (San Antonio)*

- Excerpt: *“From working with the researchers, working within and across departments, and with outside partners, we have noted at times we are moving too fast and at other times, too slow. It is the nature of the creation of a sustainable project to look back and want to change, we are trying to look forward to what is needed in the lives of our students.” (Columbus)*

### **RQ: How are they engaging with the community?**

Grantees noted different forms of community engagement across Domains 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7. Some grantees solicited community voices from parent focus groups, ambassadors, and equity committees to shape the definition of equity and to “socialize the work.” Additionally, community partnerships were crucial in diversifying the candidate pool and in mapping community assets.

- Excerpt: *“We have incorporated the perspectives of our Hmong, Spanish-speaking, and Black/African American parent groups. This collaborative input from these diverse educational partners serves as a resource in defining the dispositions of educational leaders.” (Fresno)*
- Excerpt: *“The goal of this pilot was to identify strategies for effectively collecting nuanced feedback from school community members to identify community resources and needs both in and around schools.” (Baltimore)*
- Excerpt: *“As we continue to undertake the redesign of the principal selection process and include community members in the overall selection process, we want to elevate engagement with organizations that can support the district’s strategy with recruitment of underrepresented groups such as aspiring Latino/x.” (DC)*