

**This is a semi-structured interview protocol. Questions are presented in categories. Although there is some logic in the ordering, it is expected that conversations will wander in predictable and unpredictable ways. In turn, the interviewer adjusts the protocol as necessary. To the extent possible, main questions are asked as stated. Probing questions—those listed and improvised—transform the protocol into something that makes sense given who the interviewee is, what s/he shares in response to questions, and what the context suggests.**

**A. Experiences as New Principal. These questions focus on the interviewee’s experiences during first few months on the job.**

A.1. How have things been going?

A.2. In the previous interview, we talked about your expectations for your new role as principal at \_\_\_\_\_. What has gone as expected so far?

Probes: What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_?  
Can you give an example of a time when \_\_\_\_\_?

A.3. What has surprised you, or not gone as expected?

Probes: What makes \_\_\_\_\_ surprising?  
How have you responded to/handled \_\_\_\_\_?  
*[As needed, probe for the distinction between role and school, as in:]*  
What have you found surprising about your role as a school principal?  
What have you found surprising about being the principal at \_\_\_\_\_ specifically?

A.4. What has been a challenge so far? *[may come up organically in previous responses; amend accordingly]*

Probes: What made/makes \_\_\_\_\_ a challenge?  
How did/do you deal with \_\_\_\_\_?  
How prepared did/do you feel to deal with \_\_\_\_\_?  
What experiences prepared you for \_\_\_\_\_?  
How did \_\_\_\_\_ *[insert experience]* prepare you for \_\_\_\_\_ *[insert challenge]*? *[try to distinguish between ‘knowing to expect/being braced for’ and ‘being prepared to address/deal with’]*  
Are there people you have turned to for help in addressing \_\_\_\_\_?  
*[Time permitting:]* In our previous interview, you also mentioned anticipating that \_\_\_\_\_ *[insert anticipated challenge]* would be a challenge, has it been? Explain.

A.5. After your first few months on the job, how are you thinking about your goals for the year?

Probes: *[Listen for key descriptors/phrases (‘improve student achievement’ ‘create environment where all students can learn’, ‘hold teachers accountable’, etc.) and for each ask:]* What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_?  
How are you going about \_\_\_\_\_?  
How do you see \_\_\_\_\_ leading to \_\_\_\_\_? *[probe for connection between approach and intended outcome—how one thing leads to another]*  
Are there people you have turned to for help in accomplishing your goals?

A.6. In our previous interview, we asked about how principals support the development of others. How are you thinking about that part of your role now?

Probes: What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_?  
How are you supporting the development of teachers, specifically?  
How does \_\_\_\_\_ contribute to teachers’ development? *[probe for connection between approach and intended outcome—how one thing leads to another]*  
How are you supporting the development of leaders (leadership teams), specifically?  
How does \_\_\_\_\_ develop leaders?

P<sup>3</sup> Newly Hired Principal Interview – T2 (few months into the academic year)

A.7. How have staff responded so far?

Probes: To you? Your school leadership approach? Changes that you have implemented?  
How do you know?

A.8 How would you complete this sentence: Being principal is like...?

Probes: How so?  
How have the first few months fit that description?