

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.

Tell me about yourself.

Probes: How did you come to be a member of the LSC?
How long have you served on the LSC?

A. Expectations for the School Principal. These questions focus on the interviewee’s understandings of and expectations for the role of the school principal.

A.1. What is a good school principal?

Probes: [*Listen for key descriptors/phrases (‘facilitator,’ ‘sharing responsibility’ ‘instructional leader’, etc.) and for each ask:*] What do you mean by ____?
How would you know if someone had ____?
Can you tell me about a good principal that you know or remember?
How did he/she demonstrate ____?
How does ____ make for a good school principal?
If you had to describe—fairly quickly—the role of principal to someone who really didn’t know what one was or did, how would you do that?

A.2. What makes for a good principal *at this school*?

Probes: What do you mean by _____?

B. Role in Recruitment. These questions focus on the interviewee’s role in principal recruitment.

B.1. How were you involved in principal recruitment?

Probes: What does ____ involve?
How, if at all, were you involved in principal recruitment prior to this year?

B.2. How did the principal position become open?

Probes: When?
[*If applicable:*] How was it determined whether to renew the previous contract or not?

B.3. How did the LSC proceed once the position was open?

Probes: How did you get started?
Who gave you advice about the process?
What kinds of advice did they give?
From whom did you seek advice about the process?
What kinds of advice did you seek?

B.4. How did the LSC recruit people to apply for the principal position this year?

Probes: What did ____ involve?
Are there things about your school that make it difficult to recruit applicants? How so?
Are there things about your school that make it easy to recruit applicants? How so?
How did this year’s recruitment process compare to previous years?

C. Role in Hiring. These questions focus on the interviewee's role in principal selection and hiring, including decisions about which candidates to interview, decisions about the interview process and focus, and decisions about which candidate to hire.

C.1. How would you describe the group of applicants you received?

Probes: How many total applicants did you have for this position?
How did the number of applicants compare to prior years?
How were these applicants similar/different from prior applicants?

C.2. What were other LSC members' impressions of the group of people who applied to be principal?

Probes: How do you know?

C.3. What information did you receive about the applicants?

Probes: Where (or from whom) did you get information?
How did you go about gathering information?
What role did this information play in the process?

C.4. How did you narrow the pool of applicants?

Probes: On what basis (how) did you eliminate applicants?
What do you mean by ____?
How did you determine if an applicant was/had ____?
Can you provide an example of how an applicant demonstrated strength on ____?
Can you provide an example of how an applicant demonstrated weakness on ____?
How many applicants did you decide to interview?

C.5. How did the interviews go?

Probes: What was involved?
What questions did you ask?
What were you hoping to learn about the applicants?
What did you learn?
How many applicants did the LSC select as finalists?

C.6. How did the LSC select its top choice from among the finalists?

Probes: What was involved?
What do you mean by ____?
What qualities and characteristics did you focus on?
How did the selected applicant demonstrate ____?
What made other applicants less desirable?
How did you come to consensus about the decision?
If there were disagreements, what were they? How were they resolved?

C.7. When did the search conclude?

Probes: When did you make an offer to the new principal?
When did the principal accept the offer? (When was the process complete?)

C.8. What strengths does the person you selected bring to the principal position? How do you know?

C.9. In terms of the LSC's eventual evaluation, what would characterize a good first year for this new principal?