

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 involved in the work you do now?
How did you get to your current position?

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 are the qualities/characteristics that make for an ineffective school principal?

Probes: *[Listen for key descriptors/phrases and for each ask:]* What do you mean by ____?
How does ____ make for an ineffective school principal?
How would you be able to tell if someone was/would be an ineffective principal?

B. Role in LSC support: These questions focus on the interviewee’s role in supporting LSCs on issues of principal recruitment and hiring.

B.1. Can you tell us about the LSCs that you work with?

Probes: How do you come to work with a particular LSC?
What characteristics do they share? *[probe for specific location, etc.]*
How do they differ? *[probe for ES/MS/HS, ALSC/LSC, turnaround/small/new, etc.]*
Which LSCs have you worked with this past year?
Which of these have been engaged in a principal hiring process for 09-10?

B.2. How do you typically support LSCs?

Probes: What does ____ involve?
With whom (LSC chair, council, subset) do you most often interact?
How do support needs differ across LSCs? *[probe in relation to variation listed above]*
How does your role differ across LSCs? *[probe in relation to variation listed above]*

B.3. How do you typically support LSCs in the principal recruitment and hiring process, specifically?

Probes: What does ____ involve? *[probe as needed in relation to form and content of training, coaching, public meeting attendance, advocacy, feedback about candidates, etc.]*
With whom do you most often interact in this instance?
Who else assists LSCs in this process? How?

B.4. Can you describe a typical LSC recruitment and hiring process?

Probes: When do members start thinking about hiring to fill the position?
How does the process begin?
Can you walk me through a typical timeline leading up to a hire?
What role does public input and participation play in the process?
What kinds of information about candidates do the LSCs receive?
What kinds of hiring support does the district provide the LSCs?

B.5. How does the recruitment and hiring process differ among the LSCs that you support?

Probes: What do you mean by ____?
What accounts for these differences?

B.6. Can you tell us about a successful LSC principal hiring process?

Probes: What made it successful?

B.7. Can you tell us about an unsuccessful/difficult, LSC principal hiring process?

Probes: What made it unsuccessful/difficult?

B.8. What is your impression of the recruitment and hiring process *this year*, specifically?

Probes: What recruitment methods/strategies/resources did LSCs use?
How, if at all, did the new eligibility process affect recruitment?
What is your sense of the applicant pool this year?
How does this year compare with prior years?

B.9. What else should we know about how LSCs recruit and hire new principals?

C. Looking forward. These questions focus on what takes place after the new principal is hired.

C.1. In terms of the LSCs, what typically happens after the new principal is hired?

Probes: What kind of assistance does a council typically need then? From whom?
What kind of assistance does a council typically receive then? From whom?
What kind of assistance does a council typically seek then? From whom?

Closing: Given the issues we're interested in studying and the topics that have come up in the course of our conversation, are there any other people that you would suggest we speak with?

Probe: Are there LSC members who are hiring a new principal now (or recently hired a principal) and might be willing to speak with us about the process?
Are there new principals in any of the schools that you work with?