

Getting Started—A Decision Guide for TIF 4 Maine Schools for Excellence (MSFE) Districts

Model Leader Evaluation and Professional Growth Program

Introduction

The *Getting Started* decision guide will support the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) 4 Maine Schools for Excellence (MSFE) district steering committees' decision making, as committee members discuss and design leader evaluation and professional growth (LEPG) programs for principals. Although schools are often led by many formal and informal leaders, the *Getting Started* guide focuses on principals.

The document provides the MSFE district steering committees with a set of guiding questions and recommendations as members design and review the model LEPG program. A summary of key state legislation and TIF requirements is summarized in Table 1 as a reference. The model LEPG *Getting Started* decision guide should be used in conjunction with committee member use of the *Getting Started* guide for the teacher evaluation and professional growth (TEPG) programs.

Table 1. Overview of Key Legislation and Requirements, Entities Impacted, and Timelines

Maine Legislation or Grant Requirement	Summary	Entities Impacted	Estimated Implementation Start Date
<p>Maine Legislation: Legislative Document No. 1858 (2012),¹ “An Act to Ensure Effective Teaching and School Leadership”</p>	<p>This legislation requires the Maine Department of Education to collaborate with parents, educators, and community members to develop guidelines for evaluation systems for teachers and school leaders that can be adapted at the local level. The law requires the systems to have clear standards, use a four-point rating scale, and use student achievement and growth, along with other measures, to assess effectiveness. Evaluations must be conducted “regularly” and be used to inform professional development.</p>	<p>All school districts, teachers, and school leaders in the state of Maine</p>	<p>2013–14: System development</p> <p>2014–15: Piloting of evaluation systems</p> <p>2015–16: Statewide implementation</p>
<p>TIF 4 Grant Requirement: Design and implement components of a cohesive human capital management system, including performance-based compensation in high-need schools.</p>	<p>The Maine Department of Education and MSFE districts will design and then pilot the implementation of all components of the human capital management system, including principal evaluation, professional development, and a recognition and reward program.</p>	<p>Nineteen high-need schools participating within four TIF 4 MSFE districts</p>	<p>2013–14</p>
<p>TIF 4 Grant Requirement: Expand implementation of the evaluation system and human capital management system throughout participating MSFE districts.</p>	<p>MSFE districts will implement their evaluation systems with all teachers and school leaders in all schools. However, the subset of educators (from non-high-need schools) will not receive performance-based compensation using TIF grant funds.</p>	<p>All educators in high-need schools who did not pilot the system in 2013–14; all educators in the TIF 4 MSFE districts’ non-high-need schools</p>	<p>2014–15</p>

¹ 125th Maine Legislature. (2012). *Legislative Document No. 1858*. Retrieved from <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1376&item=1&snum=125>

How to Use This Guide

The *Getting Started* decision guide outlines the nonnegotiable components and locally adaptive points for the MSFE model LEPC program. The locally adaptive points are decisions that district steering committees can make with regard to LEPC program design, communication, implementation, and data collection. The nonnegotiable model components and locally adaptive points are outlined in Table 2. The guide focuses on major questions that district steering committees should answer for themselves. The questions presented in the guide will help district steering committees set agendas and make decisions.

American Institutes for Research (AIR) and MSFE staff will develop a series of follow-up decision guides that delve more deeply into the following: when and how to augment the MSFE rubric; making local decisions about observations; selecting and implementing student learning measures by leadership role; setting and monitoring learning objectives; incorporating teachers' and students' voices in evaluations; and weighting measures for summative ratings. These follow-up decision guides will walk steering committee members, step-by-step, through each of the processes, as the members design both their teacher and school leader evaluation systems. This guide, *Getting Started: A Decision Guide for Teacher Incentive Fund 4 Maine Schools for Excellence Districts: Model Leader Evaluation and Professional Growth Program*, provides a high-level look at each of these components. Links to each of these documents can be found [here](#) starting in May 2013.

Table 2. Nonnegotiable and Adaptable Components of the LEPG Model

Nonnegotiable LEPG Component	Rationale	Key Areas for Local Decision	Local Guidance Needed
<p>MSFE LEPG Rubric Structures Evaluation: The rubric consists of standards, behaviors, and performance levels.</p>	<p>These elements cannot be changed because they help support a shared language and resources across districts. Having a standard and consistent process allows the state to improve the rubric’s measurement properties (validation and reliability across multiple observers), which is otherwise a costly and time-consuming task to undertake locally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Augmentation of the rubric to include new standards ▪ Adjustment of rubric language to local terminology without substantive changes to the rubric. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritizing standards ▪ Clarifying evidence sources
<p>Multiple Measures of Effectiveness: The measures must include at least two observations, two or more student growth measures, professional goal setting, and a portfolio, that is principal-led.</p>	<p>This component is mandated by state legislation and TIF requirements. Recommendations from the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and research regarding performance evaluation point to the importance of a using multiple methods to form a holistic understanding of performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selection of one or more observation instruments ▪ Inclusion of community and parent perception data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritizing goals and focus areas ▪ Determining the number of goals to be annually addressed ▪ Determining how school- and district-improvement plans will be addressed ▪ Clarifying observation processes and procedures
<p>Meaningful Consideration of Students’ Learning and School Progress: Student learning must be a “significant” part of the final rating.</p>	<p>This component is defined by state legislation as at least 20 percent of the total score in the first year of implementation and 25 percent or more in subsequent years. A percentage lower than 20 percent may also be considered significant if the district LEPG plan prevents an educator from being rated as “effective” if the educator’s students do not demonstrate a satisfactory amount of growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definition of individual measures, weights, and targets ▪ Inclusion of student perception of classroom quality data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tailoring student learning measures to roles ▪ Determining what, if any, other student outcome measures (e.g., graduation rates) should be included in principal evaluation ▪ Determining what school or classroom climate measures to included
<p>Four Summative Effectiveness Ratings: Districts must use the MSFE model LEPG labels and definitions.</p>	<p>State legislation mandates use of labels consistent with the state definition for effectiveness. Developing a shared language and expectations for the definition of “effectiveness” also is best practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summative rating approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarifying implementation details

District steering committees should use this guide only after the committee members have read the MSFE model LEPG program document. Committees can choose to review only the relevant sections of the guide (the components of the model they know they want to adapt), or they may choose to proceed through each section.

MSFE LEPG Rubric

The MSFE LEPG Rubric² is the backbone of the LEPG. It guides principal self-assessment, the goal-setting process, the collection of evidence throughout the annual evaluation cycle, and standard-level ratings of principal performance. The rubric includes four levels—ineffective, developing, effective, and distinguished—with Maine-specific descriptions of effective leadership practices that are built on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) for Accomplished Principals. These standards are organized into three larger headings, called Core Propositions. For detailed information about the specific components of the MSFE LEPG Rubric, refer to the Model Leader Evaluation and Professional Growth Program document.

TIF 4 MSFE districts agreed to use common rubric language as part of their participation in the TIF 4 grant. However, the district steering committees are able to add additional standards to reflect their local school district priorities. District steering committees are also able to identify sources of evidence that will be used by principals and evaluators to assess performance.

² The rubric was developed in partnership with the Maine Department of Education and NBPTS as part of the TIF 3 MSFE program and revised for TIF 4 based on feedback from the TIF 3 participants

MSFE Rubric Decision Points and Guiding Questions

District Steering Committee Decision Points

Guiding Questions

Adding Standards

Is it necessary to add a standard(s) to the rubric in order to reflect local needs? If yes, how many additional standards are necessary, and under which Core Propositions will the standards be added?



1. How well does the rubric describe principal effectiveness in your district?
2. Is something missing from the rubric?
3. If something is missing, is it a standard?
4. How critical is the missing standard(s) to a leader's success in the district?
5. Is the new standard applicable to all principals, regardless of school type or professional context?
6. Is there particular language that feels unfamiliar and/or may need to be further explained for teachers or for other stakeholders?

Identifying Sources of Evidence

Does the district want to provide additional guidance or detail regarding appropriate sources of evidence for each of the rubric standards? If so, will the guidance vary by principal role or school level?



7. What principal observation documents, surveys or other processes already exist in the district that can be used to assess standards?
8. How fair, valid, reliable, and practical are the measures?
9. Will the measures yield useful information to principals?

Communication

How will the district communicate with teachers and leaders about the MSFE leadership framework?

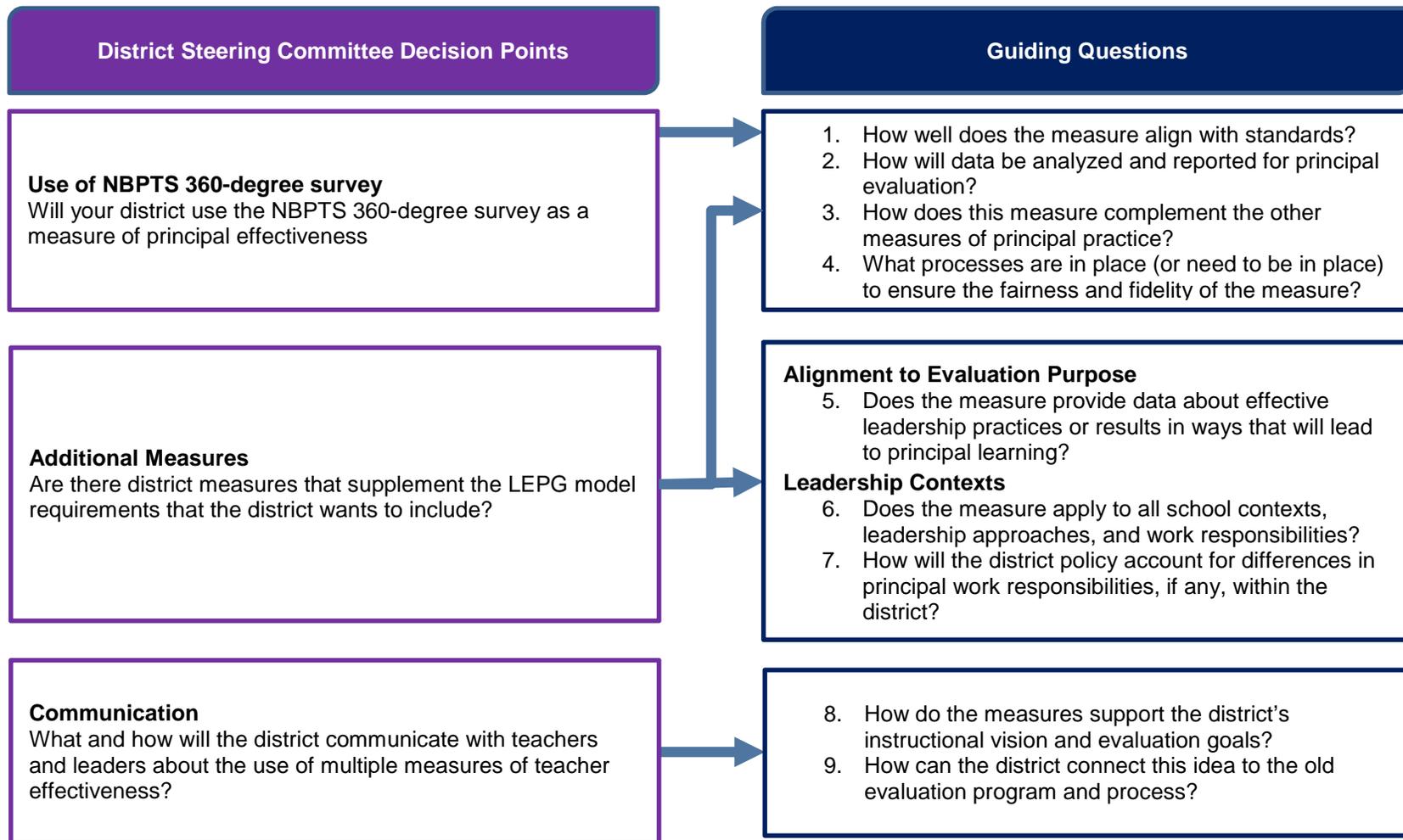


10. How will the MSFE leadership framework be incorporated into existing district processes and strategies?
11. What communication opportunities already exist that the district can build upon?

Multiple Measures of Effectiveness

The TIF 4 MSFE grant and state legislation require the use of multiple measures in each district's LEPG program. Multiple measures are particularly important for principal evaluation because principals' practices extend within and beyond the school. Required measures are outlined in the MSFE model LEPG program and include two or more student growth measures, professional goal setting, teacher input by way of 360-degree surveys, multiple observations, and a principal-led artifact review. MSFE district steering committees may select additional measures for their LEPG program, such as student or parent surveys, walkthroughs, or additional observations.

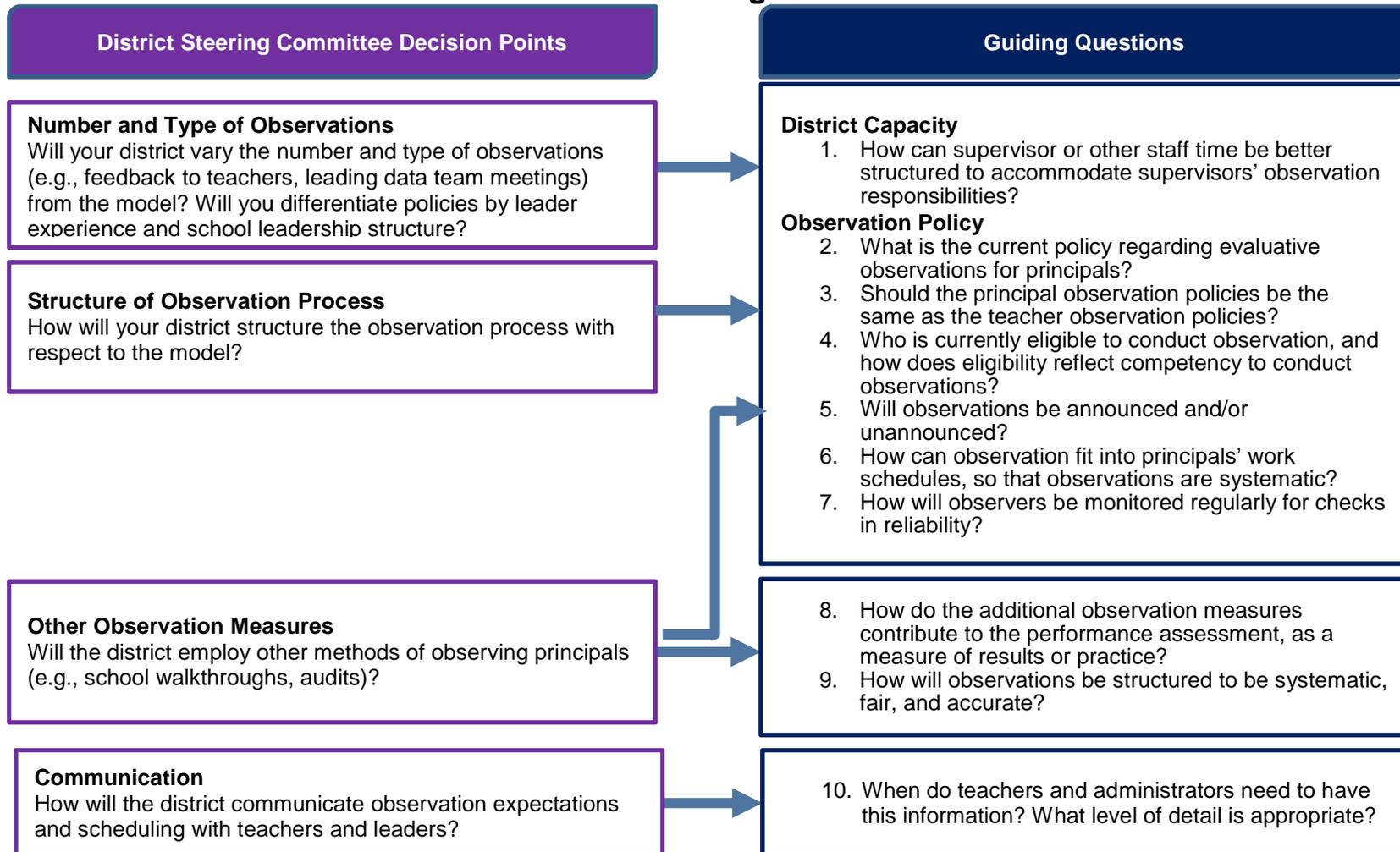
Multiple Measures of Effectiveness Decision Points and Guiding Questions



Principal Observations

The TIF 4 MSFE model LEPG program requires that all principals receive at least two (or more) observations from supervisors each year. The model recommends two types of observations for principals, at least one of which will be selected by the principal and supervisor for use in principal evaluation during an academic year. All principal observations will be announced and formal and will span the length of a meeting (typically one hour). The MSFE district steering committees can determine locally the specific requirements and processes for observations as long as all principals are observed multiple times each year.

Leader Observation Decision Points and Guiding Questions



Student Learning and School Results Measures

Principals are responsible for improving student learning, and they do so by creating organizational conditions amenable to high-quality teaching. The MSFE model LEPG includes student learning and school conditions.

As part of the TIF 4 grant, the U.S. Department of Education requires the use of multiple measures of student growth and learning to create a holistic description of leadership results. Student growth must be a “significant” component of a principal’s evaluation. The MSFE model LEPG program recommends principals be assessed on the percentage of students in the school meeting rigorously developed student learning objectives for all grades and subjects in the school. The principal will also be evaluated on the percentage of student learning objectives that are rigorously and appropriately developed by teachers. In addition to student learning objectives, the model LEPG program recommends:

- A common student growth measure is aggregated and reported at the school level. (A classroom-level student growth percentile measure using the New England Common Assessment Program is required, if it is available.)
- At least one student growth measure is identified in the school-level goals.

Although principals have an indirect effect on student learning because they are not classroom teachers, principals are responsible for setting policies and programs, allocating financial and human resources, and channeling other supports to individual teachers or groups of teachers. The MFSE model LEPG program helps ensure principals, teachers, and district-level staff members have common, agreed-upon learning targets on which to focus efforts.

The MSFE model LEPG does not require but encourages participating districts to identify classroom and school climate surveys that will be used for principal evaluation purposes. These measures recognize principals’ responsibilities for supporting teachers to create positive classroom environments for all students and for improving school climate and culture. A classroom survey, such as 7C, asks students to respond to questions about the environment a teacher creates, but survey results could be aggregated to the school level for principal evaluation. A school climate or culture survey asks teachers, parents, and other stakeholders to respond to questions about the general school environment. In contrast, 360-degree surveys about principals ask specific questions about principals’ work.

Student Learning Measures Decision Points and Guiding Questions

District Steering Committee Decision Points

Selecting Appropriate Student Learning Measures

What student learning measures and/or assessments are the district considering for inclusion in the LEPG?



Communication

When and how will the district communicate with teachers and leaders about student learning measures?



Guiding Questions

Strength of Measures

1. To what extent do the measures have research on their: (a) ability to measure student progress; (b) demonstrated impact on student achievement; and (c) demonstrated impact on teacher *and* principal practice?
2. Are the measures accurate and fair indicators of what a student is supposed to learn?

Implementation Considerations

3. How will the district work to ensure measures are rigorous and comparable across classrooms and schools?
4. To what extent are the measures intended to be aggregated as a valid measure of principal or school effectiveness?
4. Will all students' scores in both tested and nontested subjects be included in the principal evaluation system?
5. How will the selected student learning or other behavioral measures accommodate differences in school level (e.g. elementary, middle, high) or performance history?
6. How will the information be presented to principals so that it improves leadership practices?

7. What are the key anxieties the district should address in communicating about student learning measures?
8. What follow-up supports and resources will principals need?

Summative Rating Process

The MSFE model LEPG program takes a numerical approach to combining multiple practice and results measures into a single, summative effectiveness rating. The model LEPG program document includes details regarding rating categories, an approach to score calculation, and sample weights for standards and measures. The district steering committees may determine the weights to apply to each measure, and how the rating process and scores will be communicated to stakeholders.

Summative Rating Process Decision Points and Guiding Questions

District Steering Committee Decision Points

Weighting Measures

What weight will the district assign to each standard or results measure?

Combining and Rating Measures

Will the district use the model approach to rating and combining measures into a single summative score?

Communication

How will the district communicate its plan regarding the measurement and rating component of the LEPG program?

Guiding Questions

1. What is the district's definition of "significant" weight, and how does it compare with the state's definition?
2. How do the weights selected reflect and support the district's philosophy and theory of action?
3. Will the weights assigned to principal results measures differ from those assigned to teachers? If so, why?
4. Will the weight assigned to principals differ by principal experience, school performance history or organizational context? If so, why?

5. Which measures will be rated, and how often will the measures be rated? Will multiple data points roll up into a rating for each measure?
6. What is the approach currently taken in the existing evaluation process to combine multiple measures?
7. What approach will the district take to combine multiple measures that ensures student growth accounts for a "significant" portion of the rating?
8. How will the district ensure the rating approach conforms to the state's definition of each performance level?

9. When and how will evaluation results be shared with principals, teachers, and other leaders?
10. What are the next steps for principals' professional growth, and how will that information be shared?

LEPG Implementation

TIF4 MSFE districts are required to implement human capital management systems, which link professional development and performance evaluation to other human resource systems (e.g., hiring, preservice education, compensation). Regardless of school performance history, all districts must implement an improved human capital management system for principals, which includes an enhanced evaluation and professional growth component. MSFE has created an ambitious yet feasible implementation timeline, which requires implementation by 2014–15. Each district steering committee must discuss and anticipate implementation supports and challenges, particularly the questions that principals will raise about the new evaluation system. Districts also should establish a plan to monitor and use principal evaluation information for resource and staffing planning purposes and to inform other aspects of the human capital management system.

LEPG Implementation Decision Points and Guiding Questions

