

The Untapped Potential of the Principal Supervisor:

How Support for School Leaders Should Change

One of the biggest challenges of 2020-21 was translating instruction to the virtual environment — and the role of the school leader was critical. In working with school leaders, we increasingly see that the support of district leadership can be a difference-maker. When district principal supervisors focus on coaching, their impact is magnified — but too often, that isn't the case. In April, we released a report to provide four strategies for how principal supervisors can shift their role into a coaching position. The first strategy is to be a visible partner and model being a lead learner. Dr. Roddy Melancon, principal of Gonzales Primary School, and his principal supervisor, Dr. Latatia Johnson, gave us an inside look into how they have shifted to be visible leaders **and** learners in Ascension Parish Schools, Louisiana (see below).

Drs. Melancon and Johnson show that when leaders spend time with principals and actively engage as learners, they contribute to the development of a culture of reflection and continuous improvement. To read more strategies for district leaders to strengthen their support for school leaders, visit [NIET.org](https://www.niet.org).

THE FOUR STRATEGIES

1. Be a visible partner and model being a lead learner.
2. Develop a common vision and consistently use a shared language that describes expectations for principals around the instructional leadership aspects of their role.
3. Establish a coaching, feedback, and support system that is aligned with expectations in evaluation.
4. Create opportunities for collaboration and capacity-building.



Read more at [NIET.org/research-and-policy](https://www.niet.org/research-and-policy).

RM: “Dr. Johnson challenged me to be visible as an instructional leader. She modeled with me, and she pushed me to become more involved in activities like PLCs and conversations around student work.”

RM: “I had to show that I prioritized instructional leadership, protect that time, and not always be the one to leave the room to handle every issue or crisis. Looking back, it was very easy to switch to an instructional leader mindset by being visible. It was being visible in PLCs and engaging in conversation, being visible when teachers were doing planning and getting involved in looking at student work, and being visible and engaged in the learning of every student in the class.”

LJ: “I attend every leadership team meeting on my campuses that I can. From there, we follow up, and I support principals during walk-throughs. I find that if we put it on our calendars and we commit to ‘This is what we’re doing, this is when we’re going in, these are the discussions that we’re having,’ that works for us.”

LJ: “Like anything that takes place in a school, it’s about establishing trust with the principal and getting them to recognize that it’s a partnership. I want results for their students and their teachers just like they want results for their students and their teachers.”