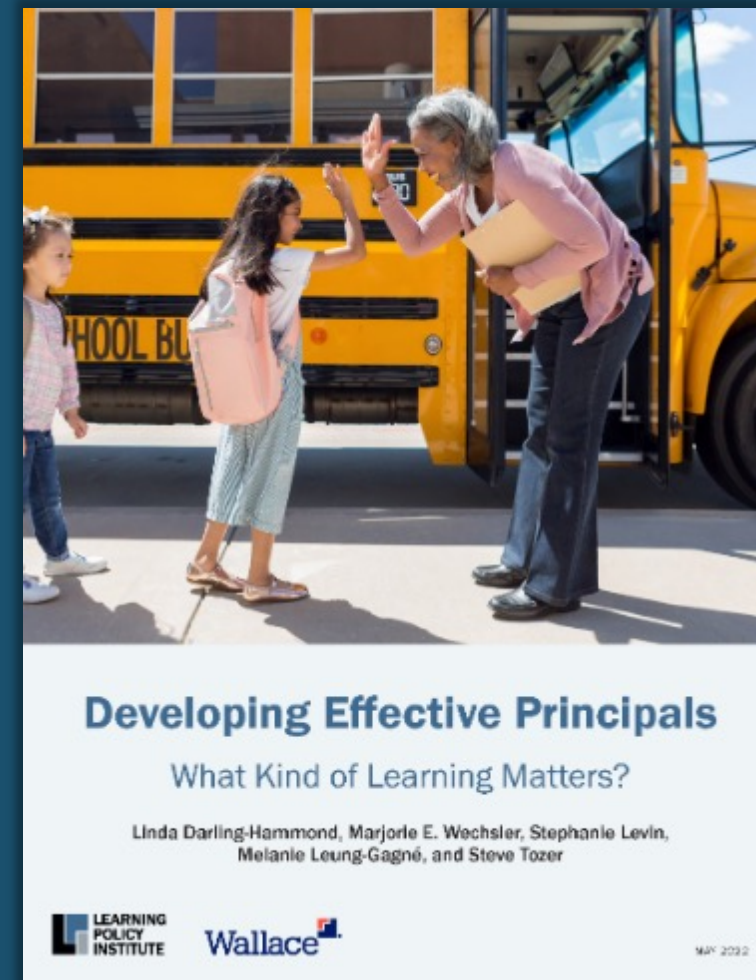


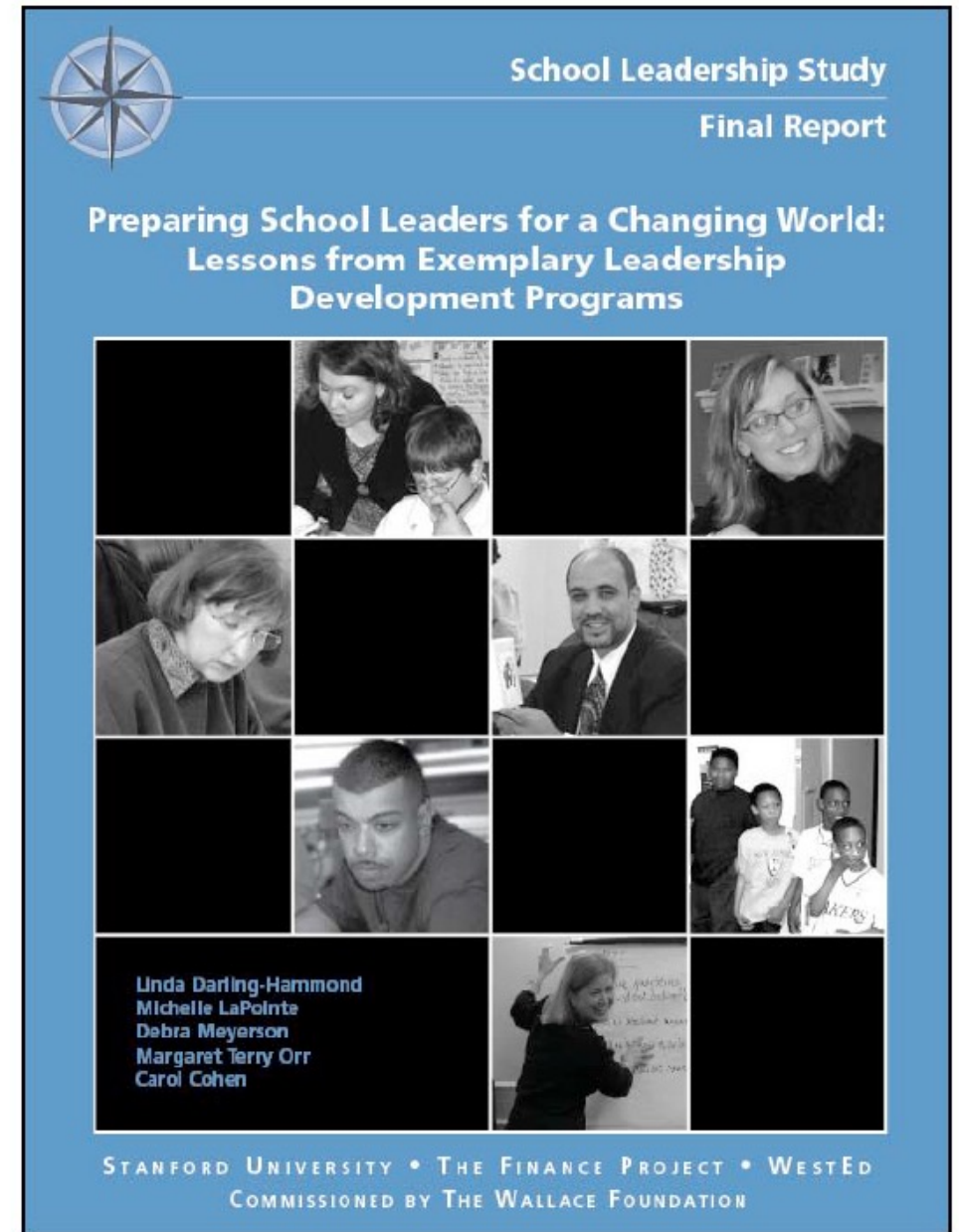
Developing Effective Principals

What Kind of Learning
Matters?



From 2007: *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World*

- ▶ Effective principal preparation and development programs can transform practice and increase principals' success
- ▶ Powerful preparation increases the likelihood of candidates entering and staying in the principalship





“It is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership.”

Principals matter

Grissom, J. A., Egalite, A. J., & Lindsay, C. A. (2021). *How principals affect students and schools: A systematic synthesis of two decades of research.* (p. 43). The Wallace Foundation.

Research questions and methods

Research question

Primary method

What are the **features and outcomes** of high-quality principal learning? How do these matter?

Research synthesis and original study

To what extent do principals have **access** to high-quality learning opportunities?

Survey analysis

What is the role of **policy** in shaping principal learning?

Policy scan

Comprehensive principal preparation and professional development are positively associated with benefits:

Principals

- ▷ Perceptions of effectiveness
- ▷ Attitudes
- ▷ Skills
- ▷ Efficacy

Teachers

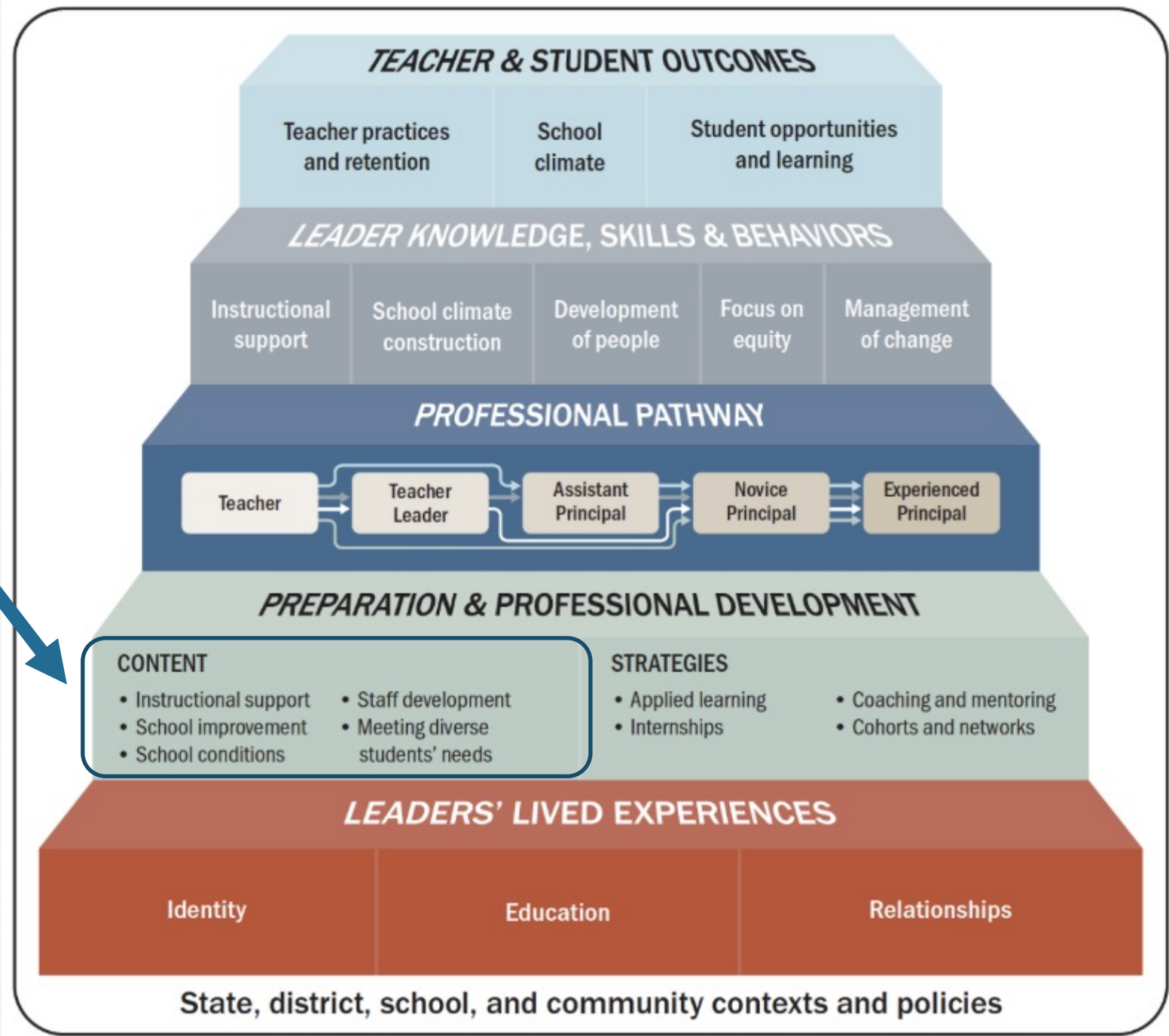
- ▷ Satisfaction
- ▷ Retention

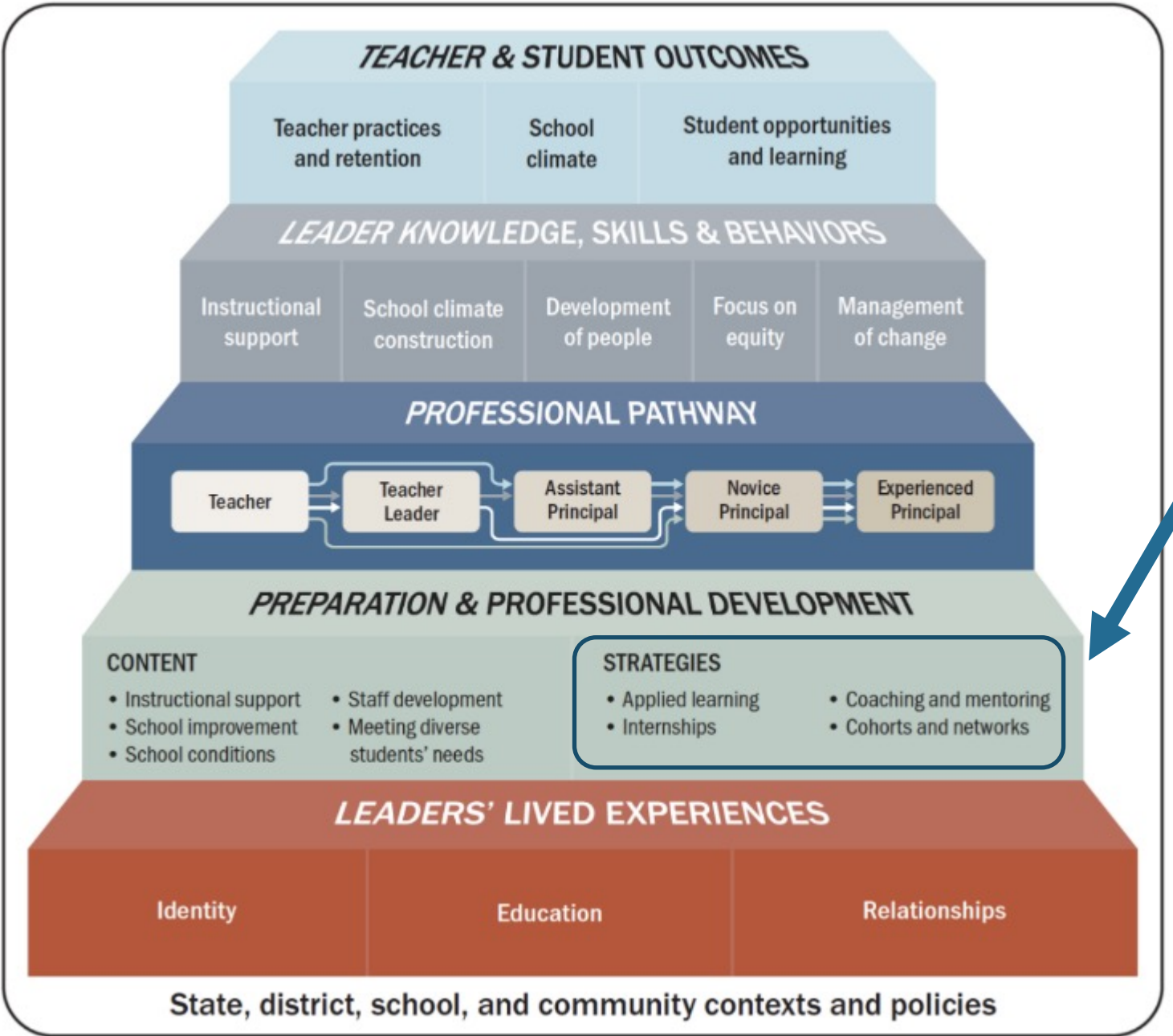
Students

- ▷ Attendance
- ▷ Achievement
- ▷ Graduation rates

Content

- ▷ Instruction
- ▷ School improvement
- ▷ School conditions
- ▷ Staff development
- ▷ Meeting students' needs





Strategies

- ▷ Applied learning
- ▷ Internships
- ▷ Coaching and mentoring
- ▷ Cohorts and networks

Principals Find Comprehensive Programs Powerful

For me, it was the structure of the program, the projects, the way we would read something and reflect on it and have a concentrated amount of time to apply those concepts ... and it was through the application that you could see the big picture. The learning-by-doing had the biggest impact on me and that came from the structure of the program (Braun et al., 2013, p. 176).

Now I have an understanding of what it means to create and try to live by a vision, so that it guides any decisions that I make. That's a whole new understanding of what it means to be an instructional leader (Perez et al., 2011, p. 239).

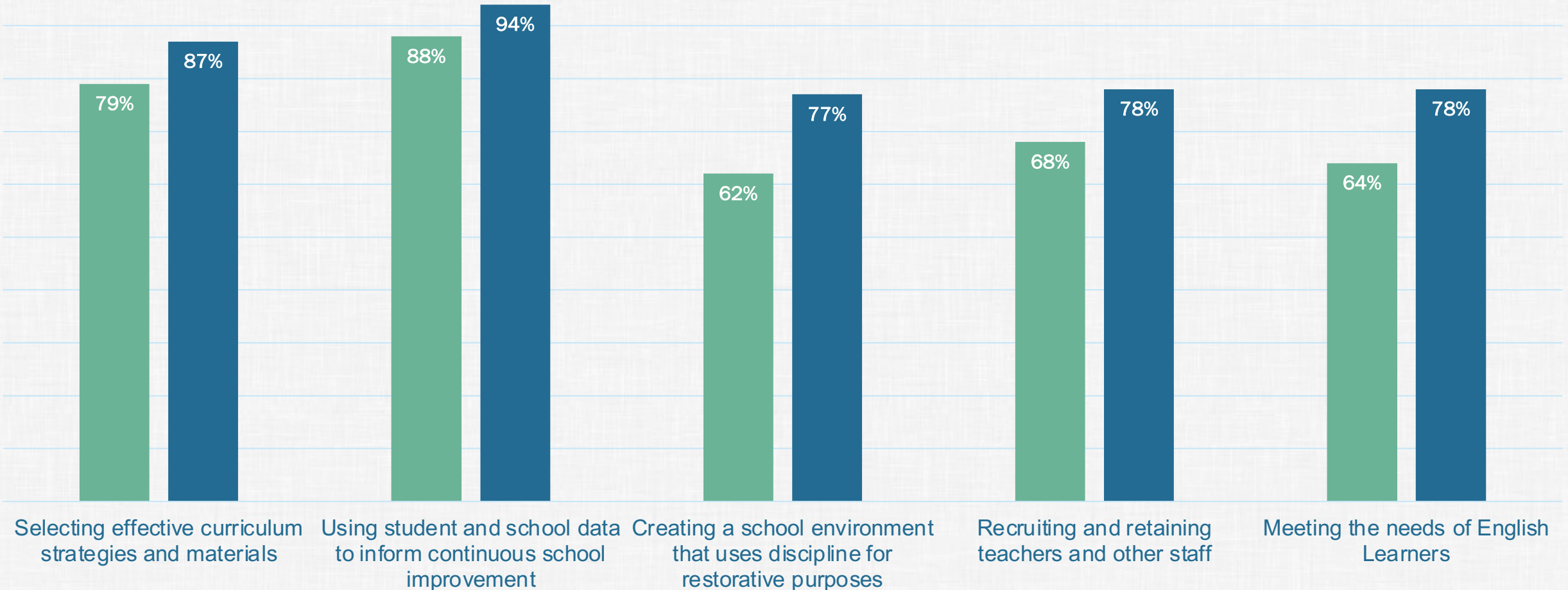
I used to think that the core work was about managing people and a school. Now I think it's about ensuring that there is a transformation, and, in order to do that, [principals] have to make sure that everyone is learning and engaged in the transformation (Perez et al., 2011, p. 241).

Access to important content in preparation has improved, nationally

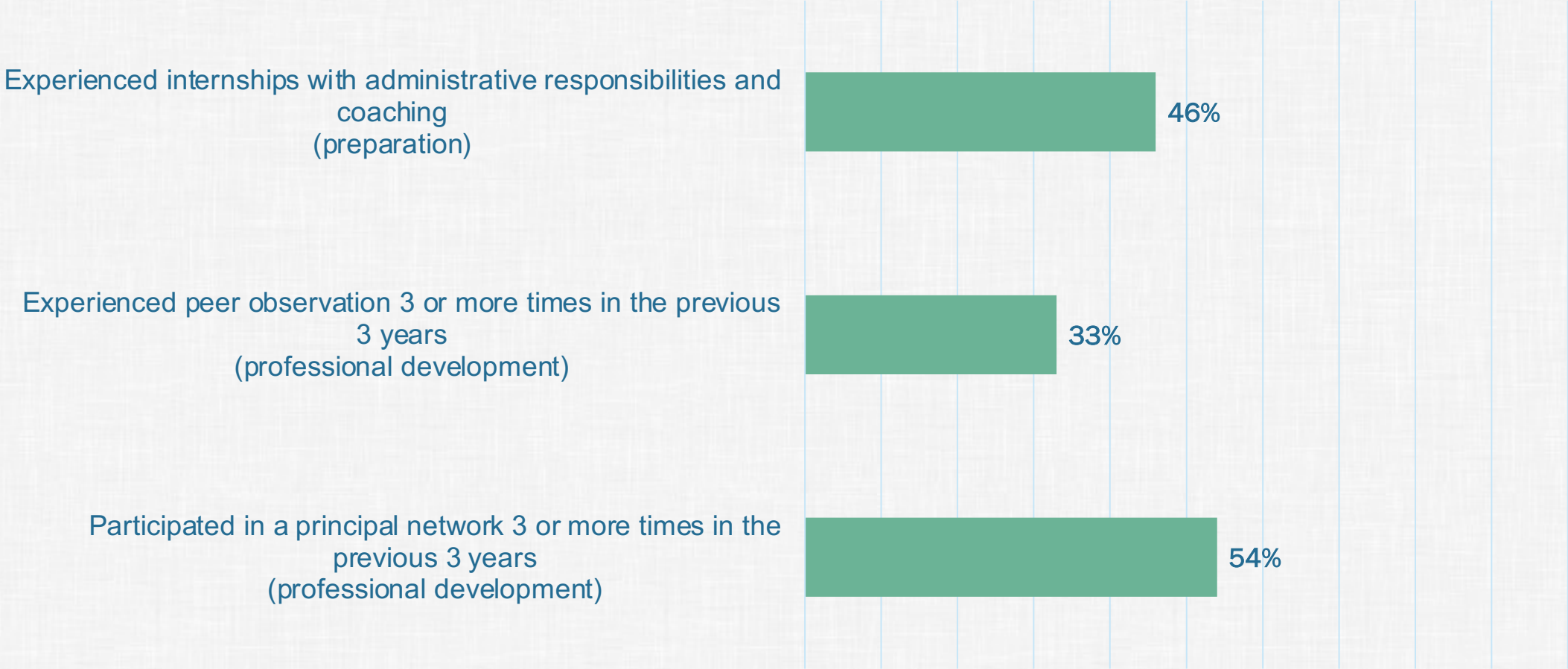
- ▶ Over two-thirds of principals had access to all important content areas associated with
 - Instructional leadership
 - Leading and managing school improvement
 - Shaping teaching and learning conditions
 - Developing people
 - Meeting the needs of learners

Access to key content in preparation is increasing

■ Certified over 10 Years Ago ■ Certified in the Past 10 Years



But fewer principals report access to high-leverage learning opportunities



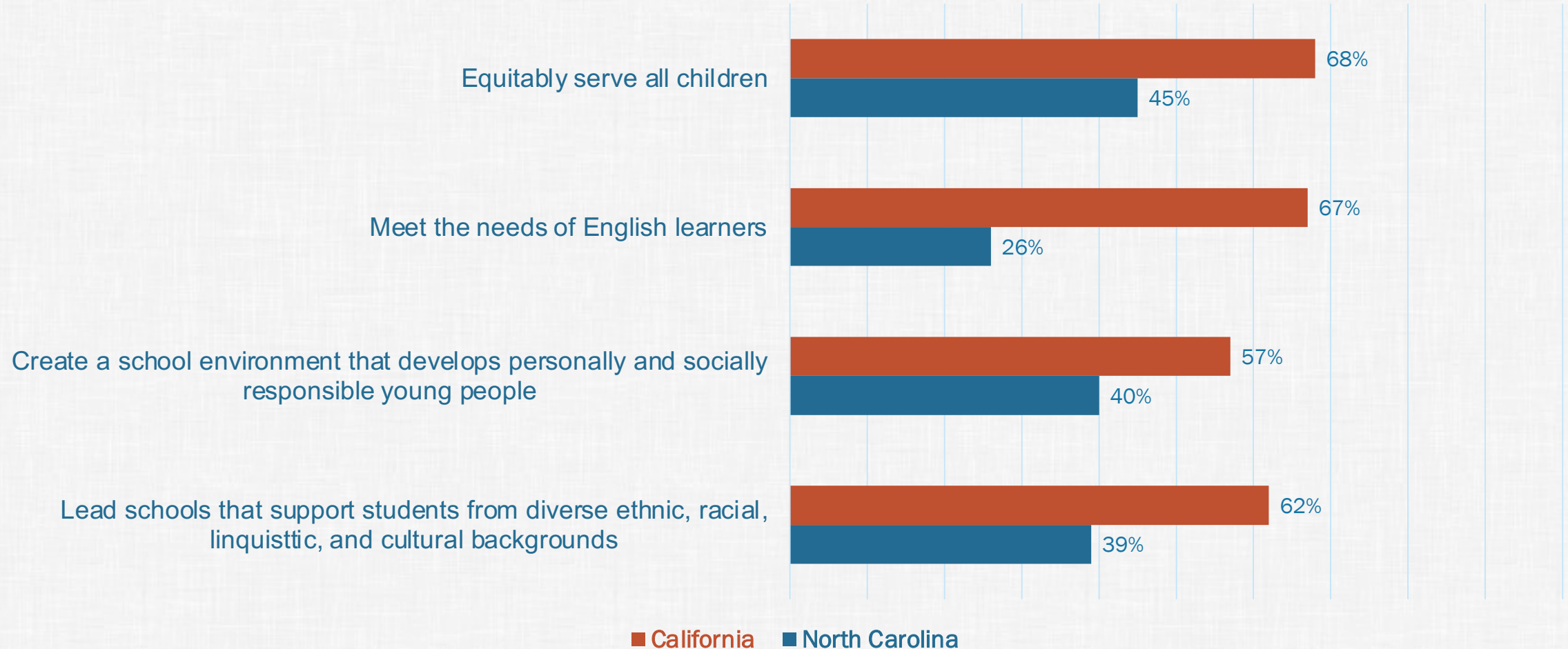
Coaching

“I learned the importance of following up with a discussion about the walk-through, especially with new teachers or teachers with whom you are concerned. I learned that I should concentrate on the strengths of the teacher and be careful of how you address the areas in which the teacher might need further professional development. I learned that in order for the teacher to really receive and act on feedback given, the way in which you give that feedback is so very important.... I learned that being specific as to what was observed is critical and [that] in delivering the message it is a good idea to do it in person.... I learned that it is important to use the proper observation format. I also learned that when delivering feedback, you should be [as] specific as possible.” (Ovando, 2006, p. 178).

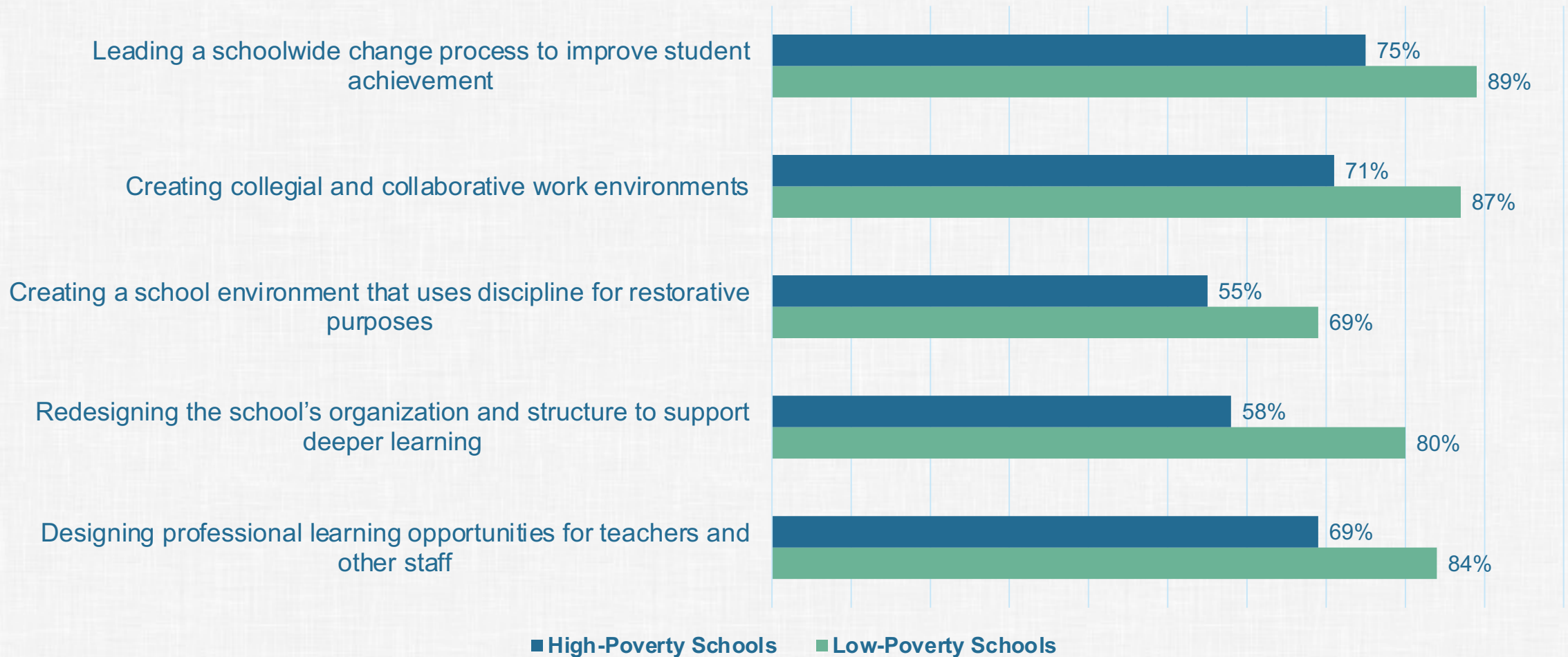
Professional Learning Communities and Networks

“For me, I think this group has been important because I do not feel isolated. Before, I felt like I was practicing in isolation, because you are at your own school, and you have all these issues that arise, and issues that you do not really talk to your teachers about. So it was nice to have a sounding board, being able to talk and share experiences with people who were facing similar issues. We were eventually able to problem-solve around those issues together.”

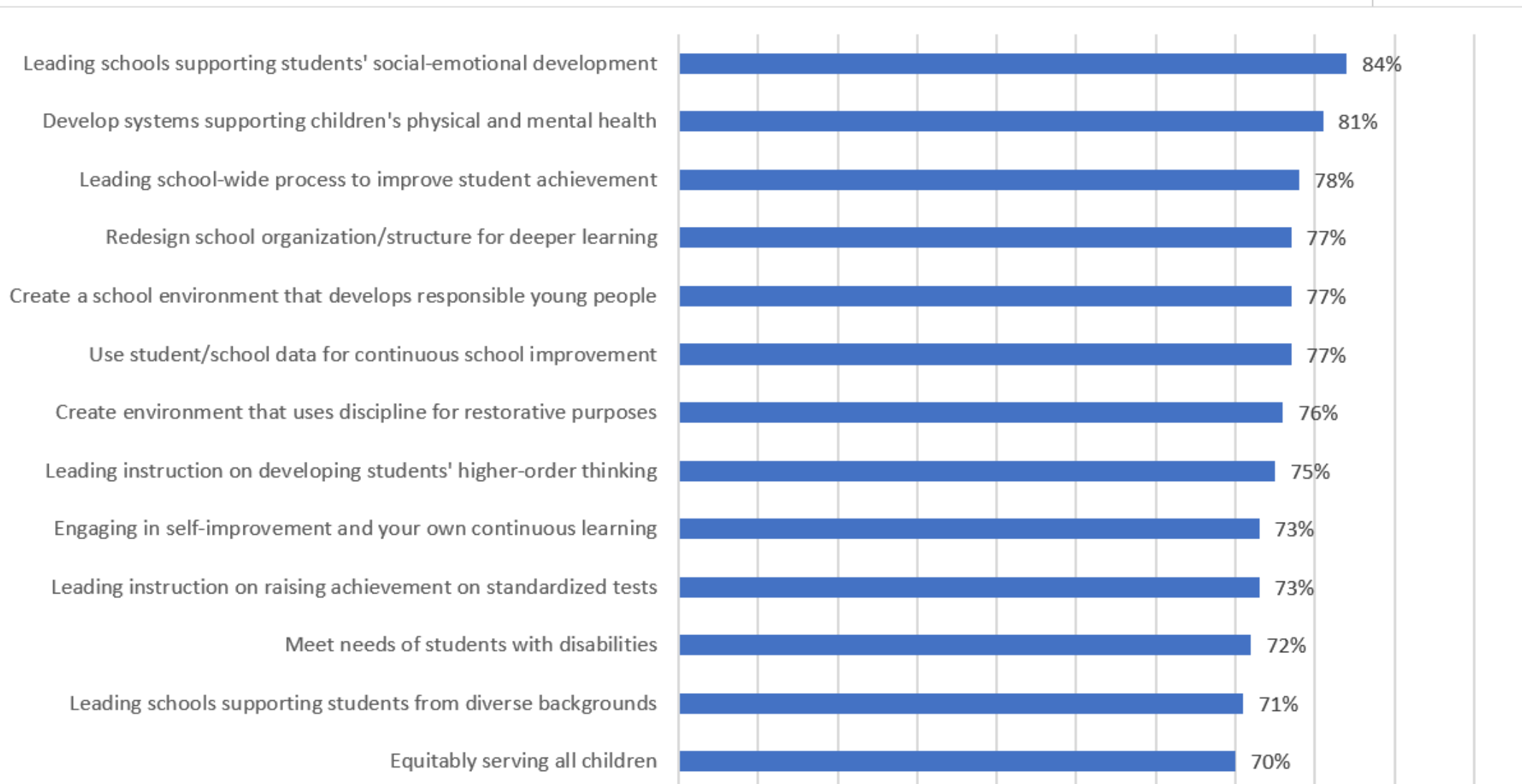
Access to professional development differs across states



Access also differs by school poverty level



What Professional Development Do Principals Want?





Principal Development Policy

Changes Over Time & Influence on Practice

Standards have evolved over time

In 2005,

- 6 states focused on *knowledge and skills to support student learning*;
- 28 additional states mentioned these skills, but ½ did not specify the knowledge or skills.

By 2014,

- 35 states revised licensure standards.
- All 50 states had adopted the ISSLC standards and mentioned skills to support student learning.

In 2018,

- The field developed the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards.
- These reinforced an emphasis on equity and clinical practice tied to meaningful coursework.

States have adopted competing approaches to principal policy

- ▶ All 50 states are engaged in policy to improve principal quality. Many are using ESSA funds to do so.
- ▶ A growing number of states are pursuing new leadership standards, licensure requirements, clinical approaches, coaching and mentoring, team training, and academies.
- ▶ However, most are pursuing both stronger requirements for programs and licensing based on new standards and alternative pathways.
- ▶ The fastest growing sector is on-line (often for-profit) training programs
- ▶ Policy reforms *can* make a difference in outcomes: e.g., CA, IL

(ECS, 2018; New Leaders, 2018)



Policies that support high-quality principal learning programs can make a difference.

Use of high-leverage policies

Program approval criteria

- ▶ Proactive candidate recruitment & selection*
- ▶ Use of school leadership standards
- ▶ Clinically-rich internships*
- ▶ Strong IHE-district partnerships*
- ▶ Regular state oversight with feedback*

Candidate licensure criteria

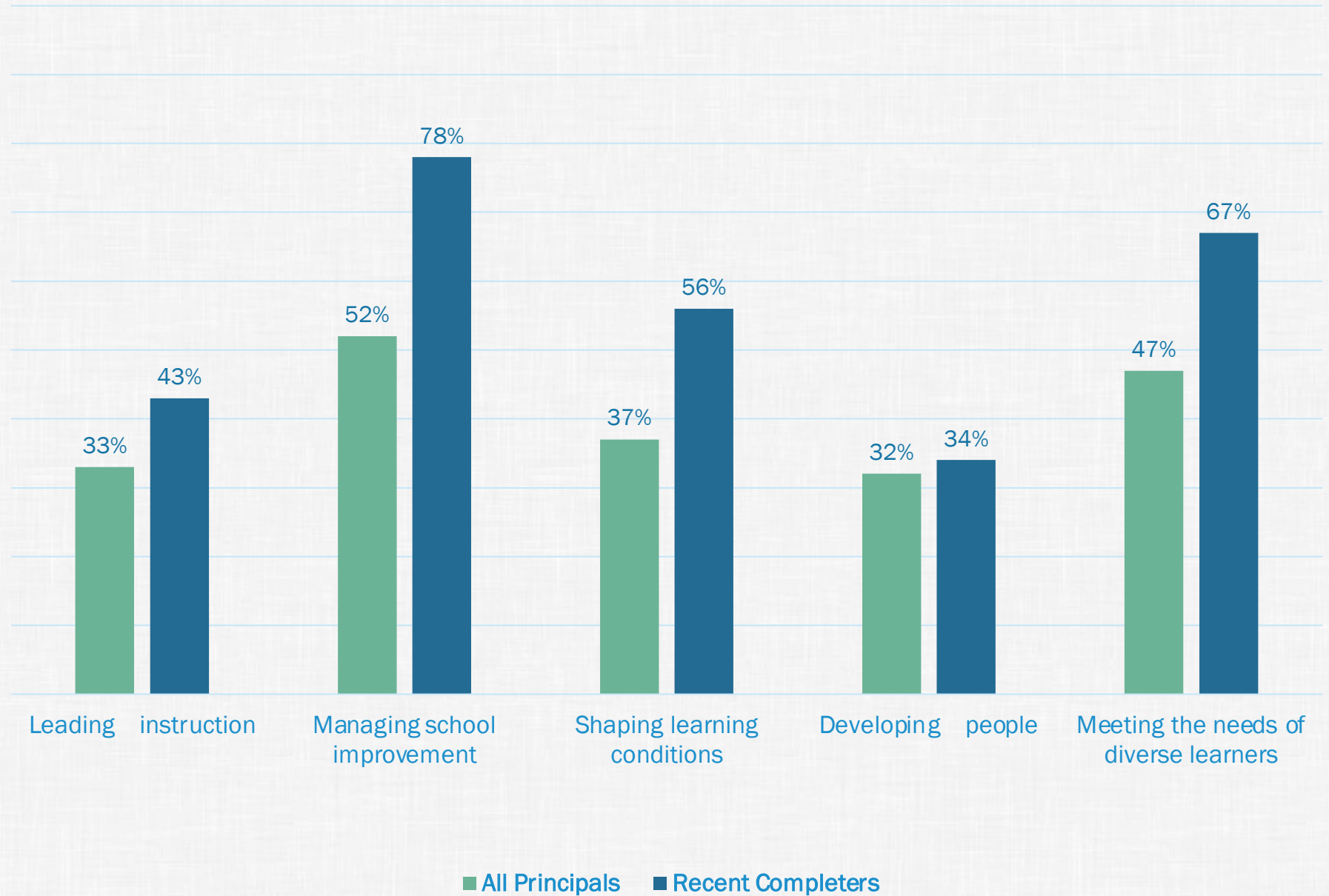
- ▶ Experience and education requirements*
- ▶ Assessment including portfolio review
- ▶ License renewal with continuing education

*UCEA-developed criteria for examining state licensing and program approval policies.



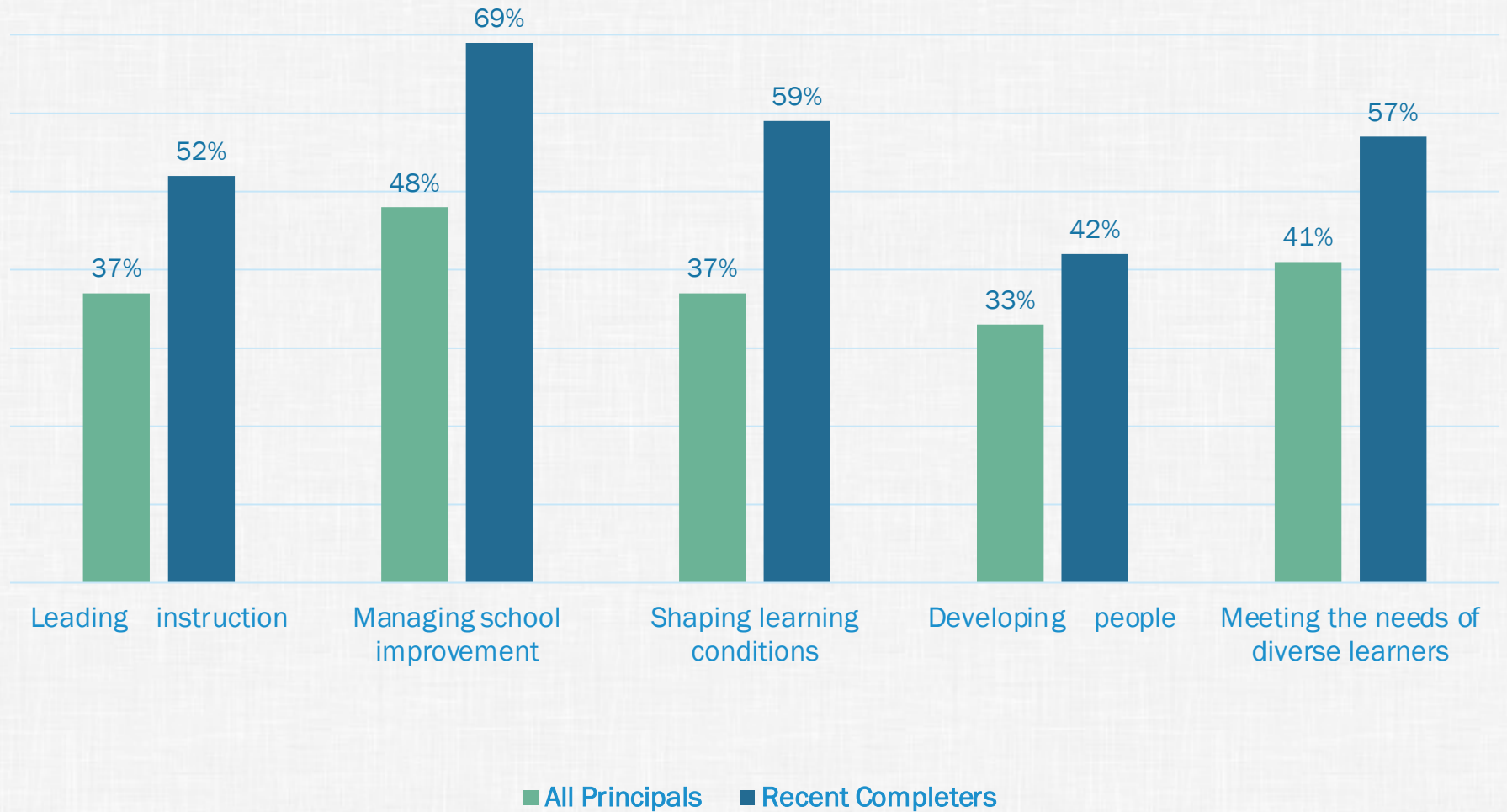
Policy changes appear to influence principals' access to learning about key topics...

(California: before & after reforms)



... and the extent to which principals feel well-prepared

(California: before & after reforms)



Stronger program approval requirements in Illinois produced positive changes in preparation programs

New requirements:

- Program-district partnerships
- Rigorous selection
- Alignment with standards
- Yearlong internship
- Competency-based assessments



Led to positive changes:

- Stronger partnerships
- Shift from quantity to quality in recruitment and enrollment
- Revamped curriculum
- Greater attention to diversity
- More meaningful internships
- Focus on continuous improvement

Urban Pipeline Project Netted Positive Learning Gains Plus Greater Principal Retention

Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC

Denver, Colorado

Gwinnett County, Georgia

Hillsborough County, Florida

New York, New York

Prince George's County, Maryland

- Adopted **standards of practice and performance** to guide principal preparation, hiring, evaluation, and support
- Delivered **high-quality preservice preparation to high-potential candidates**, typically through in-district programs and partnerships with university programs
- Used **selective hiring and placement, informed by data** on candidates' demonstrated skills, to match principal candidates to schools
- **Aligned on-the-job evaluation and support** for novice principals with an enlarged role for principal supervisors in instructional leadership.

Implications for policy and practice

- ▶ Develop and better use state licensing and program approval standards
- ▶ Encourage greater attention to equity
- ▶ Invest in a statewide infrastructure for professional learning (e.g. Principals' Academies)
- ▶ Build local pipelines



Developing Effective Principals

What Kind of Learning Matters?

Linda Darling-Hammond, Marjorie E. Wechsler, Stephanie Levin,
Melanie Leung-Gagné, and Steve Tozer



MAY 2022