

Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education Technical Manual

Principal leadership is an essential element of successful schools. To date, much of the work on developing educational leadership for school improvement has focused on licensure, program accreditation, and professional development, including coaching and mentoring. The identification and development of effective leadership, however, has been significantly hampered by the paucity of technically sound tools for assessing and monitoring the performance of school leaders. Until the publication of the VAL-ED, there have been few school leadership assessment instruments that have undergone scientific, psychometric development.

The Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) is an evidenced-based, multi-rater rating scale that assesses principals' learning-centered leadership behaviors known to directly influence teachers' performance, and in turn students' learning. The VAL-ED measures critical learning-centered leadership behaviors for the purposes of diagnostic analyses, performance feedback, progress monitoring, and professional development planning.

The VAL-ED measures *core components* and *key processes*. Core components refer to characteristics of schools that support the learning of students and enhance the ability of teachers to teach. Key processes refer to how leaders create and manage those core components.

The Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) is conceptually and theoretically grounded and its resulting scores are reliable and valid for purposes of evaluating learning-centered leadership. The VAL-ED uses 360 degree feedback from teachers, principals, and supervisors. Content is focused on learning-centered leadership behaviors that influence teachers and staff, and in turn are related to increases in student achievement. Assessment is of leadership behaviors, not knowledge, dispositions, or personal characteristics of leadership. The VAL-ED requires respondents to identify evidence on which they are basing their assessment of principal behaviors. The psychometric properties of the VAL-ED are clearly documented. Information on norms, standards, and uses are available through a comprehensive technical manual.

The VAL-ED is designed to provide a summary of effectiveness of a principal's learning-centered leadership behaviors during the current school year. A comprehensive picture has emerged and is reported with input from teachers, the principal's supervisor and his or her own self-report. The VAL-ED focuses on leadership behaviors defined by six core components and six key processes known to influence student achievement:

Core Components:

1. High Standards for Student Learning
2. Rigorous Curriculum
3. Quality Instruction
4. Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior
5. Connections to External Communities
6. Performance Accountability

Key Processes:

1. Planning
2. Implementing
3. Supporting
4. Advocating
5. Communicating
6. Monitoring

Porter, A.C., Murphy, J., Goldring, E., Elliott, S.N., Polikoff, M.S., & May, H. (2008). *Vanderbilt assessment of leadership in education: Technical Manual*. Learning Sciences Institute: Vanderbilt University.