



MULTI-ROLE ADMINISTRATORS – CASE STUDIES

Prepared for WASA, WSSDA, REC, & AESD

October 2025

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INTRODUCTION

In Washington State the current fiscal environment requires that state education leaders **communicate current conditions and innovative efforts to address fiscal challenges** to the broader community. Small and rural school districts are particularly in need of support due to legislative debate on school consolidation as a method for reducing public funding to K-12 education. To inform this debate, state education leaders need to study current conditions, illuminate fiscally responsible practices, and communicate findings to the public. This research process will **provide effective research-based best practices to all K-12 districts**, especially small and rural districts, for mitigating budget shortfalls.

To support this need, Hanover Research (Hanover) has partnered with these **state education organizations** to study small and rural district conditions and innovative budgeting strategies:

- ❖ Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA)
- ❖ Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSD)
- ❖ Rural Education Center (REC)
- ❖ Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD)

Hanover has proposed a **five-phased, mixed methodological approach** to studying small and rural district fiscal practices:

- ❑ Phase I Case Studies: Multi-Role Administrators
- ❑ Phase II Case Studies: Cooperative Agreement Strategies
- ❑ Phase III Benchmarking & Best Practices: Effective Use of Educational Service Districts
- ❑ Phase IV State-Wide Approaches for Supporting Small and Rural Districts
- ❑ Phase V Critical Services Priorities Analysis

PHASE I: MULTI-ROLE ADMINISTRATORS CASE STUDIES

Washington's state level education organizations – WASA, WSSDA, REC, & AESD – needs to support small and rural school districts with research to communicate their current fiscal environments and illustrate their innovative methods for mitigating budget challenges. Amid Washington State's fiscal crisis and debate over how much the state can fund public institutions, small and rural districts have often employed **multi-role administrators**—combining several administrator functions such as curriculum, finance, and technology into a single human resource—to ensure education dollars are invested directly in students and classrooms rather than administrative overhead. Because of their size, small districts find it difficult to communicate the benefits of these combined roles to their communities and to state legislators.

To support this need, these state education organizations partnered with Hanover to conduct in-depth interviews with small and rural district superintendents and school board presidents to understand the benefits and fiscal impacts of the multi-role administrator budget strategy. The project objectives are:



- ✓ Explore district leaders' experiences with multi-role administrator positions, including benefits and drawbacks.



- ✓ Identify both budgetary and operational impacts of the multi-role administrator strategy on small, rural WA districts.

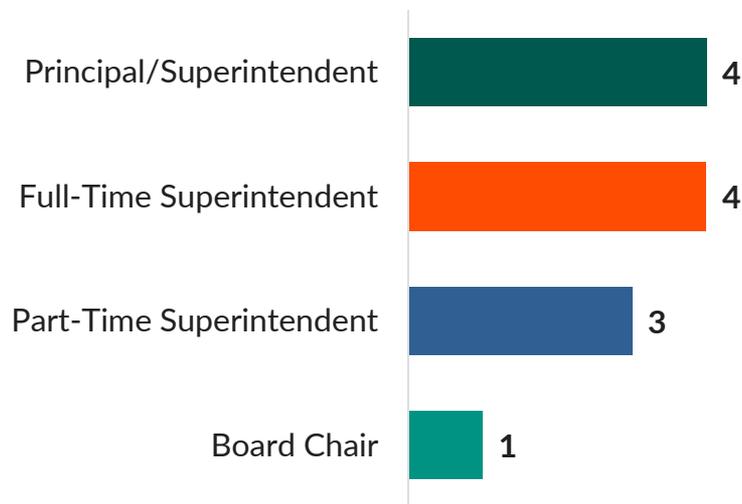


- ✓ Understand circumstances where districts choose to pursue a multi-role administrator strategy, including alternative strategies that may exist.

METHODOLOGY AND STATISTICS

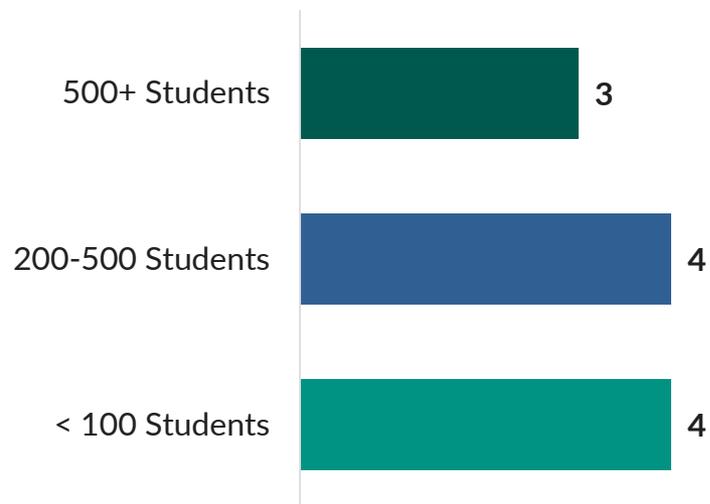
Hanover conducted **eleven (11) interviews** with current district leaders (e.g., superintendents, board presidents) at small, rural public-school districts across the state of Washington. To further enhance confidentiality, limited attributions will be included with quotations.

Participants by Role



**Participants may represent more than one type of role (e.g., part-time, full-time)*

Participants by School Enrollment



Note: Qualitative research is exploratory and designed to add insight and a depth of understanding to a particular question or topic. Qualitative findings provide commonalities and trends but are not intended to be statistically significant or to provide generalizable conclusions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this report, Hanover recommends the following:

 **Highlight the cost savings and existing efficiencies of multi-role administrators in legislative advocacy.** Small districts report reducing administrative expenses by more than half by combining superintendent, principal, and other central office responsibilities into single roles, with some noting savings as high as 60 to 70 percent compared to hiring separate full-time positions. State level education organizations should emphasize these figures in legislative testimony and policy briefs to demonstrate that small districts already are proactively consolidating internally, eliminating the need for forced district consolidation, and are reinvesting savings into student-centered priorities such as smaller class sizes and enrichment activities.

 WASA, WSSDA, REC, and AESD can help counter consolidation arguments with **clear, coordinated advocacy** that highlights districts' near-universal opposition to mergers due to threats to community identity and added costs like transportation. Advocacy toolkits with talking points, infographics, and case studies can equip both superintendents and state level staff to demonstrate that **multi-role administrators often deliver the efficiencies consolidation claims to achieve.**

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

-  **Advocate for adjustments to the state apportionment model to better reflect small district realities.** All participants describe being funded for only a portion of their administrative needs, leading them to rely heavily on voter-approved local levies. State level education organizations should use these findings to push for a more equitable apportionment formula that acknowledges the fixed structural costs of operating small, rural districts and provides sustainable support for essential leadership positions.
-  **Strengthen collaborative networks to support administrators and amplify advocacy.** Participants share that individual efforts to engage with state legislators are often ineffective, but they find participating in **regional or statewide superintendent groups** is successful at delivering a **more powerful, unified message with policymakers** (e.g., data-driven talking points, coordinated visits). These networks also provide **critical peer support** for administrators who frequently manage multiple roles in isolation; for example, several participants credit their collaborative networks with sharing strategies, exchanging resources, and helping them sustain resilience in demanding positions. By leveraging State level organizations' own network and resources to support more cross-district collaboration, these organizations can both increase the effectiveness of legislative advocacy and ensure rural district leaders remain supported, connected, and equipped to meet community needs.



ROLE-SPECIFIC FINDINGS



SUPERINTENDENT-PRINCIPAL



Hanover Definition: *A superintendent-principal is a single administrator who simultaneously serves as both the chief executive of a school district and the instructional leader of a school building, overseeing district-wide operations and day-to-day school management.*

Strengths of Model

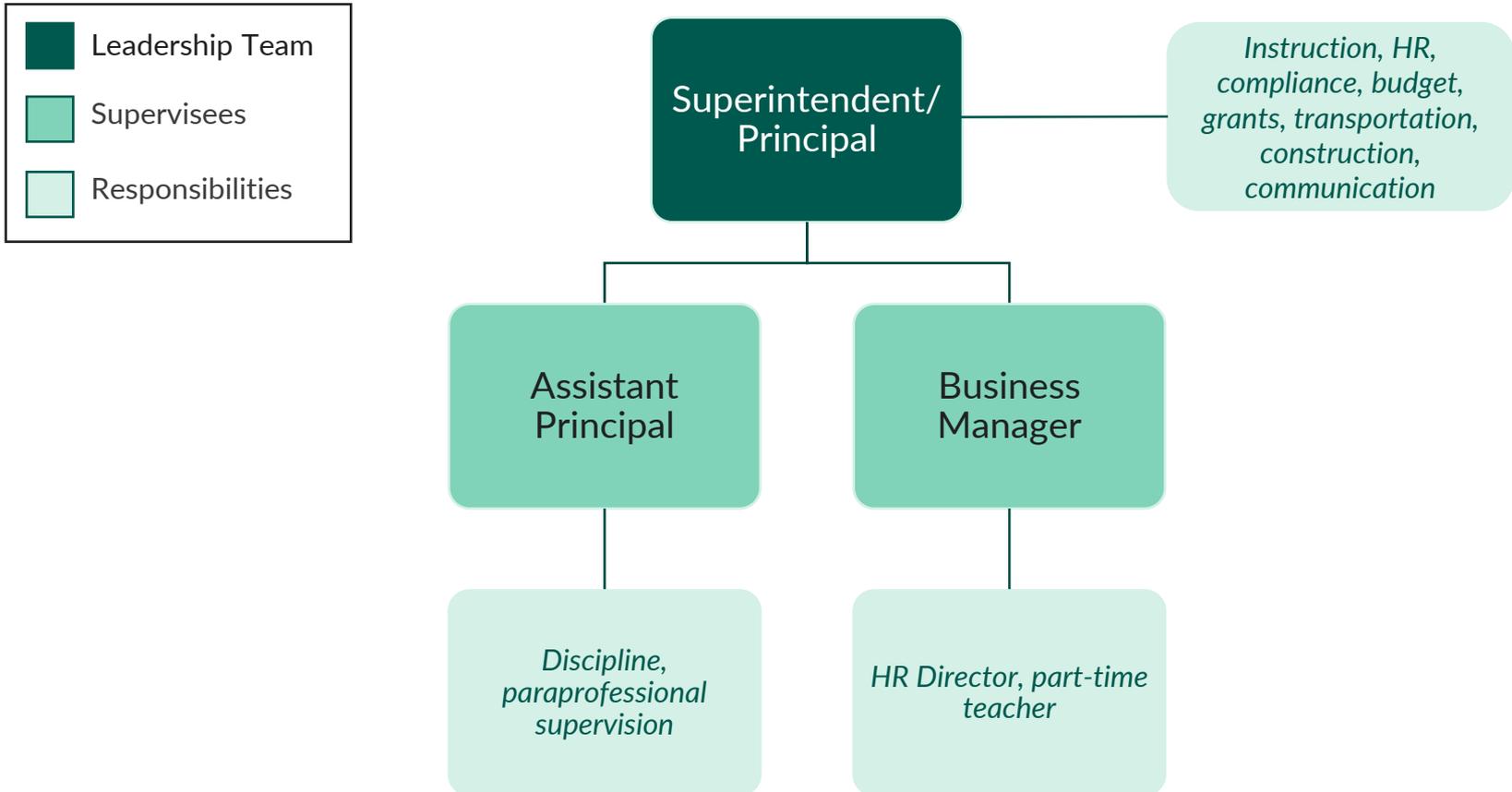
Unified Perspective and Decision-Making	Administrators gain a comprehensive understanding of both district-wide and building-level needs, enabling more coherent and aligned decisions that benefit the entire system.
Direct Influence & Accountability for School Success	Overseeing both district and school operations allows administrators to shape school culture, instructional practices, and student outcomes, while fostering a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for results.
Streamlined Communication and Transparency	Communication between district leadership, school staff, and the board is more direct, transparent, and consistent, reducing misunderstandings and building trust.
Efficient Implementation of Initiatives	The dual role allows for quicker and more effective rollout of programs, policies, and strategic plans, as the administrator can coordinate efforts without interdepartmental barriers.
Enhanced Staff Support and Collaboration	Administrators can more easily provide hands-on support to teachers and staff (e.g., daily interactions, collaboration, PD, shared goals).

Challenges of Model

Role Overload and Risk of Burnout	Administrators consistently report that managing both district and school operations can lead to an unwieldy volume of responsibilities, often leading to stress, long hours, and challenges maintaining work-life balance.
Limited Time for Strategic & Instructional Leadership	Daily operational duties frequently crowd out time for strategic planning, professional development, and instructional leadership, resulting in some areas receiving less attention than needed.
Challenges in Role Clarity and Evaluation	Both staff and board members sometimes struggle to distinguish between the administrator's principal and superintendent functions, complicating communication, advocacy, and performance evaluation.
Difficulty Navigating State Requirements	Staying current with changing state requirements and mandates is especially challenging without dedicated support, increasing the risk of compliance issues.

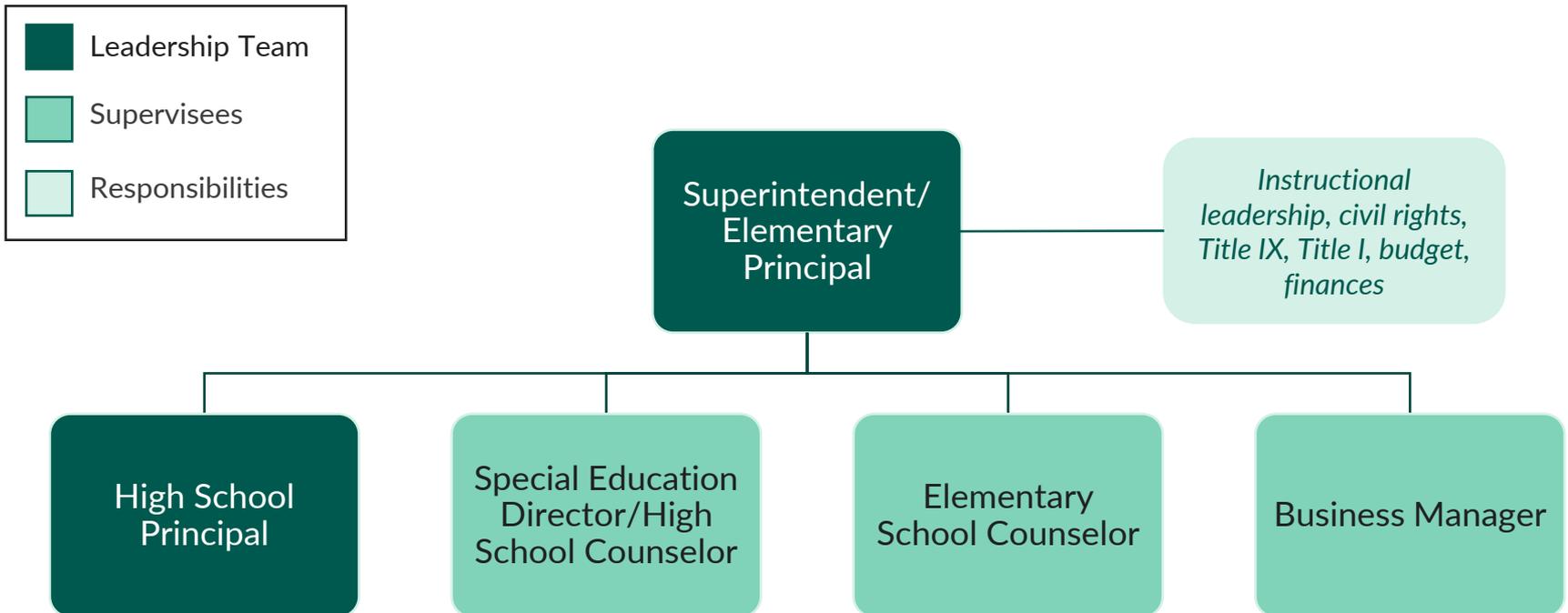
EXAMPLE DISTRICT A: SUPERINTENDENT-PRINCIPAL STAFFING STRUCTURE (<100 STUDENTS)

The following diagram represents the leadership team and staffing structure at one of the participant districts, “District A.” District A has a total student enrollment under 100.



EXAMPLE DISTRICT B: SUPERINTENDENT-PRINCIPAL STAFFING STRUCTURE (200-500 STUDENTS)

The following diagram represents the leadership team and staffing structure at one of the participant districts, "District B." District B has a total student enrollment between 200-500.



FULL-TIME SUPERINTENDENT



Hanover Definition: A full-time superintendent is a single administrator who serves as the chief executive of a school district, overseeing district-wide operations and managing multiple administrative functions such as human resources, finance, compliance, and instructional leadership.

Strengths of Model

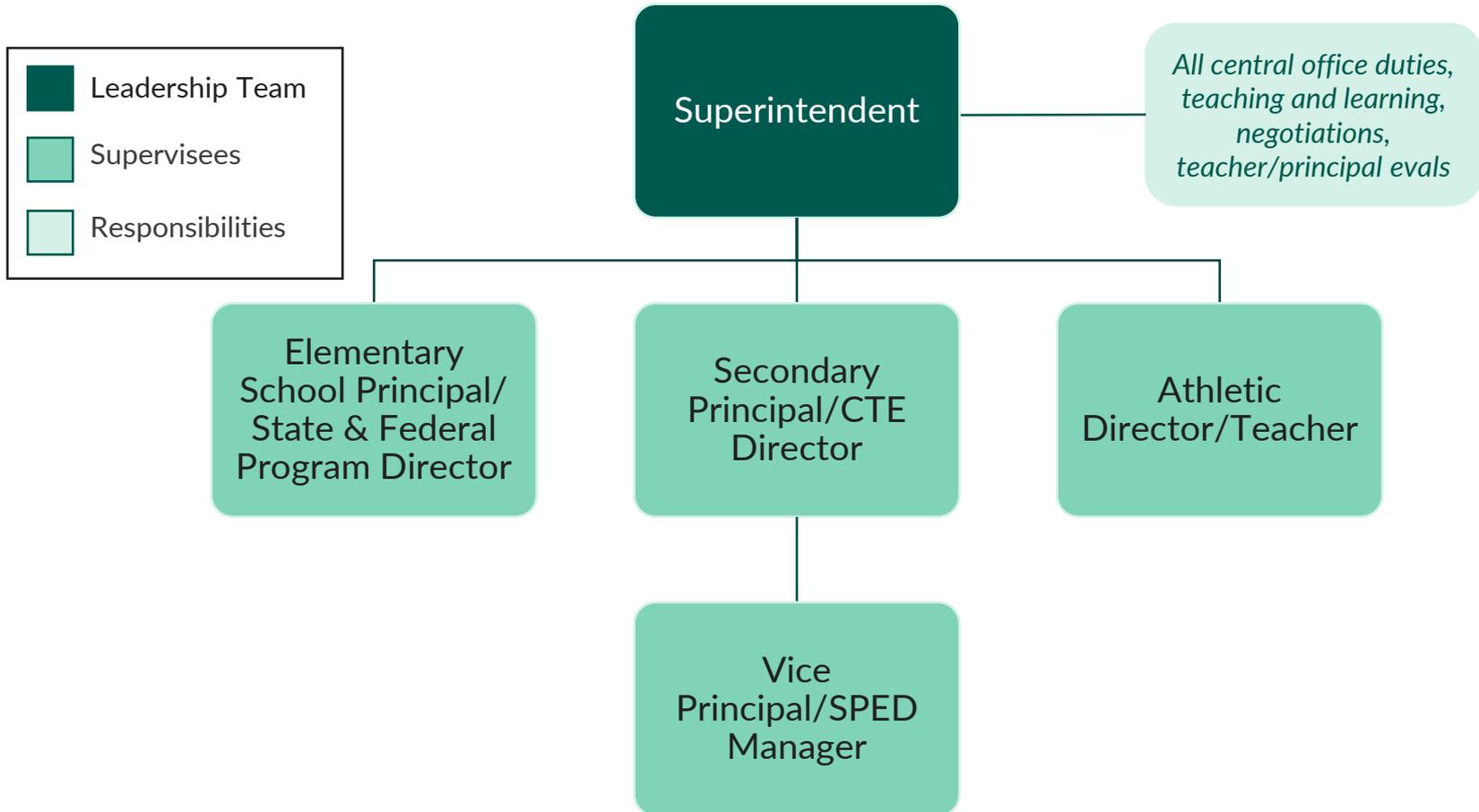
Deep Community Engagement and Locally-Driven Decision-Making	Superintendents are highly visible and accessible in their communities, allowing for strong relationships with stakeholders and alignment of district operations with local values and priorities.
Comprehensive Understanding and Holistic Leadership	Superintendents develop a broad, hands-on understanding of district functions, which supports informed, integrated leadership and strategic planning.
Agility and Responsiveness	The model enables faster, more flexible decision-making and problem-solving due to fewer bureaucratic layers and direct involvement in multiple aspects of district operations.
Efficient Use of Limited Resources	Combining administrative roles allows districts to maximize scarce financial resources, often redirecting savings to support classroom instruction and student programs.
Enhanced Collaboration and Teamwork	The necessity of multitasking and cross-training fosters a collaborative culture among administrators and staff.

Challenges of Model

Role Overload and Risk of Burnout	Superintendents and other administrators must juggle multiple complex responsibilities (e.g., HR, finance, federal programs, instructional leadership), often leading to unsustainable workloads and increased risk of burnout.
Limited Specialized Expertise	The breadth of duties means administrators may lack deep, specialized knowledge in certain areas (e.g., special education, grant management, compliance).
Insufficient Clerical and Support Staff	Growing administrative and reporting requirements often force superintendents and principals to perform clerical tasks, diverting time from instructional leadership and strategic work.
Isolation in Leadership	Superintendents may experience professional isolation, lacking the peer support and collaborative teams found in larger districts.

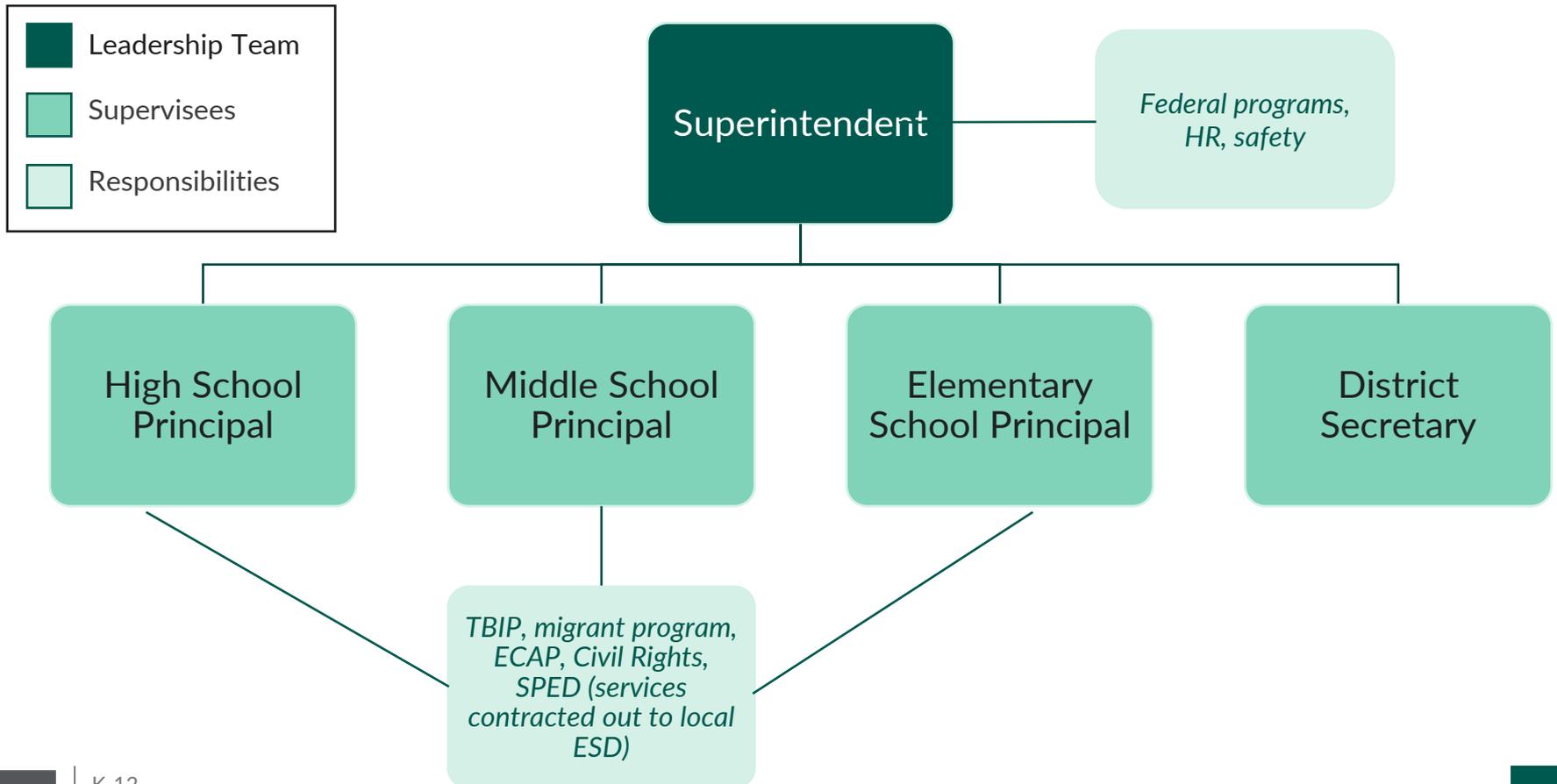
EXAMPLE DISTRICT C: FULL-TIME SUPERINTENDENT STAFFING STRUCTURE (200-500 STUDENTS)

The following diagram represents the leadership team and staffing structure at one of the participant districts, "District C." District C has a total student enrollment between 200-500.



EXAMPLE DISTRICT D: FULL-TIME SUPERINTENDENT-STAFFING STRUCTURE (>500 STUDENTS)

The following diagram represents the leadership team and staffing structure at one of the participant districts, "District D." District D has a total student enrollment greater than 500.





PART-TIME/SHARED SUPERINTENDENT



Hanover Definition: *A part-time/shared superintendent is a single administrator who serves as the chief executive for two or more school districts, overseeing district-wide operations, policy development, and administrative functions across multiple communities.*

Strengths of Model

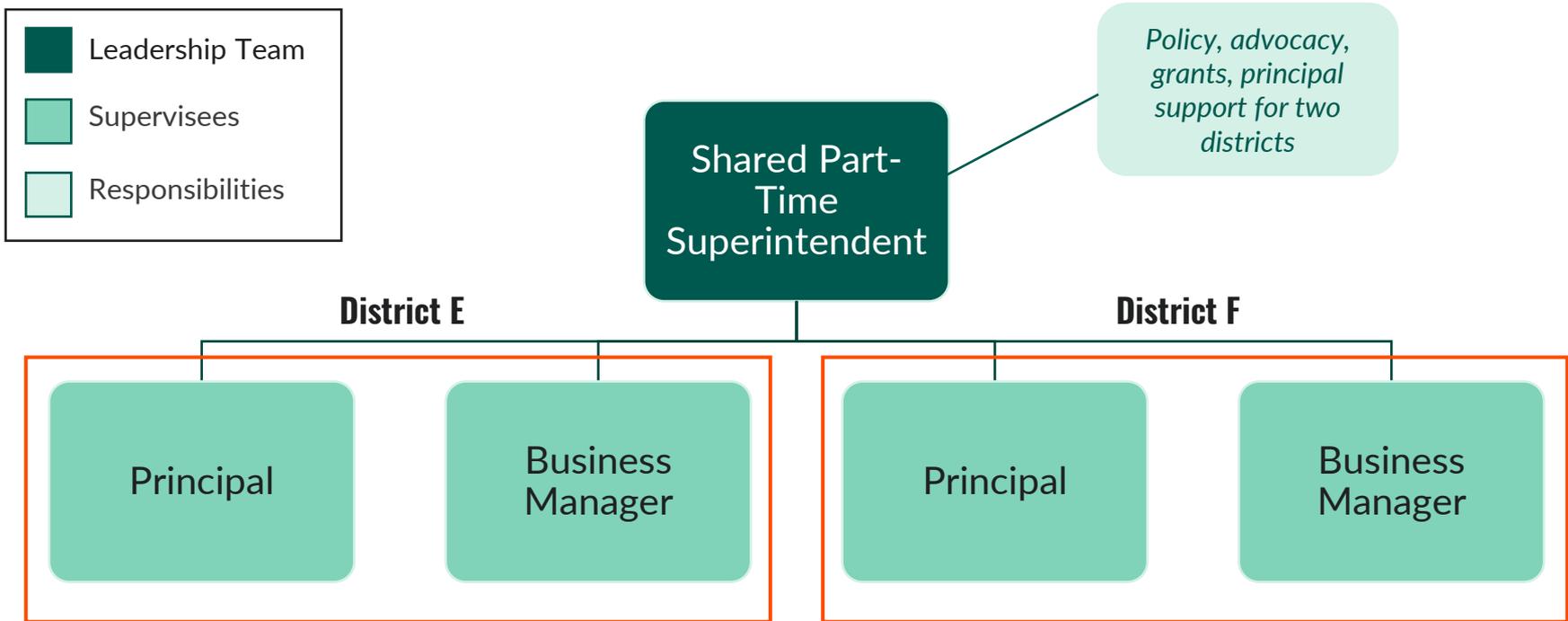
Cost Efficiency	Sharing a superintendent allows districts to split costs for administrative salaries, travel, conferences, and meetings.
Access to Expertise	Districts benefit from the experience and policy expertise of seasoned administrators who might otherwise be unaffordable for a single small district.
Representation of Local Community Needs	Maintaining separate districts with a shared superintendent ensures that each community's unique political, cultural, and educational needs are represented, rather than being lost in consolidation.
Operational Efficiency	Part-time superintendents focus on higher-level policy, advocacy, and strategic planning, while principals handle day-to-day operations.
Enhanced Advocacy and Collaboration	Shared superintendents facilitate county and state-level networking, problem-solving, and resource sharing among small, rural districts (such as transportation, CTE programs, etc.).

Challenges of Model

Limited On-Site Presence	Part-time superintendents are not present in each district daily, which can limit visibility, direct engagement, and hands-on leadership.
Competing Responsibilities	Balancing the needs, priorities, and schedules of two districts can be demanding, requiring strong organizational skills and flexibility to manage multiple tasks and initiatives.
Logistical and Coordination Challenges	Serving geographically distant districts can complicate travel, scheduling, and communication. Participants perceive the model can sometimes limit opportunities for shared programs or instructional staff due to differences in grade levels and local needs.

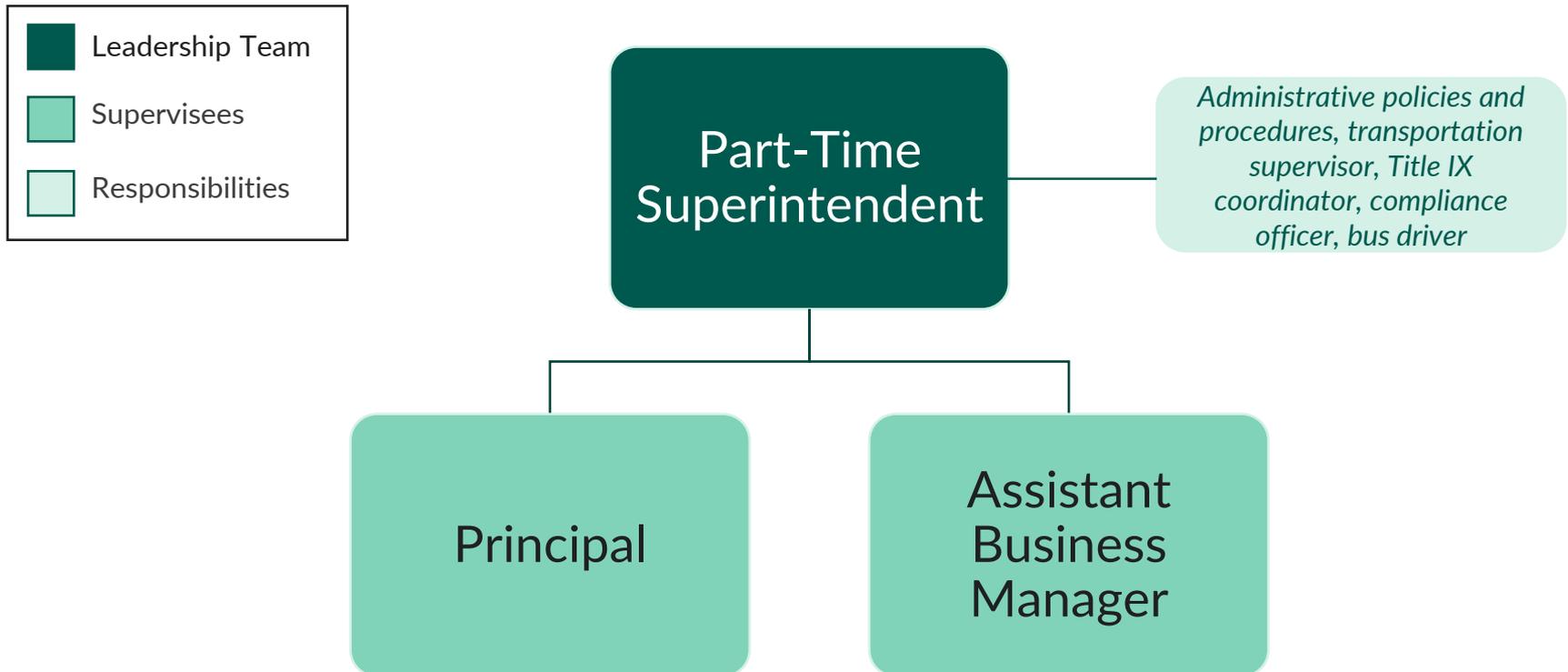
EXAMPLE DISTRICTS E+F: **PART-TIME SHARED SUPERINTENDENT** STAFFING STRUCTURE (<100, 200-500 STUDENTS)

The following diagram represents the leadership team and staffing structure at two of the participant districts, “District E+F.” District E has a total student enrollment under 100, while District F has a total student enrollment between 200-500.



EXAMPLE DISTRICT G: PART-TIME SUPERINTENDENT STAFFING STRUCTURE (200-500 STUDENTS)

The following diagram represents the leadership team and staffing structure at one of the participant districts, “District G.” District G has a total student enrollment between 200-500.





OVERALL KEY FINDINGS



Every administrator here has multiple roles and multiple assignments that are well beyond the actual primary job in order to just maintain fiscal responsibility because we can't afford to hire someone to do those things.”

– Full-Time Superintendent

FINANCES AND LOCAL CONTROL INFLUENCE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Participants represent a mix of small, rural district profiles, including districts experiencing shifts in enrollment population, learning needs, and funding opportunities. **Nearly always driven by state budget constraints, the participating districts employ between one to four “multi-role administrators”** who take on multiple district- and school-level roles and responsibilities.

*“When I was first hired as superintendent principal, the biggest issue that the district had at the time was financial. **Finances is always the driving factor...** Over my 12 years, the number of duties people have to do has ebbed and flowed. And that's really going along with where our budget is at that time.” – Full-Time Superintendent.*

Most participants say the administrative structure in their districts is also heavily influenced by local control, allowing for flexibility in how roles are defined and filled. This local autonomy enables districts to tailor their administrative structures to meet specific needs, although it can also lead to variability in how effectively these roles are executed:

*“**Small districts really look at the community values to determine what the staffing levels and what the district alignment needs to look like and where cost savings need to be made in a way that benefits both the community and our students ultimately...** In some districts, people might say, 'Hey, the superintendency is not such an important role for us. **We'll have a one-day a week superintendent who just is responsible for paperwork and compliance.**' In another, it might be it's important for us that **our superintendent is in buildings, in our community, at events, advocating for our district, doing those things. It looks different everywhere. The beauty of individual districts is that those districts make those decisions and then align their staffing around those community values, which is absolutely the epitome of local control, which is what public schools are based on.**” – Full-Time Superintendent*

ALTERNATIVES TO MULTI-ROLE ADMINISTRATOR STRATEGY

Several districts have considered or are currently employing alternative cost-saving strategies in addition to multi-role administrators:



Shared Service Models

Many small districts utilize shared service models to pool resources and expertise. This approach allows districts to **share roles such as special education directors or transportation services, which can be more cost-effective and efficient** than each district hiring independently. By collaborating, districts can maintain essential services without overextending their budgets.



Partnerships with Education Service Districts (ESDs)

Many participants say **ESDs play a crucial role in supporting small districts by providing specialized services** that would be challenging to sustain independently. These contracted partnerships help districts manage areas such as special education, IT, and business management, ensuring students receive necessary support without the district bearing the full financial burden.



Collaborative Superintendent Networks

Several participants are in **collaborative networks of superintendents and administrators**, meeting regularly to share best practices and advocate for small school needs at the county and state levels. Participants say these networks provide valuable support, professional development, and a forum for discussing common challenges (e.g., compliance, funding, policy changes, etc.).

ALTERNATIVES TO MULTI-ROLE ADMINISTRATOR STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

Notably, participants share a nearly universal sentiment against forced or mandated district consolidation, as it is perceived to threaten community identity and pride. Many administrators believe consolidation would not necessarily lead to cost savings and could increase logistical challenges, such as transportation costs. Instead, they advocate for maintaining district autonomy while leveraging collaborative and creative solutions (such as those listed on the previous page).



“And even though we're 40 minutes apart, I don't know that if you were to consolidate, that that would be any more efficient or that there'd be much cost savings. For example, if you have one district and you're spread out, okay, now your transportation costs is going to go up.”

– Part-Time Superintendent.

“Consolidation... would be the death of so many small communities in the state of Washington. The schools become such an important part of communities. They are the source of a great deal of pride and enthusiasm and respect that would be eliminated with the big C word”

– Board Chair

“My other district is 80% conservative and 20% liberal. So, it would not represent the community if they were consolidated. Whereas when they're represented the way they are now, they're really represented for what they are... If these districts were consolidated, which they should be if you looked at what financially would be 'smart,' but it's too big of a footprint to represent the community. It's hundreds of miles, and the kids would be on the bus for over an hour.”

– Part-Time/Shared Superintendent



The OSPI ... said it was an equity issue to have so many districts because small districts received more per student... but I argued that we can't fill classrooms to 30 students... some costs are higher because of scale, not inefficiency.”

– Full-Time Superintendent

FISCAL IMPACTS

“It's actually been a huge financial save for us... Just limiting your number of administrators, you could save quite a bit because you're reducing a full salary plus benefits. And if you take a district like ours, which is right around a [redacted] budget, you take an administrator who's maybe making \$130,000 plus 31% on top of that from benefits. That's a major part overall of what you can do. And if you could do that over multiple years, that helps us save money.”

– Full-Time Superintendent

“A huge cost saving for the district is they don't have to pay my retirement or give me any of the benefits [because I'm part-time]... there's probably about a 60% to 70% savings by having a dual role. We could not afford a superintendent principal. We did for a couple of years, but the superintendent had one day a week, and I might have had two and a half days. So now, we've combined that to two or three days, same person.”

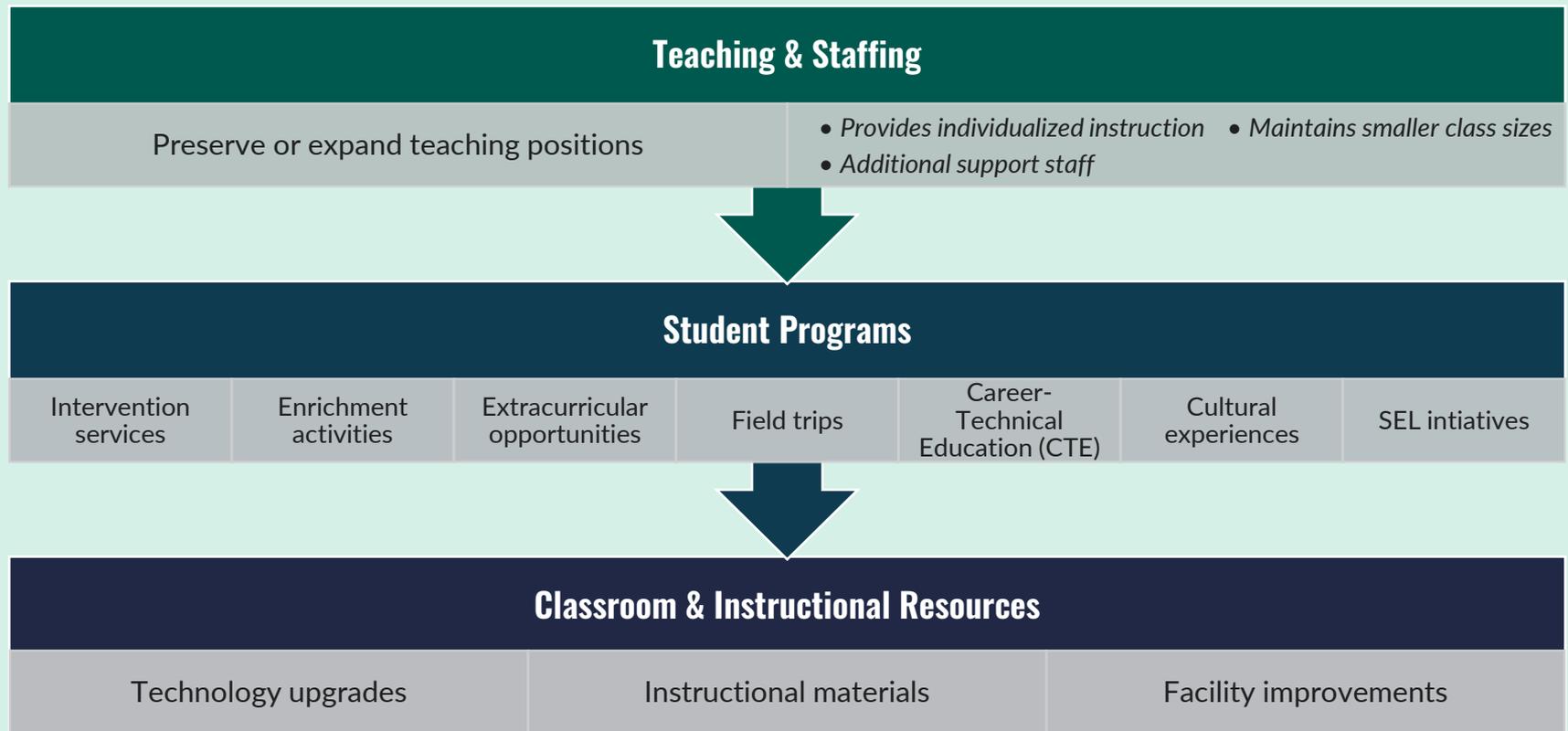
– Superintendent-Principal (Part-Time)

Participants widely agree that combining administrator roles produces significant cost savings for small districts. By consolidating responsibilities, districts avoid paying multiple full-time salaries and benefits, with some estimating a reductions in administrative costs by more than half compared to separate hires.

Several participants note that districts can also offset a portion of administrator pay with grants tied to federal programs, special education, or career-technical education, allowing districts to stretch limited local dollars further. **Many describe the blending of roles and funding streams as the only financially viable way to maintain adequate leadership in small systems**, especially due to the current state apportionment model.

FISCAL IMPACTS: COST-SAVINGS REDIRECTED TOWARDS STUDENTS

Participants report that cost savings from combining administrator roles are frequently redirected to benefit students in several ways:



FISCAL IMPACTS: SOME INCREASING FINANCIAL PRESSURES

While all participants share positive financial benefits of combining administrative roles, some acknowledge a few financial pressures that emerge due to the multi-role strategy. Several note the growing number of state and federal compliance requirements means that **high-salaried administrators are frequently performing clerical-level work**, which they view as a poor allocation of limited resources.

*“As reporting continues to be mandated and required... those compliance pieces... there is more need than ever for clerical work. We cannot financially hire someone else to do that. So more and more often, the pressure is that now principals who are instructional leaders or superintendents who are district leaders are **doing work that we would see as clerical work at a compensation level that matches a principal’s or superintendent’s compensation. It doesn’t make fiscal sense.**”*
– Full-Time Superintendent

Nearly all participants also perceive WA state apportionment rarely funds the number of administrators needed in their district, leading them to rely heavily on local levy dollars to sustain administrative salaries. Participants share that reliance on levies creates ongoing financial pressure for the district because they must be approved by voters every few years; if a levy fails, a district may have to cut administrative roles even if they are essential.

“We have myself as superintendent and principal and then we have a high school principal, and the state only funds us for, I think, 1.2 administrators. We aren’t even fully funded to have what we have, and we’ve actually combined [roles].” – Superintendent-Principal

*“That additional staffing comes from levy dollars, which are voted on regularly by our local taxpayers. **If our taxpayers adjusted and said, ‘That’s not important to us. We’re not going to approve that levy,’** then certainly [the administrative structure] would adjust because the apportionment dollars from the state are not changing.”* – Full-Time Superintendent

OPERATIONAL IMPACTS: DAY TO DAY

Participants perceive that small districts with multi-role administrators often experience **several operational benefits and efficiencies** to both daily operations and long-term operational planning. However, combining roles can bring **sustainability challenges** as well.

“We’re able to respond faster to our needs just because our chain of command... is so much shorter.... there is a speed to that, which is a pro. The negative... we don’t always have the same depth of knowledge that you would in a larger district... we can move faster, but we don’t always have the knowledge on site.” –Full-Time Superintendent.

Impact on Day-to-Day Operations

Benefits	Challenges
Faster decision-making: Participants emphasize shorter chains of command enable quick responses to needs (e.g., curriculum, discipline, budgeting, purchasing).	Burnout risk: Nearly every participant raises concerns about exhaustion and turnover due to the intensity of daily workloads across multiple roles.
Closer collaboration: Participants describe frequent teamwork within their small leadership teams as well as informal partnerships with neighboring districts.	Weaker advocacy: School staff may lack a strong voice when one leader covers both superintendent and principal roles.
Classroom connection: Especially for leaders in combined superintendent-principal roles, they have insight into school-level needs, making decisions more grounded and practical.	Work-life imbalance: Several participants speak about long hours, taking work home, and struggling to balance personal life.
Visibility and community responsiveness: Leaders emphasize how multiple roles keep them visible and accessible to staff, students, and families.	Community skepticism: Some participants describe pushback from community members when additional administrative roles are created to alleviate burnout risk (e.g., adding an assistant superintendent).

OPERATIONAL IMPACTS: LONG-TERM PLANNING

“I would say that one of the benefits is as a superintendent in a small district... I’ve served as a transportation director... special ed... [and] as a principal... When I am designing a budget or... reallocat[ing] resources... having been in the classroom... transportation... food service... I am able to bring that kind of depth of experience... I think being able to share roles and understand roles [is] critical to achieving student outcomes... I would argue 1,000%.”

– Full-Time Superintendent

“The positives in overall operations... I’m able to find that vision. You can see what’s happening within the classrooms... and also know the budget and the finances.”

– Superintendent-Principal

Impact on Long-Term Planning and Sustainability

Benefits	Challenges
Broad perspective: Participants report that holding multiple responsibilities provides holistic knowledge across HR, special education, grants, and budgeting, which strengthens system-wide planning.	Limited expertise: Participants share they often have broad but shallow knowledge across areas, which makes it difficult to address specialized issues (e.g., deep curriculum knowledge, special education).
Cost savings: Participants consistently point out that combining roles reduces administrative salaries and benefits, helping districts remain financially sustainable.	Clerical overload: Participants express widespread frustration about state and federal mandates (e.g., compliance, reporting tasks) consuming their time for instructional leadership.
Adaptability: Participants highlight that cross-training and flexible role assignments allow districts to adjust quickly to shifting mandates, grants, and resource needs.	Sustainability concerns: Multiple participants caution that while the model works in the short term, it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain as responsibilities expand.
Continuous improvement: Participants explain how their wide involvement and visibility supports strategic planning and system alignment across the district.	Capacity strain: Participants note that the breadth of responsibilities forces them to prioritize urgent tasks while leaving some initiatives unaddressed.

OPERATIONAL IMPACTS: RECRUITMENT & RETENTION



Important Skills and Qualities: *To succeed as a multi-role administrator, participants emphasize the importance of adaptability, strong communication skills, independence, and a collaborative mindset.*

Most participants say recruitment and retention of multi-role administrators can be a significant challenge for small and rural districts. The demanding nature of these positions and risk of burnout can both deter potential candidates and cause higher attrition rates. Additionally, participants also acknowledge the geography of small, rural districts can limit the applicant pool as opposed to metropolitan areas.

“The pandemic was really hard, as you know, in a lot of small districts, so the former superintendent principal had burned out. So that's where the board decided, ‘Well, let's look at this model of a full-time principal and a part-time superintendent,’ even though it's a very small district and the state doesn't fully fund those positions.”

–Part-Time Superintendent

As a result, many districts tend to focus on hiring local talent, alumni, or individuals with strong community ties, who are more likely to understand the district environment and commit to the unique demands of the role. Other effective strategies participants use for recruitment and retention include fostering a supportive, team-oriented work environment, providing opportunities for professional growth, and ensuring clear communication about the realities and expectations of the role.

“We have never had a problem retaining staff, but recruiting can be harder... we frequently recruit locals who want to stay in the community.” –Full-Time Superintendent

“For superintendents: visible in buildings and in the community... be the educational leader who keeps accountability high while maintaining a warm, inviting climate.” – Board Chair

MEASURING OUTCOMES

Participants describe a mix of **student-focused, staff-focused, and community-focused outcomes** to gauge whether their multi-role administrative structures are working.

Student Outcomes

- Student test scores
- Attendance
- Enrollment growth
- Improved behavior

*“We have some of the **highest student test scores in the area**. And we have one of the highest levels of poverty in the area... I think that’s **a sign of efficiency that you can take a very small staff and accomplish good things.**”*

– Superintendent-Principal

Staff Outcomes

- Maintain small class sizes
- Retain administrators or teachers despite limited resources

*“By going down to two administrators, **we were able then to retain a teacher** because it was either lose an administrator or lose a teacher. And by having that teacher, **now they’re in the classroom.**”*

– Full-Time Superintendent

Community Outcomes

- Levy & bond approvals
- Strong turnout at school events
- Overall community confidence

*“It’s important for that administrator to be visible in the community. **That helps when it comes time to pass a bond or a levy.**”*

– Board Chair

Fiscal Outcomes

- Positive audit results
- Stable budgets

*“Well, I think that we’re very efficient in terms of each of the people that we manage a lot... **Our audit reports are good.** Our child nutrition reports are good. Transportation is great. Our budget’s good. ... **I think that’s a sign of efficiency.**”*

– Superintendent-Principal

MOVING FORWARD: COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

Participants vary significantly in how they communicate the impacts of multi-role administrators, often utilizing informal community interactions and/or formal advocacy efforts. Many small districts rely heavily on **informal communication** methods to engage with their communities (e.g., community events, personal interactions) to share information about district operations, which often aligns with the community's culture and helps build trust and understanding among stakeholders. However, many participants face **significant challenges in engaging state legislators and representatives**, who are often perceived as unresponsive to the needs of their local contexts and inequities of the state funding model.

To communicate the impact multi-role administrators can have on small districts, many participants engage in advocacy through regional or statewide superintendent groups.

“We try to communicate that the savings really do go to the students... to help the community and also the legislators understand.” – Full-Time Superintendent

“I’m not sure that we do [communicate it] really well in small districts because we assume that everyone knows a superintendent does many, many things... The community just expects it.”
– Full-Time Superintendent

*“For our state legislators, I think every region’s a little different. **Ours falls on deaf ears.** They don’t return emails. They don’t want to meet...”*
– Full-Time Superintendent

*“OSPI has created a regionalization funding model that’s **highly inequitable**...Someone needs to hold OSPI’s hand and say, ‘Let me show you, **come visit.**’ **Don’t be threatening about consolidating.**”*
– Superintendent-Principal

“Legislators need to understand that small districts already operate efficiently with multi-role administrators.” – Part-Time Superintendent

APPENDIX (PARTICIPANTS)

Type of Multi-Role Administrator
Full-Time Superintendent
Part-Time/Shared Superintendent
Superintendent-Principal (Part-Time)
Full-Time Superintendent
Superintendent-Principal
Part-Time Superintendent
Superintendent-Principal
Superintendent-Principal
Full-Time Superintendent
Board Chair
Full-Time Superintendent



Thank you.

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