



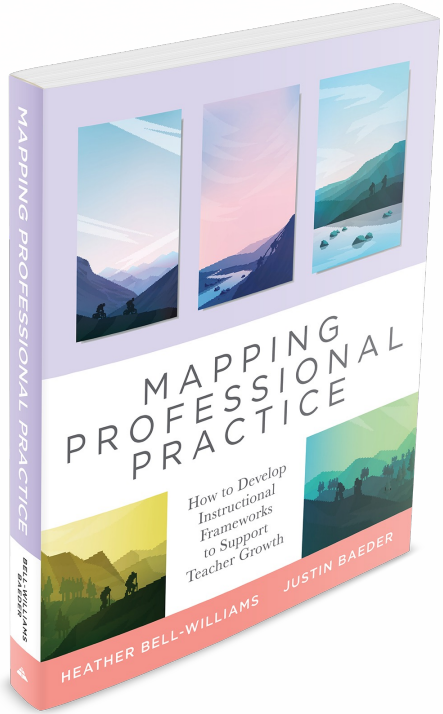
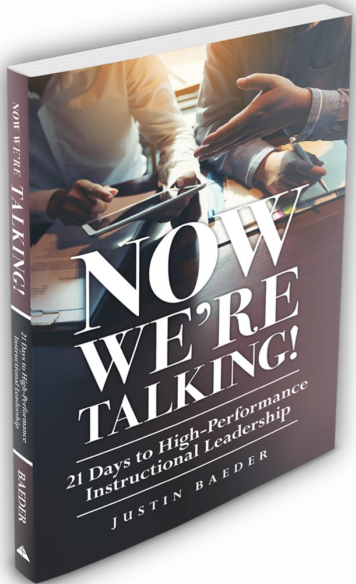
ASCEND

LEVEL UP

WITH JUSTIN BAEDER, PHD



Welcome!



AS FEATURED BY





Our Focus

In this webinar, you'll learn
how to **level up**
for the 2025 job search.





What We'll Explore

- How to level up your résumé and cover letter so you get more interviews—without needing more experience than your competitors
- How to level up your readiness to talk about current trends & cutting-edge practices
- How to get your application assets organized for the fast and furious hiring season
- One action you can take now so you never get a bad reference check (this will also help you land more interviews)
- How to prep for interviews so you're ready to give organized answers with compelling stories that convey your qualities as a leader—without rambling



Get The Recording + All Tools

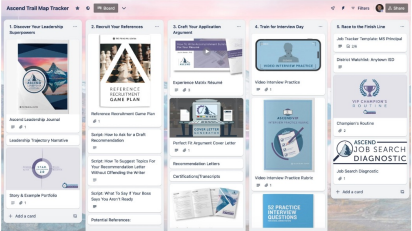
 ■ Need Help?



Get the webinar recording + all of my job search tools for \$1 for 14 days—the same tools included in the \$2196 Ascend Masterclass.

Yours to keep permanently for \$1:

- ✓ The full Level Up webinar recording
- ✓ Webinar transcript + PDF slide deck
- ✓ Ascend Leadership Journal PDF
- ✓ Ascend Trail Map Tracker Board



CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name
GCLID-3

Last Name

Email Address
justin.baeder+1017@gmail.com

Current Role
Principal/Assistant Principal—I supervise & ev ▾

Billing Address

Billing Address 2

Billing City

Billing State Billing Country
Select... Select...

Billing Zipcode

My shipping address is different from my billing address

PAYMENT INFORMATION

VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER

PrincipalCenter.com/up

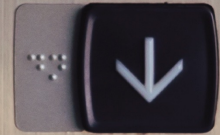
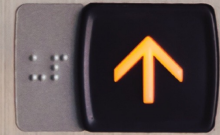


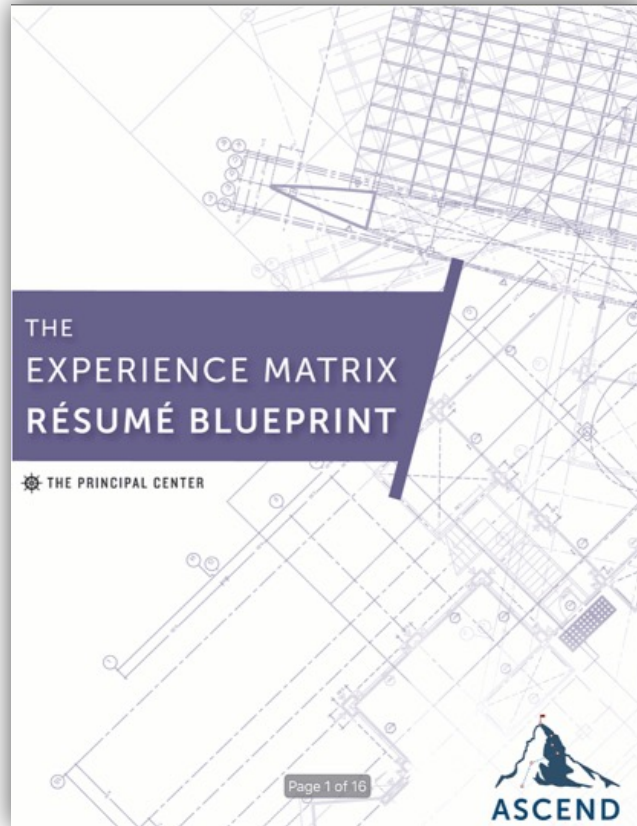
Agenda

- Job Search Tools
- Organize Your Search
- Compete To Win
- Interviews
- Up-To-Date Trends
- Application Materials
 - Résumé
 - Cover Letter
 - Recommendation Letters

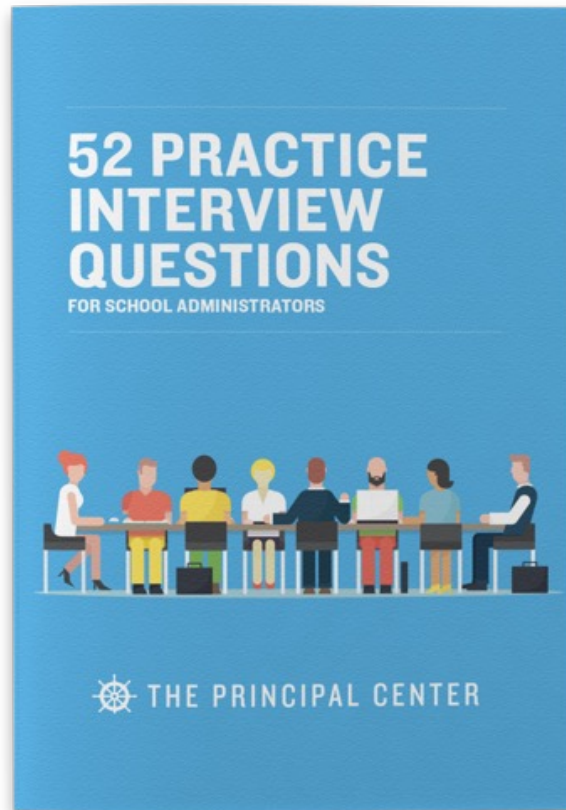
Job Search Tools

Free & Low-Cost Resources





PrincipalCenter.com/blueprint



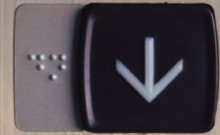
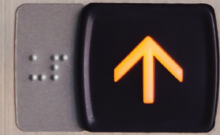
PrincipalCenter.com/interview



PrincipalCenter.com/up

Organize Your Search

Get ready for the busy season



The Wrong Way To Prepare



**“Oh, a job opening?
I guess I’ll apply!”**



The Wrong Way To Prepare

“An interview
tomorrow? I guess I’d
better practice!”

The Wrong Way To Prepare

To prepare
at the last minute
is to **fail** to prepare.





Things Happen Fast

I have an interview tomorrow!!!

10:25 AM (6 days ago)

I'm trying to keep calm! It's at my current high school. I thought for sure I would be talking to people I don't know, but that is not the case!

I have TWO interviews today!

11:03 AM (2 days ago)

Got another one last night at 8:45pm! You weren't kidding about being ready at a moment's notice... entire day off! The Will keep you pos

5 now!

7:33 PM (2 days ago)

Elementary Ed just called for a screening! Man, Justin, your material prep is amazing!

!!!!!!!!!!!!

(18 hours ago)

I GOT THE JOB!!!

Thanks for all of your coaching and materials and platform! I'm sure you hear this a lot but I could not have done it without you. You were my secret weapon. The knowledge I gained from all of your webinars was invaluable.

I will now start looking at your instructional leadership materials and seeing how I can put them into action!

Thanks so much, Justin!

Sent from my iPhone



Things Happen Fast

- When a job is posted, you won't have time to create a résumé and cover letter
- When you land an interview, you won't have enough time to practice
- While you are pursuing one job, others will be posted
- Timelines will stretch and overlap

Trail Map Tracker—Get Organized



Ascend Trail Map Tracker Board

- 1. Discover Your Leadership Superpowers**
 - Ascend Leadership Journal (1)
 - Leadership Trajectory Narrative
 - Story & Example Portfolio (1)
- 2. Recruit Your References**
 - Reference Recruitment Game Plan (1)
 - Script: How to Ask for a Draft Recommendation
 - Script: How to Suggest Topics For Your Recommendation Letter Without Offending the Writer
 - Script: What to Say If Your Boss Says You Aren't Ready
 - Potential References:
- 3. Craft Your Application Argument**
 - Experience Matrix Résumé (3)
 - Perfect Fit Argument Cover Letter (1)
 - Recommendation Letters
 - Certifications/Transcripts
- 4. Train for Interview Day**
 - Video Interview Practice (1)
 - Ascend VIP Interview Practice Rubric
 - Video Interview Practice Rubric (1)
 - 52 PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
- 5. Race to the Finish Line**
 - Job Tracker Template: MS Principal (2/6)
 - District Watchlist: Anytown ISD
 - VIP Champion's Routine (2)
 - ASCEND JOB SEARCH DIAGNOSTIC (1)
 - Job Search Diagnostic (1)



To Keep Track Of

- Districts/schools to check for postings
- Postings to apply for
- References & recommendation letters
- Application question responses
- Deadlines
- Interview dates
- Résumé, cover letter, & other documents



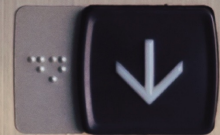
Advanced Features That Can Help

- Due dates & task reminders
- Sub-tasks & attachments
- Recommendation: Trello.com

Trail Map Tracker: PrincipalCenter.com/up

Compete To Win

How to level up & rise above the competition



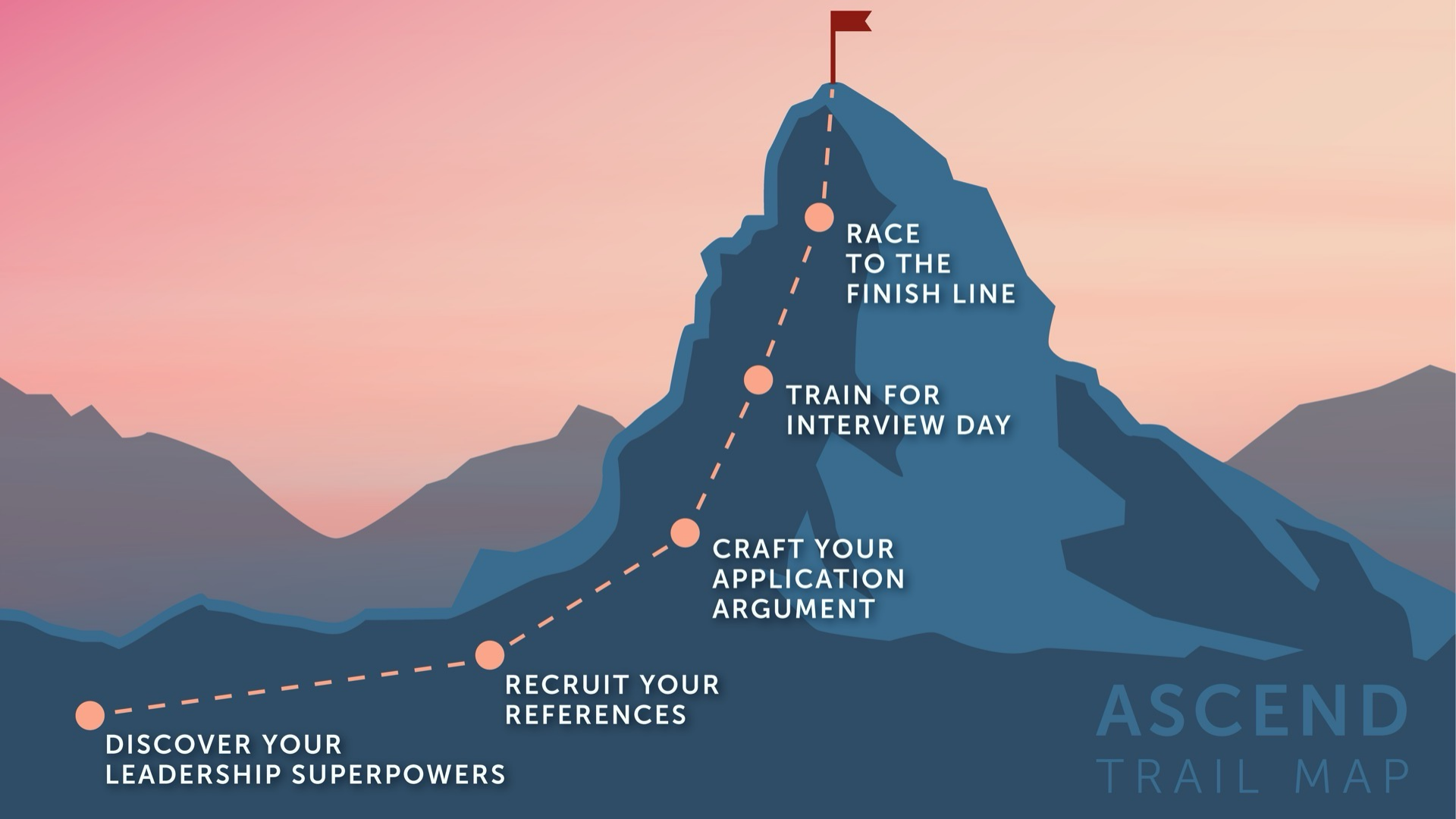




Beware of Wishing for “The One”

Too many people worry about “fit” or put too much hope in a single “dream job” instead of making themselves competitive for more jobs.





DISCOVER YOUR
LEADERSHIP SUPERPOWERS

RECRUIT YOUR
REFERENCES

CRAFT YOUR
APPLICATION
ARGUMENT

TRAIN FOR
INTERVIEW DAY

RACE
TO THE
FINISH LINE

ASCEND
TRAIL MAP



01 DISCOVER YOUR LEADERSHIP SUPERPOWERS

Discover your leadership superpowers, so you can articulate how you'll meet the organization's needs. You are more than your degrees—you have unique strengths that need to shine through in the hiring process.

02 RECRUIT YOUR REFERENCES

Let your references know you'll be looking, so they'll start drafting recommendation letters and putting in a good word for you. Don't let a surprise reference check be the first they're hearing of your job search.

03 CRAFT YOUR APPLICATION ARGUMENT

Craft your application argument, so you're not just sending in paperwork, but making a strong case that you're the best candidate for the role—even before your interview. Your résumé and cover letter aren't just cold facts on paper—they're an impassioned argument for your candidacy.

04 TRAIN FOR INTERVIEW DAY

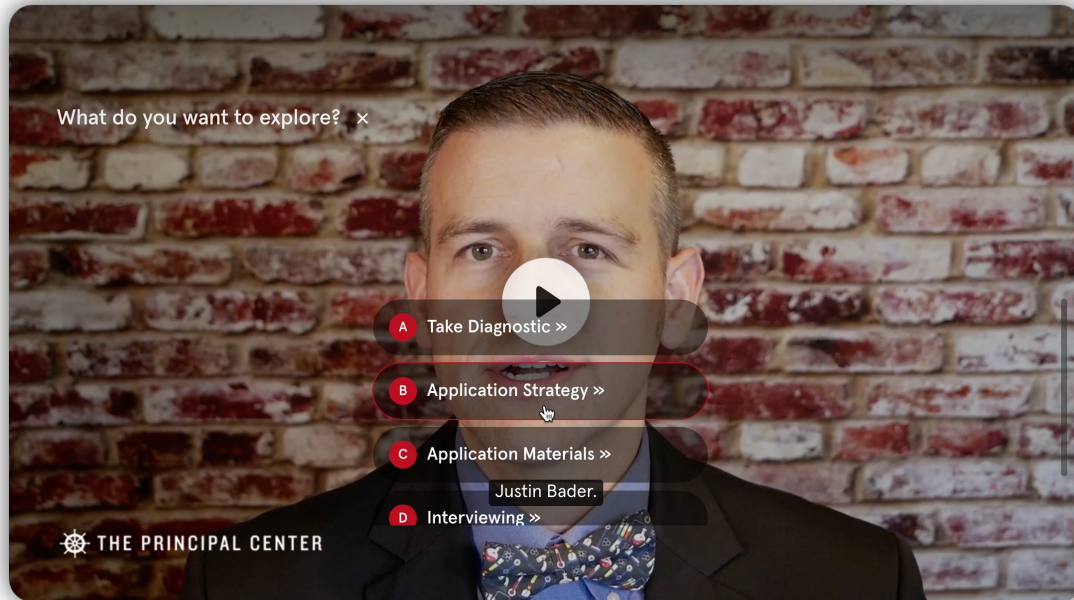
Practice on video, so you're ready for any question—cool, collected, and ready to use the stories you've prepared to illustrate why you're the right person for the job. Most people are uncomfortable in interviews—including the hiring team! If you prepare the right way, you'll be at ease—and your interviewers will hang on every word you say.

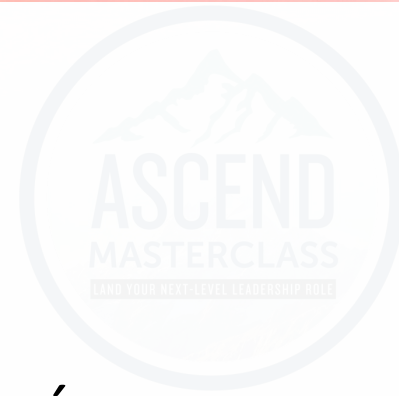
05 RACE TO THE FINISH LINE

Race to the finish line, so you get two or more job offers, and don't have to settle for waiting another year or taking a position you don't feel great about. This is marathon, not a sprint. Success requires training and preparation for every stage of the hiring process.

PrincipalCenter.com/trailmap

Diagnostic: Where Do I Focus Now?





Competing At Each Stage

- *Not getting interviews?* Improve your résumé, cover letter, and recommendation letters.
- *Not making it past the first round?* Practice your interview skills and stories.
- *Not making the final cut?* Keep applying, and check in with your references.



Let's Work Backward

If you want 2 or more job offers...

- You'll need to be a finalist at least twice...
- Which means passing multiple screening interviews...
- Which means *getting* enough interviews...
- Which means applying for enough jobs.

What does “success” look like at each stage?



The Ideal Success Ratio

20%

If you move on to the next stage in the hiring process
 $1/5^{\text{th}}$ of the time, you're doing just fine.



The Numbers Game

- 25 applications
- 5 first-round interviews
- 1 second-round interview

*With a 20% success rate at each stage,
how can I get two offers?*



“How Many Times Do I Have To Go Through This?”

- The more competitive the position, the more jobs of that type you’ll need to apply for, and the better you’ll need to compete
- For admin jobs, expect 25-50 applications
- For desirable jobs, expect 100+ competitors

How can I rise above more qualified competitors?



What NOT To Expect

- Interview 100% of the time
- Useful feedback from interview team
- Details on why you didn't get the job
- First job you apply for
- “Perfect Fit” dream job



The Only Reason You Didn't Get Hired

The reason you didn't get the job is simple: competition.

To beat the competition, be more competitive.



What TO Expect

- A long process
- With very little feedback
- And many setbacks
- That will require great persistence



What To Remember

You can do this.

The Waiting Game





Ask Yourself

Am I qualified?

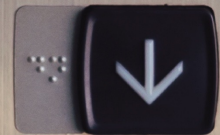
If so, go ahead and apply.

Am I competitive?

If not, take action to improve your assets.

Interviews

How to level up your skills





Competitive Advantage in Interviews

The most important
action to take is to
practice



PrincipalCenter.com/vip-rubric

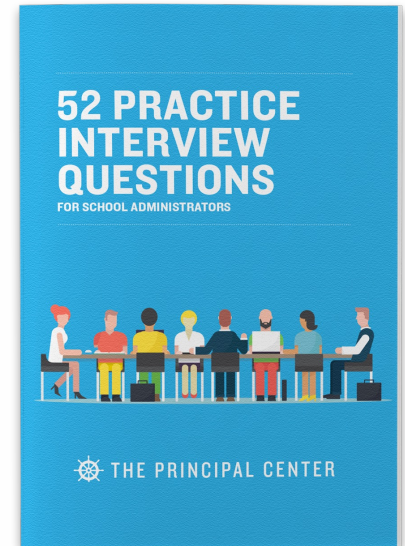


Ascend VIP Rubric: Video Interview Practice

- ✓ Used all 4:59 of my time
- ✓ Used “Rule of 3” to organize response into three main points
- ✓ Included a 1-minute story to illustrate a point
- ✓ Mentioned specific accomplishments
- ✓ Conveyed who I am/what I believe/what my values are
- ✓ Answered every part of the question
- ✓ Maintained good facial expression at beginning, middle, and end of response
- ✓ Conveyed a high level of energy & enthusiasm
- ✓ Used verb tenses to help the interview team picture me in the role
- ✓ Conveyed a sense of trajectory, interviewing for the job I want, not the job I have

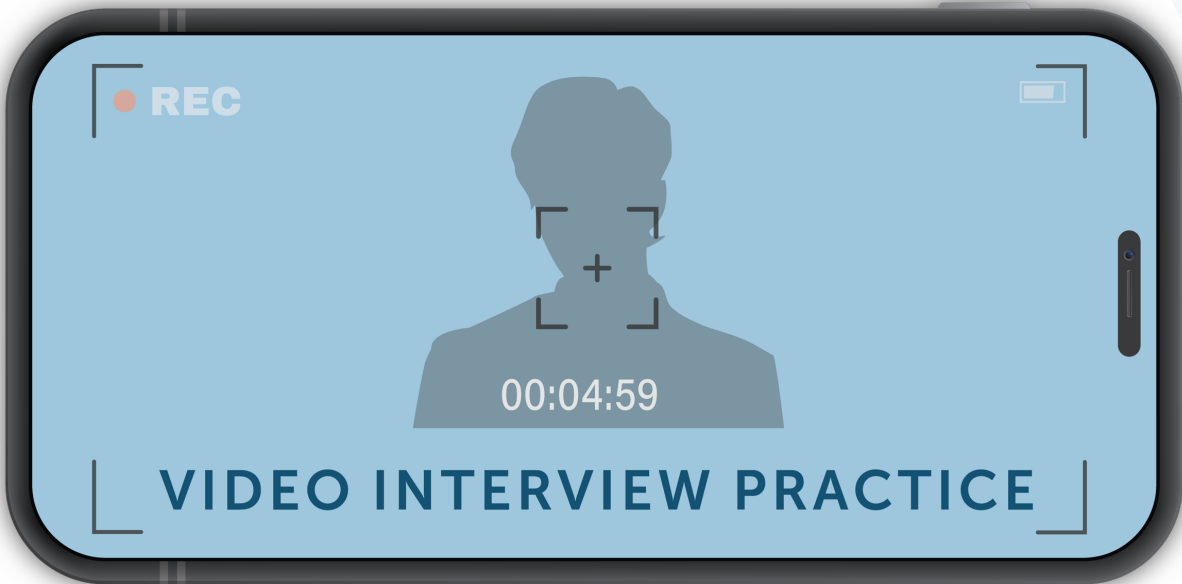
How To Practice

- Use the 52 Practice Interview Questions: PrincipalCenter.com/interview
- Write out bullet-point answers
- Practice on video (3-5 minute answers)
- Evaluate the video, then delete
- Repeat
- Work on your stories





Use Your Phone



PrincipalCenter.com/up



VIP Video Interview Practice

A video player interface for a video interview practice. The video shows a man in a suit and patterned tie against a brick wall background. The video player has a red top bar. In the top right corner of the video, there is a progress bar showing '00:09 / 00:14', a volume icon, a 'CC' icon, and a '1x' speed icon. The main text of the video is a question: 'Give an example of a situation in which you dealt with a conflict between two staff members. What do you do to resolve the conflict, and what did you learn from the experience? What would you do differently if you could do it over again?'. Below the question, there is a red button with a microphone icon and the text 'Record your answer'. Below the button, there is a small yellow lightning bolt icon and the text 'You can practice before sending'. At the bottom left of the video, there is a logo for 'THE PRINCIPAL CENTER' which consists of a gear icon and the text 'THE PRINCIPAL CENTER'. A small black box with white text 'the experience?' is overlaid on the bottom center of the video frame.



Strategies from the Toolkit



PrincipalCenter.com/up



Practice On Video

“Wanted to thank you for your amazing resources! I recently utilized your interview tips and practice questions. Watching myself was BRUTAL, but it made me very aware the importance of me to be myself. I applied as an internal candidate for an Assistant Principal position... This past week I was offered the position. Thank you again!”

—Erin, AP

TIGHT 5

PRACTICE 5-MINUTE ANSWERS



RULE OF 3

ORGANIZE ANSWERS
WITH 3 MAIN POINTS

1

2

3



RAPID INTERVIEW PREP

TOOLKIT



Common “Rule of 3” Patterns

- 3 accomplishments
- 3 commitments
- 3 beliefs
- 3 stakeholders



Sample Answers



Episode #102—Q: Student Leadership



Episode #101—Q: Special Needs



Episode #100—Q: Student Diversity



Episode #99—Q: Improvement Example



Episode #98—Q: Initiative Resistance



Episode #97—Q: Classroom Management



Episode #96—Q: Not Improving



Episode #95—Q: Staff Improvement



Episode #94—Q: Teacher Improvement





Stories

Every answer is more compelling with a story.

You only need about 10 good stories to fit any interview question.

SITUATION

ACTION

S.T.A.R.
STORY FRAMEWORK
2.0

TENSION

REALIZATION



RAPID INTERVIEW PREP

TOOLKIT



Story Structure: STAR

- Situation—what was the context and issue?
- Tension—what concerns had to be balanced?
- Action—what did you do?
- Realization—what insight did you gain as a result?



Where Can I Find My Stories?

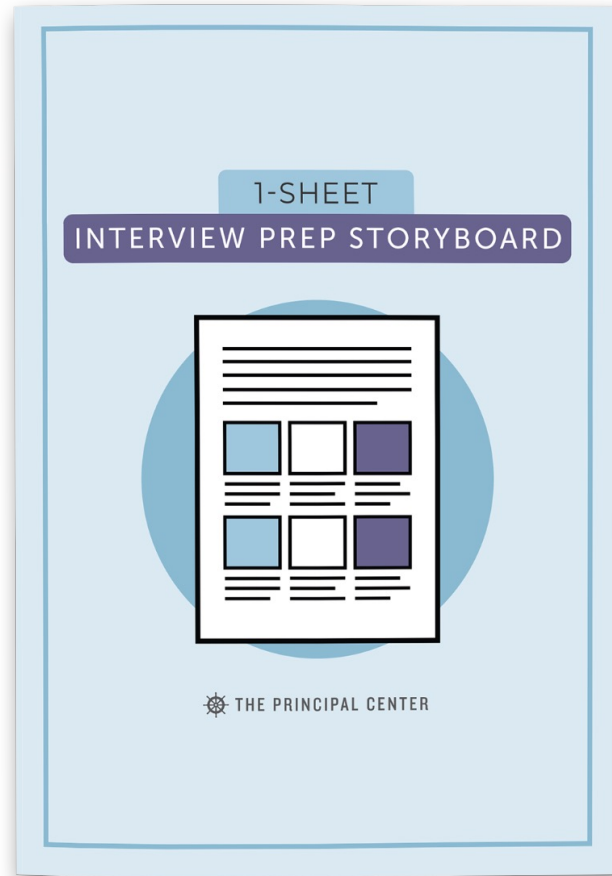
- Difficult situations
- Mistakes & Conflicts
- Committees & Projects
- Professional Development
- Moments of gratitude or high emotion





How To Practice Telling Interview Stories

- Tell the story out loud to yourself—as long as it takes
- Brainstorm the leadership attributes it illustrates
- Find the key *emotions*
- Notice any *distracting details*, and retell without them
- Practice retelling in ~1 minute



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THE PRESENT-TENSE TECHNIQUE

S.N.A.P.
ACCOMPLISHMENT
FRAMEWORK

STORIES

NUMBERS

ACTIONS

PROCESSES



RAPID INTERVIEW PREP

TOOLKIT



Two Challenges with Virtual Interviews

- Bringing the right level of energy
- Knowing when you've said enough





Energy Level

“My strength has always been my ability to engage with the people in the room and feed of the energy. I am not sure what to expect when interviews start.”



The “3 Levels of Energy” Prep Technique

Practice the same interview question or story at three different levels of energy:

- Level 1: Normal Energy
- Level 2: Maximum Energy
- Level 3: Slightly Deranged

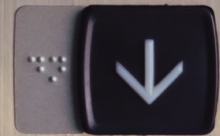


Review Video & Calibrate

- What really came through well at Level 3?
- What was a little bit off-putting that I don't need to include?
- How can I make people feel good about my energy?

Up To Date

How to talk about current trends & hot practices





Trends Are Tricky

- Education suffers from fads and pendulum swings
- Enthusiasm for new ideas often runs ahead of the evidence
- However, being able to talk about hot topics does make you a more competitive candidate
- It's better to come across as cutting-edge than traditionalist



Discredited Trends

- Learning styles
- Reading comprehension skills
- Leaving disruptive students in class

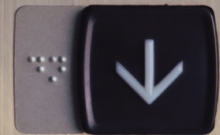


Stay Current

- Know what trends your district emphasizes
- Don't rely on your district as your sole information source
- Read magazines & news articles in education
- Listen to podcasts
- Best summary: Marshall Memo

Application Materials

Quick ways to level up on paper



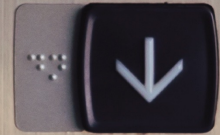
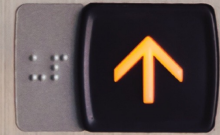


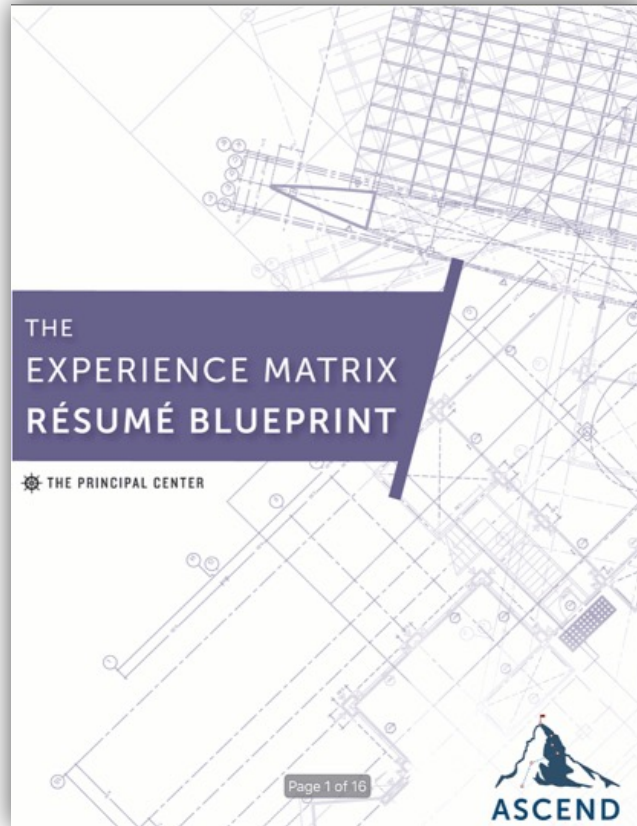
Three Key Application Assets

1. Résumé
2. Cover Letter
3. Recommendation Letters

Level Up Your Résumé

How to communicate your qualifications on paper





PrincipalCenter.com/blueprint



The Résumé's Job

At a minimum, your résumé should demonstrate that you are

qualified

for the job.



The Résumé's Job

Every résumé has room for improvement
that will make you a more

competitive

candidate—without any additional
experience.



Become More Competitive Without New Qualifications

Option A:

- Spend tens of thousands of dollars on another degree
- Spend years gaining more experience

Option B:

- Revise your résumé



Your Résumé Doesn't Need

- Candidate profile/overview
- Skills/proficiencies
- Normal duties listed under each role
- Hobbies/other interests
- “References available upon request”



Don't Make Unsupported Claims in Your Résumé

Avoid:

- Lists of skills
- Lists of adjectives
- Unsupported adverbs in accomplishments

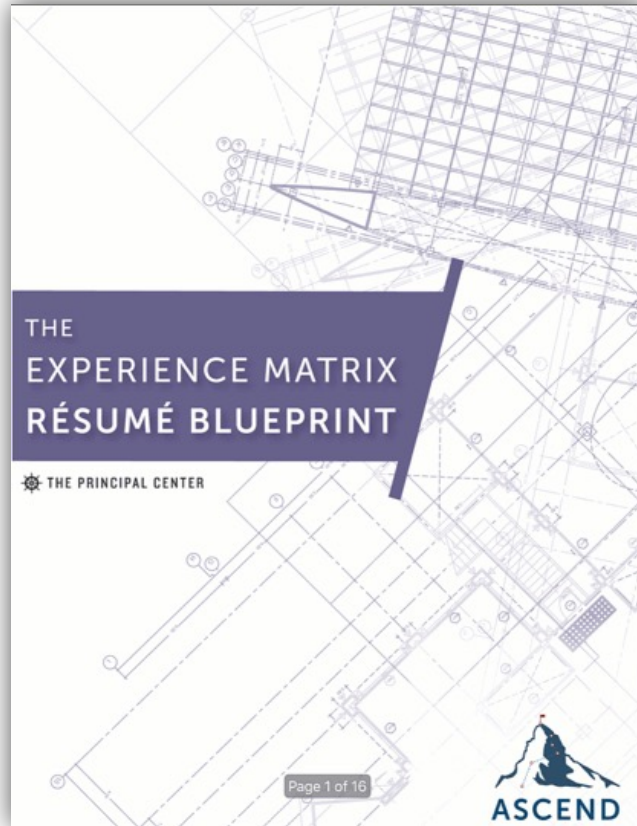
Areas of Expertise:	Qualities:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher and Staff Coaching, Professional Development, Training & Evaluation• Diverse Backgrounds, Cultures and Experiences• Curricula Design• Relationship Building• Fundraising & Capital Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intellectual curiosity & a demonstrated passion for lifelong learning• Flexible, adaptable, resourceful, & open to the ideas of others• Proven ability to embrace change tolerate ambiguity & the capacity to see uncertainty, unfamiliarity, or risk as opportunity• Ability to self-reflect for continuous improvement• Open to feedback & improvement• Kind, compassionate & authentic

A claim without evidence is worse than no claim at all.



The Experience Matrix Résumé

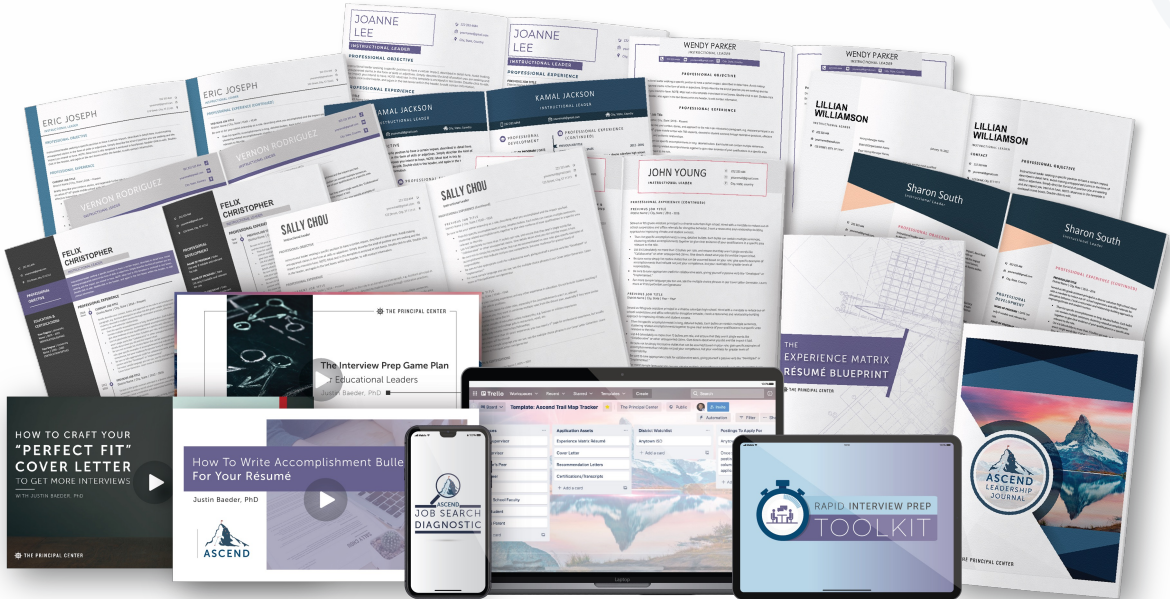
- Header—name & contact info
- Professional Objective
- Experience, most recent first
 - Role, School/Employer, Dates
 - Overview paragraph
 - Accomplishment bullets (NOT duties)
- Education & Certifications
- References



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Professional Objective

- Describe the kind of role you're looking for and the contribution you want to make
- Give the reader a sense of how you're a fit for the position
- Don't make unsupported claims



Professional Objective Example

As an experienced instructional leader, my goal is to serve as principal in a diverse elementary school in the Plano area focused on closing achievement gaps and preparing all students for citizenship.



Professional Objective Format

As a ____, my goal is to ____ in a ____
school where I can ____.



The Experience Matrix Résumé

- Header—name & contact info
- Professional Objective
- **Experience, most recent first**
 - Role, School/Employer, Dates
 - Overview paragraph
 - Accomplishment bullets (NOT duties)
- Education & Certifications
- References



How To List Your Work History

- Most recent first—anchor in present
- More detail for more recent & relevant roles
- Condense/omit dates for older roles
- Omit most non-education roles
- Don't divide into teaching, leadership, etc.—stick with reverse-chronological order



Describing Each Role

- Role / Location / Dates:

Assistant Principal, Logantown High School, 2017–Present

- Overview Paragraph:

“Hired with a mandate to reduce out-of-school suspensions and office referrals for disruptive behavior, I have built relationships and taken a fair, consistent approach to improving climate and student success.”

- Accomplishment bullets:

4-6 detailed, sentence-length descriptions of specific accomplishments—not duties or efforts

LILLIAN WILLIAMSON

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

CONTACT

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✉ youremail@gmail.com

📍 123 Street, City, ST 11111

PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE

Instructional leader seeking a specific position to have a certain impact, described in detail here. Avoid making unsupported claims in the form of skills or adjectives. Simply describe the kind of position you are seeking and the impact you intend to have. NOTE: Most text in this template is enclosed in text boxes. Double-click to edit.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CURRENT JOB TITLE

District Name | City, State | 2016 - Present

Briefly describe your context, duties, and approach to the role in an introductory paragraph, e.g. Assistant principal in an urban 6th-8th grade middle school with 788 students, devoted to student success through restorative practices, effective instruction, and authentic relationships.

- Then list specific accomplishments in long, detailed bullets. Each bullet can contain multiple sentences, clustering related accomplishments together to give clear evidence of your qualifications in a specific area relevant to the role.
- List 4-6 (absolutely no more than 7) bullets per role, and ensure that they aren't single words like "Collaborative" or other unsupported claims. Give details about what you did and the impact it had.
- Be sure not to simply list routine duties that can be assumed based on your role; give specific examples of accomplishments that indicate not just your competence, but your readiness for greater levels of responsibility.
- Be sure to take appropriate credit for collaborative work, giving yourself a passive verb like "Developed" or "Implemented."
- For more sample language you can use, see the multiple-choice phrases in our Cover Letter Generator. Learn more at PrincipalCenter.com/generator

EDUCATION &

CERTIFICATIONS

YOUR DEGREE | University Name | 2005 - 2007
CERTIFICATION DETAILS

YOUR DEGREE | University Name | 2003 - 2005
CERTIFICATION DETAILS

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED)

PREVIOUS JOB TITLE

District Name | City, State | YEAR - YEAR

Be sure to list your admin internship as a role, describing what you accomplished and the impact you had.

- Then list specific accomplishments in long, detailed bullets. Each bullet can contain multiple sentences, clustering related accomplishments together to give clear evidence of your qualifications in a specific area relevant to the role.
- List 4-6 (absolutely no more than 7) bullets per role, and ensure that they aren't single words like "Collaborative" or other unsupported claims. Give details about what you did and the impact it had.
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PREVIOUS JOB TITLE

District Name | City, State | YEAR - YEAR

Be sure to include your teaching experience and any other experience in education. Do not include student teaching if you are applying for admin positions.

- It's ok to list less detail for older roles, especially if the accomplishments aren't as relevant
- In some cases you may want to condense multiple roles from the distant past, especially if they were similar roles within the same district
- Omit roles outside of education unless noteworthy, e.g. business or military experience
- Omit high school and college jobs in restaurants, retail, etc.
- Include only notable internships/fellowships
- If you have more than 20 years' experience, you may need a 3rd page for professional experience, but usually two pages will be enough
- For more sample language you can use, see the multiple-choice phrases in our Cover Letter Generator. Learn more at PrincipalCenter.com/generator

PROFESSIONAL

DEVELOPMENT

NAME OF PROGRAM | Date

List only if notable and relevant for role

NAME OF PROGRAM | Date

List only if notable and relevant for role

NAME OF PROGRAM | Date

List only if notable and relevant for role



PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CURRENT JOB TITLE

District Name | City, State | 2016 – Present

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What's Wrong With Duties?

- They don't distinguish you from other candidates with similar experience
- They're not new information to the hiring team
- They're about the job you *held*, and don't convey your readiness for the job you're *seeking*



Accomplishments, Not Duties

Which is a more compelling bullet?

- “Discipline”
- “Handled discipline for all 9th graders, applying consequences according to discipline matrix.”



Accomplishments, Not Duties

Which is a more compelling bullet?

- “Discipline”
- “Handled discipline for all 9th graders, applying consequences according to discipline matrix.”

These are both bad, because they describe routine duties.



Accomplishments, Not Duties

- Specific projects that you completed, worded in the past tense
- Include results/outcomes, if compelling
- Give yourself an active role: *Developed, implemented, created, overhauled....NOT worked with, participated in, served on, collaborated to...*
- For interviews: turn it into a story



Accomplishments, Not Duties

Which is a more compelling bullet?

- “Discipline”
- “Handled discipline for all 9th graders, applying consequences according to discipline matrix.”
- “Implemented in-school suspension to reduce out-of-school suspensions, resulting in a 63% decrease in the number of students receiving out-of-school suspension and a 50% reduction in missing assignments.”



Accomplishment Bullet Examples

- Reduced monthly out-of-school suspensions by 32% from Fall to Spring 2018 by implementing Innocent Classroom training for staff and working with students to develop personalized support plans.
- Developed an early attendance intervention system to identify and provide targeted support for students at risk of disengaging with school, increasing average daily attendance from 97.2% to 98.7%, and reducing active truancy cases from 17 to 4.
- Piloted and implemented Writing Workshop training and curriculum to improve writing instruction



Collaborative Accomplishments

Can you still list an accomplishment on your résumé if you worked as a team or committee?



Mining Your Committee Experience

Résumé bullets like “*Served on the _ committee*” are weak...but they are a great starting point for finding key accomplishments. Ask yourself:

- What problem/opportunity did the committee focus on?
- What did you do?
- What was the impact?

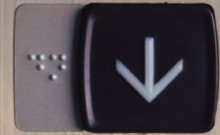
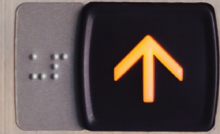


Let's Practice Now!

In the webinar chat, share a draft accomplishment that you might use in your résumé.

Level Up Your Cover Letter

Making the argument that you deserve an interview





Your Biggest Opportunity

You can't change the basic facts of your résumé in the short term:

- Your experience is “fixed”
- Your education is “fixed”

...but you can make dramatic changes to your cover letter—immediately.



Cover Letter

- The cover letter is your best chance to make the argument that you're the ideal candidate
- Treat it as a 5-paragraph persuasive essay, not a formality
- Write as an evidence-based argument
- Don't settle for a 2nd draft—this should be the best professional writing you've ever done



The “Perfect Fit” Argument

Your cover letter’s job is to get your application in the “yes” pile.

It is an argument,
NOT a recap of your résumé.



Mutually Supporting Evidence

Make the same evidence-based arguments for your candidacy in:

- Résumé
- Cover letter
- Interview
- Recommendation letters



Revise, Revise, Revise

- Your first draft is likely a liability
- Your 2nd-3rd drafts are likely on par with other candidates'
- Competitive advantage: 4th draft & beyond
- OR start with Cover Letter Generator



Don't Use ChatGPT

I am excited to apply for the position of Principal at [School Name]. With [X] years of experience in educational leadership and a deep passion for fostering academic excellence, I am eager to bring my skills and vision to your esteemed school community. Throughout my career, I have championed student achievement, supported professional development for educators, and cultivated an inclusive environment where every member of the school thrives. As a dedicated leader, I believe that collaboration, innovation, and a student-centered approach are key to driving educational success.

At [School], I successfully [specific achievement]. My ability to build strong relationships with students, staff, and families has been instrumental in creating a culture of trust and accountability. I am particularly drawn to [School Name] because of its commitment to [specific value or mission of the school, e.g., "empowering diverse learners" or "fostering a love for STEAM education"], and I am confident my leadership philosophy aligns with the goals of your institution.



What ChatGPT Lacks

- Structured argument
- Specific accomplishments
- Your voice & style
- Relevant topics
- Advantage over your competition



COVER LETTER GENERATOR



Cover Letter Generator

My name is Justin Baeder. Enclosed you will find my résumé for your consideration for the Principal position at Badger Hill Elementary.

For the past 6 years, I have served as an Assistant Principal, and

I am seeking a role that en

I believe my values, skills, and work ethic make me an excellent fit for Morningstar School District.

help all students achieve a

I have spent my career wo
nt fit for the Principal role.

I believe my professional experience has prepared me precisely the kind of instructional leader you are looking for.

— Paragraph Break —

Because I hold a deep com

I believe my professional background makes me a strong candidate for the Principal role.

all students can learn at hi

I am committed to keeping students on track in both academics and average daily

In my position as an Assistant Principal, I have

Applying Role	Principal
Applying School	Badger Hill Elementary
Applying District	Morningstar School District
Self-Characterized Role	instructional leader
Self-Characterized Role Article	an
Years Experience in Profession	17



Cover Letter Generator

- Fill in job details
- Fill in basic details—name, role, experience, etc.
- Choose from multiple-choice options for each phrase
- Copy & paste into documents, emails, forms



How To Get Cover Letter Generator

- Buy webinar recording for \$1 at PrincipalCenter.com/up
- Login to Repertoire during free trial period
- Navigate to Templates » System Templates » Cover Letter Generator

The screenshot shows a web application interface. On the left is a dark sidebar menu with the following items: 'Templates' (with a right-pointing chevron), 'Create New Template', 'My Templates', 'System Templates' (highlighted in a darker shade), and 'System Fields'. The main content area has a search bar containing the text 'cover letter', a search icon, and a dropdown menu showing '10'. Below the search bar is a table with two columns: 'Title' and 'Action'. The table contains one row with the title 'Ascend Masterclass - Cover Letter Generator - School Admin' and an action icon (a blue square with a white plus sign) that has a mouse cursor hovering over it.

Title	Action
Ascend Masterclass - Cover Letter Generator - School Admin	

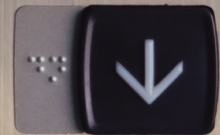
Copy Into Template



PrincipalCenter.com/up

Level Up Your References

Building your network & getting rec letters





Typical Reference Checks: Is This Person Qualified?

Usually, reference checks are a “just in case” step:

- Is this person crazy?
- Have they done something horrible that we need to know about?
- Is there something they're hiding?
- Are they really as great as they claim to be?

References are contacted in order to minimize risk...but they can do so much more for you, if you're willing to ask.



Who Can I Ask?

- Current supervisor
- Past supervisors
- Other admins who know you
- Colleagues within school
- Committee colleagues
- Associations/outside organizations

Recruit Your References Early





Make Your References A Competitive Advantage

You need references who won't just speak well of you during a reference check. You need references who will **mentor** and **advocate for you**—and the time to enlist their support is **now**.

The Awkward Conversation





The Awkward Conversation

- Sooner is better than later
- Warning is better than surprise
- Face-to-face is better than phone
- Phone is better than email



The Awkward Conversation: A Suggested Script

As you probably know, I've been planning to look for a ___ position, and I'll probably start applying when jobs are posted in ___ (month). I want you to know that I'm 100% committed to this school, and that this job has my full attention for as long as I'm in it. If there's a ___ job for me here, I'd take it in a heartbeat. But I also know there may not be an opening for me here, and becoming a ___ is a really important next step for me. I don't want to put all my eggs in one basket, so—and I know this is awkward to ask—I want to make sure I have your support as I take these next steps, even if it means going somewhere else, if that's where the opportunity is.

Between now and then, I want to make sure I'm demonstrating everything that you'd need to see in order to give me your highest endorsement without any hesitation. I know I'm probably not doing everything I could be, so I'd like to ask for your feedback now. What should I be doing to really make myself an outstanding candidate for ___?

And because I know it's always short notice when people ask for recommendation letters, what I'd like to ask for now is a draft—not something that's finished and ready to send, but just a rough outline of what you think of me and what I need to work on. Then, if you see me growing in those areas, you can revise the letter, and when I actually need to send one in, it should be a lot faster for you, because most of it is already written. Would that be OK? Could you write me a draft recommendation letter by ___?



Track Your Reference Requests

Ascend Trail Map Tracker Board

- 1. Discover Your Leadership Superpowers**
 - Ascend Leadership Journal (1)
 - Leadership Trajectory Narrative
 - Story & Example Portfolio (1)
- 2. Recruit Your References**
 - Reference Recruitment Game Plan (1)
 - Script: How to Ask for a Draft Recommendation
 - Script: How To Suggest Topics For Your Recommendation Letter Without Offending the Writer
 - Script: What To Say If Your Boss Says You Aren't Ready
 - Potential References:
- 3. Craft Your Application Argument**
 - How to Write an Accomplishment Bullet For Your Resume
 - Experience Matrix Résumé (3)
 - Cover Letter Generator (1)
 - Recommendation Letters
 - Certifications/Transcripts
- 4. Train for Interview Day**
 - Video Interview Practice (1)
 - Ascend VIP Interview Practice Rubric (1)
 - 52 Practice Interview Questions (1)
- 5. Race to the Finish Line**
 - Job Tracker Template: MS Principal (2/6)
 - District Watchlist: Anytown ISD
 - Champion's Routine (2)
 - Ascend Job Search Diagnostic (1)



How Your References Can Help

- Feedback on growth areas
- Special projects to gain experience
- Putting in a good word with their network
- Putting out feelers for jobs
- Recommendation letters
- Triangulating rec letters with application



Commit To Having The Talk

Are you willing to have the awkward conversation with your supervisor(s) in the next three weeks?

If Your Boss Won't Support You





Build Your Network

- Peers in your school & beyond
- Leaders in your content area, e.g. district/agency
- Past supervisors & colleagues
- Leaders outside your chain of command
- Project-specific colleagues



Recommendation Letter Game Plan

- Ask for a “draft” in Word/Google Docs form
- Share ideas from your Ascend Leadership Journal—accomplishments, projects, etc.
- Ask for revisions as needed
- Align with résumé/cover letter



Your Recommendation Letter Goal

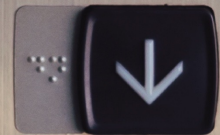
10 Letters

Are you in?

Yes? No?

Next Steps

Making the most of your early-mover advantage





Competitive, Not Just Qualified

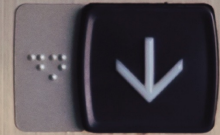
- The best leaders are too humble in the job search process
- Your qualifications are just that—they don't make you stand out from the competition



Take Responsibility & Take Action

- I am in control of my qualifications
- I am in control of my competitiveness as a candidate

Q&A





Question

Is it a good idea to look for a new principal position after one year's experience in a position? (One year total of principal experience.)



Question

Should I put student teachers/interns I have mentored in my résumé or cover letter?



Question

Is it okay to interview for a job that you think you would be great at, even if you don't meet all of the qualifications listed in the job description? I don't want to risk looking bad in an interview when they find out I don't have something the job description clearly stated was a requirement.



Question

At the end of the interview, what are appropriate questions to ask the panel?



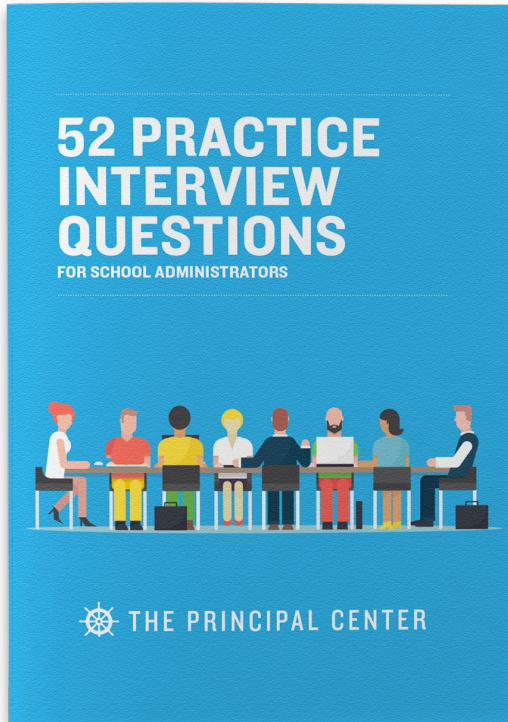
Q&A

What should I do to improve my cover letter if I'm not a great writer?

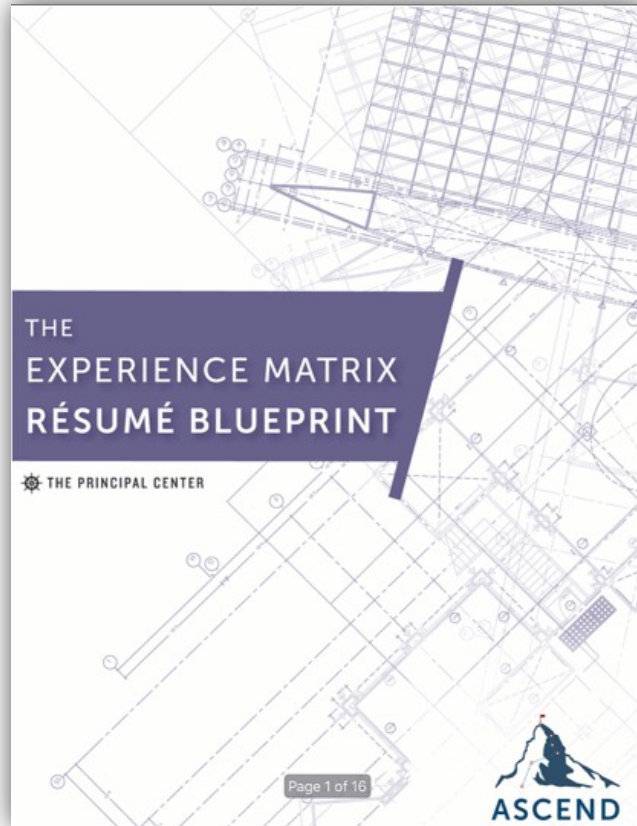


COVER LETTER GENERATOR

Practice Interview Questions

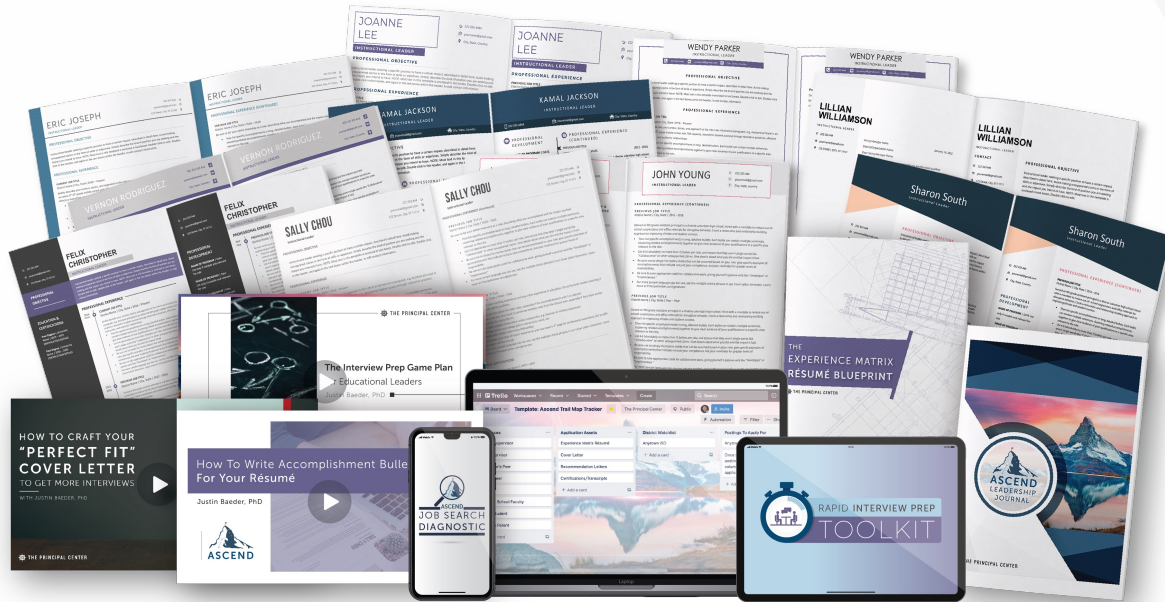


PrincipalCenter.com/interview



PrincipalCenter.com/blueprint

Recording + 14 Days of Full Access



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