

Best Practices for Developing Campus Leaders

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In the following report, Hanover Research explores best practices in developing and implementing campus leadership programs for public school districts. We review literature on the changing roles and expectations of school leaders, identify professional development best practices, and profile school districts that have successfully designed and implemented campus leadership programs.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

The era of “Institutional Leadership,” in which the campus principal primarily acts as head administrator and manager, has begun to give way to the era of “Instructional Leadership,” in which the principal is responsible for fostering a culture of school-wide knowledge and shared decision making.¹ In the past, principal preparation “emphasized leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving skills as well as basic competence in school law, budget, and supervision.”² Today, however, cohort-based training programs and mentorships are designed to address curriculum, instruction, and assessment, while practica and internships provide intensive experiences for new principals.

This report explores different best practice models in developing and implementing campus leadership programs for public school districts. The report reviews the literature on the changing role and expectations of school leaders, identifies professional development best practices and models, and profiles districts that have successfully designed and implemented campus leadership programs. It is divided into two sections:

- **Section I: Campus Leadership Program Literature Review** summarizes the literature on campus leadership development programs. Special attention is paid to program design and implementation, as well as approaches to and best practices for campus leadership development.
- **Section II: Campus Leadership Program Profiles** examines key aspects of four school districts’ campus leadership professional development programs, highlighting program design, structure, curriculum, and outcomes, when available. The four profiled districts include:
 - Providence School Department, Rhode Island
 - Pittsburgh School District, Pennsylvania
 - Community School District 2, New York City
 - Chicago Public Schools, Illinois

¹ Matthes, M. “A Study of Two School Districts’ Practices in Providing Professional Development for Principals.” Washington State University, 2009.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/304441136/BEC8CE4B78F34DA1PQ/1?accountid=132487>

² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

KEY FINDINGS

- **A paradigm shift of school principal as “institutional leader” to school principal as “instructional leader” is underway, requiring a new approach to training and professional development.** Schools districts are no longer requiring principals to be exclusively concerned with administrative and management functions, but rather to focus on fostering a culture of inquiry among teachers and students alike.
- **Studies have shown that second only to classroom instruction, school leaders are the most influential school-related factor affecting student achievement.** Strong leadership has been linked to strong teachers, which is why researchers posit the lack of evidence to support improvements in student achievement in the absence of a strong campus leader.
- **Campus leadership programs may be offered through a variety of methods and arrangements, and are frequently designed to address and support district-specific needs and challenges.** Among the institutions profiled in this report, training may be offered on-site and/or online by the school district, through a non-profit educational institution or association, or through a partnership between a school district and an outside entity, such as a university or non-profit educational association.
- **Often, university-based training programs are unselective, failing to prepare aspiring principals to lead schools.** Traditionally, unprepared principals hired for schools with profound needs were left to fend for themselves without formal mentoring or support. However, new state and district campus leadership programs require some form of mentorship relationship, particularly among aspiring and new principals, and occasionally among all principals.
- **The most common campus leadership professional development practice is mentoring and/or instructional coaching.** Additionally, cohort-based learning communities, support groups, and apprenticeships are commonly used by the school districts profiled in the following report. While programs for attracting and training new principals are most common, some districts also offer professional development and mentoring activities for seated principals.

SECTION I: CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section summarizes current trends in campus leadership development. Below, Hanover Research describes the impetus behind district- and state-level decisions to adopt and implement professional development programs for campus leaders; introduces approaches to and best practices for campus leadership development, including lessons learned through established leadership training initiatives; and provides a brief review of Boston Public Schools' *Essentials of Whole School Improvement* initiative, an exemplary campus leadership program recognized for its innovative approach to school improvement.

THE NEED FOR CAMPUS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Strong leadership has proven critical to cultivating success in every profession, particularly professions “where lives are on the line.” For example, rigorous development programs for medical and military leaders begin with candidate selection, continue through academic training, and are supplemented by ongoing mentorship. And yet, in the field of education, rigorous leadership training programs are not as embedded in the culture:³

All too often, new principals emerge from weak, unselective university-based training programs that don't really prepare people to lead schools in the real world. Once hired for schools with staggering needs, these novice principals are left to fend for themselves without formal mentoring or support.

Yet advocates of school reform, particularly those focused on cultivating strong leaders, are optimistic that current practices can be transformed to better influence student achievement. Studies have shown that following classroom instruction, school leaders are the second most influential school-related factor affecting student achievement. Researchers at The Wallace Foundation argue that, “[t]o date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership.”⁴ Furthermore, effective principals have been shown to have a profound impact on teaching quality:

It is the work [principals] do that enables teachers to be effective — as it is not just the traits that teachers bring, but their ability to use what they know in a high-functioning organization, that produces student success. And it is the leader who both recruits and retains high quality staff — indeed, the number one reason for teachers' decisions about whether to stay in a school is the quality of administrative support — and it is the leader who must develop this organization.⁵

³ Miller, W. “Study: The Problem with Principal Training and How to Fix It.” *The Washington Post*, July 29, 2012. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/study-the-problem-with-principal-training-and-how-to-fix-it/2012/07/29/gJQA1gL5HX_blog.html

⁴ Seashore Louis, K., et al. “Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning.” As cited by: “The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training.” The Wallace Foundation, June 2012. p. 3. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/effective-principal-leadership/Pages/executive-summary-the-making-of-the-principal.aspx>

⁵ Darling-Hammond, L. “Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World.” As cited by: Ibid.

An additional benefit to improved leadership training is the potential to reduce principal turnover. According to research examined by The Wallace Foundation, the average school undergoes a principal change every three to four years, which is a costly trend both fiscally and in affecting student achievement.⁶

Many university-based educational programs have failed to keep pace with the “school principal as instructional leader” movement, one in which the principal is focused on education as opposed to administration.⁷ For example, the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction argues that:

Effective instructional and administrative leadership is required to implement change processes. Effective leaders are proactive and seek help that is needed. They nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth.⁸

At the district level, schools have begun to invest in improving the quality of academic and pre-service training programs, as well as provide ongoing mentorship and alternate support systems for newly hired principals. At the state level, the adoption of more stringent academic accreditation and principal certification standards has compelled universities and campus leader training programs to improve services.⁹ In recognizing the benefits of providing comprehensive professional development to existing and aspiring school leaders, while faced with fewer available professional development options, schools districts have begun to search for effective ways to provide campus leaders with the training and resources they need to succeed.

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

School districts and states are increasingly broadening their approach to leadership training, as it has become clear that “[t]oo often, training for principals fails to prepare them for the difficult task of guiding schools to better teaching and learning.”¹⁰ The prescriptive “one-size-fits-all” information delivery approach to school management is being replaced by targeted, individual training. This shift has come from the realization that to change an organization, it is imperative to address the knowledge, skills, and practices of individual leaders.¹¹ For example, the Southern Regional Education Board argues that:

It is impossible to provide quality school-based experiences that engage aspiring principals in a developmental continuum of observing, participating in and leading teams in solving school problems without the district’s commitment to principal preparation and the contribution of staff time and expertise.¹²

⁶ Seashore Louis, K., et. al., p. 173. As cited by: Ibid., p. 5.

⁷ Miller, W., Op. cit.

⁸ Shannon, G.S. “Nine Characteristics of High-Performing Schools.” Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. p. 14. <https://www.k12.wa.us/research/pubdocs/pdf/9characteristicsRresourceclist.pdf>

⁹ “The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training.” Op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹ Matthes, M., Op. cit., p. 6.

¹² “The Providence School Department and the University of Rhode Island Partnership.” Southern Regional Education Board. p. 2. http://illinoischoolleader.org/advisory_committee/documents/05V05_Providence.pdf

School districts have had success with multiple approaches to campus leadership training. A common practice is to hire external trainers well-versed in the instructional leader paradigm, although districts have increasingly begun to develop training programs tailored to address location-specific needs. School districts taking the latter approach often choose to collaborate with local universities for instructional design and outcomes evaluations. As a result, new research-validated examples have begun to shed light on best practices in effective campus leadership development. For example, Chicago Public Schools and Denver Public Schools have partnered with local universities to develop leadership training programs, while New York City Public Schools and Boston Public Schools have created their own leadership training academies and/or partner with non-profit training providers.¹³

APPROACHES TO CAMPUS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Campus leadership development programs may be offered through non-profit institutions and associations external to a school district, may be conceived and developed internally, or may be developed in partnership between a school district and an outside entity, such as a university or association.

An example of an externally derived campus leadership development program comes from the New Teacher Center (NTC). The non-profit educational organization works to build teacher and campus leader capacity through professional development workshops tailored to address a school district's specific need and goals. Figure 1.1 provides brief descriptions of the NTC's site leadership capacity building workshops.

Figure 1.1: New Teacher Center's Site Leadership Capacity Building Workshops

| WORKSHOP | DESCRIPTION |
|--|--|
| Role of the Principal one-day workshop | Explores how principals support the development of new teachers through collaborative relationships, effective communications, and thoughtful organizational structure and policies. |
| Improving Student Achievement three-day workshop | Guides participants on how to observe teaching and learning through the lens of standards and student achievement. |
| Professional Learning Communities: Culture Not Program one-day workshop | Teaches participants the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that promote professional, collaborative, and inquiry-focused student learning. |
| Supervising and Supporting Principals as Instructional Leaders two-day workshop | For those responsible for the supervision and coaching of principals. A highly interactive forum where participants respond to video scenarios, engage in role plays and self-assessments, and share dilemmas from their own practice. |
| Leadership Institutes year-long series of 10 half-day professional development modules | Focuses on the management and leadership tasks, skills, and processes necessary for principals and other site leaders to master management responsibilities and emerge as instructional leaders in standards-based schools. |

Source: New Teacher Center¹⁴

¹³ "The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training." Op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁴ Figure text adapted from: "Site Leadership Capacity Building for High Impact Teacher Induction." New Teacher Center. <http://newteachercenter.org/induction-programs/school-leadership-programs/site-leadership-capacity-building-high-impact-teacher-induction>

A partnership between a non-profit educational association and a professional development organization offers a second approach to external campus leadership development. For example, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the Schlechty Center offer on-site workshops and online learning “predicated on the assumption that local educators, rather than outside consultants, are the people who must transform our schools.”¹⁵ The partnership’s leadership development program is designed to help seated principals increase student engagement and improve learning, thereby transforming schools and districts into “engagement-focused organizations.”¹⁶ The framework offers training in the following content areas:¹⁷

- Designing Engaging Work
- Engaging the Net Generation
- Creating a Strategy for Engaging Staff: A Learning Experience
- Reframing Accountability as a Strategy to Save Public Education
- Supporting and Sustaining Innovation
- Whose Standards Are They?
- What the Numbers Don’t Tell Us: School Districts Tell Their Stories
- Taking Stock
- Belief’s Institute
- The Capacity-Building Role of the Central Office

An alternative partnership model in which a school district and a non-profit professional development organization collaborate can ensure campus leadership development programs are tailored to address district-specific needs. For example, the New York City (NYC) Leadership Academy is a non-profit organization offering fee-for-service consulting services such as pre-service training for aspiring principals, mentoring for new and sitting principals, and a range of other continuing professional development activities for school leaders throughout the city and nation.¹⁸ Its local *Aspiring Principals Program* is taught by former NYC principals and principal supervisors, and includes a six-week summer problem-solving program specifically designed to address the unique challenges inherent to NYC schools; a 10-month, school-based mentorship residency for novice principals; and a summer session to help program graduates plan for their transition into leadership positions.¹⁹ NYC’s Department of Education provides salary and benefits for all individuals admitted to the program.

A final collaborative approach to developing an effective campus leadership program is through a partnership between a school district and university. Professional Development Schools (PDS) are a type of school-university partnership “designed to bring about the simultaneous renewal of school and teacher education programs—restructuring schools for improved student learning and revitalizing the preparation and professional development of

¹⁵ “About Schlechty Center.” Schlechty Center. <http://www.slechtycenter.org/about-the-center>

¹⁶ “Transforming America’s Schools.” Schlechty Center. <http://www.slechtycenter.org/>

¹⁷ “What We Offer.” Schlechty Center. <http://www.slechtycenter.org/about-the-center/what-we-offer>

¹⁸ “Who We Are.” NYC Leadership Academy. <http://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/who-we-are>

¹⁹ “The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training.” Op. cit., p.20.

experienced educators at the same time.”²⁰ University faculty, district administrators, and teachers collaborate to design a PDS focused on improving PreK-12 student learning, preparing pre-service educators (e.g., teachers and principals), providing ongoing professional development, and performing ongoing assessment to support and improve the previous functions. Despite the benefits of a well-designed PDS, a lack of research on administrator outcomes indicates a lower professional development priority.²¹ According to the Southern Regional Education Board,

Currently, the research base for district and university collaborations on school leadership program design is thin. Many universities have not viewed local school districts as having the responsibility for preparing future leaders or the valuable knowledge and other resources needed for effective program design and implementation. Traditionally, districts have accepted what they got from universities as the best that scholarship and research can offer.²²

Researchers believe that “[u]ntil there is collaboration between districts and universities, a serious disconnect will continue between what districts and schools need principals to know and do and what universities prepare them to do.”²³ However, an example of an exemplary PDS collaboration between the Providence School Department and the University of Rhode Island is profiled in Section II of this report.

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING LESSONS

Although less research has been conducted on the efficacy of campus leadership programs, organizations such as The Wallace Foundation are committed to studying best practices in leadership development. Its report, *The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training*, is the culmination of a six-year study in which data from 180 schools were collected and analyzed. Figure 1.2 on the following page highlights study results and recommendations.

²⁰ Field, S.S. “How Highly Effective Professional Development School Principals Utilize Research-based Leadership Practices to Lead the School-University Partnership.” University of Colorado Denver, 2008. p. 3.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/304374608/fulltextPDF/E6A2D25CF3664B6EPQ/3?accountid=132487>

²¹ Teitel, L. “The Professional Development School Handbook: Starting, Sustaining and Assessing Partnerships that Improve Student Learning.” As referenced by: Ibid., p. 4.

²² “The Providence School Department and the University of Rhode Island Partnership,” Op. cit., p. 1.

²³ Ibid., p. 2.

Figure 1.2: Five Lessons in Leadership Training

Lesson 1: A more selective, probing process for choosing candidates for training is the essential first step in creating a more capable and diverse corps of future principals.

- Exemplary training programs are more rigorous in their review of candidates' skills, experience, and leadership dispositions.
- Exemplary training programs feature strong partnerships, in which districts actively identify, recruit, and screen prospective training candidates to identify those with the potential and desire to effectively lead schools.
- Exemplary training programs tend to use more careful, and costly, screening techniques to identify promising leadership candidates.
- Exemplary training programs are more likely to graduate candidates who are women (78 percent versus 43 percent) and members of minority groups (37 percent versus 8 percent).

Lesson 2: Aspiring principals need pre-service training that prepares them to lead improved instruction and school change, not just manage buildings.

- Exemplary training programs are more focused on improving instruction, are more closely tied to the needs of districts, and more likely to provide relevant internships with hands-on learning experience. Key features include:
 - Curricula is tightly focused on improving instruction and changing school culture, so teaching and learning at high standards are everyone's top priority.
 - Coursework requires participants to apply theory to practice.
 - Well-designed, supervised internships offer genuine leadership experience.

Lesson 3: Districts should do more to exercise their power to raise the quality of principal training, so that newly hired leaders better meet their needs.

- Exemplary training programs are "discerning customers," adopting or creating leadership standards to drive the key choices in selecting, training and hiring new principals.
- Exemplary training programs are "collaborators," adopting or creating leadership standards to drive the key choices in selecting, training and hiring new principals.
- Exemplary training programs are "competitors," taking on the job of principal training themselves.

Lesson 4: States could make better use of their power to influence the quality of leadership training through standard-setting, program accreditation, principal certification and financial support for highly qualified candidates.

- The most strategic state efforts include:
 - Standards and accountability to improve programs through licensure and program accreditation;
 - Financial support for principal recruitment and quality internships and mentoring; and
 - Creation of state leadership academies that provide ongoing professional development
- However, only a few states have effectively exercised their authority to improve school leadership statewide.

Lesson 5: Especially in their first years on the job, principals need high-quality mentoring and professional development tailored to individual and district needs.

- Exemplary training programs have abandoned the long-held, sink-or-swim mentality towards new principals.
- Exemplary training programs recognize the importance of ongoing mentoring for novice principals to effect high-turnover and principal shortages in high-need schools.
- Exemplary training programs offer continuous professional development to mentors.

Source: The Wallace Foundation²⁴

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Boston Public Schools (BPS) won the 2006 Broad Prize for Urban Education for its commitment to creating innovative school leader development programs, as leaders are “the single most important factor in schools’ success.”²⁵ Initiated as a part of the district’s 1995 school improvement effort, BPS’ leadership development programs evolved under Superintendent Payzant’s leadership beginning in the 2002-03 academic year. The *Essentials of Whole School Improvement* framework incorporates best practices in school leadership, and ultimately led to the establishment of BPS’ *School Leadership Institute*, designed to:²⁶

- Provide an accelerated career path that addresses the continuum of developmental levels for leaders from both traditional and nontraditional backgrounds;
- Expose future leaders to the reality of the field through a one-year hands on residency with one of Boston’s strongest principals; and
- Build a cohort of colleagues who serve as an ongoing support network throughout their careers in school administration.

A component of the Institute is the *Boston Principal Fellowship Program*, a one-year urban principal preparation program. The fellowship begins with a five-week intensive summer session to prepare fellows for their residency placements. In the fall, fellows begin their residency, spending four days in their assigned schools and meeting the fifth day to engage in relevant theoretical coursework. Fellows receive support from their mentor as they implement a year-long practicum at their school site. Additionally, fellows participate in a series of best practices in school leadership seminars hosted by a panel of principals—the first seminar addresses fellows’ interests and learning needs, while the second seminar addresses a monthly theme (e.g., family and community engagement or race and culture in schools).²⁷ Every aspect of the fellowship is specifically designed to address and support the needs and challenges inherent to BPS, according to best practices outlined in Figure 1.3.

²⁴ Figure text taken with minimal variation from: “The Making of the Principal: Five Lessons in Leadership Training.” Op. cit., pp. 8-24.

²⁵ “Boston School Leadership Institute.” As cited by: Takata, J.W. “Boston Structure Supports School Leaders.” National Staff Development Council, Spring 2008, 28:2. p. 24. <http://www.broadprize.org/asset/1098-jsd%20boston.pdf>

²⁶ Bullet points taken with minimal variation from: Ibid., p. 27.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

Figure 1.3: Best Practices for Preparing Aspiring Principals

| FACTOR | DESCRIPTION |
|------------------------------|--|
| Cohort of Fellows | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides a critical support network throughout residency and beyond ▪ Principals can often feel isolated, thus a program comprised of a diverse, supportive group of fellows can help affect longevity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fellowship graduates remained in the same school longer than the national average |
| Residency Opportunity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through reciprocal learning, fellows have the opportunity to observe and develop school leadership skills under the supervision of a successful principal ▪ Fellows report the residency as the most beneficial program component ▪ Successful residencies are predicated on a good match between mentor and fellow |
| Coursework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coursework properly aligned to school-based work provides an opportunity for fellows to prepare for their placements ▪ Projects supported the application of knowledge in the school settings ▪ Instructors included some of the top professors in New England, who challenged fellows to connect research and theory to school experiences |

Source: National Staff Development Council²⁸

A second component of the Institute targets existing educators and community leaders who have demonstrated leadership potential, but who may not have considered becoming a principal. The *Exploring School Administration* initiative offers a series of 10 after-school seminars, each addressing a different aspect of a school leader's role, and participants "review readings and case studies, meet with school and district leaders, and visit schools to observe principals or assistant principals in action."²⁹

A third Institute offering, the *New Principal Support System*, is designed for first-year principals. Prior to the beginning of the school year, new principals attend a five-day summer institute to help them prepare. Throughout the academic year, the support system continues to develop through monthly networking sessions, school site visits, and ongoing mentoring from an experienced principal. Although second- and third-year principals no longer receive formal mentoring, they are assigned a leadership coach while they continue to attend the monthly networking sessions.

A final component of BPS' *Essentials of Whole School Improvement* program, the *School-Based Administrator Program*, is designed to specifically address the needs of school-based, non-principal administrators, and includes many of the same support services described above.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 25-26.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 27.

SECTION II: CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM PROFILES

The following section presents four school district profiles to provide an overview of varied approaches to developing and implementing campus leadership programs. Each district represents a different aspect of or approach to campus leadership development, while at the same time presenting a degree of overlap in best practices. For example, each program was designed and implemented differently; however, each district aims to change school culture from an ‘institutional leadership’ to ‘instructional leadership’ model. The four districts profiled in this section of the report include:

- Providence School Department, Rhode Island
- Pittsburgh Public Schools, Pennsylvania
- Community School District 2, New York City
- Chicago Public Schools, Illinois

PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT, RHODE ISLAND

Providence School Department (PSD) is a midsize metropolitan district (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Providence School Department

| DISTRICT | TOTAL SCHOOLS | TOTAL STUDENTS | CLASSROOM TEACHERS (FTE) | STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO | ELL STUDENTS | % KIDS POVERTY |
|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Providence School Department | 51 | 23,573 | 1,590.3 | 14.8 | 3,622 | 35.4% |

Source: NCES³¹

PSD is profiled for its inclusion in a 15-state grant-funded initiative in 2002 for districts with a high number of low-income students that sought to support systematic leadership reform to improve student achievement. The Leadership for Educational Achievement in Districts (LEAD) provided support:

[T]o put leadership at the core of systematic school reform by strengthening and diversifying the pool of potential leaders, improving the training of [existing] leaders and their professional development, and creating conditions in which they can do their jobs better.³²

All districts that received funding partnered with one or more universities “to develop and deliver a new model of leadership training that prepares aspiring and practicing school leaders to improve student achievement.”³³

³¹ “Public School District Finance Peer Search.” National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/>

³² “The Providence School Department and the University of Rhode Island Partnership,” Op. cit., p. 1.

³³ Ibid.

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM DESIGN

Providence School Department and its partner, the University of Rhode Island (URI), designed a leadership preparation program specifically for leaders in urban school districts. At the time, URI did not have an established educational leadership program, which benefited the partnership as there was no faculty resistance to the development of the new program.³⁴ To supplement the partnership, the PSD and URI sought the expertise of the Institutes for Learning (IFL), the State Action for Education Leadership Project (SALEP), The Wallace Foundation, the Education Department Corporation (EDC), and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Stakeholders kept PSD's vision central while designing Providence's *Aspiring Principals Program (APP)*, taking a new approach to program content and the leadership development process through the following:³⁵

- Making time for collective, comprehensive planning that leads to a focused and cohesive program of courses, instead of planning them independently
- Focusing first on designing a program that prepares principals to meet the district's specifications for success, instead of beginning with state and national standards and accreditation requirements
- Engaging in a program and course development process in which an outside entity, the district, shares decision making on how the program will be structured, what knowledge and skills will be taught, how they will be taught, and who will teach them, instead of having complete control, ownership and responsibility for the program
- Choosing content and curriculum materials aligned with Providence's vision and school improvement framework, instead of relying on popular textbooks on organizational management and school leadership
- Working with the district to recruit and select candidates demonstrating expertise in curriculum, instruction, and leadership, instead of waiting for candidates to self-select and admitting all who meet university criteria
- Co-teaching with district staff in the district instead of teaching solo at the university
- Crafting academic and clinical assignments that prepare participants to solve real school problems of student achievement, instead of making assignments that only require reading, discussing, and reporting
- Adjusting teaching plans as candidates' prior experiences and strengths—gained from serving as literacy or numeracy coaches, training or serving in other leadership roles—indicate the need for mid-course adjustments, instead of adhering strictly to predetermined course syllabi

Providence's *Aspiring Principals Program* was designed according to district vision, enabling PSD to:³⁶

³⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁵ Bullet points taken verbatim from: Ibid, pp. 4-5.

³⁶ Bulleted points taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 7.

- Get the right people into the future principal pipeline and support their preparation
- Provide a balanced curriculum of academic and practical content and assignments aligned with real school problems and the district vision for improvement
- Team university faculty and district staff to co-teach courses, ensuring an integration of research-based knowledge and practitioner knowledge
- Involve participants in extended school-based experiences where they develop leadership competencies by observing, participating in and leading activities to improve curriculum, instruction and student achievement
- Provide all participants with trained mentors to guide their learning

Central to PSD’s improvement effort is the IFL’s school reform framework, in which teachers, principals, and central office administrators form learning groups focused on improving leadership practices. To be successful in the IFL framework, “school leaders [must] be committed to and have the knowledge and skills for working with teachers to implement an effort-based system of education that promises all students as much high quality instruction as they need to meet rigorous achievement standards.”³⁷ Figure 2.2 outlines IFL’s nine research-based principles of learning central to Providence’s APP.

Figure 2.2: Principles of a Learning-based School

| |
|--|
| ORGANIZING FOR EFFORT |
| An effort-based school replaces the assumption that aptitude determines what and how much students learn with the assumption that sustained and directed effort can yield high achievement for all students. |
| CLEAR EXPECTATIONS |
| If we expect all students to achieve at high levels, then we need to define explicitly what we expect students to learn. These expectations need to be communicated clearly in ways that get them "into the heads" of school professionals, parents, the community and, above all, students themselves. |
| FAIR AND CREDIBLE EVALUATIONS |
| If we expect students to put forth sustained effort over time, we need to use assessments that students find fair; and that parents, community, and employers find credible... therefore, tests, exams and classroom assessments as well as the curriculum must be aligned to the standards. |
| RECOGNITION OF ACCOMPLISHMENT |
| If we expect students to put forth and sustain high levels of effort, we need to motivate them by regularly recognizing their accomplishments. Clear recognition of authentic accomplishment is a hallmark of an effort-based school. |
| ACADEMIC RIGOR IN A THINKING CURRICULUM |
| Thinking and problem solving will be the "new basics" of the 21 st century. But the common idea that we can teach thinking without a solid foundation of knowledge must be abandoned. So must the idea that we can teach knowledge without engaging students in thinking. Knowledge and thinking are intimately joined. |
| ACCOUNTABLE TALK[®] PRACTICES |
| Talking with others about ideas and work is fundamental to learning. But not all talk sustains learning. For classroom talk to promote learning it must be accountable to appropriate knowledge, and to rigorous thinking. |

³⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

| |
|---|
| SOCIALIZING INTELLIGENCE |
| Intelligence is much more than an innate ability to think quickly and stockpile bits of knowledge. Intelligence is a set of problem-solving and reasoning capabilities along with the habits of mind that lead one to use those capabilities regularly. |
| SELF-MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING |
| If students are going to be responsible for the quality of their thinking and learning, they need to develop—and regularly use—an array of self-monitoring and self-management strategies. |
| LEARNING AS APPRENTICESHIP |
| For many centuries most people learned by working alongside an expert who modeled skilled practice and guided novices as they created authentic products or performances... [which] can be brought into schooling by organizing learning environments so that complex thinking is modeled and analyzed. |

Source: Institute for Learning³⁸

PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM

Providence’s APP involves 18-months of coursework, action research, clinical practice assignments, a nine-week internship at two separate schools, and a nine-week clinical residency. During the school year, aspiring principals attend classes after school hours; during the summer, they attend classes full-time. Additionally, certified administrators mentor participants during their instructional leadership residency.³⁹

The APP curriculum is organized around six instructional strands considered best aligned to key issues faced by new principals in Providence. Coursework addresses all facets of school leadership, including the traditional institutional leadership practice, as well as the new focus on instructional leadership (Figure 2.3).

³⁸ Segments of figure text taken verbatim from: “Principles of Learning.” Institute for Learning. http://ifl.lrdc.pitt.edu/index.php/resources/principles_of_learning

³⁹ “The Providence School Department and the University of Rhode Island Partnership.” Op. cit., p. 8.

Figure 2.3: Providence/URI Aspiring Principals Program: Major Strands of Study

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>I. Curriculum and Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Principals of Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New Standards ○ National Standards for Professional Development ○ Resource Selection ▪ Instructional Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Content-focused Coaching ○ Framework for Lesson Design and Reflection ○ Facilitating Study Groups ▪ Numeracy: Computation, Concepts, and Problem Solving ▪ Balanced, Disciplinary Literacy & Writing ▪ Diversity and Equity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Differentiation of Instruction ○ Special Populations <p>II. Organization and Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organization: Organizing for Effort-based Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staffing and Scheduling ○ Mentoring and Support Systems ○ Facilitating Teacher Leadership ▪ Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budgeting ○ Allocation of Resources ○ Contracts and Grants ▪ Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Law ○ Policies and Procedures ○ Contract Interpretation ▪ Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School Board Relations ▪ Human Resource Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interviewing ○ Support Development and Intervention ○ Documentation and Due Process <p>III. Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School Climate and Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitative Leadership ○ Team Building and Effectiveness ○ Conflict Management & Resolution ○ Building a Professional Learning Community ▪ Organizational Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Theory and Practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Engagement ○ Parent and Community Involvement ○ Issues of Race and Class ▪ Building a Professional Learning Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principles of Professional Learning Communities ○ Content-focused Coaching ○ Classroom & School Inter-visitations ○ Facilitating Principal/Teacher Study Groups ▪ Personal Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Speaking, Professional Writing, Listening, Presentations ○ PR and Communications ○ Leading Meetings, Robert’s Rules <p>IV. Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>PowerPoint</i> ○ Databases ○ Electronic Portfolios ○ E-mail ○ Spreadsheets ○ Word Processing ○ Websites ○ <i>Access</i> ○ <i>Excel</i> <p>V. Teacher Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building Teacher Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professional Development ○ Mentoring and Collegiality ○ Classroom Management ○ Appraisal ○ Beginning Teacher Standards ○ I-plans <p>VI. Assessment and Accountability: School and Student Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current Issues in Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment to Inform Strategic Planning ○ Data Analysis: School and Student Performance ○ Planning POP: High Performance Learning Communities ○ Monitoring High Performance Learning Communities ○ Instructional Quality Assessment |
|---|---|

Source: Southern Regional Education Board⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 9.

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP TRAINING OUTCOMES

Ongoing assessment helps PSD and URI identify which APP elements are most effective and which elements must be adjusted. Results indicate that during their residency, more than half of participants had more opportunities to participate in, rather than lead, activities best suited to develop leadership competencies. This finding led the partners to identify ways to increase the number and quality of field-based activities, particularly through the following activities:⁴¹

- Scheduling time to work with struggling students, and to engage faculty in meaningful school improvement work
- Working with a curriculum that is interdisciplinary and provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge in various modalities across the curriculum
- Working with study groups, problem solving sessions and ongoing meetings to promote student achievement
- Building a learning community that includes all stakeholders
- Analyzing and communicating school progress, school achievement and the school improvement agenda to teachers, parents, staff, school board and the community
- Inducting and mentoring new staff
- Seeking resources to support school improvement through writing grants and developing partnerships

A level of program restructuring was needed to increase opportunities in the above activities. The APP internship schedule was altered “to provide time for interns to work with mentors in real time—that is, the critical points in the school year when certain activities usually occur,” particularly during the summer months when the majority of school-year scheduling occurs. Additionally, the districts found opportunities to “creat[e] new clinical assignments, provid[e] more direction and supervision of interns; and provid[e] more training and direction for mentor principals, university faculty, and district coaches.”⁴²

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PENNSYLVANIA

Located in a large metropolitan area, Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) enrolls nearly 28,000 students in grades PreK-12 (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Pittsburgh Public Schools

| DISTRICT | TOTAL SCHOOLS | TOTAL STUDENTS | CLASSROOM TEACHERS (FTE) | STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO | ELL STUDENTS | % KIDS POVERTY |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Pittsburgh Public Schools | 73 | 27,945 | 2,228.9 | 12.5 | 356 | 27.6% |

Source: NCES⁴³

⁴¹ Bullet points taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 15.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ “Public School District Finance Peer Search,” Op. cit.

Through its Strong Leadership initiative, the Broad Foundation recently invested in Pittsburgh Public Schools' *Emerging Leadership Academy*. School districts that receive funding are recognized for their commitment and innovative approach to improve student achievement in urban areas:

The Broad Foundation supports Pittsburgh Public Schools' Emerging Leadership Academy, part of the district's system of inter-related initiatives called PULSE. Designed to recruit, train, evaluate and retain high-quality school-level leadership, PULSE addresses the full spectrum of principal performance—from recruitment and selection to retention and evaluation.⁴⁴

Initially funded through a \$7.4 million federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant, PULSE—Pittsburgh Urban Leadership System for Excellence—is predicated on the assumption that the best way to improve student achievement is through strong leadership. Pittsburgh Public Schools' commitment to creating a culture of accountability has resulted in a system designed “to recruit, train, support, evaluate, improve, and compensate principals to enable their success toward the academic achievement and growth of students.”⁴⁵ Although program funding ended in the 2010-11 academic year, PPS plans to continue PULSE, which has proven to be effective.

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM DESIGN

PULSE was created to deliberately target training towards principals and system administrators who support schools as leaders. PPS believes that targeting principal quality will have a more profound impact on improving teacher quality, rather than focusing exclusively on teacher quality: “Scratch the surface of an excellent school and you are likely to find an excellent principal. Peer into a failing school and you will find weak leadership.”⁴⁶

To develop PULSE, PPS chose to partner with the external non-profit organizations RAND Corporation and the Educational Testing Service, and gathered input from the central office administration, a steering committee, seven subcommittees, members of the Pittsburgh Administrators Association, and existing principals.⁴⁷ Figure 2.5 outlines the ways in which PULSE differs from the previous accountability system.

⁴⁴ “Strong Leadership.” The Broad Foundation.

http://www.broadeducation.org/investments/current_investments/leadership.html

⁴⁵ Leithwood, K.A. and Riehl, C. “What We Know About Successful School Leadership.” As cited by: “PULSE Pittsburgh Urban Leadership System for Excellence.” Pittsburgh Public Schools. p. 1.

[http://www.tifcommunity.org/sites/default/files/PULSE_Overview_\(Revised%207_22_08\)%20.pdf](http://www.tifcommunity.org/sites/default/files/PULSE_Overview_(Revised%207_22_08)%20.pdf)

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “Building School Leadership that Drives Student Achievement.” Pittsburgh Public Schools. p. 4.
http://www.betterhighschools.org/MidwestSIG/documents/Ford-Heywood_Handout1.pdf

Figure 2.5: Pittsburgh Public Schools Current and Former Accountability System

| PREVIOUS ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM | NEW ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM |
|--|--|
| A system not based on research | Research based on effective school leadership |
| Two categories of performance | Four categories of performance—rudimentary, emerging, proficient, accomplished |
| Compensation based on longevity (step system) | Compensated based on measured performance and student outcomes |
| No student achievement bonuses | Bonuses based on student achievement growth outcomes |
| Limited principal training | Extensive and comprehensive principal training and support |
| No training, mentoring and support for executive directors | Extensive and intensive training, mentoring and support for principal’s supervisors, Executive Directors |
| Lack of tools for meaningful evaluation of principals | Research-based performance standards |
| Ineffective principal evaluation | Effective principal evaluation |

Source: Pittsburgh Public Schools⁴⁸

At its core, PULSE is a system designed to develop and constantly improve principal leadership, although it also encompasses principal evaluation and compensation. The PULSE system includes the following six components, described in further detail below:⁴⁹

- Pittsburgh Emerging Leadership Academy (PELA)
- Administrative Induction Program
- Leadership Academy
- Executive Director Mentoring and Training
- Performance-based Evaluation
- Performance-based Compensation

PULSE Component 1: Pittsburgh Emerging Leadership Academy (PELA) received a \$1.7 million grant from the Broad Foundation to recruit, train, support, and place highly-qualified principals throughout PPS to “serve as transformational change agents, instructional leaders and civic leaders.” PELA participants complete a yearlong residency with a mentor principal, and are placed with civic mentors to gain an understanding of the impact of public education on society—civic, economic, and social. Additionally, residents complete an action research project addressing student achievement issues in PPS.

PULSE Component 2: Administrative Induction Program is a two-year program that provides greater support to new principals. During year one, novice principals receive training on PPS policies and procedures; receive support and coaching from school management executive directors; receive education on PPS’ instructional philosophy; receive training on performance evaluation standards; and participate in the Pennsylvania Inspired Leaders program. During the second year, novice principals continue to receive

⁴⁸ Figure text taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁹ Bullet points and subsequent description: Ibid., pp. 5-9.

frequent support and coaching from executive directors, in addition to receiving coaching and mentoring from experienced principals.

PULSE Component 3: Leadership Academy provides extensive and ongoing professional development to all principals, assistant principals, and district administrators. Leadership Academy participants received 35 hours of performance-based evaluation training.

PULSE Component 4: Executive Director Mentoring and Training provides intensive training to each of the five executive directors for school management who supervise principals. The training ensures inter-rater reliability across the evaluation rubric, which was developed according to best practices in education and performance management. Training is also designed to help executive directors transition from schools to the central office, and from their role as peer to supervisor of principals.

PULSE Component 5: Performance-based Evaluation is a performance standards evaluation developed by adapting leading research and studies,⁵⁰ and is conducted twice each academic year—mid-semester and end of year—to map 21 attributes of effective school leadership. PPS effectively communicates its research-based standards to articulate what “accomplished” performance entails and to establish a common core of knowledge among principals and evaluators. Seven performance standards focused on learning, teaching, and creating a learning environment include:

- Establishing a vision of learning
- Creating a culture of teaching and learning
- Understanding the management of learning
- Developing a relationship with the broader community
- Adhering to principles of integrity, fairness, and ethics in learning
- Understanding the local political, social, economic, legal and cultural context
- Commit to the leadership of learning⁵¹

Because performance-based evaluation is critical to the success of PULSE, the above seven performance standards are evaluated according to the following five research-based criteria:

- Begin with a defensible, research-based practice definition that has been studied and understood by all stakeholders.
- Differentiate evaluation processes for novice and experienced principals, as well as principals in need of intensive support.
- Anchor the evaluation process with evidence, not opinion.

⁵⁰ See Robert Marzano’s, “School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results” and Richard Halverson’s, “School Leadership Rubrics.”

⁵¹ “Building School Leadership that Drives Student Achievement.” Op. cit., p. 8.

- Conduct evaluations in such a way that they support and further principal learning.
- Give due consideration to the evaluation process, weighting, and scoring.⁵²

Evaluation evidence is gathered by collecting artifacts, which may include letters, photos, test scores, observations, and notes. Novice principals are evaluated more frequently and are provided greater support, while experienced principals rotate through a three-year cycle of formal evaluations and professional growth project evaluations.

PULSE Component 6: Performance-based Compensation recognizes and rewards top performers in an effort to attract and retain the most effective principals and to motivate and improve the performance of existing principals. Compensation schedules include a performance increase of \$2,000 annually for principals assessed as proficient across all seven standards, which then becomes a part of the principals' base salary. Demonstrated growth in student achievement can earn an annual achievement bonus of \$10,000 (not retained in the base salary).

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM OUTCOMES

In 2012, RAND Corporation published a report assessing PULSE's impact on PPS from academic years 2007-08 through 2010-11. Key findings from the report include:⁵³

- The Pittsburgh Principal Incentive Program relied on a combination of capacity-building interventions and financial incentives to improve principals' instructional leadership
 - Principals gave high ratings to the capacity-building interventions, including professional development and feedback from their supervisors structured around the program's leadership rubric
 - Principals expressed concerns about the financial incentives, particularly those linked to student achievement, although resistance lessened somewhat over the course of implementation
- Principals' behavior changed in ways aligned with program goals
 - Principals reported spending increasing amounts of time observing teachers and providing feedback on instruction
 - Large majorities of teachers rated their principals highly as instructional leaders
- Average principal performance on the rubric remained steady over time
 - Most principals received high scores on the rubric
 - The scores on the rubric standards and components were correlated, and the rubric appeared to measure a single construct related to principal leadership
- In the last year of the evaluation, student achievement growth in grades 4-8 in mathematics and reading reached their highest levels since the beginning of the evaluation

⁵² Bulleted points adapted from: Ibid.

⁵³ Bullet points taken verbatim from: Hamilton, L.S., J. Engberg, E.D. Steinger, C.A. Nelson, and K. Yuan. "Improving School Leadership through Support, Evaluation, and Incentives: The Pittsburgh Principal Incentive Program." RAND Corporation, 2012. <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1223.html>

- Growth exceeded that of the rest of the state in three out of four years since the beginning of the program
- In the final years of the evaluation, there were increases in achievement growth by the low-achieving students
 - This finding suggests that program design features focusing on these students are having a positive impact
 - However, low-income and minority students continued to experience lower achievement growth than their peers when growth was measured using scale scores on the state achievement test

COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT TWO, NEW YORK CITY

Located in a large metropolitan area, Community School District Two (CSD2) enrolls students in grades PreK-12. It was profiled because of its extensive professional development system for all principals, including both new hires and tenured principals alike.

Figure 2.6: Community School District Two

| DISTRICT | TOTAL SCHOOLS | TOTAL STUDENTS | CLASSROOM TEACHERS (FTE) | STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO | ELL STUDENTS | % KIDS POVERTY |
|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Community School District Two | 109 | 60,665 | 3,838.2 | 15.8 | 6,963 | -- |

Source: NCES⁵⁴

Similar to the other districts profiled in this report, CSD2 is located in a diverse urban setting, and has a documented record of successful school improvement based on the implementation of a campus leadership program:

Not only have test scores risen, but there is also a remarkable professional spirit among the teachers, principals, and central staff members of the district [who] exhibit an exceptionally high level of detailed knowledge about the craft of teaching.⁵⁵

Inherent to CSD2's operation is a form of mutual dependency among all levels of staff who have come to "expect support in solving problems of instructional practice from their peers and supervisors," while "problems in design or implementation of instruction are shared and discussed (even with supervisors) rather than hidden from view."⁵⁶ Similar to teachers, principals are expected to be engaged in continuous learning. In fact, the expression, "she is a learner" is used to describe individuals—new and established—who are doing well in their leadership roles.

CSD2's culture of continuous learning to support school improvement was bred from the former district superintendent, who believed principals play a critical role in school improvement through serving as instructional leaders. He stated:

⁵⁴ "Public School District Finance Peer Search," Op. cit.

⁵⁵ Resnick, L.B. and E. Fink. "Developing Principals as Instructional Leaders." *Phi Delta Kappan*, 2001, 82:8. pp. 3-4.
http://www.educationalimpact.com/resources/usl2/pdf/usl2_2A_instructional_leaders.pdf

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

If I expect principals to do the very hard job of leading an instructional community, then I have to have the same expectation for myself. I see myself as the leader of the principals, in just the same way as they are the leaders of their teachers.⁵⁷

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM DESIGN

Community School District Two is structured around the concept of *nested learning communities*—under principal leadership, schools are expected to serve as a learning organization. Principals “are responsible for establishing a *culture of learning* in the school, one in which questions of teaching and learning pervade the social life and interpersonal relations of those working in the school.”⁵⁸

To support its *culture of learning*, the district reorganized to move resources and decision-making to the school level. To support its principals as both institutional and instructional leaders, a primary focus of district-level professional development is on developing strong leadership skills. And while principals are expected to have content knowledge, they do not have to be content specialists. Rather, as instructional leaders, principals are expected to lead “by creating a culture of learning and by providing the right kinds of specialized professional development opportunities when they are needed.”⁵⁹

PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM

All CSD2 principals, regardless of tenure, are expected to participate annually in a majority of professional development program offerings. Similar to an apprenticeship, principals learn and continue to refine “the craft” of leadership through small study and support groups, peer interactions, and individualized coaching and supervision. Although much of the individualized professional development is site-specific, a system-wide commitment to improving teaching and learning is shared throughout the district. In fact, the district’s “shared set of commitment’s, principles, and practices—joined with substantial delegation of authority and control to school sites—is one of [its] distinguishing features.”⁶⁰ Participation in monthly conferences and specialized training institutes foster a common understanding of CSD2’s ideal learning environment among school leaders (Figure 2.7).

⁵⁷ Fink, E. As cited by: Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Resnick, L.B., As cited by: Ibid., p. 7.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

Figure 2.7: Monthly Conferences and Specialized Institutes for Principals

| | |
|---|---|
| MONTHLY CONFERENCES (10-11 PER YEAR) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Day-long, focused on instruction and learning, not administration and management ▪ New instructional initiatives are introduced; old initiatives may be discussed; school data may be evaluated ▪ External consultants and speakers may present; however, extensive discussion among participants is encouraged ▪ Focus placed on instructional practice; test scores guide instructional practice ▪ Several times a year, conferences held in schools ▪ Includes a one- or two-day summer retreat |
| SPECIALIZED INSTITUTES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supplement to monthly conferences ▪ Build deeper instructional content knowledge ▪ May be district-hosted and run by outside, content-expert consultants ▪ May be an external institute or seminar hosted; district pays tuition ▪ Frequently attended by principals and teachers – highlighting the interdependency of school staff ▪ All principals expected to attend one institute each year; most attend several |

Source: Phi Delta Kappan⁶¹

A component of CSD2’s professional development program includes small support groups and study groups, providing principals with an opportunity to work on practice and leadership problems, particularly those related to culture-building and teacher-guiding (Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8: Principal Support Groups and Study Groups

| | |
|--|---|
| SUPPORT GROUPS FOR NEW PRINCIPALS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 12-13 new principals meet monthly with the Deputy Superintendent ▪ Unstructured to encourage new/untended principals to discuss leadership initiatives ▪ Groups intended to address principals’ actions in school, rather than an intellectual grounding ▪ The Deputy Superintendent ensures discussions focus on instructional leadership, rather than complaint sessions. Topics may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Effective teaching strategies ○ Techniques to assess student learning ○ Evaluating teacher instructional performance ○ How to design and run in-school teacher conferences ○ How to use and manage in-school professional developers ▪ Problem sharing is viewed as an opportunity to improve practice, not a sign of poor performance ▪ A problem-centered strategy is used to create a culture of mutual dependency |
|--|---|

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 9-11.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| PRINCIPAL STUDY GROUPS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May be led by the Deputy Superintendent or peer-led ▪ Principals pre-select a content area or problem of practice/ implementation to study ▪ To facilitate individualized coaching, choice of study groups guided by Superintendent ▪ Outside experts may be invited to sessions ▪ Discussions focus on best practices for leadership in instructional content ▪ Topics vary by year-to-year and from group-to-group (e.g., middle school study group, standards and principles of learning, implementation of the District’s new mathematics program, etc.) |
|-------------------------------|---|

Source: Phi Beta Kappan⁶²

Community School District Two has also established communities of practice to foster peer learning, which include practices such as intervisitation and buddying, both of which are designed to foster a culture of professional sharing (Figure 2.9). By eliminating communication barriers, communities of practice ensure that there is “more knowledge among principals of practices in schools throughout the district than elsewhere, where principals are often discouraged from leaving their buildings during school time and in which difficulties are hidden or masked.”⁶³

Figure 2.9: Communities of Practice: Intervisitation and Buddying

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| INTERVISITATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considered to be the “heart and soul” of CSD2’s professional development program—principals continuously learn from one another ▪ Visits may be initiated by principals, or promoted by the Superintendent or Deputy, according to principal need ▪ Principals walk through classrooms together, sit in on staff meetings, and discuss and analyze specific practice and implementation issues ▪ Visiting principal may invite host to visit his/her school to observe early and/or ongoing improvement attempts |
| BUDDYING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CSD2 encourages, but does not manage, informal professional sharing initiated and sustained by principals ▪ Principals “buddy” with one to two other principals, meet informally but regularly, and share problems and effective strategies |

Source: Phi Beta Kappan⁶⁴

Individualized coaching is another critical element to CSD2’s professional development program. Responsibility for coaching is overseen by the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent, and is meant to demonstrate that “instruction and learning are the district’s fundamental business; all other functions are secondary.”⁶⁵ The individualized coaching program is continuous and does not separate coaching and evaluation (Figure 2.10).

⁶² Ibid., pp. 12-15.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 16.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

Figure 2.10: Individualized Coaching

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>GOALS AND OBJECTIVES PROCESS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The district asks each principal to develop a yearly goals and objectives statement, including instructional initiatives and professional activities ▪ The Deputy, along with mentor principals, helps mentees establish goals and objectives for the upcoming school year ▪ The process continues until all goals and objectives are approved by the Superintendent |
| <p>BUDGET MEETINGS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Principals who need assistance receive individualized coaching while establishing school budgets ▪ Principals develop and defend a spending plan (e.g., staff positions, professional development cost and participation payments, instructional materials, etc.) ▪ Similar to the goals and objectives coaching, budget coaching is provided by the Superintendent, Deputies, and mentor principals |
| <p>SUPERVISORY WALKTHROUGH</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Central to the individual coaching process—all aspects of the principal’s activity are considered, including: review of instruction and learning, as well as classroom and school-wide achievement ▪ Occurs at least once per year; up to once per month for schools that need additional assistance ▪ Conducted by the Superintendent and Deputies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Begins with a meeting between the principal; occasionally the assistant principal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review school’s goals and objectives, discuss expectations established during the previous WalkThrough ▪ Student achievement data is reviewed, particularly at-risk student data; followed by a review of each teacher ○ Next, the visitors and principal visit every classroom; children’s work is examined and discussed with the children, teachers, student reactions, and engagement are observed ○ Once the WalkThrough is complete, the visitors and principal return to the office for an evaluation and planning session; include observations of school strengths and weaknesses; teacher-specific intervisitations and professional development suggestions may be made |
| <p>MENTOR PRINCIPALS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considered an important component of CSD2’s nested learning community structure ▪ Extends coaching beyond what the central office can provide ▪ Principals judged to need help are matched with more established principals with demonstrated expertise, rather than time-in-role ▪ Mentor-mentee matches are made according to personal compatibility and similar school needs ▪ Mentoring includes frequent school visits, advising on how to refine goals, objectives, budgets, and staff professional development ▪ Mentor principals meet with the Superintendent monthly in a special support group to discuss their coaching strengths and weaknesses, as well as other general problems |

Source: Phi Beta Kappan⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 18-22.

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS, ILLINOIS

Located in a large metropolitan area, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) enrolls over 407,000 students in grades PreK-12 (Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11: Chicago Public Schools

| DISTRICT | TOTAL SCHOOLS | TOTAL STUDENTS | CLASSROOM TEACHERS (FTE) | STUDENT/TEACHER RATIO | ELL STUDENTS | % KIDS POVERTY |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Chicago Public Schools | 648 | 407,157 | 24,760.3 | 16.4 | 51,992 | 28.6% |

Source: NCES⁶⁷

Chicago Public Schools' mission, "to ensure that every child in every community has access to a high-quality education and graduates ready for college, career and life," is supported through all levels of leadership.⁶⁸ School leaders are expected to be "bold, entrepreneurial and innovative, with a deep sense of responsibility and commitment—not only to the students in their schools, but also to the communities in which their schools reside."⁶⁹

Similar to the other districts profiled in this report, CPS believes that its principals are a catalyst for change, and that it is the district's responsibility to provide "the supports and flexibility they need to be successful."⁷⁰ As in CSD2, CPS endows its principals with the autonomy to tailor district-wide initiatives to best meet the needs of each particular school environment. And like PPS, school leaders are rewarded financially for boosting student achievement at the school level.

To support its principals, CPS has established the Principal Talent Office, which works to identify and recruit talented potential leaders, as well as to "provide support for current principals, aspiring principals, local school councils and district administrators."⁷¹ In 2013, CPS announced its *Principal Quality Strategy*, aimed at ensuring that every school within the district would begin academic year 2014-2015 with strong, effective leadership. The strategy "centers on [the district's] shared goal of preparing students for success at CPS, in college, career, and life, and it is essential to providing teachers with the single greatest resource for improving instruction—an effective school leader."⁷²

⁶⁷ "Public School District Finance Peer Search." Ibid.

⁶⁸ "Home." Chicago Public Schools. <http://www.cpsleaders.com/index.html>

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ "About Us." Chicago Public Schools. <http://www.cpsleaders.com/about.html>

⁷² Byrd-Bennett, B. As cited by: "Press Release: Chicago Unveils Comprehensive School Principal Quality Strategy." Chicago Public Schools, February 6, 2013. http://www.cps.edu/News/Press_releases/Pages/2_6_2013_PR1.aspx

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Chicago Public Schools' *Principal Quality Strategy* is comprised of five initiatives, encompassing recruitment, eligibility and selection, leadership development, effective measures of performance, and recognition and rewards (Figure 2.12). Initiatives one and two are particularly focused on new principal recruitment, eligibility, and selection; initiative three is tailored specifically for seated principals; and initiatives four and five are applicable to the entire principal pool.

Figure 2.12: Chicago Public Schools' Principal Quality Strategy

| INITIATIVE | DESCRIPTION |
|---|--|
| Recruitment | Aspiring leaders are recruited through the Chicago Leadership Collaborative (CLC). The CLC is comprised of four external partners, facilitates internships for aspiring principals, and provides hands-on experience to help them develop principal competencies and gain real-world school leader experience. |
| Eligibility and Selection | To ensure the pool of principal candidates offers high quality professionals for all schools, the new upgraded selection process includes two steps: an initial screening and a "Day in the Life" simulation to assess candidates' ability to manage real-life stressors and responsibilities. Family and community engagement are also included in the assessment process. The process was developed by a team of 80 principals, Network Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, CLC partners, and Chicago Principal and Administrators Association members. |
| Chicago Executive Leadership Development | For existing principals, enhanced opportunities for leadership development have become available. First, new principals receive focused support on fundamental school leadership skills; rising principals (i.e., mid-career) who show signs of success receive targeted support to advance specific skills (e.g., data use, financial management, and parental engagement); veteran principals receive additional support to help them reach career goals. |
| Effective Measures of Performance | CPS's improved evaluation system further supports principal quality by incorporating a balanced assessment of success by measuring student growth tied to national benchmarks and principal performance factors. |
| Recognition and Rewards | Principal Achievement Awards recognize and reward principals whose school, staff, and students demonstrate significant improvement based on specific evaluation criteria. Honorees meeting two of the evaluation benchmarks receive \$5,000, three benchmarks receive \$10,000, and all four benchmarks receive \$20,000. |

Source: Chicago Public Schools⁷³

Additionally, CPS has partnered with the New Teacher Center, a non-profit organization that works to develop school leaders through one-on-one leadership coaching. The *Supporting School Leaders* initiative was introduced at the beginning of academic year 2010-2011, and serves as a first-year induction program in which all first-year principals are paired with an experienced leadership coach to discuss "the data-driven analysis of student achievement, teacher observation and evaluation, goal setting, and community interaction."⁷⁴ First-year

⁷³ Figure text taken with minimal variation from: Ibid.

⁷⁴ "Chicago New Teacher Center." New Teacher Center. <http://newteachercenter.org/chicago>

program outcomes indicate “that 68 percent of new principals exceeded the district average for improvements on student outcomes measured by the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT).”⁷⁵

PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM

The Chicago Executive Leadership Academy (CELA) is one component of CPS’s “continuum of leadership development.”⁷⁶ The goal of CELA is to inspire better leaders by developing and articulating a “unified vision” for the district. Academy sessions were designed to address every stage of leadership development—new, rising, and veteran principals—and to provide the training needed to successfully affect change within CPS. The Academy is “designed to provide timely, relevant, and research-based curricula to increase the capacity of current building leaders,” through improving upon participants’ “academic skill sets, leadership abilities, and management protocols.”⁷⁷ Most importantly, however, the Academy helps principals understand how ongoing professional development supports their district’s mission, vision, and goals. The first cohort to successfully complete the 10-month CELA program included 18 district chiefs and deputies, 100 new principals, and 100 rising principals.⁷⁸

Academy curriculum was designed to provide a coherent program targeted to achieve the following outcomes for all principals within CPS, regardless of level of experience:⁷⁹

- Lead through change
- Develop and embed highly effective talent management practices
- Enhance critical thinking and response to situational judgment opportunities
- Create a comprehensive action plan for their school to improve schools systematically
- Work effectively across diverse teams to arrive at solutions

CELA’s differentiated model of professional learning emphasizes “extensive individual coaching, on-site action research, and the creation of learning communities,” taught by master teachers and guest speakers, and covering such topics as those listed in Figure 2.13.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ “The Chicago Executive Leadership Academy.” Chicago Public Schools. p. 2.
http://static.squarespace.com/static/516f0a08e4b0f564b2ac26b0/t/5176b93fe4b0e5c0dba371ab/1366735167902/case_chicago.pdf

⁷⁷ “LEAD Your Principals to Success.” The SUPE Academy. p. 1.
http://static.squarespace.com/static/516f0a08e4b0f564b2ac26b0/t/516fe515e4b05168333ff565/1366287637513/lead_brochure.pdf

⁷⁸ “The Chicago Executive Leadership Academy,” Op. cit., p. 2.

⁷⁹ Bullet points taken verbatim from: “Approve Entering into an Agreement with the SUPES Academy LLC for Leadership Development Services.” SUPES Academy, LLC, June 2013. p. 2.
http://www.cpsboe.org/content/actions/2013_06/13-0626-PR51.pdf

⁸⁰ Zubrzycki, J. “Reinventing Principal Evaluation.” Education Week Webinar, May 29, 2013. p. 10.
http://www.edweek.org/media/13-05-29_principalevaluation.pdf

Figure 2.13: Chicago Executive Leadership Academy Topics

| | |
|--------------|--|
| I. | <p>System Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding and articulating a personal leadership vision, values, story, and strengths as related to the role of principal ▪ Role-playing activities where cohort members have to assume the role of principal ▪ Develop and implement a theory of action that will result in an effective school system ▪ Developing an effective leadership team and organization structure |
| II. | <p>Accountability for Student Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding the Principal’s role and responsibilities in developing a highly effective and accountable learning organization ▪ Identifying strategies to transform the culture of an organization from one of adult entitlement to one centered on student achievement ▪ Developing a dynamic school plan and performance management system ▪ Driving optional organizational accountability through use of performance data and information technology ▪ Creating strategies for effectively aligning a school’s standards, curriculum, instruction, assessments, and professional development ▪ Aligning the school’s budget and budgeting processes to support achievement of the school’s plan |
| III. | <p>Communication and Political Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing the political skills required to orchestrate needed changes and survive in the role ▪ Developing the communication skills needed to engage the staff and community in a coalition for district transformation ▪ Establishing strategies that will establish and maintain a productive working relationship with the board |
| IV. | <p>Career Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparing to successfully enter a principalship with an effective plan of entry that sets the stage for long term success |
| V. | <p>Innovation in School Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilizing technology and partner organizations to bring technology into classrooms ▪ Ensuring districts, schools, teachers, and students are prepared to be using technology effectively |
| VI. | <p>Leading Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding the principal’s role and responsibilities in developing a highly effective and accountable instructional system ▪ Identifying strategies to transform teaching and learning ▪ Developing a dynamic instructional delivery strategy ▪ Driving optimal organizational accountability systems to drive academic growth |
| VII. | <p>Finance & Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding the principal’s role and responsibilities in developing and implementing a budget ▪ Developing a dynamic system to best leverage resources |
| VIII. | <p>The Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding the principal’s role and responsibilities in developing positive relations with the external community ▪ Identifying strategies to create and maintain systems of communication with the community and internal stakeholders |

Source: The SUPES Academy⁸¹

⁸¹ Figure text adopted from SUPES’ Superintendent Academy to represent possible topics offered through CELA: “2014-2015 Academy.” The SUPES Academy. <http://supesacademy.com/2013-2014-academy/>

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Chicago Public Schools, as with the other districts profiled above, requires principal evaluations. CPS uses a standards-based principal evaluation system to measure student growth indicators and professional practice ratings, which are aligned to CPS' Principal Competencies.⁸² Figure 2.14 lists the multiple measures used in CPS principal evaluation.

Figure 2.14: Chicago Public Schools Principal Evaluation Measures

| STUDENT GROWTH MEASURES, 50 PERCENT OF EVALUATION | PRINCIPAL PRACTICE, 50 PERCENT OF EVALUATION |
|---|--|
| Leading indicator for student preparedness for graduation in grades 3-12 (on track) | Champions teacher and staff excellence through continuous improvement |
| Measurement of student growth in math and reading (NWEA Growth Percentile) | Creates powerful professional learning systems that guarantees learning for students |
| Propensity to succeed in high school (8 th grade EXPLORE) | Builds a culture focused on college and career readiness |
| High school achievement growth (EPAS Growth Percentile) | Empowers and motivates families and the community to become engaged |
| High-risk student growth and closing the achievement gap (ELL & SPED) | Relentlessly pursues self-disciplined thinking and action |
| Combination index balancing graduation rate, drop-out rate, and attendance | Leads school toward achieving the vision |

Source: Education Week⁸³

However, because the Principal Quality Initiative was first implemented during academic year 2012-2013, there is yet to be a published outcomes report.

⁸² Zubrzycki, J., Op. cit., p. 11.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 12.

PROJECT EVALUATION FORM

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