Minnesota Principals Academy

Creating Great Schools by Supporting Great Leaders
Principals are responsible for over 25% of school effects on student learning...

... and also impact the hiring, training, and retention of teachers – who account for 33% of the effects.

Minnesota Principals Academy

- Executive Development program for school principals that combines theory and practice focused on school improvement through a standards based instructional system.

- Cohorts of 25-35 meet over 18-24 months for 2-day units.

- Over 400 Minnesota school leaders have participated.

- Has the option to lead to doctoral work at the U of M.
Minnesota Principals Academy

- Map represents approximate locations of the districts participants have come from over the past nine years

- Cohorts have been held in the Twin Cities, the Anoka-Hennepin School District, Rochester, Grand Rapids, and Thief River Falls
Where the MPA Came From

• Began with 2005 legislative action

• MDE and partners put out an RFP to select program, and asked the University of Minnesota to implement

• Implementation involved consultation with and support from:
  ❖ Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA)
  ❖ Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP)
  ❖ Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)
  ❖ Minnesota Elementary School Principals’ Association (MESPA)
  ❖ University of Minnesota
  ❖ Minnesota Business Partnership
Participant/Leader Perspective

Thief River Falls Public Schools Assets:
  • Student Achievement
  • Financial Accountability
  • Public Relations
  • Technology
  • Facility Planning

Through our strategic planning process, the stakeholders identified **Student Achievement** as the area of focus moving forward with our system-wide improvement plan.

*How do we do make “systemic change” in this area?*
Program Content

- **Curriculum licensed from National Institute for School Leadership (NISL)**
  - Benchmarked against leadership programs worldwide in business, military and instructional leadership in education
  - Covers theory, practice and policy
  - Uses case studies, online work, extensive readings and research

- **Enhancements from University of Minnesota**
  - U of M Faculty Guest Lecturers
  - Program Evaluation Unit
  - Teacher Development and Evaluation
  - MTSS Unit
  - Community Engagement
Four Years, $11 Million Dollars on Research and Development

Foundations
- The Broad Foundations
- Stupski Foundation
- New Schools Venture Fund
- The Carnegie Foundation

Development
- Booz Allen Hamilton
- National Center on Education and the Economy

The Result
- National Institute for School Leadership

Executive Development Program for School Leaders™
A Leadership Program Developed by Leaders in Their Fields

**Leadership & Organization**
- Peter Senge
- Lester Thurow
- Marie Eiter
- Bob Joss

**Standards-Based Instruction**
- Marc Tucker
- Judy Coddling
- Peter Hill

**Literacy**
- Gay Su Pinnell
- Barbara Forman
- Lucy Calkins
- Sally Hampton

**Math**
- Li Ping Ma
- Barbara Forman
- Phil Daro

**Professional Development**
- Marie Eiter
- Peter Hill

**Strategic Thinking**
- Gen. Tom Moorman
- George Thibaut

**Science**
- Scott McDonald

**Ethics**
- Tom Sobol
- Bob Hughes
Comprehensive Curriculum

World-Class Schooling: Vision and Goals
- Unit 1- The Educational Challenge
- Unit 2- The Principal as Strategic Thinker
- Unit 3- Elements of Standards-Based Instructional Systems and Program Evaluation
- Unit 4- Foundations of Effective Learning

Focusing on Teaching and Learning
- Unit 5- Leadership in the Instructional Core (literacy & social sciences)
- Unit 6- Leadership in the Instructional Core (math & science)
- Unit 7 Coaching for High Quality Teaching and Teacher Evaluation
- MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) Special Education and ELL
- Unit 8- Promoting the Learning Organization
Comprehensive Curriculum

Developing Capacity and Commitment

• Unit 9- Teams for Instructional Leadership
• Community Engagement
• Unit 10- Ethical Leadership for Equity
• Unit 11- Driving and Sustaining Transformation
• Unit 12- Final Case Simulation and Presentations
Participant/Leader Perspective of Experience

• Prior to Unit 1, our leadership team meetings focused on managing our buildings and school district rather than leading them.

  – **Unit 1: The Educational Challenge** - Leaders walked away with a broader perspective of our role in education from a global perspective.

  – **Unit 2: The Principal as Strategic Thinker** - Leaders left focused on strategic thinking rather than implementation of strategies.

  – **Unit 3: Elements of Standards-Based Instructional Systems** - Leaders left with the elements required to create a standards-based system for success of ALL learners.
School/Systemic Impact

- Cohort based for regional collaboration
- Action Learning Project
Systemic Approach

The Northwest Minnesota Cohort is made up of 27 participants from seven school districts. Our cohort includes principals, assistant principals, special education directors, curriculum and assessment coordinators, technology coordinators, and superintendents.

The goal of our cohort is to make systemic change locally, regionally, and at the state level.

Thief River Falls and East Grand Forks have committed their entire academic leadership teams to this extensive training in an effort to make systemic change throughout their districts.
Action Learning Project

- Action research surrounding a problem of practice in the participant’s setting
- Spans the time of the program
- Shared with other principals across the state

Examples

- Interventions in the elementary school
- Home/School reading program
- ACT/SAT test preparation
- Establishing a high school vision
- Impact of 9th grade teaming on graduation
Funding Sources

- Funding began with support from the legislature. Currently, $300,000 has been allotted as a grant to the Minnesota Department of Education for the Principal Academy in the current biennium.

- Local Foundations: Ciresi, Travelers, Saint Paul, UM Rochester, Blandin, Thief River Falls Education Foundation

- Northeast Higher Education District/Applied Learning Initiative

- District dollars including general operation, Title I, and PD funds
Investment

• Total program cost: $7000
  – Legislative funding covers $3500
  – Participant cost is $3500, which can be paid over two fiscal years

• Thief River Falls Funding:
  – TRF Education Foundation
  – General Fund: Professional Development and General Expenditures

• Time
  – 28 total days – NW Cohort is 18 student contract days
Proven Results:
Quasi Experimental Studies of NISL

• Researchers from Johns Hopkins and Old Dominion:
  – Pennsylvania: Schools with NISL trained principals had higher PSSA scores in math and reading compared to other schools with similar performance and demographic profiles
  • NISL schools outgained peers in high school math by nearly 10 percentage points
  – Massachusetts: NISL schools saw statistically significant gains in both math and reading assessments for elementary and middle school students versus comparison schools across the state

http://nisl.net/
Participant/Leader Perspective of Outcomes

• Regular Administrative Meetings focus directly on the learnings from the Principal Academy - “strategic thinking”

• Action Learning Projects are focused on in-depth strategic change

• Budget discussions are aligned with building and systemic goals

• Long-term visioning for district, including an updated mission statement
Looking Forward

• We now need to begin to solicit input on where next regional cohort should be located

• Need for Continued Legislative Funding
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A Leadership Program to Improve Student Achievement

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