

FOCUS PRINCIPAL LEARNING

Inspiring growth:

Academy gives Florida's educational leaders a safe and supportive learning space.

By Stephen Fink and Anneke Markholt

Educational leaders in Florida are participating in the Commissioner's Leadership Academy, a novel approach to improving the practice of education leaders at scale across the Sunshine State. Designed by the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership, the research-based curriculum is setting a new standard for statewide — and districtwide — school leadership professional development. Key elements of the curriculum include a common language, shared vision, nonjudgmental observation, targeted feedback skills, and a supportive professional learning community.

Learning leaders for learning schools:

Principals who pay attention to their own learning serve as models for others.

By Frederick Brown and Kay Psencik

What principals do every day, how they view and value student and educator learning, how they organize their staff into learning communities, and the designs they support for those teams to learn make a significant difference in the learning of those they

serve. To meet the expectations of today's schools, principals need effective professional learning aligned to the Standards for Professional Learning — ongoing, embedded work focused on issues in their schools for which professional learning is the response. An emerging model highlights six key behaviors of principals who are the lead learners and lead facilitators in their schools.

What a question can accomplish:

Asking the right questions can build principals' problem-solving skills.

By Isobel Stevenson

The Connecticut Center for School Change provides research-based coaching to principals, particularly those new to their role in relatively low-performing schools and districts. The coaching focuses on clarifying principals' goals, helping them self-assess where they are, and creating strategies to reach their goals. Most of this work happens through the asking of questions. Asking questions is a nuanced and difficult skill to master, with the coach having to decide, sometimes many times during a coaching session, two things: first, whether to ask a question, and second, what question to ask.

Hillsborough's principal pipeline:

Aligned learning strengthens leadership in Florida district.

By Tricia McManus

The path to principalship in Hillsborough County Public Schools in Florida is not one taken lightly. After receiving The Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline Initiative grant, Hillsborough was one of six districts that developed a comprehensive principal pipeline based on four key components: leader standards that define the role of principal, quality selection and preservice training practices, effective hiring practices, and on-the-job evaluation and support to provide coaching and ongoing professional learning.

Supervisors need support, too:

Coaching principals effectively takes time and skills.

By James G. Martin

A former principal supervisor reflects on the two years he spent coaching other principals. What he learned along the way: Principal supervisors need training; overseeing fewer schools is better; and principal support should be systematic. These lessons can help districts rethink the way principal supervisors are supported and deployed to provide on-the-job professional learning to school-based leaders.

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- Protocols and tools with guidance on use and application.

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IDEAS

6 skills every observer needs — and how to build them.

By Jeff Archer, Steve Cantrell, Steven L. Holtzman, Jilliam Joe, Cynthia M. Tocci, and Jess Wood

Quality observation involves filtering a dynamic and unpredictable scene for a common set of indicators, making an accurate record of them, and applying a set of criteria to reach the same conclusions as would any other observer who's doing it correctly. It also includes feedback that provides teachers with specific ways to make small changes in their practice, which over time can translate into measurable improvements in teaching and learning. Here are six skills that observers need to know and be able to do and the kinds of activities that can be used to develop, monitor, and reinforce those skills.

The solution is in the room:

Teacher voices power conversation protocol.

By Donna Spangler

An often-overlooked element in designing effective professional learning is to include teacher voices in creating relevant and timely topics. Because teachers have daily contact with learners and are in the best position to directly influence student learning, timely, high-quality, and teacher-driven professional development is crucial to the success of any education reform effort. The professional learning committee at Hershey Middle School in Pennsylvania created a conversation protocol that exemplifies teacher voice and shows the importance of evaluation to the learning process.



Let's really talk about data:

How to infuse meaningful data into daily decisions and conversations.

By Robby Champion

A paradigm shift about professional learning and data is overdue. This next era, with up-to-date data available everywhere all the time, demands that the field mature and move toward strong, credible program evaluation. The boldest leap that future leaders must make is to be deliberate and purposeful in your evaluation work, using the Standards for Professional Learning and starting every evaluation effort at the same time the whole initiative is being planned. As learning leaders, we need to take the reins to lead the paradigm shift with three important steps: Rethink our work, engage our co-workers, and embed student learning into our conversations.

VOICES

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Michael Garren, deputy director of schools, Loudon County Public Schools, Tennessee.

OUR TAKE

The Wallace Foundation lights the way to better principal learning.

By Frederick Brown

The theme of The Wallace Foundation's initiatives and this issue of *The Learning Professional* is that leadership practice, development, and support cannot be left to chance.

CALL TO ACTION

Build your advocacy skills with this powerful strategy.

By Stephanie Hirsh

A laser talk states your case concisely and ends with a request.

ASK

How can we develop leadership options for teachers?

By Tracy Crow

Resources are available for districts looking to strengthen career pathways for educators and develop learning leaders.

BEING FORWARD

Send the message that learning is for leaders, too.

By Scott Laurence

A principal must be the face of your district's values and show that through her actions.

RESEARCH

RESEARCH REVIEW

Study focuses on principal practices that influence student achievement.

By Joellen Killian

Identifying principal practices that influence student achievement guides principal development and decision-making.

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