Ensuring Principal Effectiveness: A District Priority
Today’s Focus:

- Importance of Principal Training
- Gwinnett’s Quality-Plus Leader Academy
- Reflections of a Recent QPLA Graduate
- Considerations in Starting a Program
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Leadership Imperatives

- Leadership matters.
- In difficult times, leadership matters even more.
- In periods of significant organizational transition, leadership is the major controlling factor in explaining organizational performance.
“...bombarded with multiple theories of leadership and management, school principals will likely experience a significant amount of role conflict and role overload...”

Catano & Stronge (2007)
Leadership is key to student learning

“Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.”

How Leadership Influences Student Learning,
Kenneth Leithwood, et al,
University of Minnesota,
University of Toronto, 2004

“Six years later we are even more confident about this claim.”

Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning,
Louis, et al, 2010
Principals are key to teaching quality

“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.”

Simply stated…

“There’s no such thing as a high-performing school without a great principal. It is impossible. … We’ve never asked so much of them. There’s nothing more important because the stakes have never been higher for our country.”

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan
2010
But a good principal is hard to find

- There is no shortage of certified principals – but there is a shortage of qualified principals.
  *Beyond the Pipeline, 2003*

- 50% of superintendents around the country report difficulty finding qualified principals. 61% of superintendents in urban areas can’t find the leaders they need.
  *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World, 2007*

- There needs to be a match between the district’s needs and the leaders that the programs produce.
  *Districts Developing Leaders, 2010*
For Districts, Two Big Tasks

| First | • Build a large corps of well-qualified candidates for the principalship (the pipeline) |

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For Districts, Two Big Tasks

First

• Build a large corps of well-qualified candidates for the principalship (the pipeline)

Second

• Support school leaders on the job
Task 1:

Build a Corps of Well-Qualified Candidates

Provide professional development that targets potential school leaders

Use robust tools to select the best-possible candidates

Consistently monitor and assess candidates’ performance in the cohort

Continuously improve the PD based on external evaluations and feedback
Task 2: Support School Leaders on the Job

- Provide ongoing PD to all principals
- Mentor novice principals for at least two years
- Provide usable data and training
- Enable principals to use time for instruction
- Plan for succession
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The Need: Growth in Gwinnett has been constant for over three decades...
Due to the rapid growth and natural employee attrition, we projected in 2005 that the district would need 33 new principals and 99 assistant principals over the next five years.

That pressing need for leaders continues today.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Years</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Assistant Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-2010</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2015</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2018</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL over 13 years</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>267</td>
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We developed a plan to address it…

- Summer 2006: 13 focus groups of principals, assistant principals, & district leaders – 360 participants
- Curriculum strands identified
  - Foundations of GCPS leadership
  - Instructional leadership topics
  - Operational leadership topics
  - Communication and community relations
- Cabinet members designated as lead faculty
- Candidate selection process outlined
The plan was successfully executed in January 2007 with the launch of the Quality-Plus Leader Academy, Cohort 1.
Two major purposes of the Quality-Plus Leader Academy

- Prepare aspiring school and district leaders to meet present and future needs
  - Aspiring Principal Program
  - Aspiring Leader Program
  - District Leader Program

- Support the continuous learning and development of existing leaders
  - Leadership Development (monthly sessions)
  - Principal Seminars
  - Quality Leader Training
Expectations for GCPS Leaders

Grounded in Seven Quality Concepts:

- Customer Focus
- Data-driven Decisions
- Teamwork
- Passion for Quality
- Continuous Improvement
- Education and Training for All
- Rewards and Recognition
A Gwinnett Quality-Plus Leader:

- Focuses on results
- Views accountability as a value
- Passionately exhibits the three E’s
  - Has high **Energy**
  - **Energizes** others
  - **Executes** by consistently turning vision into desired results
- Leads by example
What effective principals do

- Shape a transformational vision of academic success for all students
- Create a hospitable climate
- Lead people, manage data and processes
- Improve instruction
  - Lead the professional learning community
- Cultivate leadership in others
  - Lead the leadership team

Adapted from The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning, January 2012
QPLA Aspiring Principal Program

- 12-month program
- Bibliography of required books, readings
- Varied instructional delivery
  - Lecture, panels, small group discussion
  - Simulations and district-specific case studies
- Performance-based team activities
  - Local school plan for improvement
  - 100-Day Plan for a new principal
- Semester-long residency
Leadership Development Model

- Strategic Direction
- Quality-Plus Leadership
- Talent Development and Management
- Program, Processes, Strategies
Quality-Plus Leader Academy
Logic Model

Assumptions

Evaluation
External Factors

Inputs
Outputs
Objectives
Context for GCPS Leadership Development Model and Logic Model

- Unity of purpose
- Training and development are visible and important
- Depicts a learning organization
- Logically consistent (all the separate parts fit together and add up to a harmonious or credible whole)
- Shows lucidity and reason (it makes sense)
- Easy for others to understand
QPLA Aspiring Principal Program

Initiative began in January 2007. The 8th cohort is now in session.

Based on the tenets of a Practicing Quality organization.

Addresses the school district’s need for succession planning.

98 GCPS schools (74%) are currently led by an APP trained principal.

Designed for assistant principals aspiring to be principals.

12 class sessions and a semester residency.

168 APP graduates and 20 current cohort members.
QPLA Aspiring Leader Program

Initiative began in January 2010. The 5th cohort is now in session with 75 class members.

The ALP curriculum is aligned with ISLLC Standards and Georgia Leader Performance Standards.

Designed for teachers aspiring to be assistant principals.

Of the 166 ALP participants to date, 127 have been appointed to AP, Principal, or district leader positions.
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Toni Ferguson
Principal, Knight Elementary School
QPLA Aspiring Principal Program, Class of 2011
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Considering your own program?

- **Need**: Does your district have a need that is not being met through external leadership development programs?
- **Commitment**: Would this program align to the district’s priorities, and would it have commitment at the highest levels of the organization?
- **Resources**: Do you have access to the human and financial resources to develop and run an aspiring principal academy?
A note on resources

*What options do I have if my district answered “yes” to having the need and commitment, but “no” to having the resources?*

- **Get development support:** Work with external partner to develop program and train trainers, then take over program internally
- **Bring external programs in-house:** Contract with partner to run program customized to your district’s needs

- **Seek external funding:** School leadership is a growing focus for foundations and continues to be an opportunity for federal grants
- **Find economies of scale:** Partner with other districts building similar programs on program development and/or execution
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