

Leadership Development

School Leader Guide

We invest in school leaders through intensive and customized coaching, professional development, advocacy and supports. Our leadership development programming for school leaders is encompassed within our Leadership Institute.



LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Principals and assistant principals from all Partnership schools participate in Leadership Institute, created and facilitated by Partnership staff with a track record of proven success in school leadership and transformation. Leadership Institute is a comprehensive program that combines a variety of activities that ensure school leaders continuously experience relevant, job-embedded, and learner-driven professional development and build and refine their skills to best support teachers, staff, and students with effective systems and practices at their school sites. **Leadership Institute consists of all of the formal professional development we offer to principals and assistant principals, including monthly principal meetings (called Leadership Conferences), monthly assistant principal conferences, level-alike meetings, and our Summer & Winter Institutes, which bring together the Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) from across our 18 schools.** Each aspect of Institute

seeks to develop the skills school leaders need to be transformational leaders for their school communities.

The professional development available to Partnership school leaders is distinct from traditional professional development in a few important ways:

- **Focused.** Our professional development is intentionally focused on the most challenging parts of school leadership: building systems for instructional and operational leadership, driving culture change, and creating space for collaboration around problems of practice. We create active, hands-on learning experiences for our school leaders rooted in the work they're actually doing.
- **Informed Content.** The content of the sessions is informed by the school leaders themselves. This is achieved through incorporating their voice in the development of the scope and sequence of learning for the year, as well as in determining the foci of their professional learning community.
- **Coherent.** Learning for principals and assistant principals is intentionally aligned with the learning of our teacher leader pathways. One of the primary challenges of external professional development nationally is a lack of coherence across roles in a school. Partnership professional development is intentionally designed to interrupt this pattern by scoping the professional development series across the entire school year and in concert with teacher learning to promote coherence.
- **Dedicated Staffing.** We place a premium on highly resourcing this work in order to create strong facilitated learning experiences. For example, the Partnership employs staff whose primary role is to coordinate the development of high-quality, impactful learning experiences for school leaders and teachers. And the smaller ratio of Partnership Senior Directors (whose primary role is to coach and support principals) to schools in the network ensures that formal professional development is created and facilitated with intimate knowledge of each school and leader in mind.

Summer & Winter Institute

The Partnership conducts semi-annual Leadership Institutes to kickoff each school semester with a sense of purpose and to create space for school-level reflection, vision-setting, and systems-focused strategic planning. While planning activities occur within individual school ILTs, the Institutes also serve as a central location for Partnership school and office staff to develop a sense of community as a network. Trainings leverage the experience and expertise of our school leaders in implementing research and best practices, and actively create opportunities to showcase and celebrate their successes and lead relevant workshops for their peers during Institute sessions. The

Partnership also uses these Institutes to establish and reinforce norms, values, and culture across the network. Core values are integrated into all activities and effective practices in meeting facilitation and presentation are modeled to create an engaging and action-oriented professional development event that sets the tone for the school year.

- **Summer Institute** brings together the ILT of each Partnership school for four days of reflection, common strategic planning, learning, and team-building time, so that the ILT assumes shared ownership of school-wide goals and action plans. Using high-leverage data, ILTs complete the development of their school's strategic plan, which we refer to as the *"Call-to-Action"*, a unifying strategic planning document that outlines each school's specific goals and action plans, and supports rigorous, ongoing progress monitoring of their work throughout the school year.
- **Winter Institute** provides ILTs and Partnership staff the opportunity to come together for one day in early January to reinvigorate themselves and renew their focus on goals and norms before the start of the Spring semester. Similar to our Summer Institute, Winter Institute is a time for reflection, team-building, as well as data analysis. ILTs gather to monitor their progress towards Call-to-Action goals, celebrate successes, and refine strategies and action plans.

Leadership Conferences

Hosted monthly by the Partnership home office during the school year, these full-day seminars focus on supporting the development of *high-leverage systems that support school transformation*.

Administrators from all network schools come together to gain skills, reflect on successes and areas for growth, and build a system of support among peers. We approach our monthly professional development events as regular opportunities for leaders to learn, reflect, consult, and plan through structured interactions with colleagues, and content area experts from Partnership staff. Conference content is derived from a scope and sequence and is intentionally aligned with the PIF and priorities for learning for the teacher leader pathways. The conferences typically consist of:

Morning learning sessions focusing on:

- Practicing and refining core leadership skills
- Learning theory and best practices
- Data analysis
- Individual and group brainstorming of solutions and implementation practices
- Time for reflection and planning of next steps to apply learning at school sites

The Partnership Implementation Framework, called the PIF for short, identifies and assesses the systems we believe are essential for school transformation. Drawing upon a breadth of educational research, as well as best practices from school districts across the country, the PIF is designed to measure the level of implementation of these systems from "Not Yet Begun" to "Full Implementation". Unlike rubrics geared towards assessing individual practice, the PIF places an intentional focus on systems that contribute to improved student outcomes and the prescribed actions of groups within the school to enact them.

Shorter learning sessions focused on:

- Operational topics such as student talent management, testing administration and budget development
- Critical updates from the Partnership to ensure school leaders remain informed about recent changes at the Partnership or the district

Principals-only sessions in which they meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in level-alike groups to engage in high-interest and high-leverage topics chosen based upon principals' needs and interests. PLCs encourage principals to creatively and collaboratively problem-solve through reflective conversations and public practice, allowing them to rethink and challenge assumptions in a safe and collegial environment.

Level-Alike Meetings

To complement principals' skill development at Leadership Conferences and to reinforce Call-to-Action goals, the Partnership home office hosts "Level-Alike" meetings four times per school year for each grade level (elementary, middle, and high school). These half-day meetings typically take place at school sites where principals have the opportunity to dive deep into the practical application of recent professional development, observe classroom practice, observe instructional leadership practices (i.e. coaching conversations with teachers, or teacher team meetings), and/or explore a problem of practice with their level colleagues, who offer feedback and share best practices in a structured format. These meetings are impactful for school leaders as they appreciate the opportunity to learn from one another and plan for implementation of key learning in the context of their own school sites. Level-Alike meetings are distinct from the model of most traditional formal professional development because learning takes place at school sites and is always rooted in analysis and discussion of observational data from seeing work in action. School leaders are supported through a structured debrief, in the process of creating meaning and identifying takeaways for their own practice and school. This structure creates more opportunity for principals to be self-directed learners rather than passive recipients of information.