

Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program

MISSION, VISION and VALUES

MISSION

The mission of the New Principals Mentoring Program is to increase new principal leadership capacity to work with and through the school community to enable adults and students to achieve high performance standards.

VISION

The impact of a strong leadership mentoring program is reflected in the attitudes and behaviors of the leaders involved as well as the achievements of all members of the educational system. The program benefits not only the individuals involved but also all adult and student learners.

I am a new principal and I...

...am looking forward to the challenge of becoming an effective school leader. I am not alone as I face this challenge. From my first day on the job, I have someone I can call on for help – someone who is dedicated to me and my learning – my mentor. This relationship supports me and affords me the opportunity to succeed. I learn how to manage the operational systems quickly in order to create time and space for a rigorous focus on the instructional systems to support learning. With this reduction in my learning curve, I am able to effectively set priorities, manage time and build relationships. With the support of an experienced peer, I develop a confident and individualized management style in which I use data and results to guide proactive decisions. I discover how to flexibly apply what I learned in my preparation program as I make decisions, take actions and work with people. I develop as a confident and personable, learning-focused leader of high performing students and adults.

I am an experienced principal mentor and I...

...am looking forward to the challenge of mentoring a new principal. I bring a wealth of experience and a systemic way of thinking about leadership. I pose key questions and offer the new principal access to my experiential knowledge as it applies to their leadership goals and strategies. I consistently invite the new principal to manage the administrative systems in ways that increase the time available for creating a culture of learning and leading quality instruction. When I help the new principal build & foster relationships throughout the entire school community, I leverage everyone's knowledge and skills, not just my own. Although I am the mentor, this is a collaborative relationship from which I also learn and grow.

Together, we affect the educational system by...

...engaging with ourselves and others to create a culture of learning that allows us to meet or exceed our standards for results. The collaborative relationships we develop and maintain encourage everyone to think about how things fit together across the system, resulting in more creative and innovative solutions. We share the same language around system change. We make our whole selves available – our expertise and our questions – to contribute to the long-term vision and short-term strategies. Every day, we are accountable to all students and adults and we model ethical and professional standards. Our work is recognized by peers outside our system, attracting high quality candidates that want to be a part of something larger than themselves, something they can't do alone.

BELIEFS

The New Principal Mentoring Program is grounded in the beliefs about leaders and mentors (*Who is participating?*), learning (*How do they operate?*), and mentoring (*Why are they working together?*). While each belief articulates one key idea, their power is realized when they are used collectively to guide decisions and actions.

Leaders

- New principals play a pivotal leadership role in the continuous improvement of organizational results by enabling students and adults to achieve high performance standards.
- New principals must learn and model a professional code of ethics.
- New principals need continuous access to quality professional learning experiences.
- New principals must create a collaborative, inclusive, and accountable school culture that fosters adult and student learning.

Mentors

- Mentors model the desired leadership knowledge, dispositions and behaviors of a successful principal.
- Mentors ensure that new principals understand and can access supports available to them to develop their leadership capacity over time.
- Mentors always focus on the needs of new principals by offering those successful strategies and practices that increases their ability to act as an instructional leader.
- Mentors create open and trusting professional relationships with new principals and foster their networking skills.

Learning

- Adult learning improves student learning.
- Learning is a continuous, life-long process for self and others.
- Reflecting on one's own experiences is required for the effective application and honing of new knowledge and skills.
- Collaborative learning between individuals and organizations is necessary for each to meet or exceed high performance standards.

Mentoring

- Mentoring is a high-yield investment strategy for improving the performance of new principals when the learning experiences are embedded in their work.
- Mentoring allows new principals to build on their strengths to become effective, learning-focused leaders, and leverage the strengths of others to extend the effectiveness of the organization's performance.

- Mentoring requires supports, interventions and resources that are both timely and individualized.
- Mentoring is a shared experience that advances system change by powerfully linking explicit knowledge and skills acquired through professional preparation programs with tacit knowledge and skills acquired through on-the-job experience.