
Minnesota Principals Academy

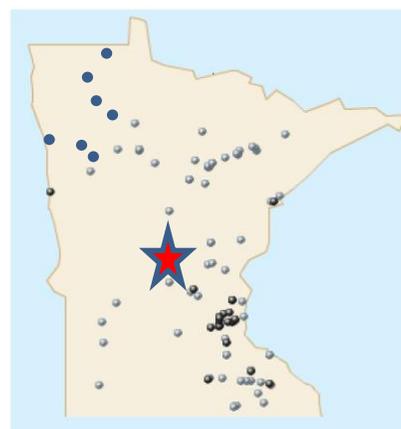
Creating Great Schools by Supporting Great Leaders
2017 Update for Legislators and Supporters

“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.”¹

The Minnesota Principals Academy, the University of Minnesota's executive development program for school leaders, focuses on creating schools where all students achieve at high levels and are engaged in an equitable learning environment that meets their needs. The program is partially funded through a legislatively allocated grant from the Minnesota Department of Education and uses proven curriculum from the National Institute of School Leadership as its foundation. It is tailored to meet the needs of Minnesota leaders through the direct involvement of U of M faculty and practitioner facilitators.

Participants: Over 460 principals and school leaders have participated in the Academy since 2006. The current Thief River Falls and Twin Cities’ cohorts serve 62 leaders from 59 schools that represent 24 districts, 3 charter schools, and 1 state academy.

Demand: Three regions (Brainerd, Duluth, and Fergus Falls) applied to host the next regional cohort. In addition there was strong interest from Southeast Minnesota. With input from the Minnesota Association for Secondary School Principals and the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association, Brainerd has been selected as the location for the next regional cohort. The central Minnesota cohort already has 30 participants committed, including 17 leaders from the Brainerd Public Schools. To date, over 25 principals have requested to be notified when applications are available for the 2017 Twin Cities cohort.



Content: The two-day units cover a comprehensive look at the improvements of schools through a standards-aligned instructional system. Unit topics include: international bench-marking; strategic thinking; foundations of effective learning; mathematics and science; literacy and history; ELL and special education; data and assessment; teacher evaluation and coaching; promoting the learning organization; teams for instructional leadership; and driving and sustaining transformation. Each participant completes an Action Learning Project where they identify and analyze a problem of practice in their context, develop a strategy for improvement, and rigorously evaluate that strategy in order to make continued improvement.

¹Marzano, R.J.; Waters, T.: & McNulty, B. (2005) School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Cost and Funding: The cost of the program is \$7000 per participant. Half of that cost is covered for public school leaders through legislative funding (\$150,000/year) appropriated to Minnesota Department of Education. As a result, the actual cost for participants is \$3500, or \$125/day.

The U of M was recently awarded a one-time grant from the Legislative Coordinating Commission to be used to reduce the program cost for charter school leaders. This grant will allow 10 charter school leaders to participate for \$1000, or \$36/day in either of the cohorts set to begin in the fall of 2017.

As a result of financial efficiencies, it is projected that there will be a small, one-time, carry-over of funds. If those dollars are utilized, and an increase of \$50,000/year in the legislative allocation can be secured, then a second regional cohort could be facilitated.

Outcomes:

The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement is conducting an evaluation of the two current legislatively-funded cohorts. Preliminary data from summative participant evaluations from the sessions in both cohorts to date shows the following:

- 95% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the content of the Academy was relevant, useful and supported learning objectives.
- 93% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the facilitators were knowledgeable and able to answer questions deftly.
- 90% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the readings are relevant and help their understanding of the overall theme of the unit.
- 90% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they see applicability of the content of each unit to their work as an educational leader.

Anecdotally, when looking at change in proficiency data on the MCA tests for the 2013-2015 cohort, one year after the conclusion of the cohort, 65% of the schools had an increase in reading proficiency.

Academy Participant Testimonials:

"The Minnesota Principals Academy is the best professional development I have ever been a part of."

**- Joel Leer, Principal,
Northfield High
School**

"...one of the things that separates the Academy from other professional development opportunities is that it's really action-oriented. It's not just sit and get. From day one you are getting things that will help your school..." **-Eric Fort,
Assistant Principal, Tartan
High School**

"The Minnesota Principal Academy was the best professional development that I have received in my eleven years as an elementary principal. The ability to network and share ideas with colleagues working in the field has been invaluable in my continued growth as the instructional leader in my school." **-Julie Greiman,
Principal, Scandia Elementary
School**
