



An Innovative Program for Leadership Development

On December 1, 2011, Florida Atlantic University's College of Education, Department of Educational Leadership and Research Methodology (ELRM), in partnership with Broward County Public School's (BCPS) Human Resource Development (HRD), was awarded a \$3.5 Million Race to the Top Job-embedded Principal Preparation Program competitive grant from the Florida Department of Education entitled, Principal Rapid Orientation and Preparation in Educational Leadership (PROPEL) Program.

The award provides funding through June 2014 to reform and streamline both BCPS and ELRM school leadership preparation programs with the outcome of creating a single, seamless, leadership preparation continuum, resulting in successful completers earning dual Level I Educational Leadership Certification and Level II School Principal Certification. By leveraging resources of the school district and university, aspiring school leaders will be better prepared in instructional and "turn-around" leadership by engaging in a an internship (in Phase 1) and apprenticeship (in Phase 2) designed to immerse participants in the challenges of administrative practice, including those targeting increasing teacher effectiveness and raising academic achievement for all students.

In this first year, two cohorts of principal-nominated highly qualified educators from BCPS were selected through a rigorous application process. PROPEL development and implementation began in December 2011. The first cohort is expected to finish by June 2013, and the second cohort in June 2014. It is expected that there will be new cohorts annually hereafter.

PROPEL's informal goals are to:

1. revamp ELRM and BCPS programs through curricular revision,
2. engage and further enhance the human capacity of both institutions in terms of training and expertise in the areas of mentoring, coaching, teacher leadership, teacher evaluation, and administrator evaluation; and,
3. continue the informal and formal partnerships of the past, present, and future continue to be successful for FAU and BCPS.

Curriculum and Job-Embedded Experiences Design

A Steering Committee of ELRM and HRD faculty and administrators oversees the co-construction and development of the academic program. Core FAU graduate courses leading to Level I certification are revised and streamlined by FAU and BCPS personnel to be Broward-specific. This has included the incorporation of new internship activities and then an addition of the Phase 2 apprenticeship. Sequential in order, courses are delivered fast-track (5 Saturdays per course). Courses are taught by trained BCPS adjuncts who are seated doctorate-holding principals. Running concurrently and beginning with the Spring Internship, HRD's Leadership programs are embedded in weekly Thursday evening seminars.

Job-embedded field experiences are being conducted in two phases. In Phase 1 internships will be executed at the participant's home school under the supervision of their principal who will mentor them in activities during preparation times, before and after school, and during the five out of classroom days a month. In Phase 2, apprenticeships will take place through an assigned principal/mentor in a high-need school. The Admissions Committee will be responsible for strategically assigning participants to the Phase 2 mentors. The grant funds the cost for substitute teachers, mentor stipends, and tuition for all participants.

PROPEL Turn Around Leadership: Making Space for What Really Matters

Although school wide reform models exist, most assume a slow and steady approach to school reform. They do not seek to achieve the kind of quick school turnaround PROPEL wants to enable its participants to have. There are packaged school wide reform models that create dramatic and quick results, however these are usually measured on standardized measures and not deep cultural and sustainable reform. However, the "turn around" concept that PROPEL looks to promote are enabling leadership models that allow our participants to make both immediate and long-term systemic reform in student learning that are contextual to schools.

PROPEL leadership models meet the immediate need of turning around the school and complying with the performance goals of accountability measures, thereby removing the district and policy-inspired pressures. This affords the school leader the opportunity to make the space for what really matters in considering the goals of public education as we have defined them.

The differentiating factor between other programs' leadership learning and PROPEL is that the intensity of the turnaround practices and the speed of putting them in place is coupled with a broader conceptualization of what should be the short and long term outcomes of democratic public school purposes. Most "turnaround" models hold to three actions that leaders should perform:

1. Identify and focus on a few early wins with big payoffs
2. Work "with" organization norms or rules to deploy new tactics needed for early wins.
3. Act quickly in a fast cycle of trying new tactics, measuring results, discarding failed tactics and doing more of what works.

PROPEL seeks to go beyond those three actions with the following:

1. Develop systemic reform that will enable sustainable learning growth.
2. Create a contextual and critical analysis of current organizational performance that guides plans of action for reform.
3. Build a school culture that is founded on democratic goals, community improvement, and sustainable leadership

PROPEL Curriculum and Instruction

In order to enable its graduates to use these six actions, PROPEL's program will facilitate a curriculum and provide instruction that then enables the participants to synthesize the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are learned in job-embedded actions and performance. However, our participants are faced with an obvious contradiction concerning time: PROPEL as rapid and temporally short learning, practice, and change for schools versus the slow and temporally persistent problems of poverty, crime, drugs, and illiteracy that are consistently tied to most schools that are underperforming. It therefore becomes our purpose, first and foremost, to develop in our participants a social conscience, not just at the level of awareness, but at the level of action.

Guiding the development of our curriculum must be the contextual elements of state regulation and accountability, district policy and procedures, FAU standards and the ELRM School Leaders Program-promoted theories of action. To that end, we are guided by the following elements, although we also know that these elements are in a constant state of change, which means that PROPEL will need to be proactive and reactive to their changes as an ever-morphing program:

- The new 2011 Florida Principal Leadership Standards and Florida Educational Leadership Exam Competencies and Skills.
- The Broward Way – how learning leadership is done in BCPS especially for underperforming schools targeted by PROPEL.
- Theories of Bridge Leadership (relating instructional leadership to social justice).
- Turnaround Leadership as Regenerative Leadership (i.e., for this and the next generation) and Democratic Leadership (making way for new models of collaboration and conceptualizations of equality in school, community, and state).

Listed below are the two Phases of PROPEL:

PHASE ONE (four semesters)

Leadership Foundation Courses

ADE 6381 - Leadership 1: Adult Learning and Assessment
EDS 6100 - Leadership 2: Theory and Assessment
EDA 6103 - Leadership 3: Administrative Processes
EDA 5931 – Clinical Supervision

Professional Knowledge Courses

EDA 6207 - Managing School Operations
EDF 6786 - Educational Governance
EDS 6050 - Instructional Leadership 1
EDS 6052 - Instructional Leadership 2
EDA 6232 - Practical School Law
EDA 6300 - Community Partnerships and Diversity

Research and Methodology Courses

STA 6113 – Statistics
EDF 6481 – Educational Research Methodology

Experiential Courses

EDA 6945 - Fall Internship
EDA 6946 - Spring Internship
EDA 6947 - Summer Internship

PHASE TWO (two semesters)

EDA 7943 - Field Project 1- Action Learning
EDA 7944 - Field Project 2 – Apprenticeship
EDA 7930 - Critical Urban Education
EDA 6052 - School Improvement

When two public institutions - both founded on the goal to educate Florida's present and future citizens with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions for a democratic, socially just, and economically successful society - join forces for that cause, the synergy creates a powerful dynamic. The success of the FAU-BCPS partnership is a model of that synergy.