The Aspiring Superintendents' Program at the University of Pennsylvania

For the last several years, the Penn Center for Educational leadership has conducted superintendent searches through its program called PennSearch. Throughout that process, we have repeatedly read two facts:

- Current superintendents are aging. According to a 2000 (this was 7 years ago!) American Association of School Administrator's survey, the median age of public school superintendents was 52.5 years old and 80 percent of surveyed superintendents were already eligible for retirement.

- The pool of qualified candidates prepared and willing to replace current superintendents has dwindled to a startling level.

Why has the pool of excellent superintendents who are qualified and willing to lead our complex school organizations diminished significantly over the past years? A 2001 survey of superintendents regarding their feelings about the superintendency linked those feelings to burnout. Findings from this survey, conducted by the Illinois Association of School Administrators, suggested that 10 of the top 13 superintendent responses were indicators of burnout. One of the most powerful has to do with the low quality of preparation and assistance that's available to new superintendents. Another is micromanagement by school boards, a phenomenon which superintendents are neither trained nor prepared to address.

The position of school superintendent is key to educational leadership for American schools. Current research shows that strong leadership in that position is essential for schools to accomplish the levels of student achievement and leadership that are demanded by today's organizations. There is no question that we need the brightest, the best prepared, and the most courageous and committed superintendents if we are to be effective in improving education for all students. This program is focused on adding to that preparation in a way that supports new superintendents as they assume their first positions in that role.

The Curriculum

The outline in this brochure represents the curricula for both the Spring 2008 and the Summer 2008 sessions. A wide range of instructional materials will be used to deliver the curricula, including case studies, simulations, modeling, workshops, mock interviews, and mentoring. You pick the session that meets your needs and schedule!

Faculty

The faculty for the Aspiring Superintendents' Program consists of the staff of the Penn Center for Educational Leadership, the faculty of Penn's Graduate School of Education, and five outstanding practicing superintendents from Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

You choose the session that's convenient for you!

Choice 1: Spring 2008 Session

The Spring 2008 session will be conducted over 2 full weekends (one in February; one in April), beginning at 1 p.m. on Friday and ending at 12 Noon on Sunday. This session is concentrated (including Friday and Saturday evenings) and is designed for those planning their application for a Spring superintendent search with a summer transition to a superintendency.

Choice 2: Summer 2008 Session

The Summer 2008 session will be conducted over 2 full weekends (one in June; one in August), beginning at 1:00 p.m. on Friday and ending at 12 Noon on Sunday. This course is also concentrated (including Friday and Saturday evenings) and is designed for those entering the superintendency in the fall or planning their application for the next year.

FIRST WEEKEND SPRING: February 22–24, 2008
FIRST WEEKEND SUMMER: June 13–15, 2008

1. Orientation

- Self-Assessment – Development of Personal Growth Plan
- Life Cycle of the Superintendency
- The Qualities of Effective Leaders and Their Teams
- Assignment of A Mentor

2. Governance

- Working With Boards – Communication and Conflict
- Personnel Leadership
- Working with Unions & Staff
- Political Leadership

3. Instructional And Curricular Leadership

- The Moral Imperative
- The Achievement Gap and NCLB
- Effective Program Leadership

4. How To Be A Successful Candidate For The Superintendency – Part 1

- Knowing the Community
- Preparing an Effective Application Package
- Preparing for the Interview

SECOND WEEKEND SPRING: April 18–20, 2008
SECOND WEEKEND SUMMER: August 22–24, 2008

5. Self Assessment – 2

- Developing Your Leadership Profile
- Preparing Your Leadership Platform
- Managing Your Personal Motivation

6. System Leadership

- Courage and the Risks of Leadership
- Leading Change and Managing Resistance
- Building a Collaborative District Culture

7. Public Leadership And Community Building

- Interpreting the Superintendent's Profile
- Working Across Boundaries with Different Stake-Holder Groups
- Leading the Community and Building Common Ground

8. How To Be A Successful Candidate For The Superintendency – Part 2

- A Compelling Interview with the Board
- Preparing for a Day with the Community
- Negotiating the First Contract
- Developing an Effective Entry Plan

Goals of the Aspiring Superintendents' Program

The goals of the program are:

1. To prepare new leaders for new superintendencies.
2. To share the lessons learned by experienced and effective practitioners.
3. To address leadership and change issues not covered by traditional preparation programs
4. To mentor those who aspire to the superintendency and develop a network support system.

What Do Past Participants Say?

When asked, "What did you find most helpful about the course?" past students responded:

"Every session was full of interacting and relevant information, analysis and insight. There was a broad view as well as appropriate detail."

"The first-hand, current information was presented by very successful persons in the field."

"I don't think there is any other program which provides this type of opportunity (i.e. outreach to mentors; outreach to other students; continual resources, network)."

"This should be a requirement as part of the Mid-Career Program. The dynamic of multiple instructors (or colleagues or facilitators) is different than any other course offering and it is very complementary."

"Everything was par excellence!"

Time Frame for the Course

Both the spring and summer sessions are offered in two extended weekends. The program will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Friday and end at 12 Noon on Sunday over two weekends. Participants will be free to return home in the evening or to stay in hotel accommodations which will be made available at a reduced rate.

Costs for the Program

The total cost for the program is $2,500 and includes all tuition, materials, and meals. This fee does not include overnight accommodations; however the Penn Center for Educational Leadership will provide reduced costs at several accommodation levels.

The program will merit Pennsylvania Act 48 and New Jersey Professional Development credits and will carry three continuing education graduate credits from the University of Pennsylvania.

Location

All sessions will be held at the Penn Center for Educational Leadership at:
3440 Market Street, Suite 500
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

How to Register

A registration form is available on the PCEL web page at: http://www.gse.upenn.edu/pcel/. Please email the registration form to: pcel@gse.upenn.edu, or call Lindsay Shafer at 215.573.5511. Please be sure to specify which session (Spring 2008 or Summer 2008) you will be attending.

Act Now!

Space is limited to the first 25 who apply.

For More Information

Please email pcel@gse.upenn.edu, or call 215.573.5511.

Penn Center for Educational LEADERSHIP
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University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Now in its second year, this valuable program is designed to prepare new leaders for new superintendencies, address leadership and change issues not covered by traditional preparation programs, share the lessons learned by experienced and effective practitioners, mentor those who aspire to the superintendency, and assist in the development of a network support system.

Aspiring

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