

MPA Administrator Induction Plan

(Adopted by the Professional Management Committee on September 16, 2003)

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Introduction:

At the core of the Maine Principals' Association's mission is its assurance of a quality education for all Maine students through:

1. Promotion of the principalship;
2. Support of principals as educational leaders; and
3. Promotion and administration of interscholastic activities in grades 9-12.

The members of the Maine Principals' Association recognize the importance of retaining and developing leaders. A growing understanding of the need to promote the principalship surfaced at the Executive Committee's summer retreat of 2002 where an ad hoc committee to propose an in-depth induction program was created. Networking and induction were named by nearly one third of the membership on a survey in the fall of 2002 as the greatest priorities for administrator professional development. Certification and employment data suggests that while more people are certified as principals today than were 10 years ago, fewer people are entering the field. Thus, the Association has a vested interest in ensuring quality leadership in order to attain its mission. In doing so we:

1. Model a desirable profession,
2. Present a strong public presence,
3. Demonstrate the importance of the role,
4. Provide professional development, and
5. Offer advice and consultation.

A survey conducted at the 2002 Fall Conference provided additional insights from the Association's membership relevant to the topic of induction. Principals currently in the field named mentoring, support groups, and relationship building as things that they believe would have better supported their transition to the principalship. They also suggested that an in-depth orientation, including opportunities to create a map or plan while on the job, would have provided a more significant training experience than that afforded through pre-service programming.

The professional development plan, through which all professional development offered by the Maine Principal's Association is screened, includes inducting and mentoring new administrators as one of six professional growth opportunities. The Association provides additional opportunities for new administrators to share and discuss topics of mutual concern through guided discussion groups, a multi-session orientation series, and retreats.

Numerous education stakeholders in Maine recognize the importance of induction. In the fall of 2000, the Maine Department of Education was awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Education to support the AARBEC (Advancing the Agenda for Results-Based Education Certification) Project, related to supporting beginning teachers in Maine. There are also components of induction programs offered through the MEA for teachers and MSSA for superintendents, but they are limited in scope and impact and not germane to the needs of building level administrators.

Nationally, there appears to be no comprehensive induction program currently implemented by any state association. Several states and/or state associations have developed mentoring and coaching programs to create support networks for new administrators, yet we recognize that mentoring alone fails to meet pre-service or continuing professional development needs. Departments of education, state associations, universities, and local schools/districts are beginning to understand that they each have a role in helping their constituents hone their craft.

The Maine Principals' Association recognizes the importance of a comprehensive induction plan to support its mission, and its obligation to provide quality leadership. The Maine Principals' Association identifies its role in meeting the needs of new administrators as:

1. Developing relationships,
2. Providing orientation to both the profession and the professional organization,
3. Offering on-going authentically-based professional development, and
4. Advocating for the needs of association members to other stakeholders (e.g. MSSA, MSMA, the Maine Education Leadership Consortium, the University System, and the State Board of Education).

Relationships:

As school leaders, building administrators find themselves at the center of competing priorities. They are expected to demonstrate competence in instructional/educational leadership and building/human resource management. Administrators face isolation while experiencing scrutiny under high-powered microscopes. Developing relationships is essential to supporting quality leaders. Relationships can be fostered through:

1. Mentoring/coaching programs,
2. Networking/connections with peers,
3. Critical friends groups, and
4. Multiple stakeholder collaborations.

Orientations:

Learning the practical matters or “nuts and bolts” of the profession is extremely important for any new administrator. Many educational organizations, including school districts, have vested interests in providing organized specific information to building administrators. The Maine Principals’ Association can facilitate connections between association members and other organizations and provide a thorough introduction to the association’s resources as well. The Maine Principals’ Association enhances other orientation efforts by:

1. Providing professional development opportunities,
2. Providing information on organizational structures,
3. Compiling and distributing resource information, and
4. Sharing opportunities for involvement in Association activities.

Professional Development:

In Leading Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) explains,

“ Creating new models of school leadership will require changes in practice. Student learning must be at the center of what schools are all about and should drive all the decisions school leaders make...To accomplish this, the organizations principals serve and that serve them must support principals’ professional growth.” (Pg. 2, NAESP, 2001)

The MPA Professional Development Plan is centered on the specifics of leadership development: networking, practical and theoretical aspects of the principalship, assisting principals in the recertification process, exploring electronic links, and inducting new administrators. Ideally, professional development for the purpose of induction, should include aspects of the following:

1. On-going involvement with a cohort for at least 2-3 years;
2. Opportunities that address the needs of both new administrators and those new to an LEA;
3. Authentically based experiences inclusive of practical and theoretical learning; and
4. Programming flexible enough to meet the needs of individuals.

Advocacy:

Universities and colleges traditionally bear responsibility for the development of pre-service administrative programs, and the State Board of Education establishes standards for certification. To ensure the success of the association’s mission, we believe that the Maine Principals’ Association must:

1. Advocate for the needs of the association’s members to the University of Maine and the University of Southern Maine and other in-state administrator preparation programs; and
2. Advocate for the needs of association members with the Department of Education and the State Board of Education.

As quality leaders, our association's members must be encouraged to recognize individuals with leadership interests and aspirations. Ralph Waldo Emerson spoke of untapped leaders when he remarked, "Their chief want is someone who will inspire them to be what we know they can be." An association of leaders, the MPA must be willing to offer information and pre-service opportunities for those considering the field. The MPA needs to capitalize on its role in the induction process and acknowledge the responsibilities of other stakeholder organizations such as the Maine Education Leadership Consortium, MSSA, and MSMA. Communicating with such organizations will be essential in the development of an induction program that meets the needs of today's diverse leaders. At the same instant, we must not delay our efforts in hopes that other organizations will assume this responsibility.

Recommendations:

After much conversation at the ad hoc committee level, a conscious decision to focus the recommendations of this report on the new administrator became a reality. While recognizing that any administrator new to a district might require additional MPA support, or a local "induction"/orientation, given the scope of the original committee's charge, we chose to narrow our recommendations to meet the needs of person new to administration.

A successful induction plan requires the support of numerous stakeholders. Our recommendations are specifically focused on the MPA's responsibility to and response in developing such a program. Although we cannot dictate to other organizations their response in support of our plan, we can and should advocate the need for such a plan and share our understanding of what role they may play in addressing it.

Any comprehensive plan of induction should support the development of relationships, establishment of orientation and networking supports, on-going professional development, and opportunities for advocacy.

Recommendations for the Maine Principals' Association

Relationships

❖ Mentoring

- The MPA should foster the development of professional/collegial relationships through the development of a mentoring program and the facilitation of professional networking opportunities.
 - In order for leaders to help other leaders, the Maine Principals' Association should **plan**, seek initial funding for, **implement**, and **evaluate** a formal mentoring program that will enable inexperienced, beginning administrators to connect with helpful colleagues on an on-going basis.

For further information, see Appendix A – "Mentoring Plan, Implementation, Evaluation, and Assumptions"

❖ **Communication**

- The MPA should seek to create professional network connections through specific enhancements to existing communication, greater use and development of available technologies, and greater involvement of committee representatives. It is recommended that the MPA find ways to link with new members of the association through:
 - Orientation and information packets specifically designed for the new administrator – including a copy of the MPA Professional Development Calendar.
 - The assignment of executive committee members to visit and welcome new administrators
 - The examination of existing structures (committees, regional associations, etc...) and their roles in supporting new administrators.
 - The establishment of an interactive bulletin board to foster connections among administrators and provide access to on-line resources and links.
 - The use of existing communication tools such as **The Maine Apprise** and the MPA website, whenever possible, to promote new formal/informal cohorts/connections.

Professional Development

In order to support the professional development needs of new administrators, the MPA should continue to offer on-going authentic professional development opportunities. It is recommended that the MPA:

- Professional Development Committee continues to give weight and credence to the necessity of professional development for new administrators.
- Promote and develop two- or three-year cohorts around induction, with mentoring as a component.
- Explore offering its own Masters and CAS programs

Advocacy:

As advocates for the Association's membership and as quality leaders, the MPA and its membership should:

- Advocate for the MPA's plan within other stakeholder organizations such as the Maine Education Leadership Consortium, MSSA, and MSMA. For example, the MPA should complete RFPs to MSMA and the MPA for their fall conferences to convey the plan, the importance of induction, and roles and responsibilities.
- Host a formal event with the chancellor; the presidents, college deans and chairs of the Education Leadership programs at UM, USM, and UNE to share information/ perceptions regarding administrator preparation programs to better meet the needs of the new administrator.
- Advocate to the State Board of Education that initial administrator certification include on-going professional development and feedback regarding on-the-job performance through a formal mentoring program.

Recommendations for School Boards and Superintendents

School boards and superintendents should and must play a critical role in the induction of new administrators. Their responsibility includes creating working conditions to ensure success and providing resources and support to do the job. These resources and support include quality training and on-the-job feedback with a mentoring component, time, and the necessary funding.

School boards and superintendents should:

- Learn about the importance of induction for new administrators and successful induction models.
- Develop and implement local induction programs, which include on-going training, feedback, and mentoring. Because of conditions unique to Maine, districts in a region might jointly sponsor such a program.
- Encourage and provide the resources for school administrators to learn and network with others in like roles. Paying dues to state and national professional administrator organizations, encouraging and paying for attendance at conferences, seminars, study groups, and courses; providing technology for interacting with others and accessing information; and encouraging participation in regional and statewide committees are examples of steps that school boards and superintendents can take.
- Encourage and provide support for school administrators to take part in MPA sponsored induction activities.

Recommendation for Administrator Preparation Programs

- Administrator preparation institutions (UM, USM, and UNE) should review their programs to ensure that they are relevant and that graduates are able to successfully lead Maine schools.

Appendix A -- “Mentoring Plan, Implementation, Evaluation, and Assumptions”

- The **plan** includes clear definitions of terms, a statement of purpose (rationale or philosophy), and goals.
- **Implementation** consists of a number of issues that need to be addressed. They include mentor selection, mentor training, mentor assignment and matching, system roles and responsibilities and mentor support, and identifying appropriate target groups.
- The **evaluation** component answers the question, “How well did the mentoring program work”? Specific questions might include – Was the program effective? How expensive was the program? Did the program meet the needs of all the participants? Did the program really help the protégés?
- **Assumptions About Mentoring**
 - Effective mentoring programs are designed so that both protégés and mentors benefit as a result of mutually enhancing positive interactions and support.
 - Effective mentoring should help people grow both professionally and personally.
 - The essence of effective mentoring is that it must involve the development of mutual trust and commitment on the part of both the mentor and protégé.
 - Because of the complexity of most professional roles (such as the school administrator), it is likely that a person will need multiple mentors during his or her career.
 - Mentoring relationships are vehicles for job enrichment and professional development.
 - Mentoring can involve a number of different professional development activities that are negotiated between a mentor and a protégé. Mentoring is not solely a one-to-one conversation between a mentor and a protégé.
 - Mentoring relationships are separate and distinct from other types of supportive relationships that might be found in organizations. There are many different and important relationships available to school leaders such as career guides, peer pals, [buddies], and so forth.
 - At times, both the mentor and the protégé may expect too much from the mentoring relationship. It is critical for both partners to remain realistic about the nature of their relationships.
 - The most effective mentors are those individuals who engage in a process of discovery with their protégés. Effective mentors are able to ask the right questions but are not always able to provide all of the right answers.

Source: John C. Daresh, *Leaders Helping Leaders: A Practical Guide to Administrative Mentoring*, Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2001.

Appendix B -- Bibliography

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