



# CMS Principal Pipeline

**DESTINATION LEADERSHIP**

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Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has made great strides in strengthening its school leadership to raise the quality of teaching and learning to improve student achievement by providing a continuous supply of effective leaders.

In recognition of our efforts, and to strengthen a pipeline of principals and assistant principals, CMS was among six (6) districts to receive a Wallace Foundation Grant in the fall of 2011. The Principal Pipeline Initiative is transforming the way CMS identifies and trains our aspiring leaders to fulfill our commitment to hiring, retaining and supporting effective leaders.

## The components are:



# LEADER STANDARDS

Aligns job descriptions, training, hiring requirements, evaluations and professional development

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools recognizes that the role of the principal has shifted from a typical administrator to an instructional leadership role. The vision of school leadership described below captures this shift and establishes parameters and expectation for all CMS school executives.

## NC STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL EXECUTIVES



North Carolina law requires all districts to adhere to statewide standards for school leaders. Using those state standards as a base, we developed a framework of competencies, skills and beliefs that principals and assistant principals are required to demonstrate consistently. These attributes are tailored to the special needs of the schools in our district.

## CMS COMPETENCIES, SKILLS AND BELIEFS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

### BELIEF IN CHILDREN

Believes all children can and will achieve. Draws attention to equity gap and works urgently to close the gap.

### BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND INFLUENCING OTHERS

Positions oneself as a leader among various stakeholder groups. Influences and motivates others to get results. Actively listens to others and creates team-oriented, cooperative and engaged culture. Effectively handles conflict. Has excellent communication skills.

### ESTABLISHING A CULTURE OF HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Sets ambitious goals and continually monitors progress towards goals. Holds others accountable.

### INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Understands research-based instructional practices and focuses attention on teaching and learning. Uses observation and student-performance data to accurately assess levels of student learning. Effectively facilitates professional learning communities to promote increased achievement.

### INTEGRITY

Aligns actions with beliefs. Promotes, models and exhibits high standards of honesty, integrity, fairness, stewardship, trust, respect and confidentiality. Exhibits ethical and moral behavior in everyday business conduct. Is self-reflective and uses feedback to improve performance.

### STAMINA, INITIATIVE AND PERSISTENCE

Persists to overcome challenges. Goes beyond what is expected to achieve desired result. Responds calmly and rationally in high-stress situations.

### STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

Develops clear vision, and develops logical priorities, goals and strategies to achieve vision. Is adept at problem-solving. Analyzes relevant data and stakeholder input to identify the problem; generates suitable solutions that address the problem; chooses the best course of action among options. Makes sound and timely decisions. Effectively generates and utilizes resources to meet goals.

### TALENT MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Accurately assesses effectiveness of staff and effectively coaches staff to improve performance.

## PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Includes recruitment, selective admissions and pre-service experiences aligned with expectations for school leaders

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has formed partnerships with four local universities to provide effective training for aspiring school leaders.

The district collaborates with partners on recruitment, content development, evaluation, and internships and residency placement.



QUEENS UNIVERSITY  
OF CHARLOTTE

In partnership between the Queens University McColl School of Business and the Cato School of Education, this 14-month licensure program is designed to equip potential school executives with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead change in CMS schools.



UNC CHARLOTTE

The UNC Charlotte Aspiring High School Principals Program offers problem-based and action-learning curriculum that simulates the actual challenges faced by high school principals and provides support tailored to participants' unique learning styles and leadership development needs.



The Leaders for Tomorrow program, administered by Winthrop University, is designed for current CMS teachers and certified employees who aspire to become executive school leaders in high-needs CMS schools.

WINGATE  
UNIVERSITY

Wingate University offers a Master of Arts in Education Leadership program and an Add-on Licensure Program in School Administration K-12 focused on the seven NC Standards for School Executives.

## SELECTIVE HIRING

Places the most qualified applicants based on a match between the candidate and the school

The need to place the right leader in the right school is critical. Some principals will be better matched with certain types of schools and vice versa. As a result, we employ a stringent screening and selection process.

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### The Assistant Principal and Principal Talent Pools process consists of three steps:

1

#### APPLICATION

An online application including a structured resume, detailed letter of interest and recommendations.

2

#### VIRTUAL INTERVIEW

This consists of a short online interview, using a computer or tablet with a camera to complete this interview.

3

#### SCREENING EVENT

For the Principal Talent Pool, this is a half-day, in person event consisting of several activities including a role play, in-basket exercise, school data review, and a teacher observation. For the Assistant Principal Talent Pool, this is an hour long interview including a role play.

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After a new assistant principal or principal vacancy is confirmed, candidates in the talent pools are invited to apply. Candidates participate in a selection process with the Human Resources department and the hiring supervisor for the vacant position. Selection activities, including interviews, are designed to ensure the best fit for the school and the candidate.

## EVALUATION & SUPPORT

Addresses the capacity to improve teaching and learning, and targeted professional development

## PRINCIPAL INDUCTION

New principals in CMS complete a 4-year induction program. The diverse induction program elements are described below.

### Years 1 & 2: Instructional Leadership Focus

First- and second-year principals are matched with a consultant coach who guides and advises them throughout the year to support a successful transition into school leadership. Principals meet with their consultant coaches for bi-monthly check-ins and gather with their cohorts for quarterly sessions focused on key topics related to developing effective administrators and increasing student achievement.

In their second year, principals focus on time management to help redirect their time and focus on collaborative work with teachers to improve student learning. Principals who participate in this process are trained to increase time dedicated to instructional leadership through reflective practice.

### Year 3: Learning About Leadership

The Educational Leadership Institute, offered in partnership with the Queens University McColl Executive Leadership Institute, equips sitting principals to effectively lead change. Participants analyze their own school and identify real, needed change initiatives. They then use these initiatives as projects for application of classroom learning. Participants design a change process and, with the support and feedback of faculty coaches, they implement and assess the success of that change process.

### Year 4: Demonstrating Leadership

The capstone experience, offered in partnership with the Center for Intentional Leadership, is designed for principals in the last year of the induction program. Principals reflect on their professional and personal relationships and make conscious commitments to improve these relationships and to continue to lead in an authentic manner.

## EVALUATION & SUPPORT

Addresses the capacity to improve teaching and learning, and targeted professional development

## ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL INDUCTION & PRINCIPAL INTERN PROGRAM

New assistant principals complete a 2-year induction program. Experienced high-potential assistant principals complete a principal intern program. The elements of each program build capacity for leadership and are described below.

### Year 1: Instructional Leadership Focus

First-year assistant principals participate in monthly meetings led by the Leadership Development Office and/or learning community executive director. These sessions focus on techniques to expand their leadership skills and raise student achievement.

### Year 2: Learning about Leadership

The AP Academy, offered in partnership with the Queens University McColl Executive Leadership Institute, helps assistant principals understand and navigate the challenges of leading from the middle—i.e. owning their own authority and leadership while also serving the vision and leadership of their principal. Additionally, participants build self-awareness, develop an understanding of leadership and a leadership philosophy of their own by participating in the program and shadowing principals for two days.

### Beyond Year 2: Personalized Development Support

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has taken a proactive approach in developing school leaders. CMS has adopted a structured and sequential Leadership Development Program that culminates with the preparation of highly skillful leaders who possess the necessary attitude, knowledge, and skills to meet the ever changing demands of the principalship.

Select assistant principals receive additional support and coaching to support the individual needs. The support could include serving as a principal intern, additional job-embedded professional development, and other experiences to deepen the high-potential assistant principal's understanding and practical application of skills associated with the NC School Executive Standards and CMS Competencies.

## ALIGNMENT, CAPACITY & QUALITY ASSURANCE

Integration of four components to create a coherent and highly effective system of development and support

## PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY (PLC)

A national professional learning community of principals, directors and other staff from participating districts built around five (5) key practices of effective principals as identified through the Wallace Foundation research.

### 5 Key Practices

Shaping a vision of academic success for all students

Creating a climate hospitable to education

Cultivating leadership in others

Improving instruction

Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement

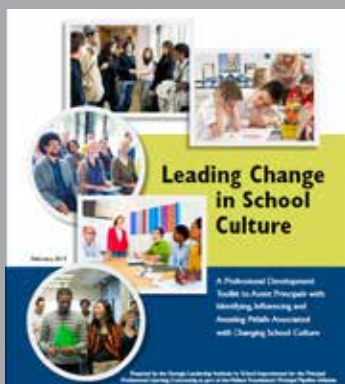
### PROJECT EXAMPLES:

#### PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

What system of effective practices creates authentic commitment for change, and how do principals ensure that change initiatives have the desired and sustainable impact on student success?

#### PRODUCT

Professional Learning Facilitator Guide for Changing School Culture, including vignettes, self-assessments of school culture and other tools.



### OBJECTIVES:

- Provide high quality professional learning experiences that build principal capacity around the five key practices of effective principals
- Bring the principal voice into district-led Principal Pipeline Initiative conversations for continuous improvement
- Engage principals in the creation of new knowledge based on their effective leadership of the five key practices through project groups
- Provide the opportunity for principals to influence the national conversation in education leadership through presentations, conversation and/or publication of their project group work
- Share what principals are learning with other leaders in their own districts

### METHODOLOGY:

5 project groups  
In-person meetings twice/year  
Webinars  
Shared artifacts  
Vignettes  
Videos  
Design Thinking



## **ALIGNMENT, CAPACITY & QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Integration of four components to create a coherent and highly effective system of development and support

## **The LEADER TRACKING SYSTEM (LTS)**

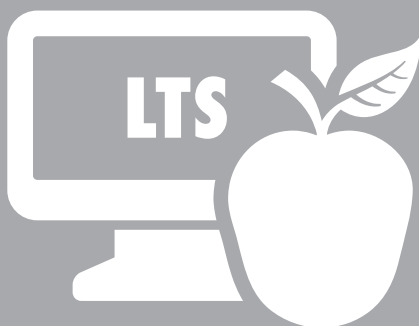
An online tool designed to enable and support data-driven decision making throughout multiple components of the CMS principal pipeline, including: pre-service training, selective hiring, on-the-job support and evaluation.

The LTS was designed specifically to support learning community superintendents and executive directors in the completion of principal evaluations, identification of professional development needs, and identifying leaders by providing school level and HR data in one, easily accessible format.

The LTS is also a tool for principals to track their own HR and student data as well as their completed leadership professional development courses in order to create their own professional development plans.

### **POSSIBLE USES:**

- Identifying skill gaps to plan professional development
- Identifying consultant coaches
- Identifying growth opportunities
- Identifying candidates and encouraging them to apply to the talent pool
- Pairing principal mentors with mentees or interns



### **THE LEADER IDENTIFIER TOOL**

The Leader Identifier tool, which is a part of the LTS, is designed for the collection and analysis of data as part of a decision-making process for future staffing needs. The tool contains information on all employees performing the following roles:

**Principals**

**Assistant Principals**

**Deans**

**Facilitators**

**Multi-Classroom Leaders**

**Blended Learning Teachers**

# PRE-PIPELINE INITIATIVE

## ASPIRING LEADERS PROGRAM (ALP)

In partnership with Teach For America, CMS created an Aspiring Leaders Program (ALP). ALP provides high-potential teachers the opportunity to explore executive-level careers in CMS.

**ALP is a year-long program with a seven-week summer fellowship. Teachers participating in the program have the opportunity for leadership development through:**



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### Typical areas for shadowing opportunities include:

Superintendent's office  
Learning Community Superintendent offices  
Learning & Teaching  
Budget and Finance  
Communications  
Accountability  
Auxiliary Services  
Information Technology  
Student Support  
Human Resources  
Legal Services  
Planning and Facilities

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**Our goal is to develop aspiring leaders with strong interest in continuing their careers in CMS.**

# POST-PIPELINE INITIATIVE

## PRINCIPAL SUPERVISORS INITIATIVE (PSI)

Though the district focus is on our principal pipeline, it is clear that the role of the principal supervisor is a linchpin position for realizing the bold goals in our district. The Principal Supervisors Initiative exists to improve the effectiveness of the principal supervisors so they can better work with principals to raise the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

### COMPONENTS

#### **Revising the position description:**

This component was completed before the initiative began and will continue to be revised to meet the needs of the district and to incorporate the upcoming release of Principal Supervisor standards by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

#### **Reduce the span of control:**

The school district has a goal of maintaining an average of eighteen (18) schools per learning community. Furthermore, the district wants to maintain less than twelve (12) schools for feeder patterns with high-needs schools. This will increase the opportunity for instructional and progress monitoring of student achievement and coaching of principals.

#### **Expand the capacity of the Principal Supervisor:**

The district is working with McColl School of Business at Queens University and the University of Washington to design and implement professional development tailored to principal supervisors.

#### **Ensure a continuous supply of qualified leaders to assume the principal supervisor position in the future:**

Realizing the importance of succession planning for the principal supervisor, the executive directors in each learning community will also be included in the executive coaching sessions to better position these individuals to move into the principal supervisor position.

#### **Strengthening the Central Office Structures:**

Realigning central services to allow learning community superintendents and executive directors to better support principals.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools believes that if principal supervisors are held accountable for shaping principal instructional leadership capacity and are provided with the highest quality training, support and the right number of principals to supervise that this in turn will improve the effectiveness of the principals with whom they work.



*Every Child. Every Day. For a Better Tomorrow.*

For more information, please contact:

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Leadership Development Office**

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**CMS Intranet:** <http://my.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/humanresources/llddev/Pages/Default.aspx>