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About the Arkansas Leadership Academy

The Arkansas Leadership Academy is a nationally recognized statewide partnership of 15 universities; 9 professional associations; 15 educational cooperatives; the Arkansas Departments of Education, Higher Education, and Career Education; the Arkansas Educational Television Network; Tyson Foods, Inc.; Wal*Mart Stores, Inc.; 2 superintendent representatives; the Office of the Governor; and the State Board of Education, a total of 49 Partners.

The Academy, through the use of research and best practices, designs creative and innovative approaches to establish learning communities in public schools by developing human resources and modeling and advocating collaboration, support, shared decision making, team learning, risk taking, and problem solving. Partners commit to changing their organizations to support system improvement.

Academy Beliefs:

- People support what they help to create.
- Diversity is embraced and valued.
- To change others, change yourself.
- The greatest leaders are known by the number of leaders they create.

Connecting People, Ideas, Perspectives, and Experiences.



A collaborative partnership
housed at the
University of Arkansas.



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Academy Action



Upcoming Institutes

Master Principal Institute

- P3S3—Apr. 5-7, 2011
- P2S3—May 3-5, 2011
- P1S4A—Jun. 14-17, 2011
- P1S4B—Jun. 29-Jul.1, 2011

Assistant Principal Institute

- Session 2—May 10-11, 2011

Superintendent Institute

- Session 4—Mar. 10-11, 2011
- Session 5—Apr. 27-28, 2011

Teacher Leader Institute

- Forum 19, Session 4—
Jun. 8-10, 2011
- Forum 20, Session 4—
Jun. 26-28, 2011

Team Leadership Institute

- Year 1, Session 2—
Jul. 11-12, 2011
- Year 2, Session 3—
Jul. 13-14, 2011

Effective Meetings Training

TBD

Learn more about application
deadlines and upcoming
Academy Institutes at

www.arkansasleadershipacademy.org

This Issue

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Team Institutes Jumpstart School Support Schools

This winter, the Academy's Deep Knowledge Leadership Team Institutes have been in full swing. The Team Institute, one of the Academy's first created institutes, was revised and reinstated in 2009. Currently, all schools participating in the Academy's School Support Program attend the Team Institutes. Team Institute Year 1 is offered for leadership teams for schools in Year 1 of the School Support Program, and this year, Team Institute Year 2 is offered for leadership teams for schools in Year 2 of the School Support Program. Twelve teams are currently participating in Year 1 of the Team Institute and nine teams are participating in Year 2.

The ALA facilitators and staff have worked to design the Team Institute curriculum to build capacity in leadership teams to create learning environments, to move the work of the school and district forward by improving systems within the school and district, and to provide the tools and skills necessary to work as a team. Team Institute Year 2 continues to develop the work of teams who completed Year 1. In Year 2, teams continue to strengthen collaborative relationships and increase their capacity to function efficiently and effectively as school leadership teams; improve student achievement through increasing their capacity to implement each of the Five Performance Areas; and increase their capacity to design, implement, and assess a systemic approach to professional learning for all members of the learning community, resulting in a learning culture focused on increased student achievement.

Year 2 teams completed their second two-day session on Petit Jean Mountain in February. Building on their learning from Year 1, these teams applied their increased understanding of the Academy's Five Performance Areas to develop products and improve their processes. Products include professional development plans for the leadership teams themselves as well as completion of a team charter that guides their work. This year, the teams are applying their learning from the study of *Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work* (DuFour, et al.) to improve their effectiveness as a leadership team that builds a culture promoting best practices in teaching and learning for both adult and student learners. In particular, session 2 highlighted "student voice" through a panel discussion with students from a participating school via Skype in addition to focusing on academic rigor and relevance. Teams will continue to initiate and support changes in practices that will result in improved student learning.

The Academy has received excellent feedback on the leadership teams' work resulting from the Team Institutes. Academy facilitator Sharon Williams remarked, "As evidence of growth over the two years of involvement with the Academy, the teams cite implementation of plans, engagement of the larger school community, and, most importantly, improved student results on both formative and summative assessments. Although there is still work to do, schools have seen significant improvement."

From the Academy Team

One of the Arkansas Leadership Academy's five performance areas is "Leading and Managing Change." As we strive to improve our schools across the state, we often see the need for change in leadership expectations, classroom instruction, data analysis, and even school culture. We address the need for change with those involved, but often we fail to remember one very important piece of the change process. Change is very hard and costly, and we must remember that those making the change must not only have ownership of the process but also the ownership of the **need** for change.

In the book "The Adaptive School" by Garmston and Wellman, we are reminded that a "shared dissatisfaction" of the status quo is the first step of developing a plan for change. If we are not dissatisfied with our current status, we will not commit to making a change. According to Garmston and Wellman, "a shared dissatisfaction along with a shared vision and knowledge of practical tools and strategies must be strong enough to outweigh the cost of any change."

Change is not always necessary, but in those situations where change is needed, let us not forget that we need to have conversations about our current reality compared to our shared vision. We cannot expect change to take place until those involved agree that the current status is more costly and detrimental than the effort needed to implement the change process. When we develop that foundation of shared dissatisfaction - and that common vision - we will be able to make those positive changes that are needed in our schools.

Blaine Alexander
Capacity Building Leader



Hughes K-12 School (Hughes School District) is currently participating in Year 2 of the Academy's School Support Program and is already seeing significant improvements. When they began the School Support Program in 2009, Hughes was listed in the 7th year of School Improvement. Academy Capacity Building Leader Karen Sullards (also ADE Director of Improvement for Hughes) recognized the need in Hughes' administration, faculty, leadership team, and students for a new vision, a morale boost, and a renewed sense of urgency. After one year of hard work in

the school and at Academy institutes, Hughes met safe harbor in all sub-groups! Other notable achievements include:

- ➔ Meeting the Arkansas school standards for the first time since the 2007-2008 school year;
- ➔ Meeting Safe Harbor in all groups in literacy and math for the first time in seven years;
- ➔ Significant increase in the number of juniors scoring proficient/advanced on the 2010 EOC Literacy Test;
- ➔ Increased proficient/advanced scores on the 2010 Benchmark

SSP Spotlight on Hughes School District

at grade levels three through eight in literacy and math;

- ➔ CWT's, focus walks, after-school tutoring, and leadership team work;
- ➔ Creation of a 2010-2011 master schedule that provides time each day for common planning and professional learning communities.

Sullards remarked, "We were certainly proud of the steps toward school improvement but were even prouder when the University of Arkansas's Office of Education Policy (OEP) published its Outstanding Educational Performance Awards for 2010. The Hughes School District is ranked in many statewide categories. As we prepare for the spring 2011 testing cycle, we are confident that we will maintain and improve our student achievement. We will continue our school improvement efforts by collaborating, innovating, and celebrating!" Congratulations to Hughes School District, and keep up the hard work!

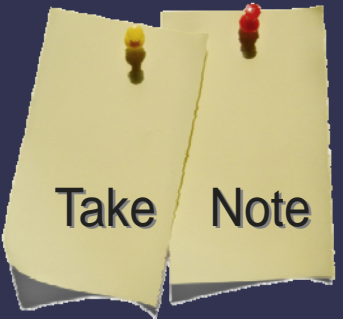


New Benchmark Site Visits for Superintendents

In February, superintendents participating in the Academy's Superintendent Institute were given the opportunity to take part in a new facet of the institute. This year, the Academy and the Superintendent Institute's National Support Team organized Benchmark site visits to three Arkansas schools: Monitor Elementary School (Springdale School District), College Hill Elementary School (Texarkana School District), and Monticello High School (Monticello School District). Monitor Elementary principal Maribel Childress and College Hill principal Marguerite Hillier are both designated Master Princi-

pals, and Monticello High principal Kenny Pennington is a graduate of the Master Principal Institute's Phase 1. Each school's district superintendent (Jim Rollins-Springdale SD, Russell Sapaugh-Texarkana SD, and Bobby Harper-Monticello SD) is also a graduate of the Academy's Superintendent Institute. Superintendents visited the schools with their Professional Learning Communities formed in the Superintendent Institute. During the site visits, each PLC talked with the principal, superintendent, and several staff about each school's school and

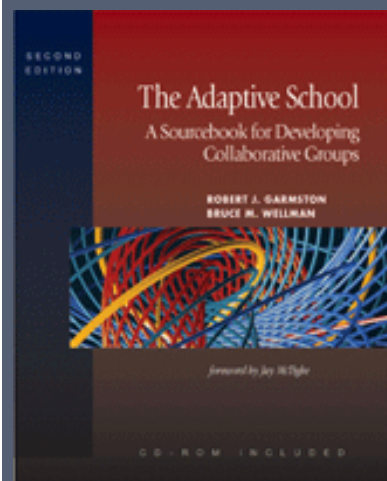
district context; their mission, vision, and core beliefs as well as culture; student and adult learning expectations; teaching and instructional practices; use of data and accountability; distributive/shared leadership; parental and community engagement; and collaborative structures and practices to support learning and increase engagement. Superintendents were also able to join in school walkthroughs and create networks to contact in continuing the work back in their own districts. The site visits received excellent feedback from all.



* Don't forget to submit your 2011-2012 institute applications online, by mail, or by fax. Visit our website for more details!

* Congratulations to Eastside Elementary School (Rogers School District) and Gibbs Albright Elementary School (Newport School District) for being recognized as 2010 National Title I Distinguished Schools. Eastside Elementary principal Robin Wilkerson is a Master Principal Institute Phase I graduate, and her assistant principal Melissa Lohmeier is currently participating in the Assistant Principal Institute. Gibbs Albright Elementary principal Alan Blair is also a graduate of MPI Phase I, and his assistant principal Lisa Tennyson is a Phase III graduate. Albright also participated in the ALA School Support Program last year and achieved AYP.

Read This: The Adaptive School



This school year, the Academy's Capacity Building Leaders have been reading and discussing Robert J. Garmston and Bruce M. Wellman's latest edition of *The Adaptive School: A Sourcebook for Developing Collaborative Groups* (Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 2008). In this book, the authors draw on their experiences working with school systems and groups across the globe and look at group work through the theoretical filters of biology, ecology, quantum physics, complexity science, systems thinking, and cognitive and social psychology to offer a practical set of principles and tools for developing and facilitating collaborative groups. *The Adaptive School* is about devel-

oping strong schools in which collaborative faculties are capable of meeting the certain challenges of today and the uncertain challenges of tomorrow. It addresses the essential *process* aspects of schooling (e.g., culture, community, communications) that are too often overlooked in the frenzy to address the programmatic or structural aspects of educational improvement. This book is informed by the central notion of adaptivity, five principles of dynamic systems, and focusing questions that bring attention to fundamental issues for capacity building in schools:

- ➔ More data do not lead to better predictions.
- ➔ Everything influences everything else.

- ➔ Tiny events produce major disturbances.
- ➔ You don't have to touch everyone to make a difference.
- ➔ Both things and energy matter.

These form the conceptual backbone of the chapters and provide a rationale for the tools and approaches presented. An appendix toolkit of facilitation strategies is also included. Garmston and Wellman believe that leadership is important and that the most effective leadership is informed, deeply developed, and widely distributed. To be adaptive and meet the demands of omnipresent change requires just as much human energy as good management.

