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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

- P2S3—May 3-5, 2011
- P1S4A—Jun. 14-17, 2011
- P1S4B—Jun. 29-Jul.1, 2011
- P1S1—Jul. 19-22, 2011

Assistant Principal Institute

Session 2—May 10-11, 2011

Superintendent Institute

- Session 1—Sept. 27-29, 2011
- Session 2—Nov.30-Dec.1, 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

May 26, 2011

Learn more about application
deadlines and upcoming
Academy Institutes at

www.arkansasleadershipacademy.org

This Issue

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Evidence-Based Change **P.3**

About the Academy **P.4**

School Boards Participate in School Support Training

In April, Hampton School Board and Crossett School Board each completed the final session of their Academy school board training as part of their participation in the School Support Program (SSP). Each board met with the Academy's School Support Program Leader and their designated Capacity Building Leader for four training sessions throughout the school year. Because the Academy's School Support Program is centered around systemic change, the Academy's services to each school/district include a board training component during Year 1 of the program to establish goals for the school district and engage in strategic planning to meet those district goals.

Each board training session is designed to provide the board with updates from each Academy institute, demonstrate the Academy tools being modeled in these institutes and in their schools, and discuss what can be done to improve student achievement in the district, various ways to involve the community, and the implications of the district's Scholastic Audit and the Academy's SSP rubric. Academy Capacity Building Leader Jerry Vaughn explains the training's purpose: "Our work is about assisting schools in building sustainable systems which have a positive impact on student achievement. I like to think of this process and support as impacting "top-down" and "bottom-up" leadership. If all stakeholders are part of the process, then the potential for positive impact and systemic change taken to scale is ultimately enhanced. The purposed outcome is also about creating leadership capacity to sustain the work into the future."

The school boards the Academy has worked with through the School Support Program have generally responded in a very positive way. Receptive and eager to learn about the progress being made in their district's schools, the boards have appreciated working closely with administrators on very relevant local issues. One board member commented, "I wish we could have had this training 5 years ago."

The board training component of the School Support Program differs from the Academy's Partner organization, the Arkansas School Boards Association (ASBA), in several ways. ASBA does a great job of training board members and superintendents about their roles in guiding and leading a school district. Their work focuses more on the role of the individual board member. The School Support Program focuses on the support school boards can provide the mission and vision of the schools and district. It is centered on and relates back to student achievement. The SSP board training also serves to unify the other components offered as part of the School Support Program (Academy institutes, on-site training via Capacity Building Leaders, community involvement) by involving all stakeholders in the work.

In response to board requests for continued support, the Academy is currently in the process of developing a school board training component to offer to school districts during Years 2 and 3 of their participation in the School Support Program on a voluntary basis.

From the Academy Team

"Crafting your elevator conversation"...If this is a new phrase for you, it is, put quite simply, the critical conversation you have that must encompass the most important points you wish to make about anything--all within 30-60 seconds. You only have one chance to make a great first impression! With that thought in mind, what would be included in an elevator conversation about the Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support Program (SSP)?

- * One of the most unique aspects of SSP is the use of a systems approach. In-depth training is provided to the superintendent, principal, assistant principal, teacher leaders, leadership team, and school board. SSP schools also receive continual support on a weekly basis from their Capacity Building Leader (CBL). In addition, each SSP school has access to the expertise of other CBLs and to our network of consultants.
- * We are process- and outcome-driven. We get results in student achievement while building and maintaining collaborative relationships and sustainable systems.
- * All of the tools and systems that are learned at the Academy are completely transferable to changing policies and programs. This includes the implementation of Common Core Curriculum!
- * We build leadership that can be sustained after the three years that we spend in a SSP school.
- * Finally, the Academy's holistic approach integrates the ALA's five performance areas into every part of the process.

These quick bullet points are the heart of the Academy's School Support Program. They tell our story, share our strengths, and reflect our intended results. This is our elevator conversation!

Belinda Akin
School Support Program Leader



While a number of participants and graduates are still in the process, currently 68 graduates of the Academy's Teacher Leader Institute have also obtained National Board certification. What connection do the two have? TI Forum 16 graduate Carrie Misenheimer (Greenwood High School, Greenwood SD) and ALA Teacher Institute Leader Amanda Linn offer their thoughts:

How did participating in the Teacher Institute prepare you for the National Board certification process? Carrie: "It was exciting to see the parallels between the NBPTS philosophy and the Teacher Institute's goals. The Teacher Institute had already taught me that in order to change student achievement, I first

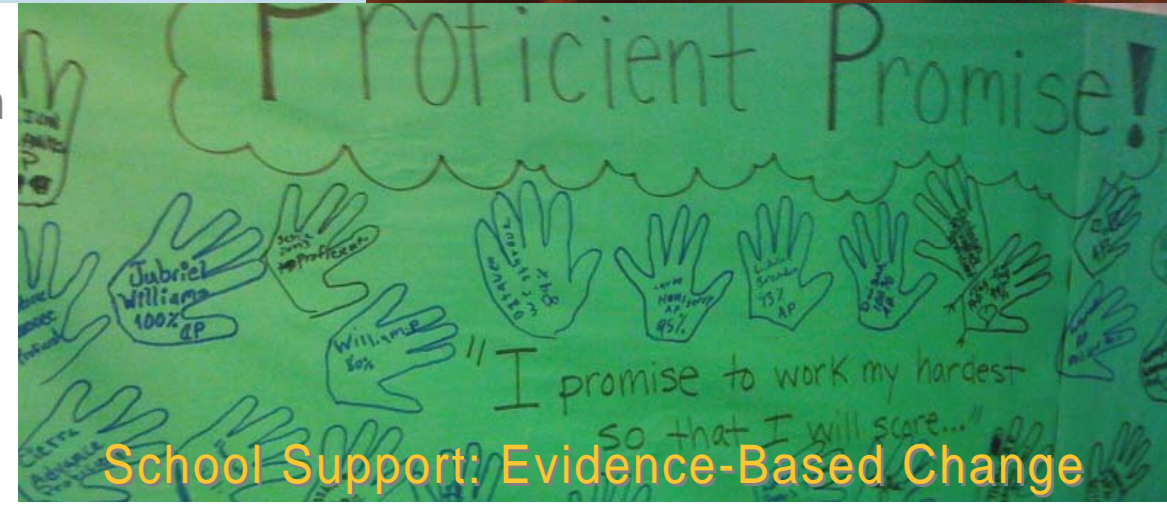
had to change my instruction. Because TI stresses reflecting and making instructional decisions based on student data, the analysis required for the National Board portfolios was second nature." Amanda: "I can say, without hesitation, that my participation in TI was the reason I was able to obtain certification on my first attempt. Nothing in the prior professional learning experiences available to me at the time addressed the knowledge and skills (reflective practice, best practices in teaching and learning, professional vocabulary) I came to realize were necessary to successfully even complete the process, much less to score high enough to achieve certification."

TI Meets National Board Certification

What would you say to Teacher Institute participants/graduates who are considering the National Board certification process? Carrie:

"Definitely consider National Board certification. The connection between the two goes beyond pedagogy to include professionalism. A large part of NBPTS certification involves your development as a learner and a collaborator with other professionals. Doesn't that sound like the definition of the Teacher Institute?"

Amanda: "Now, as the leader of the institute that played such an important role in my certification process, I have the honor of helping others along their journey. The TI curriculum specifically reflects the knowledge and skills necessary for the teacher as not only classroom practitioner but also campus leader. One of my favorite Academy mantras is 'the work is the work.' It's my intention that the work teachers do during their year-long TI experience supports not only the work they do for students but also the work they do to develop themselves as adult learners and leaders through endeavors such as the National Board process."



What do 40 years of research about implementing change in educational practices and the ALA School Support Program have in common? The ALA SSP exemplifies the evidence-based practices on predictable aspects of individual and organizational change. Districts and schools that engage in school improvement with the SSP are committing to change through a multi-year learning process, rather than a one-time event. Why not a quick fix? ALA recognizes that change is a complex process that doesn't occur overnight, and evidence points to significant reasons for a change process rather than a change "event." Hall and Hord (2011) summarized evidence-based principles of change in

- their book *Implementing Change: Patterns, Principles and Potholes*.
- Change involves complex learning
 - Change is a process, not an event
 - The school is the primary unit for change
 - Organizations adopt change, but individuals implement change
 - Interventions are key to the success of the change process
 - Appropriate interventions reduce resistance to change
 - Administrator leadership is essential to successful long-term change
 - Facilitating change is a team effort
 - Mandates can work
 - The context for change influences the process of learning and change

The ALA School Support Program integrates long-term professional development through its institutes with job-embedded development through on-site support provided by Capacity Building Leaders to address individual and organizational learning needs throughout the change process. The SSP engages the entire school and district community in collaborative efforts that enable sustained school improvement. The results of a multi-year partnership with the SSP are evident in the increased student achievement demonstrated by these schools!

Denise Airola
ALA Research Specialist



- * Don't forget to submit your 2011-2012 institute applications online, by mail, or by fax. Visit our website for more details!
- * Congratulations to Har-Ber High School assistant principal Dr. Michael Shepherd (Springdale School District) for being named National Assistant Principal of the Year by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)! Shepherd is a graduate of the Academy's Teacher Institute and has helped coach for the Teacher Institute and Team Institute.
- * Check out the Academy's new blog "The Academy Way" at arkansasleadershipacademy.edublogs.org or follow the link from our website. The blog will feature posts from Academy staff addressing such questions as *How do we continually learn? How do we facilitate/model continuous learning for others?*

Visit This: Edutopia.org



If you haven't checked out the digital resource edutopia.org, spend some time browsing the site for some great digital media content centered around "what works in education." Edutopia, created by the George Lucas Educational Foundation, embodies the vision "of a new world of learning, a place where students and parents, teachers and administrators, policy makers and the people they serve are all empowered to change education for the better; where schools provide rigorous project-based learning, social-emotional learning, and access to new technologies; where

innovation is the rule, not the exception; and where students become lifelong learners and develop 21st-century skills, especially in information literacy." Edutopia seeks to spread the word about ideal, interactive learning environments and enable others to adapt these successes locally. The site relies on six core strategies for innovation and reform in learning:

- ➔ Project Learning;
- ➔ Social and Emotional Learning;
- ➔ Technology Integration;
- ➔ Teacher Development;

- ➔ Comprehensive Assessment; and
- ➔ Integrated Studies.

Edutopia.org contains a deep archive of continually updated best practices, from classroom tips to recommendations for district-wide change. You'll find practical, hands-on advice, real-world examples, lively contributions from practitioners, and invaluable tips and tools, via videos, blogs, articles, and group discussions. Sign up for the free weekly e-newsletter to have the newest articles, video spotlights, and resources delivered straight to your inbox.

