

Principals Excellence Program (PEP)

- Who:** Cadres of practicing principals, assistant principals, and administrator-certified teachers who worked with leadership educators from the University of Kentucky and administrator practitioners from Pike County School District and Johnson County School District
- What:** An ISLLC *Standards*-based leadership development initiative spanning one calendar year (January to December) that integrated seminar-workshops, school-based disciplined inquiry and findings dissemination, active learning with P-12 educators, professional reading, and structured reflection
- When:** Weekly full-day activities during spring and fall semesters with cohort peers, project instructors, and mentor principals; annual district-wide summer leadership institute
- Why:** To expand the principalship from school management to “balanced leadership”¹ focused on student achievement through four performance themes: vision for success, focus on teaching and learning, involvement of all stakeholders, and demonstration of ethical behavior²
- How:** University-district partnership that addressed specific leadership development needs in high-need rural Appalachian schools; clearly defined program outcome goals; specific strategies to recruit, develop, and retain school leaders able to assure optimum learning for all students and engage representatives of all school stakeholder groups through visionary collaboration; funded through three-year federal grant from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) School Leadership Development Program³

What makes PEP unique?

- PEP selected by WestEd as one of six case study sites (from nearly 60 leadership initiatives nationally) for its promising practices in leadership development, specifically
 - Unique vision to change the principalship
 - Work to establish support for schools and districts in rural Appalachia
 - Innovative integration of theory and practice
- PEP featured in *Innovative Pathways to School Leadership* (www.ed.gov/admins/recruit/prep/alternative/index.html) and e-Lead (www.e-Lead.org/programs/pep/media.asp)

What two aspects of PEP are most effective?

- Participants were administrator-certified practitioners (administrators and teachers) who worked together for an entire calendar year and explored real problems of practice by conducting comprehensive action research with mentor principals in multiple school settings
- Learning cohorts provided environments that supported professional networking and relationship building, developed leadership confidence and competence, and stimulated “thinking outside the building” and moving “beyond limited experiences”

For additional information:

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¹ Waters, J. T., Marzano, R. J., & McNulty, B. A. (2003). *Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement*. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

² Hessel, K., & Holloway, J. (2002). *A framework for school leaders: Linking the ISLLC Standards to practice*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

³ Grant proposal collaboratively developed by T. Browne-Ferrigno, K. Gurley, B. C. Fusarelli, & J. C. Lindle (June 2002)