



# Leading for Learning



**LEADING FOR LEARNING**  
BUILDING STRONG SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

**"We just won't get to quality instruction in every classroom, every day without high quality school and district leadership. Show me a school where all students are achieving and I'll show you a strong school leader."**

**Krista Parent, superintendent of  
South Lane School District.  
Distinguished Leaders Council Chair**

# Effective leaders help ensure every student succeeds

Never before has the demand for school leadership been so high, with the recognition that so much is at stake for Oregon students. Among all school-related factors, leaders are second only to teachers in their impact on student learning. School leadership is identified as the most significant factor in a teacher's decision to keep teaching at their school (TELL Oregon, 2014).

Today's school leaders are required to make a dramatic shift away from building management and towards instructional leadership. But much of the training and professional development school leaders receive has remained the same and has not shifted to reflect this new reality. Many districts do not have the structures and resources in place to develop existing school leaders into instructional leaders.

Ensuring every student has access to a high-quality education is our most urgent imperative. Closing achievement and opportunity gaps among our most disadvantaged students is Oregon's greatest challenge and moral imperative, and school leaders must deliver on this promise.

## Four guiding beliefs

Members of the Distinguished Leaders Council, convened by Chalkboard Project, developed recommendations to address gaps in school leader preparation programs and how to support current school leaders to strengthen their practice. The recommendations are based on four guiding beliefs.

**A shared commitment to equity.** Every student can learn. Oregon is enriched by diversity in race, ethnicity, and language, and we need highly effective school leaders who have a sense of urgency for closing persistent achievement gaps among disadvantaged students.

**Instructional leadership is a priority.** Preparation and training in instructional leadership must be directly aligned with an explicit commitment to closing opportunity and achievement gaps, and directly measured by subsequent student outcomes.

**Practical application must be leveraged.** An extended residency must be the cornerstone of new leaders training complemented by sustained mentorship.

**A relentless commitment to results.** All school leader preparation programs should be publicly measured for admissions, equity and diversity, completion, placement, retention, ongoing support, and effectiveness of program graduates as determined by student outcomes.

If we strengthen competencies of leaders to transform districts and schools, they will have the capacity to take bold and purposeful action.

If leaders take bold and purposeful action, they will establish conditions for effective teaching and learning.

If conditions for effective teaching and learning are established, teachers will have opportunity to improve instructional practice.

If teachers improve instructional practice, student learning will increase.

# Two leadership training programs

## Current leaders

Building central office capacity to better support principals and schools.

School and district leaders are responsible for ensuring teachers have the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to improve instruction. This requires a system of supports that starts at the district central office. Without it, school improvements often fail to take hold or spread to other schools. Supporting instructional leadership in the central office will educate and empower school principals to practice leadership behaviors that drive student achievement and support teachers.

To strengthen Oregon school leadership and spread excellence to every school and every district will require a shared vision and necessary conditions for success.

Leading for Learning for current central office leaders offers an 18-month program that provides multilayered support to assess school needs, design effective turnaround strategies, and successfully implement effective strategies that lead to improved student learning. These central office leaders will form a learning community that will be sustained over time. Through this learning community, they will:

1. Develop a clear understanding of instructional leadership and supports necessary to improve.
2. Understand and be able to create the structures and routines necessary to improve the performance of principals as instructional leaders.
3. Develop the skills necessary to use teaching and coaching as a primary lever for improving principal performance.
4. Develop the routines and structures of successful learning communities to support their work together.

Training will be provided by the Center for Educational Leadership, from the University of Washington, Seattle. The first cohort will begin the program in January 2015 and continue through July 2016.

### Distinguished Leaders Council Members

Bill Rhoades  
Superintendent

Bob King  
Principal

Carlos Sequeira  
District Collaboration  
Director

Cheryl Brown  
Education Leadership  
Specialist

Colt Gill  
Superintendent

Dan Jamison  
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Advisor

Ericka Guynes  
Principal

Erin Prince  
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Iton Udosenata  
Principal

Jay Mathisen  
Assistant Superintendent

Krista Parent  
Superintendent

Kathleen Sundell  
Association President

Matt Coleman  
Assistant Superintendent

Sally Storm  
Superintendent

Susie Osborn  
Principal

Tracie Renwick  
Principal

The Center for Educational Leadership (CEL), founded in 2001 as a nonprofit service arm of the University of Washington College of Education, is dedicated to eliminating the achievement gap that continues to divide our nation's children along the lines of race, class, language, and disability. CEL works side by side with teachers, principals, and school system leaders to build the expertise to deliver great classroom instruction around a unified vision of outstanding teaching. All of CEL's research-based methods are rooted in the belief that every child can succeed at the highest level. [www.k-12leadership.org](http://www.k-12leadership.org).



In four years, Learning for Leading will prepare at least 200 central office leaders who will be well positioned to support and elevate instructional leadership, and scale improvement efforts at every school and every district in the state.

## Aspiring leaders

Providing future school leaders with relevant and meaningful coursework and training that reflect the challenges they will face on the job.

Leaders cannot lead what they do not know. Aspiring leaders need to be prepared for the challenges they will encounter once they step into a school leadership role. Preparation programs must ensure coursework moves beyond teaching managerial duties and emphasizes the importance of instructional leadership to improve student achievement.

Leading for Learning is currently designing its program for aspiring leaders. Key to our success will be the ability to:

- Partner with one or two private or public nationally accredited institutions, or professional organizations that have a statewide reach, and demonstrate an explicit commitment to redesign leader preparation, a commitment to instructional leadership, and the courage to implement quickly.
- Recruit 30 highly qualified and diverse aspiring leaders per year for four years, as administrative licensure candidates, and who have successfully engaged in career pathways and are committed to equity and closing achievement gaps.
- Deliver academic course work, concurrent with residency, which will lead to completion of the initial administrator license. The coursework will emphasize **equity**, instructional leadership, adaptive leadership, and emotional intelligence. It will also prioritize alignment and emphasis on student achievement outcomes.
- Offer aspiring leader candidates and participating districts a guaranteed residency supported with up to a .5 FTE for one academic year to enable candidates to work alongside highly effective school leaders.

In four years, Leading for Learning will help prepare 120 highly effective new school leaders placed by the 2018-19 school year, ready to address the challenges in schools and be better situated to have an immediate impact on student achievement.

## Funding

Foundations for a Better Oregon/Chalkboard Project is investing nearly \$500,000 to jumpstart Leading for Learning by covering the cost of design and training for the first cohort of central office leaders, and by designing the program for aspiring leaders. Full implementation of both programs will require additional state funding.



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