



“Principals are responsible for over 25% of school effects on student learning and also impact the hiring, training, and retention of teachers—who account for 33% of the effects.”¹

Overview

The Minnesota Principals Academy, the University of Minnesota’s executive development program for school leaders focuses on creating schools where all students graduate ready for college or careers. The program, partially funded through a legislatively allocated grant from the Minnesota Department of Education, uses proven curriculum from the National Institute of School Leadership as its foundation, and is tailored to meet the needs of Minnesota leaders through the direct involvement of U of M faculty and practitioner facilitators.

Participants

Over 570 principals and school leaders have participated the academy since 2006. The current Fergus Falls, Brainerd, and Twin Cities’ cohorts serve 111 leaders from 85 schools that represent 40 districts, 13 charter schools, 2 service cooperatives and 3 MDE staff.

Regional Approach

For the first time we partnered with the Lakes Country Service Cooperative and Sourcewell to provide the Academy in greater Minnesota to intentionally build local capacity for sustainability. Staff from the Co-ops and an MDE Regional Center of Excellence participated in the program learning alongside their region’s principals in order to provide coaching assistance during the program and leadership for continued regional collaboration beyond the Academy.

In addition to the Regional Cohort, one cohort runs in the Twin Cities.

Cost and Funding

The cost of the Minnesota Principals Academy is \$7000/participant. Half of that cost is covered for public school leaders through legislative funding (\$200,000/year) appropriated to MDE. As a result, the actual cost for participants is \$3500, or \$125/day. This funding allows for approximately 70 participants in two cohorts (1 Regional, 1 Twin Cities).

How to Apply

Individual applications for the Twin Cities Cohort are available online:

z.umn.edu/mnpa

Contact Dr. Katie Pekar, Program Director with additional questions:

kpekar@umn.edu

Outcomes

The Center for Applied Research conducts independent evaluation for the cohorts. Examples of participant perception and student outcomes data include...

- 95% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the content of the Academy was relevant, useful and supported learning objectives.
- 93% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that the facilitators were knowledgeable and able to answer questions deftly.
- 90% of participants strongly agreed or agreed that they see applicability of the content of each unit to their work as an educational leader.
- Over the time period studied, 54% of the participating schools experienced a positive change in the percentage of students achieving medium or high growth on the MCA reading test, and 22% of the schools experienced a positive change in the percentage of students achieving medium or high growth on the MCA math test.

1. Marzano, R.J.; Waters, T.; & McNulty, B. (2005) *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Academy Participant Testimonials

"The Principals Academy has provided me the most rigorous and relevant learning experience I've experienced as a principal. As a rural Minnesota principal who experiences regional limitations to professional development, our cohort has stretched my thinking and positively pushed my practice of leading—best professional growth in my career!"

—Andrea Rusk, Principal, Brainerd High School

"The Principal's Academy has been the best professional development program in which I have ever participated. The depth of knowledge of the facilitators and the director is unbelievable. More importantly, their knowledge is rooted in and scaffolded upon research-based practices in education. There is no doubt in my mind I am a better educator and administrator as a result of this academy."

—Robert Sahli, Assistant Principal Battle Creek Middle School, St. Paul Public Schools

"...it has been an invaluable experience learning and collaborating with leaders from across the state. Changing my paradigm to systems thinking and hearing best practices and challenges from other leaders has been instrumental to developing strategies to improve student outcomes."

—Dr. B. Charvez Russell, Executive Director Friendship Academy of the Arts, Charter School

"The Minnesota Principals Academy is the best professional development for principals—there is no equal. The time given and the depth of the learning creates a foundation to have a profound effect on education."

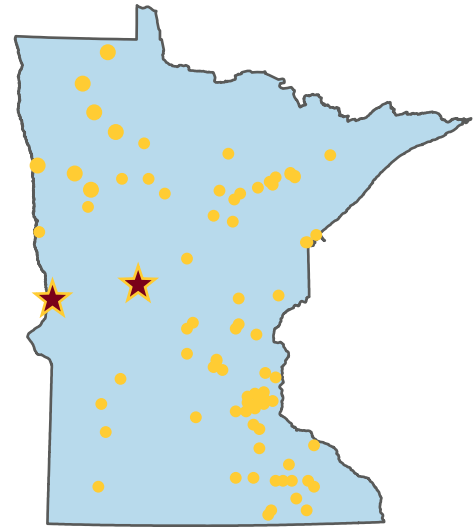
—John Regan, Principal, Motley-Staples Middle School

"The Minnesota Principals Academy is unique because it is geared towards ALL aspects of the work we do as principals. It gives us the time and space to learn, collaborate with colleagues, implement new learning at our buildings, and come back to reflect. No other professional development has the continuity that allows for the learning, implementation and the building of professional relationships like MPA does."

—Mona Perkins, Principal L.C. Webster Elementary School, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools

"The Minnesota Principals Academy has helped me build an outstanding network of educational leaders that I connect with any time I have a question, want to get feedback on a decision, or need to get an idea of what best practice looks like in other contexts. The content of the Academy and this network have helped me grow more than any other learning experience I have had in my ten years as a school administrator and in my work with principals, program directors and superintendents."

—Dr. Amy Young, EL Specialist, Minnesota Department of Education



Academy participants hail from across Minnesota