

# Principals' Center

Supporting Excellence in Leadership

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### The Connecticut Principals' Center

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## The Mission

The Connecticut Principals' Center was founded in 1999 by the Connecticut Association of Schools in collaboration with the Connecticut State Department of Education to meet the needs of practicing principals and support the development of aspiring principals.

### The Need

The common characteristic of high quality schools is high quality leadership. Such leadership is essential for children to learn and achieve academically and to contribute as citizens in socially-responsible ways. However, districts have experienced growing difficulty in finding quality leaders for the principalship as fewer candidates apply for this challenging position. The priority of the Principals' Center must be to attract, induct, and nurture potential school leaders.

Further, the Principals' Center must address the growing needs of experienced principals. Faced with more complex problems, greater demands, 60-80 hour work weeks, and increasing expectations, career principals require ongoing professional development and collegial support.

Although universities provide research and theory, practitioners at all stages of their career need a place to bring theory to practice, to share and develop their knowledge base, to hone their skills, and to reflect on their practice. And, as the definition of the principalship begins to change, educational leaders need a way to be part of the dialogue, to contribute to the research, and to experiment with new approaches.

### The Principals' Center Approach

In order to address these pressing issues, the Principals' Center has formed an advisory board with four subcommittees that have designed several workshops and are planning three major institutes for this summer and fall. The advisory board is comprised of representative administrators from elementary, middle, and secondary schools from throughout Connecticut, and is also served by consultants from higher education, education-related groups, and educational associations.

## Principals' Center: The Focus

The Connecticut Principals' Center is committed to support the leaders of Connecticut's schools by focusing its programming on four areas.

- Developing and implementing quality principal aspirant programs.
- Developing and implementing quality induction/mentor programs for new principals.
- Providing quality professional development opportunities for career principals.
- Advancing the understanding of issues critical to the role of principals.

# ASPIRANT PROGRAMS

Aspirant programs in Connecticut take varied forms according to a survey conducted by Cindy Kostas for the Principals' Center in December. Superintendents were asked to respond to three items.

1. Do they have their own aspirant program?
2. Do they participate in a consortia/RESC aspirant program?
3. Would they like to participate in an aspirant program?

## The Results from 68 (41%) Superintendents

- There are 152 participants from 23 districts in aspirant programs; 17 of the 23 participate in a consortia.
- Thirty-six said they have their own aspirant program or participate in a consortia.
- Thirty-nine would be interested in participating in an aspirant program; 14 would not. Six of the 14 already have an established program or participate in a consortia; 6 indicate no interest from their staff. Fifteen did not respond to this question.

Most of the participants in the aspirant programs are not currently certified and not all participants are committed to finding administrative jobs. Most of the superintendents who replied indicated that the greatest need would be for principals. In light of the report by the Committee on the Future of School Leadership in Connecticut, it is clear that Connecticut and the nation face a shortage of high quality leaders unless we encourage outstanding candidates to pursue both training and a career as educational leaders.

What's the good news? According to this report, the administrator aspirant programs throughout the state include most of the components that research indicates are essential to a quality program. Therefore, we can encourage future leaders to consider the principalship because excellent resources are already in place for them. With this in mind, the Principals' Center hopes to serve as an information broker for the various programs in the state. From development of the **Principals' Center Clearinghouse for Aspirant Programs**, potential candidates will have a way to investigate a wide range of programs that best fit their needs.

## By Invitation Only

What is it like to receive a personal invitation to an event that is looking for people like you? Many educators are about to have that experience as the Principals' Center sponsors **Getting Ready to be Ready**, a two-day conference designed exclusively for potential educational leaders in Connecticut schools. In the coming month, superintendents will be asked to nominate educators from within their districts who exemplify leadership potential to attend the two-day conference to be held at the Heritage Conference Center in Southbury, November 1-2, 2001. Candidates may

## Of Reading Interest

The Winter 2001 issue of the JSD, the Journal of Staff Development, focused on the theme of "The Principal." From articles on what it takes to be an effective instructional leader to ones on innovative preparation and support programs, the issue is timely and thought-provoking. You can contact the National Staff Development Council, [www.nsd.org](http://www.nsd.org), for further information.

already hold an administrators certificate but not be using it. They may be working within an aspirant program, or they may be new leadership talent not yet out of the classroom.

### **The Goal**

The conference will focus on the powerful as well as promising role of the principal, the rewards of the position, and the many ways in which aspirants can pursue administrative certification. Designed and facilitated by practicing administrators, this program will both inspire and guide prospective leaders as well as provide ongoing support with follow-up programs and networking opportunities. Whether an individual is new to the idea of the principalship or already certified, the goal is for each to look at the principalship with new eyes and new skills.

### **Support the Invitation**

It is no secret that the nation, and Connecticut, is facing a shortage of qualified administrators. Why not look more closely at your faculty to identify potential candidates? **Your action may be all it takes to tap the future.** ■

## Three-Day Program for Career Principals

**Reflective Leadership: Leading from the Inside Out**, a retreat for experienced educational leaders, to be held July 17-19, 2001 at the Heritage Conference Center in Southbury, will focus on leadership issues.

### Goals

Career principals are ready to probe the issues that truly affect learning and school success and to address the multiple demands and expectations that impact their leadership. This retreat sets the stage for reflection and renewal to help leaders find balance and effectiveness amid the conflicting and confounding demands of their work.

**Outcomes: each participant will be able to**

1. Define the personal and professional attachments they have and learn how they relate to their role as leader.
2. Define the intangible forces at work in relationships that affect planning, leadership, and commitment.
3. Define the characteristics of the different types of discourse in an organization.
4. Create a network that will be able to assist them in their work.
5. Define the personal sides of being a leader and connect them with what leaders do.

### Varied Experiences

During this program, you will experience:

- National speakers
- Experiential dialogue groups for collective thinking
- Individual reflection time
- Issue walk-about
- Readings and resources
- Books of readings
- Internet connections

### Who Should Attend?

- Individual Principals
- Building Teams of Principals and Assistant Principals
- District Teams with the Superintendent and Building-Level Administrators

Administrators from all levels will find this retreat stimulating. Plan to come with a team and watch the effects grow exponentially.

March 14  
Mentor/Mentee Meeting  
Hawthorne Inn  
Howard Johnson  
on  
School Climate

May 2  
Mentor/Mentee Meeting  
Hawthorne Inn  
Practical Problems  
and  
Best Practices

## Two-Day Gathering for Mentor/Mentees

**Continuing the Connection**, a two-day program for the participants in the Mentor/Mentee Program, will be held June 26-27, 2001 at the Heritage Conference Center in Southbury.

### Toward Leadership

The formal and informal sessions between mentors and mentees have dealt with management skills and the day-to-day operations connected with an administrative position. This retreat will refocus new principals toward leadership skills that address instructional issues, curriculum issues, and school change. This program is an opportunity to move beyond management skills toward new leadership abilities. ■

## STAY ON MESSAGE!

Ann Baldwin and Diane Alverio of Media Marketing focused on the importance of a school's message in dealing with the media in a crisis at the February 7 Mentor/Mentee meeting. Through detailed hand-outs, many real and realistic examples, conversation, and role play, they offered a wealth of information. Among the most important points to know in a crisis situation:

1. Have a communications team in place ahead of time.
2. Identify the message.
3. Have a plan to deliver and stay on message.

We are now interested in learning about the ways organizations self-renew.

—Margaret Wheatley  
*Leadership and the New Science*

## Watch for Details

- Aspiring Principals Conference  
November 1-2
- Career Principals Retreat  
July 17 - 19
- Mentor/Mentee Program  
June 26 - 27

■  
**Location**  
Heritage  
Conference Center,  
Southbury, CT

## The Connecticut Principals' Center Spring Programs

Each program is limited in enrollment with closing dates. Please check our web site for details, [www.casciac.org](http://www.casciac.org).

- **LEGAL UPDATE: HOT ISSUES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**  
March 5 and March 12, 3:30-6:30 p.m.
- **HOME, SCHOOL and COMMUNITY RELATIONS**, March 7  
Trumbull, 9am-12pm; Cheshire, 3 - 6 p.m.
- **THE BALANCING ACT: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE PRINCIPAL**, March 21 and 22, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- **MANAGING PERSISTENT MISBEHAVIOR**, April 4  
Trumbull, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.; Cheshire, 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.
- **TEACHER EVALUATION SERIES FOR ADMINISTRATORS** is fully enrolled. Watch for repeat series in the Fall.
- Coming Soon - **PRINCIPALS' CONVERSATIONS**

## For thoughtful reading

The February issue of *Phi Delta Kappan* offers another look at the challenges of administration.

There are separate articles devoted to the changing job roles of superintendents, secondary and elementary principals, as well as an insightful article on teacher leaders.

# FYI



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Serving the Needs of

- Aspiring Principals
- Career Principals
- New Principals  
with
- ~ Professional Development
  - ~ Conferences
  - ~ On-site Programs
    - ~ Mentoring
    - ~ Consulting
  - ~ Discussions of Critical Issues

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# Principal's Center Newsletter

C.A.S.  
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