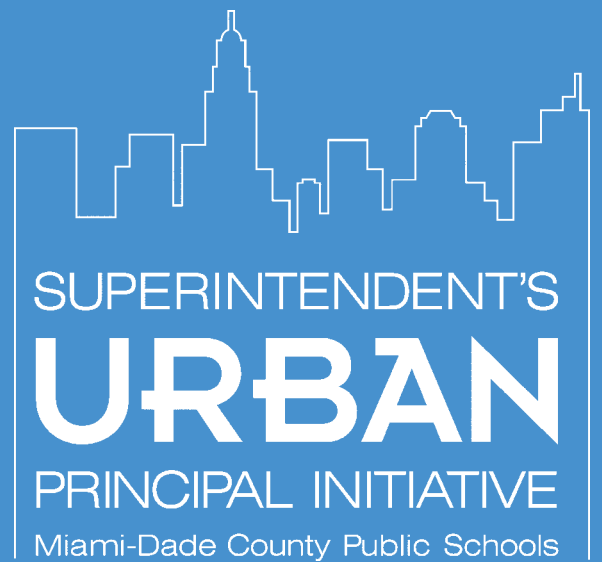


DEVELOPING LEADERS of the **FUTURE**



Inception, Strategy and Implementation in
Miami-Dade County Public Schools
2004-2008

ORIGINS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S URBAN PRINCIPAL INITIATIVE:

Analyzing the Need, Formulating a Response

ANALYZING THE NEED

In 2003, reflecting a national trend, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) faced a critical shortage of qualified principals to lead its public schools. This shortage was especially acute at the secondary level and in schools identified as high-need. The urgency of the problem was also affected by the district's size. As the nation's fourth-largest school district, serving more than 360,000 students in a 2,000-square-mile geographic region, M-DCPS required hundreds of administrators to lead its schools.

"I'm asking you to take a risk, to push against conventional trend lines and to create pathways to building knowledge."

*Superintendent Rudolph Crew,
Miami-Dade County Public Schools*

A host of factors caused the growing shortfall of principals (see "The Principal Problem," opposite). The demographics of the county meant principals also needed to develop leadership expertise that could address the particular needs of children affected by living in poverty. In fact, not only was Miami-Dade County's poverty rate significantly higher than the national rate, but the city of Miami itself -- home of many of the high-need schools -- was ranked second in the nation in terms of number of

children in poverty. In addition, with more than 50 percent of the county's population foreign-born and 68 percent speaking a language other than English at home, students' limited English proficiency created another challenge. Leading schools in M-DCPS was an increasingly complex job requiring leaders capable of ensuring success in an urban environment.

Clearly, a plan was needed -- an innovative leadership model that would support both the development and retention of highly skilled principals capable of leading the hardest-to-staff, lowest-performing schools.

FORMULATING A RESPONSE

Under the direction of M-DCPS Superintendent Dr. Rudy Crew, the visionary Superintendent's Urban Principal Initiative (SUPI) was launched during the 2004-2005 school year in response to this growing gap in leadership.

SUPI began as a pilot program with one strand of school leadership -- assistant principals. The goals of the pilot program were two-fold: to identify high-potential urban school leaders, and to inspire and prepare them for future roles as principals in M-DCPS' highest-need secondary schools.



A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

As the fourth-largest school district in the country, Miami-Dade County Public Schools is committed to supporting students, teachers, educators, and parents with strategic programs, training and other relevant resources to make each school year more successful than the last.

A major part of that effort now includes the Superintendent's Urban Principal Initiative (SUPI), which in a few short years has become a cornerstone of our mission to build a world-class system for urban school leadership development.

Knowing that effective principals are the key to raising student achievement -- and yet facing a critical shortage of these valuable professionals -- makes it all the more critical that SUPI continues well beyond its initial four-year projection.

We must continue to focus on transforming Miami-Dade's high-need schools into high-achieving schools, so that all students in the county have access to educational excellence.

As we succeed in this mission, we in turn ensure lifelong success for our students.

*Rudolph F. Crew, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Miami-Dade County Public Schools*

To help fund and assist in implementing the pilot, the District tapped The Education Fund, a non-profit organization with a mission to design and implement initiatives that involve the private sector in improving Miami-Dade County schools and bringing excellence to public education.

Concurrently, the Wachovia Foundation invited The Education Fund to apply for a grant from its Teachers and Teaching Initiative. Together the District and The Education Fund participated in extensive design meetings involving region superintendents, principals and other school and District leaders. As a result, the Wachovia Foundation awarded a seed grant of almost \$1/4 million for the pilot.

Following the initial success of the pilot, the District convened a team to expand SUPI from an effort aimed solely at assistant principals to one focused on developing and retaining leadership teams at each targeted school. Additional partners with particular expertise were asked to participate in designing the “new” SUPI. The Miami Museum of Science was recruited for its experience in building FloridaLeaders.net, a Gates Foundation-funded initiative that used retired administrators to coach educational leaders, as well as for its extensive work in training school staffs in increasing science achievement. The Council for Educational Change, originally funded as an Annenberg model, was asked to participate for its unique online leadership assessment tool and online learning modules.

In 2005 the partners’ efforts earned the District a multi-year, multi-million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education for SUPI. The pilot’s success also led The Education Fund to receive significant multi-year funding from Wachovia Foundation to support the expanded effort.

Today, SUPI is a successful three-year leadership development model involving 13 school teams each year, with each team consisting of a principal, an assistant principal and a teacher leader. Now one of the nation's most multi-faceted, comprehensive leadership training programs, SUPI is already realizing its goals of increasing the number of applicants for high-need secondary schools, reducing the turnover rate, and improving job satisfaction for those already working in high-need schools. Through online leadership assessment and training modules, professional development programs led by nationally recognized experts, training in the use of Action Research, coaching by retired administrators, sharing sessions, a nine-week internship, principal and assistant principal participation in the Harvard Institute and more, SUPI is preparing, developing and supporting school leaders to meet the challenges of school improvement in the District's urban core. The research is overwhelmingly clear in proving the link between school leadership and school success. (Casavant & Cherkowski, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1991). Thus, while SUPI is helping participants achieve their full potential as educators and leaders, the students whose lives they impact are the ultimate beneficiaries of the program.

THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM

NATIONALLY:

Retirement and attrition are outpacing new arrivals. A 2002 survey of members of the National Association of Elementary School Principals indicated that 60% of principals would retire within 10 years, while the Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates the number of available jobs in school administration will grow by 10-20% during the same time period.

Fewer people are becoming teachers; and of those who do, fewer are moving to positions in school administration due to both the increased demands associated with being a principal and salaries that are not commensurate with the expectations of the job (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2002).

Recent studies indicate that the role of the principal has changed dramatically. For example, Casavant and Cherkowski (2001) noted that “legislation and educational reforms have affected structures and processes within schools and school systems... and parents and teachers also come to the principal with increasingly high expectations and complex problems, compounding an already difficult situation” (p. 71). Such changes have negatively impacted a sense of efficacy among school leaders, heightening their feelings of isolation and insecurity.

IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY:

Due in large part to the pressures of principalship, primary and secondary public schools faced too-frequent leadership changes. From 2002-2005, there were 191 changes among the county’s 1,053 school site administrators (351 principals and 702 assistant principals), with more than 50% at the secondary school level.

There were fewer people applying for positions with M-DCPS, especially in high-need areas. Reflecting the national trend, the number of applicants for principal positions was steadily decreasing.

Retirement beckons. Florida’s Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) allows individuals to retire without terminating employment for up to five years while retirement benefits accumulate and earn interest. Projections indicate that during the next several years, more than 18% of current principals will retire from the system.

ACTION RESEARCH

Action Research was incorporated into the SUPI model following years of practice by The Education Fund. Developing SUPI in its pilot year, The Education Fund found that Action Research helped participants immediately focus on improving student achievement and provided training in an essential data-driven process. As SUPI expanded to a team-based model, Action Research had the added benefit of giving each team a common goal. SUPI program evaluator Barry Greenberg, Ph.D., who presented a summative assessment following the 2005-2006 SUPI year, stated, “it was clear that this activity was very highly regarded by participants and an experience they intend to continue to employ as administrative leaders in their schools.”

“Through Action Research, administrators begin to see that teachers are the most valuable and underutilized resource in the school. By empowering them through the processes integral to action research and engaging them in collaborative inquiry, you’re really utilizing your best resource.”

*Dr. Jill Beloff Farrell,
Director of Graduate Curriculum and Instruction Programs,
Barry University;
Consultant to The Education Fund, Action Research Initiatives*

Through Action Research, SUPI participants develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to improve teaching and learning. While immersed in the on-going systematic inquiry required of action researchers, participants learn to challenge existing notions about what they know regarding their students, what works and what doesn’t work in their classrooms, and how to help make their schools true communities of learning.

With “action” as the operative concept, research is put into motion as educators learn by experience which approach is most effective in any given situation. In other words, instead of analyzing issues as mere abstractions, researchers are actively and intimately involved with the topic for which the research is being conducted.

More than anything, Action Research involves distilling the myriad questions SUPI teams may have – How can we guide and motivate students? How effective are school policies? Would weekly roundtable sessions benefit our teachers? – into one encompassing, researchable question that can be analyzed and quantified with data collected by methods ranging

from observation and student work to interviews and surveys. Results are then collected and policy recommendations formulated.

EXAMPLES OF ACTION RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY SUPI TEAMS:

QUESTION

Will implementing a professional development plan focused on increasing student writing scores, as measured by state standards, improve students’ persuasive writing scores?

ANALYSIS

Results indicated that if followed by all teachers as a function of a professional learning community, implementation of the Four Square Writing Method would improve persuasive writing scores.

QUESTION

Will the use of Cognitive Tutor decrease the failure rate of high school students enrolled in Algebra 1?

ANALYSIS

At this school – where more than 60% of ninth graders were repeating Algebra 1 – students were scheduled into Carnegie Learning’s Cognitive Tutor, which included a weekly computer component, for the last nine weeks of school. Results showed a positive increase in student attitudes toward the subject and teachers reported greater student interest in the subject, along with added motivation to stay on task.





QUESTION

How do we improve student success in reading among a target group of 200 ninth- and tenth-grade students who were reading in the lowest 25th percentile?

ANALYSIS

Students were provided with individual intervention through pull-out sessions, motivational sessions and small group pep talks. As a result, 56% of the tenth graders made learning gains while 68% of the ninth graders made learning gains.

QUESTION

Will including ninth-grade students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms be beneficial or detrimental?

ANALYSIS

Following extensive research, it was shown that when students and parents are made aware of the higher expectations inherent in a regular, general education classroom, the students with disabilities benefited both academically and socially by being included.

QUESTION

How will team teaching, writing across the curriculum and an intensive 8th period writing curriculum improve writing scores?

ANALYSIS

Study data indicated that based on the results of the FCAT writing test, students did not show improvement in their writing performance, though the expository component of their writing scores did increase.

QUESTION

Does inclusion promote academic achievement among 6th grade special education students in an urban school?

ANALYSIS

At this middle school, findings revealed that students can learn in an inclusive setting with adequate support and structure.

QUESTION

Will small learning communities help ninth graders transition successfully to the “high school years?”

ANALYSIS

Small Learning Communities designed to assist and personalize the transition were implemented; as a result, not only did ninth-grade FCAT scores increase, but the number of ninth-grade students school-wide who successfully passed Algebra 1 increased by 40%.

QUESTION

Why were students at one middle school performing at lower achievement levels than students at schools with similar demographics?

ANALYSIS

After collecting and analyzing data through interviews and surveys, the SUPI team determined that a major difference between that middle school and the other schools was a lack of parental support and student accountability. Determining the source of the issue became the first step in overcoming it.

QUESTION

Can attendance and parental involvement be increased among a group of 21 senior high students with academic problems?

ANALYSIS

Through the efforts of a professional team comprised of school social workers, counselors, occupational and career specialists, and school administrators, student achievement and parental involvement were positively impacted.

THE STEPS TO ACTION RESEARCH

- 1

The SUPI leadership team formulates a list of school challenges, expressed as questions; e.g., what is the impact of a study skills program on student achievement?
- 2

Groups formalize their research questions, choose instructional interventions, design and implement their studies, using such data-collecting tools as interviews, student work logs, surveys and assessment data.
- 3

Groups analyze the data collected, reach conclusions, formulate policy recommendations, and determine future action steps.

LOOKING FOR LEADERS: The Accelerated School Administrator Preparation Program (ASAP) and the Educational Leadership Assessment (ELA)



Preparing qualified educators to take on leadership roles within high-need secondary public schools is SUPI's primary goal, and the Accelerated School Administrator Preparation Program (ASAP), which includes the Educational Leadership Assessment (ELA), helps make that goal a reality.

Administered at the start of the SUPI training year through one of SUPI's partners, the Council for Educational Change, the ELA is an online leadership assessment tool that helps identify and guide the development of effective principals, assistant principals and school leaders.

Designed to quickly evaluate leadership potential by identifying strengths and development needs of prospective and current school principals, the ELA uses a set of multiple-choice tests based on 10 dimensions of educational leadership. The tests help determine whether participants have the knowledge and experience to both undertake the practice of leadership and use their background and theoretical knowledge to make clear and appropriate decisions.

All three members of the school cohort – principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders – take the ELA and are evaluated based on a percentage of items answered correctly. A score of 70% or above on each area of professional learning is considered an “area of strength,” while scores below 70% are considered “areas for growth.”

Should a SUPI participant score below 70% on any given test, he or she then proceeds to an ASAP post-test module, where instruction topics range from communication and human resource development to technology competency and ethical leadership. At this stage, participants are strongly encouraged to work with fellow team members using the same modules, supporting the SUPI principle of group interaction and collaboration.

ASAP “e-learning” modules are closely aligned with the Florida Principal Leadership Standards and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, addressing issues that are critical to instructional leaders and providing them with targeted content, language and research references.

In addition to testing and modules, the ASAP program includes an electronic portfolio that SUPI participants maintain throughout their internship, containing items such as ELA results, online module assignments, their Action Research project, and their personal reflections about professional development activities they experienced. Selected portfolio components are shared with other participants at the conclusion of the SUPI training year. SUPI participants not only benefit from extensive online training, but welcome the opportunity to come off-line and gain further knowledge and insight from regularly scheduled seminars, lectures and other programs featuring authorities in education who have attained national and international recognition in their respective fields.

PORTFOLIOS

Each SUPI participant maintains an electronic portfolio containing the following:

- Résumé
- Results of ELA Assessment
- Assigned Online Modules
- Action Research Project
- Reflections on Professional Development Activities
- Job Embedded Reflective Summary
- Professional Readings Summary
- Evidence of Mastery of the 10 Florida Principal Leadership Standards

ASAP MODULES

ASAP “e-learning” provides high-level, online, interactive modules that support the professional development of SUPI participants within the 10 ASAP dimensions:

SHARED VISION

Provides practical strategies to assist school leaders in creating a learning community that will shape a school’s shared vision, facilitate committees, and establish a climate that enhances student achievement.

COMMUNICATION

Provides fundamental information, vital strategies and opportunities to practice effective communication; addresses communication through writing, public speaking, nonverbal modes in-crisis situations.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Offers a guide to various independent and collaborative strategies and activities that promote effective instructional leadership; focuses on the vital importance of organizational skills; introduces educators to the best practices in both mathematics education and literacy instruction for grades K-6 and 7-12.

DECISION-MAKING STRATEGIES

Provides strategies and practice for effective decision-making in a variety of everyday and crisis situations; assists new principals in being fully prepared for their leadership role.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Examines the managerial aspects of leadership; focuses on understanding the importance of leading human resource development; describes the skills needed for team building to make a difference at the school site.

LEARNING, ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT

Provides practical strategies for shaping a collaborative school culture; focuses on building classroom community and effective classroom management; defines and clarifies various types of student achievement data and introduces how data is gathered and organized effectively; offers instruction on how to teach using the various types of data.

TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCY

Focuses on Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in the context of an education program delivery.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

Highlights ways to guide parent involvement; provides practical systems for developing and sustaining meaningful community and school partnerships.

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Focuses on the behaviors and attitudes that define ethical leadership and helps learners identify the ethical ideal.

DIVERSITY

Prepares educators to be aware of the breadth and depth of diversity represented in the school system.



VISITING EXPERTS ENHANCE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SUPI participants benefit from the opportunity to engage in discussions with a group of national experts who are able to address critical issues facing urban education leaders. Each expert is chosen for his or her unique place in the field of education. Following are just a few of the distinguished professionals who have shared their knowledge and experience with SUPI participants.

DR. PEDRO NOGUERA

One of America's leading urban sociologists and recognized as a vital voice on education reform and diversity, Noguera is a professor at the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University, a co-director of the Institute for the Study of Globalization and Education in Metropolitan Settings, and the director of the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education.

DR. JERRY PATTERSON

Currently on the faculty in Educational Leadership at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Jerry Patterson has served as a superintendent, assistant superintendent, elementary school principal and high school teacher during more than 30 years of experience as an educator. Additionally, he has authored five nationally recognized books and conducts frequent workshops and presentations throughout the U.S. in the areas of leadership, resilience and organizational change.

IRMA TYLER-WOOD

The managing partner and founding member of ThoughtBridge – a leadership development company based in Indianapolis – Irma Tyler-Wood has served as the assistant director of the Conflict Clinic at the Harvard Negotiation Project. In addition to consulting

with corporate, government and other public-sector clients, Tyler-Wood has done extensive work in training and advising educators in universities and public school systems.

DR. KAY LOVELACE TAYLOR

Author of *Through Their Eyes: A Strategic Response to the National Achievement Gap*, Kay Lovelace Taylor has an extensive background as an educator and administrator in public education. She also served as an associate professor for educational leadership and policy studies for the College of Education at Temple University in Philadelphia. Lovelace Taylor is president of Scottsdale-based KLT & Associates, a professional services firm specializing in "Education for the New Millennium."

DR. ROLAND BARTH

A well-known consultant to schools, universities, state departments of education, foundations and businesses in the U.S. and abroad, Roland Barth is a former public school teacher and principal. He also is founding director of the Principals' Center at Harvard University and the author of several books, including *Open Education and the American School*, *Improving Schools from Within* and *Learning by Heart*.

DR. SAMUEL BETANCES

One of the country's foremost communicators on the challenge of casting away barriers to success, Betances is an honored professor emeritus, a consultant to U.S. presidents, CEOs, managers, community groups, clergy members and educators. This workshop leader and lecturer is the vice president and senior consultant of Souder, Betances & Associates, a diversity training and consulting firm in Chicago.

"The SUPI initiative launched by Dr. Rudy Crew represents one of the most ambitious efforts I have seen to confront the challenges posed by chronically underperforming schools. By targeting such schools with intensive leadership development and support from the central office, Dr. Crew is showing that he is willing to give these schools the attention they deserve. Schools like those that are a part of SUPI typically suffer from chronic problems related to staff turnover, improperly implemented reforms, and a lack of coherence in the instructional plan. The SUPI initiative provides an opportunity to address these systemic weaknesses in a comprehensive and thoughtful manner."

*Pedro Noguera, Ph.D., Professor,
Steinhardt School of Education at New York University*

EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER: SUPI's Professional Partners

Mentoring can be a powerful tool for personal growth and professional development. Studies show that it helps retain the next generation of leaders by improving leadership and managerial skills while providing needed support, candid feedback and accelerated learning for the person being mentored (Lois J. Zachary, Ed.D., 2005).

Mentors in the SUPI program are known as Professional Partners, and all are recently retired Miami-Dade County Public Schools principals and administrators who have moved on to other phases in their education careers while serving as independent consultants for M-DCPS.

Professional Partners offer SUPI participants the kind of insight that can only be gained through decades of school management. Their successful track records in dealing with the same challenges faced by the participants makes them a one-of-a-kind resource for the SUPI program.

The Miami Museum of Science -- through its interactive professional network of school leaders, FloridaLeaders.net -- has taken on the challenge of recruiting and training these former school principals to serve as mentors and coaches to the entire SUPI team.



"What's great about SUPI is that, instead of losing school veterans, they're putting our knowledge and experience to work. It's really gratifying. One of my favorite things about the program is meeting with the other Professional Partners and sharing ideas."

*Guy Newland
Retired Principal
SUPI Professional Partner*

Monthly meetings are part of the Professional Partners' training process, where topics range from the roles and responsibilities of the mentor to giving constructive feedback to issues and concerns in the schools.

Professional Partners select the cohorts with which they will work at a Professional Partner meeting following the release of the list of participating schools. Selections are made based on the perceived needs of each school and the Professional Partners' respective skill sets.

An initial meeting is held to discuss roles and desired outcomes of the mentoring program. Thereafter, participants meet weekly with their professional partners to assess progress, resolve problems and determine the best courses of action.

The Professional Partners and the participants plan their work using each school's work plan. Among the topics are leadership, action research, budget, personnel, and the school improvement plan. As a result, issues that are of prime concern to the school teams are addressed in a timely fashion. The Professional Partners and their team members discuss other problems that arise, sharing their experiences in similar situations and assisting them in finding a course of action.

Professional Partners attend their own monthly training sessions that are rich with conversation about their work in the schools. Problems which arose in discussion with the school teams or as a result of their own observations are presented. The discussion flows with much give and take allowing the partners to share their own experiences in similar situations as the group works together to provide some solutions. The Professional Partners are passionate about their work in the schools and are determined to provide their best counsel.

COLLABORATION & OBSERVATION: Building support networks and learning to use technology to lead schools

MONTHLY SHARING SESSIONS & OTHER NETWORKING EVENTS

One of SUPI's goals is to foster collaboration and camaraderie among principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, providers of professional development and others contributing to the principal pipeline. From the kick-off event to the concluding celebration, the overriding principle guiding SUPI is one of teamwork and cooperation.

In a summative report of the 2005-2006 SUPI program, evaluator Dr. Barry Greenberg called attention to the value of the sharing sessions, quoting one participant as saying that the sessions "developed camaraderie among members; we still talk to one another and serve as resources to one another, and see each other on a regular basis."

Contributing to this objective are monthly sharing sessions, through which participants build networks of support among their peers. During these monthly sessions, participants review the various professional development components, while also reflecting on leadership experiences at their respective schools.

All of the participants meet together initially, then quickly divide into groups of teacher leaders, assistant principals and principals to focus on the specific challenges faced by each group. Participants always eagerly anticipate the opportunity to compare notes, share concerns and challenges, brainstorm solutions for fellow participants and offer feedback to the program team.

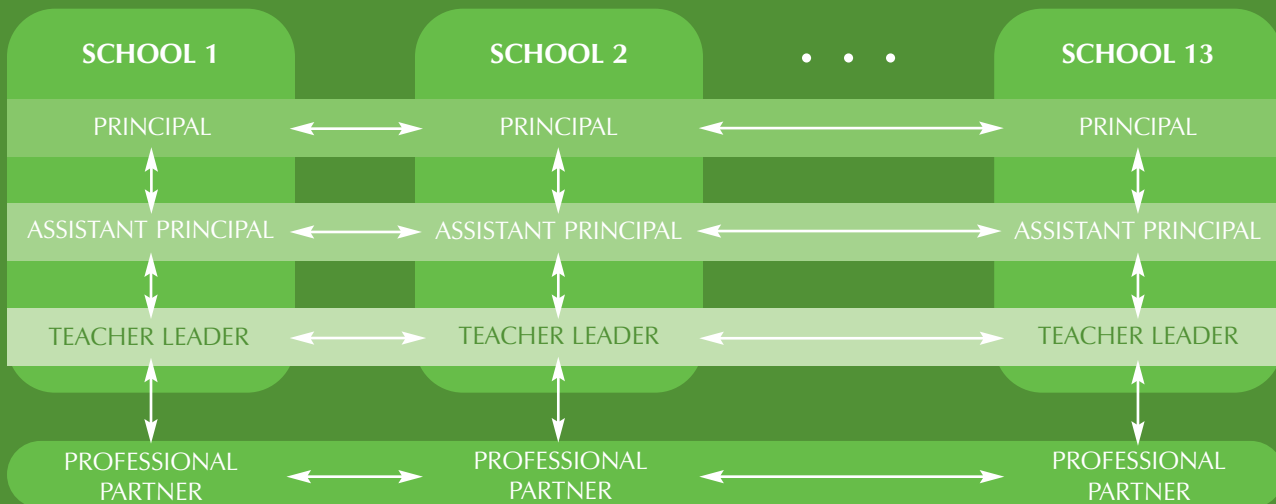
PD3

SUPI participants also benefit from a cutting-edge data collection system developed by the Miami Museum of Science in collaboration with SRI International. The "Professional Development Decisions based on Data" software (also known as PD3), which runs on the Palm TX, is given to the participants.

Designed to help school instructional leaders identify staff development needs in mathematics and science, PD3 is used to collect data from multiple classroom visits. Data is then transferred to a Web server application. The Web-based application provides access to further tools that allow the principal to analyze the aggregated data and apply it to the school improvement planning.

COLLABORATION

Throughout the year, collaboration occurs within schools and support networks are built across schools within peer groups.



NINE-WEEK INTERNSHIPS: Translating Knowledge, Theory and Testing into Practical Application

The SUPI program – nine months of training, research, testing modules, observation and portfolio keeping – culminates during an all-important nine weeks at the end of the school year.

That’s when the participants put into practice what they’ve been preparing for – taking over for existing principals and assistant principals in high-need secondary schools, assuming full responsibility for their roles and gaining hands-on experience in managing a school.

This changing of the guard occurs after months of professional training and interaction among the SUPI teacher leaders, assistant principals and their principals. This preparation makes it easier for them to take over the reins of their superiors for nine weeks.

The internship was hailed by the participants. “Nothing beats a hands-on experience, which provided me the opportunity to deal with day-to-day activities,” one assistant principal reported during the internship. “I have been given total autonomy to make decisions.”

In a post-internship interview, another assistant principal noted, “My interest is much greater in becoming a principal because of the exploration involved in the SUPI experience,” while another concurred, “I have a strong desire to become a principal now. SUPI has

enhanced my abilities and given me the tools to help me be successful.”

In fact, of all the SUPI participants interviewed following their internship, 75% indicated that the strong commitment they already had about attaining the position of principal hadn’t changed; while the other 25% said the experience had made them even more interested in the achieving that goal – or, as one respondent put it, “it has made me ‘hungrier’ for the position.”

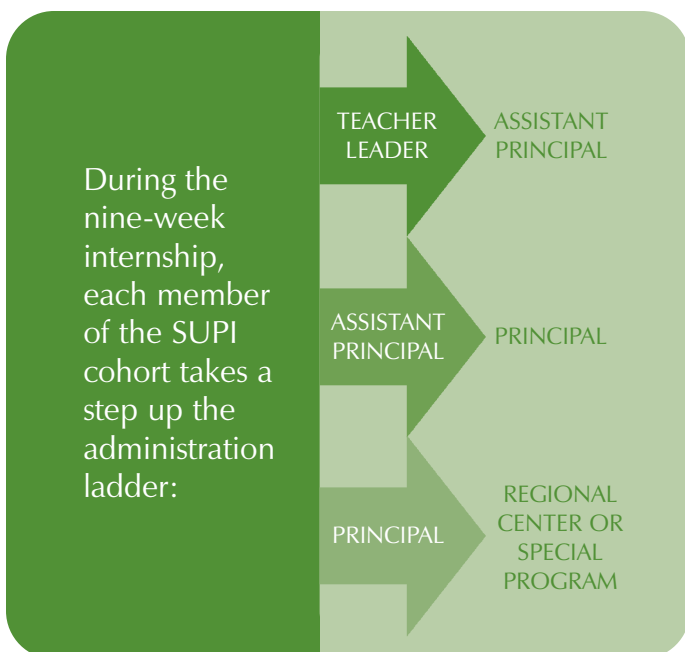
“The entire SUPI experience was excellent. As a result of participating in the SUPI program last year, I am now a principal at an urban school in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. I am so grateful to have been a part of that wonderful program!”

*Maria C. Garcia, Principal,
Thomas Jefferson Middle School*

Meanwhile, the principals of each team – already at the helm in their schools – enjoyed the experience of either serving at one of Miami-Dade County’s six Regional Centers or directing a special project.

Regional Centers, each of which covers a defined geographic area within the public school system, provide outreach and services to families whose children attend schools in that area. During the nine-week internship, SUPI principals gain insight into the opportunities for professional development that lie beyond single-school administration.

While the rewards of participating in SUPI may be immeasurable, there are career and financial remunerations as well. Successful completion of SUPI by teachers and assistant principals counts toward eligibility requirements for assistant principal and principal positions, respectively. Additionally, The Education Fund provides stipends of \$5,000 for SUPI assistant principals and \$3,000 for SUPI principals as an important incentive for successful program participation. The stipends not only compensate SUPI participants for the extra effort and hours required to complete Action Research projects and other activities, but they serve to honor the positions of urban secondary school assistant principal and principal, positions once considered to be the least attractive in the school district.



HARVARD WEEK: URBAN SCHOOL LEADERS CONVENE IN CAMBRIDGE

Capping their year of training, workshops and internships, the SUPI participants attend the week-long National Institute for Urban School Leaders at Harvard University's Principals' Center, in Cambridge, Mass. The District sponsors the principals' attendance, while assistant principals' participation is funded by The Education Fund through the Wachovia grant.

"I found the Harvard Summer Institute to be the best professional development program I have ever attended as an administrator. It was refreshing to share my views and ideas with educators from all over the country. I think that every administrator in an urban school setting should experience this program. The atmosphere at Harvard promotes the sharing of ideas, best practices and philosophy in a non-threatening setting."

*Manny Diaz, Jr., Assistant Principal,
Hialeah-Miami Lakes Senior High*

Designed specifically for school leaders working in large urban schools similar to Miami-Dade's, the Institute program examines successful practices from urban settings, explores strategies to promote high student achievement school-wide, and sets the expectation of such achievement.

Participants study schools in relation to the community, exploring race, culture, equity, special education and social justice in today's diverse urban classrooms. The program also focuses on strategies for improving teaching and learning, and how to engender commitment from the community to support the work of schools.

During their week at Harvard, the SUPI participants enjoy presentations by distinguished lecturers from a range of educational disciplines, along with discussion group break-out sessions, and time to meet and network with peers from around the world.

Part of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the Principals' Center is a membership organization dedicated to the personal and professional development of school principals, assistant principals, headmasters and other school leaders who influence the character and quality of a school. It is committed to school improvement from within, with programs and services

that enhance and develop perspectives on leadership, personal reflection and professional networking.

While the SUPI year finishes on a high note at Harvard, the overall summation of the nine-month program is a true cause for optimism. According to the program evaluation report prepared by Barry Greenberg, Ph.D., of the 13 members of the 2005-2006 cohort, seven are currently principals, with six of the seven in high-risk schools. In addition, all participants were observed fully committed to the program, and all appeared ready to make any sacrifice required for their full engagement in program components. As Greenberg put it, "there were no unsuccessful participants in the 2005-2006 program."

AT HARVARD'S NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR URBAN SCHOOL LEADERS, SUPI PARTICIPANTS:

- Learn how the politics of schools impact instructional leadership and change
- Consider the effects of race, class and culture on the learning community
- Learn about the importance of school, family and community partnerships in supporting the development of students
- Develop a deeper understanding of how instructional leadership is distributed across the educational contexts of the school
- Learn more about effective, research-based practices of an inclusive school
- Examine the beliefs, cultural changes and teaching and learning strategies required to promote high student achievement

The SUPI evaluation design focuses on both formative and summative concerns. Two organizations working in concert provide leadership for these activities, with each contributing to a different component of the evaluation.

WestEd is an educational research, development and evaluation organization with more than 450 employees and 16 offices nationwide. The firm is conducting analyses relating to the longer-term impact of SUPI on student achievement, the overall quality of the program with regard to standards for educational leadership programs, participant learning, retention in leadership positions, continued growth in the pool of applicants to the program, actual use of the learning at each site, and development of educational leaders. WestEd has extensive experience in evaluating leadership professional development programs including experience as the external evaluators of both the Los Angeles County Office of Education “Pathways to Leadership” program and the Disney Learning Partnership, a professional development program for teacher leaders to build professional collaboration environments and practices in schools.

Barry Greenberg and Associates is a local Florida firm with more than twenty years of experience conducting evaluation studies for Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Broward County Public Schools, The Education Fund, the University of Florida, Florida International University and the Florida Department of Education. With more than 25 such studies completed, including evaluations of SUPI’s first two years, Greenberg and Associates are focusing on data collection and analyses of the more immediate requirements of SUPI, including changes in each participant’s level of administrative competency, satisfaction with each SUPI activity and timely strategies for enhancing each SUPI experience based on participant-provided data.

The evaluation approach is driven by a conceptual framework or logic model developed by WestEd that is used to specify the key evaluation questions, the kinds of data to be collected, and the data collection methods and sources.

The logic of the program, its delivery, outcomes and impact are shown in a conceptual framework (Figure 1) that drives the evaluation of SUPI.

FIGURE 1



EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation addresses five key questions.

- 1 Does the program result in important participant learning and transfer of learning to schools?
- 2 What are the activities that facilitate or inhibit this development and what strategies are in need of modification?
- 3 Do schools, teachers and students change as a result of leadership practices implemented by program participants?
- 4 Do principals in target schools remain in their schools for three years or more?
- 5 Do the outcomes and impact of the SUPI program increase applications for the program?

The evaluation questions mirror the conceptual model in Figure 1, and begin with the issue of important learning outcomes for program participants and the use of what they learn in school. The use of what they learn is expected to change leadership, school and teacher practices, which impact school and student outcomes and performance.

To address the key evaluation questions, WestEd is using a cohort comparison design using quantitative and qualitative methods and multiple sources. Barry Greenberg and Associates is conducting surveys of participants, participating in monthly “sharing sessions” with focus groups aimed at deriving participant

impressions on a timely basis, and visiting schools during internship activities to determine outcomes and identify issues in need of attention.

Since SUPI uses three different cohorts over three years, the evaluators are able to compare the outcomes of each cohort at different stages of professional development. This is providing important data on the added value of each successive year of professional development and its impact on leadership practices and school, teacher and student outcomes. Figure 2 summarizes how the proposed data methods and sources provide information to answer key evaluation questions.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

In the initial stages of the program and its evaluation, the purposes of the evaluation are essentially formative, providing ongoing, timely feedback to program designers and developers on the quality and proximal outcomes of SUPI. Evaluation data provides program staff with insights into what is working and what is not, what should be further developed and what should be improved. In the third year of the evaluation, the purpose is summative, providing SUPI staff with findings and claims about the overall merit and worth of the program -- its quality, outcomes and impact -- and whether or not the program is worthy of being moved to scale across Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

FIGURE 2 - EVALUATION QUESTIONS, DATA METHODS AND SOURCES

	PROGRAM OBSERVATION	PARTICIPANT SURVEY	PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION	PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS	SCHOOL OBSERVATION	STUDENT RECORDS	PROGRAM DOCUMENTS
PROGRAM QUALITY	■	■		■			■
PARTICIPANT LEARNING AND USE; CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP PRACTICES		■	■	■	■		
SCHOOL AND STUDENT IMPROVEMENT		■		■	■	■	
SCHOOL LEADER RETENTION		■			■		
INCREASED SUPI APPLICATION AND PARTICIPATION							■

SUPI'S PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

In order to foster collaboration among providers of leadership development programs and to forge links between current District initiatives targeting school leaders, partnerships have been established with several non-profit organizations that have combined forces to develop and implement the SUPI program.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

As the fourth-largest school district in the nation, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) serves more than 361,000 students in a geographic region encompassing 2,000 square miles. More than 90% of the District's student population is from minority groups and, as evidenced by free and reduced lunch statistics at the elementary school level, almost 70% of the students are from low or moderately low income families. M-DCPS is led by Dr. Rudolph "Rudy" Crew, Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent's Urban Principal Initiative is directed by Ava Byrne, Deputy Superintendent for Professional Development. Dr. Cynthia Clark, Assistant Superintendent for Leadership Development, oversees program implementation.

THE EDUCATION FUND

As the District's local education fund, The Education Fund designs and implements initiatives that involve the private sector in improving schools and bringing excellence to public education. During its 21-year history, The Education Fund has raised more than \$30 million to support Miami-Dade County Public Schools' work to increase student achievement. The Education Fund has been recognized at the state and national levels for school improvement initiatives and has worked extensively with principals to bring about school-wide improvement. The Education Fund helped launch the SUPI pilot,

and currently assists with the following components of SUPI: action research training, sharing sessions, participation in the Harvard Institute, kick-off and celebratory events, and documentation and dissemination efforts.

MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

One of Miami's most popular educational attractions has also played a key role in the State of Florida's educational science reform initiative, developing a range of exemplary operational models that include programs for building the technology integration skills of K-16 teachers and faculty; programs for strengthening the preparation of pre-service science teachers; programs strengthening the technology leadership role of school administrators; and programs for engaging middle school girls and underserved youth in science and technology. Through its FloridaLeaders.Net project, the Museum manages the coaching component of SUPI, called Professional Partners. The Museum also trains participants in the use of cutting-edge data collection tools used in the improvement of science instruction.

COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

The Council For Educational Change (CEC) is a statewide organization committed to improving student achievement and addressing critical educational issues. Inaugurated in 2002, the CEC is the successor organization to the South Florida Annenberg Challenge, a \$100 million public/private initiative serving 378 schools in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties. The Council supports SUPI by providing the Educational Leadership Assessment (ELA) and the Accelerated School Administrator Preparation Program (ASAP).

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

It has been my privilege to serve as co-project director for the SUPI program for the past two years, and I'm proud to say that we have made major strides toward raising the academic standards, outlook and morale of our high-need secondary schools.

We're all involved with SUPI because we want to make a difference. We know that success in school leads to success in life, and we want to ensure our children have both.

And just as each child has individual strengths and needs, so do school educators and administrators. That's what makes SUPI such a vital, empowering part of our school system's professional development agenda. It promotes honest self-evaluation, and offers the tools and support for improvement where needed.

Ultimately, it prepares our teachers and school administrators for the most important job they'll ever do. A job, perhaps, that others say can't be done. But as leaders, we can't accept the limitations others might impose. As leaders, it's up to us to see the potential within the challenge. And as leaders, we must believe we have what it takes to overcome those challenges and lead the way into the future.

Ava G. Byrne
Deputy Superintendent for Professional Development
Miami-Dade County Public Schools



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FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SUPI AND PROGRAM COMPONENTS:

www.educationfund.org/SUPI
www.educationchange.org
www.floridaleaders.net
www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/principals

THIS PUBLICATION WAS CREATED BY THE EDUCATION FUND.

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