

# International Leadership Centre Network newsletter

## April 2007

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## 1. WELCOME

Welcome to the latest newsletter of the International Leadership Centre Network.

This edition provides updates on a range of projects underway in partner leadership centres. Details of a number of potentially interesting events are also provided. Thank you to all of you who were able to contribute to this edition. Particular attention is given to work which seeks to address the challenge of ensuring a sufficient ongoing supply of individuals into headship.

As always a copy of this newsletter can also be accessed via the Network's website - <http://www.ilcn.org/>

Finally any comments or suggestions you may have in relation to any area of the network would as ever be warmly received.

Best wishes

Andy

[Andy.coleman@ncsl.org.uk](mailto:Andy.coleman@ncsl.org.uk)

## 2. MEMBERS' NEWS

### ***Hong Kong Centre for the Development of Educational Leadership***

The Centre has continued to engage in theoretical and applied research as well as professional learning and development programmes for aspiring principals, beginning principals, serving principals and mid-level leaders in international schools. Current programmes are funded by RGC Earmarked Grants, the Quality Education Fund, Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB), English Schools Foundation (ESF) and clusters of local and international schools.

### **Leader Learning Programmes**

#### ***Formal accreditation***

Two of the Centre's programmes, namely: *'blue skies: A professional learning programme for beginning principals (blue skies)'* *'Leading Upstream: A learning programme for front-line leaders in international schools (Leading Upstream)'* have been formally accredited by The Chinese University of Hong Kong (for a description of the programmes please see International Leadership Centre Network, October 2005).

When beginning and experienced principals meet the formal requirements they will be awarded either the "Professional Certificate for Beginning Principalship" or 'Professional Diploma in Principalship Mentoring' respectively. Mid-level leaders and leadership mentors in international schools will be awarded either the 'Professional Diploma Mid-level Leadership in International Schools' or the 'Professional Diploma in International School Leadership Mentoring' respectively.

One recent programme designed to aid leadership learning mid-level leaders in a Hong Kong international school is 'The Fifth Way'. This aims to help them to make sense of their place in the school, to clarify the expectations the school community holds for them, and to encourage them to work together. As such, The Fifth Way aims to provide a structure through which mid-level leaders work together in the school to provide each other professional and practical support. This programme initially targets the following cores areas:

- building teams;
- providing feedback, coordination, and conflict management;
- creating communication networks;
- practicing collaborative politics;
- overcoming resource constraints;
- modelling the school's vision;
- leadership succession.

The Fifth Way depends on the integrity and professionalism of all those involved in the Programme and other leaders in the school. To be involved, people need to be willing to talk openly about the school's leadership and management activities, even if this involves constructively criticising what presently happens. They will also develop their personal leadership knowledge, skills and practices and work in teams on a self-identified project which aims to improve an aspect of their work. In short, the Fifth Way is designed to help mid-level leaders to construct meaning, explore concepts and grapple with and manage school specific issues. It is designed to challenge thinking and practice in a way that empowers. As such, the Fifth Way aims to facilitate understanding, build knowledge and promote improvement throughout the school.

For more details of the Fifth Way, please visit:

<http://www3.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/eldevnet/FifthWay.asp>

## **Research**

In an earlier newsletter we described a research project into secondary school vice-principals. Findings from the quantitative component are now being written up. Initial papers by Dr Paula Kwan are abstracted below. When combined with longitudinal data from the qualitative component we hope the findings will help inform our leader development programmes for Aspiring and Beginning Principals.

### ***Vice-principalship in Hong Kong: aspirations, competencies and satisfaction***

This large-scale study aimed to examine the core competency areas that pertain to the work of vice-principals and the ways in which vice-principals see these areas relating to their school's success. The study also examined the factors that affect their level of job satisfaction, and differentiated these factors according to whether they did or did not aspire to principalship. The findings indicate that competency gaps, if large enough, can affect the level of job satisfaction of vice-principals and that the impact of these gaps varies according to career orientation. The results show that vice-principals who aspire to be a principal are more satisfied in their jobs than their less ambitious colleagues; and that the effect of these gaps on job satisfaction differed between the two groups. The implications of the findings for the future supply of principals and leader development are expounded.

### ***Secondary school vice-principals: commitment, challenge, efficacy and synchrony***

This study sought to investigate the sources of Hong Kong secondary school vice-principals' job satisfaction, including the relative significance of different source components. It also attempted to differentiate between the sources of satisfaction of vice-principals of different career orientations. The findings indicated that there are four main sources of satisfaction, "professional commitment", "level of personal challenge", "sense of efficacy" and "sense of synchrony". In general,

“professional commitment” and “level of personal challenge” were the dominant sources of job satisfaction for vice-principals; the former was positive and the latter negative. The study also found that vice-principals who aspired to the principalship exhibited a higher degree of professional commitment, a stronger sense of efficacy, and experienced lower levels of stress associated with personal challenge, than vice principals who did not aspire to a principalship. The study discusses the implications of the findings.

**Further information from:**

Allan Walker

[adwalker@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:adwalker@cuhk.edu.hk)

## ***Center for Educational Leadership, University of Washington, USA***

### **Providing an Equitable Education for All Students**

The Center for Educational Leadership (CEL), located within the College of Education at the University of Washington, exists to eliminate the achievement gap that divides students along the lines of race, class, and language. CEL believes that the achievement gap will only be eliminated when the quality of classroom instruction improves and when school leaders know what powerful instruction looks like so they can lead and guide this long-range capacity building.

This summer in Seattle, Washington from June 25-30, CEL is hosting its sixth annual Summer Leadership Institute, *"Building the Leadership Capacity Necessary to Eliminate the Achievement Gap."* Throughout the institute, participants will have the opportunity to engage in a deep level of dialogue and develop strategies related to the instructional leadership necessary to close the achievement gap at their school and district sites. This institute's nationally-renowned speakers include:

- **Kati Haycock**- Director, The Education Trust, Washington, D.C.
- **Anthony Alvarado**- Former Superintendent, Community School District 2, New York City
- **Gloria Ladson-Billings**- Kellner Family Professor in Urban Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- **Bob Moses**- Founder and President, The Algebra Project, Inc., Cambridge, MA,

***To learn more about the institute, click on the following link:***

<http://depts.washington.edu/uwcel/programs/core/summer/brochures/sli2007.pdf>

### **The Key to Systemic Reform: How Two School Districts are Making Gains**

What's the difference between knowing how to read the words on a page, and knowing what the words mean? It's the difference between school success and failure.

The teachers, principals, and central office staff in Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District realized this more than ever when state tests revealed that less than a third of their students were achieving reading proficiency. In 2004, the two California communities, located outside Los Angeles, formed a partnership with the Center for Educational Leadership (CEL) to address this issue. Throughout this partnership, CEL has intentionally implemented a plan to empower effective instructional leadership. That is, increasing leaders' content knowledge, coaching leaders to identify if the content is being taught well, and helping leaders learn how to use their classroom observations in designing professional development so teachers can improve.

To read more about the two recent research briefs highlighting the statistic gains made within the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District and the Marysville School District, please click on the following links:.

Research Brief II:

[http://depts.washington.edu/uwcel/resources/research\\_brief/research\\_brief2.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/uwcel/resources/research_brief/research_brief2.pdf)

Research Brief III:

[http://depts.washington.edu/uwcel/resources/research\\_brief/research\\_brief3.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/uwcel/resources/research_brief/research_brief3.pdf)

**Further information from:**

Steve Fink, Director

[finks@u.washington.edu](mailto:finks@u.washington.edu)

## ***Maryland State Department of Education, USA***

### **Succession Planning Guide for Maryland Schools**

Since the publication of the May 2006 *Succession Planning Guide for Maryland Schools* by the Division for Leadership Development, a number of school districts have embraced the need to become much more serious about the need for sustained succession planning. At our recent executive officers' meeting, three school systems spoke specifically about their efforts. It is gratifying to see how these districts have acted on many of the recommendations in the report as they seek new and better ways of dealing with the acute shortage of school administrators.

The Division for Leadership Development has also had a long and mutually beneficial relationship with the British Council. At a recent meeting in Baltimore, Maryland with the new director of the British Council in the United States, the two parties agreed upon an extension of previous efforts – an action research exchange involving a delegation of educators from Maryland who would represent the U.S. and a delegation from the United Kingdom. A local school district has already agreed to participate in this effort. The two groups would engage in research around a mutually agreed upon educational issue and produce an action research project that could be communicated via CD, website, etc. throughout the U.S. and by the British Council to their extensive network.

**Further information from:**

Jim Foran

[jforan@msde.state.md.us](mailto:jforan@msde.state.md.us)

## ***National College for School Leadership, England***

### **Succession planning programme**

In its December 2005 remit letter from the Secretary of State for Education, NCSL was charged with producing a strategy for addressing the issue of succession

planning for headship. NCSL submitted this advice, developed in conjunction with a range of stakeholders, in May 2006. In it the College set out recommendations for a [national strategy](#) that will help more people to take on school leadership roles to replace those retiring from the profession.

NCSL was subsequently asked by the Secretary of State to commence work with ten pilot areas, to develop strategies to bring teachers through to headship more quickly. These pilots started in September 2006, and will run for the school year. As part of this work, leadership consultants from the College will support the pilot areas in interpreting data on demographic trends and targeting potential candidates for headship. The work will also support other activity intended to help reduce negative perceptions of headship and make the post more attractive to a wider pool of individuals.

This pilot work complements other ongoing activity aimed at developing school leaders such as [Fast Track](#) [an accelerated leadership development programme for teachers in the early years of their careers], [Future Leaders](#) [an initiative to identify and develop the skills and vision of leaders to run the most challenging of urban schools] and [Trainee Heads](#) [professional development for current deputies].

Meanwhile the College is also offering support to school governors through the publication of advice and guidance on the recruitment and appointment of headteachers, and running a series of conferences for governors on the issue of succession planning, in conjunction with the National Governors Association.

Further information on the College's succession planning work can be obtained from <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/priorities/gtl/index.cfm>

## **Wellbeing: - A Life in the Day of a Headteacher**

NCSL has recently completed a major study into the nature of the working lives and practices of contemporary headteachers in England.

The study involved 34 practising headteachers from across the country and at different stages of their career. Data was gathered via interview, direct observation and from a journal completed by the head over a two week period.

The work found that participants' working lives are demanding and pressured, with a fast pace and involving long hours. The variety of their work was also evident, with participants needing to be flexible and responsive to unexpected challenges. When asked what they would change about headship, participants identified accountability, bureaucracy and external demands. Additionally, increased capacity, more professional development opportunities and challenging the culture of headship were also cited as areas for change.

The findings illustrate that developing others, in particular seeing children progress, develop and succeed, was one of the most rewarding and satisfying aspects of their

job. Other rewarding aspects of their job included leading the strategic direction of the school and positive personal relationships. The least rewarding and satisfying elements of headship included dealing with negative staff and parent issues, and excessive bureaucracy.

Participants detailed a number of coping strategies. These included a variety of hobbies, support from family and friends, strategies for managing work, and personal philosophy: all of these contributed to a positive work–life balance. In contrast, pressure of work demands, a lack of opportunities for delegation, and negative staff and parental issues hindered the achievement of a positive work–life balance.

To improve work–life balance, participants suggested the need for increased levels of administrative support, greater distribution of leadership and a reduction in dependency on the headteacher.

The report from this study can be downloaded from  
<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/media/97B/C4/a-life-in-the-day-of-a-headteacher.pdf>

**Further information from:**

Andy Coleman  
[Andy.coleman@ncsl.org.uk](mailto:Andy.coleman@ncsl.org.uk)

## ***Ontario Principals' Centre***

### **Secondary School Principal Rotation & Succession - Understanding Sound Practices**

Although principal/vice-principal succession and rotation are pivotal events in the lives of administrators and the school community, literature remains sparse on the topic. Canadians have conducted few studies and even fewer address rotation/succession issues. Researchers such as MacMillan in *The Sharp Edge of Educational Change*; Huberman, in *The Lives of Teachers*; Wenger in *Communities of Practice* and Gabarro in *The Dynamics of Taking Charge* have begun to break that ground. *Succeeding Leaders* (2003, OPC), provides more direction. However, in the field, support for regular rotation of principals generally relies on experiential and anecdotal evidence. Given the limited research, what practices for succession/rotation in schools and school districts are successful?

To further our understanding of sound practices in principal succession and rotation, we investigated the plans, policies and procedures of three school districts located in Central and Eastern Canada, and in the US. We interviewed each district's administrators and examined the practices and philosophies that influenced them. To conceptualize data from the interviews, we modified a framework based on a standard policy analysis model to capture components of the rotation/ succession process, including the pre-placement, placement and post-placement phases.

The study drew the following conclusions.

- While administrators in the three school districts searched for “sustainable leadership resources” through rotation/succession and related policies, no single plan encompassed every aspect and eventuality. Providing a significant interview process honouring voices of all parties to develop a sustainable talent pool remained a significant challenge. While Cartier provided a good model of leadership development, in the other districts induction programs, mentoring programs and professional development programs required further attention.
- The administrators saw a need for greater depth of knowledge and length of service by principals. Concerns with the average age of principals, compounded by task complexity and apprehensions of potential candidates about the dubious benefits of the task, lead to a dearth of experienced candidates. Succession policy directives, including working to attract suitable candidates of a variety of ages, may prove beneficial in preventing a “crest and trough” effect pertaining to incoming, insider and outgoing knowledge. Encouraging, supporting and promoting capable, competent people – women, representatives of diverse community populations, or individuals with disabilities – was a continuing goal identified by all districts in this study.
- In each district, plans that could have been in place were not. For instance while principals expressed the need for assistance through protocols for school administrator entries and exits, some districts had not considered that necessary. In addition, collaborative work environments were not always in place. More formal expectations and opportunities for development in that area may be beneficial to policy makers. Clear, transparent communications, which all districts in this study regarded as highly important, are extremely important. As such, concerted efforts should be made for potential leaders to voice their concerns regarding negative aspects of the positions. When problem areas are addressed or at least acknowledged, the jobs become more attractive. This may also be beneficial for retention of administrators in the school board.
- Mentoring is an integral part of rotation/succession processes. Since each school maintains a unique ethos, if the selection cycle can occur early enough, it may be feasible for both incoming and outgoing administrators to work together for the latter part of the school year in a kind of mentorship program.
- A policy model, capturing essential components of principal rotation/succession that clarifies relevant issues, may contain pre-policy, policy and post-policy phases. The pre-policy phase concerns collection and preparation of policy statements around mega-policy and meta-policy.

- A strong mega-policy articulates the philosophy surrounding rotation/succession, goals and values relating to this process, as well as acknowledgement of historical perspectives that impact rotation/succession practices. Meta-policy identifies resources used throughout the process, including research studies, surveys, questionnaires and other information bearing on rotation/succession and the principal experience. At this stage, the policy is designed and/or evaluated; the screening committee is formed and needs are determined.
- There are six steps in the policy-making phase of the model. The first is to recognize the need for a flexible transfer process. Second, discussion occurs to determine who is available, under what circumstances, as well as the implications of the transfer. Third, testing of alternatives before, during and after the interview process takes into consideration factors such as candidates' strengths and weaknesses and the affected schools' climates. Considerations that may render it unfeasible to place certain candidates in certain positions are realized at this point. Fourth, a short-listing of candidates provides alternatives to get the best fit. Fifth, a decision in principle is made to place the suitable candidates. As offers are accepted or rejected, there may be opportunities for refinement. The final step is the adoption of the policy, comprising acceptance of the offer and, depending on the district, contract formalization.
- The post-policy phase comprises three review stages. The first is the induction of the incoming principal or vice-principal. This may include elements already present through professional development initiatives, rules of conduct and regulations. In the second stage, communication takes place between incoming and outgoing principals and their supervisors. After ongoing development, the final stage includes evaluation of the new principal's work. It is also an opportunity to review and modify the entire policy-making process, as necessary. In this way, school districts can develop a sustainable leadership pool and a supportive district-wide environment in which individuals and the district may flourish.

**Further information from:**

Robert White  
[rwhite@stfx.ca](mailto:rwhite@stfx.ca)

Karyn Cooper  
[kcooper@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:kcooper@oise.utoronto.ca)

Carol Brayman  
[carol\\_brayman@hotmail.com](mailto:carol_brayman@hotmail.com)

## ***Pennsylvania State University***

### **The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual - Values and Leadership Conference**

#### *Metaphors and Methodologies:*

*The Moral Contexts of Research and Practice*

September 27 - 29, 2007

Toftrees Resort, State College, Pennsylvania

Join us in State College, Pennsylvania for the 12th Annual Values and Leadership Conference. This annual international event is co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania School Study Council and the Willower Center for the Study of Leadership and Ethics. The theme of this year's conference, *Metaphors and Methodologies: The Moral Contexts of Research and Practice*, will provide a context for the exploration of values and ethics in educational leadership. The conference features a number of keynote speakers, plenary sessions, individual paper sessions and receptions. Most meals are provided and the conference begins on a Thursday evening and ends on Saturday afternoon to allow practitioners to attend the full event with a minimum time away from their schools.

#### ***Featured Presenters to Date***

Ken Strike, *Syracuse University*

Nancy Tuana, *Penn State University*

Steven Gross, *Temple University*

Jacqueline Stefkovich, *Penn State*

Paul Begley, *Penn State*

Joan Poliner-Shapiro, *Temple University*

Pauline Leonard, *Louisiana Tech*

Charles Burford, *Australian Catholic University*

For more information about this event, or to register, please visit our conference website at: [www.ed.psu.edu/uceacsle/conference07](http://www.ed.psu.edu/uceacsle/conference07)

If you would like to deliver a paper at the Conference, we would be pleased to accept your proposal for consideration. For more information on the conference theme, visit the website. Just send us the title and a 150-word abstract for the proposed paper by June 1, 2007. We are particularly interested in papers that address the practical application of values and ethics to educational practice. Send registrations and / or abstracts to:

Professor Paul T. Begley (pbegley@psu.edu)

Executive Director of the PSSC

207B Rackley Building

The Pennsylvania State University

University Park, PA 16802-3201