Getting it Right

Designing Principal Preparation
Programs that Meet District Needs
for Improving Low-Performing Schools

A Technical Report on Innovative
Principal Preparation Models

SREB | Southern Regional
Education Board

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Introduction

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is passionate about and committed to school reform and school leader preparation and development. Created in 1948 by Southern governors and legislators who recognized the link between education and economic vitality, SREB is the nation's first and most comprehensive regional interstate compact for education. Working with 16 member states to improve public education at every level, SREB focuses on critical issues that hold the promise of improving quality of life by advancing education.

SREB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Atlanta. The Board is chaired by a governor from one of the member states and other Board members include four gubernatorial appointees from each member state, with the appointees including at least one state legislator and one educator.

SREB's many programs and initiatives share a single, powerful mission: to help the Southern region lead the nation in educational progress. As an organization, SREB has three goals and areas of impact:

1. SREB helps states focus on what works in both policy and practice.

2. SREB brings together member states to forge consensus and work collectively on education topics of mutual concern and initiatives of mutual benefit.

3. SREB works directly with public schools and educators to improve classroom teaching and learning, career and technical education, online education and school leadership.

Supporting states, districts and schools to improve student achievement in middle grades and high schools has been a major focus of SREB's work across the Southern region and other parts of the nation for more than two decades. This work has resulted in the creation of the nation's largest and most successful program dedicated to the transformation of high schools — SREB's High Schools That Work (HSTW) — and a similar program for improving middle grades, SREB's Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW).

Leadership Initiative

Since 2000, SREB has focused on preparing and developing school leaders with the requisite knowledge, skills and dispositions for leading school improvement and, more recently, with the special skill sets for turning around chronically low-performing schools. This work comprises the SREB Learning-Centered Leadership Program (LCLP).

In all of its leadership initiatives, SREB makes use of the contemporary research on effective leadership preparation and development, the perspectives of leading authors and recognized experts in the field, and the advice of high-performing practitioners. The integration of input from these sources, along with SREB's knowledge and experiential bases on developing principals' skills and providing support for school improvement, redesigning principal preparation and development programs, and developing principals' special capacities for turning around schools, has served to make SREB's leadership programs unique. They are thoroughly aligned with the demands of the job and the conditions within which principals must function, and they are effective in producing the right results.

A grant from the School Leadership Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education during 2008–14 provided the opportunities and resources for SREB to bring together its cutting-edge knowledge base, field experience, and substantial bank of publications and training materials in the closely related fields of school improvement and school leader preparation and development. SREB applied them systematically to create and implement the Florida Leadership Academy for Schools of Innovation and Improvement (FLASII).

SREB's partners in developing and implementing FLASII included the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), the University of North Florida and five high-need school districts that demographically represented urban, suburban and rural student populations. The goal of the FLASII partners was to establish and test a scalable system for developing the capacities of current principals and school leadership teams and preparing aspiring principals to lead continuous school improvement efforts that result in increased student achievement in high-need districts.

Principal Preparation Models

This publication shares the two SREB principal preparation models that evolved from FLASII development and implementation activities: (1) a modified university master's degree program designed to prepare aspiring principals to implement a continuous school improvement process in schools where they will become leaders and (2) a model for preparing assistant principals, teacher-leaders and district office staff aspiring to become principals with the special skill sets required for turning around chronically low-performing schools.

The rationale for developing these two distinct models for preparing principals is based on skill gaps that exist for many aspiring leaders. The skills needed to lead continuous improvement require training, application and feedback on performance that exceeds what is provided through typical graduate programs in educational leadership. Likewise, the skills required to make dramatic improvements in student achievement within a short period of time (a definition of school turnaround) are beyond the scope of both preparation for leading continuous improvement and most principal preparation programs.

This publication describes in detail the point of view SREB brought to this work and the models' theoretical underpinnings. It provides program features, implementation processes, results achieved and lessons learned in creating and implementing each of the models, in hopes the work will contribute useful knowledge, practical advice and prototypes that assist others striving to create leadership programs that have lasting, positive impacts on teaching and student achievement. In a companion publication, SREB offers would-be adopters or organizations wishing to start their own program a step-by-step process and advice for planning and implementing the essential components of a turnaround leader preparation program. To obtain a copy of the companion publication, please contact Jon Schmidt-Davis at SREB (Jon.Schmidt-Davis@sreb.org).

About the Publication

The first chapter of this publication provides SREB's point of view on school leadership preparation and development, including the design principles that have governed its approach. The second chapter focuses on the Aspiring Principals Program (APP), the principal preparation model that was developed in conjunction with the Department of Education-funded FLASII initiative. The third chapter describes how this model was further refined and enhanced by incorporating lessons learned and applying recent research into a differentiated program design focused on preparing principals to turn around chronically low-performing schools. The fourth chapter offers concluding thoughts on what SREB has learned from these leadership preparation endeavors.

Because the turnaround leader model was first implemented through a Florida Race to the Top initiative, SREB refers to the program as the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program (FTLP). It is this second-generation program design that reflects SREB's best efforts at program design. It is used to illustrate the planning process, content, learning assignments, field components and other program elements to describe the SREB Turnaround Leadership model.

Chapter 1:
The SREB Point of View on School Leadership Preparation and Development

This section describes the theoretical underpinnings of SREB's approach to leadership preparation and development, starting with its definition of leadership and its overarching vision and goal for all school leadership initiatives. SREB explains its theory of action for achieving the vision and goal, identifies critical success factors demonstrated by principals who drive student achievement, and spells out the rationale for differentiating leadership program designs for schools in need of turnaround from those where continuous improvement and transformation are the goal.

Learning-Centered Leadership

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other." - John F. Kennedy

Definitions of leadership abound and vary widely in focus and emphasis, addressing leadership from the perspectives of theory, style, traits and context. But, in its simplest form, leadership involves influencing others to work toward a stated end.

Since SREB launched the Learning-Centered Leadership Program with a long-term goal of improving school leadership preparation in its 16 member states, leadership preparation and development programs have emphasized the concept of learning-centered leadership. This view of leadership, while not limited to schools, is certainly appropriate for school settings.

It requires leaders to focus the thoughts and actions of the faculty, staff, parents and other stakeholders on learning–not only student learning, but their own learning as well. Richard DuFour wrote about learning-centered leadership in a 2002 article for the journal *Educational Leadership*.[1] He cited the evolution of his own thinking as a high school principal as moving from efforts to improve instruction to a focus on improving student learning. He clarified what it means to be a learning-centered principal in this way:

> This shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning is more than semantics. When learning becomes the preoccupation of the school, when all the school's educators examine the efforts and initiatives of the school through the lens of their impact on learning, the structure and culture of the school begin to change in substantive ways. Principals foster this structural and cultural transformation when they shift their emphasis from helping individual teachers improve instruction to helping teams of teachers ensure that students achieve the intended outcomes of their schooling. More succinctly, teachers and students benefit when principals function as learning leaders rather than *instructional* leaders. - Richard DuFour

SREB Leadership Vision and Goal

"To the person who does not know where he wants to go, there is no favorable wind." - Seneca

This quote from Seneca, an ancient Roman philosopher, succinctly defines the reason that schools and other organizations striving to become better at fulfilling their purpose must begin the journey with a well-defined vision for what they hope to become in the future. It is common for treatises on the school improvement process to recommend that leaders develop a vision as the starting point for reform.

According to a 2003 report prepared by the Task Force on Developing Research in Educational Leadership, "Effective educational leaders help their schools to develop or endorse visions that embody the best thinking about teaching and learning.[2] Schools must have a vision that all staff members recognize as a common direction of growth. If schools don't have a common, agreed upon destination, then everyone is left to his or her own imagination as to what to do, and the collective effort is likely to be unfocused and unproductive in achieving desired results.

Having a vision of the ideals and goals that SREB hopes to achieve through its school leadership initiatives is just as essential as these elements are for schools that are striving to improve their outcomes. Here are SREB's vision and primary goal for school leadership:

> **Vision**: All students attend schools in which the leadership team ensures they are provided a rigorous, standards-based program of curricula and instruction that readies students for success in college and/or advanced career preparation.

> **Goal**: Provide replicable, research-based leadership preparation and development programs that ensure aspiring and current principals have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to lead turnaround and continuous improvement in student achievement, and develop teachers' expertise in aligning instruction to college-and career-readiness standards.

Students graduating from high school today must be ready to continue their preparation through college and the advanced phases of career training to succeed in high-skill, high-wage and high-demand jobs in a global economy. To secure such jobs, they will need to know how to analyze information, use math, work well on a team, think critically, solve problems and behave professionally. They will also need these skills to succeed in universities, community and technical colleges, work-based training programs and technology centers.

Getting students ready for the next steps of their postsecondary preparation means providing rigorous course work aligned to college- and career-readiness standards and giving assignments that engage students in reading and interacting with challenging texts in all disciplines. It means requiring students to express their understanding in writing, solving complex problems through productive struggle with mathematical concepts, and developing the technical and personal skills required by the 21st-century workplace and successful citizenship. It means providing students with strong guidance and advisement programs that help them define their interests and aspirations, clarify their goals, and plan and complete a sequence of courses that will allow them to follow their dreams.

Leadership programs of the past have done a poor job preparing principals to provide their faculties the leadership and professional learning opportunities that build their capacities to shift to this new and more powerful model of instruction and student guidance. **Far too few current principals have the skill sets required to develop the kind of rigorous academic and career pathway programs necessary to develop students' readiness for college and careers.**

Theory of Action

SREB's theory of action for turning around chronically low-performing schools and leading schools in continuous improvement is grounded in a firm belief that leaders matter to student achievement. Research indicates that highly effective principals influence student achievement through three sets of actions: creating consistent, quality learning experiences in classrooms across the school; managing the school's human capital to drive teacher effectiveness; and building a culture of high aspirations and expectations for academic achievement.[3]

This type of strong leadership, focused on helping set and maintain organizational direction, close involvement in instructional improvement and developing and supporting teachers, is at the heart of turnaround, continuous improvement and many other approaches to school reform.[4]

Figure 1: Premises of the SREB Theory of Action for Leadership Development

Leaders with Expertise

Developing school leaders' expertise in leading instructional improvement requires sustained high-quality professional development focused on expected outcomes.

Improved Instruction

School leadership teams have greater skills in developing teachers' instructional expertise and in leading a comprehensive school improvement process.

Higher Achievement

Higher levels of achievement for all students will only occur if the quality of instruction is improved to meet rigorous standards.

Shared Ownership

School leaders and teachers accept joint accountability for
the problems and solutions to low achievement.

Figure 1 illustrates how the first three premises are sequential. In the simplest terms, increasing the expertise of school leaders drives improvement in instruction, which produces higher achievement. The fourth premise undergirds the entire sequence. This premise requires faculty and administrators to take ownership of the problems and solutions to low achievement.

This type of shared responsibility is essential to leading and sustaining instructional improvement and other changes in school and classroom practices that impact student achievement. For true shared ownership to develop, there must be participation by those who are in control of classrooms — teachers. No amount of mandates and direction from the outside can ensure **principals and teachers are doing what matters and putting forth their best efforts every day to raise student achievement.**

This undergirding premise is of utmost importance in SREB's theory of action for school leadership and school improvement and is manifested in all of the programs and project designs that SREB implements. It's the adults in the school building who make a difference in students' learning. Principals and teachers must own their school's data and act on it to identify and solve problems and remove barriers to higher student achievement.

If school leaders depend on the state, district office or other external agencies to prescribe solutions and interventions, or fail to engage teachers as co-owners of low achievement and its improvement, then change efforts are likely to meet stubborn resistance, fail to be fully adopted, and results will likely fall short of the goal and be short lived.

Turnaround versus Continuous Improvement

For those who might question the need for two preparation models, the answer becomes clear in the distinction between the concepts turnaround and continuous improvement. Preparing students for an ever-changing world requires that ALL schools engage in continuous school improvement — working to ensure students learn what they need to be successful and that teachers skillfully use the most effective evidence-based practices. But as stated in the Mass Insight Education report The Turnaround Challenge, turning

around chronically under-performing schools is "a different and far more difficult undertaking than school improvement. It should be recognized within education — as it is in other sectors — as a distinct professional discipline that requires specialized experience, training and support."

SREB's model for preparing aspiring principals to improve chronically low-performing schools is grounded in a definition of "turnaround" drawn from the work of Mass Insight Education:[5] "Turnaround is a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that: (a) produces significant gains in achievement within two years; and (b) readies the school for the longer process of transformation into a high-performance organization."

This definition distinguishes turnaround as the initial and urgent phase of change and improvement in chronically low-performing schools that is necessary before school leaders can expect their faculties to be ready — equipped with the requisite knowledge, skills and dispositions — and willing to invest their efforts in a longer-term process of transforming the school into a highly effective organization for student learning.

The use of the term "turnaround" is not to be confused with the U.S. Department of Education's use of the same term for one of its four intervention models available to schools seeking School Improvement Grants. See the sidebar "Uses of 'Turnaround'" for clarification on how this term is used.

Turnaround has many of the same goals as the broader category of school reform labeled continuous school improvement (e.g., improve student outcomes; reduce achievement gaps; prepare all students for success in college, careers and life) and uses many similar strategies (e.g., data-based decision-making, research-based instructional interventions and embedded professional development).

However, turnaround differs from other types of school reform in that it involves urgency and pushes for rapid improvement in outcomes (within one to three years) and emphasizes a "start-from-scratch" approach designed to overcome a history of resistance to change and chronically low achievement.

It is an approach that begins the process of improving student learning in schools that fall in the bottom 5 percent in their state.

Effective turnaround in chronically low-performing schools includes such practices as use of data to identify root causes of low achievement; a culture of high expectations for all students; a safe, orderly, student-centered school environment; rigorous, standards-based instruction in priority areas for improvement (e.g., literacy and mathematics); use of formative assessment to guide planning and personalization of instruction; and developing organizational structures and capacities that support professional learning, collaborative teacher planning and in-school time for providing struggling students extra help.

By putting these essential turnaround conditions and practices into place, schools increase their abilities to achieve some "quick wins" that fuel the faculty's desire and commitment to engage in more comprehensive and sustained improvement work.

Here is an illustration of some of the practical differences leaders might focus on when turning around a school versus sustaining continuous improvement.

Turnaround	Continuous Improvement
Examining data on safety, discipline, instructional practices and assessment, as well as many other factors, to find root causes of low achievement	Working with the central office to gain greater autonomy and flexibility in scheduling, curriculum and budgeting
Developing a culture/climate of high expectations for all students and all adults working with students	Creating effective guidance and career-counseling programs
Providing all students a standards-based, grade-level curriculum in literacy and mathematics	Extending academic rigor to all subject areas, including career and technical education (CTE) courses and the arts
Giving students rigorous assignments and providing them extra help to succeed	Developing dual enrollment, advanced placement and summer catch-up programs to accelerate learning
Using data from classroom assessments to guide teaching and personalize learning opportunities	Using community resources to provide students real-life and career-learning opportunities
Developing a master schedule that provides time for collaborative teacher planning and extra help for struggling students	Creating innovative organizational structures such as ungraded student groupings, schools-within-a school, academies focusing on specific curricula or instructional approaches, and open campuses, to better serve students' interests and needs

At their core, both turnaround and continuous improvement depend on changing the attitudes and behaviors of school leaders and equipping them with the focus, skills and tactics necessary to lead and support their faculties in adopting new beliefs and instructional practices that result in increased student achievement. The developers of SREB's models for preparing aspiring principals for these responsibilities recognized that all principals have to acquire certain skills and knowledge to address such common concerns as budgeting, supervising staff, and complying with state and federal mandates.

They also realized that improving a chronically low-performing school required additional skills and knowledge, as well as core beliefs and dispositions. Daniel L. Duke, a co-founder of the University of Virginia School Turnaround Specialist Program and the primary turnaround expert for the FTLP, commented to the Design Team, "If every principal already had what it takes to turn around a low-performing school in a relatively short period of time, there would not be so many low-performing schools." The SREB Turnaround Leadership Model is based, in other words, on an intentionally differentiated model of school leadership – a model that distinguishes between what the typical leadership programs principals complete to earn certification and the highly specialized preparation needed for leading school turnaround as SREB has defined it.

The American Institute for Research has identified three key requisites for turnaround: (1) putting in place the right leadership and staff, (2) setting and tracking progress toward instructional goals, and (3) accelerating reform efforts by removing barriers. Until there are new models that prepare and develop leaders who know and can do the "right stuff," bringing school turnaround to scale and eliminating low-performing schools will remain a troublesome and elusive goal.

First Order versus Second Order Change

The leadership framework created by Waters, Marzano and McNulty[6] identifies the knowledge, skills, strategies and tools leaders need to positively impact student achievement. Their model draws from a meta-analysis of the literature that revealed a substantial relationship between effective leadership and student achievement (a correlation of 0.25). Waters et al. (2004) concluded that an important aspect of the researchers' findings is the concept of the "order" or magnitude of change.

They describe "**first-order**" change as change that aligns with prevailing values and norms, is met with general agreement by those who will implement the change and can be implemented using their existing knowledge and skills. A change becomes "**second order**" when it involves new approaches or it conflicts with prevailing values and norms.

Second-order changes require leaders to work far more deeply with those who are implementing the change or who have a stake in the outcomes associated with the change. Second-order changes can disrupt people's sense of well-being, in some cases producing a sense of loss as former practices are no longer used. This type of change may cause some to feel their expertise and competencies are being challenged as no longer worthwhile.

The concept of first- and second- order change is important to the theoretical grounding of SREB's leadership models. **Both models are designed to create leaders who can effectively implement second-order change because this is the level of change still required in the majority of schools if they are to raise the achievement of all groups of students, keep them in school until they graduate, and develop their full readiness for college and advanced career preparation.**

First-order change has little impact on student achievement. Even after more than a decade of implementing the No Child Left Behind Act (2002), which put the spotlight on the achievement of subgroups of students whose poor performance had previously been hidden in the test score averaging process, many schools have made little progress in improving student learning. **Some part of this failure is almost certainly due to schools implementing first-order changes aimed at increasing and maintaining the same instructional and organizational practices that produced poor results in the past, when what was called for was second-order changes through which leaders and teachers would begin implementing more effective ways of teaching, using time and organizing their schools.**

Check Your Understanding

Because the support teachers need who are experiencing initiatives as second-order changes is quite different from what is required by those who experience the same initiatives as first-order changes, it is important that principals are able to determine which teachers need the more extensive support.

One way to identify those teachers is to ask all faculty members to share their thoughts concerning the planned initiatives. Their responses can be used to determine who is going to need more support to successfully implement the new strategies. Table 1 presents the response of two pairs of teachers and a pair of principals to proposed initiatives. Take a moment and see if you can determine what level of change each initiative represents for each person. Compare your determinations with the explanations in Table 2.

The definitions of turnaround and continuous improvement adhered to in designing both SREB principal preparation models call for changes in values and norms, new instructional approaches, innovative organizational structures and practices, and leaders who work more deeply with staff on providing all students learning opportunities that prepare them for the next level of their education — features that are consistent with second-order change. Aspiring principals who participated in the SREB preparation models learned how to lead second-order changes that turn around achievement in the lowest-achieving schools.

A subtle but important point drawn from the work of Waters, et al.[7] is the idea that it is how a change impacts each individual that determines if it is a first- or second-order change. **Waters and Cameron make this point clearly when they state that it "…is important to note that the terms first-order and second-order have less to do with the actual change initiatives themselves and more to do with the implications of change for individuals expected to carry out the change effort."**

For a teacher who must make only incremental changes in classroom practices to fully implement targeted instructional strategies, the implementation of those strategies may be a first-order change. However, the teacher in an adjacent classroom may experience learning to use those same strategies as a radical paradigm shift conflicting with long-held values. For this teacher, implementation constitutes a second-order change. The same is true for principals who seek to change their practices.

Table 1: Comprehension Check on First- and Second-Order Change

Description of Change	Comments from Teachers	Order of Change
End each lesson by engaging students in a review of lesson content.	Teacher A: That makes sense to me. I do that occasionally, but I can make that a regular practice.	First or Second?
	Teacher B: I sum up the major points of the lesson before making an assignment, but I don't typically ask students to do this. I don't want them to get confused.	First or Second?
Base students' semester grade on demonstrated learning at the end of the semester instead of using an average of formative assessments to derive the final grade	Teacher A: I don't like it. My students will stop turning in assignments if the grades don't count. They'll just wait until the final test and take their chances.	First or Second?
	Teacher B: I like this idea; it is quite different from what we've been doing, but the semester grade will reflect what the students know and can do, not an average of their performance while they were still learning.	First or Second?
Principal uses classroom walk-throughs to provide feedback to teachers on the quality of instruction and the implementation of new strategies.	Principal A: I'm pretty used to visiting classrooms and I think it is a great idea to give teachers feedback on what I see.	First or Second?
	Principal B: I guess we have to do this, but I'm concerned. I only observe my teachers for their annual assessment, so I don't know how I'm going to keep from letting these less formal observations influence my evaluations.	First or Second?

Table 2: Answers to Comprehension Check on First-and Second-Order Change

Description of Change	Comments from Teachers	Order of Change Explained
1. End each lesson by engaging students in a review of lesson content.	Teacher A: That makes sense to me. I do that occasionally…	**First order**: It is consistent with the teacher's current practice; it represents only an incremental change that builds on existing pedagogical knowledge.
	Teacher B: I sum up the major points of the lesson…, but I don't typically ask students…	**Second order**: It conflicts with the teacher's current practice; it may require new knowledge or skill (how to engage students in a lesson-ending review).
Base students' semester grade on demonstrated learning at the end of the semester instead of using an average of formative assessments to derive the final grade	Teacher A: Students will just wait for the final test and take their chances.	**Second order**: It conflicts with the teacher's values; it may require new knowledge or skill (how to motivate students apart from using grades).
	Teacher B: The grade will reflect what students know and can do…	**Second order**: It conflicts with the teacher's current practice; it is outside the teacher's existing paradigm.
Principal uses classroom walk-throughs to provide feedback to teachers on the quality of instruction and the implementation of new strategies rather than as part of the annual evaluation process	Principal A: I'm pretty used to visiting my teachers' classrooms	**First order**: It is consistent with the principal's current practice; the change will require only incremental changes in what the principal has been doing.
	Principal B: I don't know how I'm going to keep from letting these less formal observations influence my evaluations.	**Second order**: It conflicts with current practice; it represents a shift in the principal's paradigm for classroom observations.

The Genesis of the SREB Models

Improving education has been a major focus of SREB since its inception in 1948, but grants from The Wallace Foundation during the years 2000 through 2008 were the impetus for creating the SREB Learning-Centered Leadership Program. In the first year of Wallace funding, a focus group of principals recognized for their success in raising student achievement was convened to identify factors they believed essential to raising student achievement. Based on their input, 13 Critical Success Factors were identified and subsequently used as the guiding framework for the SREB initiative focused on improving school leadership preparation and development.

A list of the Critical Success Factors is presented in Appendix A. The identification and widespread publication of the Critical Success Factors served to make SREB a front-runner in recognizing the need and beginning the quest for ways to prepare a new breed of school principals and assistant principals who can effectively address the problems of schools and student achievement in the 21st century.

The Wallace grants provided the resources for SREB to work with a network of higher education institutions in the Southern region, urban school districts across the country and state education agencies on redesigning principal preparation programs and state-sponsored leadership academies to bring them in line with the rapidly changing demands made on the school leaders' job. Leading a school requires more of a principal in an era of urgency for higher student achievement, high-stakes testing and the challenges raised by the No Child Left Behind Act.

 These activities helped make the redesign of leadership preparation and development programs a top priority in states like Alabama, Louisiana and Tennessee where governors, legislators and state agency heads called for and supported major reforms and adopted new standards and program approval regulations that impacted all universities and other entities offering school leader training in their states.

The Wallace grants also provided SREB support in developing a series of research-based training modules focused on the Critical Success Factors to support university and district leadership program redesign and SREB's own school improvement initiatives. Many school districts within the United States and abroad have incorporated these modules into their leadership development systems. A number of publications that outline the research, products and lessons learned through these experiences are available on the SREB (www.sreb.org) and Wallace Foundation websites (www.wallacefoundation.org).

A grant from the School Leadership Program (SLP) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education in 2004 supported SREB in providing guidance to key state leaders in Tennessee on legislation that resulted in dramatic changes in standards for preparing school leaders. It also supported a redesign of leadership programs at two major state universities.

A second SLP grant in 2008 allowed SREB to concentrate its efforts on developing the capacities of both current and aspiring principals to lead continuous school improvement in Florida through the Florida Academy for Schools of Innovation and Improvement.

It was lessons learned from these grant-funded opportunities that helped SREB develop the capacity to envision and propose a model for preparing aspiring turnaround leaders that resulted in a contract with the Florida Department of Education to lead a major Race to the Top initiative in 2012-14.

The aim of the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program (FTLP) was to prepare a pool of principals and assistant principals to serve as turnaround leaders in five school districts that had the state's highest proportion of schools falling into the lowest 5 percent of low-performing schools and for Florida's system of charter schools.

This program was based on a differentiated model of principal preparation that concentrated on developing the special knowledge and skills necessary for principals to lead turnaround in chronically low-performing schools, rather than the traditional university-based curriculum of initial principal certification programs.

The SREB Turnaround Leadership model produced 82 successful completers in its first implementation in the FTLP, making it the largest of its kind and one of the most successful in the nation. This claim is supported by two sound measures: The cohort achieved significant increases and scored significantly higher than the national norm on all dimensions of the University of Washington's 5D Instructional Leadership Assessment at post-training administration, including individuals trained in the dimensions by that university; and 57 percent of the pool created by FTLP were promoted prior to the end of the program into school or district leadership positions within their high-need district or charter organization.

Conceptual Framework of SREB's Principal Preparation Models

This section presents the conceptual framework that supports SREB's principal preparation models. Other organizations considering adopting or adapting one or both of these models as part of their leadership development and succession plans are urged to study this framework carefully before deciding to implement. Throughout the publication, SREB's experiences in implementing the Aspiring Principals Program and the SREB Turnaround Leadership Model in two Florida initiatives are used as examples to provide clear illustrations of how the models' various elements can be effectively implemented.

Critical Dimensions of Leading Continuous School Improvement and Turnaround

Performing any job effectively depends on an individual possessing and exercising the knowledge, skills and dispositions — the competencies — required by the various dimensions of the job. This holds true whether the job is leading school improvement, plumbing a house or playing the violin in an orchestra.

Identifying the unique dimensions of leading continuous school improvement and turnaround, as opposed to those of school leadership in general, was paramount to SREB in building a coherent program of study and authentic practice that would ensure participants developed the right competencies for the job. Dan Duke, of the University of Virginia, provided invaluable input to the SREB Design Team by identifying the following list of critical dimensions of leading continuous school improvement and school turnaround.

1. Becoming aware of the problems that must be addressed and the obstacles that must be overcome to raise performance
2. Understanding why the problems and obstacles exist
3. Planning for the focus and direction necessary to guide action and maximize impact
4. Implementing an improvement plan by leading staff members in addressing problems and overcoming obstacles
5. Committing to lead school staff in addressing problems and overcoming obstacles

As referenced elsewhere in this document, there are unique skills, knowledge and dispositions required of leaders who are attempting to turn around longstanding problems of low student achievement — expertise that might not be as urgent in leading continuous school improvement at schools that are not in need of turnaround. Despite these differences, there are areas in which the expertise required to dramatically impact student achievement overlap with what is required to lead continuous school improvement.

This overlap can be described, at least in part, by these five dimensions of school leadership. It is important to acknowledge, however, that school leaders who have already turned around student achievement or have been effectively engaged in continuous school improvement for some time have likely made these core dimensions part of their routine practice. At schools in need of turnaround, putting the competencies reflected by these dimensions into practice is a priority task for school leaders. In the next several pages, these dimensions are described in greater detail.

Critical Dimensions In-Depth

Awareness

Chronically low-performing schools often have similar problems, such as low reading scores and staffing issues, but they can also have unique problems based on their history, community context and student body. The obstacles standing between higher performance and these problems may also vary from one low-performing school to another. The Design Team and the projects' stakeholders recognized the need for principals who lead continuous improvement or serve as turnaround specialists to be adept at collecting the data needed to pinpoint academic problems as well as problems affecting academic performance.

Some of these data will already be available to school leaders because of testing programs and required reporting. Other data may need to be compiled as part of the continuous improvement process or a turnaround initiative.

Effective school leaders must also know the context in which the school exists. Failure to grasp local culture and conditions can cause misjudgments regarding the obstacles to overcome to raise student achievement. A principal may not be able to remove all obstacles at once, so it is vital that he or she determines which obstacles are most likely to be removed quickly.

Understanding

It is possible to be aware of problems and obstacles, yet fail to understand why they exist. Students may struggle with reading, for example, because of a poor foundation in phonics, difficulty with fluency, limited vocabulary, comprehension problems or lack of practice in reading grade-level texts. **Ensuring continuous improvement or achieving successful turnarounds depends on understanding the root causes of performance problems and the root causes of obstacles standing in the way of improvement**. School leaders may not necessarily possess the expertise to identify some root causes, but they must be capable of securing the expertise of others to develop sound diagnoses upon which to base school improvement or turnaround plans.

It is important for school leaders to develop the diagnostic skills and sound judgment to identify the root causes of obstacles that school personnel are most likely and least likely to impact. Focusing on causes over which educators have little impact can lead to frustration and derail continuous improvement or turnaround efforts. One of the most common causes of low achievement in schools today is principals' and teachers' expectations about what students are capable of learning.

Low expectations lead to below grade-level instruction which, in turn, perpetuates low achievement. Developing a productive work culture for students and adults requires more than setting high expectations. It involves establishing organizational processes that include norms regarding equity, expectations, efficacy and engagement. (See SREB's publication *Fostering a Culture of High Performance: Changing Practice by Using Data*[8] for more detail on this topic.)

Planning

Diagnosing the root causes of low performance in a chronically low-performing school can result in identification of a variety of problematic conditions. Trying to address all such conditions simultaneously, however, can lead to loss of focus, failure and frustration. **To avoid these problems, school leaders need to see that school improvement plans focus on a reasonable set of goals and objectives**.

A well-designed school improvement plan provides a clear direction for school personnel and a solid basis for allocating school resources. Plans also provide benchmarks for tracking progress and designate individuals to be held accountable for accomplishing specific objectives. Plans also indicate to the school community what the priorities for improvement are, thereby offering a basis for mobilizing local support for continuous improvement or turnaround initiatives.

> ***Where Leaders Should Focus Their Efforts***
>
> *The causes of low performance most likely to be impacted by school personnel include*
>
> - *staffing*
> - *programs*
> - *instructional practices*
> - *classroom assessment*
> - *organizational processes*
> - *school-level policies*
> - *professional development*
> - *parental involvement*

<u>Implementing a Plan</u>

Awareness, understanding and planning are of little benefit if principals lack the competence to lead school personnel in implementing improvement plans with bold approaches and promising interventions to alleviate existing problems. **The ability to execute plans entails a variety of skills, including generating a sense of urgency for change, overcoming resistance and building teams.**

Effective school leaders frequently use project management techniques borrowed from business to ensure staff members continue to focus on key improvement objectives. Competence in recruiting and retaining talented staff members, assigning staff in ways that take advantage of their talents, and ensuring that staff members continue to refine their knowledge and skills also are of great importance in raising student achievement.

<u>Commitment</u>

The last dimension of leading continuous improvement or turnaround is the most critical. **Without strong conviction that the improvement or turnaround initiative is the right thing to do to provide students greater opportunities to learn and prepare for success in college, careers and life, even the best improvement efforts can fall prey to distractions and the day-to-day challenges of managing schools**. The commitment to persist, even when there are setbacks, is rooted in a set of values and beliefs.

School leaders must believe positive change is possible. They must be willing to monitor progress on a continuing basis and make midcourse corrections when momentum slows. They must have faith in what they can accomplish with the proper direction and the courage to confront staff members who fail to embrace the improvement agenda. Most importantly, they must insist that school personnel never give up on the students they serve.

Critical Design Principles

For more than a decade, university-based principal preparation and on-the-job professional development for principals have been criticized for their lack of strong curricula and practical experiences grounded in the actual work that principals must do to be effective leaders.[9] It is common for principals to complain that their professional development is meaningless since much of it is not specific to the conditions under which they work or the real challenges they face.

In an effort to provide training more in line with the needs of prospective turnaround leaders, the teams developing the SREB models looked to the body of research on adult learning and the insights of veteran educational leaders. This resulted in a set of design principles for leader development that were used to guide the development and delivery of training for the Aspiring Principals Program and the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program. The seven design principles are:

1. Problem-based learning
2. Situated learning
3. Data-based problem solving
4. Team-based assignments and activities
5. Coaching and continuous feedback
6. Sequenced learning
7. Instructors who model turnaround skills

What follows is a concise summary of the rationale for each principle and a brief explanation of how these principles were applied. While these principles guided SREB's work in both programs, the examples used in this section are drawn from the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program.

Problem-Based Learning

Problem-based learning involves structuring learning experiences so learners engage in guided problem solving focused on a complex problem that does not have a single correct answer. Often, students work in collaborative groups to (1) identify what they need to learn to solve the assigned problem, (2) engage in self-directed learning to acquire the knowledge and skills needed, (3) apply their new knowledge to the problem, and (4) reflect on what they learned and the effectiveness of the strategies employed.

The earliest use of problem-based learning was in medical education.[10] Medical schools recognized that much of what doctors did in working directly with patients involved a hypothetical-deductive reasoning process (accurately connecting symptoms with causes) and expert knowledge in multiple domains (understanding how the body works and how diverse treatments might address the root causes of illness).

Traditional medical education relied on a lecture-based approach, which was inadequate to supply a context for the topics addressed in the lecture or to guide practitioners in their clinical application. That is, lecture, as a methodology, was efficient in terms of imparting information, but it failed to provide what the aspiring physicians needed to be able to recognize when that knowledge was applicable in treating real patients and how it might be applied. Problem-based learning was an attempt to address these shortcomings.

Problem-based learning appealed to SREB as an instructional methodology that would be useful in preparing turnaround leaders. First, problem-based learning provided practice in two skills required for school turnaround: understanding ill-defined problems and developing practical, real-world solutions.[11] But other goals of problem-based learning offered still more that aligned perfectly with the outcomes SREB sought to obtain.

Hmelo-Silver and Eberbach[12] described problem-based learning as helping learners develop (1) flexible knowledge, (2) effective problem-solving skills, (3) self-directed learning skills, (4) effective collaborative skills, and (5) intrinsic motivation for solving the problem. These objectives matched up very well with the outcomes desired for FTLP participants.

SREB also used what was known about problem-based learning to guide the development of the FTLP curriculum. For example, Savery (2006, p. 12), in writing about problem-based learning said that "critical to the success of the approach is the selection of ill-structured problems (often interdisciplinary) and a tutor who guides the learning process and conducts a thorough debriefing at the conclusion of the learning experience."

The directions for many of the FTLP assignments provided a structure for completing the assignment, but did not outline or describe the problem to be solved. This met the first of Savery's two success factors. The second factor was addressed through the use of mentors who provided guidance as the work associated with an assignment was being planned and executed, and detailed feedback on the participants' completed work through an SREB-developed rubric.

The 23 major assignments, seminar follow-up activities, online modules and other program-required activities that participants undertook over 27 months of training involved the kinds of real-world problems found in chronically low-performing schools, ranging from reducing the achievement gap between student subgroups to creating safe and orderly classrooms.

All were completed in low-performing schools during the practicum and internship. These assignments and other requirements were embedded in two primary activities: a yearlong practicum in a low-performing school and a six-month internship in a second low-performing school. A complete list of FTLP assignments, seminar follow-up activities and other program requirements follows the description of the design principles.

Situated Learning

Brown, Collins and Duguid[13] argued that meaningful learning will take place only if it is embedded in the social and physical context within which it will be used — a key concept of situated learning. They described situated learning as a cognitive apprenticeship in which learners move from observing skilled performance to actually performing the same tasks as the expert practitioner. This structure seemed particularly well suited to developing turnaround leaders, and so SREB utilized a number of situated learning concepts in framing assignments and other activities FTLP participants would complete.

Paula Vincini,[14] an instructional design specialist with extensive experience in situated learning, set forth several guiding principles that describe how the SREB Design Team structured the FTLP curriculum as a form of situated learning:

- Learning is driven and best presented through realistic and complex problems that allow learners to think and practice like experts in the field.

- Content is learned through activities that help solve problems, and not from "packages" of information organized by instructors.

- The instructor's role moves from providing and structuring information and knowledge through lectures and presentations to modeling, coaching and scaffolding learners as they use information and create knowledge to solve contextual real-life problems.

- Situated learning environments must support active engagement, discussion, evaluation and reflective thinking. Activities and assignments are often collaborative and group-based.

The problems FTLP participants addressed in their assignments and seminar follow-up activities were derived from their work in their home schools, their practicum schools or their internship schools. Thus, they were authentic and meaningful, rather than contrived or simulated, as is often the case in traditional principal preparation and development programs.

Data-Based Problem Solving

While basing instructional decisions on a careful analysis of relevant data is an increasingly common practice throughout the United States, it has been a heavily emphasized priority in Florida since 2004 when the state instituted data-based problem solving as a key component of the plan to implement Response to Intervention (RtI) in every school. The role of data in this problem-solving process is illustrated in Figure 2.

This approach — the reliance on data to understand the problem, determine the cause(s), identify and implement solutions, and monitor the impact of those solutions — guided the design of FTLP assignments and seminar follow-up activities. For example, the very first assignment undertaken by FTLP participants was developing a case study on their assigned school that involved collecting and analyzing comprehensive data.

The participants were guided in this work by a sample case study of a school in one of the partner districts and by training on what questions to ask about the data they collected and how to use it to diagnose actionable causes of low achievement. In addition, a number of other assignments required participants to collect and analyze data to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of specific

Figure 2: Illustration of Data-Based Problem Solving
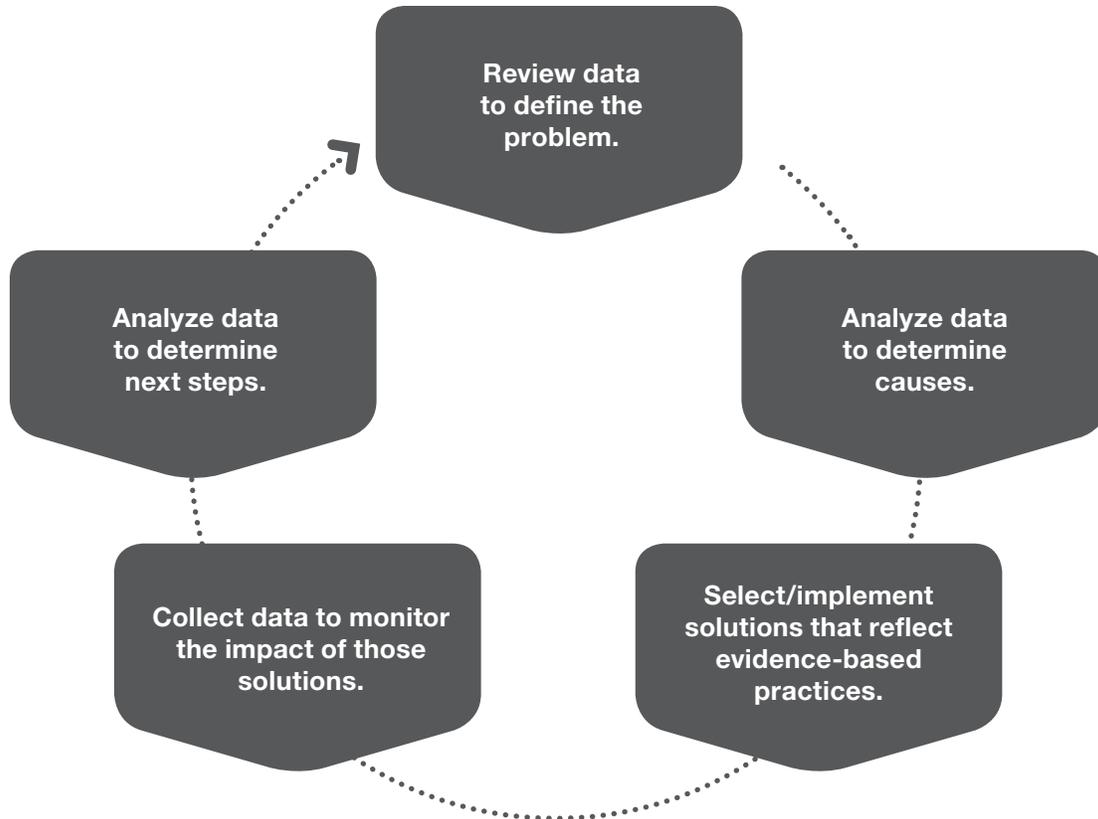
components of the school program and/or problems contributing to low-achievement, including such areas as discipline and school safety, schoolwide instructional rigor, interventions implementation and the quality of career and technical education.

Team-Based Assignments and Activities

A number of diverse strategies can be found under the umbrella of team-based learning.[15] At one end of the continuum of team-based learning are highly-structured strategies that emphasize using purposefully selected team membership that ensures diversity in terms of relevant skills and knowledge, individual accountability for making appropriate contributions to the work, incentives for working together effectively, and guidance and/or instruction on how to work well as a team. On the opposite end are strategies that allow team members to self-select and provide no instruction or incentives to improve the effectiveness of the team as the assignment is completed.

A team-based approach was built into the structure of the FTLP in two ways: (1) having participants work in groups on activities during seminars and (2) having participants work in teams on field-based assignments at their practicum or internship schools. A series of small group activities was embedded in each seminar to provide participants immediate practice in applying what they learned. These activities allowed participants to benefit from brainstorming, an open exchange of ideas and the opportunity to seek and make use of immediate feedback on their efforts.

Here are two examples of assignments that represented team-based learning opportunities within the two field experiences. In completing the case study assignment as part of their work at the practicum school, participants were formed into two- to four-member teams from the same district (charter participants were paired where they were located near enough to one another to make collaboration practical).

These teams worked together to collect data and compile a comprehensive case study of a designated low-performing school (the practicum school). **During the internship, each participant led a project management team in implementing a 90-day segment of the school's improvement plan and worked with groups of teachers on several other major assignments.**

The lead practice coach held individual participants accountable for actively taking part in team-based activities and intervened when team member contributions were uneven. Advice for working effectively as a team was included in the directions for many of the FTLP assignments and seminar follow-up activities, but no formal training in working with teams was provided until the internship.

Future implementations should include specific training in how to work with and through teams to accomplish shared objectives, and this training should come early in the program so participants can benefit from substantial practice in working in teams.

Coaching and Continuous Feedback

Research support for the impact of coaching and feedback on the classroom teachers' implementation of instructional practices has been around for many years[16] (see Cornett and Knight[17] for an extensive review). At the time the FTLP was in the design phase, evidence of a similar impact of coaching provided to principals was not widely available. However, many experts in leadership development, including SREB, were touting coaching and/or mentoring as crucial elements of a strong principal preparation program.

Believing the benefits of coaching that had been proven with teachers would also accrue to aspiring turnaround leaders, the Design Team built multiple forms of coaching into its design. Each FTLP participant had his/her own expert support team comprising a mentor principal chosen from the ranks of effective principals within their own school system. A district contact person was responsible for expediting field-based training and overseeing progress throughout the program; a school improvement coach worked with them from the outset of the internship through the end of the program; the principals of the practicum and internship schools and an SREB-based lead practice coach supported and coordinated the work of mentor principals and coaches, and provided extensive coaching and feedback directly to participants.

Each support team member had occasions throughout the training program to provide feedback on a participant's performance and progress. It was the mentor principal's responsibility to coordinate the feedback process and assess how well the participant performed on structured assignments. The Design Team developed rubrics and other tools to guide mentors in the assessment process. If participants could not reach their mentors or coaches when they encountered challenges or simply needed someone to hear their concerns, the lead practice coach was available to them via email or telephone almost around the clock.

Sequenced Learning

The idea that learning is enhanced when knowledge acquisition is followed by opportunities to apply that knowledge and when the learner receives feedback on his/her performance is found in the work of a wide range of learning theorists and instructional design experts from Gagne[18] to Marzano[19]. The learning experiences of FTLP participants were designed to follow an acquisition to application to feedback pattern. The Design Team understood that knowledge about turnaround was essential, but they also believed the true test of learning is demonstrated through application of the acquired knowledge in an authentic setting.

For this reason, participants' learning was sequenced so application of turnaround skills occurred directly following content presentation in seminars, online modules and webcasts, where feedback from turnaround experts could be provided immediately. Subsequently, participants applied their newly acquired knowledge and skills in the authentic settings provided by their work in the practicum and internship schools.

Again, mentors, coaches and the practicum and internship school principals provided feedback on their performances. Many participants also requested and received individual feedback on draft work products from the lead practice coach via email.

Figure 3 illustrates the varied forms of knowledge acquisition, application and feedback employed to support participant learning in the SREB Turnaround Leadership Model.

Figure 3: Illustration of Sequenced Learning

Acquisition

Content presentations at seminars

Readings from online modules

Observation of principals at practicum and internship schools

Webcasts, including CTE series

Application

In-seminar small group activities

Major assignments and seminar follow-up activities

Module assignments

Classroom walk-throughs and other practicum/internship requirements

Feedback

Seminar presenter and module facilitators

Mentors and coaches

Practicum and internship principals

Lead practice coach

Expert panel members

Instructors Who Model Turnaround Skills

Nearly seven of 10 principals surveyed by Public Agenda[20] believed that the leadership training at universities is "out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today's school districts." Critics of current principal preparation programs also cite weak connections between theory and practice and university faculty who have little recent experience as school leaders.[21] In response to these concerns with traditional principal preparation programs, the Design Team committed to drawing instructors and facilitators, to the greatest extent possible, from the ranks of turnaround specialists.

To ensure the training content was accurate, authentic and specific to turnaround leadership, rather than generic, the selected instructors met with the Design Team well in advance of the seminar or module they were asked to deliver. They received an introduction to the FTLP and learned about their assigned skill set and the subsequent assignments and activities participants were expected to complete. They presented their ideas for content aligned with the skill set and discussed possible activities for in-seminar group work and at least one seminar follow-up activity that was to be completed in the participant's practicum, internship or home school.

Following this initial meeting, instructors were assigned an instructional development specialist from the Design Team to assist in creating high-quality materials and activities for their seminar.

This process resulted in instructors sharing their own experiences within a focused context based on the overall FTLP design, and provided participants living proof that low-performing schools can be turned around.

The second set of design principles SREB adhered to in designing the two principal preparation models described in this publication were drawn from what is known about how adults learn and their preferences for how their learning is structured. The adult learning principles SREB followed are listed below. The consistency across these two sets of guiding principles helped SREB plan optimal learning experiences for participants.

Adults learn effectively when:

1. Their learning is directed at solving a specific job-related problem

2. They are involved in selecting the content and, where possible, the development of the learning experiences or process to be used

3. They are involved with their colleagues in solving problems that represent collective concerns.

4. They believe they are being prepared for tasks and responsibilities that are more challenging or complex than current tasks

5. They are provided with opportunities for carefully guided reflection about their performance of new competencies

6. Their concerns are understood and used to provide appropriate support as they learn about and implement new practices

7. They are given support after initial training in the form of coaching, team-based tasks and opportunities to learn by watching their colleagues perform

Logic Model

Organizations developing programs for preparing principals and assistant principals with the requisite competencies for leading school improvement and turnaround should begin their work with a clear understanding of why the proposed program is expected to achieve important goals. In other words, a logic model should be constructed to show the relationship between resources – including money, time, staffing and training materials – to be invested in the program (**inputs**); the methods and activities that will be used to accomplish program goals (**throughputs and activities**); the short- and long-term indicators of progress toward the goals and direct results of activities (**outputs**); and the long-term changes that are expected to result from the program (**outcomes**).

Logic models are of little use in implementing a program unless they are connected to the larger vision and specific goals an organization intends to reach. These connections, as well as details concerning how the four components of the SREB logic model were operationalized in the SREB Turnaround Leadership model, are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: SREB Turnaround Leadership Model

VISION: All students attend schools in which the leadership team ensures students are provided a rigorous, standards-based program of curriculum and instruction that readies them for success in college or advanced career preparation.

GOAL: Provide replicable, research-based leadership preparation and development programs that ensure aspiring and current principals have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to develop teachers' instructional expertise and lead turnaround and continuous improvement in student achievement.

Inputs	Throughputs/Activities	Outputs	Outcomes

• LEA, university and other high-level decision makers committed to collaborative planning, implementation and conditions for achieving program goals
 	
• State and/or district instructional standards and principal/teacher evaluation systems
 	
• SREB Turnaround Leadership model and training materials
 	
• SREB project management staff and master trainers
 	
• Designated district contact with allocated project time
 	
• Local principal mentors and coaches
 	
• State, district or other-source funding sufficient to implement the program with fidelity to the model
 	
• Participant access to Web-based instruction
	• Convene Design Team monthly to customize training, monitor delivery and coordinate partners' work.
	
	• Facilitate a rigorous, locally implemented participant selection process.
	
	• Train and supervise mentors and coaches.
	
	• Deliver seminars, online modules, field assignments and other training activities via multiple instructional methodologies within acquisition/application/feedback model.
	
	• Provide district/participant support system.
	  • Monthly meetings with district contacts
	  • Supervision and support of local mentors and coaches by an SREB lead practice coach
	  • Electronic repository of participant and mentor materials
	  • Monthly snapshots of upcoming training, assignments, due dates, etc.
	  • "Anytime access" to SREB staff
	
	• Conduct participant performance evaluation to track/assess mastery of targeted leadership skill sets.
	
	• Conduct formative/summative evaluations of overall program design, implementation and results.
		• Effective collaboration resulting in on-time, on-budget program delivery
		
		• At least 80 percent of participants completing the program and judged ready to lead a low-performing school
		
		• At least 80 percent of participants satisfied with program content, learning activities and support
		
		• Increased pool of aspiring principals to lead turnaround and continuous improvement in low-performing schools
		
		• District contacts with increased capacity to plan and deliver future principal preparation programs; support principals of low-performing schools
		
		• Mentors and coaches providing effective support to aspiring principals
		
		• Lessons learned to guide redesign of district principal preparation program and succession planning
			• Higher student performance – percentage meeting standards, graduation rates, college/career readiness, college completion and workforce success
			
			• Local cadres of expert mentor principals and coaches supporting district principal preparation and development initiatives
			
			• Turnaround initiatives effectively implemented in every low-performing school, producing measurable gains in closing the achievement gap
			
			• District leadership development plan providing pipeline of well-prepared principals and assistant principals with essential competencies to fill vacancies in all schools, including low-performing schools

SREB Principal Preparation Models

Figure 4: Relationships among SREB Leadership Models
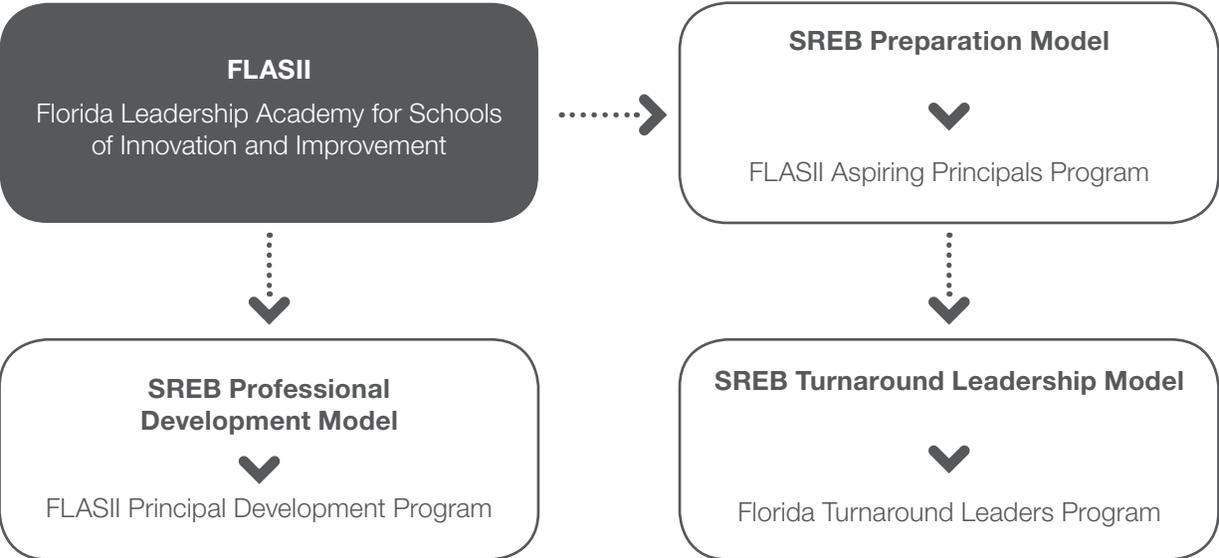
As illustrated in Figure 4, SREB used the opportunities presented by FLASII as a catalyst for **applying its expertise in school improvement and principal preparation in designing, building and testing three replicable models for deepening current and aspiring school leaders'** knowledge and skills for improving student achievement. While this publication is focused on the models for preparing aspiring leaders for school improvement and equipping leaders to turn around student achievement at chronically low-performing schools, **the SREB Professional Development Model in this diagram was included to accurately portray the full scope of work for which FLASII was the foundation.** Because the SREB Professional Development Model had a unique focus — it was designed to increase the capacity of sitting principals, along with their leadership teams, to lead their faculties in continuous improvement of teaching and learning — it was left for a separate publication.

Chapter 2:
Florida Leadership Academy for Schools of Innovation and Improvement

The Florida Leadership Academy for Schools of Innovation and Improvement was a five-year partnership initiative of the Florida Department of Education, the Southern Regional Education Board, the University of North Florida and a select set of Florida school districts with a high proportion of high-need schools (Duval, Escambia, Gadsden, Highlands, Madison, and Orange).

The partners' mission was to increase the supply of highly qualified principals to lead continuous improvement of student achievement in selected high-need districts across the state. **FLASII incorporated a two-tiered approach to this mission by working with sitting principals and assistant principals to expand their capacities to lead continuous school improvement and by developing a modified university-based preparation model that emphasized preparing participants to lead continuous school improvement in low-performing schools. This aspiring principal preparation model was further refined and more discretely focused on leaders for the lowest- performing schools in the development of SREB's Turnaround Leadership Model, which was implemented for the first time in Florida as the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program.**

To accomplish this mission, the FLASII partners worked to achieve the following:

- Develop and test replicable models for preparing and developing aspiring and current school leaders that build their capacities to lead improvement of student achievement.

- Recruit, train, certify and retain a pool of new school leaders who can work with teachers, parents and others to bring about improvement in high-need schools.

- Provide professional development and coaching for current principals and assistant principals to support them in implementing proven practices that are linked to increased student achievement.

The major outcomes of the FLASII project included: (1) tested leadership preparation and development programs for both aspiring and current leaders that incorporated the elements of quality professional development identified by research and best practice; (2) a pool of 24 well-prepared and certified new school leaders committed to serving as principals or assistant principals in low-performing schools within the targeted high-need districts; and (3) a plethora of lessons learned to guide development of future leadership programs and state policies for scaling up and sustaining a system that provides a pipeline of well-prepared leaders for low-performing schools.

FLASII Oversight

The Academy's oversight, design and delivery were guided during 2008 - 2011 by four input and decision-making bodies:

- Florida Commission on Leadership for High-Need Districts

- Academy Design Team

- Academy Curriculum Development Team

- Academy Management Team

Florida Commission on Leadership for High-Need Districts

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE), with guidance from SREB, established a Commission on Leadership for High-Need Districts to plan, coordinate and provide oversight for the Academy's development; monitor implementation and evaluation activities; and craft recommendations that would support its continuation and replication. The 14-member Commission appointed by the Florida education commissioner included a broad representation of state, district and school-level leaders and stakeholders in education policy and practice.

The long-term purpose and role for the Commission was to lift the preparation, support and retention of effective leaders for low-performing schools to high visibility as a state priority, recommend to the state board of education an appropriate set of policies and a plan for replicating the Academy's emerging training and delivery in other districts, and secure state political and financial support for scaling up the Academy models in district and university partnerships across the state.

Academy Design Team

The Academy Design Team provided input on content, structure, instructional methods and delivery of all FLASII components. Its membership consisted of 14 carefully selected representatives, including key FDOE and central office staff, exemplary principals, university faculty and other experts in school improvement and leader preparation and development. At the startup of project implementation in fall 2008, a subgroup of this team made a site visit to the New York City Leadership Academy to investigate elements of that highly regarded program that could be incorporated into the FLASII models.

The full team was then convened in an initial one-day meeting to gain an understanding of the purpose, goals and proposed overall design of the project and to give detailed input on the content, structure, delivery schedule and other components for both program models. The team was subsequently convened in three meetings annually to review progress in program implementation and help plan midcourse corrections as necessary.

Academy Curriculum Development Team

This smaller team made decisions about how the courses would be sequenced, what modifications or enhancements were needed to imbue them with concepts and practices of continuous school improvement and what topics would be included in the seminars. This team, under the direct leadership of the project director, met in person almost monthly to make programmatic decisions, but also communicated via emails and telephone calls about the day-to-day implementation of the APP, including such things as student enrollment, tuition payments and students' progress in the master's degree program.

Academy Management Team

The Academy Management Team was responsible for planning, coordinating and evaluating the implementation of all project activities. The team consisted of FDOE bureau chiefs for school improvement and leadership preparation, SREB project co-directors, a university leadership program director and designated district contacts. The FDOE bureau chiefs and project co-directors met monthly over the three-year duration of the training for both aspiring and sitting school leaders, usually via telephone conferences. The team attended Design Team meetings and the Commission on Leadership for High-Need Districts.

Project staff conducted additional meetings and communications with district contacts, held training sessions and seminars, and communicated via day-to-day emails and telephone calls. Written reports about the project were routinely disseminated to members of the team to help keep them abreast of activities and the interim results being achieved.

Figure 5: FLASII Programs
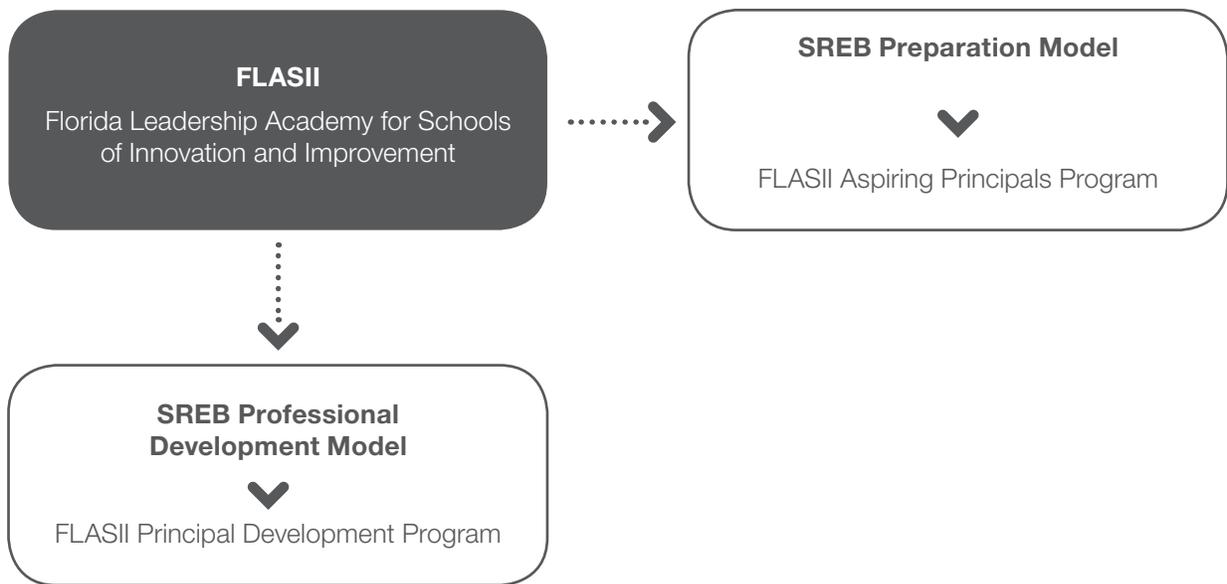
FLASII Oversight

The initial efforts of the FLASII Academy Design and Curriculum Development Teams resulted in two distinct programs built on SREB models: the Principal Development Program (PDP), which provided extensive professional development and coaching for sitting principals and assistant principals to support them in implementing rigorous school transformation initiatives; and the Aspiring Principals Program (APP), which equipped aspiring school leaders with the skills and knowledge to lead school improvement at low-performing schools through a modified initial preparation program.

The following sections provide an overview of the primary components of the APP that illustrates the framework provided by the SREB Preparation Model, outline the initial steps taken to orient the partners to the project, explain how participants were selected, and provide detailed descriptions of the APP's components. Data are provided on the results of the APP, including comments from participants and other stakeholders. Throughout this APP description, the seven design principles, where applied, are identified by a small textbox naming the relevant design principle. This section concludes with a comprehensive list of the lessons learned from implementing the APP.

FLASII Aspiring Principals Program

The APP was built upon SREB's preparation model for equipping future principals and school leaders with the skills to engage in school improvement work and make it the centerpiece of their leadership practice. The model called for aspiring principals to undergo three years of training that included completing a master's degree in educational leadership, participating in and applying new skills in authentic settings, and receiving coaching to help them strengthen their performance.

Two additional years of ongoing district support was added for those who were subsequently appointed to leadership positions in their respective districts. The formal goal of this program was to recruit, train, certify, hire and retain up to 40 new leaders who can work with teachers, parents and others to improve high-need schools.

The primary components of this program were:

1. Graduate course work in educational leadership to enable participants to meet state requirements for Level I licensure as a school principal

2. Special topics seminars that equip participants with the skills, knowledge and dispositions essential to leading dramatic improvements in teaching and learning at chronically low-performing schools

3. SREB Leadership Modules that provide online, self-paced instruction on key topics that, like the special topics seminars, go beyond the depth and breadth of topics in generic principal preparation programs

4. An extensive, two-year field experience (the practicum) based on the principle of sequenced learning in which participants transition from <u>observing</u> effective school leaders to <u>participating</u> with those leaders in school improvement efforts and finally actually <u>leading</u> those efforts themselves

5. Post-graduation seminars on advanced topics

6. A district-managed two-year induction program to support newly appointed assistant principals

Figure 6 provides an overview of these components.

Figure 6: Overview of the Components of the Aspiring Principals Program

Graduate Course Work

- State approved standards-based content, instructional methods, learning activities and assessments
- Thirteen master's-level courses tailored to emphasize knowledge, skills and behaviors for improving student achievement
- Master's degree and qualification for Florida Level I Educational Leadership License for successful completers.
- Online delivery by select university faculty and practitioners
- Tuition assistance covering one-half the cost of course work

Special Topics Seminars

- Essential knowledge, strategies and practical tips for leading middle grades and high school reform
- Exposure to experts in relevant disciplines
- Knowledge of effective principals
- Intensive guidance on planning the practicum
- Venue for cohort members to collaborate, share and support each other

SREB Leadership Module Training

- Research-based content and strategies for improving school and classroom practices
- Identifying and solving problems in school and classroom practices that impact student achievement
- Opportunities to work with leaders from diverse schools
- Take-home action plans for applying new knowledge, skills and behaviors in leading school improvement efforts

Two-Year Practicum

- Opportunities to observe, participate and lead real-time school improvement efforts
- Action research project on increasing student achievement
- Practicum Learning Planner that promotes integration of theory into practice
- Trained and rewarded mentor principals
- Continual coaching by expemplary principals
- Standards-based protocols and rubrics for planning, documenting and assessing experiences

Post-Graduation Seminars

- Analyzing the context of low-performing schools
- Envisioning a culture of high expectations
- Providing a rigorous, relevant curriculum
- Promoting effective teaching and learning
- Building a productive school environment

Induction Program

- Two years of coaching and individualized support of newly appointed principals and assistant principals by district staff

FLASII Aspiring Principals Program

In creating an effective partnership to develop and test the FLASII APP, the first order of business was providing district leaders in the selected high-need districts with a thorough orientation to the FLASII project and clarifying how the Management Team would solicit and utilize their input regarding local needs and priorities and address their concerns. This was accomplished by the FDOE convening an online meeting; they requested key leaders in each of the six participating districts to attend.

The next critical step was identifying a university with a will to collaborate and seek change, and a commitment to allocate the necessary resources of time, money and staffing. Will was defined as dissatisfaction with the current program in terms of preparing aspirants to become effective leaders of low-performing schools, a sense of urgency to take action that would alleviate or improve the situation, and a shared vision of the ideal program the partners hoped to create.

The commitment to allocate necessary resources to support the program proved to be more problematic than anticipated. The university that committed to being a partner when the proposal to U.S. Department of Education was prepared, ultimately decided it did not have the staffing resources to provide the envisioned master's degree program in educational leadership, especially during summer sessions when faculty time would be reduced. After approaching several other potential university partners and experiencing a false start with another, the University of North Florida ultimately agreed to become the partner.

The guiding framework for structuring the APP incorporated the best practices gleaned from the literature on university-district partnerships for preparing school leaders and the lessons learned from SREB's 25 years of work in school improvement and leadership development.

Aspiring Principals Program Selection Process

An effective recruitment and selection process is a critical component of a high-quality principal preparation program. Preparing individuals for the complex work of a principal can best be accomplished if candidates enter the program with proficiency in oral and written communication, expertise in teaching, some experience in leading adults in teamwork and the personal traits of effective leaders.

According to Levine,[22] a dependence on individuals to self-select for principal training instead of purposefully recruiting and selecting those who show the greatest potential for becoming outstanding school leaders has gotten us into a troublesome predicament. Most districts have more licensed candidates waiting in the wings than there are schools to lead. While in most locales there is an abundance of candidates who hold the right credentials, many are not willing to serve or are deemed not well qualified for the job when a vacancy has to be filled. This is especially true when it comes to providing leadership for low-performing high schools, where it is most difficult to get experienced, effective principals and assistant principals to fill vacancies and to retain them there.

We envisioned the FLASII Aspiring Principals Program as a model that could fill this void by using a stringent process and criteria for selecting candidates and then equipping them with the special knowledge, skills and behaviors needed by principals who serve in struggling middle grades and high schools.

The selection process used in the initial implementation of the APP was comprehensive and designed to identify candidates who demonstrated the following knowledge, skills and dispositions:

- Passion and commitment to closing the achievement gap, as evidenced by increased student performance in the classes they teach
- Expertise in curriculum and instruction
- Leadership traits and capacities gleaned from leading improvement initiatives in their schools
- Strong communication skills — written and oral
- Three or more years of successful experience in a K-12 teaching position

The components employed in identifying and selecting candidates who met these criteria included many of those recommended in the research on principal selection, such as:

1. Nomination by the candidate's principals

2. Three letters of recommendation by immediate supervisors and others who had observed the candidate's professional performance, focusing on specified performance domains

3. A written application requiring detailed targeted selection-type descriptions (situation, action, results) of how the candidate had improved student achievement and provided leadership for improving curriculum and instruction, as well as the candidate's perception of the principal's role and commitment to becoming a school leader

4. Interviews in which the candidate analyzed different levels of student performance on the same assignment and identified next steps in providing student-appropriate instruction

Prior to opening the recruitment and selection process, SREB school improvement coaches had the opportunity to make informal observations of teachers in schools participating in the FLASII Professional Development Program as the teachers served on leadership teams for school improvement. Based on these observations, the coaches visited with and encouraged promising candidates in the project schools to apply for the program and suggested to their principals that they consider tapping these individuals as their nominees.

Candidates generally learned about the program from their principals, who were provided brochures for dissemination by the project staff. In the two largest partner districts, Duval and Orange, there were intensive efforts to advertise the program, including meetings with key district staff and principals. SREB school improvement coaches also met with principals participating in the FLASII Principal Development Program to encourage them to nominate well-qualified candidates for the Aspiring Principals Program.

During focus groups conducted by an independent evaluation consultant in summer 2010, APP participants reported that they thought the selection process was fair and valid and that both the application materials and interviews addressed qualities and experiences aspiring principals should possess. They expressed appreciation that the focus was on a principal's role today, rather than an antiquated view of the role.

In addition to meeting requirements for selection into the FLASII Aspiring Principals Program, candidates had to apply and meet requirements for admission to graduate study at the University of North Florida.

Graduate Course Work

The graduate course work offered through the FLASII university partner, the University of North Florida, consisted of 13 online courses delivered over two years. The courses were taught by select university faculty who volunteered to redesign their courses in keeping with the program's curriculum and by practitioners with a track record of success in specific areas of leadership such as school finance and school law. The courses were all state approved and included multiple instructional methods, individual and team learning activities and assessments that emphasized knowledge, skills and behaviors that improve a school's culture, organizational practices, classroom instruction and learning outcomes.

The required courses were scheduled to allow participants to complete the master's program requirements prior to the end of the APP so participants would not be overburdened by taking more than two courses per semester; however, there was one term in which three courses were scheduled to provide credit for the practicum. To assist APP participants in managing the financial commitment of obtaining a master's degree, SREB paid one-half the tuition costs for 13 graduate courses (39 hours of credit).

Teams of university professors tailored educational leadership courses to more substantially address the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed by middle grades and high school principals serving schools in need of improvement. A key element of this process was for the program's lead coach to review the course syllabi.

The review focused on identifying additional topics relevant to the school improvement process to be included in the course content and revising course activities to ensure they matched the leadership behaviors described in the relevant Florida Leadership Standards, and to ensure they were designed with the APP practicum in mind (that is, the course assignments and activities involved participants in working with the school leadership team and/or teachers to improve teaching and learning). The university faculty teams received stipends for their work to tailor their courses to the aims of the APP.

The 13 courses offered by the University of North Florida (UNF) as a part of the APP represent a typical program to prepare individuals for initial certification in educational leadership.

1. Education in America
2. Foundations of Educational Research
3. Action Research in Education
4. Introduction to Educational Leadership
5. Developing School and Community Relations
6. Curriculum Leadership for Schools
7. Human Resource Development in Education
8. Leadership for Learning Organizations
9. Law & Ethics in Educational Leadership
10. School Finance
11. Technology & Educational Leadership
12. Principles of School Accountability and Assessment
13. Instructional Leadership

Even with the modifications made to course content and learning experiences by UNF faculty and APP staff, it was clear that preparing aspiring leaders to lead continuous improvement at low-performing schools would require additional training. For this reason, the APP model included extensive use of special topics seminars to provide in-depth training in the skills and knowledge needed to plan and manage continuous improvement of teaching and learning.

Special Topics Seminars

The APP Special Topics Seminars were two-day training events that brought together all members of the APP cohort in a central location once each semester. The seminars were planned collaboratively by selected content experts and the FLASII Curriculum Development Team. The topics presented during each seminar are listed below. Seminar content was sequenced to enable participants to acquire specific knowledge and skills prior to applying them in the completion of practicum experiences, documenting the performance of relevant Florida Leadership Standards.

Design Principle 6
Sequenced Learning

Special Topics Seminar 1: Diversity, inclusion and equity as essential elements of a school culture that supports high expectations for all students

Special Topics Seminar 2: Providing a standards-based curriculum — prioritizing standards; managing school improvement projects; and defining student achievement, teacher practices and behaviors that change student achievement, and school leader practices that support changes in teacher practices and behaviors

Special Topics Seminar 3: Building and working with teams to improve teaching and learning

Special Topics Seminar 4: The principal interview process, including how to identify various types of interview questions and appropriate responses, the value of effective self-presentation, and application of competency acquisition theory in the selection of teachers and other job candidates

Special Topics Seminar 5: Developing a strong portfolio of demonstrated leadership competencies during the practicum, behavioral analysis concepts and strategies principals can use in working with faculty to achieve school goals, the Change Game simulation on school improvement, lesson study as a process for improving instruction and student achievement, and organizing and using data to focus and sustain school improvement

In the concurrent lead-up to adopting new state and national standards for educational leadership, the project staff determined participants should receive additional training that incorporated the anticipated changes in knowledge, skills and dispositions these new standards would require. Upon receiving U.S. Department of Education approval of project amendments in the final quarter of Project Year 4, SREB began providing the aspiring principals cohort a series of five post-master's seminars, each focusing on key skill sets required of turnaround principals.

Design Principle 7
Instructors Who Model
Turnaround Skills

The first seminar, October 12-13, 2012, featured Daniel Duke, co-developer of the University of Virginia's much-acclaimed School Turnaround Specialist Program. Participants benefited from this extended training and networking opportunity and gave the seminar high marks on the evaluation for its content, relevancy and expert trainer.

The seminars were scheduled to continue through Year 5, with expert consultants featured at each. The seminar titles and content covered in each seminar were:

Special Topics Seminar 6: Analyzing the Context of Low- Performing Schools

- Identify the characteristics of low-performing schools.

- Collect meaningful data on school conditions.

- Analyze data on school conditions as they relate to the characteristics of a turnaround school.

Design Principle 3
Data-Based
Problem Solving

- Diagnose probable causes of low performance.

- Prioritize probable causes in the school to address in the improvement plan.

- Set initial goals or targets.

Special Topics Seminar 7: Envisioning a Culture of High Expectations

- Articulate what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in the 21st century.

- Set a clear, shared vision and direction for preparing middle grades students to succeed in rigorous high school courses and preparing high school students for college and career readiness.

- Differentiate the characteristics of a culture of high expectations and a culture of low expectations.

- Use strategies for engaging teachers in designing lessons based on the new college-and career-readiness standards.

- Assess the existing curriculum in relation to levels of cognitive complexity (rigor).

- Provide feedback to teachers on the level of rigor observed in classroom instruction.

- Lead faculty in developing and implementing processes for providing timely and targeted feedback to students to help them understand what constitutes high standards of performance.

Special Topics Seminar 8: Providing a Rigorous, Relevant Curriculum

- Support teachers in developing and implementing standards-based curriculum calendars in literacy and math.

- Engage in data analysis for instructional planning and improvement.

- Ensure the appropriate use of high-quality formative and interim assessments aligned with the adopted standards and curricula.

- Clarify and communicate the relationships among academic standards, effective instruction, and assessment.

- Ensure students have opportunities for accelerating learning.

Special Topics Seminar 9: Promoting Effective Teaching and Learning

- Differentiate between instructional leadership and management behaviors.

- Implement the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices through a common language of instruction.

- Provide feedback to teachers on their application of evidence-based principles of learning and the 5D Instructional Framework. This framework was developed by the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership as a way to look at five dimensions of classroom instruction that instructional leaders must be able to observe and impact. Those dimensions are: purpose, student engagement, curriculum and pedagogy, assessment for student learning, and classroom environment and culture.

- Implement differentiated instruction on a schoolwide basis.

- Maintain a safe and orderly school and classroom environment.

Special Topics Seminar 10: Building a Productive School Environment

- Maintain a safe, disciplined and inclusive student-centered learning environment.

- Develop a schedule that supports teacher planning and instructional interventions.

- Promote team-based planning, decision-making and instructional interventions.

- Monitor team meetings to maximize their effectiveness.

- Provide opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership.

- Organize and implement programs to ensure effective transitions from elementary to middle grades, middle grades to high school, and high school to college and career.

- Implement a comprehensive guidance and advisement program that supports students in setting goals and understanding what they will need to accomplish their goals.

The seminars developed for the APP were designed to provide the type of rigorous, relevant and engaging professional development participants should expect to receive as principals. In addition to the goal of providing high-quality training, this was intended to help them become discerning consumers of professional development, able to articulate the qualities they want in their own professional development as well as what

is provided to their faculties. School districts and other organizations that use the APP seminars in their principal preparation programs would find them easily adaptable for use with sitting principals as well.

SREB Leadership Modules

The aspiring leaders also attended SREB Leadership Module training sessions throughout the program. The leadership modules incorporate research-based content and strategies for improving school and classroom practices, and focus on identifying and solving problems that impact student achievement.

This training gave aspiring leaders opportunities to work with leaders from diverse schools and practice such leadership responsibilities as developing action plans for applying new knowledge, skills and behaviors in leading school improvement efforts. The intent was for APP participants to attend these training sessions with the leadership teams from the practicum schools that would also participate in the FLASII Professional Development Program; however, this was not possible in every instance.

Aspiring Principals Program participants were trained on a number of customized SREB Leadership Modules. Modules topics were:

Fostering a Culture of High Expectations: Changing School Practices with Powerful Instructional Leadership — This module focused on teaching middle grades and high school leadership teams to look at the type of school culture they need to convey high expectations for all students where success for all is anticipated. School teams learned the components of an effective school culture, used real school data to identify "red flag" problems in student achievement, and analyzed the root cause(s) of problems contributing to low student achievement in their schools.

Design Principle 4
Team-Based Assignments and Activities

Prioritizing, Mapping and Monitoring the Curriculum — Participants learned about the research that supports the idea of a prioritized curriculum. They learned why prioritization is critical to their school's success in student achievement, the key elements of a prioritized curriculum, what a curriculum looks like when it is properly prioritized, supporting structures that must be in place for a prioritized curriculum to be effective, and how to facilitate the process. They studied the many ways that curriculum maps can be used and how they help ensure the prioritized curriculum is followed. The module content also included a process for leading a school team in mapping the curriculum.

Leading Literacy – During the first session, participants defined literacy and explored good literacy practice based on pre-work readings. They studied the role of a literacy leadership team and created an action plan that was implemented in between the first and second sessions (several weeks apart). Participants shared key learning points from the action plans they completed relating to improving literacy.

Participants explored a wide variety of research-driven strategies appropriate for helping students become better learners of standards-based content curricula. They also explored differentiation and the need to consider literacy needs of all learners as well as those of struggling students. Teams continued to implement their literacy plans. Participants submitted a portfolio that contained teamwork products, individual reflections, and narratives.

Success for All Students — School leadership teams that participated in the initial module on school culture took part in this workshop as a follow-up activity. During the second session, participants focused on leading a schoolwide effort to implement a policy of success for all students. They examined the factors contributing to student failure; gained a deeper understanding of and prioritized actions to increase proficiency, rigor and cognitive complexity; and learned strategies to support the practices of having students redo work, providing extra help, and standards-based grading.

Guidance and Advisement – Teams of school and teacher leaders and guidance counselors worked to develop an effective advisement program that ensures every student has an adult mentor, involves parents in the process of planning their students' program of study and encourages all students to take a challenging program of study that prepares them for high school and postsecondary success.

Assessing Academic Rigor to Ensure Grade-Level Proficiency and College Readiness Part 1– This module introduced school leaders to the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy and alignment tools to determine the level of rigor and core habits of mind expected in their schools and from their teachers. The goals of the module were to:

- Define rigor as the expectation that students will be able to perform at levels of cognitive complexity necessary to achieve proficiency on standards at each grade level and achieve readiness for college and advanced career training.

- Define alignment as having a matching level of cognitive complexity (rigor) among standards, instruction and assessments.

- Explain the relationship between the level of cognitive complexity (rigor) of expected student learning and student achievement.

- Identify ways to measure, monitor and encourage increased rigor at the school and classroom levels.

- Demonstrate how to gather and analyze data related to the present level of cognitive complexity of expected student learning across the school.

Assessing Academic Rigor to Ensure Grade-Level Proficiency and College and Career Readiness Part 2 — This training was the second two-day segment of the module. It was customized to help Florida school leaders gain in-depth understanding of how their schools could use Webb's Depth of Knowledge as a tool for ensuring students achieve proficient performance on state standards. The primary objectives for school leaders were to:

- Understand how teachers can use the Depth of Knowledge as a tool for developing curriculum, instruction and classroom assessments that match the level of cognitive complexity (rigor) contained in the Florida Standards and accountability tests and bring students to proficient performance.

- Develop a plan for increasing the level of rigor in classrooms.

- Understand the concept of academic press (defined as schoolwide rigor) and the eight key dimensions of school practice, and practice using a rubric to evaluate it in their schools.

- Create an action plan for monitoring classroom rigor and academic press in their schools.

Designing Assessments to Improve Student Learning — This customized four-day training helped school leaders develop knowledge and skills for improving the design and use of classroom assessments as a means to increase student achievement. It built on the concepts and strategies for aligning lesson/unit objectives, curricula, instruction and assessment to standards that were introduced in the previous module, *Assessing Academic Rigor to Ensure Grade-Level Proficiency and College Readiness*. Participants gained a thorough understanding of how a balanced assessment system, student involvement and effective feedback improved student learning. The primary objectives for the aspiring school leaders were to:

- Develop an understanding of the qualities and benefits of a balanced assessment system, ensuring that assessment for learning receives at least as much attention as assessment of learning.

- Differentiate the qualities and appropriate uses of various classroom assessment methods and apply them to assessment for learning and assessment of learning.

- Analyze and evaluate the balance of assessments in schools and formulate a plan for improvement based on findings.

- Demonstrate how to manage, interpret and analyze assessment data to improve student learning.

- Evaluate the impact of effective feedback and grading practices on student learning and develop strategies to increase student involvement in assessment practices.

- Plan and implement a project that uses exemplary practices in assessment to improve the school's current assessment system.

Meeting the Standards: Looking at Teacher Assignments and Student Work — This module taught participants how to use the six steps of SREB's Standards in Practice process to make sure assignments and assessments match standards in terms of cognitive complexity. Teachers learned how to use this process as a vehicle for professional development and school improvement, as teacher teams look critically at the work they assign, the scoring guides they use and the standards to which they are accountable. The six steps in the process were modeled, and participants worked through samples as well as examples from their own practice. The steps were as follows:

1. Complete the assignment or task.

2. Analyze the demands of the assignment.

3. Identify the standards that apply to the assignment.

4. Generate a rough rubric (or scoring guide) for this assignment from the standards.

5. Score student work by using the scoring guide.

6. Analyze student work to plan strategies for improving performance – then look at actions needed at the classroom, school and district levels to ensure all students meet the standards on this and similar assignments.

SREB coaches and APP program staff worked with contracted consultants to customize and deliver the modules in four regional sites. As module training progressed, it became increasingly apparent that it was crucial to make the modules available in both face-to-face and online formats in order to increase the consistency and quality of delivery across multiple sites and to support the future scaling of the model.

The project plan was amended to allocate a portion of the U.S. Department of Education funding for this purpose. Having the option of face-to-face, online or a combination of these delivery formats reduced costs, allowed flexible scheduling that accommodated users' needs and varying requirements of delivery in university, school and regional settings.

Aspiring Principals Program Practicum

A traditional master's program in educational leadership includes course work and some form of internship. The APP expanded and enriched the typical internship by structuring it as a two-year experience in which the aspiring principal has many and varied opportunities to gain skill and experience by observing, participating in and leading a broad range of leadership activities.

The internship, or practicum, as titled for the APP, functioned as a unifying structure in which the content students learned through course work was implemented in real school settings in response to real needs. It also served as a capstone experience in which the aspiring principal experienced a much fuller, more integrated preview of what is expected of today's principals.

Design Principle 2

Situated
Learning

The practicum provided multiple opportunities for aspiring principals to demonstrate — under the guidance of an experienced and trained school leader and a university or program supervisor — that they had mastered the necessary knowledge, behaviors and dispositions to change schools and classrooms and that they could apply these competencies effectively in school settings where they must work with real teachers to accelerate student achievement.

Practicum experiences were spread across two full school years so the aspiring principals could observe, participate in and lead key events and tasks that occur throughout the school year (such as planning for opening school, analyzing data from state and national tests, planning professional development, observing and giving feedback on classroom instruction, and working with a team of teachers to implement more effective classroom strategies in a content area.

Design Principle 5
Coaching and Continuous Feedback

The time required for the practicum was not completed as a block of consecutive days. However, it was a firm program expectation that participants engage in projects and activities of such breadth and depth that the time and effort required to complete them was greater than a planning period or the regular teacher duty time before and after school.

The aspiring principal selected and initiated practicum experiences in collaboration with the school's principal. They talked about what was to be done, how the aspiring principal planned to complete the task and what was to be learned from the work. Most of the experiences involved working with teachers and school staff, just like the work of the principal. The APP program paid for a substitute teacher when one was required to allow the aspiring principal to complete practicum tasks.

Design Principle 5
Coaching and Continuous Feedback

The APP practicum had several advantages over the traditional leadership practicum or internship experience. Because it stretched over two school years and continually engaged the aspiring principals in the real work of a school improvement leadership team, it gave them a fuller range of experiences in making significant changes in school and classroom practices.

These experiences went far beyond job-shadowing or handling routine administrative tasks. They focused on engaging groups of teachers in looking deeply at data on student achievement to identify "red flag" issues and then take thoughtful action to resolve those issues. Through these experiences, aspiring principals learned to lead groups of teachers and to plan and manage the work of others. The goal was to give aspiring principals firsthand experiences with the challenges and responsibilities of school principals in low-performing schools so that when moved into that role they would do so with confidence and a clear picture of what must be done to raise student achievement.

Design Principle 1
Problem-Based Learning

Practicum Roles and Responsibilities

The **aspiring principal** had the central role in making the practicum a successful learning experience. **For many participants, the practicum, which was primarily self-directed, represented a significant shift from traditional professional development to managing their own learning**. The aspiring principal had to identify areas related to the state's Principal Leadership Standards that needed further development, and then seek and plan experiences that strengthened those areas while documenting acquisition and mastery of all of the Key Indicators for Entry-Level Principals as established by the state of Florida.

However, the goal of the practicum went far beyond documenting competencies to fulfill state licensure requirements. It provided aspiring principals with challenging experiences so they would be well equipped to lead significant change at the schools where they would become principals.

The **mentor principal** fulfilled another key role. The APP mentors provided the day-to-day feedback and coaching that help aspiring principals transition from the role of classroom teachers (or other roles) to that of school leaders. **Mentors were responsible for structuring opportunities for aspiring principals to solve a range of school problems, first through observing and participating, and then by actually leading teams in identifying, implementing and evaluating improvement interventions.**

This type of skillful mentoring helps aspiring principals shape their beliefs about whole-school change, students' capacities to learn, relationships with staff and community members, and ethical leadership practices.

Practicum coaches were also unique features of the APP model. They were all former principals who guided the aspiring principals through the requirements of the practicum and helped select and plan more relevant and rigorous learning experiences. *Relevant* **experiences were those that showed a direct connection between what the aspiring principal was learning in the other APP components (graduate course work, special topics seminars and online modules) and the real work of a school principal.**

Rigorous experiences went beyond being able to "check off" individual competencies. They provided deep, challenging learning opportunities that stretched the aspiring principals' knowledge and skills to the level required to effectively perform the responsibilities of school principals.

As the program progressed, a "lead" coach emerged as an important player. This individual assumed responsibility for coordinating coaching activities, ensuring the coaches provided the level of service expected and serving as the "go to" person when questions or issues arose. This role proved to be very helpful through the remainder of the program, but particularly near the conclusion when decisions were made about the readiness of individual participants. Fairness dictated the assessment of readiness be based on the consistent application of common criteria, and the lead coach provided that consistency by acting as a resource for the expert teams as they judged participants' portfolios and presentations.

Design Principle 5
Coaching and Continuous Feedback

There was also a role for the **district staff** person who was responsible for developing a pool of well-prepared principals for future vacancies, especially vacancies in low-performing schools. This individual worked with the practicum coach to develop a clear understanding of how practicum experiences aligned with what the district expected new principals to know and be able to do and with experiences provided through the district's program for preparing and inducting new principals. This was important, not just to avoid redundancies, but to allow the district and the Academy to customize the experiences aspiring principals have in the practicum to meet the district's needs for new leaders.

This required coordination among all of the partners, but produced significant benefits for the aspiring principal and the district. This form of collaboration allowed aspiring principals to be guided through experiences that targeted the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to lead the district's schools to higher levels of student achievement and increased the district's pool of highly qualified candidates who understood district requirements, tools and procedures because they had used them in authentic practicum experiences.

In part because the practicum had a less visible structure than the course work or online module components, the aspiring principals and their mentors needed to see clear examples and illustrations of how the practicum was designed, how to navigate through it and what high-quality practicum learning looks like. A number of supporting documents were co-developed by the program's SREB staff, the university and the district, so everyone was on the same page in terms of how things worked and the guidance aspiring principals, mentor principals and practicum coaches received.

APP Long-Range Project

The long-range project was designed to help aspiring principals plan and conduct an in-depth school leadership project focused on improving curriculum and instruction. The project provided an opportunity for participants to apply the knowledge, skills and behaviors they gained from all components of the APP — university courses, working as a member of a school improvement leadership team, SREB module training and special topics seminars.

The project was structured and implemented in a way that allowed the aspiring principal to experience the real work principals must perform to improve curriculum, instruction and student achievement. Participants were able to document the mastery of a substantial number of the competencies related to the Florida Principal Leadership Standards as they planned, implemented and evaluated their long-range projects.

APP long-range projects included the following elements:

1. Identification of a problem or gap in student achievement: Project focused on solving a problem or reducing a critical gap in achievement that existed between subgroups of students in the school

2. Project objectives/expected outcomes: A clear statement of the project scope and the specific changes in teacher and/or student performance that were expected to occur as a result of achieving project objectives

3. Intervention documentation: A rationale for the intervention's selection and a description of the intervention that included the research-based strategies that would be implemented to address the achievement gap

4. Project evaluation plan: A plan for evaluating the implementation and impact of the project, including formative and summative evaluation. The summative evaluation also included a summary of lessons learned based on the participant's reflections.

Example #1

APP Long-Range Project

Black students at the participant's high school scored lower than their peers in reading, writing and math and were underrepresented in Advanced Placement and Honors courses. The participant solicited teacher volunteers to serve as mentors to members of this subgroup, trained them in effective mentoring strategies and monitored their work with students. As a result, mentored students earned additional credits through the Florida Virtual School and 100 percent were on-track to graduate by the end of the school year. Fifty percent of the mentored students eventually enrolled in more rigorous courses and all mentored students developed a personal vision for attending college upon graduation.

5. Project management plan: A plan for managing the project that includes these components.

   • A statement of the scope of the project with sign-off by the school's principal before its initiation

   • A stakeholder map

   • A work plan that identifies each task, who is responsible for that task, a start date and an end date

- A list of deliverables that includes the requirements for each deliverable

- A communication plan that includes who is responsible for creating and sending project messages

- A list of known risks to implementation and a brief summary of prevention and contingency plans

6. Project Status Report: Status reports were submitted to the lead practice coach three times during the project's implementation phase.

Aspiring Principals Program Mentors and Coaches

Educational Leadership programs typically provide an internship supervisor whose role is to "check on" or supervise the aspiring principal at several points during the internship to ensure progress is made and deadlines for completing required tasks are met. The APP provided support for participant learning through a coach and an experienced principal mentor rather than a supervisor.

When an individual entered the APP, his or her principal was asked to take on a critical role in the aspiring principal's development — the role of a mentor. While the coach concentrated on guiding the aspiring principal through the practicum, the mentor principal "pulled back the curtain" on what a principal does to lead the faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders in improving student achievement.

Design Principle 5

Coaching and Continuous Feedback

Because APP mentor principals had already completed the transition from individuals who aspire to the job to those who live it on a daily basis, they were uniquely equipped to guide others along that path. The work of mentor principals typically focuses on these activities:

- Provide opportunities for the aspiring principal to move through a progression of experiences that begin with observing critical aspects of what the principal does, but advance quickly to participating in and then actually leading activities that bring about improved teaching and learning

- Engage in collaborative planning experiences that allow the aspiring principal to assume tasks normally done by the principal

Example #2

APP Long-Range Project

Benchmark assessment data revealed 50 percent of English language learners at the participant's school scored in the Needs Improvement or Needs Much Improvement range. The APP participant designed a program that engaged teachers in (1) studying new strategies through a PLC structure, (2) reworking the master schedule to provide additional instructional time for ELL students and (3) working closely with parents to support student learning. Results documented gains of 3 percent to 63 percent on subsequent benchmark assessments, with an average gain of 24 percent.

- Share feedback that helps the aspiring principal see situations, actions and consequences through the eyes of an experienced principal

- Find the right balance of being supportive while challenging the aspiring principal to take on growth experiences

- Allow the aspiring principal into the principal's "inner circle" to see how vision becomes strategy and strategy becomes action

- Share personal reflections so the aspiring principal can see how the mentor principal continues to learn from each experience

The primary obstacle to effective mentoring and coaching was a lack of time. The teacher's duty day has little time that is not already committed to teaching, planning or meetings. The principal's day, while not governed as strictly by the bell schedule, is even more packed with urgent and important activities. **Yet, mentor principals and aspiring principals found the time to meet, plan and review the aspiring principal's practicum experiences.** When these meetings were focused on planning and processing the type of challenging experiences aspiring principals need to become school leaders, they proved to be a very good investment of that time.

For the practicum coach, meeting with the aspiring principal and mentor principal was also predicated upon finding a mutually convenient time. This produced some creative solutions including phone-in meetings and tacking coaching/mentoring sessions onto other scheduled events such as faculty meetings or professional development activities where the aspiring principal and mentor principal were both in attendance.

Mentor principals received intensive training in strategies and structures of effective mentor relationships. **Many commented that the two-day training (provided through an SREB leadership module) was applicable to their work with many different members of their faculty and staff in addition to those in the Aspiring Principals Program.** Regular gatherings of mentor principals and Academy staff bolstered their effectiveness through hearing what other mentors were doing and how they had handled specific situations. Recognition and rewards were also important aspects of the APP mentoring program, and APP mentor principals received a modest stipend that was paid directly to them as they completed program milestones.

The practicum coaches communicated regularly, primarily via email, but they also met at the quarterly special topics seminars and in between those sessions as necessary to exchange insights and ideas and to develop solutions to shared concerns. One of the practicum coaches was designated as the "lead coach" and had responsibility for ensuring the other coaches received timely support and answers to their questions.

Results

The outcomes of the FLASII APP are reported in terms of the two original project objectives that applied to this program. Selected comments drawn from surveys and interviews conducted with district representatives, participants and mentors are included as well.

> **Objective 1:** Develop and test a replicable academy model for both preparation and professional development of aspiring and current school leaders through a problem-centered approach that enables them to improve student achievement in low-performing schools.

The APP was fully developed as designed by the project's partners as a multi-component model for preparing and certifying aspiring school leaders with the capacity to lead continuous school improvement. The four components were: (1) a graduate-level program of courses leading directly to state licensure as a school principal, (2) special topics seminars to engage participants in more in-depth treatments of essential knowledge and skills related to school improvement, (3) additional leadership training provided through SREB's leadership modules, and (4) extensive field experiences through which targeted skills are acquired and practiced under the coaching of experienced school leaders.

This model was thoroughly tested by full implementation in Florida with a university partner and participants from seven high-need districts. Each component contributed to the model's effectiveness and also to the knowledge base for principal preparation programs. Moreover, the model served as the basis for the next generation of principal preparation programs, the SREB Turnaround Leaders Program.

> **Objective 2**: Recruit, train, certify, hire and retain up to 40 new leaders who work with teachers, parents and others to achieve improvement in high-need schools.

A total of 24 aspiring principals completed the FLASII program in Years 3 and 4, and subsequently qualified for state licensure in educational leadership. The data for each sub-element of Objective 2 are presented in Table 4. These data were collected through follow-up contacts during the last quarter of 2014. Five program completers did not respond to email contacts.

Table 4: Status of FLASII APP Participants

Recruited[1]	Trained[2]	Certified[3]	Hired[4]	Retained[5]
34	24	24	16	16

1 = Recruited into the APP; 2 = Completed the APP; 3 = Attained state licensure in educational leadership through the APP; 4 = Hired or promoted to a school leadership, district office or other leadership position in education; 5 = Currently serving a second or third year in a school leadership, district office or other educational leadership position

Participant Comments

At the conclusion of the APP, participants were asked to submit reflections on their experiences in the program. The comments excerpted below are representative of how participants perceived the program and the support they received from APP staff.

"Quarterly sessions were extremely beneficial. The topics were relevant and it afforded me the opportunity to learn and interact with other aspiring principals. The speakers were very knowledgeable, experienced and willing to share their wisdom. I came away from those sessions feeling empowered and each one built up my confidence and reassured me that in the end I would be well equipped to handle the challenges ahead as an instructional leader."

Orange County Participant

"The APP contributed to my performance as a leader by giving me the knowledge needed to lead and support all staff members. At this time I oversee approximately 130 programs and each program is very diverse. That diversity requires a toolkit that I was able to build as I worked through the rigorous experiences provided through the APP."

Duval County Participant

"The first instinct when describing my experiences in the APP is to latch on to a specific instance or lesson as the defining moment that transformed me. This would be a mistake as the totality of the experience is where the true worth of the program lies. In other words, the whole truly is greater than the sum of the parts. To be more direct, however, it is easy to identify the interaction of theory and practice as the most transformative component of the program. The instruction was great from the partner university as were the in-person modules conducted by the SREB team. There were no gaps in the theory as presented by the program. But even the best laid plans would hold little merit if there were no way to put theory into practice."

Escambia County Participant

"The Aspiring Principals Program played an integral role in the development of my leadership skills in the areas of decision-making and my overall approach to building relationships with internal and external stakeholders. In my current position, I serve as a liaison between Duval County and the charter schools operating in the district. As the way of work in charter schools may not be the same in the district, the Aspiring Principal Program equipped me to be able to analyze programs through multiple lenses to make informed decisions that support student academic achievement and positive school change."

Duval County Participant

"I did not enjoy the process involved in preparing the summative project. However, the end result immensely outweighed the sacrifice and preparation necessary. I was able to create a plan of what I would do to turn around a low-performing school. I gained skills on how to create a portfolio and present, with confidence, my plan as the principal. This was the last piece of confirmation and affirmation needed. I can stand boldly in front of my faculty and departments and meet with groups of parents without constantly second guessing my abilities."

<div align="right">Orange County Participant</div>

"Having a mentor who has a wealth of experience has been priceless. I have many friends who have completed Ed. Leadership programs through other universities, and when they graduated the assistance and guidance ceased. It has been very comforting and reassuring to know that I have someone I can call, email and meet with to share my insecurities, uncertainties and victories as an instructional leader."

<div align="right">Orange County Participant</div>

The APP staff conducted interviews with each stakeholder group and surveyed district representatives, program participants and mentors throughout the program to identify areas where corrective action was needed and to ensure stakeholders were satisfied with the program and the support provided. A concise summary of the information obtained through these surveys and interviews follows.

Survey/Interview Responses

Interviews with district representatives produced the following responses:

- Candidates were perceived as being well trained.
- District representatives would give these candidates first consideration for assistant principal positions in their districts.
- The mentoring and practicum components of the program were comprehensive and of very high quality.
- The Aspiring Principals Program should be scaled up across Florida.

Aspiring Principals candidates reported the following:

- The APP was more comprehensive, complex and rigorous than the traditional leadership preparation programs in the state, and they believed this program better prepared them to lead low-performing schools.
- Survey responses from the mentors revealed the following:
  » They thought the APP provided greater practicum opportunities for candidates to participate in or lead instructional walk-throughs, handle grading and assessment issues, and participate in or lead improvements in school culture, compared with leadership candidates in other programs.

In April 2011, the external evaluator surveyed the University of North Florida faculty involved in the APP. Representative excerpts from responses to the survey are presented here.

- The Academy curriculum Design Team provided timely information about the members of the cohort, other courses and instructors in the program, and the specific goals and learning objectives of the program. In addition, they provided feedback regarding the delivery of instruction and interaction with the cohort.
- The process of selecting participants was a major weakness for this cohort. The process appeared rushed and there was insufficient dialogue with principals to convey expectations, though face-to-face meetings were conducted for potential mentor principals in the two largest districts. Too many participants were identified by their principals just because they were interested in a reduced-cost master's degree.

- There seemed to be a wide range of candidate preparedness levels. One cohort had several students who showed great promise. There were others who probably would not "cut it" as school administrators. Those students who fully participated in the module trainings and whose principals provided them with leadership experiences at their schools gained the most from this program and were the best prepared.

- The quarterly seminars provided great opportunities to connect with students face to face. A seminar before the beginning of course work would provide an opportunity to lay out expectations face to face.

- Highly motivated cohort! Overall academic quality was very high. Support by the SREB staff and other faculty was superb! A pleasure to be part of this initiative. It is hoped that funding can be identified to continue/expand this model.

Lessons Learned

Lesson 1: Redesigning course content to incorporate the targeted competencies and aligning the content with real-world field experiences require a significant commitment of resources (time and effort) by the university faculty and by other stakeholders, particularly school districts, which must be engaged to help shape the content so it aligns tightly with the districts' needs for leadership development. This requires strong communication and shared responsibility. Because this may be a new level of partnership for both district staff and university faculty, having this process facilitated by someone who understands the district's and university's perspectives can be helpful.

A strong commitment is needed from university leadership to send the clear message that involvement in this form of collaboration is just as important as scholarly research and publication in terms of the expectations for university faculty performance. This message can be sent most clearly by providing release time from other responsibilities to allow faculty to be deeply engaged in course design/redesign to keep abreast of the needs of districts and schools.

Lesson 2: Program participants may not, on their own, see the link between the content of their graduate courses and their work in the practicum. If this linkage is not established during the first term, there may be missed opportunities for aspiring principals in utilizing course assignments to acquire, practice and document the standards that are addressed in their initial courses.

If these particular standards are not embedded in other courses, a unique opportunity will have been lost. One way to avoid this problem is to ensure the individuals teaching the first term's courses understand the structure of the practicum and how competencies and standards are documented in practicum experiences. Connecting real-world learning experiences that are part of most graduate courses in educational leadership to the practicum is a logical and appropriate way for program participants to gain much of the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to be effective principals.

Lesson 3: There are many differences between planning and managing the work of your students as a classroom teacher and planning and managing the work of your fellow teachers as an aspiring principal. Since the great majority of aspiring principals completed the practicum at the school where they taught, it was deemed important that they have opportunities to be in leadership roles at other schools. By working with the school improvement team at a neighboring school, the aspiring principal could carry out leadership functions that might not be as well accepted by his or her fellow teachers.

The Aspiring Principals Program worked in concert with the Academy's Professional Development Program for sitting principals and assistant principals to give aspiring principals such opportunities by attending training with leadership teams from other schools implementing improvement efforts.

Lesson 4: Some opportunities for excellent practicum experiences may come and go, early in the aspiring principals' time in the program. **For example, a principal's role in opening a new school year provides a rich source of opportunities for the aspiring principal to observe, participate and even lead important activities that may not occur again until the opening of the following school year.**

Preparing participants to hit the ground running in terms of the practicum requires that its elements, structure and procedures be established in advance (as opposed to a "build the boat as you row it across the river" approach) and a clear explanation of how things work is delivered to aspiring principals as they enter the program. A joint session of aspiring principals, mentor principals and those who will supervise the practicum provides an effective venue for sorting through practicum-related issues and questions — allowing everyone to hear others' questions and get the same answers.

Lesson 5: Because the APP practicum was less structured than other program components such as the graduate courses, there was a greater degree of uncertainty and procrastination on the part of the aspiring principals in initiating and completing practicum experiences. **Walking the aspiring principal through a step-by-step approach to planning, executing, documenting and reflectively reviewing practicum experiences can be very helpful but time consuming.**

Some are likely to take the initiative in planning their own experiences more quickly than others. Holding sharing sessions in which these aspiring principals help their peers by sharing candid explanations of what they are doing and how the idea for the experience took shape over time (helping them see the planning and execution of practicum experiences as iterative) can be a good solution.

Lesson 6: Part of being a student in a graduate program is learning each professor's expectations and standards. **If documentation of practicum experiences is not assessed until the end of the program when one or more faculty members review the portfolio, the expectations for what is acceptable quality might not be made clear until too much time has passed.** Some type of sequenced, criteria or standards-based formative evaluation that provides timely and actionable feedback to aspiring principals as they document the competencies they are acquiring is essential.

Lesson 7: Collaboration between universities and school districts within their service areas is critical to developing high-quality principal preparation programs that meet the needs of these districts for well-trained school leaders who are ready to step into the role of the principal when vacancies occur. **One way these university/district partnerships can produce leaders who are "ready" is by embedding school improvement strategies into the principal preparation curriculum.**

SREB's experience in the APP and later in the FTLP revealed that leading effective school improvement initiatives is a complex undertaking that requires extensive training and practice. Building successively more rigorous learning experiences in which aspiring leaders first observe principals up close as they work with and through teams to lead school improvement initiatives, sharing leadership responsibilities for such initiatives and eventually leading those initiatives will go a long way toward ensuring the aspiring leaders are fully ready to fill this important role of the principal.

Lesson 8: When aspiring principals are located across multiple school districts and take all of their course work online, whole cohort meetings are limited. Distributing documents such as the tools to be used to complete practicum work is typically done electronically. This can lead to problems with "version control" when some aspiring principals use older versions of a tool or template because they missed the email containing the updated version.

One solution to this problem is having a central electronic repository of program documents and tools that can be accessed at any time by program students and staff. Having the current version of each tool, document or presentation on this site makes version control and dissemination much easier.

Chapter 3:
Transition to the Turnaround Leadership Model

Building a New Model

As the time frame for implementing the FLASII APP drew to a close in mid-2011, SREB submitted a proposal to the Florida Department of Education for implementing its leadership pipeline for turnaround principals and assistant principals. A white paper detailing elements of the SREB Preparation Model and lessons learned from its initial implementation in the APP had been utilized by the Florida Department of Education staff in putting together the Invitation to Bid for this project, and therefore it represented a rare opportunity to further refine SREB's original principal preparation design.

Following a competitive award process, SREB was awarded the contract for implementing this new Florida Race to the Top initiative in December 2011, and implementation began in January 2012. This new program, titled the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program (FTLP), was based on the SREB Turnaround Leadership Model and represented a substantial scale-up of the well-tested SREB Preparation Model, with refinements that promised to make it even more effective and focused on the leadership of low-performing schools.

At a global level, there were several important distinctions between the programs derived from these two models. The APP was designed as a hybrid program that enabled participants to obtain a master's degree in educational leadership. It was structured as an online degree program along with a series of highly-customized seminars to introduce participants to topics crucial to implementing a continuous improvement process beyond those covered in their graduate course work. The overall purpose was to ensure graduates possessed the skills to lead a continuous school improvement process. However, while the intent was to prepare aspiring leaders for working in low-performing schools, the knowledge, skills and dispositions that made up the APP curriculum were appropriate for all principals and assistant principals, whether their school was low-performing or well along the path to higher performance.

The FTLP was based upon a more differentiated model in that it was a post-certification program (except for a very few participants who needed to gain initial certification in educational leadership) designed to ensure participants developed the capacity to turn around chronically low-performing schools. This second-generation SREB principal preparation model relied to a much greater extent on customized training provided through quarterly seminars and online modules developed by SREB to help participants acquire the SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets and, in this way, it placed much greater control over the curriculum directly in the hands of the FTLP's Design Team.

It provided significantly more structure by prescribing the learning experiences participants completed through the assignments and seminar follow-up activities. The FTLP also added a six-month full-time internship, thus significantly deepening the opportunities participants had for applying their new skills. In addition to these differentiations, the FTLP curriculum and design for learning experiences provided a much clearer alignment with each district's professional development program for aspiring principals so participants were able to document competencies and knowledge required by the district for Level 2 School Principal certification through their FTLP experiences.

Finally, further refinements in the support for participants included more in-depth training and closer monitoring of mentors and coaches, more intensive engagement with coaches, and a stronger communication plan that dramatically increased the level of contact with FTLP staff charged with working directly with participants.

Table 5 provides a more detailed comparison of the key features of the APP based on the SREB Preparation Model and the FTLP structured according to the SREB Turnaround Leadership Model.

Table 5: Comparison of Model Features

Model Feature	SREB Preparation Model: APP	SREB Turnaround Leadership Model: FTLP
Goals/Objectives	• Create a scalable model for building the capacity of aspiring school leaders to bring about continuous improvement of student achievement in low-performing middle grades and high schools in high-need districts. » Objective 1. Develop and test a replicable academy model (the Florida Leadership Academy for Schools of Innovation and Improvement Aspiring Principals Program) for both preparation and professional development of aspiring school leaders through a problem-centered approach that enables them to improve student achievement in low-performing schools. » Objective 2. Recruit, train, certify, hire and retain up to 40 new leaders who can work with teachers, parents and others to achieve improvement in high-need schools	• Create a pipeline of up to 100 aspiring principals, assistant principals and teacher leaders who are equipped with the essential turnaround knowledge and skills and committed to serving in leadership positions in low-performing schools. • Develop participants to a level of readiness that results in at least 40 percent of program completers being promoted to leadership positions in their current districts or charter organizations. • Develop a cadre of mentors and coaches with the special knowledge and skills to support aspiring turnaround leaders across the state. • Provide an effective turnaround principal preparation program model that is replicable within the state and in other states and organizations.
Leadership/Planning Team	• The Academy Design Team provided initial input on program design and competencies to be acquired by participants. • The curriculum development team utilized the Academy Design Team's input to create a program design, complete detailed planning and manage day-to-day operations of the program.	• Two design teams (one for the traditional side, one for the charter side) provided oversight and high-level planning. • The core planning team (a subgroup of the design team) completed detailed planning and managed day-to-day operations of the program.
Length of Program	• 27 months of training	• 27 months of training
Partnerships	• FDOE • SREB • Seven Florida districts with high-need schools • University of North Florida	• FDOE • SREB • Five Florida school districts identified by the FDOE • Charter schools and organizations across Florida • University of North Florida

Table 5: Comparison of Model Features

Model Feature	SREB Preparation Model: APP	SREB Turnaround Leadership Model: FTLP
Curriculum Focus	• Prepare for leading improvement of student achievement at low-performing schools. • Based on the Florida Principal Leadership Standards • Topics identified by an analysis of the Florida Standards and SREB's extensive background in leadership development	• SREB Turnaround Leadership Skills – 11 sets of skills reflecting evidence-based practices and specialized topics required by FDOE; all related to school turnaround
University Course Work	• Participants enrolled in online courses from UNF; one-half of tuition was reimbursed by SREB. (Note: No one held license in educational leadership when they entered the program.)	• Participants not certified in Educational Leadership enrolled in online courses from UNF; one-third of tuition was reimbursed by SREB. (Note: The great majority of participants had this certification prior to being admitted to the FTLP.)

Participant Selection	• Program information was distributed to participating districts and utilized to identify candidates who then took part in a selection process that included review of qualifications, a writing sample and examples of work experience in school improvement. These items were reviewed by FLASII staff, and candidates were admitted based on this review.
	• An initial cohort of 25 aspiring principals was selected and admitted to the program in the fall of 2009. Ten additional candidates were selected for admission to the program in January 2010.
		• Participating districts and charter organizations selected participants based on FTLP criteria:
		» Critical Factors to Consider
		  • Skills and experience related to school improvement
		  • Leadership potential
		  • Current job performance
		» Suggestions for Measuring Critical Factors
		  • Current data on ability to raise student achievement
		  • Written essay on situations in which the candidate led groups of teachers or other adults in accomplishing a goal
		  • Professional references
		  • Oral communication skills in face-to-face interview
		  • Classroom walk-throughs
		  • Feedback from current principal
		  • Contribution to school improvement efforts

Table 5: Comparison of Model Features

Model Feature	SREB Preparation Model: APP	SREB Turnaround Leadership Model: FTLP
Participant Characteristics	• 90 percent classroom instructors • 7 percent schoolwide (deans, coaches) • 3 percent district office	• 25 percent classroom instructors • 27 percent schoolwide (deans, coaches) • 16 percent district office • 28 percent assistant principals • 5 percent principals
Training Approach	• Special Topics Seminars • Online modules from SREB Leadership Module Series • Online master's level courses leading to initial certification in educational leadership	• Quarterly seminars • Online modules from SREB Leadership Module Series • CTE webinar series • Online master's level courses for those who lacked initial certification in educational leadership
Field Experiences	• 24-month practicum (Participants were provided 20 days of release time to go to their assigned practicum school to complete APP-related assignments.)	• 12-month practicum at assigned low-performing case study school (Instructional participants were provided up to 10 days of release time per quarter.) • Six-month internship (full-time internship at a carefully selected low-performing school)

Table 5: Comparison of Model Features

Model Feature	SREB Preparation Model: APP	SREB Turnaround Leadership Model: FTLP
Assignments and Activities	• Participants planned or were assigned tasks that allowed them to document one or more of the Florida Leadership Standards. Thus, each participant's assignments were tailored to the needs of the school where the participant was employed. • Participants documented their learning experiences through a FLASII-developed journal template. • Participants completed a long-range practicum project that required them to report on the project status at eight distinct milestones. • Participants were required to document passing scores on the three subtests of the Florida Educational Leadership Exam (FELE) to graduate from the master's program.	• Nine major assignments, five seminar follow-up activities, classroom walk-throughs with defined foci; five Web-based modules, plus an individual learning plan
Participant Support	• Principals at the schools where participants were employed served as mentors. Their primary responsibility was to ensure participants had experiences that allowed them to document all of the Florida Leadership Standards. • SREB leadership coaches visited participants monthly. • Project team members provided email and phone support. • Project team members also reviewed draft journal entries and provided feedback to participants.	• The sitting principal served as a mentor to guide work, resolve issues and evaluate assignments. • A retired principal served as coach and made monthly visits (during the last 12 months of the program). • The lead practice coach provided email and phone support. • District contact was used to coordinate district/FTLP interaction and resolve issues involving certification and placement. • The principal of the practicum school provided opportunities for participants to complete assignments and provided feedback on participant performance. • The principal of the internship school provided opportunities for interns to complete assignments and experience the full range of responsibilities of a turnaround leader, and provided feedback on participant performance at end-of-internship conference.

Table 5: Comparison of Model Features

Model Feature	SREB Preparation Model: APP	SREB Turnaround Leadership Model: FTLP
Participant Portfolio	• Hard copy was provided in three-ring binder, based on framework provided by FLASII staff members. • Portfolio was evaluated by a panel of experts in educational leadership.	• The portfolio was electronic, based on the template provided by FTLP staff. • The portfolio was evaluated by the mentor. • Roughly half the participants also presented a condensed version of their portfolio to an expert panel made up primarily of senior staff from the participant's district or charter organization.
Participant Evaluation	• START journal entries were evaluated by FLASII staff members, and Florida Leadership Standards were "checked-off" if the journal entry provided sufficient documentation. • Participant completion of all FLASII requirements was tracked through a monitoring tool developed by FLASII staff. • Readiness at the end of the program was evaluated by an expert panel that reviewed the individual participant's portfolio (Day 1 of the evaluation process) and a presentation by individual participants addressing selected aspects of their FLASII experience (Day 2 of the evaluation process). • Participants who were judged as "not ready" were asked to sign a performance contract and complete additional requirements set by FLASII staff.	• FTLP assignments and seminar follow-up activities were evaluated by a mentor, using SREB-developed rubrics. • Participation, assignments and discussion postings in online modules were evaluated by module facilitators. • CTE webinar series assignments were evaluated by a facilitator. • The portfolio was evaluated by a mentor and, for selected participants, by an expert panel. • Participants completed the 5D Instructional Leadership Assessment as a pretest of their abilities to accurately observe and identify effective instructional practices; they completed a second 5D assessment as a post-test near the end of the program. • Participant performance on the full range of FTLP learning experiences was tracked through the FTLP Performance Record. • Participants who fell behind worked collaboratively with their coach and the lead practice coach to develop a "catch-up" plan. • Participants who failed to meet program expectations at key milestones were asked to sign a performance contract through which they agreed to revisit assignments and/or complete overdue assignments to the satisfaction of the coach and lead practice coach.

Table 5: Comparison of Model Features

Model Feature	SREB Preparation Model: APP	SREB Turnaround Leadership Model: FTLP
Participant Evaluation	• Stakeholders were interviewed annually (Years 1–5) to obtain feedback on program implementation (Years 1 and 2), readiness of aspiring principals (Year 3), preparedness and success of newly appointed assistant principals (Years 4 and 5). • Exit interviews, as necessary, were held to determine reasons for withdrawing from the program. • Participants were administered questionnaires (Years 2–4) to obtain information on acquisition of competencies and motivation of selected aspiring leaders. • A new leader questionnaire (Year 4) was administered to obtain feedback at the end of the first year as a school leader. • Stakeholder questionnaires: state leaders (end of Year 1), district leaders (end of Year 5), university faculty (end of Year 1) and mentors (annually Years 2–5) were given to evaluate program quality and effectiveness. • Participant performance was evaluated pre-/post-training using SREB's Critical Success Factor Survey; documentation of Florida Principal Leadership Standards was evaluated by participant's coach; and placement as assistant principals was tracked by APP staff. • Data were collected and reported to the U.S. Department of Education to assess the following program-level objectives: » Number of program completers » Promotions received by participants » Number of participants obtaining Level 1 certification in educational leadership	• Data were collected to assess the following program-level objectives: » Number of program completers » Promotions received by participants » Gains in instructional leadership skills as measured by a pre-/post-training assessment • Participant satisfaction was measured following each seminar, and an annual survey was conducted at the end of each program year.

SREB Turnaround Leadership Model

Based on elements tested and lessons learned from application of the SREB Preparation Model in the FLASII Aspiring Principals Program, the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program (FTLP) was the second-generation model for preparing school leaders to exert strong impact on adult and student learning. Derived from key elements of the earlier APP, the FTLP represented a more rigorous, tightly-focused effort to equip aspiring principals with the skills and knowledge necessary to make dramatic improvements in student achievement within a short period of time, as called for in turnaround conditions.

The FTLP was a collaborative effort of the Florida Department of Education, SREB, participating districts and charter organizations, and the University of North Florida to prepare a cohort of school turnaround leaders. Funded through the state's 2010 Race to the Top award, this program differed from traditional principal preparation programs in a number of important ways.

The purpose of the FTLP was to prepare individuals to be school turnaround principals committed to serving as leaders in the district or charter organization's lowest-achieving schools. It equipped participants with an extensive set of highly specialized skills needed to plan and implement a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that produces significant gains in student achievement within two academic years. The FTLP was launched in January 2012, and culminated in June 2014, having produced a pool of 82 well-qualified turnaround principals, assistant principals and aspiring school leaders; 57 percent of the pool created by FTLP were promoted before the end of the program.

One of the design principles that helped shape the FTLP curriculum was sequenced learning. This principle states that learning is enhanced when the acquisition of knowledge is followed by opportunities for the learner to apply that knowledge and receive feedback on his or her performance. SREB structured FTLP participants' learning through this acquisition, application and feedback pattern. See Figure 7.

Design Principle 6

Sequenced Learning

Figure 7: Sequenced Components of the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program

Acquisition	Application	Feedback
Quarterly Seminars Online Modules Webcasts Graduate Courses	Assignments Seminar Follow-Up Activities	Mentor Evaluation of Assignments
Modeling by mentors, coaches, and practicum or internship principals	Practicum Internship Classroom Walk-Throughs	Monthly Coaching Visits
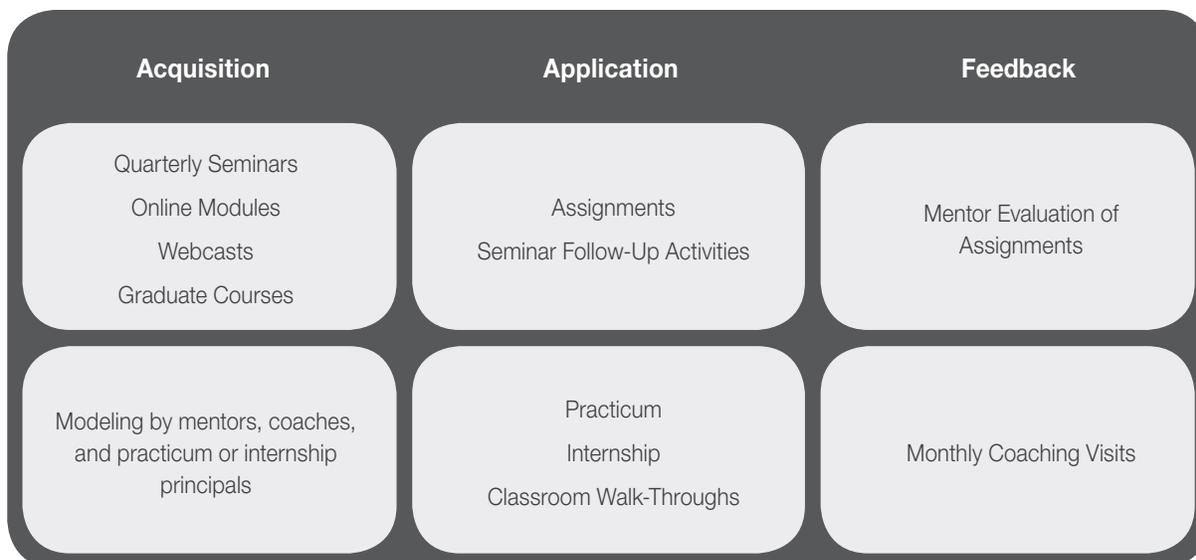
Florida Turnaround Leaders Program Overview

The items in the lists below describe how participants acquired and practiced the SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets, as well as the support the FTLP provided throughout the two and a half-year program.

Training

- Participants attended 10 quarterly seminars that focused on the SREB turnaround leader skill sets, which were drawn from the University of Virginia's School Turnaround Curriculum, the new Florida Principal Leadership Standards and other important sources of leadership research and practice.

- Seminars were two-day training events led by nationally recognized experts in school turnaround. Three of the seminars were statewide events which the entire FTLP cohort attended together at a single location; the other seven seminars were delivered regionally to reduce travel costs.

- Seminars prepared participants to complete one or more follow-up assignments requiring application of the content and skills that they had learned.

- Participants completed a total of five Web-based modules that supplemented the seminars and provided self-paced learning on a range of topics. Each module involved approximately 40 hours of instruction, including independent or group assignments. Expert facilitators guided the participants in completing the modules and gave participants a grade on their performance on module assignments.

Field Experiences

- Participants completed a structured yearlong practicum in a low-performing school while continuing in their current positions. During the practicum, which ran from July 2012 through June 2013, FTLP participants practiced the skills they acquired in selected case study schools.

- Most participants worked in two- to four-member teams during the yearlong practicum. Under the direction of their mentor principals, these teams worked with the faculty and leadership of their case study schools to complete a series of assignments that provided authentic practice in applying the skills taught at the seminars and through Web-based modules.

- Participants completed a six-month, full-time salaried internship in a low-performing middle grades or high school from July 2013 through December 2013.

- During the internship, participants identified a critical need based on an in-depth analysis of student achievement data, and then planned and implemented a 90-day school improvement plan initiative to address that need.

- Other assignments and activities completed during the internship included analyzing performance at the individual student level to help teachers differentiate instruction, assessing support for struggling students and working with teachers to enhance the use of Lesson Study.

- During the internship, FTLP participants conducted multiple classroom walk-throughs each week, took part in school advisory council meetings, planned and delivered professional development activities to faculty members and engaged in many more authentic leadership activities.

- For many participants, the FTLP paid the salaries of the participants' replacements, as well as a portion of their benefits, during the internship. The districts employed these replacements to "backfill" the participants' positions while they were engaged full-time at the internship school. The districts determined where each participant was to be placed for the remainder of the 2013-14 school year when the internship ended December 31, 2013.

- Charter participants also had replacements hired to fulfill their current responsibilities so they could focus on instructional leadership during the internship. The FTLP reimbursed charter schools for the replacements' salaries, up to a maximum of $43,000. Benefits were not reimbursable for those hired to replace charter participants.

Mentoring and Coaching

- Trained mentor principals worked with participants to guide their learning throughout the program — mentors explained assignments, helped participants plan their work at the case study and internship schools, and provided the type of one-on-one support needed to grow into the role of a school turnaround leader.

- Recently retired principals and district office staff were employed as coaches for FTLP participants at the outset of the internship. All coaches completed a two-day training session focusing on the FTLP coaching process. The FTLP coaches met monthly with their participants to conduct joint classroom walk-throughs, talk through a range of issues related to the internship and review progress on internship tasks and assignments.

Participant Evaluation

- Mentors evaluated assignments using specially-designed rubrics, and progress through the program depended, in part, on earning a satisfactory score on the assignments.

- Participants' readiness to lead school turnaround was evaluated twice — during end-of-internship conferences with their mentors, coaches and internship principals and during an end-of-program conference with their mentors and coaches.

- Participants completed the 5D Instructional Leadership Assessment at the beginning and end of the program, and completed other program evaluation activities at key points of the program. The 5D assessment involved watching a segment of a videotaped lesson and then responding to a series of questions about what was observed, using an online assessment portal.

- Participants developed portfolios that included artifacts of their growth as leaders and provided a comprehensive summary of what they had proven capable of in preparation for their role as turnaround leaders.

Figure 8 provides a high-level view of the FTLP. The elements of the diagrams are organized to illustrate how the FTLP was structured, i.e., with an initial practicum phase followed by the six-month internship and post-internship activities.

Figure 8: Overview of the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program

A High-Level View of the FTLP Practicum Phase

Seminar 1	**Seminar 2**	**Seminar 3**	**Online Module**
Analyzing the Context of Low-Performing Schools	Envisioning a Culture of High Expectations	Providing a Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum	Assessing Academic Rigor in School and Classroom Practices
April 2012	June 2012	August 2012	August - October 2012

Seminar 4	**Online Module**	**Seminar 5**	**Seminar 6**
Promoting Effective Teaching and Learning (Part A)	Designing Assessments to Improve Student Learning	Building a Productive School Environment	Planning and Managing the Turnaround Process
November 2012	November 2012 – January 2013	February 2013	June 2013

July 2012

Practicum Assignments and Experiences in Case Study Schools

June 2013

Case Study Report	Schoolwide Rigor Assessment	Classroom Walk-Throughs	Safety Audit/ Discipline Analysis	Culture Assessment	Case Study School ImprovementPlan Recommendations

Mentoring by Experienced Principals

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A High-Level View of the FTLP Internship and Post-Internship Phases

Online Module

Building Instructional Leadership Teams

July - October 2013

Seminar 7

Implementing Organizational Change and Professional Development

September 2013

Seminar 8

Promoting Effective Teaching and Learning (Part B)

December 2013

Online Module

Leading Schoolwide Literacy Initiatives

January – March 2014

CTE Webcasts

Developing Engaging, Academically Rigorous CTE Programs

February – May

Seminar 9

Leading Initiatives to Improve Student Success in Mathematics

February 2014

Seminar 9a

Maximizing Flexibility and Autonomy in the Charter Setting (Charter Only)

February 2014

Seminar 10

Sustaining Turnaround and Growing the Organization

June 2014

July 2013 ⋯⋯⋯⋯ **Internship Assignments** ⋯⋯⋯⋯ **December 2013** ⋯⋯⋯⋯ **Post- Internship Assignments** ⋯⋯⋯⋯ **June 2014**

90-Day Plan

Lesson Study

Daily Classroom Walk-Throughs

Master Schedule

Individual Learning Plan

Meeting Needs of ELLs

Analyzing Performance at the Student Level

Supporting Struggling Students

Midcourse Corrections to 90-Day Plan

Charter Strategies

Expert Panel Presentation

Portfolio

Mentoring by Experienced Principals – Daily Guidance from Internship Principal – Monthly Coaching Visits

This abbreviated list of activities and the two graphics depicting the program elements within the phases of the FTLP reveal this was an intensive program that required a high level of energy and commitment. However, the rewards justified the investment participants made. At the completion of this program, they were ready to lead the most challenging middle grades or high school in a turnaround effort that produces significant, sustained improvement in student achievement. And that means more than simply raising exam scores. By turning around teaching and learning, FTLP completers are providing their students a lifetime of greater opportunities and fulfillment.

The following sections provide detailed descriptions of how the components of the FTLP were planned.

A Systematic Approach to Planning

> *"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."*
>
> Benjamin Franklin

No one would argue that a complex undertaking such as preparing aspiring principals to turn around student achievement could be accomplished without planning, but too often, the planning process is rushed and many details are left unplanned. The quote from Benjamin Franklin correctly predicts the outcome of planning that does not adequately prepare the organization to accomplish its goals. To ensure the work of planning for the APP and FTLP to be of sufficient scope and detail to guide implementation, SREB structured these efforts to align with the following four elements of effective planning:

1. Designate group of individuals who have the relevant experience and expertise to develop high-level plans and detailed action plans.

2. Establish a clearly defined set of outcomes and keep focused on these outcomes throughout the process of developing and implementing the plan.

3. Consider all aspects of the tasks and resources required to achieve those outcomes to ensure planning is comprehensive and implementation runs smoothly.

4. Utilize an iterative planning process for detailed action plans that are responsive to monitoring data and changes in the environment or conditions.

These four elements characterized how the APP and FTLP models were planned and managed through a systematic process.

The Core Planning Team

The FTLP Design Team was charged with planning, guiding and implementing the FTLP, but it soon became apparent the detailed planning of seminar content and delivery, the development of rigorous assignments and associated rubrics, as well as the day-to-day management of logistics and record-keeping, would need to be performed by a smaller, more cohesive group. This need was met by creating the core planning team. This team included the following personnel: the FDOE project director; key SREB project staff, including a co-director of curriculum development and a co-director of fiscal and contractual control, a project manager and a lead practice coach; Daniel L. Duke, a nationally recognized turnaround expert from the University of Virginia's Turnaround Specialist Program; an instructional designer with years of experience as head of a Texas regional service center; and the head of the educational leadership department at the University of North Florida.

> **Element 1:**
>
> *Designate a group of individuals who have the relevant experience and expertise to develop high-level plans and detailed action plans.*

A number of other school turnaround and content experts from Florida and other states, contracted to assist the development and delivery of seminars on specific skill sets, joined the team on an ad hoc basis as their assigned topics/seminars were being planned. The team met for a two- to three-day planning session each month throughout the 30-month project and worked together via virtual meetings between these monthly sessions as often as needed to develop high-quality program materials, solve problems, make midcourse corrections and provide continual oversight and monitoring of implementation.

A typical core planning team agenda included the following:

- Reviewing participant performance

    » Data relative to the status of participants

    » Overdue assignments and the underlying issues for those participants

    » Data on participant performance on recent assignments

    » Issues with field experience placements

- Planning for upcoming seminars

    » Have initial discussions of priority topics and potential content developers/presenters.

    » Meet with content developers/presenters to clarify requirements and expectations and to assign specific tasks related to the seminar.

    » Review draft presentations and activities to provide feedback to developers/presenters

    » Create a seminar agenda.

    » Design seminar follow-up activities and other assignments that would be completed based on what participants learned through the seminar content.

    » Plan and finalize logistical arrangements, including printing and shipping seminar notebooks and other materials.

- Updating the status of tasks assigned during previous core planning team meetings

- Planning for other program elements (i.e., practicum, internship, participant evaluation, mentoring, coaching, portfolio and expert panel presentations)

- Planning for the next core planning team meeting

As is clear from this list of typical agenda items that the work of the core planning team required multiple skill sets and rich knowledge, and the team members brought a wealth of experience and expertise to the task. While individual team members had a concentration in areas such as school turnaround research or instructional design, most of the members had overlapping skill sets that were built upon extensive experience in leadership development and the design and implementation of innovative principal preparation programs.

The Core Planning Team's Focus

While much of the team's work dealt with detailed planning of FTLP seminars and managing the ongoing implementation of the FTLP, the team retained a strategic focus — to develop a replicable, repeatable program that prepares principals and assistant principals to produce dramatic improvements in student achievement within a two-year period — the FTLP definition of school turnaround.

> **Element 2:**
>
> *Establish a clearly defined set of outcomes and keep focused on these outcomes throughout the process of making and implementing the plan.*

From time to time during the intense team planning sessions dealing with seminar content or one of the major FTLP assignments, the focus would temporarily drift toward a more generic application of a particular leadership competency. Inevitably, someone would bring the team back to its long-term focus of preparing turnaround leaders by asking, "How would a principal apply this skill in turning around student achievement at a low-performing school?" These gentle reminders brought clarity of purpose to conversations and maintained the central focus of each seminar, assignment and program requirement on preparing turnaround leaders, not just leaders.

Narrower intended outcomes of the project were also generated to provide targets against which the program's performance could be measured. These targets included:

1. A 90 percent completion rate for the aspiring turnaround leaders and future charter leaders prepared through the program

2. A 40 percent placement/promotion rate for program completers

3. Increases in post-test scores on the University of Washington's 5D Instructional Leadership Assessment

A small, but consistent part of the team's planning sessions involved monitoring these narrower outcomes, for example, monitoring participants' completion rate by tracking performance on assignments, online modules, and program requirements such as completing a pre-determined number of classroom walk-throughs during the internship was an ongoing task.

The FTLP Performance Record was created early in the program to maintain a centralized database of individual participant performance. This became the source document for monthly reports to the core planning team, through which the team identified participants who were falling behind schedule and thus becoming more vulnerable to dropping out. When this occurred, individualized "catch-up plans" were developed and monitored closely by the lead practice coach and the participant's mentor.

FTLP staff also maintained records of participants who received a promotion. This too was an ongoing record-keeping task. At the time this publication was being drafted, 56 of the 82 participants who completed the FTLP had been promoted to assistant principal, principal or district office staff. Some participants had been promoted twice during the program, moving from the classroom to assistant principal positions, and later, to the principalship.

The third objective focused on changes in participants' abilities to recognize evidence-based instructional practices as demonstrated by real teachers in videotaped lessons. Since these abilities were measured on a pre-/post-test basis through the 5D Instructional Leadership Assessment, the team utilized a proxy for this skill as a way to monitor participants' growth in observing effective instruction.

This was done during the internship as participants and their coaches conducted joint classroom walk-throughs focusing on a different dimension of the 5D framework each month. Feedback from the coaches allowed the team to assess participants' skill prior to the post-assessment with the 5D, which took place shortly before the completion of the FTLP in late spring of 2014.

The Core Planning Team's Way of Work

No two members of the team lived in the same city, and getting everyone together required significant effort and schedule coordination, so much of the team's actual work was completed by team members working independently between the monthly meetings.

The face-to-face meetings were reserved for talking through important questions of program content, design and management, and a wide range of other issues that arose during the FTLP's implementation. Lively discussions took place around such content development questions as "What would a principal who is leading school turnaround need to know about this topic?" and "How would a turnaround leader apply this skill?"

It was during such discussions that the diverse backgrounds of the team members helped the team consider all aspects of the different tasks being addressed. The key points made during these discussions were incorporated into FTLP assignments and the rubrics used to evaluate participants' performance and work products.

Program design issues were also addressed in the face-to-face meetings. The team devoted time during each meeting to identifying program elements that needed additional planning and development. For example, the process used to evaluate participants was not fully developed when the FTLP was initiated, and much work was done by the team to develop, test and refine the key components of that process while the program was being implemented.

These components included the FTLP Performance Record used to track individual participant performance on each of the 23 assignments, follow-up activities and program requirements comprising the FTLP curriculum, the end-of-internship and end-of-program evaluation processes and tools, and the expert panel presentations in which participants shared their portfolios with a panel of experts in educational leadership.

Developing the end-of-internship evaluation process provides a good example of the level of detail and iterative nature of the way of work employed by the core planning team. Initial discussions about this program element centered on what was important to accomplish through this process. The team members brought up a number of questions in sorting through options for how participants' work during the six-month internship would be evaluated. These included the following:

- Who would have input in the evaluation?
  - » Each participant had a mentor, internship principal and coach. Each of these individuals would complete an end-of-internship evaluation form. Additional input was collected from members of the participant's project management team for the 90-day plan. This was the group of school faculty and staff who were actively involved in planning and implementing the 90-day school improvement plan that was the capstone assignment of the internship. An online survey was used to collect their responses to a short list of questions about how this major assignment was conducted. Their input was made available to the participant, mentor, coach and internship principal.

- What would be the scope of the evaluation?

  » Since the coach and internship principal had begun working with their participant at the outset of the internship, and the internship was meant to demonstrate the integration of the 10 skill sets into the aspiring principal's performance, the evaluation focused on what the participant had done during the internship. Although the mentor had worked with his/her mentee for 12 months before the start of the internship, the mentor also focused on the participant's internship performance.

- How should the evaluation instrument be structured?

  » The core planning team charged the lead practice coach with drafting an end-of-internship evaluation form. The initial draft included a brief narrative providing background information for those who would use the form, a set of directions, and a rating scale. Upon reviewing this draft form, the team suggested including a list of indicators drawn from the major assignments to be completed during the internship so that the mentor, internship principal and coach would focus on a consistent set of expectations relative to the participant's work during the internship.

- How would the actual decision on participant readiness be made?

  » The mentor, coach and internship principal would each complete an end-of-internship evaluation form before coming together for an end-of-internship evaluation conference. In the first part of this conference, the mentor, coach and internship principal, without the intern present, would discuss their individual assessments and arrive at a consensus readiness rating for their intern. Then, the intern would join the conference and the coach would facilitate a review of the comments and consensus assessment of readiness. Finally, the intern's support team would share recommendations for additional professional development tailored to meet the intern's needs for growth based on their readiness assessment.

It required multiple meetings to work through these and other related points, and the end-of-internship evaluation process went through several iterations before the core planning team finalized it, as each element of this process was analyzed and debated in detail. For example, the major hurdle to developing an end-of-internship evaluation form that met with the approval of the team was the rating scale. Since the overall purpose of the evaluation was to produce an assessment of the participant's readiness to lead school turnaround, everyone agreed the scale should reflect levels of readiness. However, arriving at consensus on what makes an individual "ready" to lead turnaround proved difficult.

The team's initial approach involved a two-stage evaluation. The first stage was to focus on the participant's performance on FTLP assignments and online modules completed by the end of the internship. Stage 2 was to address readiness as defined by the expertise and effort demonstrated by the participant during the internship.

First Draft Evaluation Scale

Expert Level	Proficient Level	Completer Level	Participant Level
Ready to be the instructional leader at a chronically low-performing school. Demonstrated **extraordinarily high levels of expertise and effort** in applying turnaround skills during the internship.	**Ready to work as an instructional leader** at a chronically low-performing school. Demonstrated **high levels of expertise and effort** in applying turnaround skills during the internship.	**Ready to work in support of the instructional leader** at a chronically low-performing school. Demonstrated **an acceptable level of expertise and effort** in applying turnaround skills during the internship.	**Failed to demonstrate** acceptable levels of expertise and effort in applying turnaround skills during the internship. Therefore, no readiness assessment can be made at this time.

A representative group of FTLP coaches tried out the draft scale and provided input on how it functioned. This resulted in a decision to drop the first stage of the evaluation process and a rewording of the scale used to assess readiness. The scale that was eventually used to determine the intern's readiness to be a turnaround leader interpreted readiness as the extent to which the intern demonstrated competence in leading school turnaround activities at a low-performing school during the internship.

This three-level scale was less prescriptive and allowed more leeway for the expert judgment of the mentor, internship principal and coach. The scale had three levels rather than the four levels of the original scale.

Three-Level Evaluation Scale

Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Fully ready to lead school turnaround at a chronically low-performing school	**Nearly ready** to lead school turnaround at a chronically low-performing school	**Not ready** to lead school turnaround at a chronically low-performing school

The core planning team recognized the challenge of obtaining reliability with an evaluation tool such as the readiness scales of the end-of-internship evaluation form and attempted to increase the validity and reliability of the ratings by including a range of sample indicators for each level directly on the evaluation form. This allowed the rater to ask, "Did I observe my intern doing this?" and, "If so, how skilled was this person's performance of this behavior?" This structure simplified the evaluation task for the participant's mentor, internship principal and coach. The team thought this simpler approach would be more likely to produce valid and reliable ratings.

This process was typical of the work conducted by the core planning team. Figure 9 illustrates the phases of this process and the iterative nature of this type of work.

Figure 9: Core Planning Team Workflow
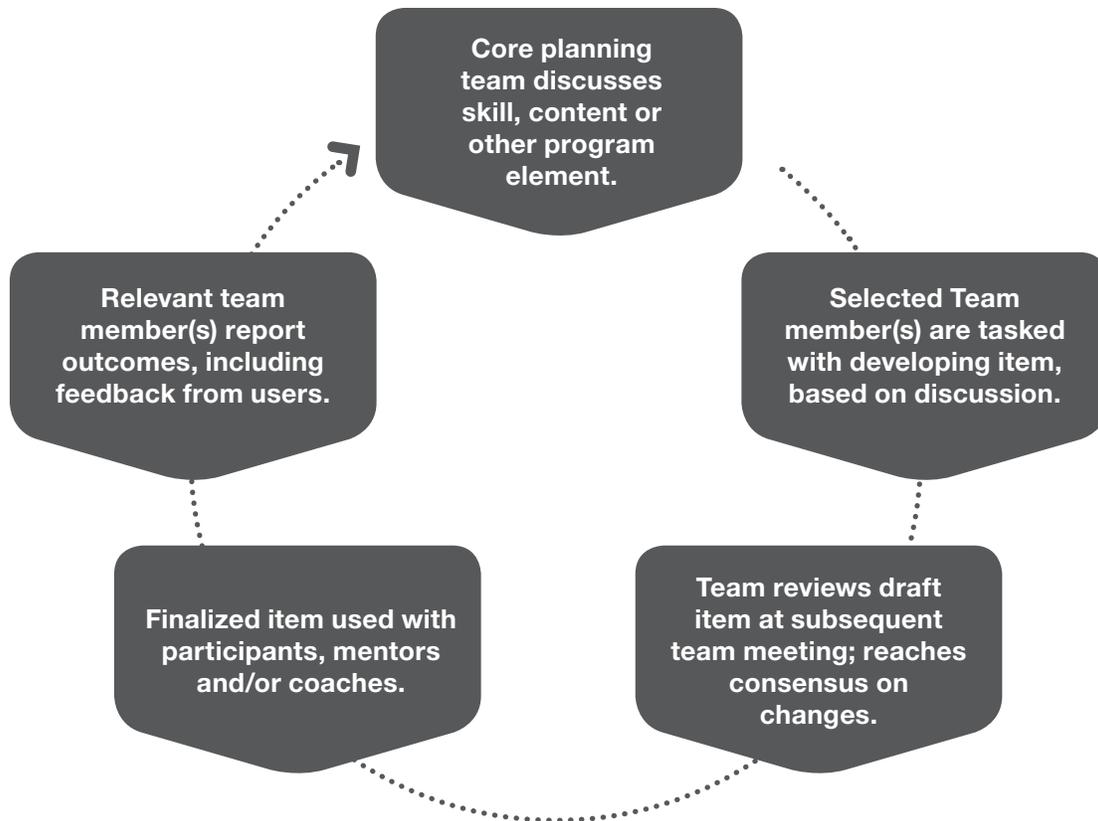
What Worked Smoothly and What Didn't

The core planning team was high-functioning in terms of developing program content; designing program elements to meet the needs of participants; managing the logistical aspects of program implementation; designing effective tools for use by mentors, coaches and participants; and supporting each role within the FTLP (participants, mentors, coaches, district contacts and seminar developers/presenters). The high quality of work produced by the team was attributable to several key factors.

- Most team members had previous experience working together on similar projects. Their familiarity enhanced communication; allowed work to be assigned to the right person because each individual's skills were well known to others on the team; and provided a cohesive, collegial work environment.

- All work products were subject to core planning team review before being finalized. Thus, each assignment, rubric, tool or supporting document reflected the perspective and expertise of multiple members of this highly-skilled group.

- Several previous projects on which most team members had collaborated also focused on preparing and developing principals to improve low-performing schools, and therefore, a number of the assignments and program structures of the FTLP were refinements (albeit extensive refinements) of earlier efforts and, in this way, benefited from the "lessons learned" in prior projects.

These and other factors enabled the team to design a rigorous and relevant curriculum, work effectively with participating districts to select participants with high leadership potential, plan and deliver high-quality training to those participants, and provide strong support to participants as they applied the school turnaround skills comprising the FTLP curriculum.

However, working with content area specialists as ad hoc members of the team to develop the content and activities for a specific seminar proved somewhat more challenging. These challenges showed up in three areas; (1) communicating the need to focus on the skills targeted for that seminar, (2) balancing the need to share important information with the need for actively engaging the participants during the seminar and (3) translating excellent content into effective training.

Content developers/presenters for the seminars were drawn from the ranks of turnaround specialists to the greatest extent possible. For example, a former North Carolina high school principal assisted development of and presented Seminar 3, which focused on using data to identify gaps in student achievement and conducting data meetings with teachers to plan instruction.

A former principal who gained national attention for her leadership of turnaround in a Texas high school assisted in developing and presented Seminar 5, which focused on building a productive school environment. And the secondary coordinator for Florida's Response to Intervention Project assisted with and presented a session focusing on project implementation.

Design Principle 7

Instructors Who Model
Turnaround Skills

To ensure the training content was accurate, authentic and specific to turnaround leadership rather than generic principal training, the content developers/presenters met with the core planning team well in advance of the seminar they were asked to deliver. They received an introduction to the FTLP, learned about their assigned skill set, and were given an opportunity to provide input on the subsequent assignments and activities participants were expected to complete based on what they would learn during the seminar.

Some seminar content developers wanted to emphasize skills or strategies that had been effective for them personally rather than focusing on the skills in the SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets targeted for a particular seminar. While this is understandable, the team was committed to delivering seminar content that reflected the evidence-based practices of the SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets. So, feedback from the core planning team to the content developers on early drafts of their planned seminar presentations emphasized the importance of clearly and explicitly aligning seminar content with the targeted skill set.

Because content developers/presenters were chosen for their extensive knowledge and experience with the content of a specific seminar, this often meant the developer knew much more about the content than participants could absorb in a two-day seminar. Wanting to provide maximum benefit to the seminar attendees, some developers initially planned to present so much information that participants would have little time to process it.

It frequently took several attempts by the core planning team to convince these developers that "less is more" and that participants wanted and needed to be actively engaged in processing information presented at the seminar if they were to be able to apply it in a low-performing school setting.

As part of the seminar content development process, the content developers/presenters were assigned an instructional development specialist from the team to assist in creating high-quality materials and activities for their seminars. This was deemed important because expertise and experience do not always translate into strong presentation skills. Connecting the presenters with a skilled instructional designer resulted in the presenters sharing their own experiences within a focused context based on the overall FTLP design, while at the same time providing participants living proof that low-performing schools can be turned around.

Lessons Learned for an Effective Planning Team

Several factors have been mentioned as playing key roles in the effectiveness of the FTLP's core planning team. These factors, along with the "lessons learned," can provide guidance for those charged with selecting individuals to serve on a team with similar responsibilities. The lessons learned are:

- Clearly define the role(s) the team will fill so team members can be selected who possess the range of expertise and experience required.

  » The breadth of the tasks that need to be planned and completed is significant, so individuals with broad experience are needed, as well as those with deep expertise in specific areas.

- Strike a balance between selecting team members who have worked together previously and introducing new team members who bring diverse experiences and perspectives.

  » Many times, discussions at core planning team meetings were driven to greater depths and richness as team members shared divergent views on how to approach a certain topic. Strive for cohesiveness, but not at the expense of strong professional discourse.

- Find ways of work that allow all members to be productive.

  » The core planning team made significant use of the skills of individual team members by assigning tasks to be completed through independent work, thus allowing the team to devote its time together to decision making and issue resolution rather than spending face-to-face meeting time on work that could be done more efficiently outside of the monthly meetings.

  » When core planning team meeting topics did not require the active participation of all team members, those whose expertise might be better utilized on other tasks were often allowed to leave the meeting temporarily to work on specific assignments and report back to the team with a finished product.

  » When one team member was restricted to working from home, the team adapted by increasing the use of virtual meetings. Virtual meeting tools also allowed for sharing documents and presentations between monthly meetings and speeding up the process of drafting items for review by the team.

  » The team made sure the places selected for monthly meetings were accessible (near a large airport for those who flew to the meeting) and conducive for the kind of work performed (quiet with ample table space and appropriate media equipment).

- Make sure team members come prepared to work.

  » All team members committed to joining each meeting on time, with all assigned work completed, and having read or reviewed materials provided before the meeting.

- Establish routines and protocols for how particular tasks will be completed.

  » The team gradually developed set protocols for what should happen before, during and after a meeting (i.e., when agenda items should be submitted, how revisions were made to documents and presentations during and after the meeting, how far in advance seminar content should be finalized and how logistical arrangements of each seminar should be confirmed).

- Have a leader.

  » While the emphasis of the core planning team was on the "team," the group had a clear leader. This is important, not only when tough decisions have to be made, but also when there is a need for coherent vision and message. Having one person who speaks for the program increases the clarity of the message and presents a more credible image of the program to others.

Partnerships

If you have an apple and I have an apple, and we exchange these apples, then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas.

George Bernard Shaw

<u>Why Partnerships are Critical</u>

Few, if any, organizations are able to plan and implement a rigorous turnaround leader preparation program entirely on their own. Therefore, most organizations will find it to their advantage to engage the right partners in a collaborative effort. Carefully selected partners can dramatically enhance the overall quality of a principal preparation program by bringing diverse skills and resources to bear on the complex tasks required to design and execute such a program.

In addition, effective, mutually beneficial partnerships can multiply the energy and enthusiasm needed to push through obstacles and sustain the level of commitment necessary to achieve successful implementation.

SREB has a 10-year history of researching, understanding and documenting the importance of partnerships in preparing principals who are effective in improving teaching and learning.[23] This rich background made it possible for SREB to identify the key aspects of effective collaborative partnerships related directly to preparing turnaround leaders.

- **Shared Vision** — Ensure all partners understand the goal of the program is to better prepare school leaders to turn around persistently low student achievement.

- **We Need Each Other** — Acknowledge that the partners cannot singlehandedly provide the breadth of experiences needed to adequately prepare school turnaround leaders, so each partner is important to the program's success.

- **Openness Builds Trust** — Believe that mutual respect, understanding and trust can be built when all partners acknowledge their self-interests in light of the partnership's goals.

- **Joint Selection Process** — Utilize a jointly designed screening/selection process to select program participants.

- **Selection Criteria** — Agree on the criteria to be used to identify candidates, such as selecting potential leaders with demonstrated knowledge of curriculum and instruction.

- **Authentic Practice** — Collaborate on field experience design so aspiring turnaround leaders participate in continual learning activities closely aligned to school improvement; ensure these field-based experiences are integrated throughout the program.

- **Selecting Authentic Practice Settings** — Collaborate on-site selection criteria to make certain participants practice turnaround skills in authentic settings.

- **Track Performance** — Select clear measures for evaluation that drive improvement of processes and outcomes and ensure partners are engaged in ongoing discussions on program results.

- **Partnership Agreements** — Utilize well written partnership agreements to avoid or remove barriers to successful implementation.

Working With Partners in the FTLP

Before the initial outreach asking potential partners to consider joining SREB in planning and implementing the FTLP, the core planning team discussed how to utilize the key points set forth in the above bulleted list as the team built partnerships with districts, the university partner, charter organizations across Florida and the contact at the FDOE. Examples of how these aspects of effective partnerships were operationalized are described in the following paragraphs.

A key objective of the initial kickoff meeting for the FTLP was to clearly communicate the purpose of the program — to prepare individuals who can turn around teaching and learning at chronically low-performing middle grades schools and high schools. By agreeing on this purpose, SREB took the first step toward building a shared vision for the type of program to create. Other elements of the shared vision included a rigorous selection process to ensure program participants with high potential for turnaround leadership; an emphasis on turnaround skills rather than generic leadership skills; and extensive field experiences in schools that possessed the characteristics of schools in need of turnaround.

The strong support SREB received from participating districts throughout the program and the fact that 64 percent of the program completers were promoted by their district prior to the end of the program are just two indications that the partners shared SREB's vision for the FTLP.

Shared Vision

The best partnerships are those that leverage each organization's strengths. For example, universities and service centers have unique services that might be helpful in forming the program's curriculum, but without authentic settings (i.e., low-performing schools) in which to practice new skills, even high-quality training can fall short of meeting expectations.

However, a partnership between service providers and school districts supplies both of these requirements for effective training — content that is well designed and delivered, and practice of newly acquired skills in authentic contexts.

Other potential partners might help with specific content. For instance, a consulting firm that has contracted with the state or district to design the teacher evaluation system might be willing to provide supplementary training on teacher evaluation to program participants.

An agency contracted by one district to assist school leaders with developing innovative schedules for purposes such as providing common planning time for specific groups of teachers, accommodating students' needs for extra help during the school day, or creating pathways of study aligned with students' career interests and goals might also be willing to provide this special training to participants from all participating districts.

We Need Each Other

While the mix of partners in the FTLP was defined to some extent by the FDOE's requirements, the scope of partners reflected a well-balanced group, and each partner brought unique capacities and perspectives, thus ensuring a thoroughly conceived and executed program. Figure 10 highlights just a few of the key contributions of each partner.

Figure 10: Contributions of FTLP Partners

FDOE	University of North Florida	Participating Districts	SREB
Funding	State-approved courses leading to Level 1 Certification	Carefully selected participants and mentors	Experienced project team
Oversight	Research base for leadership development	Authentic field experience sites	Seminars and online modules
Advice on Substantive Issues	Knowledge of leadership program content	Additional training on selected topics	Planning, managing reporting all project activities

The benefits that accrue to potential partners depend on the mission and objectives of each partner. For school districts, the benefit of the FTLP was obvious. They gained highly-skilled leaders who are equipped to lead school turnaround. But, other categories of partners who participate in turnaround or transformational leadership preparation programs can also achieve outcomes that meet their interests. For example, an agency that provides professional development services might benefit from partnering in this type of endeavor by expanding the scope of professional development opportunities it is able to deliver and/or expanding its audience for those opportunities.

When partners are open and forthright about how they hope to benefit from the program, other partners understand their motivation and can take these important needs into consideration during the decision-making process. This type of openness builds a sense of trust. It's easier to predict how a partner is likely to respond to specific situations when it's clear what is important to that partner.

Openness Builds Trust

Very early in the implementation of the FTLP, SREB experienced how openness can create a trusting relationship among partners. This came about when SREB explained to each district how it was going to fund temporary replacements for each participant during the six-month internship.

By reimbursing the district for the salaries of replacements to backfill each participant's current position, SREB intended to create a situation in which the participant could concentrate fully on the tasks associated with the internship, without the responsibilities of his/her regular job with the district. Unfortunately, the FTLP budget as initially calculated was not sufficient to reimburse the districts for 100 percent of the benefits for the replacements. That is, SREB could pay all of their salaries, but only part of their benefits.

This proved to be an important point for each district as it represented an unanticipated expense. But, by being transparent and open about its inability to pay the full costs of benefits for the replacements, SREB began to build trust with partnering districts. Districts realized they could count on SREB not to surprise them with bad news after they had committed to the program.

A clear example of how partners can work together to achieve project objectives is the selection of FTLP participants. This began at the kickoff meeting where the FTLP director shared a proposed selection process designed by the core planning team based on lessons learned from the FLASII.

Joint Selection Process

This allowed representatives of each district to ask clarifying questions and to provide input on the structure of the selection process and who should be involved from the districts' perspective. Ideas on how the selection process could be implemented were exchanged among the district representatives in a free-flowing discussion that enabled each district to come away with a plan for this process that met FTLP requirements and was customized to their individual district's needs and circumstances.

While each district customized the selection process to some extent, all adhered to FTLP requirements in terms of identifying candidates from the targeted groups, utilizing a selection team to oversee the process, and involving principals and others with firsthand knowledge of the qualities of potential candidates in nominating those who eventually entered the FTLP. The roster of participants produced by the selection process proved quite strong, as 56 of the 82 program completers were appointed to positions as assistant principals, principals or district office positions before the end of the program.

At the session kickoff, the FTLP director also shared the criteria districts were to use to screen and select the best candidates for this program. These criteria emphasized demonstrated knowledge of curriculum and instruction. In the discussions that followed, SREB partner districts raised sound questions about the abilities of teacher leaders to assume turnaround leader roles without extensive additional experience, and so they shifted the composition of the FTLP cohort to include a higher proportion of assistant principals —individuals who might be more "principal-ready" after completing the FTLP.

Selection Criteria

The strong, shared intent on the part of each FTLP partner to ensure participants had ongoing opportunities to engage in the real work of school turnaround produced some of the most comprehensive examples of collaborative partnerships. The members of the core planning team gave the highest priority to authentic practice in designing FTLP assignments and seminar follow-up activities, but without the cooperation of district partners in providing access to low-performing schools, completing those assignments would have been an academic exercise.

Authentic Practice

FTLP district contacts from each district, ad hoc members of the core planning team who were involved in seminar development, and SREB's FDOE project leader all provided input on the design of FTLP assignments. Their input echoed the emphasis on authenticity in how participants practiced and honed their skills. Many partners suggested ways to make specific assignments more closely resemble what turnaround leaders actually do, based on their firsthand experiences in school turnaround. In this way, the core planning team was able to piece together suggestions of multiple partners to enrich the experiences provided to FTLP participants.

The previous paragraphs addressed the mutually held belief that providing FTLP participants with opportunities to practice what they learned through seminars and online modules in settings that reflected the characteristics of low-performing schools were of critical importance. This made identifying appropriate field experience sites an imperative.

While FTLP staff members were capable of analyzing student achievement data and identifying schools in each district that met the FTLP definition of "low-performing," there were other criteria that only the district could assess. Primarily, these additional criteria dealt with the school's leadership.

Ideally, schools serving as practicum or internship sites would have dynamic leaders who were in the early stages of school turnaround. It would do little good (and might be harmful) to place FTLP participants in schools where the principal was content to accept the status quo, believing that students and teachers were performing up to their abilities, with no real chance to improve. Therefore, district contacts were charged with reviewing the list of schools within their district that met the FTLP definition of low-performing* and identifying those schools where the principal would be a good role model for FTLP participants.

The site selection process required a very high degree of collaboration between FTLP staff and the district contacts. This collaboration, as depicted in Figure 11, involved a highly structured sequence of tasks. However, the coordination required to complete this process within an extremely tight time frame was achieved in each district because the partners had established a relationship of trust and communication.

Figure 11: Swim Lane Diagram of Partner Collaboration to Select Field Experience Sites
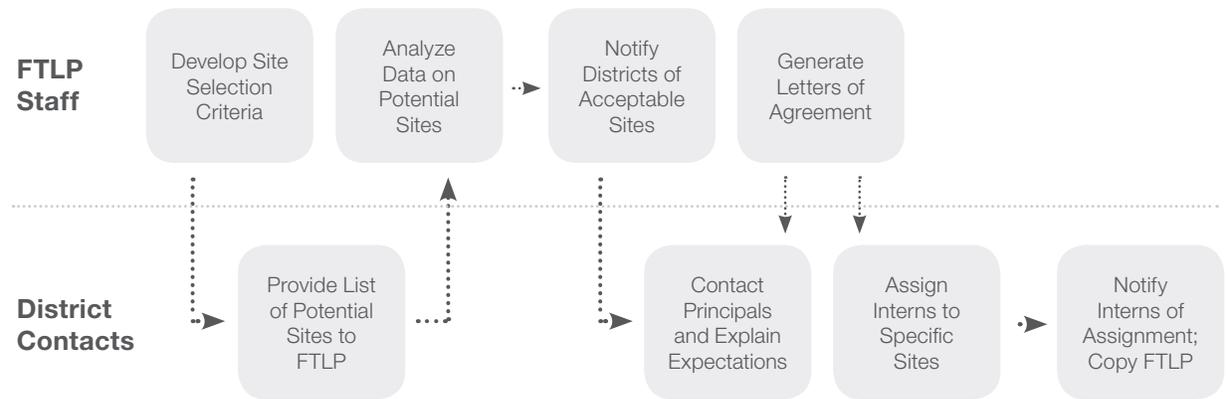
The primary tool for tracking participant performance was the FTLP Performance Record. This tool provided a record of each participant's score on assignments, online modules and other FTLP requirements such as classroom walk-throughs and seminar attendance. Scores were clustered into categories (highly effective, effective, needs improvement and unsatisfactory), and each score on a participant's performance record was color coded to reflect the relevant category, thus allowing "at a glance" identification of performance issues at the individual participant or district level.

Program-wide reports were provided to the core planning team at each monthly meeting, and district reports were shared with the appropriate district contact on a quarterly basis or more frequently if an issue arose. Two performance-related issues addressed at least once within each of the five participating districts were late assignments and delays in mentor evaluations of FTLP assignments.

Each assignment had a prescribed due date. When circumstances resulted in an overdue assignment, the participant's mentor worked with that individual to get back on schedule. A number of participants had at least one overdue assignment during the program, but most were able to complete the assignment within a reasonable extension of the due date.

In the rare instances where overdue assignments piled up for a participant, the FTLP lead practice coach and the participant's mentor worked together to create a "catch-up" plan tailored to the individual's circumstances. The district contact was notified of this situation and in most of these cases, the contact was able to provide support for the catch-up plan that aided the participant in making up overdue assignments.

Similarly, a small handful of mentors in almost every district at one time or another were slow in grading assignments. With few exceptions, these instances were handled through a brief conversation between the mentor and lead practice coach. However, in the case of a mentor with two mentees, the involvement of the district contact was required as the mentor did not respond to repeated reminders and offers of assistance from the lead practice coach.

In this situation, the fact that the district contact had access to the mentor's supervisor seemed to be the reason the contact had much more success than the lead practice coach in getting the mentor to grade all assignments submitted.

These are examples of performance issues that required partner involvement to resolve. Continual tracking of participant performance ensured that problems were addressed in a timely manner, participants needing additional support received it, and program attrition was minimized. Close partner communication and trusting relationships again were keys to success in resolving these issues.

Partnership Agreements

A key element in creating trusting relationships is a timely response to questions partners have about how the partnership will function. SREB has collected many sample agreements between universities and school districts that address the selection and preparation of aspiring leaders. Each agreement tends to be written specific to the context and needs of its partners. Some are called memoranda of understanding (MOUs) or letters of agreement (LOAs). Some have a more formal or legalistic approach, somewhat like a contract between the partners. But there are common elements across these samples that should be included in any partnership agreement. They include:

- A description of the partners
- A detailed description of the partnership, including answers to these questions:
    - » What is the purpose of partnering?
    - » What will occur as a result?
    - » What, if any, parameters or limitations need to be stated at the outset?
    - » What are the "non-negotiables"?
    - » What are the shared vision and/or beliefs of the partners?
    - » How can all partners achieve their missions better through the partnership?
    - » What benefits will accrue to each partner through this partnership?
    - » What will be the decision-making structure of the partnership?
    - » Who will be the representatives of each partnering organization?
    - » How will membership on committees be balanced between the partnering organizations?
    - » Who must be on committees because of their formal role in the organization?
    - » What are the responsibilities of the partnership?
    - » What resources will each partner contribute?

> » How will resources be shared?
>
> » Who controls resources?
>
> » What will occur if resources are not provided in accordance with this agreement?

- A description of the parameters of the agreement

  » What is the timeline or time frame for the agreement?

  » When can changes to the agreement occur?

  » When can partners opt out of the agreement?

  » What additional conditions are necessary to commit to during the agreement process?

  » Who can sign the agreement on behalf of the partnering organizations?

Levels of Collaboration

Orr, King and LaPointe,[24] in their extensive study of the relationships between school districts and universities working collaboratively to design and implement leadership development programs, identified three primary ways the core work of such programs was shared. These distinct ways of working together reflect levels of collaboration within each affiliation.

1. Working independently: One institution had primary responsibility for the core work and might seek input from the other for one or more matters relative to program design or implementation. In one such example, the collaborating university managed all program designs and implementation decisions itself, but involved the district in candidate selection and internship placement.

2. Constructing parallel roles: The district and university conducted joint planning and shared resources, but a majority of the work was performed independently. This mode of collaboration was illustrated by a program in Springfield, Illinois, where the district and university each evaluated candidates on separate selection criteria and district staff and university faculty split teaching responsibilities.

3. Blending responsibilities: Roles were shared and decision-making and implementation of the core work were not solely the responsibility of one institution or the other. This way of working was exemplified by joint planning and action such as district staff and university faculty who co-taught core courses at the affiliated university. Another example was cited by Orr et al. where university faculty and district staff, meeting at a district work location rather than on the university campus, worked together to construct weekly learning activities, emphasizing district and university priorities at different times.

The FTLP included characteristics of all three levels of collaboration. Many of the day-to-day activities required to implement the program were performed by SREB staff (an example of working independently). Participants were guided in their assignments and field experiences by a support team made up of mentors, and practicum and internship site principals who were district employees, as well as coaches who were employed by SREB (an example of blending responsibilities). Districts and SREB staff fulfilled parallel roles in the selection of participants and mentors with the districts identifying the participants and mentors based on criteria provided by SREB staff, but the orientation and training of mentors and participants were provided by SREB.

Other examples of blended responsibilities included determining how the program would dovetail with the districts' Level 2 school principal certification programs and the expert panel presentations that took place in each district near the end of the program. SREB staff worked collaboratively with district contacts to identify overlaps and gaps in the competencies addressed in the FTLP and each district's Level 2 certification curriculum. This analysis was used to determine what elements of the district's certification requirements were satisfied by completing the FTLP.

The expert panel presentations also represented blended responsibilities in that the core planning team established the design of this activity and set the criteria used by panelists to assess participants' readiness to lead school turnaround, but the participating districts selected the panel members and scheduled the presentations with individual participants. During the presentations, senior staff from each district facilitated the process, with FTLP staff in an active support role.

Partnership Lessons Learned
The elements of effective partnerships described at the outset of this section provide clear guidance for structuring the working relationships of partners in a turnaround or transformational leader preparation program. SREB adhered to this guidance in operationalizing the FTLP partnerships at the level of day-to-day implementation and, in doing so, learned some important lessons including three critical aspects to consider in making partnerships work. These aspects, outlined in the Figure 12, are explained in detail in a describing how the FTLP worked with the contact person for each of the five participating districts.

Figure 12: Important Aspects of Successful Partnerships

Roles	Communications	Understanding
• Each partner's role makes sense for that partner in terms of objectives and capacity. • Partners are not asked to take on roles that are unrelated to their objectives or beyond their capacity.	• The communications plan includes frequent two-way communications via a preferred method. • Responses are prompt. • The plan is assessed so it can be improved as needed.	• Partners understand how the program fits into the priorities of other partners. • The priorities of all partners are considered when decisions are made.

Background of District Contacts

At the outset of the FTLP, superintendents of each of the five participating school districts were asked to identify an individual who would be the primary contact for FTLP communications and take on the responsibility for coordinating a range of activities involving that district's participants. Having a single point of contact for each district made communication easier for FTLP staff, and it gave the district a source of information about the program that was readily accessible and could interpret FTLP requirements and expectations in the context of the district's policies and procedures.

SREB was extremely fortunate to work with individuals in each of the five districts who were enthusiastic about their district's participation and about the leadership potential of the FTLP participants from that district. The FTLP district contacts were typically senior staff members with human resources or professional development backgrounds. Their district responsibilities included leadership development, and therefore the purpose of the FTLP — to prepare school turnaround leaders — was a good fit for these individuals.

An additional benefit of having a primary contact in each district was the contact's in-depth knowledge of district policies and personnel. Put simply, the contact usually knew who to go to for action on requests from FTLP staff. This was helpful because the size and complexity of the participating districts made it difficult for an "outsider" to know who within the district was responsible for a particular policy or practice. In Florida, each of the 67 counties is a single school district. Because of this structure, many of the largest school districts in the United States are in Florida. To illustrate this point about the size of each district, the 2012-13 K-12 enrollment figures for the five participating districts are listed in Table 6.

Table 6: Student Enrollment Data for Participating Districts

District	K-12 Enrollment	District	K-12 Enrollment
Alachua	27,826	Orange	183,066
Dade	354,262	Pinellas	103,590
Duval	125,686		

Source: KIDS COUNT Data Center

Table 7 lists the official job title of each of the district contacts. In all but one district, the FTLP contact changed over the nearly three years of the program's duration. In one district, the person who was the first district contact took over that role for a second time when responsibility for leadership development was moved back to human resources after being overseen by professional development staff for a period of just under a year.

Roles

When the FTLP was designed, experience indicated a single point of contact with each district would be important when (not if) questions or concerns arose relative to program and district expectations and the routine communication needs associated with a large-scale principal preparation program implementation. In actual practice the FTLP district contacts went far beyond acting as a conduit for communications with district partners. These individuals were engaged in planning, facilitating and evaluating a wide range of program-related activities, including the following:

- Attending the kickoff meeting and sharing critical information with relevant senior district leadership to enable them to make an informed decision on participation

- Facilitating the process of reaching agreement on district participation; ironing out details and helping FTLP staff understand the district's perspectives, procedures and constraints as they pertained to the district's participation

- Coordinating the participant selection process so nominated candidates met program criteria and the district's needs

- Answering questions and providing information about district procedures, such as instrumentation, indicators and deadlines related to teacher evaluation, and how they might impact FTLP activities and time frames

- Working with FTLP staff to identify appropriate practicum school sites

  » This process involved finding common ground between FTLP criteria defining a "low-performing" school and district practices concerning the placement of interns, and innovative programs at schools that might already be experiencing initiative overload.

Table 7: Position Titles of District Contacts

District	Initial District Contact	Replacement District Contact		
Alachua	Director, Project Development and Staff Development			
Dade	Administrative Director, Professional Development	Administrative Director, Leadership Development	Director, Professional Development	Administrative Director, Leadership Development
Duval	Executive Director, Leadership Development	Executive Director of Instruction		
Orange	Senior Executive Director, Human Resources	Principal on Assignment, Professional Development Services	Senior Executive Director, Human Resources	
Pinellas	Chief Turnaround Officer	Associate Superintendent, Student and Community Services		

- Facilitating the agreement of potential practicum school principals to have a team of participants to complete FTLP assignments and activities on campus and use practicum school data in those assignments. This also involved working with district IT staff to provide participants access to the practicum school's data on the district's network.

- Suggesting sitting principals for the role of mentors to one or more participants and facilitating the orientation of those mentors and their assignment to mentees

- Helping FTLP staff navigate the district's processes for reimbursing schools or the district for the cost of substitutes for participants who required a substitute to cover their classes when they visited their practicum schools

- Alerting FTLP staff to changes in district personnel

  » Principal changes were a common occurrence, particularly at the outset of the internship. These changes had the potential to be disruptive to FTLP participants as they began their internships. District contacts were proactive in communicating these changes and getting the participants in touch with their new principals quickly.

- Resolving issues with mentors

  » In a few circumstances when a problem with a mentor required an intervention, the district contacts acted promptly and with tact and sensitivity that brought about a favorable outcome in each situation.

- Notifying the FTLP of emergency situations as well as health concerns of participants that impacted their active participation in FTLP activities

    » Several FTLP participants had serious health issues arise during the program, and the district contacts were able to assist FTLP staff in making appropriate accommodations while maintaining strict confidentiality regarding the individual's health concerns.

    » Other emergency situations were less serious, but still important. When unexpected emergencies kept participants from attending a seminar, the district contact notified the FTLP, thus allowing the participant to focus on the school-based emergency.

- Recommending recently retired principals and district office personnel for the role of coaches

    » "Local knowledge" is a valuable asset in almost any endeavor. The district contacts were able to recommend individuals for the coaching role who possessed the dispositions necessary to be a good coach as well as the recent experience in the district needed to advise FTLP participants accurately on a range of policy issues.

- Helping with regionally delivered seminars

    » Seven of the 10 quarterly FTLP seminars were delivered on a regional basis to reduce travel costs. District contacts were often engaged in making training room arrangements, recommending reasonably priced hotels nearby for those participants who were staying overnight, and ensuring participants had the correct information for parking and other logistical matters.

SREB was careful to avoid asking district contacts to take on roles that were unrelated to the districts' reasons for participating in the FTLP.

Communications

Even a quick scan of this list of tasks and activities performed by the district contacts reveals the need for a comprehensive partner communication plan. This plan should include:

4. Regularly scheduled opportunities for two-way information sharing

5. A consistent "preferred" method of communication

6. A commitment on everyone's part to respond quickly to requests and notices

7. A way to assess the communication plan's effectiveness so that improvements can be made proactively

The FTLP utilized virtual meetings to conduct information-sharing sessions with the district contacts. To ensure these sessions included two-way communication, SREB sent a draft agenda in advance of each session and asked the contacts to review it and send any items they wanted added to the agenda. Then, SREB made "questions or concerns from the contacts" a standing agenda item for these sessions. Sessions were also recorded, so that any contact missing the virtual meeting could stream a recording at his or her convenience. This also allowed the contacts to use the recording to share information with others.

Because email is the preferred method of communication for most school districts, SREB opted to use email as the primary means of communicating with district contacts. However, phone numbers were shared and contacts were encouraged to call if an issue arose that needed immediate attention.

SREB worked diligently to respond promptly to any questions or concerns raised by district contacts or any other FTLP stakeholder. Data from a program-wide survey indicated high levels of satisfaction with response time from FTLP staff, with 93 to 98 percent of respondents assigning the survey's highest rating to individual FTLP staff members' prompt responses to questions.

In addition to an annual survey of participants, SREB sought less formal but more frequent feedback on communications through quarterly meetings with district contacts, the one-hour "business sessions" SREB conducted at the end of each of the quarterly seminars, and the monthly core planning team meetings. Feedback from these sources caused SREB to make changes in several aspects of the communications plan. These included making the email communications with participants and district contacts more concise; recording selected virtual meetings so those who could not join the session live could view a recording at a convenient time; and developing a calendar of events that informed district contacts, participants, mentors and coaches of key milestones during the last quarter of the FTLP.

Each member of the core planning team who was under contract with SREB tracked SREB's communications with the district contacts and charter participants through a contact log. The log allowed SREB to monitor the frequency of communications with key stakeholders, report contacts to the funding agency, and identify the issues being addressed with district contacts. Individual logs were compiled into a single document at the close of each quarter. These summary logs were submitted to the FDOE as part of SREB's quarterly reporting process.

As for communication with the FDOE, for each week of the contract period (December 2011 through June 2014), a brief report of activities completed during that week was prepared and forwarded to the project director, along with comments related to any notable accomplishments or unexpected issues encountered.

Understanding the Priorities of Partners

While all FTLP partners shared a common vision in terms of program outcomes, each partner had one or more priority outcomes that defined a successful program for that partner. It was important to all partners to recognize these partner-specific priorities and to consider them when decisions were being made.

Figure 13 includes a sample of priority outcomes that highlight how they differed among the FTLP partners. While there is overlap on some objectives, there are also certain objectives that impact one partner exclusively. The narrative that follows Figure 13 clarifies one of these individual partner priorities and how the decision-making process weighed that priority when considering a related program component.

Figure 13: Partner-Specific Priorities

- Develop a replicable model for preparing school turnaround leaders.
- Produce a cadre of school turnaround leaders.

SREB | Districts

- Place well-prepared turnaround leaders in the principalship.

- Develop a replicable model for preparing school turnaround leaders.
- Share materials with interested parties.

FDOE | University of North Florida

- Enroll master's degree candidates.
- Help participants obtain Florida's Level 1 Educational Leadership Certification.

While producing a cadre of school turnaround leaders was a priority outcome for SREB, the primary objective was to develop a model for preparing turnaround leaders that could be adopted or adapted by any school district, state or university. The participating districts, however, were more interested in a near-term outcome — placing FTLP participants as principals and assistant principals. These objectives, while clearly related, created a measure of conflict when FTLP participants were promoted to principal before completing the program.

The FTLP was an extremely rigorous program and it required extensive time to attend seminars, work through online modules, and complete assignments and follow-up activities in the practicum or internship schools. Therefore, participants who were promoted to principal during the program faced a difficult dilemma.

For these new principals, the desire to throw oneself fully into that new role was compelling; making the requirements of the FTLP seem even more daunting. As the number of participants who were promoted to the principalship grew, this issue became an increasingly urgent matter. Several participants elected to drop out of the FTLP to devote themselves to their new positions.

The core planning team discussed this situation and the options that were available — seeking to acknowledge the increased responsibilities of new principals while helping them obtain the full benefit of the training and experiences that made up the FTLP curriculum. District contacts shared their thoughts and the preferences of their respective districts. The decision was made to evaluate each new principal's situation on a case-by-case basis to determine how the FTLP curriculum requirements would be modified so the new principal could fulfill his or her increased responsibilities and remain an active participant in the FTLP.

For some new principals, this meant a significant reduction in expectations for FTLP requirements. For others, only a small change was made. As contrasting examples, one new principal appointed shortly after completing the six-month internship was exempted from several of the remaining assignments, but still required to compile a portfolio. Another participant made principal of an elementary school was exempted only from the CTE webinar series.

These accommodations were made acknowledging the needs of partnering districts to place the best available person in the principal's position at each school. By balancing SREB's priority outcome of producing fully-qualified turnaround leaders with the district's priority of placing principals when vacancies occurred, SREB was able to achieve both objectives.

FTLP Curriculum: Acquisition and Application

> To meet the urgent need for effective leaders requires preparation programs that strategically recruit and rigorously screen potential candidates, then immerse them in authentic course work and integrated field experiences.
>
> <div align="right">Innovations in Education: Innovative Pathways to School Leadership.[25]</div>

Enhancements Based on Lessons Learned From the Aspiring Principals Program

The design of the FTLP benefited significantly from lessons learned through the implementation of the earlier APP model. These enhancements are identified here in the following list and expanded upon throughout the remainder of this section.

- The APP curriculum was based on the current Florida Principal Leadership Standards.
  The knowledge base undergirding the FTLP was expanded to reflect a sharper focus on school turnaround. This was accomplished in part by using the SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets as the foundation for the FTLP curriculum.

- Targeted skills were defined more explicitly in the FTLP. While the Florida Principal Leadership Standards provided clear language describing what all principals needed to know and be able to do, the subskills that comprised each SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets were more detailed and tightly-focused on leadership behaviors essential to school turnaround.

- FTLP assignments and other program requirements were more structured and more field-based. In the APP, participants' learning experiences were drawn primarily from the work assigned to them by their university course instructors and supervising principals. This led to inconsistencies in what individual participants experienced at their practicum schools. By being much more prescriptive in what participants were required to accomplish, FTLP assignments provided clear, unambiguous guidance for what learning experiences were completed.

- The rigor and clarity of participants' work evaluations were increased significantly by employing SREB-developed rubrics specific to each major assignment and seminar follow-up activity. By describing levels of performance, the rubrics set a high and consistent standard as the benchmark for evaluating participants' work rather than relying on the individual mentor's expertise and experience to make these judgments.

- These rubrics also included helpful structures such as concise background information on the behaviors being evaluated, guiding questions to be used to assess participants' work products, and reminders about what was required to earn the top rating (highly effective).

SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets

The SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets were the foundation of the program's curriculum. SREB uses the term skill sets to encompass the special knowledge, abilities and dispositions necessary for school leaders to turn around persistently low student achievement, for two reasons: first, to acknowledge that proficiency as a turnaround leader required training and practice; and second, to establish that turning around student achievement required the integration of clusters of related skills.

As the SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets were developed, SREB attempted to ground each set in the authentic work of principals engaged in school turnaround, and to build cohesive clusters of skills and place them in a logical sequence that mirrored as closely as possible what a leader would do to turn around a school.

Even though the time frame for initial planning of the FTLP was brief, the core planning team devoted a significant amount of that time to defining what should be included and how individual skills should be grouped to form meaningful skill sets. Multiple sources were used to develop and refine skill sets that were tightly aligned with SREB's theory of action.

Sources Used to Develop Skill Sets

- SREB's extensive knowledge base concerning school turnaround and leadership development

- Tenets of the University of Virginia School Turnaround Specialist Program

- Reports on cutting edge research into turnaround leadership by organizations such as the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership, Consortium on Chicago School Research, Public Impact, Mass Insight Education, New Leaders, and American Institutes for Research

- Books, articles and reports by individuals prominent in the school turnaround field, including but not limited to the following: Duke, Carr and Sterrett;[26] Kowal and Hassel;[27] Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson;[28] Waters, Marzano and McNulty;[29] and Williams, Kirst, and Haertel.[30]

- Specific skills and knowledge, as required by the Florida Department of Education in the Invitation to Negotiate, that described the grant requirements

- Newly introduced Florida Principal Leadership Standards

The overarching theme of each SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Set is reflected in the following list of skill set titles:

- Analyzing the context of low-performing schools

- Envisioning a culture of high expectations

- Providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum

- Promoting effective teaching and learning

- Building a productive school environment

- Planning and managing the turnaround process

- Implementing organizational change and professional development

- Leading initiatives to improve student success in mathematics

- Maximizing flexibility and autonomy in the charter setting

- Sustaining turnaround and growing the organization

Table 8 provides a list of the SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets and subskills that constituted the FTLP curriculum. The relationship between the skill sets and the seminars was almost one-to-one, but because of the breadth of content needed to address all of its subskills, promoting effective teaching and learning was delivered in two seminars. The division of this theme into two parts is described in Table 8.

Table 8: SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets and Subskills

SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets	
Skill Set 1	Analyzing the Context of Low-Performing Schools
	1.1. Identify the characteristics of low-performing schools.
	1.2. Collect meaningful data on school conditions.
	1.3. Analyze data on school conditions as they relate to the characteristics of a turnaround school.
	1.4. Diagnose probable causes of low performance.
	1.5. Prioritize probable causes to address in the school improvement plan.
	1.6. Set initial goals or targets.
Skill Set 2	Envisioning a Culture of High Expectations
	2.1. Articulate what students will need to know and be able to do to be successful in the 21st century.
	2.2. Set a clear, shared vision and direction for preparing middle grades students to succeed in rigorous high school courses and high school students for college and career readiness.
	2.3. Differentiate between the characteristics of a culture of high expectations and those of a culture of low expectations.
	2.4. Use strategies for engaging teachers in designing lessons based on college- and career-readiness standards.
	2.5. Assess the existing curriculum in relation to levels of cognitive complexity (rigor).
	2.6. Provide feedback to teachers on the level of rigor observed in classroom instruction.
	2.7. Lead faculty in developing and implementing processes for providing timely and targeted feedback to students to help them understand what constitutes high standards of performance.

SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets	
Skill Set 3	Providing a Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum
	3.1. Support teachers in developing and implementing standards-based curriculum calendars in literacy and math within the turnaround context.
	3.2. Engage in data analysis for instructional planning and improvement.
	3.3. Ensure the appropriate use of high quality formative and interim assessments aligned with the adopted standards and curricula.
	3.4. Clarify and communicate the relationships between academic standards, effective instruction and assessment.
	3.5. Ensure students have opportunities for accelerating learning.
Skill Set 4	Promoting Effective Teaching and Learning (Part A)
	4.1. Differentiate between instructional leadership and management behaviors.
	4.2. Implement the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices through a common language of instruction.
	4.3. Provide feedback to teachers on their application of evidence-based principles of learning and the 5D Instructional Framework.
	4.4. Implement differentiated instruction on a schoolwide basis.
Skill Set 5	Building a Productive School Environment
	5.1. Maintain a safe, disciplined and inclusive student-centered learning environment.
	5.2. Develop a schedule that supports teacher planning and instructional interventions.
	5.3. Promote team-based planning, decision-making and instructional interventions.
	5.4. Monitor team meetings to maximize their effectiveness.
	5.5. Provide opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership.
	5.6. Organize and implement programs to ensure effective transitions from elementary to middle grades, middle grades to high school, and high school to college and career.
	5.7. Implement a comprehensive guidance and advisement program that supports students in setting goals and understanding what they will need to accomplish their goals.

SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets	
Skill Set 6	Planning and Managing the Turnaround Process at the Internship Site
	6.1. Understand the context of the internship site.
	6.2. Diagnose the causes of low performance using data on all student subgroups.
	6.3. Prioritize causes to address first.
	6.4. Develop measurable goals and objectives.
	6.5. Identify research-based and innovative strategies for accomplishing goals and objectives.
	6.6. Ensure quick wins.
	6.7. Identify individuals to manage action plans for goals and objectives.
	6.8. Develop timelines and needed resources for each goal and objective.
	6.9. Develop a budget for the school improvement plan.
	6.10. Create the first 90-day plan.
	6.11. Create the remainder of the annual school improvement plan.
	6.12. Monitor the implementation of the first 90-day plan through data gathering and classroom observations.
	6.13. Meet regularly with project managers to assess risks and ensure progress on 90-day plan goals.
	6.14. Conduct interim assessment of progress on the 90-day plan and adjust the second 90-day segment of the annual school improvement plan.
	6.15. Make midcourse corrections in the first 90-day plan and adjust the second 90-day segment of annual school improvement plan.
	6.16. Manage crises so that momentum for school improvement is maintained.
Skill Set 7	Implementing Organizational Change and Professional Development
	7.1. Generate support for the 90-day school improvement plan among the faculty and the community.
	7.2. Develop and implement strategies for dealing with resistance to change.
	7.3. Implement project management processes.
	7.4. Plan and implement professional development related to the 90-day school improvement process.
	7.5. Identify areas in which the faculty needs additional professional development, including standards-based content, research-based pedagogy, data analysis for instructional planning and improvement and the use of instructional technology.
	7.6. Work with teachers to implement lesson study and other instructional improvement strategies.

SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets	
Skill Set 8	Promoting Effective Teaching and Learning (Part B)
	8.1. Develop the school's capacity to provide instruction that meets the needs of English language learners and special education students.
	8.2. Implement and manage the Response to Intervention system.
	8.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of instructional interventions.
	8.4. Exercise instructional leadership in working with teachers in a school-based setting.
Skill Set 9	Leading Initiatives to Improve Students' Success in Mathematics
	9.1. Engage teachers in using the college- and career-readiness standards for math.
	9.2. Engage teachers in implementing the Mathematics Design Collaborative as developed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
	9.3. Ensure teachers have opportunities to learn to teach mathematics through the STEM framework using integrated projects that require students to apply the mathematics they are studying.
	9.4. Prepare teachers to use effective planning strategies for planning mathematics instruction.
	9.5. Conduct classroom observations and provide appropriate feedback for mathematics teachers and the STEM team.
	9.6. Support teachers in making mathematics a tool for learning in technology instruction.
Skill Set 9a	Maximizing Flexibility and Autonomy in the Charter Setting (charter participants only)
	9.1a. Design and implement instructional programs that apply innovative approaches to meeting the needs of students.
	9.2a. Ensure compliance with district and state fiscal, legal and educational requirements.
	9.3a. Employ best practices in managing contracts with service providers.
	9.4a. Recruit and retain highly qualified faculty and staff.
	9.5a. Work collaboratively with the school's board of directors and contribute to their further development as a board.
	9.6a. Implement quality control processes and make decisions about innovative practices.

SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets	
Skill Set 10	Sustaining Turnaround and Growing the Organization
	10.1. Extend rigor to subject areas beyond literacy and mathematics.
	10.2. Recruit and retain highly qualified faculty and staff who are committed to improving student achievement.
	10.3. Use the teacher evaluation process to support teacher growth and continuous school improvement.
	10.4. Build and sustain partnerships with local businesses, community agencies, and service providers to support student success.
	10.5. Develop and maintain strong supportive relationships with the district office, state department of education and other state agencies.
	10.6. Demonstrate resiliency by staying focused on the school vision and reacting constructively to the barriers to success that include disagreement and dissent with leadership.
	10.7. Engage in professional learning that improves instructional leadership practice in alignment with the needs of the school system.

Source: Florida Turnaround Leaders Program

Appendix B includes the final version of the FTLP Comprehensive Curriculum Map that shows how the SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets were organized for delivery via 10 quarterly seminars and five Web-based modules over a 27-month period, and the field-based assignments and activities aligned with each to form a rigorous, practice-rich and cohesive turnaround curriculum. The curriculum map also identifies how each assignment or activity was evaluated.

Seminars, Online Modules, Webcasts and Graduate Courses

Quarterly Seminars

FTLP seminars were intensive, two-day training events that led participants to think deeply about the skills from specific SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets and how those skills were applied by turnaround leaders. The 10 quarterly seminars provided opportunities for participants to hear firsthand from educators with personal experience in turning around student achievement. This reflected the design principle of utilizing instructors who model turnaround skills. They provided participants with real-life examples of turnaround leaders and the strategies these leaders used to bring about dramatic improvement in teaching and learning.

Design Principle 4

Delivery by Instructors Who Model Turnaround

An 11th seminar, focusing on Skill Set 9a, was planned delivered specifically for participants from the charter community. It addressed key issues and effective practices focused on leveraging the greater autonomy and flexibility afforded charter schools. This unique seminar stressed practices that enhanced participants' understanding of charter-specific issues and provided strategies for dealing effectively with those issues.

The seminar was developed in collaboration with a number of charter school experts, including a charter high school principal and a supervisor of a cluster of charter middle grades schools, two attorneys with extensive experience with charter governance and charter law, and a highly regarded charter school consultant from Charter School Services Corporation.

Online Modules

SREB's library of online leadership development modules was an important resource in delivering training related to the SREB Turnaround Leader Skill Sets. The online format allowed participants to learn the content and complete the assignments on their own schedules. For busy school administrators, this was a significant benefit. The format also gave participants an opportunity to interact with their colleagues in other districts through discussion board postings and team-based assignments.

For most modules, participants were assigned to one of three sections and each section was assigned to an experienced facilitator who kept participants engaged with the content, monitored their discussion board postings and gave individualized feedback on completed assignments. Although most participants finished the modules in a timely manner, extenuating circumstances caused several to postpone completion of some aspects of a particular module. Again, the online format allowed for personalized learning, in this case giving additional time to those who needed longer to complete the module.

Webcasts

Because participants were scattered across the state, SREB made efficient use of a number of Web-based technologies, including the utilization of webcast virtual meeting software to share live and recorded presentations via the Internet. Two forms of webcasts were utilized during the FTLP — webcasts in support of FTLP assignments and seminar follow-up activities that were particularly complex or challenging.

In these cases, the lead practice coach recorded brief presentations, providing an additional explanation of the assignment given at the relevant seminar. These presentations often included examples that illustrated how a specific aspect of an assignment might be completed. Recording these eight- to 10-minute presentations allowed those with scheduling conflicts to view them at their convenience and/or to view them multiple times if needed to clarify important points.

However, the primary use of this medium was to deliver a series of sessions on CTE. In this series, developed in collaboration with FDOE's career and technical education program directors, a nationally known expert in CTE led interactive sessions during which a range of presenters shared their personal expertise and knowledge with participants and engaged participants in dialogue on key points through the software's chat feature.

While the majority of participants joined these sessions live, some were not able to do so because of scheduling conflicts. They were able to view recorded versions of the sessions they missed by streaming them online from a server in one of the participating districts.

The Case for Career and Technical Education in School Turnaround

SREB included the CTE Webcasts as a cost-effective way to introduce a wide range of topics related to CTE and the role of programs of study and career pathways in school turnaround. **One of the primary reasons for implementing and/or expanding CTE programs as a strategy for school turnaround is that they engage students in learning that is both rigorous and relevant — presenting challenging academic content students perceive as directly preparing them for postsecondary studies and/or employment in careers of interest.**

To date, however, much of the evidence supporting CTE as an important factor in improving attendance, engagement and achievement has been qualitative. One example of where a principal has accelerated school turnaround by expanding CTE offerings is New Britain High School in New Britain, Connecticut. Principal Michael Foran, the 2012 MetLife/NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals) National High School Principal of the Year, used CTE as a key component to turn around student achievement. New Britain has experienced improved graduation rates and stronger academic achievement, based in part on new CTE programs such as the Academy for Health Professions, which is a collaborative effort between the school, city and two local hospitals.

Another example[42] can be found in Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. It was once a district where every high school faced a serious challenge in improving graduation rates. The district comprises 43 schools and over 30,000 students, with a population that is nearly 99 percent Hispanic and over 85 percent economically disadvantaged. Just a few short years ago, the district had a dropout rate almost twice the state average, but as of 2011, that rate had been reduced by 90 percent. The number of graduates increased from 966 during the 2006-07 school year to 1,906 during the 2010-11 school year due to the turnaround initiatives implemented in the district.[31]

These efforts, directed by the superintendent, Daniel King, included the opening of a dropout recovery high school, known as the College, Career & Technology Academy. In partnership with South Texas College, students can enroll in this school up to age 25 to earn the credits they need for a high school diploma and to dual enroll in postsecondary education. The school is designed to create viable career pathways for all students, along with intensive support services and personalized, accelerated learning. The program monitors data on off-track and out-of-school youth by age and credits, and designs personalized recovery programs specific to the needs of the individual student. As students gain skills, dual enrollment courses in areas like business computer applications, HVAC (heating, ventilating and air conditioning) and health science are offered.

While examples such as these provide support for addressing career pathways and other elements of CTE as integral parts of school turnaround, more rigorous evidence is being accumulated through a longitudinal, field-based study of programs of study and career pathways. This study was designed using rigorous research methods to estimate the impact of programs of study on high school students' academic and technical achievement outcomes through the completion of high school.

Researchers are following students from the class of 2012 in three large urban school districts that offer programs of study. Each year, student outcome data are collected and site visits are conducted at treatment and control or comparison schools. The researchers observe academic and CTE classes and interview students, teachers, counselors and administrators to get a better sense of the experiences of students enrolled in programs of study in the treatment sites compared to the "default" high school experience. The study has generated large sets of qualitative and quantitative student outcome data that offer rich opportunities to estimate the impact on key indicators of student success.

In reporting preliminary findings, the researchers[32] stated that at the outset of the study, few differences existed across groups in ninth grade, but by the end of 10th grade, students' exam scores, academic grade-point averages and progress toward graduation tended to be better for the students in programs of study than for comparison students.

Another reason for including content and assignments related to CTE in SREB's school turnaround curriculum was the belief that schools have an obligation to students that goes beyond preparing them for high-stakes standardized tests. The recent increase in interest in college- and career-readiness standards reflects this same belief.

SREB is a leader in CTE and used its extensive library of SREB publications to plan this part of the FTLP curriculum. SREB also studied job market research that signaled the importance of CTE programs in preparing students for the type of employment opportunities that would characterize the remainder of the 21st century. One example of this type of research was conducted by Holzer, Lane, Rosenblum and Andersson[33] using data drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer – Household Dynamics database to determine the relationships between the availability of high-quality jobs and qualified workers. Holzer et al. made these noteworthy points:

1. Good jobs — defined as those that enable a qualified worker to earn more than he or she would be able to earn at other jobs for which the worker was qualified — are likely to be available, but the distribution of those jobs is changing (the top 20 percent of jobs as measured by job quality grew faster during the study period than jobs in the middle 40 percent).

2. The likelihood of less-educated workers being employed in these good-paying jobs is decreasing.

3. The quality of jobs obtained by workers is more closely aligned with their own personal skills. This means that even for the good-paying jobs, rewards are growing most rapidly for those with the best skills.

The study's authors concluded with this insightful quote.

Still, the "good jobs" of today and tomorrow increasingly require good skills among the workers who get them. Therefore, the best strategies going forward should perhaps emphasize the creation of "better workers for better jobs," rather than a set of choices in which we need to choose between these. Education and workforce policies that better target high-paying jobs, such as the best career and technical education programs… could be particularly useful in this light.

Holzer et al.

Graduate Courses

SREB's partner, the University of North Florida, provided an online master's degree in educational leadership for participants to obtain Level 1 certification; however, the great majority of participants were already certified. Those who needed this certification developed a program of study with a member of the core planning team who represented the university. They then signed up for the required courses at the university as they became available. Since most of this group already held a master's degree in some field of education, their course work consisted of three to five educational leadership courses determined on an individual basis — in other words, an alternate or modified certification program.

Assignments and Activities

Working in an Authentic Setting

During the FTLP, participants completed two major field components: a yearlong practicum that extended from the beginning of the program in July 2012 through June 2013; and a six-month internship that began in July 2013 and extended through December 2013. Some adjustments in the start time of the internship were necessary to align with district contract periods of participants who were 10- or 11-month employees and not on contract and regular salary during July – August, and in the case of participants whose internships were extended to a full school year based on a district decision.

Design Principle 2
Situated Learning

Throughout the practicum, participants worked in two- to four-member teams to complete four major assignments, a seminar follow-up activity and two semesters of classroom walk-throughs in an assigned low-performing school in their district or charter organization. They did so while continuing to work as staff members at their home schools. Participants also completed two online modules during the practicum. The FTLP provided funds for districts and charter schools to hire substitutes for participants who were classroom teachers so they could spend up to 20 days working at the practicum school.

Design Principle 4
Team-Based Assignments and Activities

During the internship, each participant was assigned to a different low-performing school where he or she completed five major assignments, including leading the implementation of a 90-day school improvement plan that was part of the school's comprehensive improvement plan. They also performed classroom walk-throughs and completed a third online module while serving their internship.

Funds were provided for hiring replacements for their positions at their home schools while the interns continued to receive their regular salaries. However, some participating districts did not hire replacements for all of their interns, and this proved to be a significant factor in terms of what participants could accomplish during the internship.

Design Principle 2
Situated Learning

Table 9 provides a brief description of each of the 23 major assignments, seminar follow-up activities, online modules and other program requirements completed by participants during the FTLP as well as key information to help potential adopters understand their complexity and rigor.

Table 9: Description of FTLP Assignments, Seminar Follow-up Activities and Online Modules

Assignment/Module Description	Key Points	Lessons Learned
Assignment 1: Case Study Report — Participants created a comprehensive case study report by collecting and analyzing a wide range of data on the practicum school to identify possible root causes of persistently low student achievement.	FTLP staff provided a model case study report on a low-performing middle grades school from an urban Florida school district to illustrate the breadth of data that should be considered and the depth of analysis necessary to identify "red flag" issues and their root causes.	Later in the FTLP, when participants conducted a similar analysis of their internship school, those who had gained experience in working with data did a better job of identifying root causes — indicating actual experience in analyzing achievement data is critical.
Seminar Follow-up Activity: Assessing School Culture — Participants conducted a study of the practicum school's culture, focusing on faculty and administrators' expectations for all students. Participants analyzed the results and shared a summary report with the practicum school principal.	If teachers and administrators consciously work to change their biases (how they perceive students and their capacity to learn) but don't change their behavior toward the students from whom they have tended to expect less, their attitude change will have little effect on student achievement.	To help mentors evaluate participants' work accurately, extensive explanations of key concepts were built into the rubric so this information would be readily accessible as they reviewed their mentee's work. This proved a popular and effective feature and was included on all subsequent rubrics.
Assignment 2: Assessing Schoolwide Rigor — Participants assessed schoolwide rigor by conducting a focus group to obtain input on an 18-item rubric related to practices and processes that support rigor. They utilized an SREB-developed format for reporting their analysis to the school's principal.	The principal must know where the faculty is functioning in terms of rigorous instruction, practice and assessment if he or she is to lead teachers in increasing rigor. The skills participants acquired and practiced equipped them to assess the level of rigor of instruction at their school.	Participants were not accustomed to drawing the level of inferences required to move from data to conclusions about the level of rigor of instruction, practice and assessment. **Many included clear descriptions, but little in the way of actionable recommendations for the principal to increase rigor in classrooms.**
Assignment 3: Scheduling for Student Success — Participants asked administrators at the school to complete a checklist of effective scheduling practices. The results of this self-assessment were used to suggest revisions to the schedule development process.	The school's master schedule is the foundation for how all students, instructional or administrative personnel on the campus allocate their time. As such, it must be constructed intelligently and purposefully. The schedule's objectives (what the schedule is designed to produce, encourage or support) should be aligned with and serve the turnaround effort.	It became apparent that the training on scheduling provided up to that point was inadequate to enable participants to design a truly effective schedule. A scheduling expert was added to a subsequent seminar so FTLP graduates would be fully trained in schedule development.

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Table 9: Description of FTLP Assignments, Seminar Follow-up Activities and Online Modules

Assignment/Module Description	Key Points	Lessons Learned
Assignment 4: School Improvement Plan Recommendations —Participants reviewed data from the practicum school and identified one or more priority issues that might be addressed in the school's annual school improvement plan. They made a formal presentation of their recommendations to the school's principal.	Participants gained practice in select elements of the process for planning improvement initiatives as a precursor to planning and implementing such an initiative during their six-month internship. They were required to review all they had learned about their practicum school to identify the priority issues.	The level of involvement of practicum school principals varied greatly. Where they held expectations that this assignment would help them identify priority issues, the participant had a much richer experience. **Clearer communication with the principal concerning this assignment would have been helpful.**
Assignment 5: 90-Day Improvement Plan — Participants worked collaboratively with their internship school principal and others at the school to analyze data on student achievement, develop a segment of the school's 2013-14 school improvement plan and actually implement the initiative.	The assignment's requirements were tightly aligned with Florida's new school improvement plan model and terminology used in the online template. This alignment ensured an authentic experience and allowed their work product to integrate smoothly into the school's annual improvement plan.	Many participants needed extensive coaching to meet the demands of this assignment. **This became clear when participants struggled with key parts of this assignment such as identifying anticipated barriers and planning strategies to remove those barriers.**
Assignment 6: Expanding Lesson Study — Participants had three options: Assess the effectiveness of Lesson Study at the school, present to the faculty, and ask for volunteers to try out Lesson Study or model Lesson Study for faculty members.	Lesson Study has been a major emphasis on the state level for several years. The core planning team gave participants options for this assignment so they could tailor it to the situation they found in their internship schools.	This assignment was quite popular with FTLP participants and more seminar time should have been devoted to preparing them to assess the implementation of Lesson Study, build interest and lead faculty in implementing Lesson Study as job-embedded professional development.
Seminar Follow-up Activity: Analyzing Performance at the Student Level — Participants conducted a data conference with a teacher in which they selected and analyzed samples of a selected student's work. They interviewed the student using an SREB-developed protocol and recommended possible interventions. Participants also tracked the student's progress and monitored the impact of the interventions as implemented by the teacher.	Dramatic improvements in student achievement can occur when teachers understand where and why students are struggling. In a turnaround school, it is critical the principal model a deep understanding of the data analysis cycle and demonstrate the ability to lead teachers through a process of reflection and well-planned interventions that result in improved academic outcomes for students.	**For many participants, this assignment was an eye-opener.** They said they had not performed this type of in-depth analysis of an individual student's performance, either as an administrator or as a teacher. SREB could have conducted some form of sharing session to provide participants with an opportunity to share what they learned and how they planned to repeat what they had done for this assignment in future situations.

Table 9: Description of FTLP Assignments, Seminar Follow-up Activities and Online Modules

Assignment/Module Description	Key Points	Lessons Learned
Seminar Follow-up Activity: School Safety Audit/ Discipline Incident Analysis — The school safety audit involved comparing the safety audit protocol used by the participants' district with a nationally-recognized safety audit protocol provided by SREB. The discipline incident analysis involved collecting and analyzing three years of discipline incident data to discover trends or patterns that negatively impacted teaching and learning.	The two options represented diverse challenges for participants. The school safety audit required them to form and lead a team of knowledgeable stakeholders through a structured process of investigating a wide range of school safety issues. The discipline incident analysis option required disaggregation of data to identify patterns and trends that may not be apparent on the surface.	More could have been done to help participants understand the impact that safety concerns and discipline incidents have on student achievement. These are often major issues at schools in need of turnaround. Emphasis on literacy and mathematics initiatives as priority interventions for turning around student achievement may have led some participants to overlook red flag issues growing out of school safety and/or discipline issues.
Online Module: Rigor — Participants learned the meaning of academic rigor in order to identify, analyze, measure, monitor and increase rigor in the classroom and schoolwide. The module introduced two alignment tools, the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge, to determine the level of rigor and core habits of mind expected in their practicum schools.	Having a faculty that can unpack rigorous standards, plan instruction at the level of rigor in the standards, engage students with content in meaningful ways that are aligned with the standards and design assessments that measure performance at the same level of cognitive complexity in the standard does not happen on its own. It requires the vigorous efforts of a knowledgeable leader and a commitment to providing rigorous instruction, practice and assessment for all.	Although there were many aspects of rigor that were consistent across districts (i.e., the idea that new standards represent more rigorous expectations for students), discussion board postings from participants about rigor, and how each district approached the goal of increasing it revealed a lack of consistency in how rigor is defined, measured or observed and supported. **A common language for dialogue concerning rigor would enhance efforts to increase it within and among schools.**
Online Module: Assessment —Participants learned how to create and lead a process to increase student achievement through classroom assessment strategies. This module helped participants rethink the way assessments are used in the classroom and in the school as a whole.	Turnaround leaders who take an active leadership role in improving assessments that meet the needs of all users of assessment data can promote higher achievement. The module drew on the work of James Popham, among others, and included in-depth discussion and application of assessment OF learning and assessment FOR learning.	The role of assessment FOR learning in improving learning (and thereby improving the results obtained through assessment OF learning) needs continued emphasis if aspiring leaders are to have a balanced perspective on assessment.

Table 9: Description of FTLP Assignments, Seminar Follow-up Activities and Online Modules

Assignment/Module Description	Key Points	Lessons Learned
Online Module: Building Instructional Leadership Teams — This module focused on helping participants form instructional leadership teams, define the team's purpose and goals and to work collaboratively to create a climate for change based on their school's needs. The content included the various factors that impact a school's ability to implement and sustain meaningful change.	The purpose of the instructional leadership team is to improve instruction schoolwide. Principals can accomplish more as instructional leaders by sharing leadership and decision making with others. Teachers can be effective leaders if they have a supportive culture, a principal who shares leadership, and opportunities for professional development.	Participants' experience with resistance to change made this topic of great interest. They were able to engage deeply with the readings and the discussion posts because of the strong relevance of the topic. This idea, along with participants' expressed interest in strategies for supporting teachers who are implementing new practices, indicate that more emphasis should be given to change management.
Online Module: Leading Literacy Initiatives — Participants learned how to lead the effective implementation of strategies that promote literacy. They gathered relevant data on these practices and created a literacy plan to address the literacy needs of all students.	A successful initiative to improve literacy requires identification of the root causes of low achievement, selecting the right intervention, planning its implementation and a consistent effort to measure the implementation and its outcomes for teachers and students.	Participants were exposed to concepts that were new to them, such as how content experts and secondary content teachers read disciplinary texts, make use of discipline-specific comprehension strategies, and teach those strategies to adolescent readers.
Assignment 7: Supporting Struggling Students — Participants identified a team of staff with representatives from attendance, behavior and guidance to collect or compile data to determine which students were in danger of dropping out. They led the team in analyzing the data to identify students in need of targeted or intensive intervention.	Participants worked with the team to search for the root causes of the problems identified in their data analysis. Strategies included interviewing school personnel to determine what was currently being done to support students in transition or who were in danger of dropping out. There was a focus on interventions related to attendance, behavior and course failings.	Internship school principals commented on this assignment more frequently than others. They described the findings and recommendations of the team led by the FTLP intern as surprising and extremely helpful in pointing out where one or more subpopulations were not being served adequately in terms of support for struggling students.
Assignment 8: Implementing the 90-Day Plan and Making Midcourse Corrections — This was an extension of Assignment 5. Participants worked with a team to collect data on the implementation and impact of the initiative created through Assignment 5 and made recommendations for "midcourse" adjustments.	Responding to unanticipated forces and factors through midcourse corrections improves overall outcomes and helps the initiative make efficient use of resources. It also causes stakeholders to see the project manager and project management team as responsive to their needs and concerns.	Actions that produce immediate results or "quick wins" are important to gaining support among faculty. Participants were only moderately successful in producing "quick wins." A more in-depth explanation followed by multiple examples of strategies that generated quick wins in similar settings would have been helpful.

Table 9: Description of FTLP Assignments, Seminar Follow-up Activities and Online Modules

Assignment/Module Description	Key Points	Lessons Learned
Seminar Follow-up Activity: Supporting ELLs — Participants reviewed efforts at their school to support English language learners (ELL) using a set of criteria presented at Seminar 8. These criteria were summarized on a checklist participants completed after interviewing key school staff and conducting direct observation of related indicators. They reported their assessment to the school principals.	School leaders have a responsibility to ensure the school is organized effectively to meet the needs of English language learners and to ensure students have access to comprehensible input while building their academic skills. When a new leader is assigned to a turnaround school, the tasks and related evidence identified on the checklist can be used to assess the current state of services for English language learners and to plan for improvement.	Data collected for this seminar follow-up activity would have been meaningful information for many participants in identifying root causes of persistently low student achievement at their internship schools. This content might be more appropriately sequenced prior to the internship and the development of the 90-day plan.
Seminar Follow-up Activity: Implementing Autonomy and Flexibility (charter only) — Charter participants selected one or more innovative strategies for leveraging the additional autonomy and flexibility provided to charter schools, and implemented those strategies. Later, they reported on the outcomes and identified how those strategies might be improved.	Because the seminar was developed and presented by current practitioners, their knowledge of charter school operations, challenges and opportunities was both relevant and recent. Their presentations were full of the kind of practical advice so desperately needed by turnaround leaders working in a charter school, and this drove the design of the seminar follow-up activity.	Because many charter schools are independent or part of a small organization, principals often do not have the same access to colleagues with whom they can exchange successful strategies for improving teaching and learning. **Sharing practical strategies for taking advantage of the autonomy and flexibility afforded to charter schools was of significant benefit to participants.**
Web-based Series Plan to Improve CTE — The core planning team worked with a nationally-recognized expert in CTE to address topics related to the role of CTE in school turnaround. Participants applied what they learned about the qualities of effective CTE programs in analyzing a CTE program and developed a plan to improve that program.	Seeing highlights of programs from other districts gave participants a broader perspective and helped them see possibilities they had not considered previously in terms of how a quality CTE program can increase engagement and reduce dropout rates while providing highly technical curricula for all students.	While the format provided advantages (exposure to content experts without the cost of travel and recording the presentations for future viewing), it required a new instructional design to be most effective. When the webcasts relied on traditional tools such as PowerPoint, participants described the content as dry and not engaging. **Multimedia such as video clips of actual CTE programs increased participants' levels of interest and engagement.**

Table 9: Description of FTLP Assignments, Seminar Follow-up Activities and Online Modules

Assignment/Module Description	Key Points	Lessons Learned
Individual Learning Plan — Following the end of the internship, participants worked with their coach to plan a series of personalized learning experiences to address needs identified during the end-of-internship conference or to polish existing skills.	Individual learning plans could address weaknesses or further enhance existing strengths. The plans were reviewed by the FTLP's lead practice coach, and the extent to which the plan was completed was evaluated by the participants' coach before the end-of-program evaluation conference.	Participants' experience with resistance to change made this topic of great interest. They were able to engage deeply with the readings and the discussion posts because of the strong relevance of the topic. This idea, along with participants' expressed interest in strategies for supporting teachers who are implementing new practices, indicate that more emphasis should be given to change management.
Assignment 9: Portfolio — From the outset of the FTLP, participants were encouraged to save electronic artifacts of their growth in knowledge and skills related to school turnaround so these could be included in an electronic portfolio that would be created during the final six months of the program.	The portfolios served as more than a record of accomplishments. They also provided opportunities for participants to reflect on their experiences and share those reflections with their coaches and colleagues. This strengthened their learning and enhanced their feelings of readiness to lead turnaround.	Participants were nearly unanimous in stating that putting together their portfolios helped them see just how much they had learned. Many said that the process of creating the portfolio made them feel more confident of their readiness to lead school turnaround.
Expert Panel Presentations — Participants presented an abbreviated portfolio to a panel of senior staff members of their district or charter organization. Based on a PowerPoint template provided by FTLP staff, the presentation highlighted the participants' readiness to lead school turnaround. Panel members gave feedback to each participant following his/her presentation.	The coaches worked closely with participants on developing and refining their presentations to the expert panels. This included "dress rehearsals" in which participants presented their slides to their colleagues and received immediate feedback so they could revise their presentations prior to sharing them with the expert panel.	These presentations produced two important benefits. First, they offered high levels of visibility for the program and individual participants within each district, and second, they provided participants with authentic and relevant feedback on their leadership abilities. Hearing first-person feedback from senior staff was a new experience for many participants, and it proved to be a highly-valued activity for participants and panelists.

Classroom Walk-throughs

In practice, classroom walk-throughs vary greatly in terms of their purpose, focus, duration and the tools used to record what is observed. But the rationale for principals to conduct regular classroom walk-throughs is based on the idea that firsthand observation of instructional practices provides data for dialogue with teachers that reinforce practices linked to improved student achievement and helps teachers see where they can strengthen classroom instruction. An added benefit is that administrators who conduct classroom walk-throughs clarify their own perceptions of high-quality instruction and learn from observing the skilled use of evidence-based practices.[34]

> **Design Principle 2**
> Situated Learning

Classroom walk-throughs were a significant part of the FTLP practicum and internship experiences. The objective was to teach the walk-through process and gradually increase the depth and breadth of participants' abilities to discern sound instructional practices, note where instructional practices could be improved, and engage teachers in constructive and productive dialogue on what was observed or not observed during classroom walk-throughs. The requirements for classroom walk-throughs were structured to ensure this progression in capacity to use this important tool for improving teaching and learning in this way:

- *Introduction to the Walk-through Process* – During the first semester of the yearlong practicum, participants were required to document two "rounds" of classroom walk-throughs each month. A round was defined as visiting four classrooms, with each visit lasting roughly 15 minutes. Participants were also required to document with whom they debriefed each round of walk-throughs. No specific tool or focus was required during this period, but participants were advised to follow their district or charter organization's prescribed process. This less prescriptive approach was intended to allow participants to become comfortable with observing classroom instruction before being asked to focus on specific instructional practices.

- *Focus on Rigor and Assessment* – During the second semester of the practicum, a specific focus was provided for each set of classroom walk-throughs. In January, both required walk-throughs were to focus on instructional practices related to rigor. This followed up on what participants had been taught about rigor through Seminar 2 and the online module that dealt with rigor. An SREB-developed tool was introduced and participants used this tool to classify the standard being taught and the work students were assigned, in terms of Webb's Depth of Knowledge. Again, debriefing each round was required. A second focus was added in February as a follow-up to the online module addressing the use of classroom assessment. **Rigor and assessment remained the focus of walk-throughs through the remainder of the practicum.**

- *Focus on Schoolwide Practices* — In April, participants were required to use another SREB-developed tool to record their observations of schoolwide practices such as teacher collaboration, monitoring students between class periods, the "look and feel" of the campus, and how administrators and office staff allocated their time. Because of the scope of what participants were asked to observe, this task replaced classroom walk-throughs during April.

During the six-month internship, program requirements for classroom walk-throughs increased dramatically. Participants were required to visit from 10 to 15 classrooms each week. In addition to continuing the practice of debriefing classroom walk-throughs, participants were required to provide explicit feedback (verbally and/or in writing) to teachers observed during at least one round of walk-throughs each week.

Participants also conducted joint walk-throughs with their internship principals and the FTLP coach during the coach's monthly visit. These walk-throughs focused on each of the dimensions of instructional leadership incorporated into the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership's 5D Instructional Leadership Assessment. This helped participants gain a deeper understanding of effective instructional practices and calibrate their observational skills. It also provided an excellent opportunity for coaching on how to discuss observations with teachers — providing feedback on what was observed to reinforce evidence-based practices and improve instruction.

The training provided through the FTLP and the practice participants completed during the internship helped to increase their skill in observing instruction. Participants demonstrated verifiable improvement by their performance on the 5D Instructional Leadership Assessment. **This assessment required individuals to view a videotaped lesson and document what they observed. FTLP participants posted statistically significant gains in performance across all five dimensions of classroom observation (purpose; student engagement; curriculum and pedagogy; assessment for student learning; and classroom environment and culture). The participants also out-performed the national averages of the 3,491 other school leaders from 62 school districts and education entities who have also taken the 5D Assessment.**

Lessons Learned from the Practicum and Internship

Table 9 described the major assignments and seminar follow-up activities completed by FTLP participants during the practicum and internship, and includes lessons learned related to those assignments. However, there were other lessons learned concerning the FTLP field experiences.

Practicum Lessons Learned

The practicum was a 12-month experience during which participants worked in teams of two to four to complete the first FTLP assignments and seminar follow-up activities. The practicum involved self-scheduled visits to case study schools selected by each district to provide a setting representative of low-performing schools.

Three issues arose during the practicum that led to lessons learned for the core planning team. First, some participants had difficulty obtaining approval for sufficient release time from their current duties to visit the case study school, even though project funds available for substitutes allowed them up to 20 days of released time. While a carefully worded email had been sent to each participant's principal explaining the purpose and requirements of the practicum, this communication proved inadequate in some cases.

These problems were resolved quickly through a phone call from the lead practice coach to the principal, but future implementations should include an orientation session conducted jointly with program staff and district contacts for participants and their principals or others who supervise participants. They should hear the same message at the same time concerning the program's purpose, features and requirements. FTLP staff employed this type of orientation preceding the internship, and it was extremely effective in establishing clear expectations and resolving questions about the purpose, duration and requirements of the internship.

A second issue arising from the practicum involved a small number of participants who, according to their case study school teammates, were not actively contributing to team-based assignments. This circumstance was not entirely unexpected as it can occur with any team-based work that is not directly supervised. Each case was referred to the appropriate mentor, along with advice from the lead practice coach on how to turn it into an opportunity for thoughtful mentoring.

With one exception, participants took their mentor's counsel to heart and began immediately to be more actively engaged in their team's work. The individual who did not respond to the mentor's advice eventually dropped out of the FTLP after falling behind on several assignments.

Two changes took place as a result of "lessons learned" from this issue. **One involved requiring teams to meet collectively with their mentors on a regular basis to talk through what they are learning through the practicum assignments and to problem-solve any issues that develop**. The higher level of visibility into the team's work and work habits afforded to mentors through these meetings should ensure fuller participation in team-based assignments.

An alternate, but somewhat more costly approach would be to engage the coaches earlier in the program rather than waiting until the full-time internship to begin coaching support. Similar to the first solution, involving coaches earlier would raise the level of accountability because the coach's role as established in the FTLP includes more contact time with participants than is required of mentors, and thus produces greater individual accountability for each participant.

The third lesson learned from the FTLP practicum called for clearer and more detailed communication with the principal of the case study school where practicum activities were completed. Again, the initial communication from the FTLP was in the form of an email with a detailed explanation of the practicum's purpose and requirements. Even though district contacts also communicated with the case study school principal concerning practicum requirements, many of these principals were less engaged with the participants as they were completing more assignments and seminar follow-up activities than had been expected.

Therefore, some form of orientation should be provided to principals and possibly other administrators at the schools where participants will complete their initial program requirements. This would allow program staff to respond to questions and concerns from case study school principals that should result in a richer, more meaningful practicum experience for participants.

Internship Lessons Learned

The primary issue that produced lessons learned related to the six-month full-time internship was the failure of some participating districts to backfill participants' current position to allow them to focus exclusively on internship responsibilities. The original design was for participants to be assigned to low-performing schools in a unique role that would enable them to put major emphasis on developing and implementing a 90-day plan as part of their school's improvement plan and also to complete a number of other major FTLP assignments, seminar follow-up activities and program requirements.

To allow participants to devote this level of time to the internship, SREB offered salary reimbursements and a portion of the cost of benefits for each district to hire qualified individuals to fill the participants' current positions. However, this did not work out as planned.

The participating districts found it extremely difficult to identify a sufficient number of qualified individuals who were willing to work on a temporary contract or a temporary assignment for the six-month duration of the internship. In addition, some district contacts underestimated the intense nature of the internship and felt it was within the participants' capabilities to hold a full-time job and fulfill all of the internship requirements. This assumption was quickly contradicted as interns, who were in effect working two jobs, expressed high levels of concern about the feasibility and fairness of this situation.

One district created even more stress for a large number of its participants by placing them as leaders in newly-created, poorly planned and supported academies for students who were behind in credits earned and other graduation requirements. This added a significant level of responsibility to each intern, including recruiting students, interviewing and hiring teachers, and creating — on a very short timeline and largely from scratch — all of the schedules and policies necessary to get the new program up and running.

While this was not best practice and far from an ideal situation for the participants to complete the FTLP internship, it met a high-priority district's need; therefore SREB directed coaches assigned to these participants to tailor the support they provided to make it a meaningful and productive experience.

The expectation had been that the districts would contact SREB if they were contemplating departing from the structure of the internship laid out for them, but in most cases, decisions to modify the internship design by not backfilling participants' current job or creating additional responsibilities were made unilaterally by district leadership. **Taken together, these circumstances led SREB to recommend that future project directors negotiate and agree to the structure of the internship with each participating district so all stakeholders share a clear understanding of its purpose, design and requirements.**

FTLP Mentors and Coaches: Feedback

"When a young person, even a gifted one, grows up without proximate living examples of what she may aspire to become — whether lawyer, scientist, artist or leader in any realm — her goal remains abstract. Such models as appear in books or on the news, however inspiring or revered, are ultimately too remote to be real, let alone influential. But a role model in the flesh provides more than inspiration; his or her very existence is confirmation of possibilities one may have every reason to doubt, saying, 'Yes, someone like me can do this.'"

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Sonia Sotomayor
Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court

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Enhancements Based on Lessons Learned From the Aspiring Principals Program

The expectations for FTLP mentors and coaches differed significantly from what SREB expected from these roles in the earlier program model. Enhancements were made to the selection, training, monitoring and compensation for mentors and coaches. They are identified here in a concise list and expanded upon throughout the remainder of this section.

Mentor Lessons Learned

- In the Aspiring Principals Program (APP), mentors were selected by default. That is, the principal where the participant worked was invited to be the mentor for that participant. In the FTLP, mentors were selected by the district based on criteria provided by FTLP staff. While it's fortunate there were some excellent mentors in the APP, experience confirmed that mentors should be selected for their abilities and commitment to fulfill this role.

- The mentor's role was outlined with more clarity in the FTLP. It included a "meet your mentor" orientation where role expectations were articulated for mentors and participants, and clear directions were given on how to evaluate each assignment or seminar follow-up activity. Monthly task-specific reminders were discussed, and webcasts that provided additional detail on how to perform specific mentor tasks were held.

- The FTLP mentors were supported and monitored much more closely than those in the APP. The FTLP lead practice coach provided guidance for how to evaluate each assignment and seminar follow-up activity through instructions embedded in the rubric used to evaluate participants' work products. The lead practice coach also monitored mentors' adherence to those instructions by reviewing each completed rubric. The work of FTLP mentors was organized as 25 separate mentor tasks. This allowed for tighter monitoring of individual mentor performance.

Coaching Lessons Learned

- The APP coaches operated with fairly minimal direction and supervision from project staff, and SREB relied more on their prior experiences in coaching teacher performance when they were principals themselves. This led to inconsistent coaching practices. It also allowed individual coaches to communicate expectations for participants that differed considerably in terms of the type and quality of work necessary to successfully document Florida Leadership Standards.

  These outcomes led to a much more structured approach to supervising coaches in the FTLP. Coaches were brought together for two days of intensive training prior to beginning their work with FTLP participants, and much of this time was devoted to establishing consistent expectations for what coaches would do and the type of feedback to be given to participants. A coaching guide with extensive resources was developed and distributed during training. It served as a toolkit and a comprehensive set of resources for working with participants and their principals. As such, it proved to be a very helpful means of support for the coaches throughout the internship.

- During the APP, coaches met at each seminar, but their time together was relatively unstructured. It consisted primarily of observing the content presented to participants, and little time was spent in direct discussion of coaching tasks and the status of individual participants. This situation was addressed in the FTLP by holding monthly "Coaches' WebEx Sessions" with a formal agenda that included specific directions for how to complete upcoming coaching tasks, a time for coaches to provide feedback on how participants were progressing and a time to deal with questions and/or concerns and problem solving.

- The FTLP lead practice coach also worked closely with the coaches to ensure that program expectations were met in terms of coaching visits and follow-up letters. These tasks were carefully monitored and documented for compensation purposes as well as to ensure participants received the coaching they needed. Other SREB program staff also read these letters to keep abreast of progress and problems in the internship.

- When the APP coaches visited participants on campus, they attempted to meet with the mentor principal, but they were rarely successful in getting an opportunity to debrief with the mentor. So, when expectations were set for internship principals in the FTLP, meeting briefly with the coach at the outset and conclusion of each monthly visit was required. Coaches were also required to develop an agenda and share it with the internship principal and the participant prior to the visit, and to promptly summarize the visit, including feedback, through a follow-up letter to both individuals.

Selection

Mentors were assigned to the FTLP participants at the outset of the program, with each mentor having no more than two mentees. Finding highly qualified mentors across the five participating districts and charter schools throughout Florida, within a short period of time, proved to be a challenge. Because of the scope of this task and the limited time between the contract award and the beginning of the mentoring program, SREB relied almost exclusively on recommendations from each district's senior staff in selecting mentors for participants from that district.

On the charter side, SREB utilized FDOE contacts and solicited recommendations from charter management organizations and independent charter schools. In the end SREB accepted all district recommendations of principals for the role of the FTLP mentor.

The selection process for coaches was more rigorous. SREB was able to apply more due diligence in reviewing potential coaches because far fewer coaches were needed than mentors, and SREB did not begin providing coaching until the outset of the internship, thus allowing a much longer time frame to complete this process. SREB wanted coaches who could devote a substantial amount of time to this role, rather than individuals who had other full-time work and responsibilities.

Ideally an intern-to-coach ratio of no more than 12:1 was sought. However, the largest district in the program preferred to work with a smaller number of coaches, and as a result, in that district the ratio of interns to coaches was 20:1. While SREB accepted the recommendations of senior staff in two of the participating districts for five of the eventual cadre of 11 coaches, the other six were selected based on prior experience with their work in similar efforts.

Training

To accommodate the busy work schedule of sitting principals, mentors were trained through three regionally delivered day-and-a-half training events. This training focused on helping FTLP mentors who were already effective principals develop and refine their skills at promoting reflection, using questions effectively, providing feedback, modeling effective leadership practices and using praise to encourage and motivate their mentees. A follow-up session was held with each district's mentors to introduce them to their mentees and to share more detailed information about the work of an FTLP mentor. This orientation to the mentor's role emphasized these important mentor responsibilities.

1. Engage your aspiring leader(s) in learning about and practicing turnaround skills.

2. Model effective leadership practices that are linked to improved instruction and increased student achievement.

3. Guide your aspiring leader(s) in planning and implementing additional learning experiences and reflecting on those experiences.

4. Provide feedback on the quality of your aspiring leaders' performance and how he or she can improve.

Having the mentors and their mentees together for this "meet your mentor" session allowed SREB to deliver an important message about expectations for their working relationship. SREB clarified that the work of mentors and mentees should follow a pattern, illustrated in Figure 14, which was repeated for each FTLP assignment.

Figure 14: Diagram of Expectations for Completing FTLP Assignments
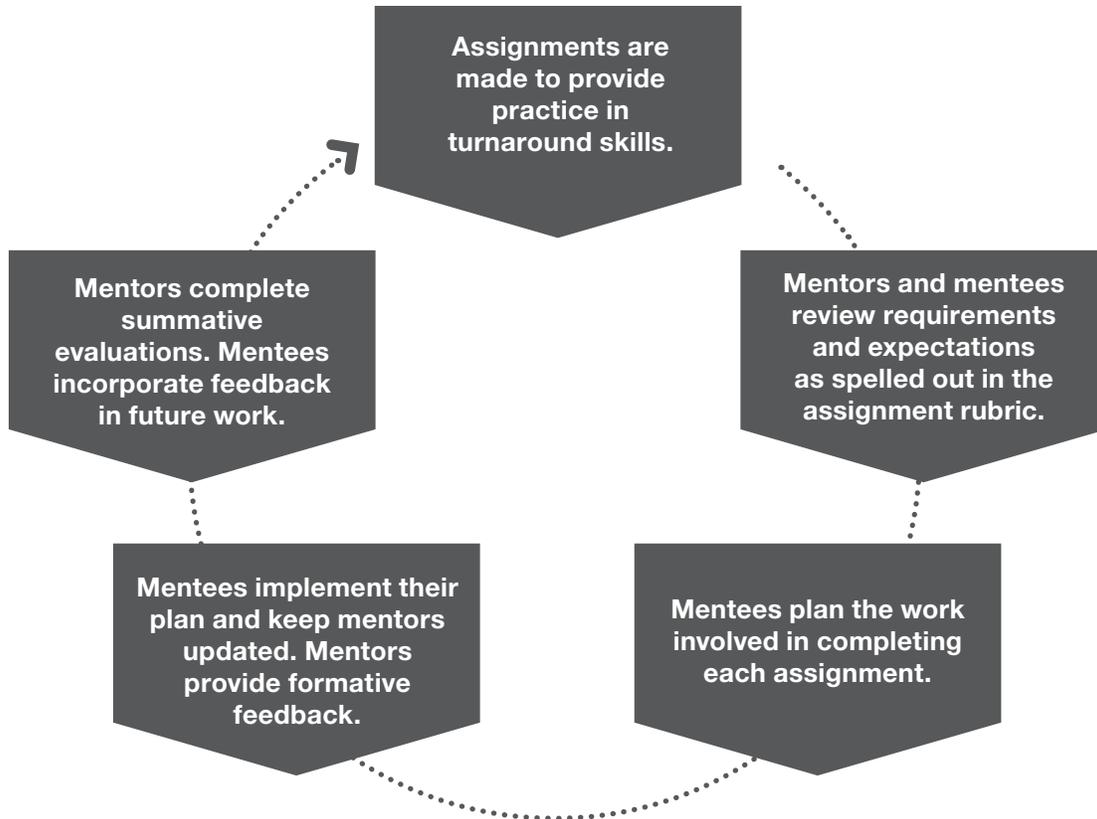
Training for the school improvement coaches was conducted in a two-day session in Orlando in late May 2013, just two months before the start of the internship. The training was planned and delivered by FTLP staff and focused tightly on the following objectives:

FTLP Coaches will…

1. Understand the purpose and design of the FTLP and the internship.

2. Recognize the roles and responsibilities of key players on the FTLP internship team.

3. Review effective coaching practices.

4. Gain knowledge about the FTLP coaching process, their coaching responsibilities and the provisions of the SREB coaching contract.

5. Become familiar with the assignments, seminar, online module follow-up activities, and classroom walk-throughs the FTLP interns are expected to complete.

6. Develop collegial relationships that will support the coaches in their FTLP work and promote sharing of expertise that result in personal growth.

One goal of the training was to distinguish the FTLP coaching process from other coaching models the coaches might have experienced and to build consistency in the coaches' work with interns while leveraging their individual expertise to enrich interns' learning and performance. Their collective experience in coaching current and aspiring leaders was deep and varied. Thus, they were able to profit optimally from the learning experiences and dialogue that made up the coaches' training.

The Work of Mentors and Coaches

The mentor's role was intended to fulfill a twofold purpose: (1) to ensure that participants understood what was required to successfully complete the FTLP curriculum assignments and understood how the skills acquired through those assignments related to school turnaround, and (2) to share from their own experiences how effective turnaround leaders integrate those skills into the complex work of leading school turnaround.

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Design Principle 5

Coaching and Continuous Feedback

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SREB envisioned multiple interactions between mentor and mentee on each assignment. These interactions would begin with an exploration of the requirements for the assignment and how the participant's work product would be evaluated. It continued through the review of key milestones while the assignment was underway, and concluded with a summative evaluation and debrief of the final work product. **However, over time, the focus of many mentors narrowed to providing feedback on the assignment after it was completed.**

SREB attributed this to three factors. First, mentors were sitting principals in secondary schools and as such, they had an extremely demanding job that left little time for extensive interaction with their mentees.

Second, the monitoring of what mentors actually did may have focused too narrowly on the completion of summative rubrics. Thus, mentors may have reduced their emphasis on other elements of their work with FTLP participants because they were not monitored as closely and were not connected with mentor compensation.

Finally, introducing coaches at the beginning of the internship may have made some mentors feel part of their role had been assumed by the coach and therefore, they did not expend as much effort in talking things through with their mentees as they did earlier when they were the primary source of support for FTLP participants.

> Due to the time constraints of her job, my mentor was not able to fully give the time needed to get the true depth of understanding of the various projects that she was expected to evaluate. Each of our assignments requires hours of reading and working with staff. More time should be allocated to the mentor to undertake this role.
>
> *FTLP Intern*

While a shift in emphasis occurred in how the mentors fulfilled their roles, the work of the coaches was consistent throughout the internship. Coaches scheduled and conducted monthly visits to the internship sites, and these visits had a mandated structure as described in a previous section. This structure contributed to the sustained consistency of the work completed by the coaches.

As the internship drew to a close in December 2013, an amendment to the FTLP contract with the FDOE allowed SREB to extend the use of the coaches through the end of the program in June 2014.

Originally, the coaches were to have supported FTLP participants during the internship only. When their work was extended, they were assigned a new task. Based on input from the mentor and internship principal collected at the end-of-internship conference, the coach and participant designed an individual learning plan that served to organize and expand the learning experiences for that participant during the last six months of the program. This learning plan addressed areas where further growth was needed as identified by the participant's self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses and by the observations of those who had worked most closely with the participant. While the mentors had input into this plan, its design and execution were the responsibility of the coach.

Ongoing Support and Communication

Mentors and coaches were supported primarily by a tightly-knit group of FTLP staff. The FTLP project co-director was responsible for curriculum design/delivery, and the project manager and lead practice coach were responsible for training, supporting and monitoring the performance of mentors and coaches. These individuals lived in three different cities in Florida, but met monthly throughout the project for two-day work sessions and stayed in constant communication via email and phone. They also made extensive use of the online meeting application WebEx, which allowed FTLP staff to collaborate on project planning, issue resolution, and document creation, without the expense of travel.

The lead practice coach provided the day-to-day support for mentors and coaches. This individual was a former principal and district office administrator with extensive experience in leadership development programs. The primary responsibilities of the lead practice coach were to develop processes and tools to direct, support, monitor and document the work of the mentors and coaches.

The lead practice coach developed and implemented processes that guided mentors' work in evaluating FTLP assignments, supported their interns through face-to-face meetings, and provided feedback on a wide range of leadership behaviors. These processes spelled out expectations for mentors and coaches and defined how these intern support roles were compensated.

Issues that arose with mentors were resolved by the lead practice coach. While complaints from FTLP participants were few, when a mentor did not provide adequate support for his or her mentee, the lead practice coach investigated the situation and determined the most appropriate action, including replacing mentors who failed to fulfill their responsibilities to the expectations of FTLP staff.

Because of the significant distances separating the five participating districts (See Figure 15.), support for and communications with mentors and coaches was delivered primarily via email. The support provided for mentors evolved over time in response to feedback from mentors on what was helpful in preparing and guiding them in their work. The initial form of support was a monthly publication that described the tasks mentors should complete during the upcoming month and alerted them to due dates and other schedule constraints.

This document was called the *FTLP Tasks and Time Frames*, and it was delivered at the first of each month via email distribution lists for each group of mentors. A sample Tasks and Time Frames document appears in Appendix C.

Figure 15: Location of Participating Districts

Of all the tasks mentors were asked to complete, the evaluation of participants' work products was the most complex. Support for mentors in evaluating the summary reports and other work products generated by participants for each assignment was often provided through "mentor guides." These documents reiterated the purpose of a particular assignment and its importance to school turnaround, so mentors would have a strong frame of reference for evaluating their mentees' work. They also provided advice on how to use the associated rubrics, i.e., what to look for and how to distinguish among the levels of performance described by the scales of the rubric. An example of a mentor guide is included in Appendix D.

The rubrics themselves provided support for mentors by clarifying the focus of each scale, and providing background information, where appropriate, and key questions to guide the mentors' analysis of the work product. Completed rubrics were shared with the participant and submitted to the lead practice coach, who maintained electronic copies for documentation purposes. A sample rubric for a major assignment is included in Appendix E.

All FTLP documents, including assignment directions, rubrics, mentor guides and monthly communications, were stored in a central repository accessible by mentors and coaches from any computer with Internet access. This allowed mentors and coaches to search for and download the documents they needed, when they needed them, without waiting for a response from the FTLP staff to an email request.

Access was customized so mentors and coaches could download any document but could not save changes to the repository or upload additional documents. This ensured consistency and provided FTLP staff with a relatively easy method of version control as outdated documents were deleted when they were replaced by updated versions.

During the internship, an additional form of mentor support was introduced. FTLP staff utilized the recording capability of the online meeting application to record narrated PowerPoint presentations that previewed the key points and requirements for each assignment or seminar follow-up activity. Links to these recordings were sent to mentors, coaches and participants so they could stream the preview at their convenience. By sharing the same information with mentors and coaches, FTLP staff hoped to increase the consistency of feedback to the participants.

The FTLP coaches also received ongoing support in fulfilling their roles. While email and phone calls to and from the coaches were a daily occurrence, the primary support mechanism for the coaches was a monthly online meeting during which FTLP staff shared information concerning upcoming tasks, responded to questions and discussed issues and concerns raised by the coaches. These monthly sessions concluded with a list of action responsibilities for FTLP staff and the coaches which were reviewed during the next scheduled session so that task completion was monitored closely.

Monitoring and Compensation

FTLP mentors and coaches worked as independent contractors for SREB. Both groups, mentors and coaches, were closely monitored by FTLP staff for task completion and quality of work. The results of the monitoring processes were used to inform future support for mentors and coaches and to document task completion for compensation purposes.

For mentors, monitoring for compensation purposes focused on the submission of rubrics following the evaluation for FTLP assignments and activities. Each rubric was reviewed by the lead practice coach to ensure a rating was entered for each scale and to identify and investigate any possible error in scoring. While errors rarely occurred, this type of monitoring provided FTLP participants with a high level of confidence the ratings entered onto their individual performance records were valid and accurate.

Careful review of the rubrics completed by FTLP mentors also provided the impetus for new support mechanisms to help mentors perform at a high level. For example, midway through the practicum, monitoring data on mentors' scoring of FTLP assignments and activities revealed a trend toward Highly Effective ratings (the highest rating on the FTLP's four-level scale). A review of randomly selected work products indicated that "grade inflation" might be a factor contributing to the increased frequency of Highly Effective ratings. The review also suggested that ratings were inconsistent from rater to rater and from district to district, with some mentors grading work products less stringently.

In response, the lead practice coach added a clarification to each rubric scale that provided examples of distinguishing characteristics of work deserving of a Highly Effective rating. By putting this information on the rubric, FTLP staff communicated the same message to mentors and to participants — earning a Highly Effective rating required extraordinary levels of performance.

Mentor compensation was tied directly to task completion. That is, each mentor task was assigned a dollar value and mentors earned that amount by completing the task and providing the required documentation. The amounts were determined by dividing the contract amount of $3,500 per mentee for the entire program by the number of mentor tasks, and then adjusting the task-specific amounts for the relative level of complexity of each task.

In contrast, coaches were paid a predetermined amount for each half-day visit with the intern. They wrote coaching follow-up letters for each visit that detailed accounts of what took place during the visit as well as the coaches' recommendations for next steps and actions to improve the interns' performance. These letters were reviewed by the project co-director, project manager and lead practice coach to ensure coaches were providing the required level of support for their interns. An example of a coach's follow-up letter is included in Appendix F.

Lessons Learned for Creating Strong Participant Support Teams

SREB observations on the impact of mentors and coaches on the learning and performance of FTLP participants indicate there were several features that enabled the coaches to contribute more consistently to achieving program outcomes. **The first and most obvious of these features is time**. Mentors were sitting principals at middle grades or high schools and therefore, faced a greater challenge than the coaches in carving out time for planning and dialogue with FTLP participants.

The coaches were free to schedule their visits at mutually convenient times and received reimbursement for travel expenses. Of the 11 FTLP coaches, only one held a full-time job in addition to her work as a coach. While all had other professional commitments, they were of a nature that allowed the coaches to set aside time to prepare for, conduct and follow up on the monthly half-day visits to each intern.

This regularly scheduled time of intensive interaction and performance analysis/feedback appeared to produce more positive results than the less structured approach used by mentors.

The second feature that favored the coaches' role in terms of capacity to impact learning and performance was the scope of what FTLP staff monitored. Monitoring for the coaches covered significantly more aspects of their work than did the monitoring for mentors. Coaches were monitored for making monthly half-day visits, conducting joint classroom walk-throughs and thorough documentation of the monthly visits in personalized follow-up letters.

In addition, the monthly online meetings with the coaches provided a means of talking through issues and questions that had arisen during the previous weeks and reviewing their plans for the ensuing weeks. Through these online meetings, FTLP staff members were able to ask questions about the coaches' work and to provide feedback and direction to all of them at the same time. This level of monitoring was not possible for mentors because of the larger number of mentors and their diverse locations across Florida.

By comparison, only one aspect of the mentors' role was monitored throughout the FTLP — the completion of summative rubrics. While the primary purpose of the summative rubrics was to communicate evaluative feedback to participants on their performances on FTLP assignments and activities, a secondary purpose was to document that mentors had reviewed their mentees' work products. Though attendance at key FTLP events was also monitored, these were relatively few in number (four) compared to the number of summative rubrics mentors completed (12).

Although mentors' status as sitting principals limited the amount of time they could devote to their mentees, it also gave them several advantages over the coaches. First, they were more likely to be familiar with district or charter organization policies and practices, even though some coaches had been employees in the district in which their interns worked. While the impact of this situation is difficult to measure, it would seem to be advantageous to someone trying to learn the ropes to have a mentor who could speak with currency and authority on how the district or charter organization wanted things done.

Similarly, the mentors were more likely to know how to access district resources and would be able to introduce their mentees to the right person for a particular question or need. One of the things that can consume a good deal of a turnaround leader's time is searching for the right place to go for help. Having a mentor who could point the mentee in the right direction quickly would also seem to be an advantage.

As is often the case when trying to create an ideal situation, if it were possible to combine characteristics of different options, the hybrid would make a better solution than either of the existing options. Therefore, SREB's recommendation for creating the most effective support structure for participants in rigorous principal preparation programs is to combine the positive aspects of these two roles. Here's how this combination of roles might work:

- Bring coaches on at the beginning of the program so mentors and coaches form a team in supporting the participants from the outset. Carefully describe and differentiate the support team members' various roles at an initial orientation for mentors, coaches and participants.

- Restructure the coaches' role so that they are guides for mentors in terms of program requirements and procedures. The lead practice coach's role should continue to guide the coaches through frequent contacts and serve as a resource for mentors, but the coaches should take on some elements of the role of supporting mentors. This would bring the support role closer to the mentors and help to establish the desired relationship between coach and mentor.

- Have coaches and mentors confer on grading all assignments. This should increase the quality of feedback participants receive on each assignment, give participants multiple perspectives on their performance and help them develop their own vision of school turnaround.

- Assign coaches ongoing responsibilities for visiting and working with teams of participants as they work in their practicum schools and in their internship schools.

- Require coaches to visit the team of participants at the practicum school at least once per month to monitor the participants' work on-site and to conduct joint classroom walk-throughs. These visits could follow the same protocol as their visits to internship schools. (i.e., follow-up letters to the teams that would iterate what is expected during the upcoming month).

- Have coaches pattern their interactions with the practicum school principals after their interactions with the internship school principal; that is, each visit should begin and end with a short debriefing session so the coach can hear any concerns identified by the practicum school principal and preview upcoming program assignments so the practicum principal can be more knowledgeable and proactive in working with the practicum team of participants.

- Continue to have mentors, coaches and internship principals meet and participate in the end-of-internship conference.

- Provide monthly task and timeline/snapshot documents showing the respective tasks and timelines for mentors and coaches so they know how the work of each role aligns and differs.

- Have coaches "check in" via telephone or email with mentors on a weekly or biweekly basis to share concerns, resolve issues and give assurance that things are working as planned. The coaches can offer assistance or clarification on participants' assignments, rubric scoring and upcoming tasks. Since coaches work with multiple participants and mentors, their perspectives and insights can be valuable and should be available to mentors and participants.

- Plan for and implement all other elements of the coaching and mentoring model as initially designed for the FTLP. These elements include:
  1. Intensive role-specific training
  2. Close monitoring
  3. Frequent communications between project staff and coaches
  4. Clear and explicit directions
  5. Practical tools for accomplishing important tasks
  6. Compensation tied to task completion
  7. Involvement of the entire support team (mentor, coach and internship principal) in end-of-internship evaluation conferences

These seven elements are necessary to ensure that program participants receive the type of guidance, critical formative assessment and feedback on their performances that produce the quality of learning experiences required to prepare them to become school turnaround leaders.

Program and Participant Evaluation

Evaluation "involves the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs, personnel and products … to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness and make decisions with regard to what those programs personnel, or products are doing and affecting."

Michael Quinn Patton

Daniel Stufflebeam wrote that program evaluation is "a study designed and conducted to assist some audience to assess an object's merit and worth.[35]" In this case, the "object" was the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program. The "merit and worth" of the program were assessed through an approach based on the logic model used to guide the FTLP's design, development and implementation.

Lawton, Brandon, Cicchinelli, and Kekahio[36] described three ways in which logic models are useful in planning program evaluation. First, they guide program evaluators in understanding how the program's activities and intended outcomes are related. Second, logic models help evaluators distinguish those program elements and outcomes that are higher priorities for evaluation. Finally, studying a program's logic model will enable evaluators to generate specific evaluation questions that target the more important elements and/or outcomes of the program.

SREB's FTLP co-director, Jon Schmidt-Davis of SREB, began with six broad questions to serve as a framework for his evaluation of the program. Then, he used the logic model that provided guidance for the design and implementation of the program to craft a set of more tightly-focused evaluation questions specific to the FTLP.

FTLP Program Evaluation Plan

The summative evaluation of the FTLP focused on specific outcomes and provided data on the extent to which those outcomes were achieved. There were six guiding questions that served to frame the program evaluation plan. They are listed below, along with a brief narrative describing how SREB dealt with each question in the FLTP.

1. What outcomes will be evaluated and for what purpose? The FTLP collected data on participant satisfaction with seminar content, delivery and activities; promotions received by participants during the program; and growth in abilities to observe instructional behaviors accurately in a classroom setting. As mentioned previously, participant performance on each assignment was evaluated through an assignment-specific rubric, and these scores were tracked using the FTLP Performance Record.

2. Participants anonymously filled out evaluation forms at the conclusion of each quarterly seminar and completed online evaluations after each of the online modules. A comprehensive satisfaction survey was also completed following the internship.

3. Summative evaluation reports documented instances of program attrition and reported on progress toward the program's goals of achieving a 90 percent program completion rate and a 40 percent school leadership promotion rate.

4. At what points will evaluation reports be generated? Descriptive data from these evaluations were collected and analyzed, and results were included in the quarterly project reports. Annual online surveys of program participants' satisfaction were conducted in the fourth quarter of each year of the project. The survey results were forwarded to the Florida Department of Education as a deliverable. More detailed analyses of these annual surveys were included in annual summative evaluation reports.

5. What form of instrumentation will be used? Paper and online surveys were used to collect data on participant satisfaction. FTLP staff used the 5D Instructional Leadership Assessment developed by the University of Washington as a pre- and post-assessment (during the third quarter of Year 1 and again in the fourth quarter of Year 3) in order to measure participants' gains in instructional leadership expertise. The 5D assessment consisted of individual participants watching a video excerpt of a

classroom lesson, as if conducting a classroom walk-through, and providing written analysis of what was observed. Two trained raters then evaluated the accuracy of the participants' observations and analysis against a rubric, rating it across five dimensions:

1. Purpose

2. Student engagement

3. Curriculum and pedagogy

4. Assessment for student learning

5. Classroom environment and culture

The 5D Instructional Leadership Assessment is research based, drawing on the work of Robert Marzano, Charlotte Danielson, Rick Stiggins, Lauren Resnick and others. Raters are limited to permanent staff of the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership who have a background in instructional leadership, have scored highly on the assessment themselves, and achieved and maintain a high inter-rater reliability (at least 0.90). FTLP participants received individual reports of their performances on the pre- and post-training assessments. Individual results from the second administration of the assessment were made available to participants in the summer of 2014 and can be used in planning induction support and training as they are promoted or selected for leadership positions.

6. Who conducted the evaluation? The project co-director, Jon Schmidt-Davis, conducted the evaluations.

7. How was that information used? The information was used to modify future seminar content, delivery and activities, and to make changes in SREB's communication plan.

8. Who received a copy of the evaluation? The FDOE and district contacts received copies of all FTLP evaluation instruments and results.

The next step in creating the plan for conducting a program-level evaluation of the FTLP involved generating specific evaluation questions. As mentioned earlier, these questions arose from a careful study of the logic model upon which the FTLP design was based. The analysis of the logic model identified three key outputs that would be the focus of the program evaluation plan. These were:

- Increase the pool of aspiring principals to lead turnaround and continuous improvement in low-performing schools.

- Ensure that at least 80 percent of participants are satisfied with program content, learning activities and support.

- Ensure that at least 80 percent of participants complete the program and are judged ready to lead a low-performing school.

This led the project co-director to develop data collection tools and processes to track the number of participants promoted to assistant principal or principal positions, measure participant satisfaction following each seminar, track participant attrition and compile readiness assessments at the end-of-internship, and end-of-program milestones.

However, the program evaluation plan addressed far more than these priority outcomes. A close study of the logic model revealed the throughputs and activities that were likely to contribute to the priority outcomes. For example, program completion was likely to be influenced by the quality of program activities such as the mentoring and coaching provided directly to participants, the frequency and clarity of communications from program staff, and the level of support provided by the participants' district or charter organizations. So, these more granular aspects of program performance were also measured, analyzed and used to improve the program's effectiveness.

FTLP Participant Evaluation Plan

SREB asked five questions when developing the participant evaluation system. For each question, a brief description is provided of how that part of the FTLP participant evaluation system was designed.

1. What aspects of participant performance will be evaluated? SREB collected data on participant performance on: (1) FTLP assignments and activities, (2) classroom walk-throughs, (3) online modules and Web-based training, (4) seminar attendance, (5) participants' individual learning plans and (6) readiness to lead school turnaround. Assignment-specific rubrics were developed and used by mentors to evaluate the work products submitted for each assignment or seminar follow-up activity. During the practicum, walk-throughs were evaluated. During the internship, input from the coaches on the quality of their interns' observations during classroom walk-throughs was obtained.

   Participants who fell behind schedule completing assignments or seminar follow-up activities entered into an "assignment contract" with their coach, mentor and the lead practice coach. These individualized contracts specified what the participant and each member of the support team would do to help the participant get caught up. These contracts were closely monitored and provided a higher level of accountability for those participants who had fallen behind on their FTLP work.

   Each online module had a facilitator who moderated the discussion board and graded work relative to the module assignments. Grades on the classroom walk-throughs and online modules were originally based on a three-tiered scale —Met, Did Not Meet, or Exceeded Expectations. Eventually these were translated into points so that these grades could be added to the point total on the FTLP Performance Record.

   Seminar attendance was documented, and those who missed one or both days of a seminar had to respond to a short makeup quiz on seminar content. This required them to review the seminar notebook contents and talk with one or more participants who had attended the seminar.

   The individual learning plans were evaluated by the participant's coach. A four-tiered scale was used — Completed, Good Progress, Lack of Progress and Did Not Attempt.

   Readiness to lead school turnaround was assessed twice during the program. The first assessment took place at the end of the internship. Each member of the intern's support team, made up of the mentor, coach and internship school principal, completed an SREB-developed readiness rating scale and then met to discuss their individual ratings and arrive at a consensus. The three-tiered scale was Fully Ready, Nearly Ready and Not Ready.

   At the end of the program, the mentor and coach reviewed the full FTLP performance record for their participants and reassessed their readiness to lead school turnaround. These end-of-program readiness ratings were recorded using the same three-tiered scale, and these final ratings became part of the participants' FTLP Performance Record. A copy of the End-of-Program Evaluation Form is in Appendix G.

2. Who will conduct the evaluation? See the answers to question 1 for information about who evaluated individual assignments and other FTLP elements. The FTLP lead practice coach conducted the final evaluation to determine program completion. This was done through a comprehensive review of each participant's FTLP Performance Record, including the final readiness rating. Two designations were possible – Program Completion and Program Participation. The latter would be assigned if a participant failed to complete all FTLP requirements.

As it turned out, those participants who remained in the program through Seminar 10 completed all requirements. Those who eventually saw they were not going to be able to complete all the requirements withdrew from the program before the final seminar.

3. How will the evaluation results be recorded? All FTLP evaluation results were documented through the FTLP Performance Record. This was a large, complex spreadsheet in which all grades and points earned were recorded along with the end-of-internship and end-of-program readiness rating, seminar attendance and the results of individual learning plans. A version of the final FTLP Performance Record, with names redacted, is found in Appendix H.

4. How will evaluation results be used? The FTLP used the evaluation results to make decisions about program completion. Participating districts used these results to make determinations for placement and Level 2 School Principal certification (a requirement in Florida). The results were also reviewed on a monthly basis by the core planning team to track individual participant performance so issues could be addressed proactively, and to make decisions about midcourse corrections in program planning.

5. Who gets a copy of the evaluation results? At least once each quarter, individual participants were provided with an updated FTLP Performance Record that included only their results. This proved to be very effective in motivating participants and in keeping mentors up to date on submitting grades for work completed by their mentees. Mentor-specific reports were also generated so mentors could see the current status of each of their mentees. District contacts also provided reports on all participants from their district.

To reiterate, the FTLP Performance Record included the participants' score on each assignment and program requirement. The cells were color-coded to align with the four categories of performance used in the FTLP (Highly Effective, Effective, Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory). The Performance Record displayed the total points earned and the percentage of points possible for each participant. It also recorded their end-of-internship and end-of-program readiness ratings. The following is an excerpt from a Performance Record that shows only a representative number of items.

Introducing this record brought a strong sense of accountability to FTLP participants and gave them a picture of how they were performing on a program-wide basis. Many said they found it motivating and it inspired them to try harder to earn the Fully Ready rating.

Table 10 provides a concise summary of the participant evaluation plan. It identifies the junctures within the program at which each participant evaluation activity was conducted, what aspect of participant performance was evaluated, how that evaluation was conducted and which members of the participant support team had a role in that evaluation activity.

FTLP Performance Record Excerpt

A1 Case Study Report (20)	SFA School Culture (20)	A2 Schoolwide Rigor (15)	Online Rigor (20)	Internship Classroom Walk-throughs (20)	Total Points Earned	Percent Points Possible	End-of-Program Readiness Rating
14	14	15	20	20	256	93%	Fully Ready
14	14	15	15	20	248	90%	Fully Ready
20	20	15	20	20	275	100%	Fully Ready
18	20	15	20	15	248	90%	Fully Ready

Legend: "A1" = Assignment 1; "SFA" = Seminar Follow-up Activity"

Table 10: Summary of FTLP Participant Evaluation Activities

When	What	How	By Whom
During Practicum	Assignments and Seminar Follow-Up Activities	SREB-Developed Rubrics	Mentors
End of Practicum	Status on Practicum Assignments and Requirements	Review of FTLP Performance Record	Lead Practice Coach
End of Internship	Assignments and Seminar Follow-Up Activities; Walk-throughs	End-of-Internship Conference	Mentor, Coach and Internship Principal
Expert Panel Presentation	Abbreviated Portfolio	Verbal Feedback	Panel of Experts in Educational Leadership
End of Program	Individual Learning Plan and Portfolio	End-of-Program Conference	Mentor and Coach

Florida Turnaround Leaders Program Outcomes

From 2012-14 the FTLP was one of the largest, most rigorous and successful school leader preparation efforts in the nation. Of the 82 participants who completed the program, 72 received promotions. Thirty-nine were promoted to assistant principal, 24 to principal, and 10 to executive director or assistant superintendent positions in some of Florida's largest urban school districts.

The FTLP training has resulted in verifiable improvement in the instructional leadership capabilities of participants, confirmed by their performance on the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership's 5D Instructional Leadership Assessment. FTLP participants demonstrated statistically significant gains in performance across all five dimensions of instructional leadership (purpose, student engagement, curriculum and pedagogy, assessment for student learning, and classroom environment and culture). The participants also out-performed the national averages of the 3,491 other school leaders, from 62 school districts and education entities, who have also taken the 5D Assessment.

Participants in the FTLP have been highly satisfied with the training. At the conclusion of the program, 96 percent of participants strongly agreed that it had been a high-quality program; 97 percent responded that it had been more demanding than other professional development they had received; 93 percent strongly agreed that the program had made them better instructional leaders; and 92 percent strongly agreed that the FTLP had given them the skills to succeed as a turnaround leader.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Purpose of "Getting It Right"

In this publication, SREB described in detail two distinct models for preparing principals to lead the improvement of teaching and learning at low-performing schools. The intent is to help those responsible for preparing principals produce more effective school leaders by utilizing what these models offer through their thoughtful design, effective structure, and well-tested materials, and through lessons learned in designing, implementing and evaluating two highly-successful programs based on these models.

As these models are offered for use by others, SREB has an obligation to caution against using individual pieces. A piecemeal approach can reduce the benefits derived from the synergy of the whole. The total approach consists of the following: SREB's theory of action; the logic model that aligns resources, activities, indicators of progress and program outcomes with a clear vision and goals; the design principles that guided the development of the models and programs; and important concepts such as second-order change and the critical dimensions of leading continuous improvement and school turnaround.

While certain elements, such as the SREB Leadership Modules or the detailed assignments from the FTLP curriculum, have value as stand-alone items and can be used in that way to enhance an existing principal preparation or professional development program, in terms of the impact of these models on the quality of principal preparation the value of the whole exceeds the sum of the individual parts.

SREB's description of the two models and the programs implemented utilizing these models are detailed and comprehensive. The purpose in offering this level of detail is to provide sufficient information for potential adopters to obtain a deep understanding of everything involved in designing the models and developing the programs that tested the models through large-scale implementations in Florida. This extensive detail is necessary to guide the planning required to use SREB models to replicate either of these two programs.

The purpose of this publication is put most succinctly in the title, *Getting It Right*. SREB has written about the models — their theoretical underpinnings, structure, purposes, salient features and lessons learned — to help those who, as they prepare individuals to lead schools, are committed to *Getting It Right*.

How Might States, Universities and School Districts Use These Models?

There are several ways these models can be used to enhance principal preparation. These include assessing existing or proposed programs, building a highly customized model that addresses specific needs, and adopting one of these models "whole cloth."

Assessing Existing or Proposed Programs

If an organization wants to use one of these models to evaluate a current or proposed principal preparation program, the organization should first determine which model to use. If the focus of the program to be evaluated is preparing principals to lead continuous improvement at low-performing schools, then the SREB Preparation Model may be more suitable. If the schools that program completers will lead have a history of performance that requires more dramatic interventions, then the SREB Turnaround Leadership Model should be selected.

Once the appropriate model is identified, comparisons can be made between the selected model and the existing program in terms of the theoretical underpinnings such as the theory of action; the logic model and adherence to design principles that reflect evidence-based practices; the rigor of the tasks and activities in which participants engage to practice the targeted knowledge and skills; and the authenticity of the settings in which skills are applied and refined. Other elements such as the support provided through mentoring and/or coaching should also be part of the comparison.

In utilizing this publication to plan this assessment, organizations should focus on SREB's Point Of View on School Leadership Preparation and Development, the theory of action and design principles explained in the early sections, and the extensive section that describes the program implemented — the APP or the FTLP — based on the model being used for comparison.

Building a Customized Program

An organization that intends to build its own program tailored to specific needs will find useful information in the section of this publication describing the SREB Leadership Program Implementation Design. Using the Leadership Program Implementation Design in developing the APP and FTLP helped SREB understand the depth of thinking and focus on details needed to translate these models into quality programs. Staff from organizations seeking to develop their own principal preparation programs should think deeply about the problem(s) to be addressed and reflect upon the models' design and components to identify the concepts, structures and tools they want to emulate in creating a customized program.

The lessons learned, which are found throughout this publication, should prove to be invaluable aids in avoiding mistakes and miscalculations and capitalizing on the insights gained in creating and implementing programs based on the SREB Preparation Model and the SREB Turnaround Leadership Model. While an organization may intend to develop a highly customized program that differs significantly from these models, many lessons learned from SREB experiences will be applicable to even the most divergent designs.

Just as there are several ways these models can be used, there are multiple purposes for which these models are appropriate. These include the initial preparation of aspiring leaders as demonstrated by the APP, helping those who already have initial certification to meet other state requirements such as Florida's Level 2 School Principal certification, and enhancing the training provided to sitting principals for leading continuous improvement or school turnaround.

Adopting a Model "Whole Cloth"

Organizations that want to adopt one of these models in full as a principal preparation or development program will appreciate the detailed descriptions of processes and practices that were developed and refined during the implementation of the APP and the FTLP. The multitude of artifacts from these programs found in the appendices of this publication, while providing extensive examples of the tools, documents and instruments used by participants and program staff, are not exhaustive. However, there are two other sources from which additional program materials are available. The FDOE maintains a large catalog of FTLP materials and will provide access to electronic versions of those materials upon request. SREB also stands ready to provide a full range of materials and services related to these programs.

Current Examples of the Models' Use

Recent implementation of the SREB Turnaround Leadership Model by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) provides one example of how a state might build on this model. After consulting with SREB staff to learn more about the SREB model and reviewing its curriculum materials, the SCDE launched its own turnaround leadership training initiative in January 2014.

Named the South Carolina Transformational Leadership Academy (SCTLA), it is substantially based on the SREB model and uses FTLP curriculum materials and trainers. One major modification is limiting the internship due to lack of resources to support a six-month internship. In addition to the seminars, the SCTLA incorporates three of SREB's online leadership modules, on increasing academic rigor, using assessment to improve student learning and improving literacy instruction. The 15 participants in the first cohort came from five districts and included five principals, six assistant principals and four district staff members. This cohort completed its training in May 2015 and a second cohort began in January 2015 and will end in May 2016.

Participants have described the program as "really practical," with every training session providing ideas that can be used immediately. Participants have also echoed feedback received from Florida participants that the program is exceptionally demanding.

At the time this publication went to press, two school districts in Florida — Pinellas County Schools and Alachua County Schools — were utilizing major components of the SREB Turnaround Leadership Model to revamp their primary principal training programs. Plans being discussed included training current and aspiring principals in skills from the SREB Turnaround Leaders Skill Sets, applying those skills to conduct in-depth case studies of select low-performing schools and developing school improvement initiatives based on the findings of those case study reports.

How SREB Can Help

While SREB is hopeful many organizations will take advantage of the significant amount of materials generated through the implementation of the APP and the FTLP to improve professional development for aspiring leaders and sitting principals, most organizations are likely to need help in configuring the selected model to their needs and getting their program up and running. To these organizations, SREB offers a cost-effective way to access help in the initial stages of program design and implementation that focuses on building the organization's capacity to sustain the program over time and make it a part of their routine practice.

Figure 16 illustrates a high-level view of three stages of support SREB may provide to organizations that plan to implement one of these models. Each successive stage reflects a measured release of responsibility. In the "hand-in-hand" stage SREB consultants work as team members with district or state staff to plan the first cycle of implementation and to manage the initial cohort through the program.

In the second stage, SREB consultants are in a support role, and the organization's team shoulders the bulk of the workload. The on-site presence of the SREB consultants is reduced from the level required in the first stage, but regular visits are scheduled so SREB can assess progress and the need for assistance firsthand. Finally, with the organization's capacity to manage and refine the program fully established, the consultants remain on-call, but no longer make regularly scheduled on-site visits.

Figure 16: Stages of Assistance for Model Adopters

Hand-in-Hand: On-Site

Two to three SREB consultants work as a team with staff from your organization to configure the program and plan and guide implementation of all phases for the first cycle or cohort. SREB's team is on-site monthly and available in between via virtual meetings, phone and email.

On-Call: On-and Off-Site

One to two SREB consultants are "on-call" to answer questions and think through options related to program implementation and refinement. Regular site visits also take place as needed, and the organization's team is nearing full capacity.

On-Call: Off-Site

One to two SREB consultants are "on-call" as needed. The organization's team has reached full capacity to manage current and future cycles/cohorts, and the program is integrated into the organization.

This measured release approach provides flexibility in two ways. First, the level of initial support may be differentiated based on documented capacity of the organization. For example, organizations with significant experience in designing and implementing professional development programs may be capable of beginning at the on-call or on- and off-site stage. Second, the time spent in each stage may also vary from one organization to another. Organizations where the staff has a high workload may lean on SREB consultants in the hand-in-hand stage for more than one cohort of participants. Other organizations where staff can spend a greater percentage of their time on planning and managing the program may move from the hand-in-hand stage to the next in less time.

Other forms of support are also in the works. **SREB envisions developing a network of adopters who would convene periodically to share lessons learned about implementing the models.** These sessions would provide a forum for exchanging ideas about common challenges and for SREB to introduce the latest thinking on leadership development. In this way, participating organizations can continually refine their programs by adopting what is working in similar settings and by keeping their program designs and content on the cutting edge of leadership preparation and development.

SREB will also offer intensive sessions for trainers who will be using the SREB Turnaround Leader Program model seminar materials. Through this approach, organizations can develop and enhance the capacity of their own trainers to deliver seminar-based training, thus reducing consultant costs and gaining in-house capacity that can be applied in a number of settings for diverse purposes.

Finally, SREB is updating and refining a number of modules in the Leadership Module Series. These in-depth training packages can be used by organizations to deliver high-quality training on a full range of topics including career pathways for secondary schools, implementing programs such as the Literacy Design Collaborative and the Mathematics Design Collaborative, building instructional leadership teams and professional learning communities, assessing academic rigor to help teachers prepare students for new college- and career-readiness standards, using data for school improvement, coaching instructional faculty, classroom "look-fors" to improve observations and learning walks, and creating a high-performing culture.

Moving forward, SREB has five objectives relative to the SREB Preparation Model and the SREB Turnaround Leadership Model. These objectives are:

1. Provide customized support for organizations that adopt one of these models to ensure that their return on investment is high and sustainable over time as they use the selected model to produce highly skilled leaders for their schools.

2. Learn more about what makes these models effective by studying what works well and what can be improved in future implementations.

3. Collect data on the outcomes of each implementation to further validate the models' designs.

4. Establish a network of adopters (as described above).

5. Continue to develop and refine SREB models and associated training materials as the conditions faced by school leaders (i.e., changing demographics, new state and district mandates) and standards evolve and change, so that principals are equipped with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to address this ever-changing landscape of school leadership.

As stated in objective five, keeping these models current involves examining new leadership standards as they are published and comparing these new standards with the skills, knowledge and dispositions reflected in the curricula of SREB models.

Final Thoughts

This publication has provided an in-depth look at two models for preparing principals to lead school improvement at low-performing schools, and described the process followed in planning and managing two large-scale implementations so those who have the responsibility and privilege of equipping leaders for the most challenging schools might be as successful as possible.

Looking back at designing, developing and testing these models — which SREB began in 2008 and concluded by returning 82 highly-trained school turnaround leaders to their respective districts — **there are three final thoughts. First, a shared vision among the senior leadership of an organization of the principal preparation program that aligns with the structure and content of the mo`del selected for implementation will help in overcoming obstacles and reaching goals.**

The level of support needed to plan and implement a complex undertaking such as a model leader preparation program is obtainable when the leadership of the organization is in agreement on the problem to be solved through this program; the scope of this program, i.e., what will be involved in planning and implementing it; and the importance of the program to an organization's primary mission.

Second, select the best people to lead the most challenging schools and "clear the decks" for them so they can concentrate on acquiring and refining the leadership skills that make up the foundation of the program. A program like the APP or the FTLP is not intended to fix broken principals or to be open to any and every teacher who wants to put educational leadership on his or her certificate.

The best candidates are those who have demonstrated strong leadership skills and have the potential for further growth. The best way to put it is to ask — Who can be trusted to change persistently low student achievement at the most difficult schools? Then, take those people and get them ready for the job through a leadership preparation program.

If designed properly the program will be quite rigorous. Participants should be able to focus on getting ready for this extremely important role, so don't let this be an "add-on" to their already full plates. Reassign responsibilities as much as possible so they are able to devote concentrated time to their own learning. Structure the program so participants have opportunities to apply what they are learning in low-performing schools as they complete the program. This gives them a head start on improving teaching and learning at those schools.

Third, don't be afraid to challenge one another on the planning and implementation of the program selected. The FTLP's core planning team often engaged in lively discussion of the best way to design program elements and took turns reminding each other to stay focused on what a school leader needs to know and be able to do to turn around chronically low student achievement. Through this process of engaging in deep thinking and professional discourse, team members grew as much as participants did.

SREB wishes you the highest levels of success and stands ready to help in the selection of the model that meets your needs. SREB will work collaboratively with you to create and execute the type of detailed implementation plan required to make such a complex undertaking a productive and effective program.

Appendices

Appendix A | List of SREB's Critical Success Factors

SREB's 13 Critical Success Factors for Effective Principals

SREB developed the 13 critical success factors for effective principals from extensive reading of school leadership literature, focus meetings with successful school principals, and years of organizational experience in providing technical assistance to improve school leadership practice, preparation and policy.

1. **Focus on student achievement**: Create a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.

2. **Develop a culture of high expectations**: Set high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.

3. **Design a standards-based instructional system**: Recognize and encourage good instructional practices that motivate students and increase their achievement.

4. **Create a caring environment**: Develop a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.

5. **Implement data-based improvement**: Use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and in student achievement.

6. **Communicate**: Keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement.

7. **Involve parents**: Make parents partners in students' education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration.

8. **Initiate and manage change**: Understand the change process and use leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.

9. **Provide professional development**: Understand how adults learn and advance meaningful change through quality, sustained professional development that leads to increased student achievement.

10. **Innovate**: Use and organize time and resources in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.

11. **Maximize resources**: Acquire and use resources wisely.

12. **Build external support**: Obtain support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for the school improvement agenda.

13. **Stay abreast of effective practices**: Continuously learn from and seek colleagues who keep abreast of new research and proven practices.

Comprehensive Curriculum, Practice and Assessment Map

Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
**Skill Set 1.	Analyzing the Context of Low-Performing Schools** **Content** 1.1. Identify the characteristics of low-performing schools. 1.2. Collect meaningful data on school conditions. 1.3. Analyze data on school conditions as they relate to the characteristics of a turnaround school. 1.4. Diagnose probable causes of low performance. 1.5. Prioritize probable causes to address in the school improvement plan. 1.6. Set initial goals or targets. **Quarterly Seminar 1**	**Assignment 1: Low-Achieving School Case Study** Teams of participants assigned to each case study school create a comprehensive case study report by collecting and analyzing a wide range of data on the school to identify the root causes of persistently low student achievement. This assignment provides practice in project planning, data collection, drilling down in the data to answer "why" until root causes are confirmed, and organizing the relevant data into a document that can communicate the teams' findings to stakeholders and can be updated as new data are generated.	**Assessment**: A series of formative assessments of the teams' work on the case study is conducted by the mentor principals. Questions used to structure the formative assessments are provided in the Guide to Assignment 1. A rubric is used by the school improvement coach to conduct a summative evaluation of the final case study report.

Comprehensive Curriculum, Practice and Assessment Map

Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
Skill Set 2. | Envisioning a Culture of High Expectations	**Seminar Follow-Up Activity – Culture Survey**	**Assessment:** An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the school improvement coach to evaluate the participants' summary report of results on the culture survey.
Content	Participants conduct a school culture survey in the case study school to assess the extent to which faculty and administrators hold high expectations for all students. Participants analyze the results and produce a summary report that is shared with the case study school principal. The data and findings in this report may be used in selecting and/or planning school improvement initiatives.	
2.1. Articulate what students will need to know and be able to do to be successful in the 21st century.		
2.2. Set a clear, shared vision and direction for preparing middle grades students to succeed in rigorous high school courses and for preparing high school students for college and careers.		
2.3. Differentiate between the characteristics of a culture of high expectations and those of a culture of low expectations.		
2.4. Use strategies for engaging teachers in designing lessons based on college- and career-readiness standards.		
2.5. Assess the existing curriculum in relation to levels of cognitive complexity (rigor).		
2.6. Provide feedback to teachers on the level of rigor observed in classroom instruction.		
2.7. Lead faculty in developing and implementing processes for providing timely and targeted feedback to students to help them understand what constitutes high standards of performance.		
Quarterly Seminar 2		

Comprehensive Curriculum, Practice and Assessment Map

Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
Skill Set 3. | Providing a Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum **Content** 3.1. Support teachers in developing and implementing standards-based curriculum calendars in literacy and math within the turnaround context. 3.2. Engage in data analysis for instructional planning and improvement. 3.3. Ensure the appropriate use of high quality formative and interim assessments aligned with the adopted standards and curricula. 3.4. Clarify and communicate the relationships among academic standards, effective instruction and assessment. 3.5. Ensure students have opportunities for accelerating learning **Quarterly Seminar 3**	**Assignment 2: Assessing Schoolwide Rigor** Participants work as a team in the case study school to assess schoolwide rigor and conduct a focus group to obtain input on an 18-item rubric related to practices and processes that support rigor. The items were developed to emphasize implementation of the college- and career-readiness standards as an essential element of rigor. The team presents the results of the schoolwide rigor assessment to the case study school principal and may, at the principal's request, present them to the school leadership team and/or the entire faculty.	**Assessment:** Evaluation of the assignment on assessing rigor schoolwide is completed by the school improvement coach, utilizing an FTLP-designed rubric.

Comprehensive Curriculum, Practice and Assessment Map

Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
Online Module 1. | Assessing Academic Rigor in School and Classroom Practices **Content** Participants will learn how to incorporate rigor into the curriculum. They will: • Learn the concept cognitive complexity of expected learning as the true definition of rigor. • Be introduced to tools to determine levels of rigor and core habits of mind in classroom practices and systemically in schools. • Assess rigor in lesson plans; unit plans; course content; teacher assignments and student work; in formative and summative assessments and rubrics; and in the tight alignment of these elements to challenging standards. • Undertake a project that focuses on a problem in their own schools to gain practice in recognizing and infusing rigorous expectations into instructional and assessment practices. **August 13, 2012 – October 19, 2012**	**Module Follow-Up Activity – See Assignment 2**	**Assessment:** Participants' overall effort on the online module will be evaluated by the module facilitator. Evaluation of the assignment on assessing rigor schoolwide is completed by the school improvement coach, utilizing an FTLP-designed rubric.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
Skill Set 4. | Promoting Effective Teaching and Learning (Part A) **Content** 4.1. Differentiate between instructional leadership and management behaviors. 4.2. Implement the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices through a common language of instruction. 4.3. Provide feedback to teachers on their application of evidence-based principles of learning and the 5D Instructional Framework. 4.4. Implement differentiated instruction on a schoolwide basis. **Quarterly Seminar 4**	**Assignment 4: School Improvement Plan Recommendations** FTLP participants develop and present recommendations for the case study school's school improvement plan to the principal (and to school advisory council or school improvement team upon the principal's request). Recommendations are developed based primarily on the findings of the case study report (Assignment 1) as well as participants' other work in the case study school during the practicum. In addition to recommendations for how to address root causes of low student achievement, participants make recommendations for improving school discipline and safety based on an analysis of discipline incidents and the results of an audit of school safety. (See Activity: Audit of Safety and Discipline Incidents.)	**Assessment**: A rubric is used by the school improvement coach to conduct a summative evaluation of the school improvement plan recommendations. This assessment will include feedback from the case study school principal following the presentation of recommendations

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
Online Module 2. | Designing Assessment to Improve Student Learning Content Participants will learn how to create and lead a process to increase student achievement through assessment strategies. They will: • Rethink the way assessments are used in classrooms and the school as a whole. • Understand the why and how of grades and grading and which practices are effective or need to change. • Learn strategies to convey expectations of students' level of achievement toward grade-level standards to all stakeholders. • Examine how to use assessments to develop students' higher-order thinking skills. **November 26, 2012 – January 18, 2013**	**Module Follow-Up Activity –** This module stands alone; there are no follow-up activities associated with this module. Participants complete an inventory of interim assessments within the module. Classroom walk-throughs provide opportunities for participants to apply the skills acquired through the module.	**Assessment:** Participants' overall effort on the online module is evaluated by the module facilitator. The pre- and post-assessments administered through the 5D videos also assess mastery of this module's content – focusing on Dimension 4: Assessment.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
**Skill Set 5.	Building a Productive School Environment** **Content** 5.1. Maintain a safe, disciplined and inclusive student-centered learning environment. 5.2. Develop a schedule that supports teacher planning and instructional interventions. 5.3. Promote team-based planning, decision-making and instructional interventions. 5.4. Monitor team meetings to maximize their effectiveness. 5.5. Provide opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership 5.6. Organize and implement programs to ensure effective transitions from elementary to middle grades, middle grades to high school and high school to college and career. 5.7. Implement a comprehensive guidance and advisement program that supports students in setting goals and understanding what they will need to accomplish their goals. **Quarterly Seminar 5**	**Assignment 3. Course Schedules** Participants work with relevant school staff to develop the schools' schedules for the following year. There are options for which school is used to complete this assignment. Options include developing a schedule for the practicum school, the internship school, or the school where the participant is employed during the practicum. Prior to actually developing the school's schedule for the upcoming year, participant: • Analyze how the school's master schedule impacts the implementation of the RtI process. • Assess opportunities for in-school intervention. • Identify where the schedule allows for reteaching if students are not successful after initial instruction. If the schedule does not have adequate opportunities for reteaching, make suggestions for how this can be incorporated into the final schedule. (Describe the process used at the school to monitor the reteaching of content.) • Determine the extent to which the school's master schedule supports or impedes teacher collaboration.	**Assessment:** An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the school improvement coach to assess the process and outcome of the participants' work on developing the course schedule.

Comprehensive Curriculum, Practice and Assessment Map

Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
See Skill Set 5 above for a description of the content delivered in Seminar 5.	**Seminar Follow-Up Activity –** School Safety and Discipline Incident Audit Teams apply what they learn in Seminar 5 to conduct a safety audit of the case study school and an audit of discipline incidents over a three- year period at the case study school.	**Assessment:** School improvement coaches utilize an FTLP-developed rubric to evaluate the participants' work product.
Online Module 3. Building Instructional Leadership Teams **Content** Participants will learn how to form instructional leadership teams, help them define their purpose and goals, and work collaboratively with them to take ownership of problems in student achievement and create a climate for change. They will: • dentify various human and organizational factors that impact a school's ability to implement and sustain meaningful change. • Create a vision of adaptive change rooted in high expectations for all students. • Gain an understanding of how shared leadership and a team approach to school improvement can sustain improvement processes. • Work on a framework for sustainable implementation of these concepts. • Complete a project that focuses on establishing effective teams and using professional learning communities to lead a change initiative and build leadership capacity throughout the school. **July 22, 2013 – October 21, 2013**	**Module Follow-Up Activity –** The implementation of the 90-day plan serves as the project that focuses on establishing effective teachers and using professional learning communities to lead a change initiative and build leadership capacity throughout the school.	**Assessment:** The module facilitator evaluates participants' application of the skill set through module assignments and activities. Participants' work in building instructional leadership teams is evaluated by the coaches through the 90-day plan, using the team template found in the module.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
**Skill Set 6.	Planning and Managing the Turnaround Process at the Internship Site** **Content** 6.1. Understand the context of the internship site. 6.2. Diagnose the causes of low performance — using data on all student subgroups. 6.3. Prioritize causes to address first. 6.4. Develop measurable goals and objectives. 6.5. Identify research-based and innovative strategies for accomplishing goals and objectives. 6.6. Ensure quick wins. 6.7. Identify individuals to manage action plans for goals and objectives. 6.8. Develop timelines and needed resources for each goal and objective. 6.9. Develop a budget for the school improvement plan. 6.10. Create the first 90-day plan. 6.11. Create the remainder of the annual school improvement plan. 6.12. Monitor the implementation of the first 90-day plan through data gathering and classroom observations. 6.13. Meet regularly with project managers to assess risks and ensure progress on 90-day plan goals.	**Assignment 5: 90-Day Plan** Each FTLP participant work with teachers and others at the internship school to identify a red flag issue and **develop a 90-day school improvement initiative** that addresses that issue. Prior to the internship start date, the participant reviews the current school improvement plan and other relevant data for the internship school. The participant then prepares a set of questions to structure a discussion with the principal of the internship school concerning the selection of a school improvement initiative for which the participant can assume responsibility for planning and implementation. This assignment requires the integration of skills practiced in the practicum assignments as well as those taught during **Seminar 6: Planning and Managing the Turnaround Process at the Internship Site**	**Assessment:** A formative evaluation is conducted by the school improvement coach in mid-September of FTLP Year 2 implementation, and the summative evaluation in early December of Year 2. An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the coach in assessing the process and outcome of the participant's work on developing the 90-day plan.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
6.14. Conduct interim assessment of progress on 90-day plan and adjust the second 90-day segment of annual school improvement plan.		
6.15. Make mid-course corrections in the first 90-day plan and adjust the second 90-day segment of the annual school improvement plan.		
6.16. Manage crises so that momentum for school improvement is maintained.		
Quarterly Seminar 6		

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
Skill Set 7. | Implementing Organizational Change and Professional Development **Content** 7.1. Generate support for the 90-day school improvement plan among the faculty and the community. 7.2. Develop and implement strategies for dealing with resistance to change. 7.3. Implement project management processes. 7.4. Plan and implement professional development related to the 90-day school improvement process. 7.5. Identify areas in which the faculty needs additional professional development, including standards-based content, research-based pedagogy, data analysis for instructional planning and improvement, and the use of instructional technology. 7.6. Work with teachers to implement Lesson Study and other instructional improvement strategies. Note: Participants will bring their 90-day school improvement initiative to the seminar. **Quarterly Seminar 7**	**Assignment 6: Lesson Study** Participants choose one of three options: Option (1) Assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Lesson Study process (in one or more content areas) as a form of job-embedded professional development. Share the analysis with the principal. Option (2) Plan and deliver a presentation to the faculty on the purpose, structure and benefits of Lesson Study as an instructional improvement process. (If the internship school is not utilizing Lesson Study) Option (3) Lead a Lesson Study group as a model for other faculty members to observe and copy.	**Assessment:** An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the school improvement coach to assess the participant's work on the option selected by the participant.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
Skill Set 8. | Promoting Effective Teaching and Learning (Part B) **Content** 8.1. Develop the school's capacity to provide instruction that meets the needs of English language learners and special education students. 8.2. Implement and manage the Response to Intervention system. 8.3. Evaluate the effectiveness of instructional interventions. 8.4. Exercise instructional leadership in working with teachers in a school-based setting. **Quarterly Seminar 8**	**Assignment 8: Midcourse Corrections** This assignment is an extension of Assignment 5. The individual FTLP participant works with the school improvement team to collect data on the implementation and impact of the school improvement initiative created through Assignment 5 and makes **recommendations, if necessary, for a "midcourse" adjustment.** This assignment is completed at the very end of the internship, but the participant monitors the implementation of any changes to the original 90-day plan at the internship school through activities assigned through the mentor principal.	**Assessment:** An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the school improvement coach in assessing the participant's work on Assignment 5.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	**Related Assignments and Activities**	**Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition**
See Skill Set 3 for a description of the content delivered in Seminar 3. See Skill Set 4 for a description of the content delivered in Seminar 4.	**Seminar Follow-Up Activity – Examining Rigor** Teams apply what they learn in Seminars 3 and 4 about **drilling down to an individual student's performance on standards** to determine his or her specific deficiencies, align curriculum, instruction and assessment with standards, and apply appropriate interventions to accelerate learning. This is where the root causes of persistently low student achievement are identified. Participants are assigned an individual non-tenured teacher, and they plan and conduct a data conference with that teacher. From that data conference, a student is selected for further analysis. The participant analyzes examples of the student's work; observes the student in diverse class settings; and reviews additional interim assessments to clarify the level of rigor of instruction, practice and assessment experienced by the student, as well as the student's response to instruction, practice and assessment.	**Assessment:** An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the school improvement coach to assess the participant's work on this seminar follow-up activity.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	**Related Assignments and Activities**	**Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition**
Note: See Skill Set 5 for a description of the content related to Assignment 7. Specifically: 5.6 Organize and implement programs to ensure effective transitions from elementary to middle grades, middle grades to high school, and high school to college and career	**Assignment 7: Supporting Students in Transitioning from Level to Level** Participants work with a group of teachers to collect and analyze data on incoming students (sixth-graders for the middle grades; ninth-graders for high school) to develop, implement and monitor a plan to identify and support the transition for students at risk of academic failure. Elementary participants can lead a group of teachers and others at the elementary school in looking at fifth-graders who may be at risk of academic failure as they move to the middle grades school. This assignment includes an assessment of the impact of the plan on the level of success experienced by the students identified for transition support. This assessment requires extended monitoring of students for whom interventions and other forms of support were applied.	**Assessment:** An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the school improvement coach in assessing the participant's planning and implementation of the transition support interventions, as well as the effectiveness of their work in leading groups of teachers in this project.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
See Skill Set 3 for a description of the content delivered in Seminar 3. See Skill Set 4 for a description of the content delivered in Seminar 4.	**Seminar Follow-Up Activity – Examining Rigor** Teams apply what they learn in Seminars 3 and 4 about **drilling down to an individual student's performance on standards** to determine his or her specific deficiencies, align curriculum, instruction and assessment with standards, and apply appropriate interventions to accelerate learning. This is where the root causes of persistently low student achievement are identified. Participants are assigned an individual non-tenured teacher, and they plan and conduct a data conference with that teacher. From that data conference, a student is selected for further analysis. The participant analyzes examples of the student's work; observes the student in diverse class settings; and reviews additional interim assessments to clarify the level of rigor of instruction, practice and assessment experienced by the student, as well as the student's response to instruction, practice and assessment.	**Assessment:** An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the school improvement coach to assess the participant's work on this seminar follow-up activity.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	**Related Assignments and Activities**	**Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition**
**Skill Set 9.	Leading Initiatives to Improve Students' Success in Mathematics** **Content** 9.1. Engage teachers in using the college- and career-readiness standards in mathematics. 9.2. Engage teachers in implementing the Mathematics Design Collaborative as developed by the Gates Foundation. 9.3. Ensure teachers have opportunities to acquire the abilities to teach mathematics through the STEM framework using integrated projects that require students to apply the mathematics they are studying. 9.4. Prepare teachers to use effective planning strategies for planning mathematics instruction. 9.5. Conduct classroom observations and provide appropriate feedback for mathematics teachers and the STEM team. 9.6. Support teachers in making mathematics a tool for learning in technology instruction. **Quarterly Seminar 9**	**Seminar Follow-Up Activity –** This seminar stands alone; there are no follow-up activities associated with this seminar.	**Assessment:** No additional assessment required.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
Online Module 4. Leading Schoolwide Literacy Initiatives **Content** Participants will learn the process of increasing student achievement through the use of strategies that promote literacy throughout the school. They will: • Develop a deeper understanding of the concept literacy. • Examine root causes of literacy problems in schools. • Evaluate solutions through successful literacy programs. • Create a plan to address literacy needs, including professional development to reach literacy objectives and goals. **January 2014 – March 2014**	**Module Follow-Up Activity –** Developing a schoolwide literacy action plan to address one red flag issue in their school.	**Assessment:** An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the school improvement coach to assess the participant's work on a schoolwide literacy action plan.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
**Skill Set 9a.	Maximizing Flexibility and Autonomy in the Charter Setting (Charter strand only)** **Content** 9.1a. Design and implement instructional programs that apply innovative approaches to meeting the needs of students. 9.2a. Ensure compliance with district and state fiscal, legal, and educational requirements. 9.3a. Employ best practices in managing contracts with service providers. 9.4a. Recruit and retain highly-qualified faculty and staff. 9.5a. Work collaboratively with the school's board of directors and contribute to their further development as a board. 9.6a. Implement quality control processes and make decisions about innovative practices. **All Charter Participants**	**Seminar Follow-Up Activity –** Charter participants report on their implementation of strategies presented and discussed at this seminar.	**Assessment:** An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the school improvement coach to assess the participant's implementation of the selected strategies.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
**Skill Set 10.	Sustaining Turnaround/Growing the Organization** **Content** 10.1. Extend rigor to subject areas beyond literacy and mathematics. 10.2. Recruit and retain highly qualified faculty and staff who are committed to improving student achievement. 10.3. Use the teacher evaluation process to support teacher growth and continuous school improvement. 10.4. Build and sustain partnerships with local businesses, community agencies and service providers to support student success. 10.5. Develop and maintain strong supportive relationships with the district office, state department of education and other state agencies. 10.6. Demonstrate resiliency by staying focused on the school vision and reacting constructively to the barriers to success that include disagreement and dissent with leadership. 10.7. Engage in professional learning that improves instructional leadership practice in alignment with the needs of the school system. **Quarterly Seminar 10: Statewide**	**Seminar Follow-Up Activity –** This seminar stands alone; there are no follow-up activities associated with this seminar.	**Assessment:** No additional assessment required.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	Related Assignments and Activities	Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition
Online Module 5. Developing Engaging, Academically Rigorous Career and Technical Education Programs **Content** Participants will learn how today's CTE programs can and must challenge students intellectually and develop their literacy and communication skills, their soft skills with people, and their numeracy and STEM skills. They will: • Learn strategies for ensuring that students in all grade levels are learning study skills and life skills. • Learn how to support teachers in facilitating instructional practices that provide hands-on learning in every grade level and in every subject. • Explore ways to expose students to future career possibilities early. • Create a plan for ensuring every student and his or her parents have a serious conversation with a counselor, a teacher or an administrator no later than the eighth grade. Include what the student plans to be doing the year after graduating from high school, and exactly what the student needs to do academically to achieve that goal. **January 2014 – June 2014**	**Module Follow-Up Activities –** Providing effective CTE programs **Activity 1:** Individual participants conduct an assessment of a chosen CTE program in their school. **Activity 2:** Participants develop a 15-minute presentation (PowerPoint) to be used with their choice of audiences, either guidance staff or full faculty, that explains the importance of CTE programs in high school students' educational experiences and the use of programs of study for improving student success and readiness for college and career. **Activity 3:** Participants select a CTE instructor and conduct a study of the rigor level in one of the courses the instructor teaches. **Activity 4:** Participants choose a guidance counselor to interview regarding the school's career guidance and advisement program/services.	**Assessment:** The CTE expert trainer assesses participants' work on each follow-up activity, using FTLP-designed rubrics aligned with the activity.

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Skill Sets and Content (Seminars and Online Modules)	**Related Assignments and Activities**	**Assessment of Skill Set Acquisition**
	Assignment 9: Portfolio Presentation Participants create a comprehensive portfolio in which they recount the process, product and outcomes of their work on Assignments 5 and 8, providing a clear description of how they integrated everything they learned throughout the FTLP into this assignment.	**Assessment:** An FTLP-designed rubric is used by the school improvement coach to assess the participant's portfolio.

Appendix C | Sample Tasks and Time Frames Document

As the second half of the FTLP practicum began, it seemed appropriate to review the purpose and structure of the monthly Tasks and Time Frames document. The changes to the format are intended to make it more useful to you by streamlining the information and making the overall design simpler.

What's Next?

Mentee(s) will be attending Quarterly Seminar 5 on these dates:

- Miami-Dade – February 4-5, 2013 in Miami

- Alachua/Duval – February 11-12, 2013 in Jacksonville

- Orange/Pinellas – February 19-20, 2013 in Largo

One major assignment and one seminar follow-up activity will be assigned at this seminar. They are outlined in the snapshot document.

Outstanding Documentation

There are still a few participants working on assignment contracts from the first half of the practicum. Once they have submitted their work, please evaluate it right away and send me the rubric as soon as you have shared it with your mentee(s).

There are also a number of mentors who have not sent me a completed rubric for one or more of the assignments and activities from the last quarter. I have attached a spreadsheet that shows the current performance record for your district's participants. Please check to see if you still need to send me a copy of one or more rubrics. Now is the time to get caught up on these tasks before your mentee(s) begin submitting their work on the next set of assignments and activities.

As always, if you have a question or need help with an aspect of these tasks, please let me know and I will put myself at your service. (I sent the attached spreadsheet to the district contact each month and I will do the same for you from this point forward.)

Assignments or Activities, What's the Difference?

There are nine major assignments FTLP participants will complete before the program ends in June, 2014. Four of these are completed during the practicum, four are completed during the internship, and one is completed post-internship. Assignments provide opportunities to apply turnaround skills that require extensive practice to master. They are typically evaluated through a rubric developed specifically for each assignment. Seminar follow- up activities are usually not as extensive as the major assignments. They also provide practice with turnaround skills, but they arise more directly from the content taught at the quarterly seminars.

Assignments are numbered, but their label also includes a short phrase describing the assignment. For example, the first assignment was Assignment 1: Case Study Report. The naming convention for seminar follow-up activities begins with the acronym SFA and the name of the activity. The follow-up activity for Seminar 5 has two options, and there is a distinct name for each option: SFA: Option 1 School Safety Audit and SFA: Option 2 Discipline Incident Analysis.

What is a Snapshot?

We provided a snapshot of the mentor's work last quarter, and it was a popular reference document. So, this quarter we've created another snapshot for you and a similar document for participants. The mentor version of the snapshot appears on the next page.

Assignment/ Activity	When the Work Is Due to You	What Your Mentee(s) Will Turn In to You	What You Will Use to Evaluate Their Work	What You Will Send to the FTLP
Classroom walk-throughs (See Note 1.)	March 29, 2013	Classroom Walk-Through Log	This work is not evaluated by the mentor. (See Note 2.)	A payment document with data drawn from the Classroom Walk-through Log
SFA Option 1: School Safety Audit (See Note 3.)	April 22, 2013	Summary Report: School Safety Audit	**SFA School Safety Audit Rubric 1_14_13**	A copy of the completed rubric; mentee(s) will submit his or her summary report directly to FTLP
SFA Option 2: Discipline Incident Analysis (See Note 3.)	April 22, 2013	Summary Report: Discipline Incident Analysis	**SFA Discipline Incident Analysis Rubric 1_14_13**	A copy of the completed rubric; mentee(s) will submit his or her summary report directly to FTLP
Assignment 3: Course Schedules	May 24, 2013	1. A completed checklist used to evaluate the schedule development process 2. Summary Report	**Summative Rubric Assignment 3 as of 1_30_13**	A copy of the completed rubric; mentee(s) will submit his or her summary report directly to FTLP

File Name	Look in this folder in Dropbox or Sky Drive
Classroom Walk-Through Log	Walk-through documents
SFA School Safety Audit Rubric 1_14_13	Seminar Follow-Up Activity School Safety Audit
SFA Discipline Incident Analysis Rubric 1_14_13	Seminar Follow Up Activity Discipline Incident Analysis
Checklist for Assessing the Master Schedule Development Process 1_28_13	Assignment 3 documents
Summative Rubric Assignment 3 as of 1_30_13	Assignment 3 documents

Notes:

1. Beginning in January 2013, each classroom walk-through will have a focus. The two walk-throughs in January had a focus on rigor. In February, participants must complete two sets of classroom walk-throughs, one focusing on rigor and the other on assessment.

2. Classroom walk-throughs conducted during the practicum are not evaluated. During the internship, walk-throughs will be evaluated by the Leadership Coach.

3. To complete the Seminar Follow-Up Activity, participants may choose Option 1 or Option 2.

Assignment 1: Case Study of the Practicum School

Time Frame: April 2012 – August 2012 with formative assessments completed by August 1, 2012 and the summative assessment completed by August 30, 2012

What Will My Aspiring Leader(s) Do to Complete This Assignment?

Descriptive component: A team of three to five participants assigned to a low-achieving case study school will create a case study-type report on the school. This work is done throughout the practicum, with the culminating product serving as a major part of the evaluation of their practicum experience, which is a gateway to the internship. Participants will construct a three-year history of the school. They will:

1. Develop an inventory of programs that have been implemented, maintained or eliminated over the three-year period.

2. Describe all school-based professional development activities over three years.

3. Collect data on staff and leadership credentials and turnover, students' course-taking patterns, student mobility, grade distributions for core subject areas, demographic data, attendance, discipline, and graduation rates.

4. Review the past three years of school improvement plans and goals that have been achieved and not achieved.

5. Review existing survey data on student, parent and community perceptions of the school and its performance.

They will consider this set of descriptive data in analyzing the related trends in student achievement. The FTLP will provide an exemplary case study at the outset of the practicum so aspiring leaders have a model to follow in constructing their case study report.

Analytical component: Participants will look for trends and patterns in the case study school data over time and offer tentative explanations for changes in student achievement.

Implications component: Participants will utilize their analysis of data to prepare recommendations for school improvement.

What School Turnaround Skills Are Targeted In This Assignment?

Skill Set 11.   Analyzing the Context of Low-Performing Schools

11.1.   Identify the characteristics of low-performing schools.

11.2.   Collect meaningful data on school conditions.

11.3.   Analyze data on school conditions as they relate to the characteristics of a turnaround school.

11.4.   Diagnose probable causes of low performance.

11.5.   Prioritize probable causes to address in the school improvement plan.

11.6.   Set initial goals or targets.

Why Are These Skills Important?

Dramatic improvements in student achievement require the concerted efforts of everyone at the school. But those efforts must target the root causes of persistently low student achievement, or the results will be superficial and short-lived at best. The skills developed through the diligent completion of Assignment 1 will help the school turnaround leader know what data should be examined, how to obtain that data, how to analyze it efficiently, how to use that analysis to uncover the root causes of low performance, and how to establish challenging but attainable goals and objectives.

This assignment provides the aspiring school turnaround leader with a model for this process and practice in applying it in a real-school setting. This is important so the individual will have refined expertise and a high degree of confidence in implementing this process when he or she is a school leader responsible for turning around student achievement.

Coordinating With Other Mentor Principals

This is a team assignment, meaning that there may be more than one mentor principal involved in guiding this work. It is important to coordinate how this will take place. For example, you may decide that one of the mentor principals will take responsibility for assembling the team, talking through expectations and providing direction. Then, each individual mentor principal may provide formative feedback throughout the assignment to his or her aspiring leader. Alternately, all of the mentor principals may meet with the team of aspiring leaders at the outset of the assignment to reach consensus on an approach to completing this work. Then, one or more mentor principals may provide feedback for the entire team. So, there are multiple options. The important point is for all involved mentor principals to come together and plan how you will coordinate the supervision of this assignment.

The lead practice coach will schedule a WebEx session soon after Seminar 1 to answer questions and establish any procedures that need to be consistent across teams of aspiring leaders.

How Will This assignment Be Evaluated?

You, as the mentor principal, will conduct a series of formative assessments of the teams' work on the components of the case study. Guiding questions are provided below to structure this level of assessment. A rubric developed specifically for the purpose of summative evaluation of your aspiring leaders' performance will be used to evaluate the final case study report. The summative rubric appears on the last page of this guide.

Guiding Questions (What questions should you ask to ensure your aspiring leaders get the greatest benefit from this assignment?)	Rationale/Timing/Follow Up (Why should you ask this question? When should you ask this question? What follow-up questions are appropriate?)
1. **What do you see as the purpose of this assignment in terms of preparing you to be a school turnaround leader?**	You want to be certain your aspiring leaders understand this assignment is preparing them for their work as school turnaround leaders. Ask this question as soon as they let you know this assignment has been made. Follow-up questions might include asking about the scope of the assignment (What will be involved in completing this assignment?) and how they will approach planning as a team. (How will you plan out what you will do to complete this assignment?)
2. **What action plans have you written?**	Their response should include showing you the list of actions they have generated. This will allow you to assess the thoroughness of their plan (Have they thought of everything that needs to be done?) and where they might need additional direction. (Here's my advice on how to proceed.) Ask this question after the team of aspiring leaders has met to plan out their action steps.

Guiding Questions (What questions should you ask to ensure your aspiring leaders get the greatest benefit from this assignment?)	Rationale/Timing/Follow Up (Why should you ask this question? When should you ask this question? What follow-up questions are appropriate?)
3. **How did you divide up responsibility for those action plans among the members of your team?**	This question is to ensure that everyone is getting an equal chance to contribute to (and benefit from) this assignment. Follow-up questions might focus on the thought processes that produced the division of responsibility. (How did you decide to assign these tasks to these individuals?)
4. **What form of risk assessment did you conduct and what risks did you identify?**	You want to ensure they learn to ask what could go wrong as a part of their planning process. Risk assessment should include identifying risks (What could go wrong?); assessing risks (What is the probability and impact of each risk on our list?); risk prevention (What can we do to prevent this from going wrong?); and risk mitigation (What can we do to limit the damage if it happens anyway?)
5. **What have you planned to prevent or mitigate those risks?**	See above.
6. **Do you have a schedule for completing your action responsibilities? Are you on schedule?**	These questions allow you to assess whether their timeline is realistic. Estimating how long it will take to complete an individual task or group of tasks is a difficult skill to master. If they appear to have difficulty in estimating, encourage them to break the tasks down into smaller tasks; these are easier to estimate accurately. If they fall behind schedule, ask them to create a plan to get back on schedule. You do not want them to get in the habit of pushing back important deadlines as their only approach to being behind schedule.

Guiding Questions (What questions should you ask to ensure your aspiring leaders get the greatest benefit from this assignment?)	Rationale/Timing/Follow Up (Why should you ask this question? When should you ask this question? What follow-up questions are appropriate?)
7. **Are you getting the data you need?**	If the team has run into a roadblock, you want to be sure they use appropriate problem-solving strategies to secure the data or if the data are not available, they know how to select an alternate data set. Ask this question after the team has begun to collect data. Repeat as necessary.
8. **What are you looking for in analyzing this data set? (This question should be repeated for each data set.)**	You want to know they understand what can be learned from a range of important data sets. Their experience in analyzing diverse data sets might be varied. So, be sure that all members of your team understand what can be learned from the data they are analyzing.
9. **What are the limitations of this data set? How do these limitations impact your use of this data?**	It is important for your aspiring leaders to know that some data are more valid and reliable than others. For example, parent survey data collected at a PTA/PTSA event might have less validity than data from the same survey given to a broader, more representative group of parents.
10. **How does your work to date compare to the model case study provided by FTLP?**	Just as the summative rubric can help your aspiring leaders understand the expectations for this assignment by clarifying what constitutes different levels of performance, the model case study report provides an illustration of what strong performance looks like.
11. **If you were to use the summative rubric for this assignment to assess your progress to date, where on the scale would you place your work?**	This question also asks your aspiring leaders to assess their work against a standard. It provides an opportunity for you to offer feedback not only on their work, but also on how they understand and view this assignment.

Guiding Questions (What questions should you ask to ensure your aspiring leaders get the greatest benefit from this assignment?)	Rationale/Timing/Follow Up (Why should you ask this question? When should you ask this question? What follow-up questions are appropriate?)
12. What are you learning about your practicum school?	This question asks the aspiring leaders to summarize their observations and conclusions and to communicate them verbally. It requires them to process what they have learned, and it reveals how they assess the relative value of what they have learned in terms of its importance to the goal of diagnosing root causes of weak performance.
13. What are you learning about the process of getting to know a school in preparation for developing a school turnaround plan?	The intent of this assignment is to provide practice in getting to know a school in a way that allows the principal to identify the root causes of chronically low performance. If the aspiring leaders see it only as an assignment to complete and do not connect it with preparing to lead a school turnaround, they will provide a weak answer to this question.
14. What conclusions can you draw from the data you've analyzed?	Again, this question asks if the aspiring leaders are able to see trends and patterns in data that reveal the root causes of low achievement. Conclusions should be supported by facts, but also point to areas where interventions are more likely to produce significant improvements.
15. How can you validate those conclusions?	The rubric includes triangulation of data as a way to validate findings and conclusions. Other approaches should also be considered; i.e., focus groups or asking others who know the school to review your data and conclusions.

How Can the Summative Rubric Be Used Prior to the Final Evaluation of the Case Study Report?

In addition to helping you evaluate the final product, the summative rubric should be used to communicate your expectations for this assignment at the outset and to provide a scale your aspiring leaders can use to self-assess their progress as they move toward completion of the case study.

Using the Model Case Study Report

An example of a preliminary draft of a comprehensive case study report was provided to participants at Seminar 2. This report utilized actual school data from a middle grades school in an urban school district. As of the date of Seminar I, the sample case study report was incomplete. Its intent is to provide a framework for the case study report as well as an example to follow.

There are two types of comments in the review pane of the case study report document. These comments explain important aspects of the case study development **process** and point out noteworthy **data** points, trends and patterns. The case study report developed by participants will not include comments, but participants should provide an explanation of their data and findings in the narrative.

At Seminar II in June, a further refined version of this model case study will be provided so participants can compare it with their own report.

Appendix E | Sample FTLP Assignment Rubric

Directions: Mentors should complete the fields to identify the intern, mentor and the date the evaluation was completed. The tab key will move your cursor to the next field. Use your mouse to select the check box to record your rating; check only one box for each scale. The points earned on each scale will be totaled by the FTLP upon receipt by the lead practice coach.

Intern _____   Mentor _____   Date Completed _____

Scale #1 *The intern managed the work of the team to…*	*Highly Effective*	*Effective*	*Needs Improvement*	*Unsatisfactory*
	…maximize the expertise of school personnel in data collection and in providing input to interpret the data they collected ☐ 5 points	…utilize the expertise of school personnel in data collection and in providing input to interpret the data they collected ☐ 3 points	…utilize school personnel with minimal regard to their expertise in collecting and interpreting data ☐ 1 points	…utilize school personnel with no regard to their expertise in collecting and interpreting data ☐ 0 points

Focus: This criterion is concerned with how the intern worked with school personnel to leverage their personal expertise to plan and conduct data collection and to provide input into the interpretation of those data.

Key Questions: To what extent did the intern assign tasks and otherwise engage team members to maximize how individual team members' expertise was utilized in collecting data and in providing input to ensure the interpretation of the data was valid and accurate?

Background: School staff members who work daily with attendance or other types of data usually have insights into how the data might be collected efficiently and effectively. But their expertise might also extend beyond an understanding of how the data could be compiled to how the data might be interpreted. They are more likely to be able to detect patterns and trends because of their daily engagement with these data. Therefore, engaging these individuals should involve more than merely asking the attendance clerk to provide attendance data. Those who work with the data should be deeply involved in looking for and explaining trends, patterns and anomalies in the data.

What does it take to earn a Highly Effective rating? Often, differences between the descriptors for Effective and Highly Effective may appear minor or subtle. The best guide is to ask yourself two questions —"What descriptive words are used in the rubric to explain the difference?" and "Would I use those words to describe my mentee's performance if I was describing this work product to others?" Remember, a Highly Effective rating means there is something special about this work product; something you could point to if asked for evidence to support your rating.

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Appendix E | Sample FTLP Assignment Rubric

	Highly Effective	Effective	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
Scale #2 **The intern's data collection and analysis…**	…made extensive and effective use of all relevant data (attendance, behavior and course failure) AND …made extensive and effective use of appropriate data analysis tools (charts, graphs and statistical analyses)	…made effective use of all relevant data (attendance, behavior and course failure) AND …made effective use of appropriate data analysis tools (charts, graphs and statistical analyses)	…failed to use all relevant data (attendance, behavior and course failure) AND/OR …failed to use appropriate data analysis tools (charts, graphs and statistical analyses)	…failed to use any relevant data (attendance, behavior or course failure) AND/OR …failed to use any data analysis tools (charts, graphs and statistical analyses)
☐ 5 points	☐ 3 points	☐ 1 points	☐ 0 points	

Focus: *This scale is concerned with the intern's use of diverse types of data to identify behaviors that place students at risk and appropriate tools for analyzing those data.*

Key Questions: *To what extent did the intern ensure that data on attendance, behavior and course failure were collected and analyzed? How extensive and effective was the intern's use of appropriate data analysis tools such as charts, graphs, scatter plots and statistical analyses readily available through common software such as Excel?*

Background: *According to Mac Iver and Mac Iver (2009), "Student disengagement in school generally manifests itself behaviorally in high absenteeism, behavior problems and course failure, including the failure both to complete assignments and to pass courses. These three factors — the ABCs — are the strongest predictors of dropping out and are often interrelated." Data collection must include multiple data sets from each of these three types of data to ensure that all at-risk students are identified. Many times, merely putting data into an appropriate display will reveal trends and patterns that provide useful information. However, to get the most in-depth and accurate understanding of diverse data sets, the thoughtful leader will utilize a range of data displays and common statistical analyses. This can also be an opportunity for individual team members to employ their particular expertise in terms of generating and interpreting important data displays.*

What does it take to earn a Highly Effective rating? *Often, differences between the descriptors for Effective and Highly Effective may appear minor or subtle. The best guide is to ask yourself two questions —"What descriptive words are used in the rubric to explain the difference?" and "Would I use those words to describe my mentee's performance if I was describing this work product to others?" Remember, a Highly Effective rating means there is something special about this work product; something you could point to if asked for evidence to support your rating.*

Appendix E | Sample FTLP Assignment Rubric

Scale #3 **Method and quality of gap analysis…**	Highly Effective	Effective	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
	…addressed all three levels in identifying current services and gaps in those services; the gap analysis was very thorough and comprehensive	…addressed all three levels in identifying current services and gaps in those services; the gap analysis was thorough and comprehensive	…failed to address all three levels in identifying current services and gaps in those services; the gap analysis was less than thorough and comprehensive	…failed to address any of the three levels in identifying current services and gaps in those services; the gap analysis was weak or omitted altogether

Focus: This scale focuses on the thoroughness of the identification of gaps in support services and interventions to help struggling students at risk of dropping out.

Key Questions: How thoroughly did the intern collect information on current interventions and other support mechanisms and analyze that information to identify gaps in needed support for struggling students?

Background: A clear and comprehensive picture of the most effective support structures is now available. These structures should include well-planned interventions and support at each of these levels:

1. Districtwide and schoolwide reforms aimed at providing high-quality instruction that promotes engaged learning and successful high school completion for every student.

2. Targeted interventions for small groups of students who need additional supports to address attendance, behavior or academic struggles.

3. Intensive intervention, often delivered one-to-one by specialists, for students who need more clinical support.

The intern's work in analyzing the gaps in currently available support services should address all three of these levels. If no gap is found in services provided at a certain level, the intern's report should state this clearly so you know that level was included in the gap analysis.

What does it take to earn a Highly Effective rating? Often, differences between the descriptors for Effective and Highly Effective may appear minor or subtle. The best guide is to ask yourself two questions—"What descriptive words are used in the rubric to explain the difference?" and "Would I use those words to describe my mentee's performance if I was describing this work product to others?" Remember, a Highly Effective rating means there is something special about this work product; something you could point to if asked for evidence to support your rating.

Appendix E | Sample FTLP Assignment Rubric

Scale #4 Recommendations provided…	Highly Effective	Effective	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
	…clear and explicit information on what could be done to improve support for struggling students ☐ 5 points	…clear information on what could be done to improve support for struggling students ☐ 3 points	…vague information on what could be done to improve support for struggling students ☐ 1 points	…little or no information on what could be done to improve support for struggling students ☐ 0 points

Focus: *The final criterion examines the quality of the recommendations provided in the summary report. High-quality recommendations are stated clearly in actionable terms, and they are focused on concrete actions that are likely to positively impact teachers' use of Lesson Study.*

Key Questions: *After reading these recommendations, would I know exactly what to do to improve the quality, scope and type of support services available to help struggling students?*

Background: *Principals examine practices such as providing support to struggling students so they can obtain the highest return on their investment of time and staff in helping students be successful in school and progress to the next level with their peers. The final part of the summary report should provide the answer to this question (What needs to be done to improve support for struggling students at this school?) in very direct and explicit terms. Vague recommendations such as, "student attendance should be monitored" do not provide the principal with actionable recommendations. That is, the principal would need to do additional work and planning to determine how student attendance should be monitored and what should be done with the data this monitoring produces. A clear and explicit recommendation on monitoring student attendance might read like this: The attendance clerk should run a report each week of student absences to date during the school year and highlight students whose year-to-date totals exceed 10, 15 and 20. This report should be shared with the guidance department to facilitate early identification of students with attendance problems so appropriate interventions can be applied promptly.*

What does it take to earn a Highly Effective rating? *Often, differences between the descriptors for Effective and Highly Effective may appear minor or subtle. The best guide is to ask yourself two questions —"What descriptive words are used in the rubric to explain the difference?" and "Would I use those words to describe my mentee's performance if I was describing this work product to others?" Remember, a Highly Effective rating means there is something special about this work product; something you could point to if asked for evidence to support your rating.*

Florida Turnaround Leaders Program

Visitation Follow-up September 19, 2013

Hi (Name Redacted),

Thank you so much for meeting with me today. I enjoyed my visit and the time we spent in classrooms, and hearing about the steps you've put in place to address the attendance issues of ninth and 10th-graders.

Kudos on your 90-Day Project! The PSW feedback from David Collins didn't have a single suggestion for improvement on the content. You also shared that your mentor, (Name Redacted), was impressed with your plan and indicated he might "borrow" some of your ideas. It shows you put a lot of thought and effort into designing your plan. Congratulations! Now you need to present the plan to both the SAC and the faculty. Please be sure to obtain a copy of the minutes from each meeting to keep as documentation that this requirement has been met.

We reviewed the Pacing Calendar and the timeline for required assignments. You indicated that you are working daily on Module 3 and are currently on Unit 5. Therefore, you anticipate no concerns with having the work completed by the due date. You have been working on the CTE activities and will have the assignment submitted by October 15. You are also prepared for Seminar 7 next week. Don't forget to view the 9/12 WebEx on Assignment 8. It is now in your Dropbox. You have many tasks to balance in your intern program, so it's important to keep on top of things, especially now that the implementation phase of your 90-day plan has begun.

I had a chance to review your Daily Planner for the week of 9/16 to 9/20. Scheduled meetings, along with times, were recorded. You've done a nice job adding in the 90-day plan tasks and pacing out your internship assignments. Please be sure to email a copy of your Daily Planner to me each week. I'll also need all previous ones. They help me to keep abreast of what you are working on and how you are progressing with the implementation of the action steps in your 90-day plan.

We reviewed evidence of your walk-throughs, and you shared the instrument you use to collect data. We conducted a round of walk-throughs together focusing on 'Purpose'. You've done a nice job incorporating the specific items (Name Redacted) is reinforcing with the staff as they implement strategies from Marzano's work. Your focus has been primarily the math teachers in the three grade levels. Your interactions with the staff we encountered indicate that you have begun to develop a warm and congenial working relationship. You indicated that each teacher visited receives a copy of the walk-through sheet in his or her mailbox. Your next step is to begin to provide more specific feedback to one round of teachers a week. (See pg. 84 in your internship handbook.) This specific feedback is a critical piece of the process. When giving the feedback, always start with one or two positives you observed. This can be followed with a question designed to have them reflect on a specific part of their practice. Having these quick conversations is valuable in promoting teacher professional growth. Perhaps you could conduct one round each week with the math coach, sharing observations after each class visit and then observing each other provide feedback to the teacher. It's always helpful to remind the staff that you have no part in the evaluative process and that you're practicing providing feedback to hone your skills and help them refine their practice.

You told me that you and (Name Redacted) worked together earlier this week reviewing the rubric used to evaluate your 90-day plan. Kudos to (Name Redacted) for being the first mentor in Pinellas County for sending in the completed rubric! We reviewed the action steps in Section 5 of your PSW. Implementation has already begun for step 1 of both strategies 1 and 2. We discussed changing some of the dates on the action steps to provide a more realistic time frame for implementation. Remember that this is a living document, so minor changes can always be made. Modifications can also be made to your plan through October 15 if necessary. You shared with me minutes from the 9/13 PLC meeting where the math coach conducted a training with the teachers on the use of technology to enhance lesson engagement. This was directly aligned to your action step. It would be helpful if you emailed copies of the minutes to me as they become available. We also discussed the composition and role of your Project Management Team. On a future visit I will want to observe you facilitating this group during one of your regularly scheduled meetings. You are off to a great start.

The WebEx scheduled for September 25 will begin at 4:00 p.m. Please mark the day and time on your calendar. If you are unable to view it, you will be able to access it at a later date from your Dropbox.

Seminar 7 is scheduled for next week, September 23 and 24 in Orlando. You will receive valuable information on upcoming assignments as well as the portfolio requirement. Be sure to take some time to network with other interns. Sharing the work you are doing in your schools is one of the best forms of professional development.

I will see you again Thursday, October 17 at 11:00. If you have any concerns before then, don't hesitate to contact me.

Appendix G | FTLP End-of-Program Evaluation Form

Coach _____   **Mentor** _____   **Participant** _____

Background	The end-of-program evaluation of participants in the **Standard or Differentiated FTLP Curriculum** results in a final readiness rating. The scale used to determine the participant's readiness to be a turnaround leader interprets readiness as the extent to which the participant has demonstrated competence in the skills necessary to lead school turnaround at a low-performing school throughout the entire program. The scale has three levels: Level 1) **Not ready** — the participant demonstrated limited competence in the skills necessary to lead school turnaround at a low-performing school. Level 2) **Nearly ready** — the participant demonstrated acceptable competence in the skills necessary to lead school turnaround, but needs further experience to become fully ready to lead school turnaround at a low-performing school. Level 3) **Fully ready** — the participant demonstrated extraordinarily high competence in the skills necessary to lead school turnaround at a low-performing school.

Instructions	Step 1. Review the background information above carefully. Step 2. Consider these questions and determine your overall tentative readiness rating. • What concrete example(s) of this participant's competence in the skills necessary to lead school turnaround did I observe? (Reviewing the section on the next page, **Evidence of Competence**, may help you recall specific instances of competence demonstrated by the participant.) • Remember that participants in the **Differentiated FTLP Curriculum** chose an elective from Assignments 6, 7, 8 and Seminar Follow-Up Activities from Seminars 3 and 8. Therefore, they may have had limited opportunities to demonstrate the indicators related to those assignments and activities. Participants in the **Standard FTLP Curriculum** completed all FTLP assignments and activities. • Which of the three levels of readiness would most accurately describe the participant's competence in the skills necessary to lead school turnaround as reflected in those instances? Step 3. Check the box for your tentative readiness rating. Step 4. Add brief comments to explain the rationale for your rating. The comments field will expand to a third page as you type. Email your completed form to the participant's coach prior to the end-of-program evaluation conference so the coach can have an electronic copy of your comments. These may be edited at the end-of-program conference, based on the dialogue among those in attendance. Step 5. Attend the end-of-program evaluation conference, where you will share your tentative rating and rationale as part of the process of reaching consensus on an end-of-program readiness rating for this participant.

Appendix G | FTLP-End-of-Program Evaluation Form

Internship Indicators

Representative Indicators based on Skill Set 5/Assignment 7

Identified students exhibiting early warning signals and took action to address their needs

Representative Indicators based on Skill Set 6/ Assignments 5 and 8

- Worked effectively with the internship principal and project management team to develop and implement the 90-day plan
  » Diagnosed and prioritized barriers, selected research-based strategies, developed effective monitoring plans
  » Planned and managed project team meetings effectively

Monitored 90-day plan tasks and interim results and made mid-course corrections as needed

Representative Indicators based on Skill Set 7/ Assignments 5, 6 and 8

- Managed the change process effectively
- Provided high-quality professional development, including the use of Lesson Study as a form of job-embedded professional development
- Used effective communications strategies to generate and maintain support for the 90-day Plan

Representative Indicators based on Skill Set 8/Seminar Follow Up Activity: Supporting ELLs

- Reviewed the school's capacity to provide instruction that meets the needs of ESOL/ESE students

Practicum Indicators

Representative Indicators based on Skill Set 1/Assignment 1

- Collected, analyzed and interpreted a broad range of data to identify red flag issues and possible root causes of those issues

Representative Indicators based on Skill Set 2/Assignment 2 and SFA on School Culture

- Identified practices that support rigorous instruction
- Analyzed the culture of the school in terms of expectations for students
- Provided feedback to teachers on rigor of instruction

Representative Indicators based on Skill Sets 3 and 4/ Seminar Follow-Up Activity: Analyzing Performance at the Student Level

- Worked with teachers to differentiate instruction based on an in-depth analysis of student work and other data

Representative Indicators based on Skill Set 4/Walk-throughs

- Conducted classroom walk-throughs on the 5D indicators and a broad scope of programs and practices, and gave sound feedback to teachers
- Demonstrated growth in ability to discern effective instructional practices and share constructive feedback with teachers
- Addressed the level of rigor of instruction, practice and assessment in providing feedback to teachers

Evidence of Competence

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Appendix G | FTLP-End-of-Program Evaluation Form

Levels	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Definitions	Fully ready to lead school turnaround at a chronically low-performing school	Nearly ready to lead school turnaround at a chronically low-performing school	Not ready to lead school turnaround at a chronically low-performing schoolv
Readiness Ratings			

Comments *From the start of the FTLP until the very end, (Name Redacted) has completed outstanding work and put her every effort into enhancing her skills as an instructional leader. Her knowledge of rigorous instruction, ability to utilize data to target areas for improvement and skills in providing feedback to teachers are exemplary. She has outstanding communication skills, builds trust with her team, and can prioritize needs to effectively manage the demands of the principalship. She is currently serving as an elementary principal and will undoubtedly continue to shine as a superb turnaround leader. (Name Redacted) has demonstrated excellent analysis of data, and use of that data to determine areas for improvement. She has developed an action plan that addresses those areas and can easily develop checkpoints and monitoring of the plan. She understands the ESE and ELL student needs and can develop schedules that support student learning. (Name Redacted) is able to communicate clearly and effectively with others, and has a clear vision of what needs to be accomplished at the school level. (Name Redacted) has successfully completed her Individual Learning Plan.*

Appendix H | Excerpt From Final FTLP Performance Record with (Names Redacted)

A1 Case Study Report [20]	SFA School Culture [20]	Classroom Walkthorughs Sept-Dec	A2 Schoolwide Rigor [15]	SFA School Safety Audit/Discipline Incident Analysis [20]	A3 Schedule Development Process [15]	Classroom Walkthoughs Jan-May	Online Rigor [20]	Online Assesment [20]	A 4 SIP Recommendations [20]	A 5 90-Day Plan [30]	A 6 Lesson Study [15]	Internship Classroom Walkthroughs [20]	Online Teams [20]
14	14	5	15	20	15	5	20	20	18	30	15	20	15
14	14	5	15	20	13	5	15	15	18	29	15	20	20
20	20	5	15	20	15	5	15	20	20	30	15	20	20
18	20	3	15	20	15	5	15	15	20	30	15	15	7
18	20	3	15	20	15	5	15	15	18	30	Exempted	20	7
14	8	3	7	5	11	3	15	15	15	22	9	20	20
16	16	5	13	20	15	5	15	20	19	30	15	20	20
18	18	5	13	14	11	3	20	15	16	30	13	20	15
18	18	5	15	20	15	5	15	15	13	23	13	20	20

Appendix H | Excerpt From Final FTLP Performance Record with (Names Redacted)

A 9 Portfolio [30]	Individual Learning Plan	Total Points Earned	Points Possible to Date	Perfect Points Possible	End-of-Internship Readiness Rating	End-of-Program Readiness Rating
30	Completed	256	275	93%	Fully Ready	Fully Ready
30	Completed	248	275	90%	Fully Ready	Fully Ready
30	Completed	275	275	100%	Fully Ready	Fully Ready
30	Completed	248	275	90%	Fully Ready	Fully Ready
30	Completed	266	290	92%	Fully Ready	Fully Ready
22	Completed	289	380	76%	Fully Ready	Fully Ready
30	Completed	407	420	97%	Fully Ready	Fully Ready
30	Completed	241	275	88%	Fully Ready	Fully Ready
30	Completed	247	275	90%	Fully Ready	Fully Ready

End Notes

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