

Syllabus: Iowa Principal Leadership Academy

Seminars for Preparing Candidates and Mentors with the Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions Needed for the Program Content and Problem-Based Learning Themes

Purpose: The purpose of these seminars is to do the following: (1) prepare each principal candidate with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be successful in developing the program content and problem-based learning themes of the ISSL Standards; and (2) prepare each mentor with training that targets best theory and research in mentoring and an understanding of the ISSL Standards and Problem-Based Learning Themes and Activities.

Overview and Rationale:

In order to meet the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the ISSL Standards, the following seminars have been developed for the candidates and mentors. This principal preparation program is based on state-of-the-art research and theory, research, and best practices. Both the candidates and the mentors need to have the same understandings of the core curriculum so that they can conduct the work of the program successfully. In order to ensure the success of both the candidate and the mentor, a series of seminars have been developed that will involve them both separately and collaboratively. In addition, this will provide the mentors and the candidates with an opportunity to establish a relationship prior to the work that they will complete together over a period of approximately 24 months as well as the candidates having the opportunity to begin work as a Cohort Group.

Candidate Preparation Seminar:

Research and Theory of Effective Schools and Effective Leaders: Candidates will be introduced to the theory, research, and best practice on which the Iowa Principal Leadership Academy is based.

Program Guidelines: Candidates will be provided with an overview of the program components including the ISSL Standards and Problem-Based Themes, timelines, rubrics, roles and responsibilities, expectations, and other criteria for success.

School-wide Action Research (SAR) Model: Candidates will be introduced to the action research model developed by Emily Calhoun and used by the Iowa Department of Education in many of their training modules as well as a recommended model for developing district comprehensive school improvement plans. The model is based on the belief that in order to make any systemic change, a study should first be undertaken that will drive the plan. There are six components necessary to investigate before building an action plan:

- a. Current Status of the Learner: What data does the school have that shows the status of learners in a specific area(s) in the school.
- b. Research and Best Practice in Current Status of the Learner: In the area being studied, what is the current theory, research, and best practice for improving student achievement?
- c. Current Status of the Learning Environment: What data does the school have that shows the current status of the learning environment?
- d. Research and Best Practice in Current Status of the Learning Environment: What is the current theory, research, and best practice for improving student achievement in the area being studied?
- e. Developing a goal based on the information learned from the current status of the learner and research and best practice.

f. Developing an action plan based on all the data and research found in the study. The action plan will be developed using the following format (format acceptable for Comprehensive School Improvement Plans).

- (1) Long-Range Goal
- (2) Annual Improvement Goal
- (3) Review of the Current Status of the Learner
- (4) Review of the Current Status of the Learning Environment
- (5) Activities to be conducted including how they will address the diverse needs of students including those at-risk, TAG, Special Needs, and multi-cultural gender fair issues
- (6) Resources Needed
- (7) Staff Development Plan
- (8) Monitoring of the Plan
- (9) Evaluation of the Plan

Candidates will be provided with actual district and building plans using this model to analyze. In addition, they will participate in teams in a simulation exercise and complete an action plan.

Portfolio Development: This seminar will provide the candidates with portfolio guidelines and expectations and the selection of materials for their portfolios. Candidates will develop a working portfolio for each standard and learning theme. This working portfolio will be used by the Project Director and Mentors for assessing the progress of the candidate on the standard. In addition, the candidate will be provided with expectations and guidelines for the development of the portfolio they will submit for review and present to the Program Director and Advisory Board for final approval of their recommendation for licensure from the Iowa Principal Leadership Academy.

Logs: Candidates will be provided with guidelines and expectation for logs that document their progress throughout the length of the program.

Reflective Journaling: Candidates will be provided with guidelines for reflective journaling, provided with sample reflective journaling, and have an opportunity to practice it.

Tool Box Activities: Candidates will be introduced to the activities to be completed in the Tool Box section of each of the problem-based learning themes and their connection to be ISSL Standards.

Cohort Groups and Adult Learning Theory: Candidates will be provided with guidelines and expectations for their participation in the Cohort Group and an overview of adult learning theory and its use in working both within the Cohort Group and within the school where they will be conducting their problem-based learning activities.

Mentor Training: All mentors will be expected to examine current theory, research, and best practice in mentoring candidates for principal preparation programs. Program components, themes, resources, roles and responsibilities, timelines, technology and other available support from the Program Director and Advisory Board will be addressed. An outline of guidelines will be provided as well as resources available from the Iowa Principal Leadership Academy. Mentors and candidates will be together for the first day of the training, which deals with the Research Theory of Effective Schools and Effective Leaders, Program Guidelines and Portfolio Development. Additional mentor seminars will be held throughout the 24-month period in order to provide information, support, and on-going program evaluation.

Instructors: The Project Director, Advisory Board Members and other AEA staff expert in the areas identified will provide the training for the candidates and mentors.