



## Proposed Superintendent Mentoring Program

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Superintendents have an enormous amount of responsibility covering every aspect of the educational process for their district. There is a vast range of knowledge that a new superintendent needs in order to effectively operate a school district. New superintendents have a variety of background experience in certain areas, but that experience will vary from person to person. However, in order to be successful, new superintendents need to have training in all aspects of the superintendency during the first year in the position.

The Administrators Association believes that the superintendent is vital to the efficient and effective operation of a school district and will have an impact on school finance, facilities, instruction, and student achievement. AAEA believes that strong leadership is essential to improve school districts in Arkansas. As a matter of fact, in a six-year study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation it was found that, "To date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership." Arkansas has made great strides by improving schools and we are receiving national recognition such as the *Quality Counts 2010 Report*. This report graded Arkansas as 10th in the nation when evaluating a state's schools on multiple criteria. The newest *Quality Counts Report* ranks Arkansas as sixth in the nation. We are very proud of the national recognition and what we have done in Arkansas, but we believe we can do even better. By developing and retaining leaders in top administrative positions our schools will continue to improve. The superintendent position is the only educational position in Arkansas that is not required to have some type of mentoring program in order to retain the position.

With this in mind, the AAEA has partnered with other interested parties to develop a proposed mentoring program for new superintendents. These partners include the Arkansas Leadership Academy, ATU Center for Executive Leadership (ACEL), Arkansas School Boards Association and higher education institutions such as University of Arkansas, Arkansas Tech University. All groups see the value of developing an Arkansas superintendent mentoring program and are willing to work to implement the program to meet the needs of Arkansas superintendents. Arkansas has several talented potential leaders who would like to take the challenge of becoming a superintendent, but do not feel the support is currently available for them to be successful. This proposed mentoring program would provide that support.

### **Proposal**

New superintendents in Arkansas will be required to take 36 hours of specific course work and structured mentoring time and an additional 12 hours of documented mentor/mentee time. This makes a total of 48 hours required to complete the program including an assessment at the end of the program graded by the AASA board, higher education officials, Arkansas Leadership Academy, ACEL and potential out of state evaluators. The program will start in July and run through the spring of the first year as superintendent. If the first-

year superintendent does not complete the mentoring program, he/she will not be eligible to continue the role as superintendent in an Arkansas school district. There will be some limited opportunities afforded for make-up of training missed due to extenuating circumstances. Much of this coursework will count for training and/or professional development already required for first-year superintendents (i.e. Tier 1 Financial Training).

Course work required for new superintendents is listed below. Each class is two hours including discussion on current issues on the subject.

### **School Funding**

1. Matrix, Print-Out, and Adequacy Funding
2. Developing Budget – Revenue
3. Developing Budget - Expenditures
4. Bid Laws and Purchasing Requirements
5. Detecting Fraud and Preparing for Audit
6. Requirements for Federal Programs, Special Education Funding, GT Expenditures and Categorical Funding

### **Leadership**

1. Superintendent Board Relations and Board Meeting Preparation
2. Public Relations and Millage Elections

### **Facilities**

1. Developing Facility Plans Based on Projections
2. Implementing Partnership Programs and Developing a Maintenance Program

### **Personnel**

1. Fair Dismissal Law and PPC Requirements
2. Certification Requirements and Highly Qualified Requirements

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

1. Standards of Accreditation and Career and Technical Education
2. Common Core, Assessment and Evaluation Programs

### **Technology**

1. Technology in the Superintendency

The above 15 classes total 30 hours of instruction. Another 6 hours will include structured mentoring time scheduled around various state conferences. This will make a total of 36 hours required for new superintendents.

### **Mentor Training**

Training mentors is essential to make this program effective. In order to provide the greatest amount of assistance to new superintendents, mentors will be trained on a “coaching model,” providing a consistent framework for all mentors instead of a “this is the way I did it” approach. Mentors will be required to go through a two-day training on the “coaching model,” along with periodic updates to continue as a mentor. A priority for the mentor will be assisting in the development of the budget and monitoring the revenue and

expenditures to keep the district out of financial trouble. It will also be essential for mentors to make themselves available for a new superintendent to call when various issues arise, hopefully keeping them from making serious mistakes. Strict confidentiality between the superintendent and the mentor will be vital to the success of the program.

### **Assessment**

Each new superintendent would be required to develop a notebook of various presentations and keep documentation on what they learned. This notebook would serve as a resource for the superintendent as they continue throughout their career. The notebook and learning documentation would be graded on a rubric developed by our partners.

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