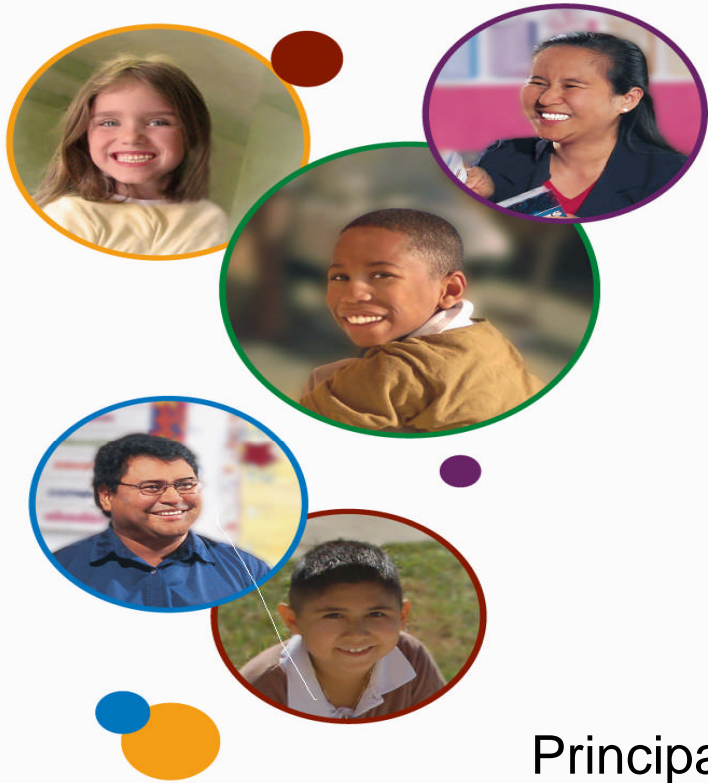# Mentoring Principals

**Current Research
and
Best Practices**

Principals' Executive Program
UNC Center for School Leadership Development

# Why mentor?

Successful public schools ensure that our children have the knowledge, sensibilities and application skills to grow into good and responsible citizens in a democratic society and become contributing members of their communities.

Successful public schools are built upon successful leaders.

Successful school leaders evolve from efficient and effective mentoring programs.

# Carnegie Foundation Study (2002)

One of the most effective ways to prepare and support principals in their careers is to provide a mentoring program.

As record student enrollment steadily increases, anticipated retirement of an estimated 40% of principals will drain the pool of aspiring principals and qualified applicants over the next five to seven years.

# Goals of the Mentoring Process

Promote independence in a nonjudgmental manner; the principal learns to question and coach self, becoming more reflective

Learn strategies to build school-level capacity to leverage resources which will maximize learning and continuous instructional improvement

*Teams of former school principals and superintendents not far removed from their previous roles have greatest impact as mentors*

# Multiple Titles for Mentors

School Change Coach

Leadership Facilitator

Principal Coach

Critical Friend

Mentor

NC Districts often contract with retired principals to coach new principals as requested by superintendents and superintendents' designees.

# Competency-Based Mentoring

<u>New principals</u>

❑   Pre-service training and 1:1 coaching

<u>Experienced principals</u>

❑   1:1 coaching

❑   Group coaching

❑   Coaching for school-based leadership teams

❑   Guided learning walks

❑   Technical assistance sessions and team retreats

# Three Mentor Models

1. <u>Technical Mentoring</u>

   Experienced administrator's share and respond to requests for:

   > Advice

   > Information

   > Practice or Procedure

   > New Skill

   Initiated by mentor as new principal may not know yet the depth of what they don't know

# Three Mentor Models (cont.)

2. <u>Collaborative Mentoring</u>

   Mentor and mentee co-develop solutions to problems

3. <u>Cognitive Mentoring</u>

   Promoting self reflection

   - Collecting and sharing data
   - Sharing descriptions, observations of behaviors
   - Combining data, observations with questions
   - Asking questions that deepen thinking
   - Actively listening as mentee analyzes data

Villani, Susan (2004). *Mentoring Programs for New Principals*. Corwin Press. New Teacher Center, Santa Cruz, CA.

# Characteristics of Effective Mentoring Programs

❑ Clearly defined outcomes

❑ Organizational support for process

❑ Screening and training of mentors and mentees

❑ A learner-centered focus

McREL Source: *Making the Case for Principal Mentoring* (The Education Alliance at Brown University, 2003)

# Outcomes of Successful Mentoring Programs

❑ Promote collaboration and collegiality

❑ Encourage reflective thinking

❑ Reduce professional isolation

❑ Reduce turnover

McREL Source: *Making the Case for Principal Mentoring* (The Education Alliance at Brown University, 2003)

# Challenges

Uniqueness of every school

Suitably matched mentor / mentee pairings

Scheduling meetings around time constraints

Organization of process

Resources for successful process

Productive program results

Clearinghouse on Educational Policy and Management (2002)

*Research tells us that highly effective professional leadership development sessions are collaborative, involve networking, 1:1 coaching and specific feedback. This helps principals understand why, when, and how to transfer learning to daily application.*

Donovan, M., Bransford, J.D., & Pelligrino, J. (1999). How people learn: Bridging research and practice. Washington, D.C: National Academy Press

# Principals' Executive Program

❑ **24 years** of feedback from principals involved in PEP programs confirm these findings

❑ **2927 principals** have graduated from a residential PEP program

❑ **1432 assistant principals** have graduated from a residential PEP program

❑ **Over 60%** of these assistant principals have become principals or central office directors

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