



## Great school leaders start here!

Training and preparing effective leaders for high need schools through a rigorous, yet personal approach, is our business at the Piedmont Triad Leadership Academy. Our engaging leadership development model connects the leader's professional lens with his or her personal lens, focusing the "PTLA Way" as a new vision of hope for transforming schools to high achievement and success. **Follow us at: [www.ptla-nc.org](http://www.ptla-nc.org)**

### PTLA Key Features

- PTLA is a paid, full-time, 1 year-long cohort based principal preparation program (\$50,000 maximum salary). PTLA was funded \$6,176,995 over three years (2011-2014) to prepare over 60 aspiring leaders.
- Beginning in July, PTLA participants complete intensive summer coursework. Then, beginning in August, PTLA participants complete a school-based, full-time clinical residency internship experience during the K-12 school year.
- Throughout their clinical residency, PTLA participants participate in an action-learning PTLA Leadership for School Improvement curriculum co-developed and co-taught by PTLA team leaders, UNCG faculty, and district partnership school leaders.
- PTLA participants benefit from a multi-faceted support structure, including University supervision, district mentors, and PTLA coaching. Executive coaching and wrap-around is continued in years 2 and 3 following program completion.
- PTLA graduates receive PTLA and district support in seeking school leadership positions upon completing the program. PTLA participants commit to 3 years of service in their partnership districts upon program completion.
- PTLA graduates will be eligible to receive North Carolina state licensure as a school principal after successfully completing the PTLA program and the licensure portfolio requirements.
- PTLA graduates also earn 24 credits toward a UNCG Post Masters Certificate in School Administration or Master of School Administration.

**Photo Right: Cohort 1 Class of 2012  
Aspiring School Leaders  
of High Need Schools**





Cohort 1 intern Ashley Triplett with Mentor Keisha McMillian at Vandalia Elementary School in Guilford County, NC. They are currently assistant principal and principal at Aycock Middle School in Guilford County.

## Why PTLA?

In contrast to more traditional school leadership preparation programs, PTLA stands on C.R.U.C.I.A.L. leadership development values that are grounded in personal relationships, high expectations, and a paid, full-time on-the-job training component which features a rigorous one-year school improvement curriculum. Our strong cohort approach to learning and growing is complimented by a collaborative partnership between PTLA team leaders, university professors and district partners. Intentionality and flexibility in meeting individual and cohort learning needs is a unique factor in student success.

## **Our C.R.U.C.I.A.L. Leadership Development Values**

*Collaborate, Recruit, Unite, Coach, Involve, Accelerate, Lead*

**C**ollaborate among four districts, a regional education consortium, and a university in order to create an innovative, sustainable, and effective way of training future leaders of high need schools.

**R**ecruit and select the best candidates who can and will learn quickly how to refine and maximize their demonstrated leadership potential.

**U**nite as a team and always build relationships. Emerging leaders develop best when they learn and grow together.

**C**oach participants from the moment they enter the program until after they have taken their first formal leadership roles.

**I**nvolve district partners in all aspects of the program, from candidate selection to curriculum design to curriculum delivery to program logistics to internship support to post-program graduate placement.

**A**ccelerate the leadership development process. Participants engage in an intensive, rigorous summer learning period followed by a full-time, administrative internship in a high need school. Participants receive authentic, real-time support through experienced mentor principals, weekly seminar learning opportunities, and dedicated, on-site coaching.

**L**ead participant development by demonstrating authentic leadership ourselves - every single day.



Cohort 2 interns Jonathan Hegedus and Kathy Bryant troubleshoot during summer intensive class.

## Action-Learning

Principal interns are taught, mentored, and coached by three full-time PTLA leaders who are experienced, but recent school principals in schools from the district partners. UNC-Greensboro professors, who are also former school administrators in high-need schools, teach, support interns and serve on the PTLA Leadership Team.

In addition to customizing and co-developing the school leadership improvement curriculum, our leaders and university partner professors provide relevant leadership strategies and one-on-one executive coaching to further develop our principal interns' leadership capacity.

PTLA Leadership Team meetings include ongoing planning efforts for curriculum refinement, intern development, program updates, training, data collection, sustainability and publicity.

The team selects guest lecturers and panelists from the partner districts as well as presenters who demonstrate relevant, expert experiences matching the curricular needs of the cohort. Many class visitors are professional leaders from our district partners. The team also evaluates individual intern and group development through seminar sessions, site visits, and one-on-one conferences to determine areas of focus in our teaching and learning sessions.

## Full-Time Clinical Residency

PTLA principal interns engage in a full-time clinical residency that is clearly the most authentic school training ground for future principals. At district-selected school placement sites, mentor principals provide our principal interns with school-based supervision and relevant experiences that university courses or leadership books alone cannot replicate. Mentor principals' modeling and willingness to allow interns opportunities to lead in their shadow creates a "trusting-trust us" relationship that prepares them for the principalship.

Additional features not typically present in traditional school leadership preparation programs include customized instruction with a differentiated focus, specialized training for schools identified with low performance and high poverty rates, turnaround



Cohort 1 members Amy Day and Scarlet Evans



Cohort 1 Graduate Cynthia White, Assistant Principal at Jones Elementary School in

strategies for school transformation, flexible scheduling with a school improvement curriculum, executive coaching with laser-focused goals and real-time feedback, and 360 assessments for personal and professional growth. PTLA principal interns are stretched further through readings and studies of research-based best practices, professional development through local, state, and national conferences directly related to school leadership and NC Standards for School Executives.

## How are PTLA members selected?

“Most comprehensive and sustainable were collaborations that resulted in the development of customized programs that met district needs by design—from start to finish. Thus, many program elements in the collaborative partnerships, including selection, curriculum development, internships, operations and follow-up, were collaboratively designed. In some cases the partnership programs were co-delivered as well.”

~ UCEA Research Utilization Brief, October 2011, drawn from research of Orr, King, & LaPointe (2010)

**\*Each cohort was selected through a rigorous screening and admission process; fewer than 15% of candidates were selected for participation in PTLA in all three recruitment years.**

### Timeline

December	PTLA district Information Sessions hosted in each district
January	Application; participant interest materials due to district contact; email reminders
February	District selection process-application review; selection exercises
Early March	Participant selections from districts due to PTLA
Early April	UNCG application deadline
Early May	PTLA final notifications of admission to UNCG
Mid-May	Mentor principals determined by districts
July	Cohort members begin “Summer Intensive” session

### Selection Process

The PTLA Cohort selection process is a two-phase process supported through our District-University Partnership and Advisory Team. **Phase 1** is led by PTLA Advisory Team district level representatives (central office members ranging from Assistant Superintendents to program Executive Directors) in coordination with the PTLA Leadership Team (Executive Director, Executive Coaches, and Academy Coordinators). Each district, as the hiring agents for potential principals and assistant principals coming from the Piedmont Triad Leadership Academy, conduct an interview and selection process to make their final Cohort selections from a pool of individuals who have expressed interest in PTLA. PTLA Leadership Team members have made themselves available to participate on final selection committees and offer insight on successful cohort member characteristics of Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, as well as, successful characteristics of mentor principals. In **Phase 2**, selected district candidates complete the UNCG admissions process for the appropriate, PTLA-related school leadership program. Candidates selected by the districts and admitted to UNC-Greensboro will comprise the next cohort of PTLA.

### District Specifics in Selection Process

Interview teams: Regional Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Executive Directors, Human Resources Directors, other Central Office personnel, district Teachers and Principals; PTLA graduate; PTLA Mentor Principal; PTLA Leadership Team Member

#### Application Review/Initial Screening:

All application materials include: candidate’s resume, statement of interest, list of professional references, and a letter of support. All materials are presented professionally are evaluated for content, past leadership and/or potential



Step One - Criteria for Application Review:

Demonstrated leadership in school, district; Leadership potential; Level of readiness for administrative position; Quality of application materials; Potential/ability to complete PTLA successfully. Individual committee reviews and ranks among selected applications. The committee meets to discuss and select applicants to move into round two.



Cohort 2 – Aspiring School Leaders of High Need  
Schools – Class of 2013

Step Two - Each district has created their own process for this round in the selection process including: an online scenario-based prioritization activity, a PowerPoint presentation focusing on an instructional issue, a writing sample, and problem-solving scenarios dealing with an angry parent and/or a controversial student issue.

Step Three (Final stage) includes a formal interview with additional scenario-based questions, such as the candidate's thoughts and ideas about replacing 50% of their staff in order to improve student achievement and school culture, retaining teachers/staff in low-performing/high need schools, and evaluating/coaching an underperforming teacher.

Selection Activities:

Various selection activities are used by our PTLA district partner selection teams for final selection interviews. The Candidate Selection teams use district rubrics to tally scores for interest materials, references, interview questions, written exercises, scenario-based activities, school improvement exercises, and the final assessment of the selection finalists.

Evidence of the candidate's interest in leading a high need school, his/her will to become a principal, and one's coachability and competencies in administrative speaking, listening, writing, problem-solving, decision-making, planning and communicating, is critiqued and evaluated throughout the selection process. Selection teams also diagnose the candidate's ability to perform in high stakes interpersonal situations, make sound decisions under pressure, take constructive criticism through interview and presentation feedback, and research, present and contribute positively toward a school improvement plan .

A series of PTLA Advisory Team meetings, district information sessions, and email correspondences begin in October and run through January to discuss and collaborate on our selection processes for cohorts. PTLA Leadership Team members attend and participate in all district information sessions. Fall Advisory Team meetings are especially devoted to the selection process. Advisory Team members convene again in March on the UNCG campus to bring their Cohort selection names and information and debrief their selection processes, next steps, and discuss program updates.



Photo Left: Cohort 1 Graduate –Shadonna Gunn - Principal -  
Grove Park Elementary School, Burlington, NC

## Evaluations:

Program evaluations include feedback from principal interns, mentor principals, and superintendents. Principal interns respond to on-line surveys that evaluate summer, fall, spring, and end-of-the year preparation stages. In addition, they provide feedback on curriculum modules, learning objectives, coaching effectiveness, internship experiences, and overall program relevance. Mentor principals and superintendents respond to similar on-line surveys that also address growth areas such as intern progress, program effectiveness, and emphasis on intern readiness for the role of principal in a high need school. The PTLA cohorts participate in the NC Department of Public Instruction's Race-to-the Top evaluation methods that are aligned with the grant initiative and RFP guidelines. E-portfolio reviews for the NC Principal license along with mid-year and end-of-year evaluations by mentor principals ensure principal interns have met the required leadership competencies of the School Executive Standards. PTLA leaders use survey results and other forms of feedback to adjust and implement improvements on a weekly basis.

## PTLA by the Numbers:

- \* **95% of Cohort 1** members earned leadership positions in one year following program completion.
- \* Students experience **over 400 hours** of face-to-face instructional time, group activities, individual skill-building, site-based visits, and conference-based learning opportunities during the one year program.
- \* **Over 150** current practitioners (principals, assistant principals, superintendents, teachers, district office personnel, students, school board members) address the PTLA cohort and provide meaningful insight and proven strategies for school improvement.
- \* PTLA Team Leaders make **over 400** site-based coaching and supervision visits to Internship sites **each semester** during the internship year.
- \* Placed at 21 different high-need schools, PTLA Interns help make an immediate positive impact on the lives of over 14,000 K-12 students in the Piedmont Triad area.

## Public Recognition:

This story about PTLA appeared recently on the front page of the *Greensboro News and Record*:  
<http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/ODE/NRCOM/LandingPage/LandingPage.aspx?href=TkFSLzIwMTIvMDUvMTM.&pageno=MQ..&entity=QXIwMDEwMg..&view=ZW50aXR5>

## Expected Long Term Grant Results:

1. Over 60 licensed principals prepared to serve as leaders of learning, promote cultures of continuous professional learning, & provide data-driven leadership in high need schools.
2. Development of a PTLA Principal Preparation Curriculum that leverages national leadership-development best practices and maximizes locally-sourced school improvement strategies and experts.
3. Strengthened, productive relationships among the school districts, regional educational consortium, and university collaborating in the partnership.