

Statements of Support
Mentor Training Institute for Principals
Kennedy Principals Fellows (KPF)

Just a few of the many testimonies received following the Training Institute...

“My experience as a Kennedy Principal Fellow has been the ‘tipping point’ in my growth as a school principal. ... The learning I have experienced here has made the greatest contribution to my leadership skills. With the knowledge I have gained, I have a greater confidence with which to move my school forward. The relationships I have cultivated will be a resource for further learning.”

“This Institute provided opportunities professionally and personally that enhanced my work as a secondary administrator. In order to move the vision and build capacity within our schools, administrators need this professional development along with the collegial support to meet the challenge.”

“A funny thing happened at my weekends in the woods. I knew the Institute would provide some wonderful networking opportunities. I’d get to share ideas, collect new and innovative information and connect with others who are as passionate about education as I am. But along the way I became a better listener, a more effective mentor, a more focused facilitator, a more skilled examiner of data and a true, dedicated reflector of my craft. In short, I became a better principal for my teachers, parents and especially my students.”

“The KPF Institute has been a phenomenal professional development opportunity. I hope this work continues next year. I learned more from these four weekends than in my graduate program.”

“This program has been, by far, the best professional development I have received since becoming a principal. The opportunity to collaborate and share with other administrators from twenty-two districts in the state has been invaluable. Hot topics and difficult work were presented in such a way that made me feel there was nothing I wasn’t capable of accomplishing. I am a better principal leader, facilitator, and mentor because of what I learned at the KPF Institute.”

“Leadership can be so lonely. The KPF Institute has afforded us the opportunity to share, collaborate and reflect on our own practices and beliefs. My colleagues have offered me practical strategies that I have taken back to my faculty, staff and students to foster a professional learning community. The Institute has reaffirmed and validated my decision and commitment to instructional leadership.”

“As a ‘veteran’ principal with seventeen years of experience, I’ve been to many conferences and workshops. I often enjoy the speakers and take away an idea or two that I can use at my school. This is the first time, however, that I have had a professional experience of this kind – the KPF program has been stimulating, challenging, engaging and exciting – every session, every hour.”

“This was more than a course. This has been an invaluable experience. For the participants, it has been an opportunity to share and learn new strategies. It is easy for those who are principals to become isolated and overwhelmed. I have already used some of the strategies and intend to use many more. I appreciate the opportunity to model what I preach - lifelong learning. Thank you for the support.”

“This course has affected my students, my staff and my professional practice. I have learned simple, practical tips to make meetings more productive and effective, to make my conversations with staff more focused and to make my daily work more reflective. After a long and (sometimes) stressful week, settling in at 4pm and knowing I had a full day ahead on Saturday was often daunting, but I left each weekend re-

energized and inspired to do the very best I could do to ensure every child academic, social and emotional success. Thank you.”

“The Institute provided a combination of learning experiences through professional articles and information from practitioners in the field. We were able to share ideas and strategies and try them in our schools. Having attended other professional opportunities, this one provided the recognition of the individual needs and these experiences have helped to shape us as principals and leaders.”

“As a new principal, the opportunity to collaborate with other colleagues has contributed greatly to my learning. Please offer us more opportunities to learn like this.”

“This training experience has impacted my professional practice in ways still to be made visible. I remarked to one of my peers today that ‘this state is filled with powerful, committed, professional administrators’ and I am proud to have shared this learning experience with them. This experiential learning is critical to our leadership. Thank you.”

“Possibly the greatest value of attending the KPF Institute is the opportunity to walk away with a tool kit of ideas and practices readily applied to our own schools. The value of gaining from the knowledge of the cohort and instructors cannot be overstated.”

“This Institute provided me with hands-on and clear ideas on how to tackle the job more efficiently and effectively. I have grown professionally and will take all the information back to work with my faculty on improving our children’s education. I highly recommend this course for all principals.”

“Educational leadership can be lonely and isolating. The Institute has been about collaboration. We have been allowed to share ideas and concepts, discuss common, directed readings, and put forward ways to promote student learning. It has been extremely valuable.”

“The KPF was a journey ... a journey in personal reflection, a journey in collegial growth and sharing, a journey in collaborative learning and a journey in cultivating critical friends. At first I was hesitant about spending weekends with the group; I didn’t see the value of the experience. Now I understand. ‘Living together’ really created a collegial atmosphere, broke down barriers and created bonds that otherwise would not have been created with a group of 45 administrators from around the state!”

“It has been a great honor and pleasure to participate in the KPF Institute. The professional development and networking has been an invaluable asset to my work as an instructional leader. Our expectations have been well met with research reviews, program initiatives and practical applications.”

“The KPF Institute has been the most professionally stimulating experience of my career. If, indeed, we want school reform to occur, this needs to begin with leadership.”

“I loved the new friendships I have already begun to form. I would love to have the mix changed next time to meet/make more friends. All the activities were wonderful! The two days have already affected my thinking and will cause a change in my practice.”

“I’m loving how I can actually sit and listen with no phone, no watch, no one talking about where they have to be in the next hour. It’s good to know that what seems/appears to be my frustrations are shared at all levels. I’m more comfortable knowing how big issues can be heard in a non judgmental environment and suggestions and things I may not have thought about flow easily from colleagues.”

“The opportunity to” discover” commonalities and differences was priceless. I was thrilled to have the opportunity and vehicle to discuss pertinent and current issues we face. Mentorship is an extremely important, but often missing component to educational leadership. The transition from teacher to leader is a monumental leap- you need supports to surround you- to act as both a safety net and encourager in the everyday duties and responsibilities.”

“Sessions are very well organized and facilitated. It is such a pleasure to network with principal peers and the dynamic leadership of Donna and staff. Activities have provided an opportunity for self- reflection, exploration, insight and validation into the myriad roles of a school principal. We will all come away with positive growth to support our own learning and have the privilege of helping others through mentoring. It is an honor to be participating in this project.”

“These hours together have been very powerful for me. The rich conversations and interactive activities have served my professional development needs. Although we have heard much of the information before these sessions, the dialogue has reinforced my beliefs and practices. I look forward to implementing many of the activities at my monthly faculty meetings. I appreciate and value the opportunity this provides for me to learn with like-minded professionals. Thank you!”

“Many great ideas were presented to us that can be used. Building capacity with a school requires dynamic meetings and authentic interaction with in the staff and the N-S-E-W activity drove home the need to expend that effort to start that interaction. It was not just an ice breaker- but a vehicle for understanding each other a little better that I plan on using. I can also foresee that this group is going to be a great network for new principals to grow with!”

“I’d like to comment on the activities.

- Work with Standards:
 - Thank God these exist. This was never a part of my training in leadership. Now that I have a few years of experience as a principal, I can rate myself according to the standards. I’d be interested in creating rubrics for these.
- Adult Learning:
 - Desire and motivation- this helps when planning adult learning experiences.
 - Personal journals
 - I appreciate that I was forced to “reflect” so to speak, about my journals towards mentorship. The changing definition of a mentor made me think.
- Consultancy
 - Powerful, and universal dilemma for strong leaders. The Reeves article really resonated with me.
 - Thank you very much for this opportunity.”

“I liked the following activities:

- Becoming more familiar with the standards
- The use of the protocol- thanks so much for modeling- now I feel I can use this or other protocols in my school.
- The NWSE activity: I liked this and would like to use it for team building with my staff.”

- “Very energizing
- Fabulous learning opportunity
- People who want to be here
- Networking ideas, challenges
- The teachers are dynamic
- Varied activities to keep you awake, alert and interested
- Understanding you are not alone and do have a large support system
- Time flies by
- Looking forward to session in March
- Excellent variety of people
- Adult learners; list of extensive resources
- Putting the ISLLC Standards in perspective and translating them, too.
- Ready to read and learn more.”

“The past two sessions were extremely beneficial to me as a new principal. Often, I think I am alone with my issues but it was comforting to know that there are challenges (which can be overcome) at all levels and with principals who have been “there” for a while. I was not surprised about being in the north group because I do have very little patience with a lot of talk and no action. The consultancy protocol reinforced to me that being too much of a north could ‘disenfranchise’ a fraction of the faculty. I need to be aware of ‘south, east, & west’ and know that will affect my relationships with the faculty. Great sessions! Facilitation is terrific. Thanks”

“This was an excellent professional development opportunity. This is a mentoring workshop and what was presented was exactly that. I feel I am slowly being equipped with the tools necessary for being an effective mentor. Thus far, I plan to implement the N.S.E.W activity & the brainstorming activity (obstacles/strategies). After the brainstorming activity, I will proceed to a consultancy protocol with my staff on an issue they have. I learned so much these past two days. Keep up the great work!”

“Warm feedback: I appreciated the challenging reading & thinking we experienced in such a short time frame. Too often, I feel like topics are too surface- level and I feel we dove in right away. Cool feedback: It would be good if some of the activities required us to move & interact with different people in small groups. I always like a little more time to discuss articles, thoughts, ideas in a small group before a larger group debrief. We did do this, but more (for my style) is always better. Thanks!!”

“The discussion we had made me realize that we are all in the same boat. We share many of the same problems. It made me rethink my approach and it made me remember some people or group of people that I neglected.”

“Really enjoyed the NSEW know yourself as a leader exercise. Forces one to at least examine how they approach leadership issues. Also enjoyed the consultancy protocol exercise. Thought JM did a great job of baring his soul a bit about an issue common to so many of us. The other participants also did an outstanding job.”

“These sessions were well organized and provided interventions that are pragmatic. Modeling the consultancy protocol was informative and provided a design for thoughtful, respectful feedback. It highlights the need for reflective practice. Inherent in leadership is the need to listen. The format promotes active engagement, analysis of the issue and feedback for reflection. Great job to all especially Joe. This forum offers each of the participants an opportunity to network and acquire strategies to better inform our practice as leaders.”

“Knowing about leadership styles and knowing about your own leadership styles is essential for successful collaboration. As instructional leaders we must always have time to reflect on practice and relationships (we must not leave these important pieces unattended). Building a community of leaders is hard work. We must be careful about our image (and how we are perceived by others). Networking was great! I love the presenters. You are wonderful people and extremely knowledgeable. Please reassure Joe he is headed in the right direction.”

“I enjoyed the multi-model styles of presentation and participation. All “activities” are meaningful and engaging. I cringe when I hear, “We are going to have an activity”- but that is never the case here. I feel safe when I speak what is on my mind or when I express an opinion. Although I don’t know all the people in the room, there is a wonderful level of comfort and trust. Everything that we’ve done has been meaningful to my practice. I listen to problems and perspectives of my colleagues and realize we have such a diverse pool of talent- styles-background- tenure and yet we all share the common vision. I like networking, but really enjoy the wisdom shared by everyone. Thank you for our hard work and recognizing our need to learn and share.”