Executive Development Program for School Leaders

Content **Overview**

01. **World-Class Schooling: Vision and Goals**

02. **Focusing on Teaching and Learning**

03. **Sustaining Transformation through Capacity and Commitment**

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EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

2016 EDITION

This document provides an overview of the Executive Development Program. The program consists of 12 two-day units, delivered over 12 to 15 months. The units are distributed between three consecutive courses. The pages that follow describe the content of each course and how the content is applied in practice, as well as details of each component unit including objectives, texts, and references.

01

COURSE 1

World-Class Schooling: Vision and Goals

Unit 1
The Educational Challenge

Unit 2
The Principal as Strategic Thinker

Unit 3
Elements of Standards-Aligned Instructional Systems

02

COURSE 2

Focusing on Teaching and Learning

Unit 4
Foundations of Effective Learning

Unit 5
Leadership in the Instructional Core: English Language Arts and History

Unit 6
Leadership in the Instructional Core: Science and Mathematics

Unit 7
Coaching for High-Quality Teaching

Facilitation Unit
Leadership Team Only

03

COURSE 3

Sustaining Transformation through Capacity and Commitment

Unit 8
Promoting the Learning Organization

Unit 9
Teams for Instructional Leadership

Unit 10
Ethical Leadership for Equity

Unit 11
Driving and Sustaining Transformation

Unit 12
Final Case Simulation and Presentations

1

COURSE 1

World-Class Schooling: Vision and Goals

Units 1-3

6 days

36 hours face-to-face plus 6 hours pre-work, including online

World-Class Schooling: Vision and Goals focuses on using strategic thinking to drive a vision of high-quality teaching and learning for all students.

First, the course analyzes global trends as the context affecting educational systems at both the national and local levels. While the context for the discussion is global, the models are applied to the school building as a system to achieve these ends.

Next, participants examine a formal, rigorous conceptual framework for strategic thinking, adapted from professional military education, which firmly ties strategy and decision-making to a vision relating to teaching and learning that emerges from and responds to context. This strategic thinking framework pushes principals to evaluate a theory of action (the "ways and means") through which they will achieve the ends described in the vision.

Finally, the course looks at the school building as a high-quality aligned instructional system—the primary system affected by strategy impacts.

COURSE 1

CONTENT OVERVIEW

UNIT 1

The Educational Challenge

The Educational Challenge.

Explains:

1. Why fundamental changes in the international economy have resulted in significantly higher educational requirements for all citizens in advanced economies
2. Why social development and ethical behavior are just as important as high academic achievement

It helps participants realistically assess the challenges schools must meet to achieve high standards. It also addresses the corrosive effect of pervasive low expectations for many poor and minority students. This unit helps participants accept and embrace the goal of getting every student ready for college or career by graduation.

UNIT 2

The Principal as Strategic Thinker

The Principal as Strategic Thinker. Encourages participants to think strategically about the challenges they face and to develop a clear, powerful strategy for addressing those challenges. They learn to distinguish among tactical, operational, and strategic thinking. In this unit, participants examine decision-making processes that school leaders need to understand and apply when analyzing complex situations, overcoming barriers, and accomplishing objectives. Case studies in the military, business, and education worlds allow participants to adapt and apply their knowledge to new situations. While much of this unit draws on experience from the military and business worlds (enterprises that perform well with strategic thinking and operational planning), participants are asked to apply what they learn to the world of the school.

UNIT 3

Elements of Standards-Aligned Instructional Systems

Elements of Standards-Aligned Instructional Systems. Challenges participants to develop a sophisticated understanding of the components of a high-quality standards aligned instructional system and how those components can be combined to boost student performance. Participants learn about different standards and assessments and how to use them.

They learn how to:

1. Identify assessments genuinely aligned to standards
2. Build curriculum frameworks that array topics logically to enable students to reach standards over time
3. Select instructional materials that are aligned with the standards and the frameworks

Most importantly, participants learn the principal's role in ensuring that his or her school has a fully aligned instructional system focused on the standards and is internally coherent and consistent.

COURSE 1

APPLIED LEARNING

Course One introduces the primary mechanism participants will use to implement EDP principles and concepts at their schools—the Action Learning Project (ALP). The ALP is central to the entire EDP experience and lasts the duration of the program. In Course One, participants begin to work collaboratively with their leadership teams and other stakeholders to review and refine their vision and the accompanying strategy decisions and actions in order to identify their ALP.

Templates & Tools

introduced in Course One intentionally leverage participant data from three diagnostics:

- **The Instructional Leadership Instrument**
- **The Learning Context Assessment**
- **The High-Quality Aligned Instructional System**

Data

is used to determine a vision and theory of action for their school and to then create an ALP strategy and plan that:

- **Builds consensus for the ALP among a variety of stakeholders**
- **Determines and communicates clear measures of success**
- **Identifies a set of decisions and actions that will move the ALP forward and allow refinement to the vision, the goals, and the plan based on results**

COURSE 1

DETAILS

UNIT 1

Key Performance Objectives

- Explain why all students need a much higher level of academic skills than previously thought and why they need a different type of skills—more complex skills, many kinds of non-cognitive skills, and advanced cognitive skills—to be employable in the new economy.
- Explain why a much higher level of education is now required not just to enable individuals to get and keep good jobs, but to have broadly shared prosperity and well-informed voters and participants in the country's political life.
- Describe the role of the principal and other school leaders as system designers, strategic thinkers, instructional leaders, and builders of an ethical culture.

Core Texts

- *9 Building Blocks for a World-Class State Education System* (NCEE, 2015)
- *Leading for Equity: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Montgomery County Public Schools* (Childress, Doyle, and Thomas)
- *What Does It Really Mean to be College and Work Ready?* (NCEE, 2013)
- *Case Study: Turnaround! The Pasadena High School Case Study* (NISL, 2016)
- *Case Study: The Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School Case Study* (NISL, 2016)

Selected References

- *Surpassing Shanghai: An Agenda for American Education Built on the World's Leading Systems* (Tucker, et al.)
- *That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back* (Friedman and Mandelbaum)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standard:	Standard 1: a–f
Related Standards:	Standard 2: c Standard 3: c, e–h Standard 10: a, h, i

COURSE 1

DETAILS (CONT'D.)

UNIT 2

Key Performance Objectives

- Apply principles of strategic thinking and strategy to school contexts.
- Lead and motivate a school team to create a vision of where the school wants to be over time.
- Develop a strategy for implementing that vision with approaches informed by analysis.
- Build action plans and milestones to execute the strategy.
- Examine decision-making processes that school leaders need to understand and apply to ensure objectives are accomplished.
- Apply leadership and decision-making concepts, and begin to exercise creative approaches to school coherence and alignment, to achieve strategic goals.

Core Texts

- *Conceptual Framework for Strategic Thinking* (NISL)
- *Accelerate: Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World* (Kotter)
- *Leading for Equity: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Montgomery County Public Schools* (Childress, Doyle, and Thomas)
- *Case Study: Transformation at Ford* (Harvard Business School Press)
- *Case Study: Cuban Missile Crisis* (Neustadt and May)

Selected References

- *Decision Traps: Ten Barriers to Brilliant Decision-Making and How to Overcome Them* (Russo and Schoemaker)
- *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Alison and Zelikow)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standards:	Standard 1: a–f Standard 9: a, c, l
Related Standard:	Standard 10: a, b, d, f, h, i

UNIT 3

Key Performance Objectives

- Apply systems thinking to how a school building functions—based on benchmarking research and best practice from the United States and other countries.
- Identify the critical elements of a high-quality aligned instructional system and analyze these within their own schools.
- Identify the characteristics of performance standards and assessments that can be used to drive teaching and learning in schools.
- Define the specific characteristics of curriculum frameworks, syllabi, and instructional materials, aligned to the standards.
- Define the specific characteristics of a system of supports for students who need additional help, aligned to the standards.
- Illustrate how leadership and professional development can promote a standards-aligned culture.

Core Texts

- *The NISL Wheel* (NISL)
- *Leading for Equity: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Montgomery County Public Schools* (Childress, Doyle, and Thomas)
- *Case Study: The Turn-Around at Highland Elementary School* (Harvard Business School Press)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standard:	Standard 4: a–g
Related Standards:	Standard 1: c, d, f Standard 2: c Standard 3: c, e, g, h Standard 9: b, c, g, i

2

COURSE 2

Focusing on Teaching and Learning

Units 4–7

8 days

48 hours face-to-face plus 8 hours pre-work, including online

Focusing on Teaching and Learning is a deep dive into the content areas that will equip participants to guide teaching within the instructional core (English language arts, history/social studies, science, and mathematics). NISL's view of instructional leadership—the governance of the cycle of aligned instruction that includes the operationalizing of performance standards through curriculum, instruction, and assessment—is the EDP's single major focus.

Course Two builds on the elements of the standards-aligned instructional system introduced in Course One and explores the integration of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in depth.

COURSE 2

Focusing on Teaching and Learning (Cont'd.)

Course Two also uses cases studies that address the variability of teaching quality within a school, with implications for closing the achievement gap while raising the bar. All of this is done within the context of leading change—focusing on a process for building and monitoring capacity to move from a current state to a future state.

First, participants look at the recent research on how people learn. This exploration draws from the work of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences.

Next, they explore how to integrate curriculum, instruction, and assessment within the instructional core.

Finally, Course Two connects this integration to current trends in educator effectiveness systems with specific implications for using classroom observation as a data source for coaching, school-wide and domain-specific professional development, and leadership improvement. This connection to educator effectiveness helps participants build a professional work environment that improves teaching. It does this by describing a process for coaching, collaborative professional development, and effective teacher leadership teams.

COURSE 2

CONTENT OVERVIEW

UNIT 4

Foundations of Effective Learning

Foundations of Effective Learning. Supports participants as they become "students of learning." Participants explore key ideas about how people learn from various perspectives grounded in the research (National Research Council, 2000, 2012) and the implications of these ideas for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

This unit addresses

1. The concept of mindset and explores its significance in advancing the notion that all students can learn
2. The relationship between language and learning
3. The disciplinary basis of reading and writing
4. Learning environments that reflect and support what we know about how people learn

The main purpose of this focus is to help school leaders understand and support the relationship between ideas about learning and the alignment of standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

UNIT 5

Leadership in the Instructional Core—English Language Arts and History

Leadership in the Instructional Core—English Language Arts and History. Presents the most significant research on the characteristics of an integrated ELA classroom that supports student learning for college- and career-readiness. The unit examines a research-based model of reading comprehension and its implication for instruction across the disciplines in grades 4–12 and builds awareness of the relationships among a variety of writing modes. It also explores how learning in history, while often not traditionally grounded in the key concepts of the discipline, can be deepened and strengthened through a refined understanding of how people learn.

UNIT 6

Leadership in the Instructional Core—Science and Mathematics

Leadership in the Instructional Core—Science and Mathematics. Examines science and mathematics teaching and learning in light of Unit 4's focus on conceptual knowledge structures, preconceptions, formative assessment, and language in learning. Participants examine the alignment of these aspects of "how people learn" with the nature of inquiry-based instruction and "apprenticeship to the discipline" in science. Participants also connect the three key principles in "how people learn" and the ideas around deeper learning and twenty-first-century skills with the attributes of a "mathematically proficient" student. They will consider the next steps in aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment in science and mathematics.

UNIT 7

Coaching for High-Quality Teaching

Coaching for High-Quality Teaching. Wraps up Course Two with a focus on the implications of Units 4–6 on teaching effectiveness and the requirements for coaching and professional development within a human capital management model. NISL promotes coaching as the principle means for linking the concepts from the EDP and the research to the day-to-day experience of instructional leadership in schools. Participants practice coaching through discussion and application to scenarios and case studies.

COURSE 2

APPLIED LEARNING

In the Action Learning Project (ALP), participants continue to refine a project that explicitly addresses instructional leadership—i.e., one that has an impact on classroom instruction.

Action Learning Projects

apply new knowledge and skills in schools as participants:

- **Select a particular focus—either school-wide or within a particular domain—for improving student performance**
- **Identify data used for monitoring instructional processes and student growth in order to track progress and make course corrections**
- **Collaborate with teachers to design and implement professional development and other supports that drive the strategy.**

COURSE 2

DETAILS

UNIT 4

Key Performance Objectives

- Explore the current state of knowledge in the learning sciences and implications for ways of enhancing learners' capacity to learn.
- Articulate implications of the main ideas about learning for curriculum, instruction, and assessment and the achievement of an aligned instructional system.
- Consider how learners' mindsets impact their capacity to learn and how to support development of positive mindsets and address factors that negatively influence students' mindsets.
- Understand how the learning environment affects students' capacity to learn and how to enhance positive aspects of the learning environment.
- Articulate the essential connection between language and learning and understand that language development must be addressed in each discipline.

Core Texts

- *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (National Research Council, 2000)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standard: Standard 4: a–g

Related Standard: Standard 6: a–i

UNIT 5

Key Performance Objectives

- Explore a variety of knowledge-building activities in an integrated ELA classroom.
- Examine the Kintsch model of reading comprehension and determine its implications for instruction in grades 4–12.
- Explore the relationship among standards, rubrics, and instruction to foster student learning and set goals.
- Understand the central organizing concepts in the discipline of history and why the organizing concepts represent the framework from which all learning in history is approached and structured.
- Articulate how learning in history relates to student preparation for college and career/lifelong learning.

Core Texts

- *How Students Learn: History, Mathematics, and Science in the Classroom* (National Research Council, 2005)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standard: Standard 4: a–g

Related Standard: Standard 6: a–i

DETAILS (CONT'D.)

UNIT 6

Key Performance Objectives

- Explore the implications of learning theory research for the disciplines of science and mathematics.
- Articulate the connections among language and learning, scientific literacy, and mathematical literacy.
- Critically review existing curriculum, practices, instruction, and assessment in science and mathematics for alignment and consistency with current perspectives in cognitivist learning theory.
- Articulate the role of the school leader as a student of learning in the discipline of science.

Core Texts

- *How Students Learn: History, Mathematics, and Science in the Classroom* (National Research Council, 2005)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standard: Standard 4: a–g

Related Standard: Standard 6: a–i

UNIT 7

Key Performance Objectives

- Identify sources of teaching variability among classrooms relating to educator effectiveness systems.
- Use classroom observations and other data, coupled with knowledge from the research on learning, to identify opportunities for 1) mentoring of individuals, 2) professional development for teaching teams, and 3) improving one's own leadership practice.
- Apply NISL's coaching practices grounded in specific principles of learning and teaching with a focus on the skills of listening, questioning, observing, and giving and receiving feedback
- Monitor the progress of the coaching relationship and its effect on student performance.

Core Texts

- *Smart Leaders, Smarter Teams: How You and Your Team Get Unstuck to Get Results* (Schwarz)

Select References

- *Blended Coaching: Skills and Strategies to Support Principal Development* (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, Warren, eds.)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standard: Standard 4: a–g

Related Standard: Standard 6: a–i

3

COURSE 3

Sustaining Transformation through Capacity and Commitment

Units 8–12

10 days

60 hours face-to-face plus 10 hours pre-work, including online

Participants learn how to:

1. Identify root problems and causes
2. Gather intelligence
3. Formulate a plan based on appropriate data
4. Set performance targets
5. Select strategies
6. Develop sound implementation plans

Sustaining Transformation through Capacity and Commitment weaves together major themes relating to high-performance organization and management. Participants reflect on their role as instructional leaders and examine how to play that role effectively, alone or in combination with other leadership team members. This course challenges participants to examine their roles as leaders as they create and nurture an ethical culture in their schools.

Course Three presents the moral principles of a just, fair, and caring community, and participants use these principles to guide their discussions and decisions about the course's case studies.

This course provides a study of a formal change process that can be used to support steady improvement in student achievement. Participants integrate materials from earlier units that relate to the crucial role of the principal in providing a vision of the results worth achieving, keeping that vision constantly in front of the school community, and allocating responsibilities to everyone responsible for realizing that vision.

COURSE 3

CONTENT OVERVIEW

UNIT 8

Promoting the Learning Organization

Promoting the Learning Organization. Examines the enhancement and support of teaching capacity through a focus on the school as a learning organization. Participants apply principles of deeper learning (National Research Council, 2000) to professional development while looking at:

1. Growth models for teachers as professionals
2. Models of teacher accountability

Participants learn how to promote organizational learning through analyzing its successes and failures, through benchmarking best practices beyond the school, and through disciplined searches for proven knowledge that bears on the challenges the school faces. Participants engage in the Williams Middle School case study—a scenario-based, team-oriented simulation built around four quarters of a school year. Tackling this case study helps participants practice using the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the EDP. It also helps them push past that experience to new learning, insights, and questions.

UNIT 9

Teams for Instructional Leadership

Teams for Instructional Leadership. Introduces the concept of the leadership team (not simply the principal) as the nexus of instructional leadership within the school. It combines this concept with the idea that distributing leadership and allocating responsibility to other teams of teachers and other stakeholders in the school leverages the power of teams to get the work of the school done and to develop the knowledge and skills needed to build high-performing teams. Participants learn how to define the goals for teams, recruit and select their members, and motivate and coach them to success.

UNIT 10

Ethical Leadership for Equity

Ethical Leadership for Equity. Guides participants to examine their roles as ethical leaders in their schools with a focus on equity, defined as providing equal opportunity for learning. Day-to-day pressures of being a principal, standards-based reforms, and new accountability requirements are fundamental conditions of the principal's job. In many situations, principals are so pressured by operational demands that they lack time to think deeply about their decisions' ethical assumptions and implications. Participants consider the moral principles of a just, fair, and caring community and equal opportunities for all students, and use these principles to guide their discussions and decisions about this unit's case studies.

UNIT 11

Driving and Sustaining Transformation

Driving and Sustaining Transformation. Enables participants to design, lead, and drive an adaptive change process calculated to produce steady improvement in student achievement. Participants learn to analyze the change process from the perspective of sustaining transformational change in an environment that is continually volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. Participants also learn how to identify root problems and causes, gather intelligence, formulate a plan on the basis of appropriate data, select strategies, and develop sound implementation plans.

UNIT 12

Final Case Simulation and Presentations

Final Case Simulation and Presentations. Presents a follow-on simulation based on the Williams Middle School case study, specifically year three in the life of the school (i.e., a future time horizon from the initial scenario introduced in Unit 8). Unit 12 includes in-depth presentations by teams around their analyses of the case study. These in-depth presentations promote productive, collaborative sharing within the cohort and help to synthesize the learning from all of the EDP units.

COURSE 3

APPLIED LEARNING

The Williams Middle School case study is a gameplay-oriented simulation that challenges participants to apply the EDP learning to real-word situations.

The Leadership Simulation

requires participants to make decisions and act as an instructional leadership team across a school year.

- **The simulation draws together all the NISL major themes through a wide range of issues related to the analysis of data, strategic thinking, distributed leadership, and coherence/alignment of all the elements of a standards-based system.**

- **Participants continue to refine, implement, and evaluate their ALPs.**

COURSE 3

DETAILS

UNIT 8

Key Performance Objectives

- Create a culture of leading and learning in schools directed at improving student learning outcomes.
- Leverage the characteristics of effective professional development and their relationship to principles of adult learning.
- Implement key leadership strategies to promote professional learning among teachers.

Core Texts

- *Beyond PD: Teacher Professional Learning in High-Performing Systems* (NCEE, 2016)
- *Case Study: Williams Middle School* (NISL, 2016)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standards:	Standard 6: a–i Standard 7: a, d, f, g, h
Related Standards:	Standard 2: c, e Standard 4: d, e, g Standard 9: c, e, g

UNIT 9

Key Performance Objectives

- Explore the meaning, significance, and characteristics of instructional leadership, including the levers available to improve instruction.
- Analyze the strategies and behaviors of school leadership teams that exercise effective instructional leadership.
- Know how to sustain and enhance the performance of instructional leadership teams.
- Understand how to build high-performing teams at many levels across a standards-aligned school.

Core Texts

- *Smart Leaders, Smarter Teams: How You and Your Team Get Unstuck to Get Results* (Schwarz)
- *Developing Shanghai's Teachers* (NCEE, 2016)
- *Case Study: Williams Middle School* (NISL, 2016)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standards:	Standard 6: g, h, i Standard 7: a–h Standard 9: h–l
Related Standards:	Standard 1: d, f Standard 2: e Standard 8: a, b, c, j Standard 10: d, j

DETAILS (CONT'D.)

UNIT 10

Key Performance Objectives

- Describe the role of school leadership in creating an ethical culture that ensures equitable opportunities for learning for all students.
- Understand the contribution that a just, fair, and caring community makes to realizing the goal of high achievement by every student.
- Appreciate and value how critical it is to act in ways that foster the development of a just, fair, and caring school community.
- Employ strategies for developing and sustaining such a community.

Core Texts

- *Leading for Equity: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Montgomery County Public Schools* (Childress, Doyle, and Thomas)
- *Case Study: Williams Middle School* (NISL, 2016)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standards:	Standard 2: a–f Standard 3: a, b, c, e, g, h Standard 5: a–f Standard 8: a–j
Related Standards:	Standard 1: a, b, c Standard 4: c Standard 7: b–e

UNIT 11

Key Performance Objectives

- Describe the school leader's role in leading the deep and sustainable reforms needed to achieve high standards of academic, social, emotional, and ethical development for all students.
- Describe the school leader's role in designing and implementing an adaptive change process.
- Identify the forms of resistance to change and effectively apply the correct strategy to counter that resistance.

Core Texts

- *Accelerate: Building Strategic Agility for a Faster-Moving World* (Kotter)
- *Case Study: Starbucks Coffee Company – Transformation and Renewal* (Harvard Business School Press)
- *Case Study: Williams Middle School* (NISL, 2016)

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

Primary Standard:	Standard 10: a–j
Related Standard:	Standard 9: a–l

DETAILS (CONT'D.)

UNIT 12

Key Performance Objectives

- Use strategic thinking to set priorities and plan next steps.
- Analyze the demands of different tasks, events, and resource decisions in terms of defining the problem, articulating costs/risks, analyzing importance/urgency, and assessing team competencies.
- Work collaboratively to make decisions about how to spend resources to optimize teaching and learning.
- Engage with a professional learning community to discuss the members' successes, challenges, decisions, remaining questions, and key take-aways.

Core Texts

N/A

Standards Alignment

Links to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA)

All are relevant.

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