

Leaders as Learners: Abstract

The Leaders as Learners (LAL) initiative is a collaborative project between William Paterson University of New Jersey (WP) and the Paterson Public Schools (PPS), a high needs LEA. The overall goal of this 5-year project is to improve the academic achievement of P-12 students in high needs urban schools by identifying, selecting, preparing, retaining and supporting highly effective school leaders. The program has two components: first to target 40 aspiring educational leaders (20 in each cohort) by providing them with an innovative preparation program leading to principal licensure in New Jersey. Priority recruitment will be from our Professional Development Schools (PDS) in Paterson and from graduates of our newly designed and innovative teacher education programs who teach in Paterson. The professional preparation program will consist of coursework leading to a master's degree, a two-year (300 hour) supervised clinical internship, and mentoring to support school leaders once they are employed in urban schools. Their success as effective school leaders will be tracked through licensure attainment, placement, retention, and P-12 academic achievement measures. Second, and in collaboration with the LEA's three Executive Directors for Principal Coaching and Evaluation, the project will provide professional development (through the LAL Institute) and school-based Leaders in Residence for current school leaders to build capacity for improved teaching and learning. The proposed project builds on the highly successful, on-going, and long-standing partnership between WP and the PPS. The problems and issues of practice have been identified by the schools through on-going assessments within the district, in collaboration with WP, and with the NJDOE. An important component of this project will be the evaluation of its effectiveness and the dissemination of best practices based on the Leaders as Learners model.