

Developing Internship Programs for School Leaders

What can you expect to get from this module?

Teams of participants attending this training will be guided through the decision-making process needed to plan and implement an effective internship program for principal candidates. They learn, from research and current literature, recommended practices for building the types of field-based experiences that help develop school leaders that make a difference in student achievement. This training is based on the idea that professional development should include authentic, real-world application. Throughout the training, teams learn general principles and then apply them to their own situation as they work.

What *shouldn't* you expect to get from this module?

This program is for internship program designers and implementers, not mentors. See the companion program, *Mentoring School Leaders in Competency-Based Internships and Induction Experiences*, for skills development for mentors.

Who should take this training?

This module is for teams in university-district partnerships (and any state partners as well) who are seeking to work collaboratively to develop and improve the quality of their internship programs.

Other SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules that support this module:

There are no formal prerequisites for this SREB module. However, participants may find it helpful to have attended the module *Developing Collaborative University-District Partnerships to Prepare Learning-Centered Principals*.

What will you have to do to get the most from this module?

Participants must have the right team of people present — those that have the authority and knowledge to develop an internship program in a university-district partnership. Participants must commit to attending two consecutive days of training, completing prework and homework and completing an Internship Program Agreement.

Big Ideas in This Module

- A strong internship developed by a collaboration of university and district representatives provides benefits to the districts, universities, interns, mentors, students and schools.
- Regardless of whether an internship lasts a month or a year, the quality of internship learning experiences is key.
- Effective programs are focused on helping interns develop the critical success factors that are the hallmarks of principals who make a difference in student achievement.
- Obstacles are to be expected, and they are best overcome by anticipating potential problems and being prepared with strategies to deal with them.
- University leaders, district personnel, school-based leaders and others all have important roles to play in the planning and implementation of a quality internship experience. Role clarification is essential.
- A longer internship encourages interns to develop a comprehensive understanding of administrative routines and daily tasks; learn to identify and solve problems within the context of a dynamic, changing organization; see projects through to completion; and experience the consequences of one's decisions.
- Expectations for interns should revolve around the development of critical success factors for principals that make a difference in student achievement.
- Explicit learning experiences should be developmental — observing, participating, then leading — and focused on student achievement.
- An intern's learning plan should address district/school needs, intern needs and university requirements. It should be structured, supported and monitored, and it should be consistent with adult learning principles.
- Teams must work on procedures for selecting, matching and training mentors.
- Program evaluation, both formative and summative, should be planned for up front by developing a list of questions to answer and a strategy for collecting data to answer them.

Module Design. *Developing Internship Programs for School Leaders* is a two-day workshop. It also includes prework and homework assignments. Each section is described below.

Prework. Participants read the required text *The Principal Internship: How Can We Get It Right?* and reflect on the characteristics of an effective internship. They also distribute and tally a survey of current internship practices in their areas.

Welcome and Introductions (30 minutes). In this introductory section, participants go through an overview of the course and explore the possible benefits of a good internship program to the district, the university, the interns, the mentors and the students.

Building a Framework for a Well-Designed Internship Program (two hours, 15 minutes). Participants identify the qualities of a well-designed internship through a learning activity. Participants then discuss who needs to be involved in the planning and implementation of these programs.

Developing a Well-Designed Internship Program, Part One (two hours, 45 minutes). Participants walk through some steps required to develop an internship program. At each step, they discuss some basic principles and issues and then work as a team on that step. Steps addressed include establishing purpose and goals; defining roles and expectations for mentors, interns and university supervisors; and setting high expectations for interns and other parties involved.

Developing a Well-Designed Internship Program, Part Two (3 hours, 10 minutes). Day Two begins with reflections on Day One. Then, participants discuss what it means for internship activities to be “developmental and competency based.” They discuss how the Intern Learning Planner can be applied to various scenarios and to their own internship plans. Participants also outline the support materials that they will need to develop for their program (e.g., handbooks, contracts, surveys, etc.).

Implementing and Monitoring a Well-Designed Internship Program (2 hours, 20 minutes). Participants react to statements about selecting, matching and training mentors, and use this as a forum to discuss the principles involved. Teams then complete the corresponding decision points. Then, the group discusses how to monitor and evaluate its program. Finally, the teams work on an action plan for finalizing the University-District Internship Program Agreement.

Summary. Participants must work to finalize their decisions for creating a well-designed internship program. Mastery of module objectives is measured by completion of a University-District Internship Agreement.