

A graphic of interlocking puzzle pieces in shades of blue, white, and grey, arranged in a pattern that fills the right side and top of the page.

# SCHOOL LEADERSHIP THAT FITS

*A Guide to Securing the Optimal  
School Leadership Position*

A SCHOOL LEADER PARADIGM RESOURCE



**SCHOOL  
LEADER  
COLLABORATIVE**



**SCHOOL  
LEADER  
COLLABORATIVE**

# SCHOOL LEADERSHIP THAT FITS

## **A Guide to Securing the Optimal School Leadership Position**

Fit. It is important. Why? Because over the years, we at the Association for Wisconsin School Administrators (AWSA) have learned that fit is critical for school leaders to realize a long, successful tenure in a leadership position. More importantly, research now reinforces the correlation between the length of a school leaders' tenure and impact on student and adult performance.<sup>1</sup> So, once you are hired for a school leadership position, your students, teachers, and community need you to be there for an extended stay.

With the importance of school leaders' tenure in mind, our goals with *School Leadership That Fits* are two-fold. First, we hope to help you determine whether the profession of school leadership is the right fit for you. If you determine it is, our desire is to then help you secure the school leadership position that is the best fit for your values, personality, skills, expertise, experience, and vision for helping kids. The pages that follow are filled with reflective questions, practical tips, and resources to guide and assist you with this process. But, be aware! You must be committed and willing to put in the work needed to be successful. However, the payoff is worth it. School leadership, if the right fit for you, offers you an opportunity for impact like few other professions.

One final reminder before digging in. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can assist you on your journey of finding *School Leadership That Fits*. You can reach out anytime at 608-241-0300 or visit us on the web at [www.awsa.org](http://www.awsa.org). Best of luck!

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Visit [awsa.org/career-center](http://awsa.org/career-center) for additional resources!

## Are You Ready to Make the Jump?

With your mindset, well, set for school leadership, the next step to finding a school leadership position that is the right fit for you is to determine if you are ready to make the jump. So, it is time to do some more reflecting. However, the questions that follow are better considered with trusted confidants like your spouse, significant other, mentor, accountability partner, or close members of your professional learning network. Overall, these questions will help you reflect on your current professional status, motivation for a job change, and readiness for a new challenge. Please be sure to engage your family about this life-changing decision, or you put your relationship with them and future position as a school leader at risk.

- Am I adequately prepared with the right skills, expertise, and experiences required of a school leader overall?
- Why do I want to leave my current situation?
- Can I afford to change positions?
- Are my family and I willing to move if required?
- What do I expect to gain personally and professionally by changing jobs?
- Are any of the school leadership positions currently available a realistic fit for me and my family?

It is likely there are other questions that you and your family need to answer as you discern whether a move to school leadership is the right one. But these will at least get you started. Exceptional

“School leadership, particularly principal leadership, is critical to the success of our nation’s schools, teachers, and students. Very few professions offer the vast opportunities to influence the lives of so many and leave a forever impact on those served.”

school leaders are those who not only think critically but do it in community with those close to them.

## So, You’re Going for It. Now, Do the Work.

Once you have made the decision to seek a school leadership position, it is time to focus on what you must do to make your goal a reality. To give yourself an advantage over others who desire the same position, you must be willing to DO THE WORK.

- Be an all-star in your current position. In order for prospective employers to envision you as a school leader, they must see how you are a person who has vision, identifies needs, develops strategies to solve problems, and measures your progress with data.
- Volunteer for your or lead school improvement efforts.
- Start and/or run educational programs in your school (i.e. literacy nights, etc.).
- Join and take leadership positions in professional organizations, like AWSA, and community groups.
- Form professional learning networks with educational leaders. Again, AWSA can be helpful here.
- Publish education related articles and/or present at education conferences.
- Read education and private sector leadership books and periodicals.

## Your Credentials

Your credentials consist of several items including your cover letter, resume, references, and transcripts. Depending on the position you are applying for, you could be asked to submit your education philosophy, a listing of accomplishments, and other materials. This section will provide guidance on these items with most attention being given to your cover letter, resume, and references.

### COVER LETTER

The cover letter is an important part of the application. The cover letter is your first opportunity to communicate effectively and succinctly with your potential employer. Poorly written cover letters convey a lack of effective communication skills and will often result in the reader dismissing the candidate from consideration.

#### THE HEADING

Your cover letter heading should include the current date followed by the name, title, organization name, street address, city, state, and zip code of the individual to whom you are addressing the letter.

#### THE SALUTATION

Following the heading, you should begin your letter with an appropriate salutation. The cover letter is a formal document, so you address your reader using Dear and his or her formal name and title (i.e., Dear Dr. Jones) followed by a colon.

#### THE BODY

The body of the letter can be further broken into three parts:

- 1) The introduction paragraph: name the specific job you are applying for and include a strong statement about your interest in the opening as well as the fit between your qualifications and the position.
- 2) A description of your qualifications and how they will benefit the organization. Use succinct language to provide the reader with insight into your experience and how that experience fits the job description.
- 3) An appreciation for the reader’s consideration and your follow-up contact information including email address and phone number with area code.

## THE CLOSING

Following the body, you should provide a complimentary closing. Appropriate closings may include such phrases as “Sincerely,” “With gratitude,” “Respectfully,” “With appreciation,” “With sincere thanks,” or “Thank you.”

## THE SIGNATURE

After inserting the complimentary closing, leave approximately 3-4 blank lines followed by your typed signature. Once you have finished the letter, you should print it and add your handwritten signature in ink before mailing or scanning the letter for inclusion in an application packet.

## RESUME

The Resources section in the back of this document contains two different sample resumes. Overall, you want your resume to be reader-friendly, so it is easy for prospective employers to consume. It is perfectly acceptable for your resume to be longer than one page. In fact, it is preferred. School leadership is a challenging and complex job. Further, it is a professional position. Trying to prove you possess the skills and experiences necessary for the role is not possible in a page. Two to four pages is the typical length. Here are some other thoughts to keep in mind.

- Be clear, concise, and accurate. DO NOT embellish your record.
- Use consistent fonts, formatting, and spacing.
- If you choose to include an Objective statement, keep it short and focused on how you plan on serving your prospective employer.
- Be prepared to explain reasons for gaps in service which might include raising kids, a family move, going back to school, etc.
- List experience in reverse chronological order.
- Use bullet points and action words when describing your work experience. A comprehensive list of action words is available in the Resources section.

## CREATE A DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

Often, we are asked whether it is useful to bring a portfolio to an interview. What we have determined is, unless you are specifically told to bring a physical portfolio with you, they tend to be more of a nuisance than a help.

Instead consider creating a digital portfolio from a web-based program.

### What to include?

- your education philosophy
- examples of your work
- ensure it is mobile friendly

- When describing your work experience, be sure to do more than just list your job description. Prospective employers are looking for school leaders who can identify needs, develop strategies to meet those needs, implement those strategies, and get results. It is a bonus if you can offer concrete data (student performance, attendance, etc.) to describe the outcomes of your efforts.

- Customize your resume to the position(s) for which you are applying, which means customize it for every position.
- Make sure to balance your resume between being full but not crowded. As was shared previously, your resume is going to need to be longer than one page. However, be sure that your content covers every page from top to bottom, so your resume looks complete.

## REFERENCES

No big surprise here, but an important section of your resume is your list of references. Three to five is common, and it does not hurt to have a few more available to share during an interview in case you are asked for them. Include your references on a separate document from your resume.

When selecting references, it is critical for you to list current and past supervisors. These individuals are deemed most credible to speak objectively about your personality, abilities, and character related to the work you do. Next on the list are college professors and community

leaders. Obviously, peers, subordinates, friends, and family members are not viable references.

Once you are ready to solicit references, it is important that supervisors, especially your current one, learn that you are looking for a new job from one person: You. Ideally, it is best for you to speak with your current supervisor about your desire to secure a new position at the beginning of the job search process.

As you work to identify and solicit references, you may find yourself being uncomfortable with telling your boss early in your search process. Or, you may not want to list this person as a reference at all. If you are feeling this way, be sure to reflect on the pros and cons of not saying anything to your boss. Additionally, you also need have a satisfactory explanation for a prospective employer for why your boss is not listed.

## Finding School Leadership Positions

In Wisconsin, we are fortunate that we do not have to dig too far to find open school leadership positions. Most available education openings in the state can be found at: <https://wecan.waspa.org/> Additionally, it is good to leverage your professional network to see if they are aware of current or job openings. In cases where a member of your network is aware of an opening, it is possible this person may have a relationship with someone where the opening exists and might be able to speak on your behalf. The adage “it’s who you know” can be beneficial if the search process being conducted by the school district is above board and free of nepotism.

Once you have decided on which position(s) to consider applying for, your next step is to spend time researching the position, school, district, and community. First, doing extensive study of a prospective position will help you tailor your application materials to the job for which you are applying. For example, you may find through your research that a district you are interested in needs help developing its curriculum, and you just helped lead this process in your current school. Thus, you will want to highlight this work in your application materials. Second, and more importantly than customizing your credentials, doing your due diligence about

a school leadership position and the surrounding school community will help you determine whether a job is the right fit for you and your family. So, here are several questions you may want answered as you decide about where to apply.

- If the new position requires for me and my family to move, does the new community possess the homes, schools, recreation, and cultural opportunities that suit us?
- Is the community supportive of its schools?
- What is the district's financial health?
- Is the district's enrollment growing, shrinking, or stable?
- What are the school's achievement levels?
- What are the community and district's expectations of its principals?
- Is my personality, expertise, experience, and educational leadership philosophy a good fit for the prospective position and surrounding community?
- What is the history of the job I am seeking? In other words, has there been stability or significant turnover? Why is the position open right now? (i.e. promotion, retirement, dismissal, etc.)
- What is the status of the school board relationships with the superintendent, building leaders, teachers, and community?
- Can I work for the superintendent? Does that person possess a leadership style that I am comfortable with?

Visit the school, district, and community's websites as well as <https://wecan.waspa.org/>. Consider visiting the community to look around, eat at a local restaurant, and talk with community members about their school. If time permits, you may want to attend an extra-curricular activity or athletic event.

## THE INTERVIEW: PRE-GAME

Like an athletic competition, preparation for an interview is critical, and it is something you can begin gearing up for even before you get a call. Below are some ways you can get ready for game time.

## LET AWSA HELP YOU PREPARE

Do not forget to have your credentials reviewed by a trusted colleague or someone at AWSA.

Be sure to ask for feedback about things like content covered, readability, structure, spelling, grammar, etc.

Then be sure to schedule a mock interview!

- Review the list of sample interview questions frequently and take time to write out responses to the questions. Two of the more difficult questions you should be prepared to answer are: 1) "Why should we hire you for this position?" and 2) "If we offer you the job, will you accept it?" The second question may seem like an obvious "yes." However, something concerning may come up during the interview that may give you pause. The issue may not be a deal breaker, so you must be prepared with a response that keeps you engaged in the process yet buys you some time.
- From your research of the position you applied for, anticipate questions you may be asked based on the local context and needs of the school. Again, write out responses to these questions.
- Practice giving oral responses to questions by recording your responses on your phone or another device. Then play your responses back to yourself to determine where you sound confident and where you need to improve.
- Complete a mock interview.
- Once you get a call for an interview, be sure to find out where and with whom you will be interviewing. Also, determine how much time you need to schedule? It is not unreasonable to block out a day to make sure you have all the time you need to dedicate to the process.
- Prepare a list of a few questions you may want to ask during the interview. In addition to you learning more about the position, it also gives you an opportunity to show that you have done your homework about the job, school, district, and community. Be aware that these questions should not include requests for information

about salary, benefits, and working conditions. These are questions you may consider asking:

- What are the community's expectations of me as this school's principal?
- Where do principals fit into the district's hierarchy?
- Are site-based management concepts in place?
- How much control do I have over my building's budget?
- What support staff do I have?
- What is the status of the school improvement plan?
- What am I free to change? How quick?
- Put together a few materials to take with you like an extra copy of your resume, a list of additional references, a list of a few questions you may want to ask, and a legal pad for you to take notes.

## GAME TIME

Below are some final tips as you head to the interview.

- Be early and recognize that the interview begins as soon as you arrive.
- Before leaving your car, put your phone away or be sure it is turned off, so it does not become a distraction.
- Be kind to everyone you encounter, especially the administrative support staff. Their opinions are very important to the decision makers.
- Introduce yourself confidently to everyone by offering a firm handshake, speaking clearly, and looking people in the eyes.
- Sit up and use good posture.
- Be positive and self-confident. Most

importantly, be yourself.

- Address the interviewer(s) by name and maintain eye contact.
- Pay attention to body language and non-verbal cues.
- Give clear, concise, and truthful answers. If you do not know something, say so.
- If you do not understand a question, ask for clarification.
- Explain your strengths, leadership style, and beliefs about education in your answers.
- Show you have done your homework by highlighting what you know about the school, district, and community in your responses.
- Do not make disparaging comments about current or former employers.
- Ask meaningful questions from your prepared list as well as from what you heard during the interview.
- End by thanking everyone, shaking hands, and addressing people by name.

## POST-GAME

Send handwritten thank you notes to everyone you interviewed with if possible. While an email is quicker, nothing beats the personal touch of a card sent via snail mail. To speed up the process, have thank you notes prepared in advance to send out the day of the interview if you know with whom you will be interviewing.

Additionally, take time to reflect on the interview. Do you still feel like the position is a good fit for you and your family? Were there any red flags? What about the interview went well? Where might you have done better? Were there any questions that you were not prepared for? Take note of these so that you are ready for them if asked again in the future.

## YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Every Tweet, Facebook post, Instagram picture, and Snapchat message becomes a part of your permanent digital footprint. Be mindful of this when and how you choose to post on social media, especially when you are in an emotionally charged state of mind.

Occasionally Google (or search) yourself to see if others have posted anything about you. While you cannot control what others say, you should be aware of it and be prepared to answer questions about the content.

## Three Ways It Could Go

### 1. THIS JUST ISN'T GOING TO WORK. WHEN DO I PULL OUT OF THE PROCESS?

The obvious answer to this question is as soon as possible, which is why you should spend time thoroughly researching a school district even before you apply. While no position is perfect, be on the lookout for anything that makes you uneasy from a legal or ethical perspective.

Up and to the point you sign an employment contract, there is time to take yourself out of the job search process. Once you make the decision to remove yourself from a search process, especially if you have interviewed with a district, the best thing you can do is call the district contact, thank that person for the opportunity, and explain that the position is not the right fit. Be prepared for a few questions, but do not feel the need to share details beyond your comfort level.

“What do I do if I have signed an employment contract and can no longer take the position?” In extreme circumstances, like you learn something concerning about the district or position or you have a significant life change with your family, you and the district can probably separate amicably. Otherwise, be prepared for potential legal and licensure ramifications as well as harm to your professional reputation.

## 2. SORRY, YOU ARE NOT THE RIGHT FIT FOR US.

Being passed over for a job you desire and work hard for stings. When this call comes, be sure to express your gratitude for the opportunity so you leave yourself open to be considered again in the future. Depending on the rapport you developed with those in the district, you may feel comfortable enough to ask how you could have improved your standing through the process.

## 3. CONGRATULATIONS! WELCOME TO OUR LEARNING ORGANIZATION.

Prior to working one minute in your new position as a school leader, it is critical that you have an agreed upon, attorney reviewed, and signed contract with your new employer.

We have provided a Model Contract for you in the Resources section that contains both essential and recommended elements for your employment agreement. You can use this to compare to the contract language your new employer has given you to review or as the starting point for a contract if the school district does not have one.

During your initial research of the job opportunity, be sure to find the salary and benefits history for the position which should be available on the district's website. This will give you an idea of the baseline you will be working with when talking with the district.

As you work through the process of negotiating your contract, below are some additional questions you may want answered before signing the final agreement.

- Do I have any district responsibilities? i.e. transportation, facilities, grants, etc.?
- What are expectations for my attendance at meetings and extracurricular activities?
- Are winter holidays workdays?
- Will I receive a mentor or coach?
- What opportunities will I have for professional learning?

- Will my involvement with my professional organization be supported?
- How will I be evaluated?
- Will I receive moving expenses?

Be sure to pause and run your employment agreement past your own attorney to ensure you are not being taken unfair advantage of and that everything you agreed upon with the district is explicitly spelled out. As an AWSA member, you can contact the Association's legal department to review your contract.

## Endnotes

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## RESOURCE

### School Leadership That Fits Checklist

Use the following checklist to make sure you have completed the critical tasks necessary to help improve your chances to find *School Leadership That Fits*.

- Do I possess a school leader's mindset?
- Am I (and my family if appropriate) ready to make the jump?
- Am I taking the steps needed now to prepare me for a school leadership position?
- Have I put in the work necessary to create high-quality credentials?
- Have I proofed my credentials in detail?
- Have I had another professional proof my credentials for feedback?
- Have I spent time reviewing my digital footprint?
- Have I thoroughly researched school leadership positions that interest me?
- When making an application for a school leadership position, have I provided exactly what was asked?
- Have I thoroughly prepared for an interview including answering potential questions and/or taking part in a mock interview?
- Did I send thank you notes to those individuals I interviewed with?
- Does the contract I am presented to sign contain the essential elements of the Model Principal's Contract?

# SCHOOL LEADER PARADIGM

*Becoming...*

## PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE

### Wellness

Ethical  
Fit/Healthy  
Optimistic  
Self-aware

### Self Management

Organized  
Balanced  
Self-controlled  
Self-confident

### Growth Mindset

Humble  
Reflective  
Intentional  
Accountable

### Innovation

Creative  
Adaptive  
Resilient  
Courageous

## SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

### Service

Empathetic  
Trustworthy  
Generous  
Protective

### Capacity Building

Empowering  
Guiding  
Resourceful  
Facilitative

### Community Building

Relational  
Collaborative  
Connective  
Conciliatory

### Influence

Attentive  
Communicative  
Motivational  
Catalytic

## SYSTEMS INTELLIGENCE

### Mission/Vision/ Strategic Planning

Analytic  
Strategic  
Articulate  
Visionary

### Teaching & Learning

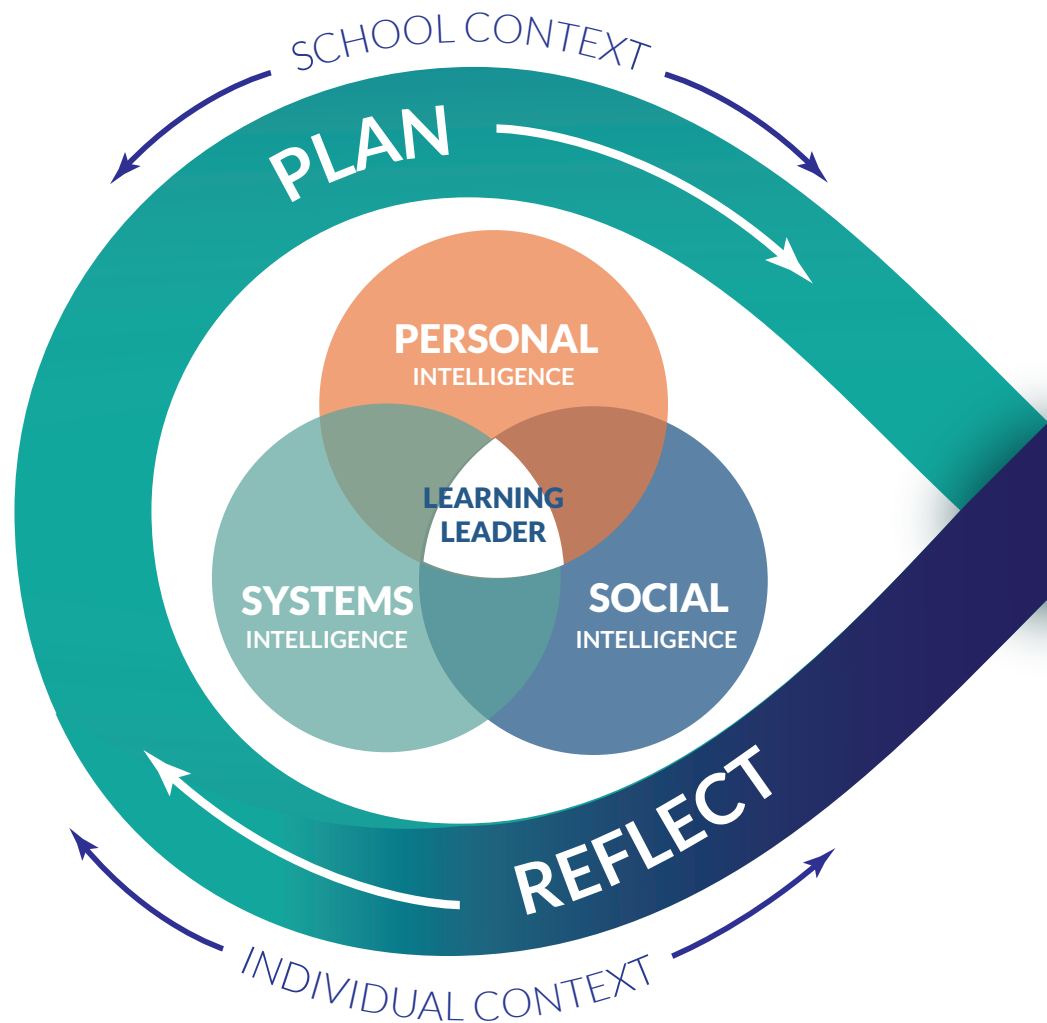
Diagnostic  
Knowledgeable  
Pedagogic  
Evaluative

### Operations & Management

Responsible  
Transformative  
Responsive  
Methodical

### Cultural Responsiveness

Visible  
Affiliative  
Advocative  
Global



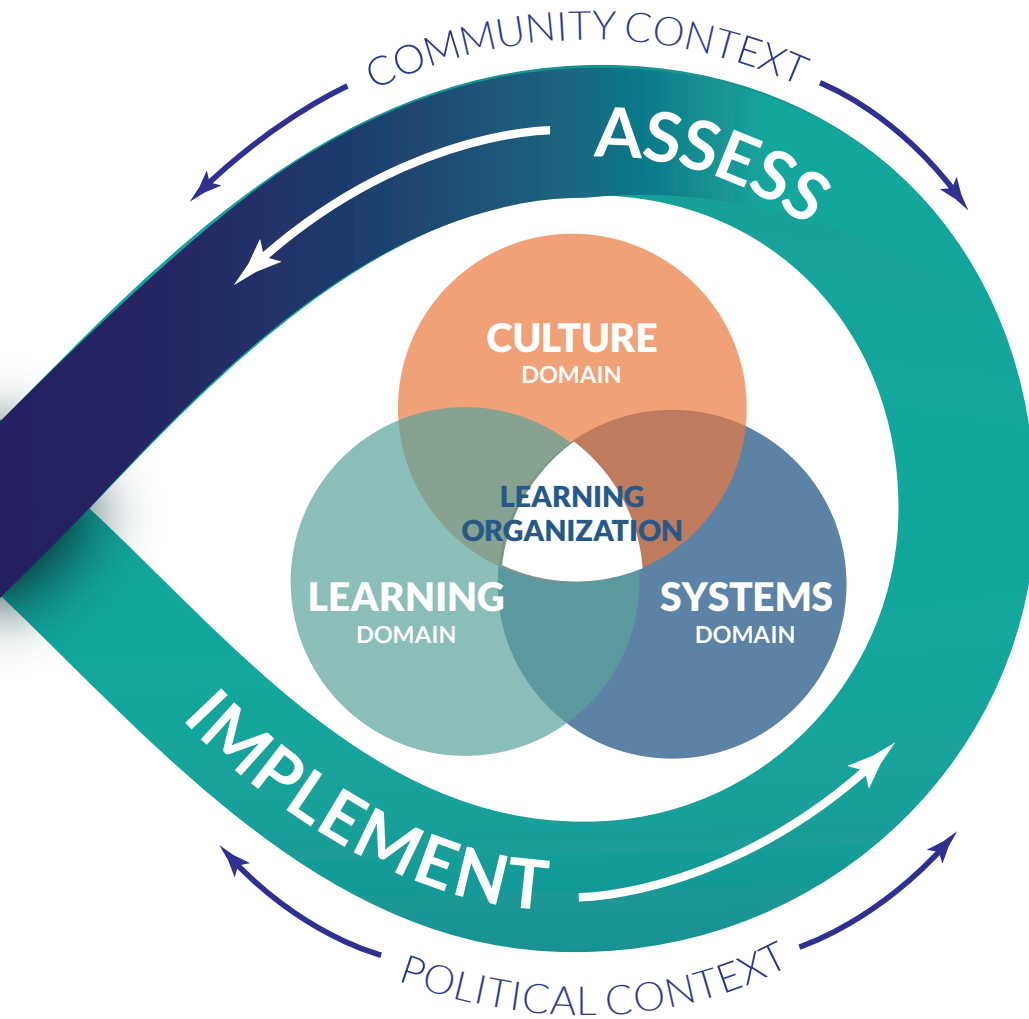
**Creating Hope for All**  
#CreateHope

### “BECOMING” GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to be a Learning Leader?
2. What are your Leadership Intelligences? How do these intelligences impact your ability to lead?
3. How aware are you of the contexts in which you lead? How does your leadership intelligence impact your contextual effectiveness?
4. How effective are you in leading constant Cycles of Inquiry? What attributes make you more or less effective?



## ... while Doing



### CULTURE DOMAIN

- Relationships
- Student Centeredness
- Wellness
- Equity
- Traditions/Celebrations
- Ethics
- Global Mindedness

### SYSTEMS DOMAIN

- Vision/Mission
- Communication
- Collaborative Leadership
- Data Literacy
- Strategic Management
- Safety
- Operations

### LEARNING DOMAIN

- Reflection/Growth
- Result-Oriented
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Assessment
- Innovation
- Human Capital Management



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### “DOING” GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. How are **you** leading the learning of your learning organization?
2. What are you doing to create culture with your students, staff and school community? What attributes increase your effectiveness at leading culture?
3. What systems are supporting and/or eroding your culture and what are you doing to be a systems leader? What attributes make you an effective systems leader?
4. How are you pushing on leading learning for all stakeholders? What attributes make you an effective “Lead Learner”?

## RESOURCE: SAMPLE RESUME 1

### Bucky Badger

1515 Anystreet  
Anytown, WI 6255  
(H) 555-555-5555  
personal email

### Education

Any University  
Degree

City, State  
Date

Any University  
Degree

City, State  
Date

WI Educator License

Date

### Experience

District  
School, Title

City, State  
Date

- Provide daily leadership and supervision for 1000 students and 100 staff members
- Led the development of a new school vision statement, core values, and student motto
- Created a database to track student achievement and demographic data
- Enhanced the leadership of department chairs by clarifying their role and leading the study of leadership principles
- Initiated Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in order to provide students differentiated instruction and needed educational supports
- Collaborate with staff to implement restorative justice practices to better serve at-risk students and comply with Senate Bill 100
- Enhance staff professional growth by encouraging and recognizing teachers involved in National Board Certification
- Improved relationships with the Anytown Athletic Boosters by assisting with revising the booster's by-laws and developing team budgets
- Developed a Principal's Cabinet comprised of students to meet each month to discuss and implement ways to improve Anytown High School
- Led the implementation of a new student management software system which improved teacher use of data and home-to-school communication
- Meet diverse student learning needs by implementing team taught Enhanced Learning periods and developing a class called Learning for Life
- Wrote and obtained grant to improve broadband connectivity, reliability, and speed
- Led the development of the Anytown Political Action Committee

## RESOURCE: SAMPLE RESUME 1

**District**  
School, Title

City, State  
Date

- Provided daily leadership and supervision for 285 students and 30 staff members
- Led the development of a data driven internal review process
- Created and implemented peer coaching training to raise the level of teacher professionalism and provide teachers with re-certification credit
- Creator of the DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) Program to provide time during the school day for sustained silent reading and increase student motivation to read
- Led the revision of the school's Crisis Management Plan
- Worked with high school staff, school board, and community members to revise the school's Athletic Code
- Increased student involvement in the school decision making process by seeking frequent input from the student council
- Key staff member of a new teacher mentoring program to assist first year teachers with classroom management and quality instruction
- Led the development and implementation of a new teacher evaluation system based on the Danielson Framework

**District**  
School, Title

City, State  
Date

- Led the development and implementation of a math curriculum for an eight block schedule
- Wrote grant proposals for and successfully obtained new Chromebooks for classroom
- Increased enrollment in Calculus from an average of 34 students to an average of 71 students

### Professional Organizations and Honors

Association of Wisconsin School Administrators	2011-Present
National Association of Secondary School Principals	2011-Present
Phi Delta Kappa	2011-Present
WI Award Winner	2016
Educational Leadership Award	2015
Scholarship Award Winner	2012
State FFA Degree	2000

### Other Experience

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| • Volunteer with Anytown United Way                     | 2014 - Present |
| • Radio Personality                                     | 2005-2009      |
| • Wisconsin High School Association Basketball Official | 2001-2005      |

## RESOURCE: SAMPLE RESUME 2

### BUCKY BADGER

1515 Anystreet, Anytown, WI 62555  
555-555-5555 • bbadger@anyemail.com

#### CAREER PROFILE

Visionary, student-centered learning leader able to facilitate systems, learning and school culture to guide continuous improvement for educational stakeholders and a proven track record of increasing student achievement at the high school level. Educational optimist who believes that lives are truly touched, and the future shaped, by extraordinary teachers.

#### EDUCATION

**Most Recent University** – City, State Month, Year  
Ed.S., Educational Leadership

**Next Most Recent University** - City, State Month, Year  
M.S.Ed., Educational Leadership

**Next Most Recent University** – City, State Month, Year  
B.S., Math Education

#### LICENSES AND CERTIFICATION

##### ILLINOIS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR LICENSE No. 123456

Endorsements: General Administrative K-12; Language Arts 6-8; Mathematics 6-8;  
Mathematics Senior High 9-12

Evaluator Designations: Teacher and Principal Evaluator Designation

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**TITLE, ANY HIGH SCHOOL** Start Year – End Year  
Anytown, State  
*1000 students / 100 staff members*

##### *Major Accomplishments*

- Implemented a new school vision statement, core values, and student motto.
- Enhanced the leadership of department chairs by clarifying their role and leading the study of leadership principles.
- Key leader in the implementation of an evidence-based school improvement process.
- Promoted and assisted staff with a new student management software system which improved teacher use of data and home-to-school communication.

## RESOURCE: SAMPLE RESUME 2

- Created a database to track student achievement and demographic data.
- Led the implementation of curriculum mapping.
- Enhanced the use of 8-block teaching strategies through in-service training and weekly email tips.
- Initiated Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in order to provide students differentiated instruction and needed educational supports.
- Increased staff professional growth by encouraging and recognizing teachers involved in National Board Certification.

### TITLE, OTHER TOWN HIGH SCHOOL

Start Year – End Year

Other Town, State

285 students / 30 staff members

#### Major Accomplishments

- Collaborated on the development of a data driven internal review process.
- Led the development and implementation of a new teacher evaluation system based on the Danielson Framework.
- Initiated Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in order to provide students differentiated instruction and needed educational supports.
- Created and implemented peer coaching training to raise the level of teacher professionalism and provide teachers with re-certification credit.
- Implemented the DEAR (Drop Everything AND Read) Program to provide time during the school day for sustained silent reading and increase student motivation to read.
- Led the development and implementation of a student Service Learning Program.
- Key staff member in the revision of the school's Crisis Management Plan.
- Worked with high school staff, school board, and community members to revise the school's Athletic Code.
- Increased student involvement in the school decision making process by seeking frequent input from the student council.
- Co-authored a monthly newspaper article called "From the Administrator's Desk" which focused on informing the public of educational issues and helping parents assist their children to get the most out of their educational opportunities.
- Led the development of a new school mission statement as well as student, staff, and personal school commitment statements.
- Integrated a new teacher mentoring program to assist first year teachers with classroom management and quality instruction.

## RESOURCE: SAMPLE RESUME 2

TEACHER/COACH, NAME OF SCHOOL  
City, State

Start Year – End Year

### *Major Accomplishments*

- Led the development and implementation of a math curriculum for an eight-block schedule
- Wrote grant proposals for and successfully obtained new Chromebooks for classroom
- Increased enrollment in Calculus from an average of 34 students to an average of 71 students

### PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HONORS

- Illinois Principals Association Year – Year
- National Association of Secondary School Principals Year – Year
- Phi Delta Kappa Year – Year
- IPA Region Herman Graves Award Winner Year
- Educational Leadership Award Year
- Scholarship Award Winner Year

### GRANT WRITING EXPERIENCE

Authored and/or co-authored grants, including:

- Title I, II, II-D and V Grants (Federal; allocation)
- I.D.E.A. (Federal; allocation)
- National Science Foundation Math/Science Grant (regional; competitive)

### GRADUATE TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct instructor, Name of University, School of Education, Educational Leadership Department.  
Courses taught: List names of courses

### PRESENTATIONS

- Achieving Greatness – City, State (Year)
- Charlotte Danielson Domain 4 - Professional Responsibilities – City, State (Year)
- Tackling the Issue of Educator Ethics – City, State (Year)
- The Job Search - Getting the Offer in a Competitive Market – City, State (Year)
- Becoming an Educator Who Matters – City, State (Year)
- Succeeding as a Teacher Mentor – City, State (Year)
- Invisible Enemies: The Case for Internet Safety – City, State (Year)
- A Road to Somewhere—Delivering High Stakes Data to the Classroom Teacher – City, State (Year)

## RESOURCE: SAMPLE REFERENCES

### BUCKY BADGER

1515 Anystreet, Anytown, WI 62555  
555-555-5555 • bbadger@anyemail.com

#### PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Jeff Stanford, Superintendent  
Othertown CUSD #2  
555 Othertown  
Othertown, WI 63555  
444-444-4444  
Email Address

Joyce Davis, Superintendent  
Anytown CUSD #1  
555 Anystreet  
Anytown, WI 62555  
333-333-3333  
Email Address

Camila Hernandez, Principal  
Finaltown High School  
555 Finaltown  
Finaltown, WI 64555  
777-777-7777  
Email Address

#### PERSONAL REFERENCES

Dr. Stacey Jensen  
Board of Education Member  
Anytown CUSD #1  
555 Anystreet  
Anytown, WI 62555  
333-333-3334  
Email Address

Dr. David Teacher  
Assistant Professor  
Any University  
987 Anystreet  
University Town, WI 11111  
111-111-1111  
Email Address

## RESOURCE: ACTION WORDS

The following are action verbs that relate to leadership skills. Use words like these to describe the accomplishments you list on your resume and speak to during an interview.

### A

Accelerated  
Accomplished  
Achieved  
Acted  
Activated  
Adapted  
Addressed  
Adjusted  
Administered  
Advanced  
Advertised  
Advised  
Advocated  
Aided  
Allocated  
Analyzed  
Answered  
Applied  
Appraised  
Approved  
Arbitrated  
Arranged  
Ascertained  
Assembled  
Assessed  
Assigned  
Assisted  
Attained  
Augmented  
Authorized  
Awarded

---

### B

Balanced  
Began  
Boosted  
Briefed  
Budgeted  
Built

---

### C

Calculated  
Captured  
Cataloged  
Centralized  
Chaired

Charted  
Checked  
Clarified  
Classified  
Coached  
Collaborated  
Collected  
Combined  
Communicated  
Compared  
Compiled  
Completed  
Composed  
Computed  
Conceived  
Conceptualized  
Condensed  
Conducted  
Conferred  
Conserved  
Consolidated  
Constructed  
Consulted  
Contacted  
Continued  
Contributed  
Controlled  
Converted  
Conveyed  
Convinced  
Coordinated  
Corresponded  
Counseled  
Created  
Critiqued  
Cultivated  
Customized

---

### D

Debugged  
Decided  
Defined  
Delegated  
Delivered  
Demonstrated  
Designated  
Designed  
Detected  
Determined  
Developed  
Devised  
Diagnosed

Directed  
Discovered  
Dispensed  
Displayed  
Dissected  
Distributed  
Diverted  
Documented  
Drafted

---

### E

Earned  
Edited  
Educated  
Effected  
Eliminated  
Emphasized  
Employed  
Encouraged  
Enforced  
Engineered  
Enhanced  
Enlarged  
Enlisted  
Ensured  
Entertained  
Established  
Estimated  
Evaluated  
Examined  
Executed  
Expanded  
Expedited  
Experimented  
Explained  
Explored  
Expressed  
Extended  
Extracted

---

### F

Fabricated  
Facilitated  
Fashioned  
Finalized  
Fixed  
Focused  
Forecasted  
Formed

Formulated  
Fostered  
Found  
Fulfilled  
Furnished

---

### G

Gained  
Gathered  
Generated  
Governed  
Grossed  
Guided

---

### H

Handled  
Headed  
Heightened  
Helped  
Hired  
Honed  
Hosted  
Hypothesized

---

### I

Identified  
Illustrated  
Imagined  
Implemented  
Improved  
Improvised  
Incorporated  
Increased  
Indexed  
Influenced  
Informed  
Initiated  
Innovated  
Inspected  
Inspired  
Installed  
Instituted  
Integrated  
Interacted  
Interpreted

Interviewed  
Introduced  
Invented  
Inventoried  
Investigated  
Involved  
Issued

---

### J

Joined  
Judged

---

### K

Kept

---

### L

Launched  
Learned  
Lectured  
Led  
Lifted  
Listened  
Located  
Logged

---

### M

Maintained  
Managed  
Manipulated  
Marketed  
Maximized  
Measured  
Mediated  
Merged  
Mobilized  
Modified  
Monitored  
Motivated



## RESOURCE: ACTION WORDS

### N

Navigated  
Negotiated  
Netted

---

### O

Observed  
Obtained  
Opened  
Operated  
Ordered  
Orchestrated  
Organized  
Originated  
Outlined  
Overcame  
Overhauled  
Oversaw

---

### P

Participated  
Performed  
Persuaded  
Photographed  
Pinpointed  
Piloted  
Pioneered  
Placed  
Planned  
Played  
Predicted  
Prepared  
Prescribed  
Presented  
Presided  
Prevented  
Printed  
Prioritized  
Processed  
Produced  
Programmed  
Projected  
Promoted  
Proofread  
Proposed  
Protected  
Proved  
Provided  
Publicized  
Purchased

### Q

Qualified  
Questioned

---

### R

Raised  
Ran  
Rated  
Reached  
Realized  
Reasoned  
Received  
Recommended  
Reconciled  
Recorded  
Recruited  
Reduced  
Referred  
Regulated  
Rehabilitated  
Related  
Remodeled  
Rendered  
Reorganized  
Repaired  
Replaced  
Reported  
Represented  
Researched  
Reshaped  
Resolved  
Responded  
Restored  
Retrieved  
Reviewed  
Revised  
Revitalized  
Routed

---

### S

Saved  
Scheduled  
Screened  
Searched  
Secured  
Selected  
Separated  
Served  
Shaped  
Shared  
Simplified  
Simulated

Sketched  
Sold  
Solved  
Sorted  
Spearheaded  
Specialized  
Specified  
Spoke  
Sponsored  
Staffed  
Standardized  
Started  
Streamlined  
Strengthened  
Structured  
Studied  
Suggested  
Summarized  
Supervised  
Supplied  
Supported  
Surpassed  
Surveyed  
Sustained  
Synthesized  
Systematized

---

### T

Targeted  
Taught  
Terminated  
Tested  
Tightened  
Totaled  
Tracked  
Traded  
Trained  
Transcribed  
Transformed  
Transmitted  
Translated  
Traveled  
Tutored

---

### U

Uncovered  
Undertook  
Unified  
United  
Updated  
Upgraded  
Used  
Utilized

### V

Validated  
Verbalized  
Verified  
Vitalized  
Volunteered

---

### W

Weighed  
Widened  
Won  
Worked  
Wrote

## RESOURCE: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell us about yourself!
2. Tell us about your educational background and professional experience.
3. Why do you want to become a school leader? Or, why do you want this position?
4. Talk about what you consider to be your greatest strengths. What are your greatest potential growth areas?
5. What are the three most important qualities a principal must possess?
6. What are you doing to keep abreast of developments in the field of education and school leadership?
7. What do you do to sustain your own personal and professional wellness?
8. What do you consider to be a principal's biggest pressure?
9. Describe your entry plan as you prepare to assume the leadership of your school.
10. What system do you use to manage your time and leadership responsibilities?
11. What is your role as principal (assistant principal, dean, etc.) in creating a culture of excellence for students and staff?
12. Tell us about a time you improved staff and student morale.
13. How do you involve students in the decision-making process?
14. How do you involve teachers in the decision-making process?
15. What do you do to keep your own implicit biases in check?
16. Describe an improvement process you led either in your current/previous classroom or leadership position. Did you achieve the outcome you expected? Why or why not?
17. Discuss your philosophy of discipline. Include effective methods you have used in the past. How do you feel about restorative justice practices?
18. What policies and procedures might a school put in place to address any identified discrepancies in the rates of suspension and expulsion of students of color or those students with disabilities? How might proactive behavior practices impact suspension and expulsion rates?
19. Tell us about a time when a teacher sends a student to you for disciplinary measures. You administer the consequences. The teacher gets upset because he/she feels the student did not receive enough punishment.
20. An informant (student) comes to you and reports that another student has brought drugs into the building. What would you do?
21. You receive information that requires the school to go into a hard lock-down. Explain the procedures you would use in this situation.
22. Several teachers have been grumbling in the lounge about lack of administrative support. What would you do?
23. How would you engage unmotivated students? Similarly, how would you build rapport with students who do trust authority figures?
24. What experience do you have with special education (IEPs) and with 504 plans?
25. What is your vision for special education?
26. Describe your experience with inclusive leadership.
27. How would you ensure all students and staff feel emotionally connected to and valued by our school community?
28. How would you describe your conflict resolution style?
29. What processes will you utilize to empower and develop the capacity of your teachers and staff overall?
30. What do you look for when assessing teacher performance? What steps will you take to assist a teacher who is struggling?
31. Describe a time when you supported or helped others to embrace change or risk-taking in their position.
32. How will you resolve a parental complaint when you know the teacher is in error?
33. What strategies would you use to continuously share your school's story?
34. What strategies have you used to effectively engage with families and the greater community?
35. Describe your communication style with staff, students, and parents.
36. What experience do you have with:
  - a. Data Driven Analysis
  - b. Curriculum Development
  - c. Monitoring Curriculum
  - d. Addressing Needs of At-Risk Students/Parents
  - e. Master Scheduling
  - f. Developing Teams/Programs
  - g. Encouraging Parent Involvement
  - h. School Improvement Planning
37. What are essential elements of quality schools?
38. What methods will you use to evaluate your school and its programs?
39. Are there any questions we did not ask you that you wish we had? If so, what are they?
40. Why do you feel you are the best candidate for this position?

# NOTES



**Illinois Principals Association**  
www.ilprincipals.org | 217.525.1383



**Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association**  
www.mespa.net | 651.999.7310



**School Administrators Association of New York State**  
www.saanys.org | 518.782.0600



**Indiana Association of School Principals**  
www.iasp.org | 317.891.9900



**Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals**  
www.maesp.com | 573.638.2460



**Association of Washington School Principals**  
www.awsp.org | 360.357.7951



**School Administrators of Iowa**  
www.sai-iowa.org | 515.267.1115



**Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals**  
www.moassp.org | 573.445.5071



**Association of Wisconsin School Administrators**  
www.awsawis.org | 608.241.0300



**New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association**  
www.njpsa.org | 609.860.1200

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