

CHAPTER I

Program Overview

Kentucky's Executive Leadership Series for Onboarding New Superintendents

The onboarding program designed for new superintendents is truly impressive, offering a layered and supported approach during the initial year. Led by experienced superintendents, the program features timely learning sessions that provide invaluable insights. Additionally, the networking opportunities are extensive, and the assignment of both a mentor superintendent and a director of executive coaching & mentoring ensures comprehensive and confidential support for new superintendents.

- Superintendent Todd Neace

Trimble County Schools

Cohort #12

Program Overview

Today's superintendents must be systems thinkers (Fullan, 2005; Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). They must understand the connection and alignment of all district dimensions while also understanding the relationship among the parts.

The Executive Leadership Series for Onboarding New Superintendents is the statewide induction program for first-year school superintendents in Kentucky. It is an extensive onboarding process that provides deeper knowledge levels, broadened skill sets, practical application, and dispositions for leadership based on five effectiveness standards for superintendents.

The Kentucky Association of School Administrators, in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), is the sole provider of the onboarding program, which is required by [KRS 156.111](#).

Important elements of the legislation include:

1. Required training and participation in the following components:
 - Core concepts of leadership quality best practice
 - Effective implementation of school-based decision-making
 - Kentucky school law
 - Kentucky school finance and budgeting
 - School curriculum and assessment
 - Instructional leadership
 - School improvement
 - Community and board relations
 - Effective communication
 - Ethical leadership
 - Executive coaching and mentoring program with an emphasis on demonstrated professional growth

To listen to this superintendent's message, click [here](#).



Program Overview Continued

2. A comprehensive collection of data and evidence demonstrating proficiency, which shall be delivered to KDE and the employing board of education during and at the conclusion of the training
3. Successful completion of the onboarding program within two years of taking office to maintain superintendent certification

Program Design

The program was designed by a team of experienced superintendents, KASA staff, and university representatives with support from Scholastic Achievement Partners and the International Center for Leadership in Education. The program is a continuous improvement model that includes the following elements:

1. Superintendent and district diagnostic data to inform and guide the training
2. Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) crafted by a team comprised of the new superintendent, director of executive coaching and mentoring, superintendent mentor, and a school board member liaison
3. Evidence-based self-assessments, including pre- and post-assessments of the superintendent standards, are integrated into the new superintendent implementation process alongside a 30-60-90-day plan and a professional growth plan. These documents are compiled in a digital portfolio and presented to the ILP team during a Capstone of Learning presentation at the end of year one. Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) data is also collected at the end of year one and used to guide mentoring sessions throughout year two.
4. Diverse learning modules in online formats that facilitate both customized learning from the ILP and a timely resource for new superintendents
5. Strong coaching and mentorship program with training and evaluation, including specific objectives outlined in the ILP and guidance throughout the onboarding process

I believe this program has been well organized and very informative from day one. It is professionally done; and the staff at KASA are great and easy to work with. Also, the collaboration time with other superintendents and building relationships is invaluable.

– Superintendent
Sean Horne, Ed.D.

Russell Ind. Schools

Cohort #2

Program Structure

Once a new superintendent is appointed, an onboarding team provides immediate and wraparound support through the leadership series. The team includes a number of high-performing team members who provide on-the-ground support, guidance, and professional learning.

ILP Team

The Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) team provides essential support, encouragement, and guidance to new superintendents. The team assesses current district needs while helping develop a flexible improvement plan that can be modified for the new superintendent in his or her ongoing decision-making process.

Executive Director of Coaching & Mentoring

The executive director of coaching and mentoring oversees and guides the new cohort superintendents, their mentors, and school board member liaisons through the onboarding process. The coach's duties are extensive and critical to the success of each new superintendent and to the onboarding program.

The director of executive coaching & mentoring possesses the highest credentials and is a former superintendent who remains actively involved in public education at the leadership level and exceeds the qualifications outlined in the [executive director of coaching & mentoring job description](#).

The ILP team quickly establishes itself as essential core support. Building trust and connections with these leaders is a key step for a new Superintendent. Their extensive knowledge and expertise can provide invaluable assistance when needed. Their coaching and encouragement to maintain a healthy work-life balance were greatly appreciated and always came at the right time. Undoubtedly, my first year as Superintendent was smoother, more productive, and more successful because of the support from my ILP team.

--Superintendent
Charles Broughton
Daviess County
Cohort #13

Program Structure Continued

Mentors are experienced superintendents who volunteer to serve in this capacity. They complete a required training program and possess the qualifications outlined in the [mentor job description](#).

Mentors are charged with guiding new superintendents through a successful first year, providing a continuum of ongoing support and timely learning. The mentor communicates frequently and meets in person and virtually at least four times throughout the year with the new superintendent.

School Board Member Liaison

A school board member liaison is selected by the new superintendent to serve on his or her ILP team. This team member serves as a liaison between the local board of education and the new superintendent, providing guidance and direction from the perspective of district needs and working to assimilate the new leader in the school district. Specific duties are outlined in the [school board member liaison job description](#).

Detailed job descriptions are located in the [appendix](#).

The onboarding process goes well beyond statutory requirements and theory by weaving practical, day-to-day, and just-in-time strategies throughout the process to help superintendents to be better educational leaders. The program (also) allows new superintendents to form a network of critical friends with fellow superintendents, mentors, and other state-wide educators and leaders.

– Superintendent
Brian Creasman, Ed.D.
Fleming County Schools
KY Supt. of the Year, 2019

Cohort #3

*Program Structure Continued***Professional Learning**

This part of the program focuses on the new superintendent's content knowledge base and his or her ability to apply it to the job. The director of faculty & curriculum, faculty members, program directors, support staff, and members of the Kentucky Department of Education team provide program support by sharing critical information to strengthen the first-year superintendent's knowledge base. It is important to note that faculty members are selected based on their area of expertise as proven in a particular field or content area. They are the state's top education leaders, are highly respected, and lead a school district or program of excellence. Faculty members who possess the highest levels of education, are award winners, and lead by example to facilitate the new superintendent's professional learning.

Curriculum for the onboarding program meets the requirements of [KRS 156.111](#). Core operational skills, a strong knowledge base, and both urgent and optional learning opportunities addressing new and emerging topics are embedded in the curriculum framework shown below. The professional learning provided by the faculty aids new superintendents in extending and refining their leadership vision, honing critical skills, addressing the most pressing challenges, and meeting essential goals.

Curriculum for Onboarding New Superintendents		
Community Engagement	Finance & Budgeting	Organizational Culture
Communication	Human Resources	Process Development through the Evaluation System
District Mission, Vision & Goals	Instructional Leadership Local Accountability Measures	School & District Governance
Education Law & Policy	Leadership: Foundational Framework & Practice	Strategic Planning & Visioning
Ethics & Personal Values	Operations	Supt.-School Board Relationships

**See pages 33-38 for more information*

Partner Support

New superintendents and partners are brought together in person so the new leader can meet the representatives from the organizations that support the work of public school districts and the students served. Partner organizations include the Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, Kentucky Center for School Safety, Kentucky School Boards Association, Kentucky High School Athletic Association, Education Professional Standards Board/Kentucky Educator Credentialing System, and Kentucky's Educational Cooperatives.

Standards-Based Model

The onboarding program is a standards-based model that focuses on the emerging challenges of leading teaching and learning efforts across the state. Five Superintendent Effectiveness Standards serve as a framework for understanding the complex elements of a superintendent's work.

Effectiveness Standards

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Strategic Leadership | 4. Human Resource Leadership |
| 2. Instructional Leadership | 5. Operational Leadership |
| 3. Cultural Leadership | |

The effectiveness standards aim to achieve the following:

1. Help superintendents focus on the most important aspects of the job
2. Serve as a roadmap for ongoing professional growth and effectiveness from career entry through career exit
3. Assist the ILP team in determining the new superintendent's successful completion of the onboarding program ([ILP Details](#))

The superintendent effectiveness standards serve as a roadmap for ongoing professional growth from career entry through career exit.

Standards-Based Model continued

Each new superintendent, guided by his or her ILP team, develops an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), which supports the evaluation conducted by the board of education for the new superintendent's annual evaluation. The plan is based on a rubric that outlines the five effectiveness standards and provides practices, indicators, and performance ratings. The plan provides opportunity for new superintendents to examine personal and district strengths. It also provides growth opportunities within the framework of the KASA Effectiveness Standards while building evidence and reflective benchmarks for the new superintendent's evaluation through an e-portfolio using the SuperEval platform.

The standards-based model serves to illustrate proficient performance on the part of the new superintendent while recognizing he or she is unlikely to possess all the competencies and skills inherent in each of the five effectiveness standards. Each new superintendent's ILP team uses the rubric to gauge his or her performance level for each of the standards. The performance levels are listed below.

Performance Levels



The ILP provides an opportunity for new superintendents to examine their personal and district strengths as well as growth opportunities within the framework of the effectiveness standards. Their ILP team will determine their successful completion of the program, which is a determining factor for maintaining certification in the state of Kentucky.

– Jan Lantz, Ed.D.
ILP Support

Standards-Based Model continued

During the first year, each new superintendent will synthesize his or her own performance against the standards. At the end of the training year, they will use their ILP artifacts and share their work with the board of education in a culminating Capstone of Learning presentation.

At the end of the first year, new superintendents complete the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), a 360-degree assessment based on 30 leadership behaviors. The LPI is aligned to the Superintendent Effectiveness Standards ([page 7](#)).

The ILP team will then make a consensus decision regarding the new superintendent's successful completion of the Executive Leadership Series for Onboarding New Superintendents or will recommend additional time in the program. This decision is a determining factor for a new superintendent to maintain his or her certification in the state of Kentucky. It is important to note a new superintendent's board of education is still responsible for the annual evaluation, which may or may not be distinct from the ILP team's performance appraisal.

Copies of the effectiveness standards and the ILP rubric are located in the [appendix](#).

Delivery Methods

A variety of methods are utilized to deliver the onboarding program content to new superintendents. Content and curriculum are provided using a timely method in accordance with the superintendent's work flow, timelines, and legal deadlines. Methods for delivery include:

1. In-person training led by experienced superintendents and other experts in the education field
2. Peer-to-peer interaction in a virtual or online community that includes a repository of resources

Completing the ILP was a process that allowed me to reflect meaningfully on my strengths and areas in need of improvement as a leader. The input and feedback from my ILP team members was an invaluable part of my growth. Creating the e-portfolio gave me an in-depth look at the effectiveness standards and allowed me to analyze my actions and decisions within the scope of the standards.

– Superintendent
Kent Campbell,
Perry Co. Schools
Cohort #12

Delivery Methods continued

3. Interaction and support provided by faculty members
4. On demand video resources
5. Group web conferencing and virtual meetings
6. Individual mentoring and executive coaching

What Superintendents Say About the Program

At the culmination of cohorts 1 and 2 (2012–13 and 2013–14, respectively), participants responded to questionnaires and participated in focus groups. The message was a resounding voice of approval.

The average combined feedback of the two cohorts reported a 97.5 percent satisfaction rate, indicating that they were “highly satisfied” with the program. Participants said they felt empowered and equipped to manage daily operations, in addition to leading their districts on budget, tax rates, education law and policy, and communications. Superintendents also said the program challenged them to take leadership of their own personal growth, forcing them to think proactively about the challenges in their district.

Finally, participants reported the program positively impacted their leadership skills by helping them build a statewide network of their peers, establish key relationships with mentors and other resources across the commonwealth, and prepare for their evaluation in the Superintendent Professional Growth and Effectiveness System standards. Session scores from Cohort 11 in 2022-23 ranged from 4.30-4.99 (on a 5.0 point scale). Focus groups are now conducted at the end of each Cohort year to gather data regarding suggested improvements to the Onboarding program for the next Cohort.

Although the first year as school superintendent is a busy one for us all, the time I spent as a part of New Superintendent Cohort 13 was well worth my time and critical to my success navigating the unfamiliar waters of a new role. The program is sequenced intentionally, with just-in-time information provided throughout the school year. The aspect I appreciated most, however, was the wisdom shared by sitting and retired superintendents who have been there, done that, and seen it all. As I near program completion, I now have the tools and positive momentum needed to move my district forward in year two!

– Superintendent

Tom Radivonyk
 Carlisle County Schools
 Cohort #13