
Shifting Paradigms in School Leadership

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has the second largest implementation of Reading First in the southeastern United States with 89 participating elementary schools. Keeping with the spirit of Reading First explicit and systematic professional development for teachers, a vehicle to impact leadership practice was developed. The creation of a trainer-multiplier model of Vanguard principals was the catalyst for this dynamic model of a principal-led, leadership practicum. Comprehensive and strategic professional development is provided to equip Vanguard principals with skills that can be replicated among their peers (Associates).



Creating a Vanguard Approach



The criteria developed for Vanguard participation begins with the “Receptive Factor”. Principals chosen to participate in the Vanguard group are

willing to break the bonds of leadership isolation. They are willing to be responsible for others. Expertise, the length and depth of administrative experience, was not a deciding factor. Vanguard members came from schools distributed geographically throughout the district and represented schools of all performance levels. Ten percent of the principals at the 89 participating Reading First schools were represented in the first cohort of Vanguard Principals. Phase II involves forty-one percent of all Reading First principals in M-DCPS demonstrating the evolution of the program into a multi-tiered approach.

Key Components for Replication

The goal is to reach all principals of Reading First schools using this Vanguard approach. Phase two introduces Associates to the first cohort of Vanguard Principals in which Vanguard Principals are partnered with two principals with 1-3 years of practice.

Key components necessary for replication of the Vanguard model are:

- 1 Begin with a small and intimate group of principals.
 - 2 Candidates should have a high “receptive factor”
 - 3 Length of experience is not a sole qualifier.
 - 4 Span the geographic and demographic needs of your district (including school grades).
 - 5 Provide uniquely designed, principal-specific professional development.
 - 6 Integrate sound research-based leadership practices.
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Inaugural Vanguard Principal Membership

Ms. Pauline Ward, Executive Director
Reading First - MDCPS

Mr. Arthur Head, Researcher
Florida Center for Reading Research- FSU

Ms. Johnnie Brown, Principal
Miami Gardens Elementary

Mr. Michael Charlot, Principal
Hubert O. Sibley Elementary

Dr. Liliane Delbor, Principal
Toussaint L'Ouverture Elementary

Ms. Olga Figueras, Principal
Fienberg/Fisher Elementary

Ms. Sally Hutchings, Principal
Olinda Elementary

Ms. Janice Hutson, Principal
Natural Bridge Elementary

Dr. Sharon Lopez, Principal
Riverside Elementary

Dr. Susan McEachin, Principal
Opa Locka Elementary

Ms. Cathleen McGinnis, Principal,
Frederick Douglass Elementary

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Miami-Dade County Public Schools

The Vanguard Approach: Changing the School Leadership Paradigm



A collaborative effort between Miami-Dade
County Public Schools and the Florida Center
for Reading Research and
Florida State University
