

Abstract

Empowering Education Leaders: Building Talent, Trust & Teams

CESA 3 provides support to 31 rural districts, serving 18,300+ students across SW WI. Twenty-three districts in the region are identified as high needs LEAs, and the racial diversity of our student population is growing. Proficiency rates on the 2021 state Forward Exam showed low levels of achievement overall, and results were even worse for students experiencing disparities. Wisconsin Educator Development Support and Retention (WEDSR) surveys of our teachers from 2020 to 2022 indicated declining positive sentiment in several domains related to Educator Effectiveness (EE). As for leadership, our principals wear various hats, as is often the case in rural settings, and at least a third of our principals have had fewer than five years in their current position. Fortunately, our region's leadership is cohesive and eager to embark on the activities outlined in this proposal to increase student outcomes in their districts and across the region.

In response to our needs assessment, a literature review identified research commissioned by the Wallace Foundation for a new review of the evidence base on the link between leadership and learning. (J. Grissom, A. Egalite, and C. Lindsay, 2021). This research report involved the synthesis of 219 studies representing both quantitative and qualitative methods. The resulting research report clearly identifies the role and leadership of principals as key to student achievement. This work provides the foundation for our proposal and related activities. Our goal in this effort is to create systems that enable our leaders to support their educators to best serve students in their academic achievement and future life success. This proposal provides a systematic approach to increasing principals' and other leaders' talent, trust, and team-building skills. Through this systems approach, CESA 3 will provide leaders with the resources for coaching and expert guidance to enhance their skills, leadership, and confidence in supporting the effectiveness of educators in their schools. Additionally, they will be equipped with the knowledge and resources necessary to complete systems review of their school-based on data analysis of staff and student data sources. This systems approach drives our work toward the overall goal of improving long-term outcomes for all students in the CESA 3.

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