**MISSOURI LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

Transformational Learning – Moving Beyond Competence

11/20/19

Early in the development of the Missouri Leadership Development System (MLDS), the design team envisioned meaningful professional learning that acknowledges the varying needs and different stages of leadership learning and practice. The Aspiring Level seeks to introduce degree seeking candidates to the language, perspectives, and competencies of the principalship and MLDS based learning. As of this writing, member institutions of the Missouri Professors of Educational Administration (MPEA) are working to incorporate Aspiring Level learning experiences and treatments into their degree programs.

Emerging Level content takes principals through the first two years of leadership practice and sets the foundation for the Developing Level engagement as school leaders move from novice to experienced professionals. As Clark Mershon, Executive Director of the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals (MOASSP) notes, in the Emerging Level our intent is to see principals survive, while the Developing Level gives them what they need to thrive. Now, with the addition of three learning experiences and twenty-four treatments the Transformational Level (TL) of the MLDS is in print.

While the MLDS is anchored on the development of specific leadership competencies, the TL seeks to move participating principals beyond competence. When discussing continuous improvement, it is appropriate to think in terms of incremental change within a particular paradigm. In defining the intent of the TL of MLDS learning, it is more accurate to think in terms of elevated leadership focus, process, and practice as the driving force behind fundamental change within an organization. With the addition of the TL content, twelve Learning Experiences, encompassing ninety-eight specific treatments, are now available to Missouri principals. The three new LEs are: Principles of Servant Leadership, Principles of Systems Thinking, and Principles of Personal and Professional Sustainability.

In Principles of Servant Leadership, the learning leans on Robert K. Greenleaf’s inquiry test of servant leadership, “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely to serve others. Understanding the underlying values of servant leadership, what it means to create meaningful work, and engage in purposeful action are hallmarks of becoming a servant leader.

Systems thinking prompts practitioners to recognize the factors that forge the success of people, programs, and systems. Understanding existing paradigms and inevitable shifts, the effect of multiple structures working in concert, or not, and the degree of influence those structures exert, enable future looking leaders to be responsive to changing demands and expectations while managing those persistent dilemmas that often confound school effectiveness.

Finally, in understanding the Principles of Personal and Professional Sustainability, getting a handle on the physical, social/emotional, spiritual, and professional frames of extended leadership is critical. Being “in charge”, especially over the long term, is more than a career choice. It is a lifestyle. In a career that demands so much, establishing and utilizing processes and networks that promote continued learning and the benefits from mutual support are not just important, but essential.

While your personal version of, *How to Be a Principal* is still subject to edits and revisions, the MLDS offers learning leaders the opportunity to attend to their professional growth as they guide their school and community to better. Take the time to investigate what meaningful learning, with a strong dose of practical application, can do for your leadership practice by contacting the leadership development specialist in your Regional Professional Development Center, checking out the MLDS webpage <https://dese.mo.gov/educator-quality/educator-development/missouri-leadership-development-system> or contact Jim Masters, MLDS Coordinator at [jim.masters@dese.mo.gov](mailto:jim.masters@dese.mo.gov) or by phone 573 751 - 8859