

Consortium for  
Educational  
Research and  
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North  
Carolina

# North Carolina's Future-Ready Leadership Program:

An Overview of Current Data

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## **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary .....	2
Introduction.....	5
Background and Purpose .....	6
Overview of the Evaluation .....	6
Purpose of this Report.....	6
Data Source, Sample, and Measures.....	7
Data Source.....	7
Participant Sample .....	7
Findings.....	8
Evaluation Question 1: How is the FRL Initiative Operationalized and Implemented? .....	8
Evaluation Question 2: To What Extent does FRL Reach the Intended Participants?.....	8
Evaluation Question 3: To What Extent does the FRL Program Meet Standards of High-Quality Professional Development? .....	9
Evaluation Question 4: To What Extent did Participants Acquire Intended Knowledge and Skills as a Result of their Participation in FRL?.....	12
Evaluation Question 5: What was the Impact of FRL on Participants' Practices?.....	13
Further Explorations of Potential Program Impacts .....	14
The FRL Experience for Participants in Schools Led by DLP Principals .....	15
Outcomes for FRL Participants Relative to Non-Participants .....	16
Limitations and Next Steps.....	17
Limitations .....	17
Next Steps.....	17
Appendix A. FRL Session Detail.....	18
Appendix B. End-of-Year FRL Participant Survey .....	19

## **NORTH CAROLINA'S FUTURE-READY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT DATA**

### **Executive Summary**

#### ***Introduction and Background***

North Carolina's four-year Race to the Top (RttT) grant supported assistant principals through a professional development initiative known as Future-Ready Leadership (FRL). The FRL program was developed and provided by the North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals' Association (NCPAPA) in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). Each year, participating assistant principals take part in six cohort-based face-to-face sessions and engage in assignments, projects, and readings designed to build their capacity as "future-ready" school leaders and as a result build the capacity of their schools.

There are five major intended outcomes for FRL participants:<sup>1</sup>

1. Gain a deeper understanding of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives and their application to the assistant principal and principal roles;
2. Gain an awareness and understanding of the leadership competencies necessary for effective school leadership and identify their strengths and areas for growth;
3. Engage in role clarification with their principals to assure that they are making significant contributions in each of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives;
4. Develop a plan with their principals for their own professional growth as school leaders; and
5. Become involved in a statewide network and community of learners with other assistant principals.

The Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation–North Carolina (CERE–NC) conducted an independent external evaluation of the implementation and impacts of FRL activities from January 2012 to 2013. This report provides a summative evaluation of the FRL program that focuses on the following five research questions:

#### *Implementation of FRL*

1. How is the FRL initiative operationalized and implemented?

#### *Quality of Professional Development*

2. To what extent does FRL reach the intended participants?
3. To what extent does the FRL program meet standards of high-quality professional development?

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncpapa.org/FRL.html>

### *Impact of the FRL Program*

4. To what extent did participants acquire intended knowledge and skills as a result of their participation in FRL?
5. What was the impact of FRL on participants' practices?

The report ends with an investigation of differences in participant perceptions based on whether their principals participated in a related program (NCPAPA's Distinguished Leadership in Practice program), and also of differences in the formal evaluation ratings of participants and non-participants.

### *Data and Methods*

Data for this report were assembled from administrative data maintained by NCPAPA, informal interviews conducted by the Evaluation Team, and other external artifacts to better understand the implementation, quality of professional development, and impact of FRL. In addition, the Evaluation Team developed and deployed an end-of-year FRL participant survey that was administered to all participants in the first and second cohorts. The sample for this report includes all participants enrolled between January 2012 and May 2013 (193 assistant principals).

### *Findings*

#### *Implementation of FRL*

- *Multifaceted approach to professional development.* NCPAPA developed and implemented the FRL curriculum, utilized knowledgeable facilitators to deliver high-quality professional development, and provided assignments that required participants to engage their school staff.
- *Effective selection process.* Program officials used a complex selection process to identify school leaders who were prepared to benefit from the program.
- *Diverse participant population.* Participants represented over 70 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and included leadership from elementary, middle, high, and combined schools. In addition, participants came from small (9%), medium (55%), and large (36%) LEAs. Differences in race and gender were not tracked.

#### *Quality of Professional Development*

- *Overall high quality.* Surveyed participants agreed that the FRL program was useful, with few areas for improvement. Participants also agreed that the sessions had clear objectives.
- *Importance of collaboration with peers.* Overwhelmingly, surveyed participants agreed that the most beneficial aspect of FRL was the ability to collaborate with their peers during and outside of professional development sessions.
- *Alignment of content.* Although a few respondents indicated they would prefer the content to have a better alignment with their school's needs, the majority of participants agreed that nothing needed to be improved for future cohorts.

*Impact of the FRL Program*

- *Increase in knowledge.* Overwhelmingly, surveyed participants indicated that the FRL program helped them build knowledge about effective school leadership strategies. In addition, participants agreed they had a better understanding of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives.
- *Support for collaborative school environments.* Participants also indicated that, since completing the program, they are more likely to encourage a collaborative school environment that targets student outcomes.
- *Statistically significant difference in North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES) scores.* Participants from the second FRL cohort exhibited statistically significant growth in their NCEES scores after participation. Although participants from the first cohort showed growth, it was not statistically significant.

*Next Steps*

The primary goal of this evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the initiative and its impact; however, given that data for this report were limited to the first and second cohort, future research should include participants from the third cohort and should continue to follow the previous groups to assess change over a longer period of time. In addition, resources for this evaluation were limited; if further funding becomes available, the Team recommends the use of focus groups, case studies, and observations in order to gain a deeper understanding of the program and its impacts.

## **Introduction**

Providing high-quality, accessible professional development to all teachers and administrators is a critical component of the professional development plan funded by North Carolina's federal Race to the Top (RttT) grant. The preliminary positive findings for the Distinguished Leadership in Practice (DLP)<sup>2</sup> professional development program for principals inspired the creation of a similar initiative designed for assistant principals, entitled Future-Ready Leadership (FRL). This initiative is aligned to the North Carolina Standards for School Executives—the performance evaluation standards adopted by the State Board of Education for North Carolina's school leaders.<sup>3</sup> In the FRL cohort-driven model, assistant principals participate in six face-to-face sessions and engage in assignments, projects, and readings designed to build their capacity as “future-ready” school leaders and as a result build the capacity of their schools.

There are five major intended outcomes identified for FRL participants:<sup>4</sup>

1. Gain a deeper understanding of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives and their application to the assistant principal and principal roles;
2. Gain an awareness and understanding of the leadership competencies necessary for effective school leadership and identify their strengths and areas for growth;
3. Engage in role clarification with their principals to assure that they are making significant contributions in each of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives;
4. Develop a plan with their principals for their own professional growth as school leaders; and
5. Become involved in a statewide network and community of learners with other assistant principals.

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<sup>2</sup> DLP is a series of professional development trainings for principals that focuses on effective leadership and developing a positive school culture/climate; the first two DLP evaluations can be downloaded at:

[http://cerenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/NC-RttT\\_TDLP-Report\\_-9-3-12.pdf](http://cerenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/NC-RttT_TDLP-Report_-9-3-12.pdf) and [http://cerenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/FINAL\\_DLP-2012-13-Evaluation-Report-11-7-13.pdf](http://cerenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/FINAL_DLP-2012-13-Evaluation-Report-11-7-13.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/effectiveness-model/ncees/standards/princ-asst-princ-standards.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ncpapa.org/FRL.html>

## **Background and Purpose**

### *Overview of the Evaluation*

North Carolina's RttT proposal included a commitment to conduct independent evaluations of each grant-funded initiative, including FRL. This evaluation is being conducted by the Consortium for Educational Research and Evaluation–North Carolina (CERE–NC), a partnership of the Education Policy Initiative at Carolina at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University, and the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

### *Purpose of this Report*

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide information about the implementation and impact of the FRL initiative, which was designed to strengthen the leadership practices of assistant principals. This evaluation study is one part of a larger effort to evaluate the implementation and impact of North Carolina's RttT professional development initiatives in order to determine if the initiatives, as implemented, have led to the intended outcomes with respect to school leader practice, the culture and climate of achievement at those leaders' schools, and, potentially, teacher and student performance. This report provides a summative evaluation of the FRL program that focuses on the following five research questions:

#### *Implementation of FRL*

1. How is the FRL initiative operationalized and implemented?

#### *Quality of Professional Development*

2. To what extent does FRL reach the intended participants?
3. To what extent does the FRL program meet standards of high-quality professional development?

#### *Impact of the FRL Program*

4. To what extent did participants acquire intended knowledge and skills as a result of their participation in FRL?
5. What was the impact of FRL on participants' practices?

The report ends with an investigation of differences in participant perceptions based on whether their principals participated in a related program (NCPAPA's Distinguished Leadership in Practice program), and also of differences in the formal evaluation ratings of participants and non-participants.

## Data Source, Sample, and Measures

### Data Source

The Evaluation Team used a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the FRL program. Qualitative methods included analyses of open-ended responses from an end-of-year FRL participant survey, external artifacts, and informal interviews with program administrators. Quantitative methods included analyses of NCPAPA administrative data, Likert responses from the end-of-year survey, and North Carolina Educator Evaluation System (NCEES) ratings. With the exception of the end-of-year survey and NCEES scores, all data for this report were obtained from NCPAPA (Table 1).

Table 1. Data Sources

Data Source	Purpose
NCPAPA Administrative Data	Provide demographic information of past participants from the first and second cohorts
End-of-Year FRL Participant Survey*	Gather participants' perceptions of their own knowledge gained from the program and its usefulness
External Artifacts	Provide general information about the program (e.g., content descriptions, interest applications, agendas, etc.)
Informal Interviews	Provide general information about the structure of the program
NCEES	Compare NCEES scores of FRL and non-FRL participants

\*See Appendix B for this survey.

### Participant Sample

A total of 364 assistant principals have participated in FRL since its inception in January 2012 (Table 2). Although a total of three cohorts have completed the FRL program, this evaluation report focuses only on data from participants who attended the first and second cohort sessions; the third cohort did not complete the program in time for inclusion in the evaluation. By May 2013, a total of 190 assistant principals had completed the full complement of FRL sessions in either Raleigh or Charlotte, with 98 assistant principals participating in the first cohort and 92 assistant principals in the second.

Table 2. Demographics of FRL Participants

Cohort/Region	Elementary	Middle	High	Combined Schools	Unknown	Total
1- Raleigh	30	12	7	0	1	50
1- Charlotte	20	11	16	0	1	48
2- Raleigh	17	13	18	2	0	50
2- Charlotte	17	12	12	1	0	42
3- Raleigh*	22	16	19	0	0	57
3- Charlotte*	21	14	19	3	0	57
3- RESA*	29	16	14	1	0	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>364</b>

\*Cohort entered program August 2013; due to this report's timing, they are not included in the evaluation.

Source: NCPAPA administrative data



## Findings

### *Evaluation Question 1: How is the FRL Initiative Operationalized and Implemented?*

FRL is composed of six daylong sessions that target various features of leadership. During each session, program officials present four to nine segments that provide in-depth coverage of the session topic. The six sessions are listed in Table 3; Appendix A includes a breakdown of each session's segments.

Table 3. FRL Session Titles

Session	Title
Session 1	Understanding Your Role in Applying the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (NCSSE)
Session 2	What Every School Leaders Needs to Know about Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Session 3	Instructional Leadership that Builds Teacher Effectiveness
Session 4	How Leaders Create Authentic Professional Learning Communities
Session 5	How Leaders Create a Healthy School Culture
Session 6	Maximizing Student and Adult Relationships

After each session, program officials asked participants to complete assignments, projects, and readings; participants are expected to report the results of their assignment during the next session. A review of external artifacts revealed little to no variation in the curriculum across cohorts; however, there were changes between the first and second cohort in timeline, duration, and staffing. The first cohort began in January 2012 and ended in May 2012. During this five-month span, sessions occurred at least once a month, and varying numbers of facilitators administered each session. The second cohort began in September 2012 and ended in May 2013. During this nine-month span, sessions usually took place every other month, but in some cases the time between sessions was six weeks. During the second cohort, three facilitators administered each session.

Program officials recruited potential participants by sending out applications for enrollment to assistant principals across the state. Officials required applicants to obtain signatures from their principal and superintendent to indicate a commitment from school and Local Education Agency (LEA) administration for support. Additional information about selection is included in the next section.

### *Evaluation Question 2: To What Extent does FRL Reach the Intended Participants?*

The objective of FRL is to help assistant principals to become effective instructional leaders within their schools. Although the intent was to make this program available for all assistant principals, program officials utilized various sampling methods to attempt to select groups of participants that were reflective of the range of schools statewide. The first selection consideration was the size of each applicant's LEA. One program official indicated that the initiative aimed to select participants from as many LEAs as possible, and an analysis of

administrative data indicates that participants in the first and second cohorts represented at least 71 LEAs. Second, FRL officials selected participants proportionately from elementary, middle, and high schools. For Cohorts 1 and 2, 44% of participants came from elementary schools, 25% from middle schools, 27% from high schools, 2% from combined schools, and 1% from “unknown” schools (Table 2, above). The third and final method program officials used to select participants was a review of referrals from each LEA. In rare occasions where multiple applicants from the same LEA applied to the program, an official would contact the LEA superintendent for her or his recommendation. Given the limited number of openings for the program, officials used this method to ensure that the best applicants attended FRL. Program officials reported that no consideration was given to applicants’ race or gender.

In addition to utilizing various sampling methods to construct a representative pool of administrators, program officials also sought to select individuals who were committed to improving as professionals. When asked about their reasons for applying to the FRL program in the end-of-year participant survey, the most common response from participants was personal growth (80%; Table 4).

*Table 4. Reasons for Applying to the FRL Program*

<b>Why did you apply to the FRL program?</b>	<b>Percentage (n=105)</b>
Personal growth (sought out myself)	80%
Suggestion from my principal	9%
Suggestion from someone in my district	7%
Suggestion from a peer	3%

*Source:* End-of-year FRL participant survey

Officials stated that the program is not intended to serve as a mechanism to transition participants into a principalship; however, over a quarter of surveyed respondents transitioned to a principalship the following year. Given that 26% of surveyed participants are now principals, it may be worthwhile for program officials to consider transition as an outcome of interest for further study. Of the remaining surveyed FRL participants, 56% stayed at their original schools as assistant principals, and 13% moved to new schools but kept their positions as assistant principals.

***Evaluation Question 3: To What Extent does the FRL Program Meet Standards of High-Quality Professional Development?***

Overall, surveyed participants agreed that the quality of professional development was high and needed little to no improvement. Participants agreed that FRL provided an important opportunity for them to collaborate with peers and gain relevant resources.

In the end-of-year survey, participants used a 5-point scale to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with items related to the usefulness of the face-to-face sessions. Almost all participants indicated that the sessions had clear objectives and were of high quality (Table 5, following page). In addition, participants agreed that the professional development was relevant to their needs as assistant principals.

Table 5. Percent of Participants who Agreed/Strongly Agreed with Survey Items about Quality of Face-to-Face Sessions

<b>The face-to-face sessions . . .</b>	<b>Strongly Agree &amp; Agree (n=108-111)</b>
had clear objectives.	99%
were of high quality overall.	98%
were relevant to my professional development needs.	97%
were well structured.	97%
included adequate opportunities for participants to consider applications to their own professional practice.	97%
were led by an effective facilitator.	96%
included adequate opportunities for participants to share their knowledge and/or experiences.	96%
provided me with useful resources.	95%
were engaging.	95%
met my expectations.	95%
were held at locations convenient for my participation.	93%
were scheduled at times convenient for my participation.	92%
were enhanced by the use of technology (during the sessions).	92%

Source: End-of-year FRL participant survey

When asked about the most beneficial aspect of FRL, most participants identified collaborating with peers as most valuable (Table 6, following page). Besides collaboration, participants indicated that the relevant content, access to resources, access to knowledgeable presenters, and the practical approach to the NC Standards for School Executives also were valuable components to their professional development experience.

Table 6. Themes from Participants' Open-Ended Comments about the Most Beneficial or Valuable Part of FRL

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	n	Illustrative Quote
Collaboration with peers	77	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The most valuable part of the experience was the ability to create personal connections with other school leaders while developing a better understanding of my role as the assistant principal.”</li> <li>• “I enjoyed the collaboration and networking. There were valuable ideas shared during the sessions that I could not have gotten otherwise.”</li> </ul>
Relevant content	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Each time I attended FRL the material directly related to my job. Many times administrators attend staff development that they will never be able to use. With FRL this was not the case.”</li> <li>• “The ability to participate in a workshop directly relevant to my professional development needs as an assistant principal.”</li> </ul>
Access to resources	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The resources I gained have been of most value to me. I would not have had the opportunity to hear the speakers, learn from them, get a better perspective on the job as an administrator had FRL not been funded for me. The information via handouts, notes, and other documentation have been a constant resource.”</li> <li>• “Access to resources both human and material.”</li> </ul>
Access to knowledgeable presenters	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Very knowledgeable presenters with proven track record of success in educational leadership; being able to share with other leaders in the state.”</li> <li>• “The presenters were excellent and provided excellent, proven leadership skills and responses to issues that were addressed by the cohort. Each facilitator was personable and are still available for mentoring, which I have utilized consistently since graduating from the cohort.”</li> </ul>
Practical approach to the Executive Standards	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The focus on the School Executive standards was most beneficial, allowing me to better support my principal as we move the school forward.”</li> <li>• “My most beneficial part of the FRL was the in-depth defining of the standards for administrators. The structure was sequential and clearly defined by individuals with a broad knowledge-based understanding that gave meaningful examples for each standard.”</li> </ul>

Source: End-of-year FRL participant survey

When asked how FRL could be improved for future cohorts, 39 percent—the largest proportion—stated that the overall quality was good and that no improvements were needed (Table 7, following page). Of those who did indicate an area of improvement, participants suggested having the content better align to their needs, creating natural groupings within cohorts, increasing session duration, and offering more opportunities to collaborate with peers.

Table 7. Themes from Participants' Open-Ended Comments about Aspects of FRL that could be Improved for Future Cohorts

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	n	Illustrative Quote
Overall quality was good	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I really don’t think there needs to be much improvement. The fact that APs are allowed to come together and discuss specific issues that relate directly to them is quite ideal.”</li> <li>• “FRL is an excellent program. The main thing that it needs to keep doing for future cohorts [are] maintain its immediate relevance and ‘take back’ to school.”</li> </ul>
Better align content to needs	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “More presentations from current administrators in the state about effective practices that have been proven successful in their schools.”</li> <li>• “Ask the participants what their specific needs are so that it can be more beneficial to them. Administrators are more apt to participate when they know they will be receiving something that they will need in order to be successful.”</li> </ul>
Identify natural groupings within cohorts (e.g., region, content, etc.)	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It may help to have regional cohorts so that better networking occurs in the regions where people are close to each other and have common student populations.”</li> <li>• “Cohorts that are more specific to areas (i.e., breakout sessions for high school, elementary, etc. in lieu of all being together).”</li> </ul>
Increase session length/duration	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “More sessions to allow for more participation and talk time for APs.”</li> <li>• “When I was involved it was over one semester. Looking back, I would have liked it to be a little longer and give me more opportunities for ‘homework’ applications of what we were working on.”</li> </ul>
Offer more collaboration	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I think it would be helpful to have more time to talk/share ideas of the successful things that are being done in individual schools.”</li> <li>• “More time for discussion with peers during the face-to-face time. This will allow participants to hear more ideas and strategies utilized at other schools.”</li> </ul>

Source: End-of-year FRL participant survey

**Evaluation Question 4: To What Extent did Participants Acquire Intended Knowledge and Skills as a Result of their Participation in FRL?**

Results from the end-of-year survey suggest that participants developed a better understanding of how to be effective leaders in their schools as a result of their participation in FRL. Almost all surveyed participants (98%) agreed that they received pertinent training on effective school leadership strategies through their FRL experiences (Table 8, following page). Overall, the high ratings in acquired knowledge align with participants’ positive perspectives of the usefulness of FRL.

Table 8. Percent of Participants who Agreed/Strongly Agreed with Survey Items about Developing a Better Understanding of Program Components

<b>Through my participation in FRL, I developed a better understanding of . . .</b>	<b>Strongly Agree &amp; Agree (n=107-109)</b>
effective school leadership strategies.	98%
my areas for growth as a school leader.	98%
NC Standards for School Executives.	96%
my strengths as a school leader.	96%
connections between curriculum, instruction, and assessment.	96%
how to build teacher effectiveness.	96%
how to create a healthy school culture.	94%
my role as an assistant principal.	93%
Professional Learning Communities.	92%
how to maximize student and adult relationships.	92%

Source: End-of-year FRL participant survey

**Evaluation Question 5: What was the Impact of FRL on Participants' Practices?**

When asked to describe the extent to which participants applied knowledge and skills gained from FRL to their leadership positions, the assistant principals largely indicated that FRL inspired them to foster a collaborative school environment focused on student outcomes and also helped them to ensure that their school culture supported the goals of their schools (Table 9). Results from this survey item also show that many participants applied their knowledge and skills to ensure that their school's vision, mission, and goals aligned with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning principles.

Table 9. Percent of Participants who Agreed/Strongly Agreed with Survey Items about the Extent they Applied the Knowledge and Skills Gained from FRL

<b>I have applied the knowledge and skills gained in FRL to . . .</b>	<b>Strongly Agree &amp; Agree (n=107-108)</b>
encourage a collaborative school environment focused on student outcomes.	94%
help to ensure that the school culture supports the goals of my school.	94%
help to ensure that the vision, mission, and goals of my school are aligned with 21 <sup>st</sup> century learning.	92%
support in improving processes and systems that ensure high-performing staff.	91%
facilitate distributed governance and shared decision-making at my school.	91%
support in improving managerial tasks that allow staff to focus on teaching and learning.	90%
assist in designing structures or processes that result in community engagement, support, and ownership.	88%

Source: End-of-year FRL participant survey

Through open-ended items on the end-of-year survey, participants provided examples of how they implemented what they learned from FRL. Paralleling their responses on close-ended items, participants' open-ended comments suggested that, once they completed the program, they believed that they were more likely to address and improve school culture (Table 10).

Participants also stated that the program helped them to focus on improving instructional leadership for their teachers, providing professional development for all school staff, adjusting the school mission and vision, and utilizing resources provided by the FRL program.

*Table 10. Themes from Participants' Opened-Ended Comments about How They Implemented what They Learned*

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	n	Illustrative Quote
Address school culture	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "A lot of information we received on building and transforming culture has proven beneficial in my growth and the development of my school's culture."</li> <li>• "I am using some of the things we learned to help change the culture of our school with the use of data to help with this change."</li> </ul>
Improve instructional leadership	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I have utilized strategies learned in assisting teachers with instruction in the classroom."</li> <li>• "I have implemented better listening skills and ways to empower teachers to facilitate learning for all students in spite of students' disabilities, behavior, or any other barriers."</li> </ul>
Provide professional development	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Revisited and adjusted my professional development plan to include more meaningful, focused goals."</li> <li>• "One thing I've implemented is improving the culture of the school by offering weekly professional development that is tailored to the needs of the teachers and students."</li> </ul>
Alter the schools' mission/vision	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "We made changes to our school vision as a staff and have included more teachers in the decision-making process."</li> <li>• "We have revisited and developed a school vision plan."</li> </ul>
Utilize resources	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The websites that were provided are used as resources throughout the school year."</li> <li>• "This program assisted with understanding students' achievement and how to best utilize resources to help students grow and become more productive. This was incredibly helpful in moving my school forward over the past two years."</li> </ul>

Source: End-of-year FRL participant survey

### ***Further Explorations of Potential Program Impacts***

In order to explore findings related to participation in the FRL program (findings for Evaluation Questions 3, 4, and 5) further, the Evaluation Team conducted two additional analyses: 1) a comparison of the experiences of FRL participants whose principals attended NCPAPA's sister program for principals (the Distinguished Leadership in Practice [DLP] program) to those whose

principals did not; and 2) a comparison of the NCEES ratings of FRL participants and non-FRL participants.

*The FRL Experience for Participants in Schools Led by DLP Principals*

The Team compared the survey responses of participants whose principals participated in DLP to the responses of those whose principals did not. As described earlier, DLP is a similar professional development initiative that is only provided to principals. By comparing participants who worked for principals who either completed DLP or did not, the Team attempted to determine whether there were any early indications that participation by school leadership in both initiatives collectively creates a larger impact. According to data collected from the end-of-year survey, 22 percent of FRL participants worked for principals who participated in DLP, while 65 percent worked for principals who did not (13 percent did not respond to the question).

Raw response rates on the end-of-year survey data for FRL participants whose principals participated in DLP either were higher than or the same as those for participants whose principals did not participate (Table 11), but when the Team applied a two-tailed *t*-test to the two groups of responses, there were no statistically significant differences. Readers should note that this analysis suffers from a small sample size, which limits the ability to detect statistical significance.

*Table 11. Responses Based on Principals' Participation in DLP*

<b>I have applied the knowledge and skills gained in FRL to . . .</b>	<b>% Strongly Agree &amp; Agree</b>		<b>% Difference</b>
support in improving managerial tasks that allow staff to focus on teaching and learning.	Participated	95%	+7%
	Did Not	88%	
help to ensure that the vision, mission, and goals of my school are aligned with 21st century learning.	Participated	95%	+4%
	Did Not	91%	
assist in designing structures or processes that result in community engagement, support, and ownership.	Participated	91%	+4%
	Did Not	87%	
encourage a collaborative school environment focused on student outcomes.	Participated	95%	+2%
	Did Not	93%	
help to ensure that the school culture supports the goals of my school.	Participated	95%	+1%
	Did Not	94 %	
support in improving processes and systems that ensure high-performing staff.	Participated	91%	0%
	Did Not	91%	
facilitate distributed governance and shared decision-making at my school.	Participated	91%	0%
	Did Not	91%	

Source: End-of-year FRL participant survey



*Outcomes for FRL Participants Relative to Non-Participants*

The Team also was interested in the extent to which changes in participants' NCEES scores differed from their peers. The Team matched FRL participants to a group of non-FRL participants and compared their mean ratings across the seven NCEES standards from both before and after participation. Participants were matched to non-participants based on years of experience as an assistant principal, administrator licensure test scores, years of teaching experience, and whether they worked at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Table 12 shows the mean ratings for participants and non-participants in 2010-11 and 2012-13 as well as the growth in NCEES ratings between the two years.

The overall mean NCEES ratings before and after participating in FRL were not statistically different between FRL and non-FRL participants; however, participants from the second cohort showed significantly higher growth in NCEES ratings between 2011 and 2013 than did the matched non-participants. Participants from the first cohort also exhibited higher growth in their NCEES ratings, but not at a statistically significant level.

*Table 12. NCEES Ratings in 2011 & 2013*

Cohort	n	2011 NCEES			2013 NCEES			Growth		
		FRL	Non-FRL	t-statistic	FRL	Non-FRL	t-statistic	FRL	Non-FRL	t-statistic
Cohort 1 (1/12–5/12)	46	3.49	3.57	-0.68	3.63	3.55	0.54	0.13	-0.01	0.98
Cohort 2 (9/12–5/13)	21	3.38	3.65	-1.47	3.86	3.70	0.96	0.48	0.05	2.37*
All FRL Participants	67	3.46	3.55	-0.92	3.70	3.67	0.30	0.24	0.12	1.01

*Note:* This table includes results for a subsample of participants for whom administrative McREL scores were available in both the 2010-11 and 2012-13 school years. This sub-sample includes 46 participants in Cohort 1, 21 participants in Cohort 2, and 67 comparison administrators. FRL participants were matched to comparison administrators based on years of experience as an assistant principal, administrator licensure test scores, years of teaching experience, and whether they worked at the elementary, middle, or high school level. A two-tailed *t*-test was conducted to establish the statistical significance of differences between groups at the  $+<0.1$  level and  $*<.05$  level.

*Source:* NCEES

## **Limitations and Next Steps**

### *Limitations*

Only 119 of the 190 assistant principals who attended the first and second cohorts participated in the end-of-year participant survey. With a 63 percent response rate, it is possible that the data from that measure are not wholly representative of the underlying population participating in FRL. In addition, due to the timing of this report, the evaluation was limited to data from assistant principals who participated in the first and second cohorts of the FRL program. Finally, the Team was unable to analyze data from a second set of surveys administered on paper—end-of-session surveys—because program staff were unable to locate them.

### *Next Steps*

Follow-up evaluations should include participants from the third cohort and also should use additional qualitative methodologies to better understand the extent to which and mechanisms by which FRL impacts assistant principals. The Evaluation Team recommends the following analyses for future research:

- Analyze FRL program assignments for evidence of increased knowledge and application of new skills;
- Conduct focus groups and interviews with area superintendents, principals, and teacher leaders to evaluate the extent of impact;
- Conduct case studies at randomly selected schools with current participants of FRL; and
- Examine school-wide data from professional learning communities.

The Evaluation Team also recommends continuation of the following evaluation strategies:

- Reviews of educator evaluation ratings (e.g., NCEES) to determine whether FRL participants have a higher score compared to non-FRL participants; and
- Examination of schools with principals and assistant principals who attended both DLP and FRL.

In addition to addressing the impact of FRL, further research should focus on the implementation of the program. The Evaluation Team recommends ongoing reviews and analyses of end-of-session surveys, administrative data collected by NCPAPA, and observational data gathered during FRL sessions. The Team also recommends that NCPAPA convert all surveys to a digital format to allow for all data to be housed securely and to help support future evaluations.

**Appendix A. FRL Session Detail**

<b>Segment</b>	<b>Session 1: Understanding your role in applying the NC Standards for executives</b>	<b>Session 2: What every school leaders needs to know about curriculum, instruction and assessment</b>	<b>Session 3: Instructional Leadership that builds teacher effectiveness</b>	<b>Session 4: How leaders create authentic PLCs</b>	<b>Session 5: How leaders create a healthy school culture</b>	<b>Session 6: Maximizing student and adult relationships</b>
1	Recognizing the changing role of the AP in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	Review of today & session 1	Creating an instructional management system	Creating authentic PLCs: Conceptual tools	Introduction to culture & its importance in driving organizations	Understanding engagement vs. compliance
2	Examining the landscape of AP's role in implementing the NCSSE High performance model	NCSSE High Performance & instructional leadership	Supporting teachers and teach growth	Facilitating the creation of authentic PLCs: Practical tools	Strategies for reading, assessing, & changing the culture of a school	Student positive behavior support
3	Examining the NCSSE leadership competencies & personal styles impact on time management	Distributed leadership in curriculum, instruction & assessment	Using classroom walkthroughs	Job-embedded professional learning: Conceptual tools	Characteristics of top-notch & toxic cultures	A personal change model
4	The AP's role in school governance & shared/distributive decision-making	Landscape of International, national, state, & LEA/school instructional drivers	Improving instructional coaching language skills	Using data to support continuous improvement: Practical tools	Culture leadership; implications for your IGP & personal vision; next steps	Building ownership and involvement in schools
5	The AP's role in developing or reimagining a school's identity	Shaping the AP's role in curriculum, instruction & assessment	Improving instructional coaching language skills	---	---	Manage conflict
6	Data driven decision making & the PDCA cycle: Embedding the PDCA cycle in the Assistant Principalship	Examining the impact of CC and Essential Standards on teaching and learning	Improving observational skills: Viewing a real lesson	---	---	Communicating effectively
7	IGP Reflections & Planning Improvement Cycle	Effective practices for embedding the partnership for 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills in student learning, activities, experiences, & accountability results	Improving conferencing skills: Simulating a post-conference	---	---	The power of relationships
8	---	What is leadership role in assuring effective teaching?	---	---	---	---
9	---	Wrapping up-parking lot issues, interim assignment and pre-session assignment	---	---	---	---

**Appendix B. End-of-Year FRL Participant Survey**

**FRL Participant Survey**

This survey is designed to assess your overall experiences as a participant in the Future Ready Leadership (FRL) program. Please respond to each item candidly, as your responses will contribute to the overall evaluation of the effectiveness of professional development training provided by FRL.

**Quality of FRL**

1. Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements listed by checking the appropriate box.

<b>The face-to-face sessions...</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
a. had clear objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. were relevant to my professional development needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. were scheduled at times convenient for my participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. were held at locations convenient for my participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. were led by an effective facilitator.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. were well structured.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. provided me with useful resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. were engaging.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. included adequate opportunities for participants to share their knowledge and/or experiences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. included adequate opportunities for participants to consider applications to their own professional practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. were enhanced by the use of technology ( <i>during</i> the sessions).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. were of high quality overall.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. met my expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Achievement of learning objectives: Knowledge**

2. Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements listed by checking the appropriate box.

<b>Through my participation in FRL, I developed a better understanding of...</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
a. NC Standards for School Executives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. effective school leadership strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. my strengths as a school leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. my areas for growth as a school leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. my role as an assistant principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. connections between curriculum, instruction, & assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. how to build teacher effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Professional Learning Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. how to create a healthy school culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. how to maximize student and adult relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Application**

*The following set of statements are designed to gauge the extent to which you have applied knowledge and skills gained in FRL to aspects of your professional practice. Note: Do not answer these questions based on what you already did prior to FRL; instead focus on changes you've made based on your participation in FRL.*

3. Using the scale below, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements listed by checking the appropriate box.

<b>I have <u>applied</u> the knowledge and skills <u>gained in FRL</u> to...</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
a. help to ensure that the vision, mission, and goals of my school are aligned with 21 <sup>st</sup> century learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. encourage a collaborative school environment focused on student outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. help to ensure that the school culture supports the goals of my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. support in improving processes and systems that ensure high-performing staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. support in improving managerial tasks that allow staff to focus on teaching and learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. assist in designing structures or processes that result in community engagement, support, and ownership.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. facilitate distributed governance and shared decision-making at my school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Other Feedback

4. What was the most beneficial/valuable part of your experience in FRL?

5. Have you implemented what you learned? If so, how?

6. How could FRL be improved for future cohorts?

7. If applicable, has your principal participated in the Distinguished Leadership Program (DLP)?

Yes

No

Do Not Know

8. Other than FRL, from what institutions/organizations do you receive professional development?

School District

Department of Public Instruction

Institute of Higher Education

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*NC's Future-Ready Leadership Program: Overview of Current Data*  
December 2014

9. Why did you apply to the FRL program?

- Personal growth (sought out myself)
- Suggestion from my principal
- Suggestion from someone in my district \_\_\_\_\_ (please indicate what role the person plays)
- Suggestion from a peer
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Which cohort did you participate in the FRL program?

- Cohort 1 (January 2012-May 2012)
- Cohort 2 (September 2012-May 2013)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Which region did you participate in the FRL program?

- Charlotte
- Raleigh
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. *What is your current position?*

- Assistant Principal at *original* school
- Assistant Principal at *new* school
- Principal at *original* school
- Principal at *new* school
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you!**

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