



FCPS Audit Report: 23-1001 – Succession Planning and Leadership Development Audit

February 2023

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Executive Summary

Office of Auditor General (OAG) conducted a performance audit of Succession Planning and Leadership Development in accordance with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 audit plan approved by the Fairfax County School Board.

The objectives of the audit were to:

1. Determine whether Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) has developed and executed a succession plan and leadership development strategy (including considerations of onboarding¹, on-going development and knowledge management) for coordinators and above, and school-based administrators.
2. Determine whether FCPS has analyzed coordinators and above, and school-based administrators' profile and statistics, such as leadership skill gaps.
3. Research leading national practices² and benchmark best practices for succession planning and leadership development and compare concepts with FCPS' current practice.

Having no identifiable division-wide succession plan for critical roles poses the following risks to FCPS:

- Loss of mission critical knowledge that may never be recovered.
- Naming an unqualified successor who lacks personal drive, commitment, knowledge, training or skills needed to perform the job successfully.
- Loss of time spent getting a new successor up to speed.
- Potential disruptions to workplace processes, workflows, and protocols.

While there is no explicit mandate for FCPS to implement a succession planning and leadership development plan, planning in advance for a sudden departure helps to ensure a seamless replacement of critical positions without disruptions or delays to operations. Leading HR organizations such as Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) define succession planning as the process of identifying critical positions and its eligibility requirements, developing a talent pipeline and monitoring the plan (**Objective 3**).

Finding 1- Existence of Division-wide Succession Planning and Leadership Development Plan

FCPS lacks a formal, robust succession plan as well as other related policies and regulations that aligns with industry leading practices (**Objective 1**). In addition, FCPS has not provided the necessary guidance to school and department leaders to ensure the continuance of operations upon the eventual turnover of coordinators, school-based administrators and above or in key or critical positions. Given that FCPS lacks a succession planning framework or model, which would require creating a profile for each critical position and identifying the skills needed to fill it, OAG was not able to determine whether FCPS has

¹ OAG considered the FY22 OAG Hiring and Onboarding Audit report, management's response to finding #6- Effective Onboarding Practices and Professional Development, related to leadership development.

² Sources for leading practices include Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

implemented a formal process to analyze profile and statistics, such as leadership skill gaps for coordinators, school-based administrators and above (**Objective 2**).

While a formal succession plan has not been implemented division-wide, OAG identified some succession planning practices that have been implemented division-wide for instructional and operational positions such as Principal Pool and the Leadership Development Programs:

- a. The current Principal Pipeline³ model supports the succession of principals however, the process may present challenges including limiting talent available for hiring, increase the possibility of losing current assistant principal talent when rejected, and posing challenges for external talent.
- b. The Leadership Development Program managed by the Office of Professional Learning and Equity (OPLE) provides a leadership development program division-wide for operational and instructional employees; however, the operational leadership development program is not as robust as the one for instructional employees.

In addition, OAG noted Leadership Team members are taking initiatives to independently develop and implement its own succession planning practices for operational and instructional personnel. Several members of leadership reported implementing steps to help with planning for vacancies in key positions such as providing mentorship, job shadowing, cross and formal trainings programs. However, with the absence of division-wide guidance, these activities are not formalized and inconsistent within departments.

OAG recommends the following:

1. FCPS Leadership, Human Resources (HR), and OPLE should utilize industry leading practices to develop, implement and monitor division-wide succession planning and leadership development framework and communicate it to leadership. The framework, at a minimum, should include developing and analyzing leadership profiles and statistics, such as leadership skill gaps and knowledge management.
2. FCPS Leadership, HR, and OPLE should continue to evaluate all domains of the Principal Pipeline model going forward, including assessing the effectiveness of the current Principal Pool, as it is one of the risks highlighted in the [FY21 Hiring and Onboarding audit](#).

FCPS Leadership, HR, and OPLE concur with the finding and recommendations, see management response section on page 13 for additional details.

We appreciate the consultation, cooperation, and courtesies extended to our staff by OPLE, HR, FCPS leadership, and staff.

³ The Principal Pipeline Initiative developed by the Wallace Foundation which invested efforts in six districts across the United States to develop Principal Pipelines through engagement in activities related to the preparation, hiring, development, evaluation and support of school leaders. Principal Pool is an activity under hiring and development.

Background, Scope and Objectives, and Methodology

Background

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) defines succession planning as the process of identifying critical positions in the organization and creating a talent pipeline by preparing employees for expanded organizational responsibilities to fill vacancies as others retire or move on (**Objective 3**). Preparing individuals for expanded responsibilities also overlaps with what is typically considered as leadership development.

In addition, the SHRM industry leading practices, outline a succession planning process with the following steps:

1. Identify critical/key positions: The first step in succession planning is to choose positions most in need of successors.
2. Develop eligibility requirements: Once you have identified positions in need of succession plan, the next step is to develop a profile of the position and the performance expectation; this will help analyze gaps between current state and future needs.
3. Identify and develop a talent pipeline: Using the profile you have created; you can identify employees who could temporarily fill the vacancy and potentially apply as candidates for the position should the need arise; the profile serves as a goal and checklist on which you can focus your employees training and development programs.
4. Monitor and evaluate the succession plan: By evaluating and monitoring the plan periodically, you can continually improve your succession planning strategy and effectiveness.

See [Appendix A: SHRM Succession Management Process](#) for a summary of the above process.

According to the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) leading practices, government should develop succession planning strategies that include continual assessment of the potential for turnover of employees in key positions and encouraging the personal development and leadership skills of the pool of employees who might fill the key positions when they become vacant. See [Appendix B: GFOA Succession Planning Steps](#).

Furthermore, the Office of Personnel Management of the US Government (OPM), mentions that succession management (planning) is critical to mission success and creates an effective process for recognizing, developing, and retaining top leadership talent. See [Appendix C: OPM Strategic Leadership Succession Management Model](#).

FCPS Division-wide Succession Planning Practices

While there is no explicit policy or regulation that require FCPS to develop a division-wide succession plan, succession planning practices have been implemented by OPLE and HR. These practices include aspects of a talent pipeline for principals, such as the Principal Pool, and leadership development programs for both operational and instructional employees.

Office of Professional Learning and Equity (OPLE)

OPLC cultivates continuous improvement through culturally responsive, equitable and innovative practices to ensure each student is inspired, engaged, and thriving.

The office is organized into six areas of responsibility, two of which provide leadership support and services to FCPS employees and schools.

Professional Growth and Career Development

The professional growth and career development team builds adult learners' capacity to advance the achievement of all students and to close achievement gaps through dynamic and personalized professional learning for FCPS administrators, leaders, teachers, and support employees. This team includes leadership development, systemwide professional development and the instructional coaching program.

1. Leadership Development:

The Leadership Development team manages leadership professional development supporting school based and central office instructional and operational leaders throughout their FCPS careers. Offerings include individual classes, cohorts (half-year and year-long), county-wide events, and conferences. The Leadership Development Team collaborates with the five FCPS Regions and different central office departments to meet the needs of our leaders. Examples of some leadership development opportunities at FCPS are summarized below in **Table 1 Examples of FCPS Leadership Development Opportunities**. For a complete list see [Appendix D: FCPS Leadership Development Program](#).

Table 1 Examples of FCPS Leadership Development Opportunities

Program	Description
Principal Pool	The purpose of the Principal Pool professional development is to prepare participants with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully assume the role of principal (Audience: Instructional) (See Appendix F: The Wallace Foundation Study Results).
School-Based Administrator Induction Program I (SBAIP I)	SBAIP I is a year-long induction program for new school-based administrator, including Assistant Principals, Directors of Student Services, and Directors of Student Activities (Audience: Instructional).
Principal Induction Program I (PIP)	PIP is designed to meet the immediate informational and leadership needs of new principals as well as experienced principals who are new to the division (Audience: Instructional).
Supporting the Mission	Supporting the Mission cohort is designed to familiarize participants with the mission and goals of each department within FCPS and develop skills and knowledge around leadership competencies, including a focus on leading for equity (Audience: Instructional and Operational).
Middle Managers' RoundTable (MMRT)	The collaborative MMRT is a program for middle managers sponsored by FCPS and Fairfax County Government. The program provides skill development in critical thinking, management, and leadership (Audience: Instructional and Operational).

2. Systemwide Professional Development and Instructional Coaching (for instructional staff):

Systemwide Professional Development provides programming that offers multiple entry points and pathways for teachers to develop as teacher leaders. For many leaders, the first opportunity is through the Great Beginnings program. Professional development builds skill and capacity in mentors, lead mentors, and cohort coach facilitators. The Compass course program offers leadership development courses tailored for current leaders, teacher leaders and other emerging leaders who are looking to enhance and/or deepen their competence on a wide variety of topics relevant to their current position, or to be prepared for future positions. The National Board Certification Program serves to promote expert teaching and teacher leadership in the classroom through the professional development and financial support of those seeking and maintaining certification.

Instructional Coaching Program prepares and supports teacher leaders who guide their colleagues in data analysis, best practices and collaboration to improve student learning. Teacher leadership cohorts are offered through the Academy Course program to develop teachers' abilities to lead themselves and others in the division.

Since 2019, OPLE has led the effort to collaborate with the Wallace Foundation regarding the Principal Pipeline, which includes the following domains:

- **Domain #1- Leader Standards** proposes the adoption and establishment of leader standards that are applied across the continuum of pre-service, hiring, induction, evaluation, and support.
- **Domain #2- High Quality Pre-Service Principal Preparation** proposes greater alignment with district and university partners on common standards and curriculum.
- **Domain #3- Selective Hiring and Placement** proposes greater alignment and consistent use of standards as it relates to hiring, placement, evaluation and support.
- **Domain #4- Evaluation and Support** proposes continued development, refinement and implementation of a Leadership Development Framework that encompasses professional development along the continuum of teacher leadership, principal and assistant principal leadership and the leadership team.
- **Domain #5- Principal Supervisors** proposes the refinement of support to Region Assistant Superintendents and Executive Principals in the supervision of schools through their span of control. This group will also be enlisted to engage various stakeholders in the development of the Portrait of a Principal in alignment with the current Portrait of a Graduate and the Virginia Department of Education Profile of a Virginia Education Leader as directed by the Superintendent.
- **Domain #6- Leader Tracking System (LTS)** proposes site visits to various locations with existing leader tracking systems to gain more knowledge and information and pursue the establishment of LTS.
- **Domain #7-Systems and Sustainability** proposes Senior Leadership to continue to support this work and explore avenues of funding that will allow for leadership succession and sustainability that improves student achievement with equitable practice across the division.

As indicated in the [FY21 Hiring and Onboarding Practices Audit](#), OAG found that OPLE and HR have not been able to expand the Principal Pool to a Principal Pipeline based on the Wallace Study. See [Appendix F: The Wallace Foundation Study Results](#)

Human Resources (HR)

The mission of FCPS Department of Human Resources (HR) is to build, retain and serve a world-class workforce committed to educational excellence. A highly effective workforce is crucial for the Division's success. Having a strong human capital strategy ensures that there are supportive, high functioning systems in place to attract, recruit, mentor, develop, recognize and retain high performing individuals. The services provided by HR include:

- Recruiting and retaining a highly effective and diverse workforce.
- Providing all employees with competitive and comprehensive benefits and compensation.
- Providing a supportive and positive work environment.
- Ensuring a discrimination-free workplace.
- Supervising the performance evaluation programs.
- Recognizing and honoring the contributions of successful employees.
- Supporting employee wellness and recognizing the importance of work-life balance.
- Providing premiere customer service in all aspects of their work.
- Helping program managers in developing systematic programs for career development and training of employees for the purpose of improving their performance and qualifying them, when applicable, for consideration when vacancies occur in order to enhance opportunities for promotion.

HR is also responsible for managing the Principal Pool, which is it utilized to fill principal vacancies, help increase and diversify FCPS' candidate pool, and to ensure greater transparency around how FCPS selects its school leaders. The Principal Pool, under hiring and development, is one of the attributes under the principal pipeline model, introduced by Wallace Foundation.

Scope and Objectives

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), with the exception of peer review. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings, observations and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

The objectives of the audit were to perform the following:

- To determine whether FCPS has developed and executed a succession plan and leadership development strategy (including considerations of onboarding⁴, on-going development and knowledge management) for coordinators and above and school-based administrators.
- To determine whether FCPS has analyzed coordinators and above, and school-based administrators' profile and statistics, such as leadership skill gaps.
- To research and benchmark industry leading practices for succession planning and leadership development and compare concepts with FCPS' current practice.

⁴ OAG considered the FY22 OAG Hiring and Onboarding Audit report, management's response to finding #6- Effective Onboarding Practices and Professional Development, related to leadership development.

The scope of this audit includes an evaluation of FCPS succession plans and leadership development strategies for FY22 (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022) and FY23 (July 2022 and August 2022).

As required by GAGAS, OAG assessed whether internal control was significant to the audit objectives. OAG's assessment included the use of the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission internal control framework. The framework includes five components: Control Environment; Risk Assessment; Control Activities; Information and Communication; and Monitoring; along with 17 related principles. OAG determined that all five components of internal control and the 17 related principles were significant to the audit objectives

Methodology

To satisfy our audit objectives, OAG performed the following:

- Reviewed applicable laws, rules, FCPS policies, regulations, and procedures.
- Researched industry leading practices for succession planning, including discussion with industry experts.
- Interviewed key personnel from OPLE, HR, and FCPS Leadership Team members including the Chief Equity Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Assistant Superintendent of Department of Human Resources, Deputy Superintendent, Region Assistant Superintendents, and Executive Principals to obtain an understanding of the current succession planning and leadership development practices implemented division-wide for coordinators and above and school-based administrators.
- Surveyed departments and offices on a sample basis to obtain feedback on succession planning and leadership development within their site.
- Benchmarked school districts comparable in sizes, neighboring schools, and/or neighboring audit organizations to understand succession planning practices within their organization.
- Obtained data from HR to perform relevant analysis.

OAG is free from organizational impairments to independence in our reporting as defined by government auditing standards. OAG reports directly to the Fairfax County School Board through the Audit Committee. We report the results of our audits to the Audit Committee and the reports are made available to the public via the FCPS website.

Sampling Plan

A. Operational

OAG interviewed five department leaders to determine whether succession planning activities are conducted in their departments/offices for coordinators and above. Of the five employees contacted, we received three responses.

OAG also selected a sample of coordinator and above positions, including managers, directors, and executive directors, to obtain feedback on operational leadership development program and opportunities offered by FCPS. The sample selection was stratified by office and one coordinator and above position was judgmentally selected from each office resulting in the sample selection of 53 out of 309 coordinator and above positions. Of the 53 employees contacted, we received 37 responses.

B. Instructional

OAG surveyed a sample of school-based administrators including Principals, Assistant Principals, Director of Student Activities, and Director of Student Services to obtain feedback on the instructional leadership development program and opportunities offered by FCPS. Samples were judgmentally selected as follows:

- 23 out of 232 principals were surveyed on the succession planning and leadership development process. Of the 23 employees contacted, we received 10 responses.
- 61 (including 44 Assistant Principals, 12 Director of Student Activities and five Director of Student Services) out of 534 school-based administrators were surveyed on leadership development process. Of the 61 employees contacted, we received 18 responses.

For details of the survey administration, see [Appendix E: Survey Results](#).

Research and Benchmarking

A. Research

OAG reviewed leading practices developed by HR organizations including [SHRM](#), [GFOA](#), [OPM](#) and the [Wallace Foundation](#) to compare their recommended approach with FCPS' current practices.

B. Benchmarking

The audit team surveyed 15 school districts comparable in sizes, neighboring schools, and/or neighboring audit organizations to determine if succession planning and leadership development practices have been implemented in their organizations.

Four of the 15 organizations responded and indicated that the organizations currently do not have policies and/or regulations related to succession planning or have implemented a succession plan. Three out of the four organizations indicated they are engaged in the following initiatives:

- Leadership and succession strategies will be included in the organization's strategy plan to be completed by 2025.
- The organization employs a Principal Pipeline and a process to recruit and create a pool of candidates to replace any administrators who leave or retire.
- Various ad hoc procedures have been utilized when personnel are needed to operate in an acting status.

Audit Findings, Recommendations, and Management's Responses

The finding(s) within this report has been attributed a risk rating in accordance with established risk criteria as defined in Table 1.

Table 1 – Risk Criteria

Type	Description
High	One or more of the following exists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls are not in place or are inadequate. • Compliance with legislation and regulations or contractual obligations is inadequate. • Important issues are identified that could negatively impact the achievement of FCPS program/operational objectives.
Moderate	One or more of the following exists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls are in place but are not sufficiently complied with. • Compliance with subject government regulations or FCPS policies and established procedures is inadequate, or FCPS policies and established procedures are inadequate. • Issues are identified that could negatively impact the efficiency and effectiveness of FCPS operations.
Low	One or more of the following exists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls are in place but the level of compliance varies. • Compliance with government regulations or FCPS policies and established procedures varies. • Issues identified are less significant but opportunities exist that could enhance FCPS operations.

Finding 1- Existence of Division-wide Succession Planning Framework

Risk Rating: *Moderate - Issues are identified that could negatively impact the efficiency and effectiveness of FCPS operations.*

Condition:

1. FCPS lacks a formal, robust succession plan as well as other related policies and regulations to align with industry leading practices (**Objective 1**). In addition, FCPS has not provided the necessary guidance to school and department leaders to ensure the continuance of operations upon the eventual (anticipated or unanticipated) turnover of coordinators, school-based administrators and above or in key or critical positions. Given that FCPS lacks a succession planning framework or model, which would require creating profile for each critical position and identifying the skills needed to fill it, OAG was not able to determine whether FCPS has implemented a formal process to analyze profile and statistics, such as leadership skill gaps for coordinators, school-based administrators and above (**Objective 2**).
2. While a formal succession plan has not been implemented division-wide, OAG identified some succession planning practices that have been implemented division-wide for instructional and operational positions. OAG noted the following related to the Principal Pool and the Leadership Development Program.

a. Principal Pool

The Principal Pool, including hiring and development, is one of the attributes of the Principal Pipeline model, introduced by Wallace Foundation. The Principal Pool, managed by HR, is utilized to fill principal vacancies. It helps to increase and diversify FCPS' candidate pool and ensures greater transparency around how FCPS selects its school leaders.

As indicated in the FY21 Hiring and Onboarding Practices Audit, OAG found that OPLE and HR have not been able to expand the Principal Pool to a Principal Pipeline based on the Wallace Study⁵. See [Appendix F: The Wallace Foundation Study Results](#). OAG recommended that HR and OPLE are provided with the necessary support to fully implement the Principal Pipeline Initiative. Corrective actions related to this recommendation are currently in process but have not been fully implemented.

During this audit, OAG noted that the current evolving Principal Pipeline process at FCPS may help to plan for the succession of principals but is still incomplete and may present other challenges including limiting talent available for hiring, increasing the possibility of losing current assistant principal talent when rejected, and posing restrictions for external talent.

b. Leadership Development Program – Operational and Instructional Employees

⁵ The Principal Pipeline Initiative developed by the Wallace Foundation which invested efforts in six districts across the United States to develop principal pipelines through engagement in activities related to the preparation, hiring, development, evaluation and support of school leaders. Principal Pool is an activity under hiring and development.

The Leadership Development Program managed by the Office of Professional Learning and Equity (OPLE) provides a leadership development program division-wide for operational and instructional employees. See [Appendix D: FCPS Leadership Development Program](#). The leadership development offered to operational employees includes Middle Manager's RoundTable, Supporting Success, Supporting the Mission and Leadership Kick-Off. However, the operational leadership development is not as robust as instructional.

As reported in the [FY21 Hiring and Onboarding Practices Audit](#), the effectiveness of onboarding practices and professional development is inconsistent. OAG found that there are mechanisms to provide a complete onboarding and orientation for most school based and instructional employees. However, these activities do not exist in the same capacity for non-school based operational employees. In addition, onboarding practices related to job specific professional development at the school and worksite level is not consistent. There is a lack of guidance and onboarding practices for the development of supervisor or manager positions that require employee evaluation and hiring skills.

OPLE is currently implementing an Operational Leadership Hybrid Learning Program effective December 2022 to support leadership development for operational employees. See [Appendix G: FCPS Operational Leadership Hybrid Learning Program](#).

3. During the audit, OAG also interviewed members of the Leadership Team to determine the succession planning practices implemented at the school and department level. OAG noted that in the absence of division-wide guidance, Leadership Team members have independently developed and implemented their own succession planning practices for both operational and instructional personnel. Several members of leadership reported implementing steps to help with planning for vacancies in key positions such as providing mentorship, job shadowing, cross and formal trainings programs. However, these activities are not formalized and consistently practiced across and within departments.

Criteria:

1. According to Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) industry leading practices, a succession planning framework should include the following:
 - Identify critical/key positions.
 - Develop eligibility requirements (create profile of the critical/key positions).
 - Identify and develop a talent pipeline.
 - Monitor and evaluate the succession plan.
2. According to SHRM; creating the profile (which includes experience, skills, and competencies) for each critical/key position can be used to identify high potential employees and the areas they need to improve to fill the critical positions. The profile serves as a goal and checklist on which you can focus your employees training and development programs.

3. FCPS Policy 4101, Responsibilities of the Department of Human Resources, notes the responsibility of (HR) is to “Help program managers in developing systematic programs for career development and training of employees for the purpose of improving their performance and qualifying them, if practicable, for consideration when vacancies occur in order to enhance opportunities for promotion”.

Cause:

1. FCPS has not explicitly mandated or developed a succession plan that includes a well-rounded strategy to cover both anticipated and unanticipated staff departures in order to ensure a seamless replacement of critical positions to mitigate disruptions or delays to operations. It appears that the initiative to implement succession planning has been foreshadowed with competing priorities. In 2020, OPLE was focused on the implementation of the Wallace study, however the plans were halted due to COVID. The partnership between OPLE and Wallace Foundation continues and as a result they developed an Aspiring Principals Academy to be implemented in January 2023. The new Aspiring Principal Academy is a half year cohort that will equip principals with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead with confidence and build network as they prepare for principalship.
2. FCPS has not created a profile for key positions to recognize gaps.
3. The recommendation OAG provided in the [FY21 Hiring and Onboarding Practices](#) audit to expand the Principal Pool to a Principal Pipeline has not been fully implemented as resources are needed for HR and OPLE to develop a leadership tracking system and implement an Assistant Principal Pool.
4. FCPS previously provided programs such as Lead Fairfax for instructional employees, however this program ended once the Wallace grant ended.
5. Lack of staff in OPLE to focus on operational leadership development (During FY 22; 0.5 full time employees for operational vs 2.5 full time employees for instructional).
6. Lack of authority of the OPLE to coordinate across all relevant FCPS regions/departments leadership development.

Effect:

The absence of a division-wide succession plan increases the risk of the following:

- Loss of knowledge and expertise
- Lack of a robust data monitoring system to provide reliable information to assist in the succession planning and leadership development cycle
- Loss of internal talents
- Wrong candidate selection
- Underdevelopment of successors
- Lack of career ladders and career paths for principal positions
- Limits on data accessibility and availability related to workforce data
- Lack of ability to recruit diverse employees

Recommendation:

1. FCPS Leadership, HR, and OPLE should utilize industry leading practices to develop, implement and monitor division-wide succession planning and to enhance the current leadership development framework and communicate it to leadership. The framework, at a minimum, should include developing and analyzing leadership profiles and statistics, such as leadership skill gaps and knowledge management.

We recommend FCPS management consider the following perspectives:

- Customize the leadership development program to align with the implementation of a division-wide succession plan.
 - Expand the operational leadership development program division-wide and implement necessary actions for operational onboarding as noted in the [FY21 Hiring and Onboarding Audit](#).
 - Implement a leadership tracking system to support succession planning and leadership development lifecycle.
2. FCPS Leadership, HR, and OPLE should continue to evaluate all domains of the principal pipeline model going forward, including assessing the effectiveness of the current principal pool, as it is one of the risks highlighted in the [FY21 Hiring and Onboarding Audit](#).

Management Responses (Actions and Due Date):

FCPS Leadership, HR, and OPLE concur with the finding and the two recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor General.

Response to Recommendation 1:

Finding	Response	Due Date
FCPS lacks a formal, robust succession plan as well as other related policies and regulations to align with industry leading practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR and OPLE will form a joint working group to form a succession plan and explore the development of policies and regulations to align with industry leading practices. 	July 2023
FCPS has not provided the necessary guidance to school and department leaders to ensure the continuance of operations upon the eventual turnover of coordinators, school-based administrators and above or in key or critical positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand School Based Leaders PD opportunities for Aspiring Principals 	June 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop guidelines for departments and schools on establishing handbooks that include the documentation and communication of knowledge management to be shared with both new and promoted staff as part of onboarding. 	November 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Pathways to Leadership communication and opportunities 	November 2023

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan for expansion of Professional Development (PD) for Schedule A employees. Funding is needed for implementation 	September 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek funding for developing a mentoring and coaching initiative for leaders in critical positions that align to national standards and practices. 	September 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand affinity group networks to attract and retain a more diverse leadership workforce 	June 2023
<p>The Leadership Development Program managed by the Office of Professional Learning and Equity (OPLE) provides a leadership development program division-wide for operational and instructional employees; however, the operational leadership development is not as robust as instructional.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a framework of Leadership Competencies based on industry standards 	March 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a plan for ensuring all Central office administrators receive consistent PD to develop Leadership Competencies 	August 2023
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase opportunities for Mentorship within and across Central Office Departments 	July 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek alternate funding for 2 Operational Specialist positions to develop and implement a sustained approach to PD for operational leaders across the division. (These positions were carry-forward funded by OPLE, another funding source will need to be identified for FY24 and beyond) 	July 2023

Response to Recommendation 2:

Management agrees with the recommendations of the OAG to further evaluate the effectiveness of the principal pool and to evaluate all domains of the principal pipeline model. An evaluation of the principal pool has been ongoing in response to a Board Forum topic on principal hiring. A work team, led by the Deputy Superintendent, Regions, and HR has been finalizing recommendations related to the use of the principal pool given the changing hiring landscape. Future work will include an assessment of the principal pipeline model in conjunction with OPLE with recommendations to the Superintendent to ensure the division is best positioned to recruit, hire, and retain world class principals.

Due Date: August 2023

Appendix A: SHRM Succession Management Process

Figure 3: The Succession Management Process



Appendix B: GFOA Succession Planning Steps

10 STEPS



10 Steps to Succession Planning

Succession planning has gotten even more challenging in recent years, given a changing job market, shorter employee tenure, and COVID-19 job turnover—which means that governments should make it an even higher priority. GFOA's 10 steps to succession planning will help your organization retain key talent and find skilled employees to replace staff members who move on.

- 1 Develop an integrated approach.** Organizations that don't rely on a "just-in-time" approach have higher retention rates, better employee morale, and an environment that stimulates innovation and organizational change.
- 2 Continually assess potential employee turnover.** Making career planning discussions a part of a regular and ongoing performance review process helps in assessing potential turnover.
- 3 Provide a formal, written succession plan as a framework.** Without a formal plan, workforce and succession planning tends to be haphazard.
- 4 Develop written policies and procedures to encourage knowledge transfer.** Have written procedures that formalize the knowledge transfer, including a meeting with departing staff to document job responsibilities.
- 5 Develop leadership skills as a key component.** The organization benefits from developing a leadership pool for other positions.
- 6 Encourage personal professional development activities.** The organization will benefit over the long term by helping employees gain the skills they need to assume increased responsibilities.
- 7 Design better recruitment and retention practices.** Don't focus more on recruiting new employees than on orienting and developing existing employees. For example, pay should be competitive with the marketplace.
- 8 Work out how collective bargaining agreements fit in with the overall succession plan.** Engage bargaining units for cross-training opportunities.
- 9 Consider non-traditional hiring strategies.** Options such as part-time work, job-sharing, volunteers, and flexible schedules and flexible-place arrangements help meet the needs of the organization and employees.
- 10 Be prepared by addressing the succession planning risks associated with essential positions.** The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that many finance positions in local government are essential. All organizations need to be prepared with succession plans for all positions, especially those serving critical functions, as a business continuity strategy.

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Appendix C: OPM Strategic Leadership Succession Management Model

Strategic Leadership Succession Management Model

What Are the Major Purposes of Succession Management?

Succession management is a systematic approach for:

- Shaping the leadership culture.
- Building a leadership pipeline/talent pool to ensure leadership continuity.
- Developing potential successors whose strengths will best fit with the agency's needs.
- Identifying the best candidates for categories of positions.
- Concentrating resources on the talent development process, yielding a greater return on investment.

Succession management identifies those jobs considered to be the organization's lifeblood and too critical to be left vacant or filled by any but the best qualified persons. Succession management is critical to mission success and creates an effective process for recognizing, developing, and retaining top leadership talent.

Strategic Leadership Succession Management Model

Below is a graphical depiction of the SLSM Model showing the five phases in the succession management process and related activities.



Appendix D: FCPS Leadership Development Programs

THE *Leadership Development* TEAM

FCPS Leadership Development Programs: Visit the Leadership Development Google Site for more information.		
Administrator Preparation	School-Based Administrator Induction: Google Site Handbook	
<p>Accelerated Certification Cohort The Accelerated Certification Cohort (ACC) enrolls experienced FCPS educators to work toward a Virginia license in education administration. This learning cohort consists of high performing FCPS teacher and central office leaders who have demonstrated the skills necessary to pursue advanced leadership opportunities in FCPS. Visit the ACC Program Google Site for more information.</p>	<p>School-Based Administrator Induction Program I (SBAIP) SBAIP I is a year-long induction program for new school-based administrators, including Assistant Principals, Directors of Student Services, and Directors of Student Activities. Topics are structured around the needs of first year administrators.</p>	<p>Principal Induction Program I The Principal Induction Program (PIP) is designed to meet the immediate informational and leadership needs of new principals as well as experienced principals who are new to the division. PIP provides a cohort setting where colleagues collaborate.</p>
<p>University Cohorts The Educational Leadership Cohort Program works in collaboration GMU and UVA to develop potential educational leaders to fill administrative vacancies in FCPS.</p>	<p>School-Based Administrator Induction Program II (SBAIP II) SBAIP II is designed to assist second year assistant principals, directors of student services, and directors of student activities to: build leadership skills, knowledge, and actions by taking steps to redress inequities and/or improve student learning.</p>	<p>Principal Induction Program II The Principal Induction Program II (PIP II) is designed for second year principals to continue the learning around leadership skills and knowledge to redress inequities and/or improve student learning in their schools.</p>
<p>Principal Pool The purpose of the Principal Pool professional development is to prepare participants with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully assume the role of principal. This cohort meets for four synchronous sessions lead by two principal facilitators and an opportunity for career counseling/networking with an executive principal or a 360 assessment.</p>	Technical Training for 1st & 2nd Year SBAs:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Practices in Hiring (TAM) • Hearings Office • Communications Best Practices (OCCR) • Foundations in Special Education (DSS) • Investigation Basics for Administrators (EER) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations in ESOL Education (ISD) • Performance Evaluations (EER) • Family & School Partnerships (FSP) • Discipline, SR&R, and Bullying (DSS) • Finance
Additional Cohort Programs		
<p>Supporting the Mission Supporting the Mission cohort is offered once during the academic year. The program is designed to familiarize participants with the mission and goals of each department within FCPS and develop skills and knowledge around leadership competencies, including a focus on leading for equity.</p> <p>Audience: Instructional & Operational</p>	<p>Supporting Success Supporting Success is a twelve-week cohort for Schedule-A operational employees. The program integrates leadership development and the opportunity for employees to learn more about the departments, offices and school-based functions of FCPS.</p> <p>Audience: Operational</p>	<p>Middle Managers' Roundtable The Collaborative Middle Managers' Roundtable (MMRT) is a program for middle managers sponsored by the FCPS and the Fairfax County Government (FCG). This nine-month program provides skill development in critical thinking, management, and leadership.</p> <p>Audience: Instructional & Operational</p>

THE *Leadership Development* TEAM

All County Leadership PD		
<p>All County Principal Meeting ACPM is held quarterly for all principals to collaborate and engage in PD around county initiatives. Time is designated for the Division Superintendent to share important information to support the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Audience: Instructional</p>	<p>All County School-Based Administrator Meetings Held quarterly, the All County School-Based Administrator Meeting (ACSBAM) ensures APs, DSSs, and DSAs receive professional learning around county initiatives.</p> <p>Audience: Instructional</p>	<p>All County Central Office Instructional Leaders Meeting This meeting is for managers and above in the Chief Academic & Chief Equity Office. It focuses on similar content to ACPM & ACSBAM to ensure alignment between central office and school-based leaders.</p> <p>Audience: Instructional</p>
<p>Leadership Kick-Off The FCPS Leadership Kick-Off serves as the opening event for FCPS leaders every school year (employees who are Schedule B and above). It provides time for administrators to hear from our superintendent and other school leaders about the direction of our school system.</p> <p>Audience: Instructional & Operational</p>		<p>Critical Topics for School-Based Administrators Held annually during the summer, topics for this training are selected by LT members to provide cohesion in schools across the division</p> <p>Audience: Instructional</p>
Courses & Programs in Development		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspiring Principals Academy (1/2 year cohort) • Leading the Mission (Veteran Principal Cohort) (1/2 year cohort) • Operational Leadership Induction (New Managers Training) • Systemwide Mentor & Coaching Program for 1st Year APs and Ps • Leading Change • Customer Service 		
Leadership Compass Courses <i>Stand-alone virtual or in-person courses (1-2 hours)</i>		Consultation Offerings
Offered by the Leadership Development Team:		<p>CCL's Benchmark for Managers 360° & Discovery Leadership Profile 360° These 360° assessments gain feedback from bosses, peers, and direct reports and helps the individual compare their self-perception with the perceptions of others. Follow up coaching supports individuals to set goals.</p>
<p>Building Trust</p> <p>Clear is Kind: Difficult Evaluation Feedback & Summary Memos</p> <p>Delegation</p> <p>Direction, Alignment, and Commitment: Outcomes of Leadership</p>	<p>Effective Decision-Making</p> <p>Emotional Intelligence</p> <p>Feedback that Works (SBI)</p> <p>Time Management (SBAs)</p> <p>Maximizing Your APs</p> <p>So You Want to Be a Principal</p>	
<p>Fierce Conversations A two-day/ 4- half-day training to give participants tools to help facilitate coaching, team, delegation, and confrontation conversations. The objectives of Fierce Conversations are to interrogate reality, provoke learning, tackle tough challenges, and enrich relationships.</p>	<p style="background-color: #ffcc00; margin: 0;">Offered by Teacher Leadership Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building your Coaching Skills • Coaching Questions (2) • Honing Your Coaching Skills (2) • Managing Conflict • Staying Curious (2) <p>Pathways to Leadership Virtual, Asynchronous conference</p>	<p>Team Performance Indicator Creating realistic and carefully targeted goals will help to improve your team's performance. Since every team's performance challenges are unique, the TPI starts by identifying where your team needs to invest its development effort, before we work with you to create goals and individualized PD.</p>

Appendix E: Survey Results

Departments under the Chief Operations Officer

A total of five department leaders were survey on the succession planning and leadership development process. Of the five employees contacted, we received three responses. Below is a summary of the questions asked and the feedback received.

1. Do you have a process to plan for succession and identify critical positions within your department?

-Yes. We are a small office, not a department so the process is not extensive but it involves understanding the critical functions that need to be carried out and how to meet those needs. Regular discussions among management about risks to completing core functions given long-term leave, vacancies, etc.

-There is no formal process that I have discovered yet. However, I know by observation at a macro level what positions are critical. More needs to be done, but I'm focusing on the strategic organization at this point.

-Yes

2. What leadership development programs are offered for skillsets unique to your office coordinators and supervisors?

-On going mentoring and/or specific training from current position holder to successor, when possible; annual PD goals that have individualized leadership development contained within them, which has historically included leadership courses either within FCPS or external to it, 360 evaluations, and leadership opportunities; office PD focused on leadership or management usually via book study; FCPS will be starting operational leadership PD this year that should provide further support.

-The COO in collaboration with OPLE is getting ready to launch the pilot of a Hybrid Operational Leadership Development learning program in December. This is very exciting development for our operational leaders.

-The PD office is launching a leadership development course for operational leaders.

3. How is Leadership skill gaps being analyzed?

-Individualized to the person in relation to FCPS performance expectations and also CCL's 4 core skills (self-awareness, communication, learning agility, influence).

-The new training program for operational leaders will be competency based ensuring the entire organization hears the same message going forward. Hopefully starting from the same point will fill/eliminate gaps in skills and knowledge.

-Part of new PD for operational leaders

4. What tool are in place to facilitate the knowledge transfer of key positions tasks as employees retire or move on?

-Documentation of processes/procedures/practices (not tied to retirement or moving on but as a general knowledge management approach); cross training staff; specific trainings when onboarding new staff.

-I have not devoted attention to this topic yet but know it's important as I will not be here long term. In the past I have used Turnover Books, which can now be electronic, I guess. As more is online, we need to be able to reach back after someone leaves to be able to retrieve essential files or records. Not sure how that works here?

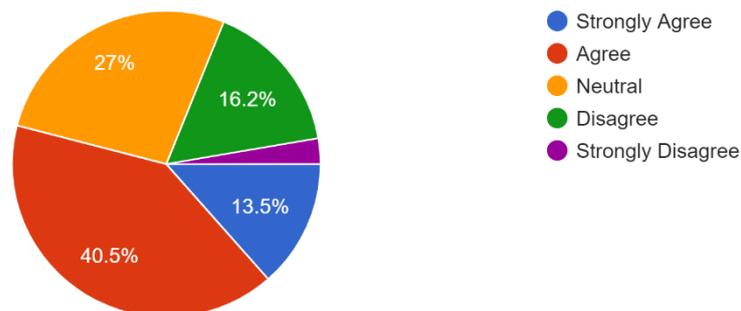
-All Directors are cross-training staff to ensure that more than one person can perform tasks.

Coordinators and above

A total of 53 coordinators and above positions were surveyed on the leadership development process. Of the 53 employees contacted, we received 37 responses. Below is a summary of the questions asked and the feedback received.

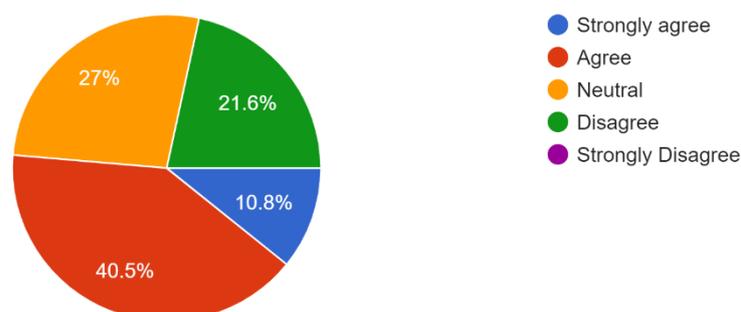
Do you feel these leadership opportunities above will help to strengthen any gaps you may have in order to apply for leadership positions in your department and/or office?

37 responses



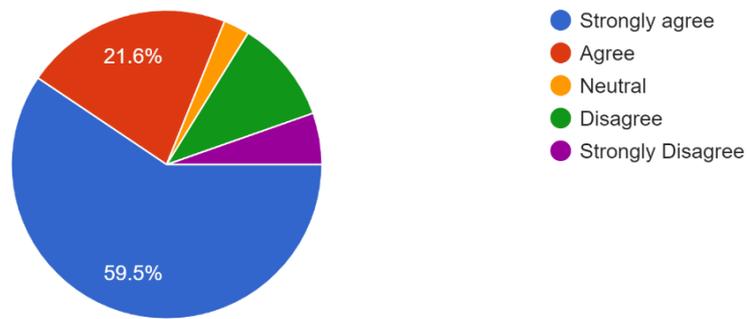
Do you feel that Leadership development opportunities offered by FCPS are properly communicated and transparent to you?

37 responses



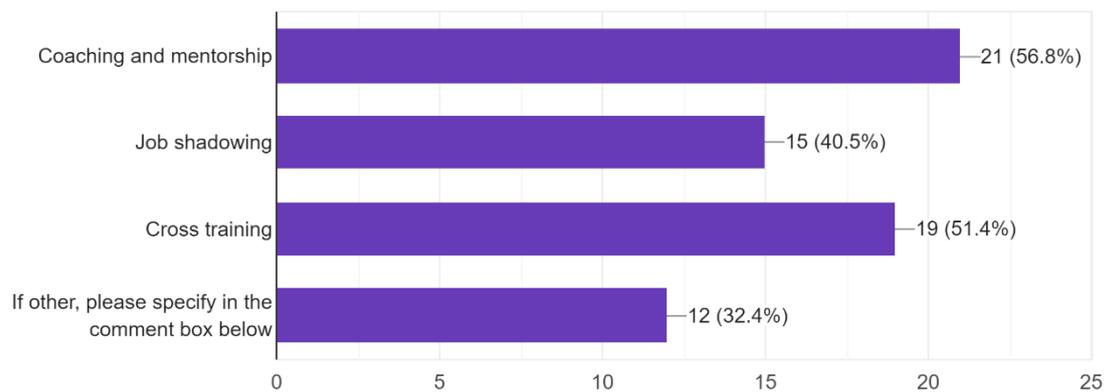
Do you feel your program manager and/or supervisor supports your development of leadership skills?

37 responses



What other resources, training, and/or experiences do you feel will help to advance your leadership skills? Select all that apply.

37 responses

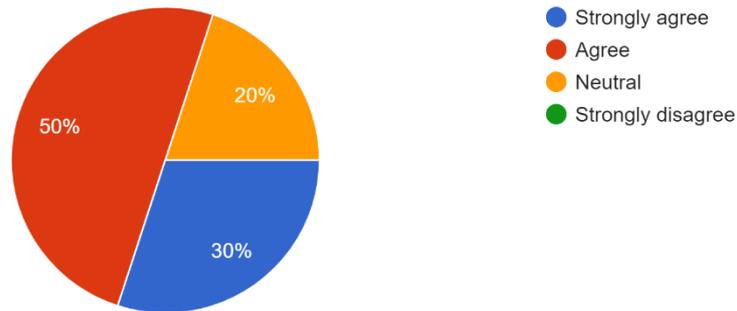


Principals

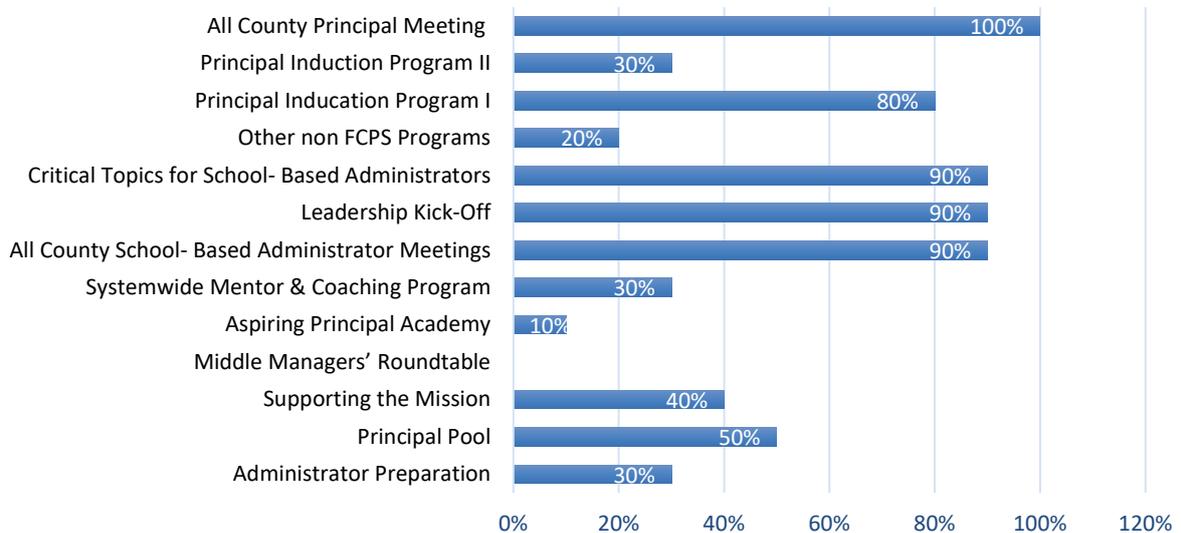
A total of 23 Principals were surveyed on the succession planning and leadership development process. Of the 23 employees contacted, we received 10 responses. Below is a summary of the questions asked and the feedback received.

Do you feel that Leadership development opportunities offered by FCPS are properly communicated and transparent to you?

10 responses

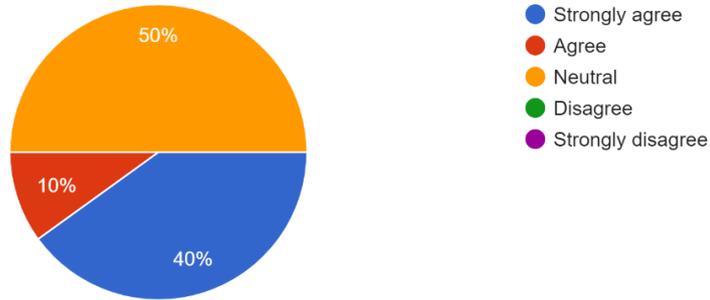


Which leadership development opportunities offered by FCPS have you participated in?



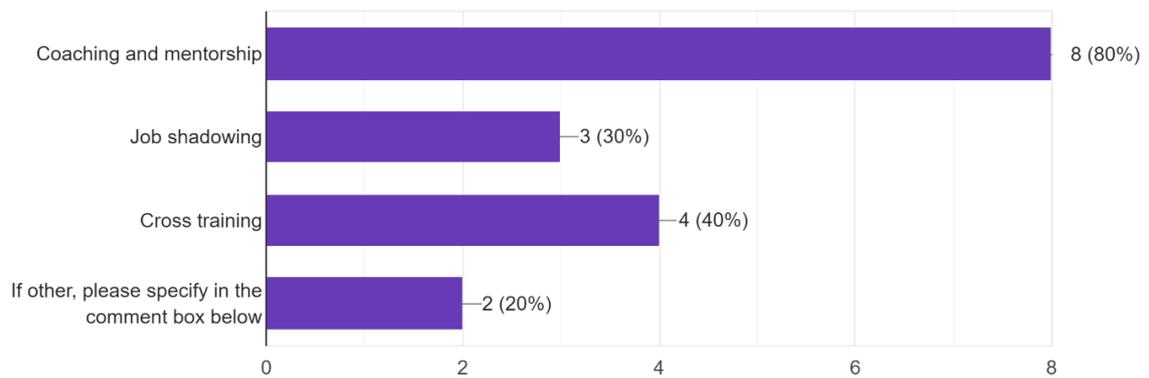
Do you feel these leadership opportunities above will help to strengthen any gaps you may have in order to apply for leadership positions in your school?

10 responses



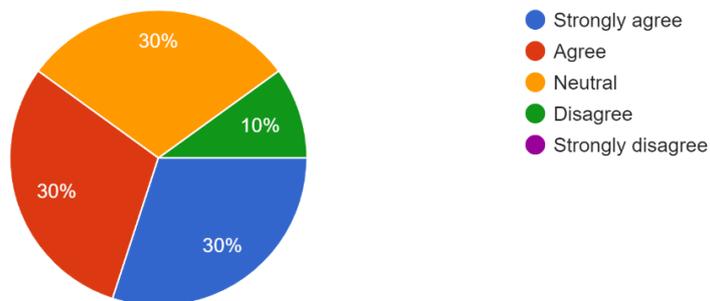
What other resources, training, and/or experiences do you feel will help to advance your leadership skills? Select all that apply.

10 responses



Do you feel FCPS leadership supports your development of leadership skills?

10 responses

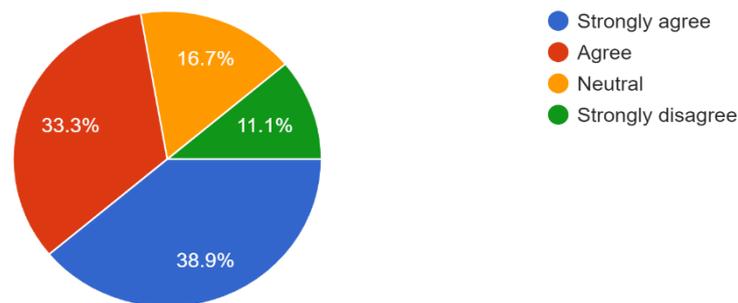


School-Based Administrators

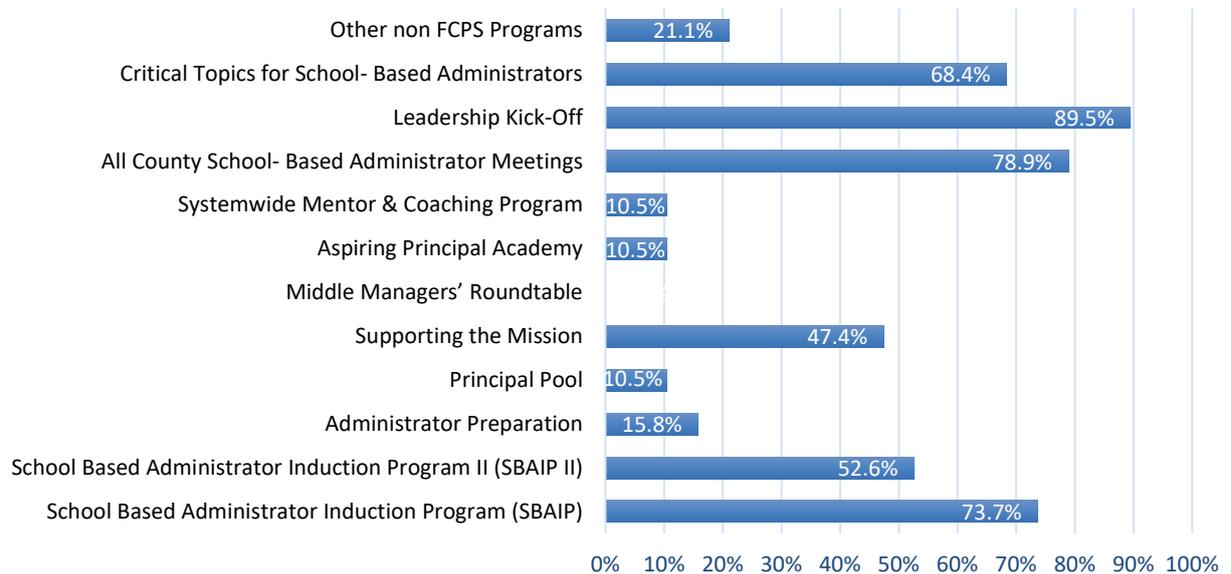
A total of 61 school-based administrators (including 44 Assistant Principals, 12 Director of Student Activities (DSA), and five Director of Student Services (DSS)) were surveyed on leadership development process. Of the 61 employees contacted, we received 18 responses. Below is a summary of the questions asked and the feedback received.

Do you feel that Leadership development opportunities offered by FCPS are properly communicated and transparent to you?

18 responses

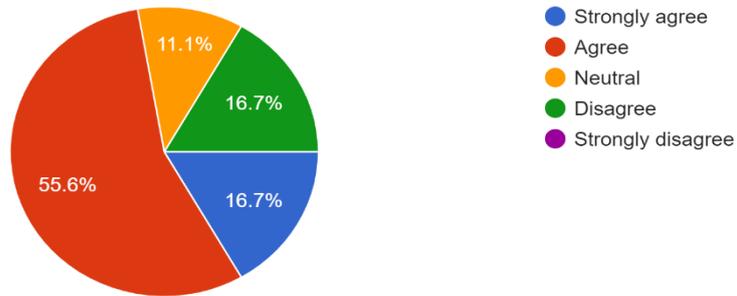


Which leadership development opportunities offered by FCPS have you participated in?



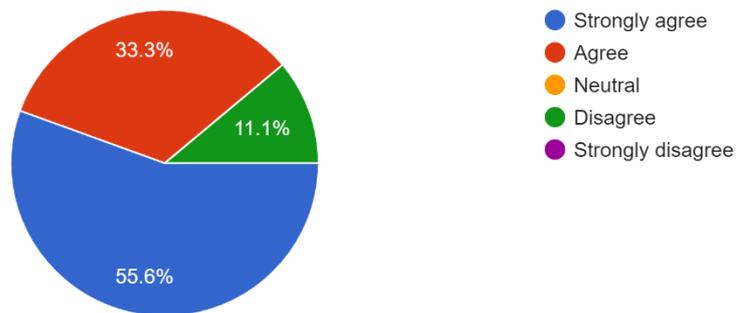
Do you feel these leadership opportunities above will help to strengthen any gaps you may have in order to apply for leadership positions in your school?

18 responses



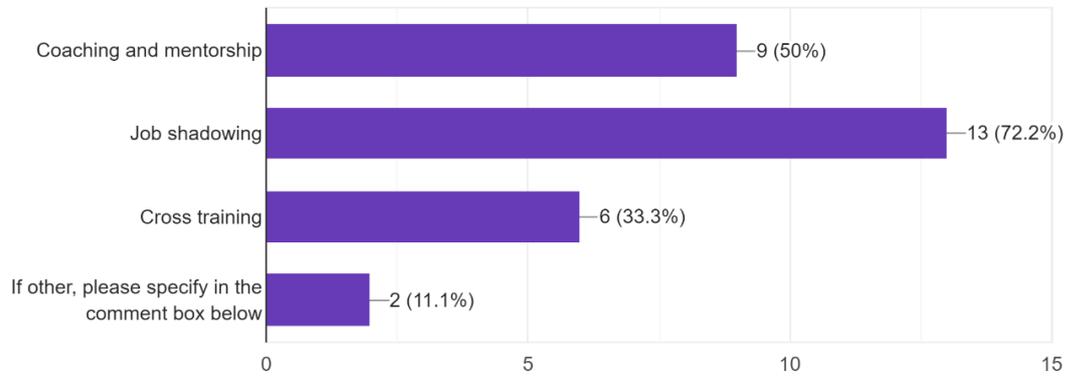
Do you feel your Principal or FCPS leadership supports your development of leadership skills?

18 responses



What other resources, training, and/or experiences do you feel will help to advance your leadership skills? Select all that apply.

18 responses



Appendix F: The Wallace Foundation Study Results

In 2019, a project founded by The Wallace Foundation explored whether six schools (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, North Carolina, Denver Public Schools, Colorado, Gwinnett County Public Schools, Georgia, Hillsborough County Public Schools, Florida, New York City Department of Education, New York and Prince George's County Public Schools, Maryland) could improve leadership through systematic improvements to a core set of activities related to the preparation, hiring, development, evaluation and support of school leaders.

The Wallace Foundation concluded that principal pipelines could serve as a strategic lever for districts to promote school improvement. The foundation suggested that a comprehensive principal pipeline would be more effective than business-as usual approaches to the preparation and management of school leaders, and it launched the PPI in the summer of 2011 to test that hypothesis in the six schools.

Principal pipelines comprise four key components: (1) leader standards that guide all pipeline activities, (2) preservice preparation opportunities for assistant principals (APs) and principals (including not only the preservice training itself but also recruitment and selection into these opportunities), (3) selective hiring and placement, and (4) on-the-job induction, evaluation, and support.

For the full results refer to the [Wallace Foundation study](#).

Appendix G: FCPS Operational Leadership Hybrid Learning Program

FCPS Operational Leadership Hybrid Learning Program

Office of Professional Growth & Career Development within the Office of Professional Learning and Equity

To ensure high-quality leadership training across FCPS operational offices, the Leadership Development team of the Professional Growth and Career Development (PGCD) office is generating a new professional development program for operational leaders. This program will utilize **asynchronous leadership training provided through Skillsoft, paired with synchronous sessions to support learning and application.**

Competency-based Framework

The new Operational Leadership Hybrid Learning program is built on a competency-based framework (right) and draws on **industry best practices and scholarly research**. The framework aligns professional development that supports the growth and development of operational employees throughout their careers and across levels of leadership, from individual contributors to executive-level leaders.

The seven competencies were selected based on themes within the [Operational Theory of Action and Excellence Framework](#) and a variety of academic and industry research.



Managers	Coordinators	Directors
<p>Driving Execution</p>	<p>Decision Making</p>	<p>Networking</p>
<p>Developing People</p>	<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Influence and Persuasion</p>
<p>Resilience</p>	<p>Agile Leadership</p>	<p>Organizational Awareness</p>

Targeted Professional Development

Operational managers, coordinators, and directors will receive targeted training suited to their positions within FCPS and the top competencies that correlate with peak performance (left). Each of these learning paths will include an **introductory course**, a **competency journey**, and a **capstone course**.

PGCD will assist operational leaders in **accessing asynchronous content and planning a timeline for completion**

that allows room for reflection and encourages conversations with other leaders.

Program Goals

1. **Reengagement with the Organization** - the beginning of learning and an introduction to training opportunities
2. **Anytime Learning** - asynchronous opportunities that may be scheduled and accessed during the workday or outside of work hours
3. **Competency Development** - targeted and tiered skills for leadership expectations
4. **Foundational Skill building** - a common beginning for new leaders; a starting point to build capacity