

2023-2024

EPP Master of School Administration

NC State University



North Carolina Department of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Overview of Master of School Administration Program

NC State University's Master of School Administration (MSA) program was re-instituted by the North Carolina state legislature in October 1998. Graduates of the program are currently school administrators in public schools throughout North Carolina, as assistant principals and principals, with some in central offices as assistant superintendents and program directors. **For the 2023-2024 school year, the MSA program had approximately 46 students enrolled.** Thirteen students participated as extension/distance education cohort members as second year students in the MSA program. These cohorts drew students from Cumberland, Dare, Greene, Wayne, Wilson, and Wake school districts. They graduated May 2024. Another 33 students participated as extension/distance education cohort members as first year students in the MSA program; they began their MSA program in May 2023. These cohorts draw from Alamance-Burlington, Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Johnston, Nash, Roanoke Rapids, Wake, Warren, and Wayne school districts. These school districts are our partners, and we have MOUs in place with them.

The MSA program addresses the standards presented by relevant accrediting bodies and the mission of the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies faculty. Program objectives are in alignment with the standards of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the North Carolina Standards for School Executives (NCSSE), the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, the Educational Leadership Constituent Council Standards (ELCCS), Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), and the principles of the NC State Professional Education Conceptual Framework (LEAD/SERVE). NC State also worked with partner districts to develop

additional standards that go beyond national and state standards. Faculty then cross-walked these standards against national and state standards. Graduates of the program are prepared to assume positions of effective leadership in schools and school districts. Faculty, along with district partners, designed the program to improve the quality of K-12 schools by preparing leaders who have the knowledge and skills to achieve educational excellence and equity. Graduates are expected to use leadership strategies to improve student performance in environments that are dynamic, interactive, and culturally diverse.

The MSA program currently consists of 42 semester credit hours, 18 semester hours of which are dedicated to a building level principal residency (internship) that spans the entire 2-year program. Students learn about leadership theory and how to apply the theory in the classroom and then immediately apply this practice in the field. Courses require students to produce artifacts that allow them to engage in the application of leadership theory and present evidence of those skills. MSA students engage in specialized trainings and attend state and national conferences to expand their coursework learning. They have opportunities to apply principles, knowledge, skills, and practices acquired during formal coursework under the mentorship and supervision of successful, credentialed public school administrators and the program's University faculty and executive coaches who visit the principal residents on site on a regular basis.

Special Characteristics of Master of School Administration Program

The MSA program combines rigorous academic coursework, extensive practicum opportunities, and focused enrichment and training opportunities. Students engage in extensive case-study situations, problem-based analysis of contemporary educational issues, and role plays. The two-year embedded and contiguous residency requires extensive on-site participation in administrative roles within K-12 schools with successful, credentialed school administrators. Principal Residents also learn application of technology, strategies of instructional performance appraisals, managing instructional technologies, continuous quality improvement, and data-based decision making in a real-world school setting.

The traditional Principal Fellows programmed merged with the Transforming Principal Preparation grant funding to create the new Principal Fellows program. NC State no longer has a traditional on-campus MSA program. All Fellows are now part of the grant-funded MSA program as described below. Since we are currently funded through the NC Principal Fellows Program, all of our MSA students are also NC Principal Fellows. In return for their scholarship loan, our graduates must serve four years as a school leader in NC public schools or two years if they serve in a high needs NC public school.

A planning grant from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and NC's Department of Public Instruction supported the development of the Northeast Leadership Academy (NELA). Directed by Dr. Bonnie Fusarelli, the program offers a supercharged set of integrated learning experiences, including high quality specialized trainings, team building retreats, visits with key state and national policymakers, field-based experiences into coursework, visitations to high performing schools across the state and nation, community-based summer internship focused on building school-community connections, paid year-long internship with rotational instructional rounds, and principal mentors and executive leadership coaches (all veteran school leaders) who offer on-going training and support throughout the program.

Based on the successes of NELA, Bonnie Fusarelli was awarded a \$4.7 million US Department of Education School Leadership Program grant for NELA 2.0: Developing and Sustaining Effective Leaders for High-Need Rural Schools. This funding continued this critical work in northeastern NC. In addition to the aspiring leaders MSA program, NELA 2.0 also brought a Principal Academy that provided professional development for current principals through a week-long summer intensive training that focused on instructional leadership in a digital learning environment and includes executive coaching for a year to help the principals apply their learning at their school sites. The NELA Principal Academy occurred over five summers with about 20 principal each year.

In 2015, Dr. Fusarelli was also awarded a \$2 million US Department of Education Turnaround School Leaders Program grant for NELA District and School Transformation (DST) Pipeline for Developing, Incentivizing, and Sustaining Effective Turnaround Leaders for Rural High-Need Schools. The NELA-DST grant also has opportunities for current principals in three of the NELA districts such as SIG Principal Educational Awards, SIG Principal Performance Educational Awards, Differentiated Professional Development, and SIG Principal Job Placement Educational Awards.

As a result, six NELA cohorts of rigorously selected students (107 students total as of May 2018) have experienced a rural-specific preparation program, graduated, and made a three-year, post-degree commitment to work in high-need, rural districts in northeastern North Carolina, thus, reducing leadership turnover.

To continue this much-needed work, NC State received two new grants from the state of North Carolina through the NC Alliance for School Leadership Development: Supporting Excellence in Leadership. We began a leadership academy in Durham, NC called the Durham Principal Leadership Academy (DPLA), which consisted of a cohort of 14 aspiring leaders to serve in Durham high-needs schools. It was a \$1 million grant over two years. We also began another leadership academy called The North Carolina Leadership Academy (NCLA), which consisted of a cohort of 19 aspiring leaders to serve in Greene, Lenoir, Wilson, Edgecombe, Duplin, and Franklin high-need schools. The NCLA grant was \$2 million over two years. Both grants officially began in October 2017, and the cohorts began their graduate program in January 2017. With the NELA, DPLA, and NCLA cohorts, we expanded the networking potential in NC to more school districts. Both DPLA (14 Fellows) and NCLA (19 Fellows) graduated May 2018, and received post-degree executive coaching during their first year as school leaders.

Furthermore, NC State's faculty worked with the Wallace Foundation's University Principal Preparation Initiative (UPPI) which was a \$47 million national initiative. NC State received \$5.6 million to take the lessons learned from NELA and infuse them into the institutional practices of NC State – thus creating a sustainable program.

NC State received another grant from the state of North Carolina through the NC Alliance for School Leadership Development: Supporting Excellence in Leadership, and 34 new Fellows began their MSA program in May 2018. These 34 Fellows were divided into three new cohorts - the NCSU Cohort had 8

aspiring leaders to serve in Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Durham, Granville, Vance, and Wake high-need schools; the Johnston Principal Leadership Academy (JPLA) had 11 aspiring leaders to serve in Edgecombe and Johnston high-need schools, and the Wake Principal Leadership Program (WPLP) had 14 aspiring leaders to serve in Wake high-need schools.

NC State received another 2-year “renewal” grant from the state of North Carolina through the NC Principal Fellows Program and Transforming Principal Preparation Program (NCPFP/TP3) that supported three cohorts of students (NELA - 13 students, Wake - 11 students, and Durham - 7 students) who started summer 2020. The total for two years (2020-2022) was \$2,369,767.

NC State received another grant from the state of North Carolina through the NC Principal Fellows Program. This grant will support one cohort (Cumberland - 15 students) starting summer 2020 and another cohort starting in 2022. We received additional funding to support another Cumberland cohort (14 students) that started in May 2024. The total for five years (2020-2025) is \$3,750,000.

We were awarded another \$4,500,000 grant from the state of North Carolina through the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program (NCPFP). We will receive recurring grants for up to \$750,000 per year for the next six years.

We have received more grants in the last few years, and we plan to write another grant in the summer/fall of 2024.

Fusarelli, B., Fusarelli, L., Wirt, L. (2021). *NC State University's Leadership Academies - Supplement Application* . A \$3,750,000 million one-year grant awarded by NC Principal Fellows Commission, NC.

Fusarelli, B., Fusarelli, L., Wirt, L. (2022). *NC State University's Leadership Academies - Additional Funding Request Application* . A \$1,426,015 million four-year grant awarded by NC Principal Fellows Commission, NC.

Fusarelli, B., Fusarelli, L., Wirt, L. (2023). *NC State University's Leadership Academies - Additional Appropriation Request Application* . A \$1,596,080 million four-year grant awarded by NC Principal Fellows Commission, NC.

Through this initiative, NC State University now has one unified MSA program with a rigorous selection process. We want to serve high-need schools with equity-focused leadership and cultivate relationships to create *Excellent Leaders. Effective Schools. Enriched Communities*©.

Direct and Ongoing Involvement with and Service to Public Schools

In addition to the internship visits, the MSA program faculty members are involved in efforts with schools to improve teaching and learning activities. The faculty has established strong relationships through personal visits with area superintendents and administrators.

Support for Beginning Administrators

New administrators frequently participate in regularly scheduled seminars and as guest speakers. These seminars provide a space for discussing and sharing relevant and useful information. The NELA program keeps an electronic database of graduates and current positions so University faculty can remain in contact with new administrators and to continue in dialogue. Through this connection, new administrators are able to broaden their awareness of new developments and learn about recent developments in school leadership. We provided a NELA Leadership Conference in October 2022 to celebrate our 10th anniversary. We hosted another NELA Leadership Conference for graduates and current students in August 2023 at the Friday Institute on NC State's Centennial Campus.

Recent graduates of the MSA program complete questionnaires and surveys so the program can obtain feedback and constantly improve. We want the coursework and experiences to remain relevant and directly applicable. Furthermore, all NC State graduates who serve in administrative positions for at least one year receive a survey for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of our MSA program. As part of the survey, we also ask about needs for on-going support from the institution. We provided post-degree executive coaching for graduates in their first year of leadership. Therefore, NELA Cohort VI, DPLA, and NCLA graduates received post-degree executive coaching during the 2018-2019 school year. We have secured funding again to provide post-degree support to our recent graduates. The 2024 graduates will receive post-degree coaching during the 2024-2025 school year. We are calling the program NELA Navigators.

Support for Career Administrators

Graduates of our program pay it forward to current students. They assist with Orientation, Formative Assessment Days, specialized trainings, and coursework. These opportunities allow them to continue their own learning. We maintain communication with our graduates monthly.

NELA provides multiple opportunities for recent graduates. Graduates have attended conferences, workshops, and professional development opportunities. Again, we have secured funding for more post-degree support.

Other Service to Schools

Our faculty and staff provide many kinds of service to the schools. We serve on advisory boards, provide advice and coaching to graduates as needed, volunteer to assist district partners in professional development, assessment, grant-writing and other services.

NC Principal of the Year

Many of our graduates receive Assistant Principal and Principal of the year. However, we are still super proud of NELA Cohort III graduate, Matthew Bristow-Smith, who received recognition for his outstanding leadership as the 2019 NC Principal of the Year.

<https://www.wral.com/edgecombe-county-schools-leader-named-2019-nc-principal-of-the-year/18378480/>

2024 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year Award

Dr. Marvin Connelly Jr. won the 2024 North Carolina Superintendent of the Year Award. He is superintendent of Cumberland County Schools, one of NELA's district partners. He earned two MEDs from NC State.

<https://www.ednc.org/dr-marvin-connelly-jr-wins-2024-nc-superintendent-of-the-year-award/>

2022 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year Award

Dr. Valerie Bridges won the 2022 North Carolina Superintendent of the Year Award. She was superintendent of Edgecombe County, one of NELA's district partners. She earned her MSA and EdD in Educational Leadership from NC State.

<https://www.ednc.org/2021-11-17-from-state-auditor-to-nc-superintendent-of-the-year-dr-valerie-bridges-of-edgecombe-tells-her-story/>

Gov. Holshouser Jr. Award for Excellence in Public Service

We are proud to include that Dr. Bonnie Fusarelli won a prestigious award at NC State University called the Gov. Holshouser Jr. Award for Excellence in Public Service to recognize her work with principal preparation for the last 13 years in NC. Over her career, she has been awarded \$43 million dollars in grant funds to develop and lead principal preparation.

<https://oe.ncsu.edu/governor-james-e-holshouser-jr-award/>

Each of the 17 institutions of the University of North Carolina system select a faculty recipient and then the UNC Board of Governors choose one or two faculty members overall. Dr. Bonnie Fusarelli won for the whole UNC system!

<https://www.northcarolina.edu/news/unc-board-of-governors-announces-winner-of-2022-governor-james-e-holshouser-jr-award/>

