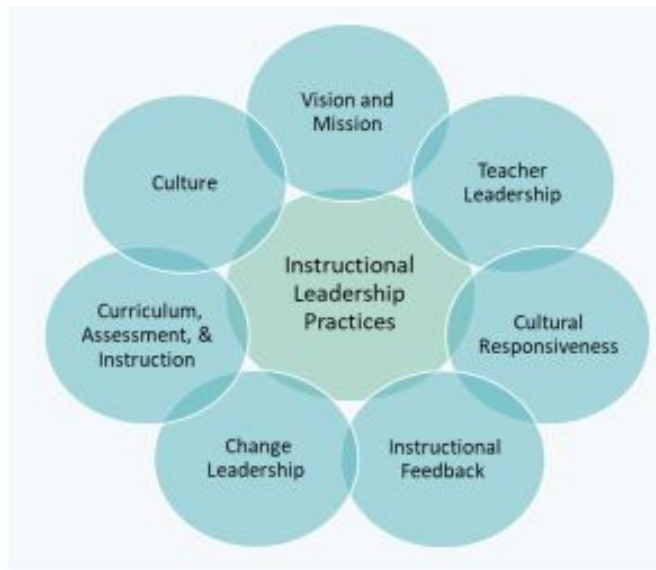# Culturally Responsive School Leadership

Growing Principals' Confidence and Practice
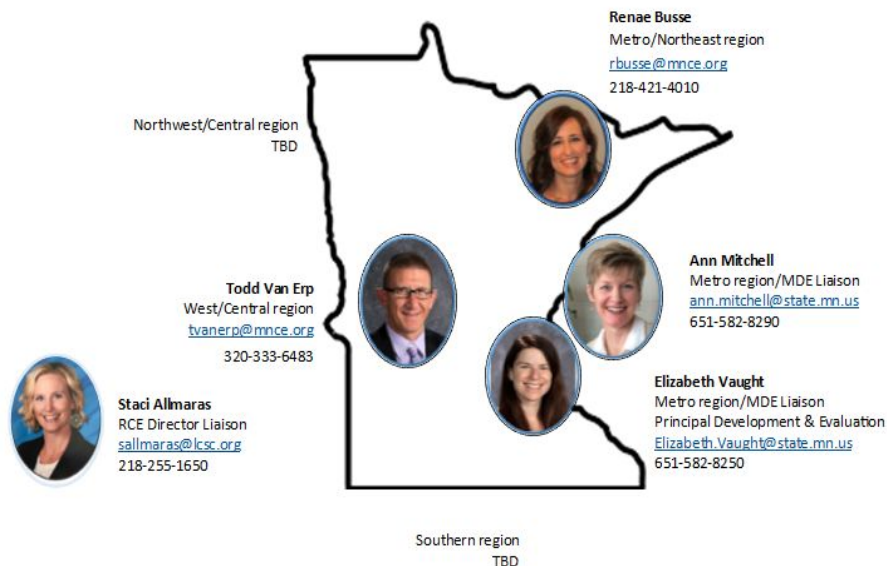
*Ann Mitchell & Dr. Elizabeth Vaught*
*Principal Leadership Support Team*

# Who are we?

## Principal Leadership Support Team



Vision and Mission

Teacher Leadership

Culture

Instructional Leadership Practices

Curriculum, Assessment, & Instruction

Cultural Responsiveness

Change Leadership

Instructional Feedback

REGIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE
A Partnership Between the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Service Cooperatives

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Southern region
TBD

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Principals **really** matter. Indeed, given not just the magnitude but the scope of principal effects, which are felt across a potentially large student body and faculty in a school, it is difficult to envision an investment with a higher ceiling on its potential return than a successful effort to improve principal leadership.

Wallace

# THE MINNESOTA PRINCIPALS SURVEY

*Through funding from the Joyce Foundation and the Minneapolis Foundation, CAREI developed a statewide survey of principals to elevate their voices in Minnesota while informing multiple stakeholders including (but not limited to) policymakers, school boards, principal licensure and professional development programs, and organizations like MESPA and MASSP that support Minnesota principals.*

Report of findings at z.umn.edu/MNPS22

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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College of Education and Human Development

Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement

# THE MINNESOTA PRINCIPALS SURVEY

**Average Level of Confidence by Area of Leadership**

*Response options: 1) little to none; 2) insufficient; 3) sufficient; 4) more than sufficient*

**3.03** School Improvement

**3.12** Management & Decision-making

**2.90** Culture & Climate

**2.86** Instructional Leadership

## Second Bi-Annual Principal Survey

- Every principal and AP in MN sent a person-specific email November 1, 2023

- Survey open until November 22, 2023

- Email from 'noreply-survey@umn.edu' - Check your spam folder!

# 2023 Survey Topics

- Career Information
- Job Satisfaction
- Preparation and Licensure
- Professional Development
- Working Conditions
- Influence
- Educational Ecosystem
- 2023: Mental Health - students and staff

- Culturally Responsive School Leadership
- Leadership Self Efficacy and Needed Supports
  - School Improvement
  - Management and Decision-making
  - Culture and Climate
  - Instructional Leadership

# What is Culturally Responsive Leadership?

Reimagining Community Engagement

Listening, Engaging, Advocating and Partnering (L.E.A.P.)

Building Trust and Belonging through Community Advocacy

Positioning Schools as Inclusive Community Spaces

Framing CEL as Everyone's Work

Partnering with Community Organizations

Aligning Leadership to Community Priorities

Leaning into Discomfort

**Words from Research**

# Salma and Sam - Practicing Leader Collaborators



## Salma Hussein,
Principal

Burnsville - Eagan - Savage School District

one91 Burnsville · Eagan · Savage **Gideon Pond Elementary School**



## Sam Court, Principal

St. Cloud Area School District

T Talahi Community School

# Participating in a Pilot Study

- **Purpose**: In response to the MnPS, this learning series aims to equip leaders with the understanding of CRSL behaviors and opportunities to develop the confidence necessary to implement them into practice. The Pilot Study is intended to design and test a scalable "learning series" to promote culturally responsive practices and mindsets among Minnesota school leaders.

- **Two groups**: Participants will have the opportunity to contribute to research on best practices in CRSL professional learning. Participants have been randomly assigned to either a **learning series** or **only text / book** group to study the impact of the series on CRSL self-efficacy and practice.

- **Two questionnaires**: Initial and Follow-up

- **Staff roles:**
  - Ann, Liz, Eskender, Ivy, Sam, Salma: Focus on series development and implementation
  - Sara: Focus on data collection and analysis

**mn** DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*We believe our work is both **personal** and **collective** requiring each of us to develop a **critical consciousness** that fosters **beliefs, behaviors, and practices** that **eliminate harm**, **values our diverse human experience**, and **cultivates environments** that **dismantle racism and all oppressions**.*

Minnesota Department of Education
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Center Belief Statement

# Intended Outcomes

- ***Recognize*** *the importance of centering community-based interests in school leadership practices.*
- ***Engage*** *in critical self-reflection (both self and organizational systems) to recognize and resist oppressive schooling practices.*
- ***Detect and disrupt*** *oppressive practices harming minoritized students.*
- ***Understand*** *CRSL practices and behaviors.*
- ***Review and revise*** *policies and practices to lead schools in culturally responsive ways.*
- ***Identify and practice*** *strategies to mentor and model CRSL behaviors and practices within your school/district.*
- ***Discover*** *opportunities to engage students, parents, teachers, and communities in humanizing ways. (include overcoming resistance?)*
- ***Increase*** *self-efficacy/confidence in CRSL practices and behaviors.*
- ***Explore ways to sustain*** *CRSL behaviors and practices beyond the learning series*

# Overview of CRSL Framework

| | |
|---|---|
| **Critical Self Reflection** | **Developing Culturally Responsive Teachers** |
| **Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environment** | **Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts** |

# Critically Self-Reflects on Leadership Behaviors



- Is committed to continuous learning of cultural knowledge and contexts
- Displays a critical consciousness on practice in and out of school; displays self-reflection
- Uses school data and indicants to measure CRSL
- Uses parent/community voices to measure cultural responsiveness in schools
- Challenges Whiteness and hegemonic epistemologies in school
- Using equity audits to measure student inclusiveness, policy, and practice
- Leading with courage
- Is a transformative leader for social justice and inclusion

# Who are you?

# Engages Students, Families & Communities



- Developing meaningful, positive relationships with community
- Is a servant leader, as public intellectual and other roles
- Finding overlapping spaces for school and community
- Serving as advocate and social activist for community based causes in both the school and neighborhood community
- Uses the community as an informative space from which to develop positive understandings of students and families
- Resists deficit images of students and families
- Nurturing/caring for others; sharing information
- Connecting directly with students

# Promotes culturally responsive / inclusive school environment



- Accepting indigenized, local identities
- Building relationships; reducing anxiety among students
- Modeling CRSL for staff in building interactions
- Promoting a vision for an inclusive instructional and behavioral practices
- If need be, challenging exclusionary policies, teachers, and behaviors
- Acknowledges, values, and uses Indigenous cultural and social capital of students
- Uses student voice
- Using school data to discover and track disparities in academic and disciplinary trends

# Develops culturally responsive teachers / teams



- Developing teacher capacities for culturally responsive pedagogy
- Collaborative walkthroughs
- Creating culturally responsive PD opportunities for teachers
- Using school data to see cultural gaps in achievement, discipline, enrichment, and remedial services
- Creating a CRSL team that is charged with constantly finding new ways for teachers to be culturally responsive
- Engaging/reforming the school curriculum to become more culturally responsive
- Modeling culturally responsive teaching
- Using culturally responsive assessment tools for students
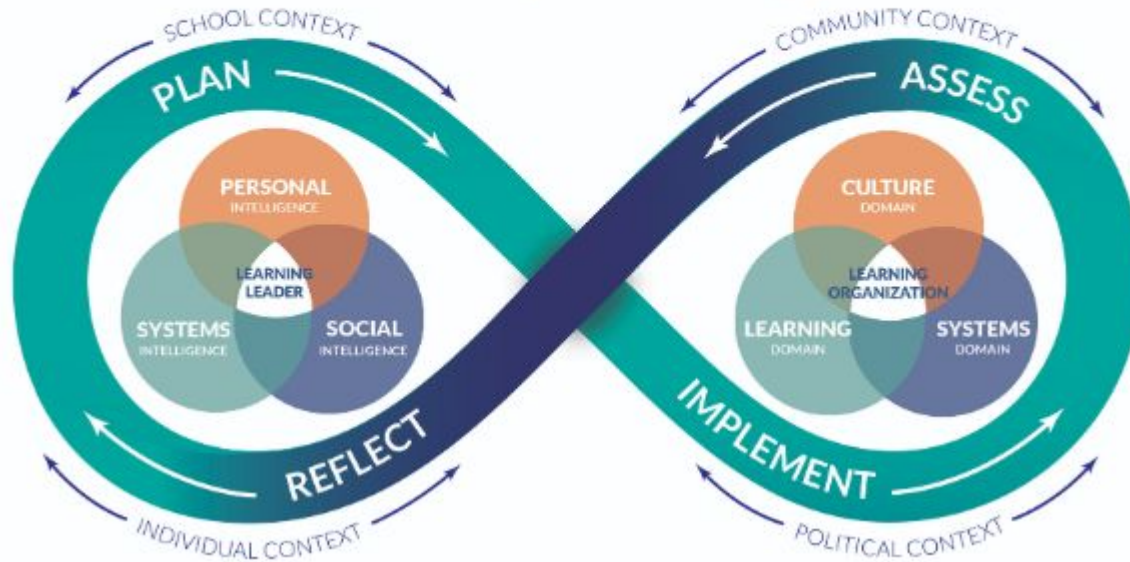
# Overview of CRSL Framework

- Critical Self Reflection

- Developing Culturally Responsive Teachers

- Promotes Culturally Responsive/Inclusive School Environment

- Engages Students, Parents, and Indigenous Contexts

"Communities have collective histories, experiences, and memories, and therefore have a unique way of viewing the world, and school" (p. 8).

# Where are you on the journey? What might be an action you can take to move to the right?

| Exploring | Becoming | Growing | Thriving |
|-----------|----------|---------|----------|
| I am **learning** (gathering information, reading, asking questions, observing) about the value and importance of ... | I am having conversations with / **engaging a learning partner** (ex. teacher, colleague, instructional coach) and **trying out** (planning, preparing, reflecting, applying) a practice … | I am reflecting on conversations, actively engaging and questioning, taking intentional action, self-assessing my practice and **seeking feedback** to adjust my practice... | I am supporting others (students, colleagues, leadership team) in the practice. I'm working collaboratively with a team in a long-range approach to **co-develop a process and embed** this practice… |

The "Explore Become Grow Thrive" language was originally created by the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership, and is used here with permission, to align the school leadership journey with the teacher career journey.

# Seeking your input…

When you think about what you know, understand and practice in Culturally Responsive Leadership…and to support growth in your practice…

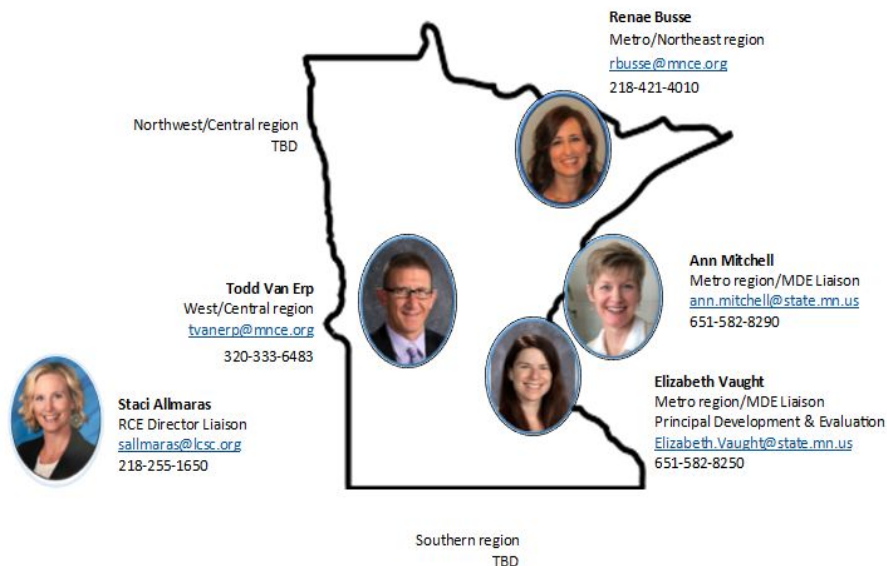*What would meaningful support look like?*

*Day-to-day*

*Weekly*

*Monthly*

*Quarterly*

*Annually*

# Who are we?

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