The Accelerated School Administrator Program ASAP®

Implementation Guide

Providing Tools That Work Effectively To Develop School Leaders

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ASAP® Implementation

The anywhere/anytime delivery of ASAP® content allows for a combination of implementation models, from completely Internet-based learning to a blended instruction option. Districts across the U.S. are using ASAP tools in a variety of ways to build or enhance their leadership development programs.

ASAP tools were developed to meet and/or exceed the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (formerly the ISLLC Standards) as published by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration.

These standards are recognized and supported by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the following NPBEA member organizations:

- American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE)
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)
- National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA)
- National School Boards Association (NSBA)
- University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)

The ASAP assessments, course modules, workbooks and case studies are also aligned to the professional standards for school leadership established by individual states and the appropriate correlation to applicable state standards is available to school districts and Local Education Agencies.

The following implementation options are among those recommended by districts experienced in the delivery of online learning content and specifically the ASAP program. Implementation can be, and most frequently is, customized to the design and needs of the district. These examples are provided as guidance in implementing your agency's integration of the Accelerated School Administrator Program into your school leadership professional development program.

Implementation Options

The Educational Leadership Assessment (ELA)

The Educational Leadership Assessment is a principal candidate leadership indicator tool that has been designed to:

- Identify high-potential educators with sufficient and appropriate knowledge, theory, and experience to be a part of an educational leadership program and to undertake the practice of leadership. It can also be used to make clear and appropriate decisions—in tandem with the candidate's background and theoretical knowledge—to guide their professional learning and work.
- Provide feedback on the skills and competencies of existing school leaders as they relate to the NPBEA and state standards for school leadership.

The ELA was developed in response to a research study investigating possible assessment instruments, which found that there was no single test or set of instruments that would assess the all dimensions of educational leadership based on national and state standards. As a result of this study, a unique set of assessment instruments were developed to screen potential and existing administrators and determine their leadership development needs according to the dimensions of leadership outlined in the standards. The ELA has been revised and updated as the standards have evolved (e.g., development of the Florida Principal Leadership Standards (FPLS) in 2012 and adoption of the NPBEA standards to replace the former Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards in 2015).

Benefits for Staff Developers at the District Level

- Affordable and valid principal candidate selection tool.
- Augments other district-based methods for identifying high-potential school leaders.
- Guides decision making to ensure district principal preparation programs focus effort and resources on areas of need.
- Allows district staff developers to design an individualized learning plan based on participants' areas of strength and need.
- Saves the district money. High-quality, low cost tools like the ELA help guide the allocation of staff development funds.
- The District Administration Reports graph each participant in comparison to everyone in the district cohort, as well as to the national average.

Benefits for Aspiring School Leaders and Existing Principals

- Assesses their "readiness" to undertake administrative positions in schools.
- Can be taken privately.
- Self-assessment to identify key areas of professional strength and growth.

- Receive an individual score for each assessment that charts their personal performance in comparison to the national average.

ELA sample reports are available by [contacting ASAP support](#).

The ELA is typically administered at the beginning of an ASAP implementation. It is used as the initial assessment tool in determining appropriate individualized learning for cohort members, and/or as a qualification tool for admission into professional development and induction programs.

Once candidates are assessed, district personnel use the detailed information in the reports to develop an individualized learning plan for each cohort member; prioritizing the assignment of Course Modules related to the assessment outcomes. The information from the reports can be combined with data from observations of the individual provided by district leadership personnel and peers (e.g., if the district uses a 360 observational analysis) in determining the Course Module priorities.

ELA assessments and the standards/categories they address

1. Shared Vision
   a. Engaging the community in the visioning process
   b. Understanding the roles of vision, mission, and values
   c. Translating the vision into measureable goals
   d. Maintaining a student focus in continuous improvement efforts
   Aligned to NPBEA 1, and sections of FPLS 2

2. Student Achievement
   a. Understanding student performance requirements
   b. Development and implementation of standards-based curricula
   c. Data analysis for instructional improvement
   d. Setting expectations for continuous improvement
   Aligned to sections of NPBEA 4 and 10, and sections of FPLS 1

3. Instructional Leadership
   a. Improving instructional knowledge and pedagogy
   b. Teaching and learning by design
   c. Empowering teachers through engagement and supervision
   d. Building a collaborative school culture
   Aligned to sections of NPBEA 4, 7 and 10, and FPLS 3

4. Faculty Development
   a. Defining and understanding faculty development
   b. Providing resources for faculty professional learning
   c. Educator evaluation
   d. Learner-centered and results-driven focus
   e. Fostering a learning community
   Aligned to NBPEA 7, and FPLS 4

5. The Learning Environment
   a. Diversity practices in schools
   b. Minimizing achievement gaps
   c. Creating a culture of continuous improvement in schools
   d. Implementing and maintaining an effective learning environment
   Aligned to NPBEA 3 and 5, and FPLS 5

6. Decision Making & Prioritization
   a. Decision-making strategies
   b. Ethical decision making
   c. Prioritization
   d. Using data in decisions
   e. Participative decision making
   Aligned to FPLS 6 and crosses all NPBEA standards

7. Building Instructional Capacity
   a. Defining instructional knowledge
   b. Identifying and using instructional materials and resources
   c. Distributive leadership that builds instructional relationships
   d. Developing and innovating organizational teams and structures that maximize professional development and student learning
   Aligned to NPBEA 6, and sections of FPLS 3 and 7

8. School Management
   a. Fiscal management and resourcing for instructional priorities
   b. Organizational efficiency to support teaching and learning
   c. Facilities management
   d. Maintaining a safe and welcoming learning environment
   Aligned to NPBEA 9, and FPLS 8

9. Communication & Community
   a. Individual communication skills
   b. School community engagement
   c. Parent relationships
   d. Faculty communication
   Aligned to sections of NPBEA 3 and 8, and FPLS 9

10. Professional & Ethical Behavior
    a. Understanding ethical behavior and moral purpose
    b. Resilience in preparing for and responding to challenges
    c. Continuous professional learning
    d. Mitigating barriers to faculty development
    e. Professional conduct in adhering to ethical behaviors
    Aligned to FPLS 10 and NPBEA 2

Administering the ELA

The ELA is comprised of a series of 10 individual examinations. Each is timed and participants are allowed up to 25 minutes to complete the test items before reviewing their score, which is provided in comparison to the national average. If the ELA is to be proctored, as recommended, the cohort or program leader should provide access to a computer lab or workspace that provides uninterrupted Internet access, appropriate technology (personal computer is preferred although some tablet devices have enough system resources), and enough time to complete the assessments. Ideally, the experience is divided into two half-day events allowing participants to complete 5 assessments each day, avoiding fatigue from spending an entire day in front of a computer screen. Some districts prefer to rely on academic honesty and allow participants to complete the assessments using their own tools and time, within a specific time frame (1 to 2 weeks).

Prior to beginning the assessments, participants should be provided with a brief orientation on what they are about to do. An orientation and explanation of the Educational Leadership Assessment can be viewed on the *asapportal* site, or if you do not have a site account, it can be viewed on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o35LU09a8kM

ASAP Course Modules

As with the ELA, ASAP Course Modules are aligned to the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders and state standards. They are typically assigned based on priorities set by reviewing ELA reports and observational data gathered at the LEA/district.

By determining the variation of the participant's score from the national norm, priority can be assigned to the dimensions showing the greatest deviation. This can be combined with observational data gathered by the LEA/district to create a priority list from which course modules are assigned. In some cases, courses should be taken in sequence. For example, Diversity provides content related to culturally relevant pedagogy and multicultural education, as well as tolerance and respect for the cultures in the school community. It may be appropriate to assign this course to an individual before transitioning to Community & Parent Relationships, which also addresses issues of cultural diversity as well as community involvement and influence in the school.

In areas related to instructional capacity, it may be appropriate to assign the Instructional Leadership course prior to Building Instructional Capacity, as some concepts addressed in the former course are foundational to issues presented in the latter. This may be followed by Staff Development and then Collaborative School Culture and/or Team Building. Depending on ELA outcomes and district observations, The Skilled Communicator may be added at some point.

Many courses stand alone in relation to the standards, and/or best practices of school leaders, such as Professional & Ethical Behavior and Decision Making & Prioritization.

The ASAP course modules are aligned with the standards and ELA outcomes as follows:

ASAP Course Module	ELA	NPBEA & FPLS Standards
M-01 Shared Vision	Shared Vision	NPBEA 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values, & FPLS 2: a), b), & c)
M-16 Professional & Ethical Behavior	Professional & Ethical Behavior	NPBEA 2: Ethics & Professional Norms, & FPLS 10
M-07 Diversity	The Learning Environment	NPBEA 3: Equity & Cultural Responsiveness, & FPLS 5
M-02 Using Data for Teaching & Learning M-03 Assessment & Evaluation M-11 Leading Teaching & Learning	Student Achievement	NPBEA 4: Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment, & FPLS 1, 2d, & 3
M-08 Community in the Classroom	The Learning Environment	NPBEA 5: Community of Care & Support for Students, & FPLS 2b, 5d & 9a
M-09 Building Instructional Capacity M-10 Instructional Leadership	a) Instructional Leadership b) Building Instructional Capacity	NPBEA 6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel, & FPLS 3 & 7
M-04 Staff Development M-05 Team Building M-06 Collaborative School Culture	Faculty Development	NPBEA 7: Professional Community for Teachers & Staff, FPLS 4 & 5d
M-12 Community & Parent Relationships M-13 The Skilled Communicator	Communication & Community	NPBEA 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families & Community, & FPLS 9
M-14 Operational Leadership	School Management	NPBEA 9: Operations & Management, & FPLS 8
M-17 Transformational Leadership M-18 Continuous School Improvement	The Learning Environment	NPBEA 10: School Improvement, & FPLS 5e & f

ASAP course module alignment (continued)

ASAP Course Module	ELA	NPBEA & FPLS Standards
M-15 Decision Making & Prioritization	Decision Making & Prioritization	FPLS 6, and crosses all of the NPBEA Standards
M-19 School Entry Planning	Additional course module provides strategies and tools for the new Principal entering their first school or a Principal moving to a new school	
M-20 District Administration	Additional course module for school leaders aspiring to a district administration position, or seconded to the district central office	

This correlation is representative of the content alignment, but it should be stated that several course modules contain content relevant to more than one standard as defined by both NPBEA and the Florida standards. For example, Shared Vision, Diversity, Leading Teaching & Learning, Assessment & Evaluation, Collaborative School Culture, and Community & Parent Relationships all include content relevant to Building Community in the Classroom and NPBEA Standard 5: Community of Care & Support for Students. The same is true of ELA assessment categories. For example, School Community Engagement within Communications, Building a Collaborative School Culture within Instructional Leadership, and Maintaining a Safe & Welcoming School Environment within School Management, all relate to FPLS 5: The Learning Environment as well as the categories in The Learning Environment assessment.

As stated in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (NPBEA, 2015), "*In practice, these domains do not function independently but as an interdependent system that propels each student to academic and personal success.*"

Each ASAP course module is reviewed annually and updated if necessary based on current research, and changes to legislation, such as the adoption of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December of 2015. The 2016 version of the course modules incorporates the significant changes to school, district, and state accountability included in ESSA. For this reason, a participant in a following year may be enrolled in a course that is slightly different in detail and presentation than someone from the previous year.

Each course module includes a series of exercises and assignments as well as a pre-test to provide each participant with a self-assessment of their current standing within the dimension, and a post-test as a further self-assessment of learning. Each module, on average, takes a minimum of 10 clock hours to complete. For busy educators, the average completion time per module as recorded and reported over the last 6 years, has been 42 days. Some participants may complete a course in a week; others will take much longer.

Starting Points

Due to the interdimensional nature of the learning content, there are recommended starting points for academic press and productive culture. For any participant enrolling in course modules related to academic achievement, foundational knowledge in setting and sharing the school vision, understanding the role of data in decision making for academic success, and the requirements of effective instructional leadership are all good starting points. For any participant enrolling in course modules related to productive culture, diversity and community engagement are recommended starting points.

For example, if ELA data indicates a need for growth in faculty development and instructional capacity, Staff Development and Team Building may be appropriate as the first two course modules prior to Building Instructional Capacity.

If ELA data indicates a need for professional development in areas of school community and culture, Diversity is recommended as a starting point before enrollment in course modules focused either on stakeholder relationships or collaborative school culture. The term 'school culture' generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity.
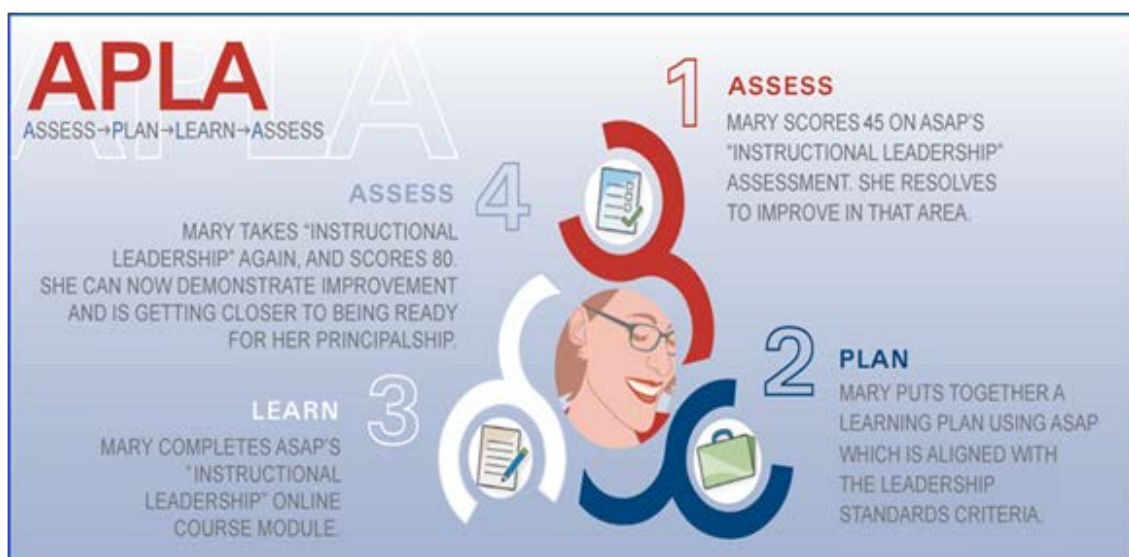
The potential for crossover occurs in many places. For example, a strong understanding of diversity issues is required when considering assessment and evaluation. In each case, the path from one course to another can be customized to the learning needs of the individual, or the LEA/district may opt for a schedule of courses to be taken by a portion of, or all members in the cohort in the same order.

Once the ELA results and any additional district data has been analyzed, the enrollment is completed by the ASAP support team, with each individual cohort member enrolled in course modules specific to their needs and the district plan. As one course module is completed, the next course can begin at the discretion of the individual, the district professional development leader, or based on a schedule set by the district.

The APLA Model

It is common for the LEA/district professional development leader to assign 2-3 course modules to participants in a single cohort. In each case, the Assess-Plan-Learn-Assess (APLA) model can be used. In this model, the participant receives their ELA scores and course module assignments. Upon completing a course, the participant can submit the course post-test as proof of learning, or take the ELA assessment for the particular dimension in which their course falls for a second time, to record their score in the dimension upon module completion for comparison to their previous score.

ASAP InBasket

As an exercise for a group event, or to further engage participants in learning within a specific dimension, the LEA/district professional development leader may use the InBasket Assessment as a formative assessment. While the InBasket has been used as a candidate selection tool by some districts, it is designed to challenge both aspiring and existing administrators. The InBasket is a scenario-based simulator, mimicking a challenging day in the life of a school principal. It was designed and written to the level of an educational leader with a Master's degree and at least 2 years of full-time work experience in a school.
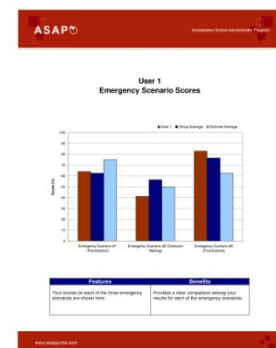
The InBasket should be administered in a group setting, with a recommended minimum of 8 participants, although 12 or more is better. This allows for small group activities including review of the assessment scenarios and group sharing and transference. The setting should be a computer lab or boardroom/conference room-style setting, free from interruption for at least 2.5 hours, with appropriate technology (as per the ELA). Since this assessment relies on interactive simulations, each participant must be provided with headphones or ear buds for audio content, so as not to distract others with the sounds included in the simulator.

Following a brief orientation about what is to follow, participants log into the ASAP site and complete the assessment. While some LEA/district clients have allowed participants to take this assessment in their own setting and on their own time, these individuals will not benefit from the group interaction that takes place following completion of the assessment.

Participants will complete the assessment at different times. Each participant receives an immediate score detailing each of the categories within the InBasket. During orientation, please instruct the cohort not to remark on or share their score with anyone else until the entire group reconvenes. It is recommended that a second room or meeting space be available for those who finish earlier, so they can leave the workspace for refreshments or a break while others complete the task. Typically the InBasket is completed within a period of 45 minutes to 1 and a half hours. The assessment is not timed and participants should not be pressured to complete the InBasket in a shorter time-span, if at all possible.

Once all participants have completed the InBasket, the program leader receives an Administrator's Report with detailed information about scores and group averages. To view a sample copy of this report, please contact ASAP support. Participants are moved to smaller groups of 3 to 4, and provided with the InBasket worksheets, containing reflective questions about what they have just experienced. When splitting up the larger group, it is recommended that individuals with higher scores in the Emergency Scenarios (or Complex Cases

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depending on which InBasket is being used) be grouped with individuals who scored lower, so that they can share their reasoning and experiences when using the worksheets to reflect on and respond to guiding questions about the issues involved in each scenario. Give the groups 30 minutes to go through the worksheets and reflect on the InBasket experience. Ask each group to select a spokesperson to present a summary of their conclusions upon completion of the worksheets and go around the room, group by group. Once this is complete, allow for an open and final discussion of the issues presented in the scenarios before concluding the event.

InBasket assessments are available in five dimensions:

1. Decision Making & Prioritization
2. Community & Parent Relationships
3. Diversity
4. Shared Vision
5. Professional & Ethical Behavior

ASAP Case Studies

The ASAP Case Studies may also be used in conjunction with the course modules as an additional assignment or set of assignments, or as a learning tool for a group event or regularly scheduled meeting. Each case is provided in both an online and downloadable PDF format for printing. The LEA/district professional development leader or their designee is responsible for grading the work of each participant, using the marking guidance and rubric provided for each case. These are accessible for download directly from the ASAP Site. The cases and the dimensions/standards they relate to are available from the program facilitator's toolset on the ASAP website. Here is a brief summary of the alignments:

- **Case 01**: The Principled Principal
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 2b; 7a; 7b; 7d; 9a; and 10d
- **Case 02**: Developing Professional Development
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 4e; 6e; 8c; 10b; and 10c
- **Case 03**: The Facebook Predicament
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 6b; 6d; 9c; and 10c
- **Case 04**: What Fits the Teaching Bill?
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 6b; 7a; 7b; 7e; 8c; and 9a
- **Case 05**: Driving Miss Jacobs
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 6b; 7e; and 10a
- **Case 06**: The Abuse Allegation
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 2b; 5a; 6b; 7e; 9a; 9e; 10a; and 10c
- **Case 07**: The Classified Claims
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 2b; 6b; 7e; 9e; and 10a

- **Case 08**: The Shady Substitute
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 2b; 6b; 6c; 7e; 9a; and 10a
- **Case 09**: The Suspected Students
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 2b; 6b; 7e; 9a; 10b; and 10c
- **Case 10**: Implementing an Instructional Plan
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 3b; 3c; 3e; 4d; 4e; 4f; 8a; and 8c
- **Case 11**: Technology and the School Climate
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 2a; 2b; 4b; 4d; 5d; and 6a
- **Case 12**: Supporting All Students
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 1b; 2c; 2d; 3b; 3c; 3e; and 4a
- **Case 13**: The Canary in the Data Mine
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 3b; 4a; 5e; 7b; 7d; and 7e
- **Case 14**: Continuum of Services
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 5a; 5e; 5f; 6a; 6c; and 9a
- **Case 15**: Leading the Leadership Team
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 7b; 7d; 7e; and 8a
- **Case 16**: Keeping the Campus Safe
    - Florida Principal Leadership Standards 8 (all); 10a; 10b; and 10e

Each case can be completed individually, or assigned to a group. If group work is to be done, the online discussion forum can be used to facilitate communication and sharing among group members. A separate "room" can be allocated to any group as defined by the LEA/district professional development leader.

ASAP Workbooks

ASAP workbooks are available in 14 subjects related to the ASAP courses and are intended as introductory or 'level 1' resources. They are typically used for early-career educators who want to explore a career in school administration, or as introductory level course materials for cohorts being considered for early career professional development opportunities or induction programs. Some workbooks contain course materials related directly to ASAP course modules, such as Essentials of Instructional Leadership or Shared Vision, while others are of a more introductory nature to the subject matter, such as Diversity and Using Technology for Instructional Purposes. The complete list of ASAP workbooks is available on the ASAP website.

Implementation Scenarios

Scenario 1

Early-career educators are provided with an introduction to concepts and skills needed to progress to a leadership role in the school/district. In this scenario, the ELA is assigned to all cohort members to identify areas for growth. ASAP workbooks are provided in those areas, with one or two courses offered to all cohort participants (e.g., Decision Making & Prioritization and Professional & Ethical Behaviors). Progress is monitored by ASAP and the district, and selected cohort members may be identified for a second track in the following term or year.

Scenario 2

Aspiring principals and school leaders are considered as candidates for induction or entry into a developmental program. ASAP is used as a component within, or as the foundation for the professional development program.

In this scenario, candidate selection begins with the ELA (and/or InBasket assessment) and from selected candidates, course modules are assigned based on a learning plan related to ELA outcomes and district observational data. Participants complete 2-4 course modules over the term or year, with each course discussion forum monitored and/or moderated by district staff. Assignments may be selected for group events or meetings as a focal or discussion point. ASAP course work is complemented by district professional development meetings and events which require the cohort members to use what they have learned in the school setting. An InBasket in one of the 5 available dimensions related most closely to the work being done by cohort members is assigned for a group event on a professional development day. Cases may be assigned to augment learning (e.g., the district has a large proportion of cohort members working in academic press, and adds Case 12 to the list of expected tasks, assigning it in small groups and holding a group meeting or conversation about the submissions of each group, and the implications for use in everyday school life. A district staff member is tasked with using the rubric to score the submissions and provide feedback to the groups through the online forum and/or at a related professional development meeting/event). Upon completion of the course module work and any assigned district initiatives, Cases and InBaskets, cohort members provide a portfolio of their learning, which may include a second ELA or a printout of the course module post-test results, along with evidence of work performed in the school related to the learning. They are interviewed by district staff in an exit interview format and the district ranks the participants relative to their achievement.

Scenario 3

Experienced teachers, assistant principals, and early-career principals are assessed for ongoing professional development needs and/or placement.

In this scenario, cohort members follow the same path as those in Scenario 2, with the exception that participants may not be candidates for induction or for other programs, but are engaged in ongoing learning. LEA/district professional development staff may select advanced course modules, such as Transformational Leadership and Continuous School Improvement, based on the experience levels and needs of the participants. Participants are typically paired with colleagues according to school level (elementary, middle or high school) and may be grouped by courses and/or asked to form a professional learning community. Participants meet at regularly scheduled times to complete assignments with an ASAP course module, case studies, an InBasket, or other group work as identified by the district. Several case studies are typically assigned and may be used as discussion points at regularly scheduled (e.g., monthly) meetings or professional development events. The groups set their own goals for implementing the learning at the school site, and compile a portfolio of achievements and shared insights that are being experimented with or adopted as new knowledge and skill. Companion texts are selected from the Suggested Readings section of an ASAP course module common to each group, and a group book study includes regular posting of questions and thoughts to the online discussion forum. In this scenario, school leaders have the opportunity to refresh their leadership skills, meet with peers to discuss learning and promote school-wide learning through the implementation of ideas on-site, bond and build learning communities in which they communicate and support each other. Often these communities persist well after the program work is completed.

Scenario 4

An ASAP Academy is designed. In this scenario, ongoing discussion and planning between ASAP learning officers and district professional development leaders identifies a common learning goal for all district participants (e.g., reviewing and improving School Improvement Plan processes for continuous school improvement, or engaging in learning around improving Literacy outcomes in underperforming schools). An academy format is used, including expert guest presenters who lead events in the district that include and support ongoing initiatives through assignments completed by learning communities structured within the academy. ASAP tools are used to support the academy process, mentors are provided to each group/learning community within the cohort, and a process is designed to include district staff in leading the initiative through learning, action in common, experimentation and innovation, and goal completion. This approach requires a project management approach to scope and goal setting. It typically requires at least 2-3 months of planning and coordination prior to execution, and additional budget and resources (meeting spaces, printing of materials, etc.) outside the scope of an ASAP subscription.

This is a customized implementation of the ASAP program, and many other customizations are possible. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact ASAP support to arrange a telephone conversation, web conference or meeting.

Lessons Learned

Over the years, with dozens of implementations in dozens of districts, some common lessons have been learned. Whether ASAP is the foundation of a leadership program or one of many components, using its tools capably is what makes the difference in the transference and retention of participant skills and knowledge. The ELA pinpoints learner needs. What happens next determines participant success.

Orientation

SIMPLE BUT IMPORTANT FIRST STEPS

Participants must know how to use ASAP tools and need a user-friendly environment and experience. Orientation is the first step.

1. If you are using a computer lab or classroom environment, a test of the computer systems and your internet connection should be conducted prior to the cohort group attending the orientation. If there are any technical issues, it is best to resolve them well in advance.

2. Make sure you have enough workstations for the size of your cohort and each station will need a set of headphones or ear-buds (like those typically used with MP3 players) if your participants will be taking the InBasket assessment, as this uses multi-media interaction and sound is important.

3. If it is possible that some members of your cohort will be uncomfortable in a large group, have an alternate room or classroom available for one or two people who wish to work in a quieter environment. Distractions will affect participant scores during the assessments.

4. Structure the schedule so that there are sufficient breaks between assessments. Having the group work from beginning to end through 10 tests in one day is not advised as some participants may struggle with the intensity of doing that much repetitive assessment work in a continuous stream. Each ELA test times out at 25 minutes. If a person were to take all ten, using the maximum time allowed, they would be sitting in front of a computer terminal answering multiple choice questions for 250 minutes, or 4 hours and 10 minutes. Given that it usually takes at least 5 to 10 minutes for participants to organize themselves, read through the instructions, and review the test results in each instance, you can add another 100 minutes for interstitial activity. Now the participant has spent almost 6 hours in front of a computer screen. You can understand how this

may skew the results of the final few tests if a suitable break structure is not incorporated into your plan.

5. Inform your participants of the schedule and your expectations around the use of time.

6. Once you have discussed your learning plan with your cohort, walk them through the orientation portion of the ELA so they get hands-on experience using the tool before starting the actual tests.

7. Discuss the presentation of test scores. The ELA is a norm referenced and validated assessment. This means there will be no feedback about how the scores were achieved, as the user may encounter the questions again as part of another assessment process. As a norm referenced test, each ELA yields a position of the tested individual in the predefined population of test-takers. It is not uncommon for test-takers who typically do well on tests to be surprised by their scores in the ELA assessments. They may need assistance in understanding that their score in relation to all of the other school administrators, who have taken the same test, is what is important. The ELA test items are intended to cover a wide range of skill sets at varying levels of complexity and specificity. Some will simply test for knowledge retention while others will require the abilities to analyze and evaluate. The assessments are intended to be challenging and typically are for most educators.

Select an Effective Facilitator

The following criteria are useful in considering a facilitator for any program:

- Approaches teaching from a coaching rather than a telling perspective
- Listens to adult learner needs
- Guides learning rather than directing it
- Is able to modify a presentation midcourse to meet needs

The following criteria are important for an ASAP facilitator:

- Is comfortable using technology
- Can put others at ease when using technology
- Can generate enthusiasm for online learning
- Understands the format and components of the ASAP program (through personally exploring the tools)
- Can navigate through the program with ease
- Is an effective communicator
- Can respond to questions about the program and individual components

- Can point out important functions and features in course modules and related assignments
- Can effectively conduct a discussion group and facilitate online forum discussion

Options for Blended Programs

STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL COHORT

Individualized learning is not unstructured learning. Participants must know how to use the ASAP tools, starting with two to three hours of required training, in a setting with their full cohort where peer tutoring is encouraged. This is considered vital to user success. Participants must practice using the tools first-hand at their required training.

Participants in an individualized learning program need clear direction:

- Provide clear and precise expectations, preferably in writing, that delineates exactly what each person is responsible for completing in the program.
- Provide starting and ending dates for activities. If module use is part of the program, set clear cut dates for the completion of a module or set of modules.

Online, individualized learning is most effective when it includes a face-to-face component for debriefing learning. Encourage participants to work collaboratively on course modules when appropriate. Instruct and encourage them to engage regularly in the online course discussion forums. You may even choose to schedule module discussion group times for participants to deepen their learning and share ideas, led by facilitation from a district staff designee.

Emphasize learning and its implementation on the job over the direct evaluation components of online learning:

- Learners can get caught up in pre- and post-tests and assignments, rather than in the vital information and high quality resources a module provides for improved job performance. Our research shows that one quarter to one third of those completing modules were surprised at the resources they missed when our team followed up with them.
- Balance the number of module assignments required with brief descriptions or video-taped evidence of implementation of skills and on-the-job knowledge.
- Monitor participant progress regularly during the program.
- Use email check-ins or online discussion forum meetings in which participants set the agenda based on their needs— encourage them to call their own meetings to share learning and solve challenges.

Consider Issues of Timing

The first step is to make a decision about how to use the course modules for:

- targeted individuals
- small groups of leaders and aspiring leaders
- large groups of leaders and aspiring leaders or other staff

Once the decision has been made, consider issues of grouping and timing. When will participants work on the course modules?

- On their own time in their own work space
- On their own time in designated meetings as a whole group
- At a set time in a district computer lab or meeting space (weekly or bi-weekly?)
- With a partner on their own time in designated whole group meetings
- With a partner at bi-weekly district meetings
- According to a unique district configuration that works for their group's needs (ensuring that their timeframe accounts for an access limit or completion date for each module)

Ensure timely completion of work within an organized learning plan.

- Access to each course module should last no more than six weeks. However, six weeks is rarely needed, especially if collaborative work is encouraged.
- Most districts allow 2–4 weeks per module when school time is scheduled for collaborative work.

When Meeting as a Group

Before the meeting:

- Print and photocopy any assignments, cases, or other work materials in sufficient quantities for your group.
- Formulate meeting goals (e.g., information, direction, growth as leaders, meeting standards, etc.).
- Create a brief (PowerPoint or other) presentation to share goals, expectations, processes, and formats for course module completion or other group activities.
- Prepare an agenda and an expectations document that clearly defines what each participant must do to effectively complete event-related work, and the overall program.
- Be sure to include definitive numbers (of course modules, assignments, entries in the learning portfolio, etc.), deadlines for each, and samples if necessary.

During the meeting:

- Distribute any required documents, allowing time for users to read them.
- Share information about the course module topic(s) and the completion date(s).
- Share deadlines for the program—beginning, ending, and meeting dates and duration of meetings.
- Share which (if any) assignments need to be completed and handed in.
- Inform group members if pre- and post-test scores need to be printed as partial documentation of course module study (recommended).
- Demonstrate a course module briefly, showing how to log in, major functions, and features.
- Distribute an "Exercise" or "Assignment" page downloaded from one of the course modules to each participant and lead a brief discussion on how you expect participants to use and complete these.
- Encourage participants to work collaboratively.
- If the meeting includes course module work, allow up to 75 minutes for module exploration and work including the pre-test, assignments, and forum postings. Post-tests should be done outside of the meeting setting.
- Ask for reactions and discuss ideas. Affirm efforts.
- Formally close the meeting by setting clear expectations for what is to come next.

The Role of the Mentor, Coach or Professional Learning Partner

- Facilitate sessions at whole or small group meetings of participants
- Work with individuals or pairs of participants
- Contact individuals between meetings to monitor progress
- Monitor online group or course module discussion forums and facilitate participation by posting questions or responding to the posts of participants
- Evaluate assignments, and case studies using the supplied rubrics
- Coordinate with ASAP support on behalf of cohort members (other than issues such as access such as a lost password, which can be dealt with immediately by the individual participant and the ASAP support team)

Course Module Discussion Forums

MODULE ONLINE DISCUSSION GROUPS ARE COMPRISED OF USERS WHO COLLABORATE AND SHARE LEARNING PRACTICES

Format

Ideally, course module discussion groups are small, informal, and comprised of users who are working through a specific course module. They share learning and practice around issues they self-identify with, or exercises or assignments in the module. The online discussion is supported by a district-appointed facilitator, but experienced participants quickly learn to facilitate their own group discussion.

Expectations

Participants should be encouraged to actively post to the online discussion forums and be prepared to share the following:

- A highlight from their learning while working in the course module which they can define or demonstrate for others (especially if it is something they are using in the school that has led to an improved outcome).
- A significant idea or innovation prompted by course module study.
- A description of how they are implementing their learning on-site.
- The type of impact they anticipate or see from implementation.

Questions

While course module exercises and assignments direct participants to post responses to specific questions, there are four scripted questions that facilitators can post that apply to each module. They may be used to engage cohort members in using the online forum, or focusing discussion on a specific topic if it appears to become too conversational and unfocused. The four scripted questions are:

1. What single item stands out the most for you in this course module (e.g., pdf's, text, resources, links, etc.)?
2. Identify a major idea or concept that has led to new discovery.
3. Describe how you are attempting to implement your learning at your school site. Is it working? What would you change?
4. What impact do you anticipate or already see as a result of implementation?

Other questions and ideas will arise. An experienced facilitator will guide discussion around them, tie them to the four existing categories, or create new ones as they are documented.

Closing the Discussion

Facilitators should take responsibility for the following:

- Providing a summary of important points posted in the cohort's forum within one week of the completion of all work within a specific course module (this may be shared with future cohorts at the district's discretion).
- Encouraging participants to continue sharing their implementation strategies (via email, telephone, in a general discussion forum on the ASAP site, etc.) after course completion.
- Setting up an additional meeting (face-to-face or online) if participants want a structured environment for closing their group interaction.

Exit Interview Questions

If an implementation similar to that presented in Scenario 2 is undertaken, an exit interview should be conducted with each cohort member (this may already be part of the district-wide professional development plan). The following are examples of streamlined questions appropriate to an exit interview:

1. In what areas, if any, did your assessments indicate areas of growth?
2. Using activities that are documented in your portfolio of learning, how did you address these areas?
3. What sections of your portfolio would you prefer to expand on to demonstrate the level of learning you have acquired in the past year?
4. Give an example in which you applied the learning from your leadership program to your work site.
5. Share one thing you learned about the role of the school principal from your leadership experience.
6. Describe how your school benefitted from your work in this program.
7. If you were convincing a panel that you were ready to be a principal today, what strengths would you say you bring to the job (not to be used for existing principals)?
8. In what areas of instructional leadership do you feel especially competent and why?
9. What do you want us to know about your leadership skills?

ASAP Implementation Checklist

This checklist is provided to assist you in reviewing your program activity to date, to be sure that you have put in place the research-based components that will provide participants with the most productive learning experiences. These, in turn, will provide better leaders for your district. Critically examine your program by responding to the questions that apply to the tools your group is using (include or exclude questions as they pertain to your specific implementation).

1. ELA results were explained and discussed with participants:
   a. Yes
   b. No
2. Expectations for the ASAP component of your program are documented in writing for participants:
   a. Yes
   b. No
3. Training and practice is required and in place for course modules:
   a. Yes
   b. No
4. The number of modules assigned is documented in writing for participants:
   a. Yes
   b. No
5. The deadlines/dates for module completion are document in writing for participants:
   a. Yes
   b. No
6. Requirements for creation of a portfolio of learning are documented in writing for participants.
   a. Yes
   b. No
7. A process is in place for review of learning portfolios at the end of coursework and participants are informed about that process.
   a. Yes
   b. No
8. Participants are informed about the rules/guidelines, and benefits of working collegially on course content:
   a. Yes
   b. No
10. Regular meetings for collaborative work are scheduled and documented in writing for participants:
   a. Yes
   b. No

ASAP Subscriptions

ASAP-oriented district programs typically use a blended learning model that includes the ELA, ASAP course modules for individualized learning, online group discussion and module discussion forums, targeted group workshops (that may or may not be centered around an InBasket or Case Studies, user-selected readings from the Suggested Readings and Bibliography sections of the course modules, and any on-site internship or site-based learning components employed by the LEA/district. ASAP customer support is available on an ongoing basis with every ASAP subscription, to assist LEA/district clients in organizing their professional learning activities.

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