



Superintendents' Networks

A unique opportunity for superintendents who are committed to sustained instructional improvement

What is the purpose of Superintendents' Networks?

Networks involve an explicit practice intended to build knowledge and skills of participating superintendents, and to provide helpful feedback to their schools. Networks are intended to increase the capacity of superintendents to provide leadership for improved instruction. They give superintendents a safe space to grapple with difficult issues related to improving teaching and learning.

What is the ILA Superintendents' Network?

Each AEA offers superintendents an opportunity to participate in a network. Coordinated through the Iowa Leadership Academy, networks are supported by the AEA statewide system and SAI. Collaborative partners: AEAs, SAI, IASB, DE and Higher Education.

How is a network structured?

Common elements: All Iowa networks use an “*instructional rounds model*” in which superintendents participate in site visits to each other’s districts. The host superintendent presents a “problem of practice,” then network colleagues use a set of non-judgmental protocols and practices to observe classroom instruction, debrief, and provide feedback and suggestions for the next level of work. Over time, all members’ schools are visited, leading to shared understandings of issues related to improving teaching and learning. All networks use Harvard-trained *facilitators* (Iowa superintendents teamed with other educational leaders) to coordinate professional learning, organize visits, facilitate network conversations, and ensure fidelity to the basic principles of the model. All networks will *maintain consistent membership* throughout a given school year.

Customized elements: Initially, facilitators in each network will determine structural elements such as network size, time commitment, frequency of site visits, etc. Network members then establish *norms* of practice for things such as attendance, mutual responsibility, involvement/attentiveness, confidentiality, sharing, etc. Network members determine how they will hold themselves and each other accountable for honoring their norms.

What are the expectations for participants?

- Attend all network meetings
- Host and participate in site visits
- Be an active and engaged learner
- Typical time commitment for meetings and visits combined is one day per month

How can I learn more?

Book: *Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning*. Elizabeth City, Richard Elmore, Sarah Fiarman, and Lee Teitel. 2009, Harvard Education Press.

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