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National School Leadership Program Launched in Virginia

The National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) Executive Development Program for School Leaders has been successfully launched in Virginia with the graduation of the first class of educators to complete the program and the training of nine others to present the course to additional cohorts.

The NISL Executive Development Program prepares principals and other school leaders to be strategic thinkers, instructional leaders and creators of school cultures in which all students are expected to meet high standards. The Virginia Foundation for Educational Leadership (VFEL) was selected by NISL to administer the 26-day training program at the recommendation of Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright.

“Strong building- and central office-level leadership results in better classroom instruction and increased student learning,” Wright said. “I want to thank the Virginia Foundation for Educational Leadership for partnering with me to bring the NISL Executive Development Program for School Leaders to Virginia.”

“This is the start of something big,” said VFEL President Randy Barrack, who is also the executive director of the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP). “The school leaders and educators who have completed this nationally recognized leadership development program are now making a difference in schools across the state, and the impact of the program will grow with the graduation of each additional cohort.”

The following educators completed the 13-unit, 26-day NISL training program in January 2014:

- Gary Blair — Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) school improvement contractor; former superintendent of Buckingham County Public Schools
- Michelle Boyd — director of exceptional education and student services, Richmond Public Schools
- Beverly Britt — principal of John Marshall High School, Richmond Public Schools
- Darlene Currie — director of professional development, Richmond Public Schools
- Frank Ehrhart — VDOE school improvement contractor
- Janice Garland — lead school improvement coordinator, VDOE Office of School Improvement
- Eric Jones — principal of Elkhardt Middle School, Richmond Public Schools
- Kimberly Judge — special education supervisor, Newport News Public Schools
- Selena McBride — reports and grants manager, VDOE Office of School Improvement
- Victoria Oakley — chief academic officer, Richmond Public Schools
- Beverly Rabil — priority schools coordinator, VDOE Office of School Improvement
- Angela Rhett — development and expertise supervisor, Newport News Public Schools

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- Varinda Robinson — school improvement supervisor, Newport News Public Schools
- Garrett Smith — executive director of elementary school leadership, Newport News Public Schools

In addition to successfully completing the program, the following nine educators earned certification to present the NISL course throughout the commonwealth:

- Randy Barrack — VFEL president, VASSP executive director
- Janice Case — VFEL project director
- Annie Harman — VDOE school improvement contractor
- Charles Harris III — VFEL program evaluator; former superintendent of Sussex County Public Schools
- Roger Jones — professor of educational leadership, Lynchburg College
- Carol Robinson — VFEL executive coach
- Abe Jeffers — principal of Robert E. Lee High School, Fairfax County Public Schools
- Brian K. Matney — principal of Landstown High School, Virginia Beach Public Schools
- Antonia Fox — principal of Tabb Middle School, York County Public Schools

Certification is valid for three years. After three years, recertification is required to continue delivering the NISL Executive Development Program.

NISL Director of Instruction Jennifer Beck-Wilson said it was “unprecedented for NISL to certify facilitators this soon, but the depth, knowledge and experience of the candidates convinced NISL to move forward with certifying each VFEL faculty member.”

Nationwide, more than 6,000 school leaders have been trained through the NISL Executive Development Program. Virginia is the 21st state to participate.

A second cohort of principals and other instruction leaders began the NISL program this month. Participants include four administrators from the Henrico County Public Schools, three from Newport News, five from Richmond Public Schools, five from Petersburg Public Schools, three from Prince Edward County Public Schools and the associate director of the VDOE Office of School Improvement.

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