



RUTHERFORD
COUNTY SCHOOLS

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Aspiring Administrators Academy Frequently Asked Questions

1. When was the Aspiring Administrators Academy established, and why?

Rutherford County Schools conceptualized the Aspiring Administrators Academy, developed its features, and outlined its structure during the 2022-2023 school year for the purpose of identifying excellent prospective school administrators across the school system, cultivating their interest in professional school leadership roles, and supporting their growth and development as future principals and assistant principals within our local elementary, middle, and high schools.

Successful, high-performing schools require strong, informed, inspired, and effective leadership. The Aspiring Administrators Academy intends to nurture Rutherford County Schools' next generation of principals and assistant principals by engaging excellent local educators in meaningful and influential preparation alongside practicing school and district administrators.

2. For whom is the Aspiring Administrators Academy intended?

The Aspiring Administrators Academy is specifically intended for current, licensed employees of Rutherford County Schools who do not yet hold a North Carolina Professional Educator's License in area 012 ("School Administrator – Principal") and who demonstrate:

- (a) A history of superior professional practice within the public school setting;
- (b) Emerging or established skills and dispositions necessary for successful practice as a principal or assistant principal;
- (c) An aptitude for and interest in exploring topics and themes in school leadership, both independently and alongside colleagues; and
- (d) A firm or tentative interest in becoming a principal or assistant principal for Rutherford County Schools within the next three to five years.

ALL RUTHERFORD COUNTY STUDENTS WILL GRADUATE PREPARED FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS.

In compliance with federal law, Rutherford County Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or military service in its policies, programs, activities, admissions, or employment.

3. What activities and experiences are provided through the Aspiring Administrators Academy?

The Aspiring Administrators Academy includes five components spanning one full school year. Those components will guide participants through an organized exploration of topics and themes in school leadership and encourage active, formative interactions among members of the cohort. They include:

Component 1: Kickoff Retreat

Participants will begin their Aspiring Administrators Academy experience with a Kickoff Retreat, to be held on a Friday evening and the following Saturday. During the retreat, participants will learn more about program components, engage in team-building activities, explore leadership styles, complete personal leadership inventories, network with colleagues, and survey a range of topics in school leadership. Meals are included.

Component 2: School Leadership Seminars

Participants will engage once monthly in a School Leadership Seminar, to be held on weekdays from 4:30 PM until 7:00 PM. During those seminars, participants will uncover and examine topics in school leadership by exploring school leadership vignettes both independently and alongside colleagues, and by engaging with invited guests through panel discussions and special presentations. Dinner is included.

Component 3: Job Shadowing

Participants will engage in three job shadowing exercises featuring paired, day-long experiences alongside one elementary school principal, one middle school principal, and one high school principal in Rutherford County Schools. On job shadowing days, participants will follow the work schedules of their partner principals and join them at their respective schools to observe, track, and discuss the diverse array of school leadership activities they routinely complete. Job shadowing dates will be individually arranged to accommodate the schedules and needs of participants and partnering principals. Related substitute teacher costs will be paid by Rutherford County Schools.

Component 4: School Leadership Project

Participants will partner with their own principals to identify, design, implement, and monitor the results of an independent project in school leadership that addresses an important need within their respective schools. Participants will present their project proposals to the cohort for discussion and constructive feedback and provide periodic progress reports during School Leadership Seminar sessions.

Component 5: Graduation

The Aspiring Administrators Academy will conclude with a special graduation ceremony, to be held at 5:30 PM on a weekday. Invited guests, including school and district administrators and members of the Rutherford County Board of Education, will recognize and celebrate participants. During the ceremony, participants will present summaries of their School Leadership Projects that include an overview of their scope and impact. Dinner is included.

4. What are the Aspiring Administrators Academy session dates for members of the 2023-2024 cohort?

Subject to adjustment in response to inclement weather conditions or other factors, session dates for the 2023-2024 cohort include:

Friday, August 25, 2023 – Saturday, August 26, 2023	Kickoff Retreat
Tuesday, September 26, 2023	School Leadership Seminar
Thursday, October 26, 2023	School Leadership Seminar
Tuesday, November 28, 2023	School Leadership Seminar
Thursday, January 25, 2024	School Leadership Seminar
Tuesday, February 27, 2024	School Leadership Seminar
Thursday, March 14, 2024	School Leadership Seminar
Tuesday, April 30, 2024	School Leadership Seminar
Thursday, May 9, 2024	Graduation

5. What if an unavoidable conflict prevents my participation in a specific Aspiring Administrators Academy session?

By design, the Aspiring Administrators Academy features a wide variety of activities and experiences intended to engage participants around important topics and themes in school leadership and to encourage active, formative interactions among colleagues. Therefore, all participants are strongly encouraged to attend and engage in all sessions. In the event that an unavoidable conflict prevents a participant's attendance and participation in a specific session, he or she should contact the school system's human resources director before the session date to make appropriate arrangements.

6. Is my participation in the Aspiring Administrators Academy free?

Yes. In partnership with the Rutherford County Schools Education Foundation, Rutherford County Schools is pleased to deliver the Aspiring Administrators Academy at no cost to participants.

7. Will I receive Continuing Education Units ("CEUs") for my participation in the Aspiring Administrators Academy?

Yes. Rutherford County Schools will issue CEUs to all Aspiring Administrators Academy graduates.

8. What opportunities for continued preparation are available to me after I graduate from the Aspiring Administrators Academy?

Rutherford County Schools will prioritize graduates of the Aspiring Administrators Academy for admission to the North Carolina Principal Fellows/Transforming Principal Preparation Program at partnering universities.

Additionally, graduates who elect to enter other approved principal preparation programs will be eligible for partial tuition reimbursement from Rutherford County Schools. Reimbursement for tuition at constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina ("UNC") System will be made at the rate of 50% of actual institutional tuition as periodically established by the Board of Governors. Reimbursement for tuition at approved institutions outside the UNC System will be made at the rate of 50% of the average institutional tuition established across the UNC System. Tuition

reimbursements will be issued at the end of each academic term upon receipt of a completed reimbursement application, university transcript, and itemized receipt reflecting tuition paid. Tuition reimbursements are only available for courses accruing academic credits toward successful program completion. Recipients of partial tuition reimbursements agree to (a) maintain their employment with Rutherford County Schools for a period of four calendar years following the date of final reimbursement and (b) apply for principal and/or assistant principal vacancies in Rutherford County Schools as they become available.

9. Where can I find an application for admission to the Aspiring Administrators Academy?

To download an application for admission to the Aspiring Administrators Academy, please visit www.rcsnc.org/aspiringadministratorsacademy/.

10. Does the admission process require one or more letters of recommendation?

Each participant's application for admission must be accompanied by a Candidate Reference Form completed by his or her principal. All Candidate Reference Forms are confidential application materials not subject to release or disclosure to applicants or other parties. Principals must submit completed Candidate Reference Forms directly to the Superintendent via email by the application deadline.

Additionally, applicants for admission may choose, but are not required, to solicit letters of recommendation to accompany their applications. Those optional letters of recommendation should be submitted with the application.

11. Does the admission process require an interview?

Yes. The Superintendent will convene a small team of practicing school administrators within Rutherford County Schools to individually interview each applicant for admission to the Aspiring Administrators Academy. Interviews are expected to take approximately thirty minutes each. All interviews with candidates for admission to the 2023-2024 participant cohort will be conducted at the school system's Cool Springs administrative offices during the month of April, 2023.

12. When is the deadline for applying to participate in the Aspiring Administrators Academy?

In order to be considered for admission to the 2023-2024 cohort, all application materials must be received by 5:00 PM on Friday, March 31, 2023. Late materials will only be considered under extraordinary circumstances.

13. When will I know if I am selected to participate in the Aspiring Administrators Academy?

All applicants for admission to the 2023-2024 cohort will be advised of their admission status by 5:00 PM on Friday, April 28, 2023.

14. I have additional questions about the Aspiring Administrators Academy. Whom should I contact for more information?

We welcome additional questions about the Aspiring Administrators Academy and would be delighted to share any additional details you may find helpful as you consider participating. Please direct any additional questions you may have to the attention of Dr. David M. Sutton, Superintendent, at dsutton@rcsnc.org.