



The University of Texas of the Permian Basin, School of Education

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Program Overview

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Introduction

The West Texas Principal Center was established in the Fall of 2005. Plans began earlier in the year with a team of educators from the UTPB's School of Education collaborated on developing a principal center that would have a foundation of research based emerging trends in educational administration. The key would be to identify school districts with high percentages of economically disadvantaged children and then to develop a program that would serve the needs of that district.

The superintendents of the region's school districts were contacted and those who met the baseline criteria to be included (high percentage of low SES students) became members of the WTPC. A grant from the US Department of Education was secured to provide funding. Districts recommended teachers who they felt could become highly qualified principals in the districts and the first group of applicants began WTPC paid graduate courses in the Fall of 2005. By mid-October, the WTPC Superintendent and Program Coordinator were in place and the activities of the WTPC have been going strong ever since.

West Texas Challenges

The WTPC's program was structured to meet the needs of the geographic region known as the Permian Basin. The communities of Midland and Odessa each have a population of around 100,000 people within their respective counties (Midland and Ector). The remaining area of the Permian Basin – approximately the size of Indiana has a population of 100,000 people. The region is geographically isolated. If educators are to attend any state conferences for professional development, they have to travel to the "I 35 Corridor" of San Antonio to Dallas that is a minimum of 300 miles away.

Currently the economy is thriving with an upturn in the production of oil – the historic “lifeblood” of the region. This is an economic base that can and will leave as fast as it came. Despite the upturn in the economy, there are still high percentages of economically disadvantaged students. Hispanic students account for a majority of the students in many communities. Finding solutions to the issues of student language acquisition and assuring cultural proficiency in the schools is a national and regional issue made more difficult by a growing shortage of highly qualified teachers and principals. Add to this the geographic isolation of the Permian Basin and the mandate to provide every child, in every school, the best teachers and principals possible – that was the driving need that led to the establishment of the West Texas Principal Center.

WTPC Goals & Intended Outcomes

The primary goals of the WTPC are:

- 1) New principals and assistant principal candidates will achieve excellence throughout all phases of the project as measured by various assessments of administrator proficiencies.
- 2) The proposed candidates will demonstrate competency in effective leadership strategies and skills as measured by various formal and informal assessments of principals.
- 3) To improve self-assessment training, support and professional development for current member district administrators and principal candidates as measured by various assessments of principal proficiencies.

The intended outcomes are:

- 1) Provide the Permian Basin with a pool of highly qualified, certified principals.
- 2) Have these certified principals employed as administrators in the school districts of the Permian Basin.
- 3) Provide current administrators with ongoing, high quality professional development opportunities within the Permian Basin.

Program Administration

The WTPC operates with the following staff:

Program Director An Associate Professor in Educational Leadership who evaluates the functions of the professional staff, the activities requirement of the grant and oversight of the program budget. Dr. Carl Hoffmeyer, an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership is the Program Director.

Superintendent A veteran public school administrator (former principal and superintendent) that performs a balance of instructional and administrative functions. Dr. Byron Welch is the WTPC Superintendent.

Program Coordinator A UTPB graduate student who has expertise in UTPB human resource, purchasing, communications and public relations functions. A. Michelle Clements is the WTPC Program Coordinator.

Member Districts

District Name	Number *	Percent
Ector County ISD	70	86%
Big Spring ISD	4	5%
Lamesa ISD	1	1%
Fort Stockton ISD	4	5%
Pecos ISD	1	1%
Seminole ISD	1	1%
Balmorhea ISD	0	0%
Stanton ISD	0	0%
Snyder ISD	0	0%
Total	81	

* Total number of program participants approved for the program and enrolled for at least one semester in UTPB graduate classes from the Fall of 2005 through the Spring of 2007.

Texas is divided into 20 geographic regions. Each region is served by a regional service center that provides a wide variety of services – professional development, technical support, technology services and so on. Most of the WTPC member districts are in ESC 18 that is located in Midland. Lamesa ISD and Seminole ISD are served by ESC 17 in Lubbock while Snyder ISD is served by ESC 14 in Abilene.

District Contacts

Balmorhea ISD

Ms. Mary Lou Carrasco, Superintendent mcarrasc@esc18.net (432) 375-2223
P. O. Box 368 Balmorhea, TX 79718

Big Spring ISD

Mr. Michael Downes, Superintendent mdownes@bsisd.esc18.net (432) 264-3600
708 11Th Place Big Spring, TX 79720

Ector County ISD

Dr. Joseph Gallegos, Asst. Supt. gallegj@ector-county.k12.tx.us (432) 335-8984
802 N. Sam Houston Odessa, TX 79760

Fort Stockton ISD

Mr. Ronald Mayfield, Superintendent rmayfield@fort-stockton.k12.tx.us (432) 336-4000
101 West Division St. Fort Stockton, TX 79735

Lamesa ISD

Mr. Keith Bryant, Superintendent kbryant@lamesa.esc17.net (806) 872-5461
P O Box 261 Lamesa, TX 79331

Pecos-Barstow-Toyah ISD

Mr. Manuel “Manny” Espino, Superintendent mespino@esc18.net (432) 447-7201
 1302 South Park St. Pecos, TX 79772

Seminole ISD

Mr. Doug Harriman, Superintendent ctherwhanger@seminole.k12.tx.us (432) 758-3662
 207 S.W. 6th St. Seminole, TX 79630

Stanton ISD

Mr. David Carr, Superintendent dcarr@esc18.net (432) 756-2244
 200 N College Stanton, TX 79782

Snyder ISD

Dr. James Collins, Superintendent rcollins@snyder.esc14.net (325) 573 – 5401
 2901 37th St. Snyder, TX 79549

Participant Data

Program Status	Number	Percent
Dropped	2	2%
Moved	1	1%
Status Uncertain*	2	2%
Finished	17	21%
Active	59	73%
Total	81	
<i>* Qualified but not enrolled Spring 07</i>		

Catagories	Number	Percent
Anglo	46	57%
Hispanic	33	41%
African American	2	2%
Total	81	

Catagories	Number	Percent
Male	30	37%
Female	51	63%
Total	81	

While not specifically stated, the operations outline of the WTPC program, would establish a homogeneous cadre of new graduate students. This cadre would move through a specific program of activities. In reality, in order to begin serving the participants as soon as possible, with limited time and no Center staff the decision was made to accept as many applicants as possible that qualified and had local district approval.

The initial group of WTPC participants represented a wide variety of graduate students that were at all stages of master's studies – newly admitted to within a few hours of program completion. Once in place, the WTPC Staff along with the Professors of the Education Leadership Program at UTPB supported the idea that maintaining a diverse group of students. This would allow for a greater diversity in group activities and the ability to serve a wider range of students.

There are two cadres of WTPC participants:

- Those who are completing a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership with an additional nine (9) hours for Texas Principal Certification.
- Those who already hold a Master's Degree and take 20-22 hours of additional coursework for Texas Principal Certification, as determined on a case-by-case basis with their advisor.

CCC / Advisory Input

The key to the success of the program is being able to address the individual needs of every individual participant. To assure this individual success, everyone who plays a part in the development of the participant has input in the process: participant student, professors, principal, principal coach and the superintendent of the home district. The WTPC superintendent and program coordinator assure that the “3 C's” are in place and the results are satisfactory to all parties:

- **Cooperation** – All parties work together to accomplish defined outcomes. All are involved.
- **Communication** – All parties communicate via: face-to-face meetings, phone calls, written evaluations, emails, site visit and group meetings their satisfaction, expectations, concerns and questions. All have a voice.
- **Coordination** – In a process of cooperation through communication, coordination of activities is carried out to assure the greatest participation possible. All participants and administrators have a full life of family, work and community involvement. While the activities of the WTPC are valuable, the philosophy of the Center is to serve the needs of the participant and the member districts. Through reasonable expectations, multiple opportunities to attend, alternative ways to participate, one-on-one sessions, site visits and other delivery methods, the WTPC, the Ed Leadership Faculty and the member districts work together with the program participant to maximize the WTPC experience.

The WTPC seeks the advise of the Superintendents of the member ISD's. This body and the Education Leadership Faculty of UTPB make up the advisory board. Each district has it's own unique character. There are some member ISD's who may only have one or two people attend one event in a year. Ector County ISD, because of it's size and proximity has a whole different working relationship than other member ISD's. By being able to tailor the program to the

needs of each district – in an “off the rack” world, has been a very positive aspect of the operations of the WTPC.

Program Components

- **Education Cost** – The most visible component of the WTPC program is paying the participants tuition, fees and books for up to 18 graduate hours a year. Additionally, all costs for conferences and program along with books and materials are paid by the WTPC.
- **Assessments** - Each participant in the WTPC program completes a series of assessments aimed at determining individual strengths and to focus on strength development during the course of their graduate school. Assessments include:
 - **In-Basket** – A “real world” activity to get an idea of the variety of activities a principal has to address and to determine their approach to problem solving and communications.
 - **Strength-Finder** – An on-line assessment that identifies primary strengths that can be the focus of determining individual professional growth goals and activities.
 - **360° Assessment** – An tool where the participant, principal/coach and any number of other professionals (principal, director, peer) perform a common assessment of the participant’s strengths. The results are compared and differences are discussed with the participant gaining incites on their unique strengths from a 360° perspective.
 - **Technology Competency** – A technology skills self-assessment aligned to Texas Education Agency (TEA), Texas State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) and national technology standards.
 - **Ongoing** – Additional assessments and reflection activities provide the participant with an opportunity to monitor their professional growth and development over time.
- **Mentor/Coaching** – Each participant is assigned a Principal/Coach. This individual applies the techniques of coaching to helping the participant reflect on determined strengths and plan a Individual Training Plan (ITP) to develop their strengths and to monitor their professional growth through their graduate school program.
 - **Coaches 05/06** – A total of 18 coaches volunteers to work with 1-4 participants (with 3 being the largest number to date). Each coach was paid a small stipend to work with their participants.

- **Coaches 06/07** - As new students were added at midterm, the total number of coaches is not fully determined, but will probably be around 25 for the year. Many are returning with the same participants or new participants if their “coachee’s” graduated in August or December.
- **Coach/Texas Curriculum** – The WTPC, is cooperating with the Texas Staff Development Council, UTPB School of Education Teacher Development Program and the Ector County ISD in the development and implementation of a mentor/coach professional development program that will serve student teachers, principal preparation graduate students as well as campus principals and teachers. The program has been developed and the training of trainers will take place in early April. Full implementation will be in place for the 07-08 school year.
- **Goal/Setting** – Each participant develops a Individual Training Plan (ITP) in cooperation with their Principal/Coach. This activities provides a focus for developing individual professional strengths over the course of their program. Opportunities to reflect and update the plan are a focal point of the participant – coach relationship.
- **Ongoing Support** – Once the participant has completed their certification program, the WTPC will assist as individually needed with preparation for the TExES certification test. Participants who complete the program are welcome to continue attending and being involved in the activities of the WTPC. In this way, they are reaching back to help the next professional who aspires to be a principal.

Program Activities

The WTPC hosts and collaborates with other entities to provide a variety of professional growth activities for the program participants and the administrators of the member districts. Examples of the activities are listed below:

- **Topical Seminars** – The WTPC has regular seminars with topics like:
 - *Focus on Strength not Weakness*
 - *Having a Vision – The Edge of the Rut is Not the Horizon*
 - *Don’t Forget the Affective Domain – Climate Impacts Outcomes*
 - *Shaping a School Culture*
 - *What Does the Future Hold – What Gary Marx and Joel Barker Have to Say*
 - *Issues Faced by Principals*
 - *Coaching, 360° and ITP’s - Something New, Something Borrowed but Hopefully no Blues*
- **Guest Speakers** – Arranged by the WTPC or in cooperation with other entities:
 - **Gary Marx** – *Focus on the Future* - futurist, speaker, writer, institute director
 - **John Hoyle** – *Vision* – educator, writer, selected “exceptional living scholar” in educational leadership, professor

- **Mikhail Gorbachev** – *Global issues* - former leader of the Soviet Union
- **Richard Villa** – *School Inclusion* - writer, educator
- **James Crawford** – *Bilingual Education* – writer, educator, institute director
- **Jack Fletcher** – *Special Education / RTI* – researcher, writer, professor
- **Charles Haynes** – *Common Ground* – Religion and Schools - professor
- **Margaret Spellings** – Education US Secretary of Education

- **Book Reviews** – Examples of the WTPC book reviews/studies:
 - *First, Break all the Rules*, Marcus Buckingham
 - *Now, Discover Your Strengths*, Marcus Buckingham
 - *The One Thing You Need to Know*, Marcus Buckingham
 - *Future Focused Leadership*, Gary Marx
 - *Leadership and Futuring*, John Hoyle
 - *Creating An Inclusive School*, Richard Villa
 - *The 360° Leader*, John Maxwell
 - *Culturally Proficient Coaching*, Delores Lindsey
 - *Schools That Learn*, Peter Senge

- **Conferences**
 - WTPC Summer Leadership Conference
 - UTPB Bilingual Conference
 - TASA Handheld Computer Academy
 - RTI Summit

- **Leadership Development** – There have been opportunities for WTPC participants to volunteer to assist behind the scenes in the planning and execution of various activities:
 - UTPB Bilingual Conference
 - RTI Summit
 - WTPB Summer Leadership Conference
 - Learning for Life / Explorers character development and workplace skills programs
 - Developing a pilot program for WTPC participants to coach student teachers
 - Researching regional education foundation development and trends and grant writing

- **Presentations** - WTPC participants and administrators have had the opportunity to do presentations at:
 - UTPB Bilingual Conference
 - WTPC Summer Leadership Conference
 - AASA and NASSP Conferences
 - TASA Mid-Winter Conference
 - TASB/TASA Convention

- **Partners** – Local and state organizations and entities that the WTPC have worked with to provide activities for participants and administrators:

- Education Service Center, Region 18
- Texas Staff Development Council
- Ector County ISD & Big Spring ISD
- UTPB Bilingual Program
- UTPB JBS Leadership Institute
- Texas Association of School Administrators

Program Evaluation

The WTPC is in the second year of operation. In March, 2006 the USDE held a conference in Washington to coordinate the program evaluation of each of their 33 programs (of which the WTPC is one of four in Texas). At that time, the WTPC program staff determined that the WTPC was in full operation at a time when most programs were just starting implementing their programs. In April of 2006, the USDE requested a program evaluation be completed for determination of continued funding. A follow-up report was completed submitted by the end of August. All indications are that the WTPC program is on track in and in full compliance with the grant requirements.

In March, 2007 the Chicago Public Schools hosted a meeting of the various program directors to provide an opportunity to share activities and program components and to evaluate the overall status of the programs in the second year of operation.

On The Horizon

The WTPC is involved in a couple of projects that are currently in development. These include:

- **Coach/Texas** – As referenced earlier in this document, the WTPC is working with the Ector County ISD, the Texas Staff Development Council and the UTPB Teacher Preparation Program to implement a mentor/coach program that has been jointly developed. Coaching is a central part of the WTPC and the program will see all participants as well as ISD administrators using a common coaching process. Coach/Texas is also targeting student teachers and new teachers in the field. A part of the WTPC program will have our graduate students coaching student teachers with the goal to develop stronger principals as well as teacher leaders for shared campus accountability and decision-making.
- **PDAS** – Texas teachers are evaluated through the use of the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS). The PDAS training materials are currently being revised and the WTPC is working with the Texas Education Agency and the Region 18 Education Service Center to assure inter-rater reliability of the training video. Both the UTPB and ESC 18 provide training in the PDAS for school administrators.

- **Bilingual Education** – The majority of the students of Permian Basin school districts are Hispanic. Many of these children are served by bilingual education programs. In an effort to better serve the needs of this growing demographic group, the UTPB has developed a intensive Spanish language immersion program with the Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua in Chihuahua, Mexico. A proposal for a program to link school administration graduate students is currently under study. The idea is to provide opportunities for future principals from both countries and universities to network and develop professional relationships based on the common issues that they face.
- **Response to Intervention (RtI)** – The WTPC, Texas Staff Development Council and the ESC 18 administrator preparation staff recently hosted a RtI Summit in Odessa, Texas. The event was attended by over 400 educators from the Permian Basin. The Summit was attended by teaches, principals, superintendents and various special education professionals. As this is a major topic, these same entities will be cooperating with future professional development events on this subject. The next event is the WTPC Summer Leadership Conference. The theme for this year stresses educating every child. The focus will be on: inclusion, differentiation in the classroom, special education, bilingual education, gifted and talented programs and a shared leadership vision for having an exemplary school.
- **Big Spring ISD** – As a member school district, Big Spring ISD has taken the lead in the development of a staff development program focused on the book, *Building Leadership Capacity in Schools*, by Linda Lambert. The WTPC graduate students and principal/coaches from Big Spring ISD will be the central presenters in the upcoming Summer Leadership Conference. They serve as an excellent model for implementation of the WTPC program components including: coaching, technology implementation, team planning, support of aspiring administrators and “sharpening the saw” through ongoing scholarship activities. As such, the district has a strong culture of quality education and positive climate on the various campuses. This has translated into outstanding student academic outcomes.
- **UTPB School of Education NCATE Accreditation** - At the same time the WTPC was being formed (Fall, 2005) the UTPB School of Education began preparation for consideration of accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The WTPC has been an active part in the work of the Educational Leadership part of the School of Education. This process culminates in April, 2007 with the NCATE accreditation visit to the UTPB campus. As the WTPC has developed, the attention to the NCATE standards during the development phase of the program has raised the bar on the quality of the program that is being provided to the member school districts and principal preparation participants.