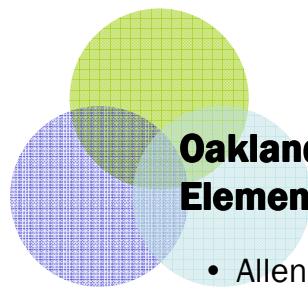


LEARNING LEADERS

Annual Practitioners' Journal of the Principals-in-Action Network™

Volume 1, June 2005



Oakland Unified School District Elementary School Cohort

- Allendale Elementary
- Brookfield Village Elementary
- E. Morris Cox Elementary
- Fruitvale Elementary
- Garfield Elementary
- Hawthorne Elementary
- Highland Elementary
- Jefferson Elementary
- Lockwood Elementary
- Sobrante Park Elementary
- Stonehurst Elementary
- Webster Academy
- Whittier Elementary



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Principals-in-Action Network™ is a professional leadership development program of Performance Fact, Inc., uniquely customized for Oakland Unified School District Elementary School Leaders. Inaugurated in 2003.

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in-Action Network™



Oakland Unified School District (Oakland, CA)
Elementary School Cohort
Volume 1, June 2005

OUSD Leaders:

Yvonne Allara, Executive Director
Kevin Wooldridge, former Executive Director

Performance Fact, Inc. Team Members:

Mutiu Fagbayi
Nancy Lee
Yolanda Peeks
Gordon Propps

[Performance fact, Inc.](#), led by Mutiu Fagbayi (President/CEO), facilitated the development of this professional leadership program.

[PERFORMANCE fact, Inc.](#) provides tools and technical assistance to state education departments, districts, schools and related institutions regarding results-focused educational plans, leadership development, and trust.

[PERFORMANCE fact, Inc.](#)

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The End of the Beginning

The *idea* of a Principals-in-Action Network™ was “conceived” in Spring 1995, in Rochester, New York. Our premise was simple, really: *If we want all students to meet proficiency standards, then all educators must be expected and encouraged to meet the standards for their profession.*

We were convinced that nurturing capable, effective leaders and communities of quality, collaborative practice were pre-requisites for improving learning and achievement for students. And we hoped that, some day, the particular *design* we had in mind would be embraced by educators committed to our “*organic*”, *learner-led, customized approach to continuous professional learning and renewal.*

Ten years later, the idea appears to be coming of age – thanks to the hundreds of educators who welcomed us into their world, trusted us, and worked with us to continually improve the *practices* of the Principals-in-Action Network™ so that those practices would work for them in their day-to-day practices as educational leaders. They are the real heroes of our story.

The Early Years

- In 2001-2002 school year, it was a small group of school leaders in Sacramento City Unified School District (Sacramento, California) who first tried the idea we proposed.
- In 2002-2003 school year, a group of seven elementary and three middle school leaders participated in the first Principals-in-Action Network™ program for Oakland Unified School District (Oakland, California).
- In 2003-2004 school year, we facilitated professional learning for educational leaders in California and Pennsylvania – three cohorts of Oakland USD school leaders, and four cohorts in the School District of Lancaster (Lancaster, Pennsylvania).
- In 2004-2005 school year, we worked with all administrators in Spring Branch Independent School District (Houston, Texas) and a cohort of elementary principals in Oakland USD.
- Each year, each group of educators defined its professional learning needs. The only constant from year-to-year and from one group of learners to the next is the underlying



architecture of Principals-in-Action Network™, namely: the seven *design principles* that frame our approach; the three *leadership disciplines* we use to organize the curriculum for each cohort; the *professional standards* for educational leaders for each state; and a set of *criteria* that clarify the expectations of each partner and assure mutual success. These are described more fully in the next section of this Journal.

- Each year, our practice got closer and closer to the vision we had in 1995. During the 2004-2005 school year, all the pieces came together. It feels like we are now at “*the end of the beginning.*”

Transitioning to New Experiences

The 2004-2005 school year was a turning-point for our Principals-in-Action Network™ concept. We found our stride this year, thanks in large measure to the dedication of the thirteen Oakland USD elementary school principals who participated in our year-long leadership development program. This first volume of our **Learning Leaders** journal is *their* story.

These leaders embraced a greater level of ownership of their learning than we had ever experienced. They formed stronger professional bonds than existed before. They evolved from “social harmony” into an “intellectual community.” They delved deeper into their selected topics. They made Performance Fact’s role as facilitators less and less necessary, as we had hoped. And they applied their professional learning more consistently in their day-to-day practices as school leaders. In short, they made Principals-in-Action Network™ *their own!* Just like we’d envisioned ten years earlier.

For many of the schools and school leaders, the 2004-2005 school year marked the “end of the beginning” in other respects. Some of the schools will be “reconstituted” in 2005-2006. A couple will become charter schools. A few will be reconfigured as “small schools.” Each of these represents a transition for the principals. However, we are convinced that the ethic of continuous learning will endure no matter where they may find themselves.

Without a doubt, countless people have contributed to the success of this venture. However, Kevin Wooldridge, former Executive Director, Oakland USD Elementary Schools deserves special mention. Kevin shares our vision and provided the disciplined leadership that a “non-



traditional” approach such as ours needed in its nascent years. Kevin, too, is transitioning into a new role as head of a network of charter schools in Oakland.

For our organization – Performance Fact, Inc. – this is a year of transitions as well. We are more certain of the efficacy of our design. We have grown tremendously. We are more confident. And we are ready for the next phase of this perpetual journey of continuous learning and renewal. A special “Thank You” to my colleagues on the Performance Fact team – Nancy Lee, Yolanda Peeks, and Gordon Propps – for their stewardship of our shared vision. Each of them brings unique strengths and perspective to our work, and they blend together in ways that serve our clients and the mission of our organization. I am grateful for their dedication.

As we come to “the end of the beginning” for Principals-in-Action Network™, it is our hope that this journal – **Learning Leaders** – will become an annual publication by, for and about *practitioners*, sharing the evolution of their practice.

The goal remains unchanged: *improving student learning and achievement by nurturing capable, effective leaders and communities of quality, collaborative practice.*

Our own role remains unchanged, as well: *creating opportunities for continuous professional learning and renewal for educators.*

Here’s to new beginnings!

Mutiu Fagbayi
President/CEO, Performance Fact, Inc.
Oakland, California



The Architecture of Principals-in-Action Network™

The Principals-in-Action Network™ is anchored in the following core ideas.

1. **Design principles** that provide the framework for the habits of mind, practices and processes of each cohort. These are common across all cohorts, although how they are applied is locally relevant to each group of learners.
2. **Professional standards** that define what school leaders need to know, be able to do and be like. We believe that the goal for every educational leader is to become proficient according to the professional standards for the respective state or school district.
3. **Leadership disciplines** around which the curriculum is organized, namely:
 - ❖ *Personal Mastery*, or “being my best”;
 - ❖ *Collaborative Team Learning*, or “being our collective best”; and
 - ❖ *Leadership for Results*, or “ensuring the best results for all students.”
4. **Criteria for success**, which outline the conditions the conditions for a successful program.

These four ideas provide a common framework for all Principals-in-Action Network™.