



## **Professional Development Offered to Principals and Superintendents**

While teacher quality is an important element of Global21 so too is effective leadership, at the school, district and state levels. As we move forward with our 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning plan, it is superintendents and principals who will be instrumental in seeing that these systemic changes move from concept to the classroom. Teachers and parents will look to local leaders for guidance.

Effective leadership can have a positive effect on school climate, staff morale and especially student performance. Strong leaders can create a climate that promotes risk taking and eliminates the fear of failure among teachers and staff.

Recent research shows that leadership can affect student achievement by 25 to 30 percent. Other studies have found that teachers are more committed to their schools when they are satisfied with the leadership of their principals.

In 2006, the state Department of Education launched the inaugural West Virginia Institute for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership to help principals transform their schools from the schoolhouse of yesteryear to the learning place of tomorrow. Principals chosen to participate were considered among the best leaders in West Virginia's public schools. They received materials, resources and technology tools that support being a 21<sup>st</sup> century leader.

The week-long summer institute was followed by additional sessions in the fall and spring. Participants also stay in contact throughout the year in online discussions with colleagues and serve as mentors for others. The goal is to reach nearly all principals, assistant principals and some prospective principals within five years. We have already trained about half of the state's public school principals.

The department's partnership with The Intel Foundation also includes leadership training for principals, who will then be certified to provide leadership forums to other principals.

County School System Leadership Teams also have been formed in all 55 counties. The teams were first established as part of a statewide initiative to bring all children in the public school system to mastery and beyond and to close the achievement gap among the subgroups of students in the state's schools. Their role has been expanded to include incorporating Global21 into their local schools.

West Virginia also has created a leadership development collaborative to establish standards for principals and superintendents in public schools. Members include the state Department of Education, lawmakers, higher education representatives, gubernatorial representatives, principals, teachers, county boards of education and others.

The goals of the collaborative are to study West Virginia practices, processes and policies relating to educational leadership; develop recommendations for statewide leadership standards; design a leadership development continuum; and propose changes in practice policy and state code that affect leadership development and support.