

Meetings in September for teachers interested in becoming administrators

Three teachers who went through a new Chino Valley Unified School District program last spring to recruit, train, support and retain high quality leaders, were hired as administrators in the district this fall.

Now serving as assistant principals are Trevor Carengo at Hidden Trails Elementary, Renae Ramsey at Butterfield Ranch Elementary, and Kristina Gentry at Magnolia Junior High.

Beginning next week, informational meetings will be held for teachers, counselors, instructional coaches, and intervention specialists who are interested in becoming administrators. The meetings will discuss the district's Aspiring Administrators Academy for teacher leaders who do not yet have their administrative credential and the Future Administrator Program for teacher leaders who are eligible for an administrative credential.

The meetings will be held 3:45 to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 16, and Monday, Sept. 21, both in the board room at the district office, 5130 Riverside Drive, Chino.

Dr. Grace Park, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, said the programs began with the vision of Superintendent Wayne M. Joseph and Deputy Superintendent Norm Enfield, who wanted to cultivate leaders and trainers from within the district.

Superintendent Joseph wants a healthy mix of administrators from inside and outside the district, Park said.

As part of the development of the administrative training program, CVUSD's superintendent's cabinet members formed a committee to talk about what is important for aspiring administrators to learn.

"We want them to have it all, people skills and organizational skills," Park said. Administrators also need to be able to deal with the diverse nature of students these days, as well as connect with both students and parents."

"You have to be an instructional leader for teachers," Park said. "It's no longer that you can be a manager and just direct."

The Process

Last fall, interested teachers were invited to attend an informational meeting about the academies. Principals were also encouraged to send teachers who demonstrated leadership skills to the meetings.

The 32 teachers interested in continuing the process, were required to submit a cover letter, application and resume, which were scored using a point system. Those who scored well were invited to take a writing test. Teachers that passed that test were interviewed by the superintendent's cabinet members.

"It's really exciting to see so many of our teacher-leaders wanting to go through the program," she said.

Fourteen teachers were selected for the Aspiring Administrators Academy.

The 75-minute workshops were held once a month, after school hours, January through June at the district's Professional Development Center on Ramona Avenue in Chino, and once at the district office on Riverside Drive in Chino.

Each of the applicants had to meet with Park to talk candidly about their strengths and weaknesses. “If they didn’t get accepted, they needed to know why,” she said.

Accepted candidates were paired with veteran administrators who would complement and strengthen their leadership capacity. The candidates spent five full days with their mentor, Park said.

“Our idea was that they will get theory in college,” Park said. “It was very practical in the sense that we gave them hands-on experience.”

She said the candidates were very positive about their mentors.

The second part of the academy involved human resources work, such as dealing with collective bargaining agreements, and providing feedback for employees. Their homework for that session included looking at mock custodial schedules on the pretext of establishing functional schedules based on differing school needs.

The teachers also studied student discipline, including when suspensions are called for, according to state education codes. They worked on strategies to correct student behavior, as an alternative to suspension.

Additional homework included examining how special education teachers collaborate with general education teachers to help their students achieve.

The candidates also learned how to shift money in school site budgets to cover needs while still balancing the books.

At the last meeting, the teachers shared all their homework assignments with each other and discussed how and why they came to the decisions they did. Those small group discussions were facilitated by veteran administrators.

The last meeting also included mock interviews, exit interviews to determine continued interest in the program, and anonymous surveys of each portion of the training. Several recognition awards were presented.

In the future, Park hopes to offer the Aspiring Administrators Academy one year, and the Future Administrators Academy, the next.

Of 14 who started the Aspiring Administrators Academy, 12 were accepted into Cal Poly, Pomona’s year-long Administrative Program.

“I met with Dr. (Anthony) Avina today and he wanted to convey how impressed he was to have as many CVUSD teacher leaders accepted into the administrative program,” Park wrote in a district email in late August. “We know that is a direct result of the great experiences our teacher leaders have had in Chino...How exciting this is in our continual effort to grow our leaders.”

Pictured: Teacher leaders interact with administrators at an Aspiring Administrators Academy workshop held in the spring.