



VAPSP HANDBOOK



Let's understand all the things involved with
the VAPSP with the help of this guide.

WELCOME

Dear Colleagues,

The Virginia Principal Support Program (VAPSP) is an exciting collaboration between James Madison University's College of Education and Virginia school divisions. We have assembled a network of colleagues and partners to provide early career principal support through principal advising and professional learning across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Principal advisors, partnered with early-career principals, engage in developing core leadership competencies and skills that enhance leadership efficacy. Focusing on what matters most in leadership and learning, principal advisors and early-career principals engage in critical conversations using the National Professional Standards for Educational Leadership, Virginia Department of Education Principal Performance Standards, and the Profile of a Virginia Leader. Purposeful professional learning builds a shared language of professional standards and serves as an essential component of the professional educator continuum.

The importance of supporting quality principal leadership cannot be overstated. Improving professional growth and support systems for school leaders can strengthen the principal workforce, improve leader effectiveness, improve teacher impact, and reduce teacher attrition in Virginia's classrooms. Investing in early career principal learning and development will have a significant and positive impact on the outcomes of learning of students across the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Mark L'Esperance
Dean College of Education James Madison University

TABLE OF CONTENT

4	VAPSP Overview
5	Vision & Mission
6	VAPSP Key Terms
7	VAPSP Organization Chart & Participation Options
8	VAPSP Core Competencies & Conceptual Framework
9	The Virginia Principal Support Program Partnerships and Participants
10	VAPSP Roles and Responsibilities
12	VAPSP Contact

VAPSP OVERVIEW



Virginia Principal Support Program (VAPSP)

The Virginia Principal Support Program was created to be part of the solution for improving principal leadership. James Madison University, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), and the VDOE Office of School Quality have worked together and formed strong funding and working partnerships for educational leaders within many school divisions across the state to engage in reciprocal collaboration. The VAPSP in-service school principals from participating school divisions receive continual, customized learning opportunities that aligned with the National Professional Standards for Educational Leadership, Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Principal Performance Standards, the Administrator of Special Education Professional Leadership Standards (ASEPLS) to promote continuous school improvement efforts within divisions and schools.

College of Education Teaching and Learning

- The VAPSP will evolve into an integral part of the overall engagement of the College of Education in teaching and learning in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This involves:
- People – early-career principals, highly-effective principals currently leading in schools across the Commonwealth, principal advisors, school and division-level educational leadership, College of Education leadership and faculty, and the Virginia Department of Education staff.
 - Places – College of Education, PreK – 12 schools and classrooms, higher education, research and scholarship in the public sphere, distance learning platforms, and professional development.
 - Programs – Collaborative partnerships with higher education and public school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia.
 - Policies – Nomination and selection of novice principals, recruitment and professional development of VAPSP Principal Advisors, VAPSP Core Competencies and Conceptual Framework, data collection and analysis protocols, and VAPSP program evaluation.
 - Processes – VAPSP Core Competencies and Conceptual Framework, data-directed decision-making, hiring, curriculum development, budget & planning, and program implementation.

VISION & MISSION

VISION

To model successful professional learning, development, and support for early career (0-2 years) principals, veteran (4+ years) principals, and division-level principal supervisors. The VAPSP strives to partner with school divisions and support the building of a strong principal workforce by fostering leadership efficacy through studying best school leadership practices in safe learning environments.

MISSION

To provide school administrators a variety of opportunities and experiences that enhance leadership skills in safe and conducive environments to increase:

- Intentionally designed, safe, and inclusive learning environment for all
- Well-being for all students, faculty and staff, and school community
- Data-directed continuous school improvement for all students
- Effective teacher retention
- Effective principal retention

VAPSP KEY TERMS

PS: Principal Supervisor is a division level administrator who supervises building principals.

PA: Principal Advisor is a veteran principal (4+ years) who is intentionally selected/nominated by the PS and matched to support an Early Career Principal.

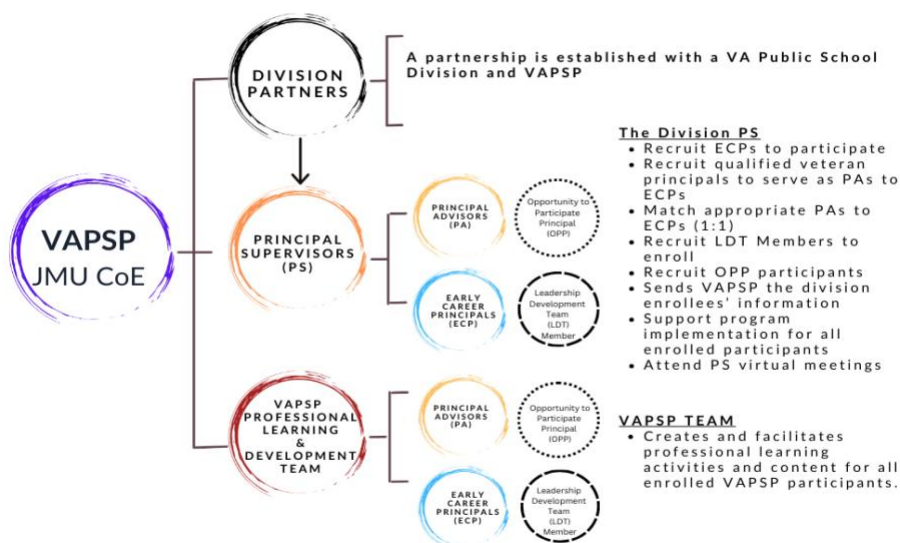
ECP: Early Career Principal is a principal who is serving in a 1st or 2nd year school leader role.

LDT: Leadership Development Team (trainers) consists of veteran principals, nominated by division PSs, to be trained and will create professional learning workshops/modules for divisions to use for enhancing internal leadership PD.

PL: Professional Learning are educational events, provided by the VAPSP and experts in the field, focusing on school leadership core competency development.

OPP: Opportunity to Participate Principals are principals with any number of years' experience in partnering divisions who may benefit from attending a specific VAPSP PL Event. Seats are limited.

VAPSP Organizational Chart



Process for Engaging in the VAPSP

1. A school division leader, who represents the division, contacts the VAPSP leadership at vapsp@jmu.edu requesting partnership interest in VAPSP.
2. A principal supervisor is designated by the division superintendent as the point of contact for the VAPSP and is responsible for leading the VAPSP division communication and implementation efforts.

VAPSP partnership participation include (one or all options):

- **Option 1:** Enrollment of Early Career Principals (ECPs)-(1-2 years) to be matched with enrolled Principal Advisors (PA)s. The Principal Supervisor (PS) is responsible for the matching participants. The PS may select a PA within the division or may request the VAPSP to assist in securing an external PA to support an ECP. A division may enroll as many matched participants as the program space allows. (See PA criteria in handbook.) Principal Advisors are
- **Option 2:** The PS may select a seasoned principal or a central office director who supports principals to enroll as a participant on the Leadership Development Team (LDT)-(not a PA supporting an ECP). The LDT participants receive training in both principal advisement and will engage in the creation of 4-5 professional development sessions addressing problems of practice at both the division and school levels. Products for development includes Workshops/Modules aligned resource materials, and outlines/frameworks for replication within partner divisions. The LDT member can lead and facilitate these PD sessions (modeling the train-the- trainer concept). The materials and products are developed as a collective team and will be used by partnering divisions as internal professional development resources for continued use with all levels of leadership.
- **Option 3:** A partnering division will be offered spaces for principals (any years of experience) to attend different professional learning events throughout the year (*space offered as available per event*).

Virginia Assistant Principal Institute

A partnering division will be offered priority spaces for assistant principals (1-3 years' experience preferred and given priority enrollment) to participate in the Virginia Assistant Principal Institute. APs will engage in virtual PL and attend a two-day F2F professional learning event at JMU.

- Bi-monthly professional learning (PL) support beginning February 2025
- Estimated 90-minute virtual PL sessions to be held after school (i.e. 4:15 – 5:45)
- One day in-person PL event may take place for interested participants
- 2 Day, In-person Professional Learning Event at James Madison University: July 22-23, 2025
- Enrolled APs who attend and participate in good standing are eligible to receive a participant stipend

THE VIRGINIA PRINCIPALS SUPPORT PROGRAM CORE COMPETENCIES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The VAPSP Core Competencies were developed in direct correlation to the National Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), Principal Performance and Evaluation of the Virginia Department of Education, and informative research. The VAPSP Core Competencies incorporate fundamental leadership concepts and skills necessary for successful school leaders to build and maximize strengths in **leading:**

- School vision
- Effective communication
- People development
- Organizational systems
- Instruction
- Inclusion



THE VIRGINIA PRINCIPAL SUPPORT PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS AND PARTICIPANTS

The Virginia Principal Support Program leverages individual and collective resources from across the Commonwealth of Virginia intentionally and purposefully to support early career principals through job-embedded professional learning. The College of Education at James Madison University and enrolled school division leaders set up collaborative partnerships. A lead VAPSP contact, who is appointed per school division, manages program implementation efforts. The various roles and responsibilities of each contributor involved in the VAPSP support network are outlined in subsequent sections. Division leaders are essential for ensuring that principal advisors and early career principals are successful in the program.

VAPSP Participant Roles and Responsibilities

VAPSP, College of Education, JMU

Responsibilities

- Establish partnership agreements with participating school divisions
- Provide VAPSP Principal Supervisors networking support
- Engage in program development and customization with division leaders
- Organize and facilitate VAPSP training and professional learning opportunities to enrolled participants
- Communicate program information promptly to all stakeholders
- Pay VAPSP Principal Advisor, Leadership Development Team member, and AP Institute participant stipends at the completion of the program year after fully participating and meeting all program responsibilities

School Division Partner

Responsibilities

- Engage in a partnership Memorandum of Understanding with CoE, JMU
- Commit to supporting all participants' actively engage in the VAPSP activities and scheduled events throughout the program year
- Appoint a VAPSP Principal Supervisor as the direct point of contact to the VAPSP and actively oversees the implementation efforts for all enrolled division participants

Principal Supervisor

Qualifications

- Support division principals
- Oversee professional development of school leaders
- Designated as the VAPSP lead by division superintendent

Responsibilities

- Function as lead contact for VAPSP
- Attend and actively engage in VAPSP events and meetings as scheduled
- Recruit and nominate division Early Career Principals (ECP) [year 1 - 2]
- Recruit and nominate division principal advisors (see PA qualifications) to pair with ECPs
- Provide relevant division documents (e.g., strategic plans, school improvement plans, professional development plans, etc.) to the Principal Advisor (PA) matched to division principal(s).
- Support all enrolled participants professional development efforts
- Communicates proactively with all VAPSP stakeholders
- Supports VAPSP implementation efforts
- Completes required VAPSP data collection activities on/or before deadlines provided

Principal Advisor

Qualifications and Characteristic

Professional qualities and characteristics include:

- Value equity and developing culturally responsive systems
- Seek to grow self- awareness, social awareness, relationship building, self-management, and responsible decision- making skills
- Demonstrate a growth mindset
- Practice solution-oriented problem-solving skills
- Practice successful leadership strategies
- Receive respect from peers
- Practice effective and efficient time management
- Take initiative and follows through on tasks
- Value building leadership ability in others
- Honor confidentiality

Effective interpersonal communication include:

- Attentive, respectful listener
- Positive, sensitive, open, and honest, communicator
- Conflict resolution and problem solver
- Reflective practitioner
- Strategic organizer who is successful with school improvement planning efforts
- Proactive planner

Effectual practice include:

- Holds a current, active school principal position (preferred, or recently filled a principal role)
- Demonstrates proficiency or better regarding PSEL leadership standards
- Has *4 or more years of successful school principal experience shown by:
 - PSEL Standards
 - VDOE School Leader Evaluations
 - *School division determination (could be fewer than 4 yr. principal)

Principal Advisor (Continued)

Responsibilities

- Provides NON-EVALUATIVE Early Career Principal (ECP) support that is aligned with VAPSP guidelines and VDOE Principal Performance Standards throughout program year
- Connects and communicates six hours each month with assigned ECP
- Complete monthly VAPSP Advising Logs by deadline
- Attends and actively engages in all VAPSP Professional Learning (PL) and Development events as scheduled
- Works to build trusting, honest, and safe relationships with assigned principal
- Communicates proactively with the principal's division supervisor to receive clarification on division specific strategic goals to best align advisement efforts
- Establishes effective communication preferences with matched ECP
- Provides advisement and guidance to the VAPSP principal to improve leadership efficacy
- Completes required VAPSP data collection forms and surveys
- Submits PL event registrations on or before deadlines

Early Career Principal

Qualifications

- Current, active school principal serving in 1st or 2nd year position within the division

Responsibilities

- Attends and actively takes part in all VAPSP professional learning events as scheduled
- Actively engages with assigned VAPSP Principal Advisor (PA) a minimum of 6 hours per month
- Works to build trusting, honest, and safe relationships with the VAPSP PA.
- Communicates proactively with assigned PA to receive clarifications, assistance, and support as needed
- Establishes effective communication with PA to achieve successful interactions
- Completes required VAPSP data collection forms, surveys and event registrations on or before deadlines
- Contacts division PS if additional support is needed

Leadership Development Team Member

- Current experienced principals and/or division leaders

Qualifications

- Same as PA qualifications and characteristics

Responsibilities

- Attends and actively takes part in all VAPSP professional learning events as scheduled
- Actively engages with assigned VAPSP Principal Advisor (PA) a minimum of 6 hours per month
- Works to build trusting, honest, and safe relationships with the VAPSP PA.
- Communicates proactively with assigned PA to receive clarifications, assistance, and support as needed
- Establishes effective communication with PA to achieve successful interactions
- Completes required VAPSP data collection forms, surveys and event registrations on or before deadlines.

OUR TEAM



Jaclyn R. Nickel
Executive Director of
Professional Educator
Development &
Partnerships,
VAPSP Co-Lead,
CoE, JMU
nickeljr@jmu.edu



Dr. Monica-Smith Woofert
Learning, Technology, and
Leadership Education
Assistant Professor,
College of Education
James Madison University
Co-Lead VAPSP
smithwmb@jmu.edu



Dr. Doug Alderfer
Assistant
Superintendent of
Leadership and
Academic Support
Rockingham County
Public Schools
VAPSP Division Advisor

VAPSP OFFICE CONTACT



[VAPSP Website](#)



540-568-7393



vapsp@jmu.edu



Memorial Hall, Suite 7220