



A Principal Experience Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of *A Principal Experience*?

A Principal Experience is a proven way for leaders in education and the greater community to share ideas, resources and a sense of responsibility for public schools. By providing a first-hand perspective on the decisions and responsibilities principals face daily, Principal Partners are inspired to take a greater interest in public education. At the same time, *A Principal Experience* provides Madison Metropolitan School District principals and staff with an opportunity to create meaningful relationships with individuals in the private sector.

2. Why is the Foundation for Madison's Public Schools sponsoring this program?

The Foundation is dedicated to enriching the education of all children by raising private funds, awarding grants, and developing partnerships to strengthen Madison's public schools. We are very pleased that over the last fifteen years more than 900 community leaders have had the opportunity to spend time in our public schools, experiencing first-hand the challenges and joys that school principals face every day. *A Principal Experience* fosters powerful partnerships with unlimited potential.

3. What exactly will I be doing as a Principal Partner?

You will be paired with one of the Madison Metropolitan School District principals and spend the morning "shadowing" that principal. Prior to October 8, you will receive a list of suggested activities that may be appropriate for the morning depending on your interests, the school, and the principal. You and your host principal will decide together how you will spend your morning so that it will be both an interesting and rewarding experience. Preparation is the key to maximizing the time spent at your school.

4. How does the Foundation decide with which school principal I'll be paired?

The participation application asks you to indicate any preferences you may have – a specific school or an elementary, middle or high school. Although we can't promise to accommodate your preferences, every effort will be made to do so. Conversely, we will have discussions with school principals about their specific goals for their Principal Partner visit and we'll use their input to try to make the best match possible. We use a number of criteria when matching, including individual areas of expertise and the goals of both the Principal Partners and host principals. Much of this information is gathered from the *Principal Experience* application, so please be as detailed as possible so that we can best match you to an appropriate school.



5. What Do Principal Partners Do During Their Visit?

In late September, both the school principals and the Principal Partners will receive their "Matchpacks." The Matchpacks let the school principals know who will be shadowing them on October 8 and will let the community leader know at which school they have been placed. We strongly encourage the Principal Partner and the principal to correspond or speak on the phone at least once prior to October 8 so that they can plan their time together in advance. This will help establish a relationship before the day of the visit and will make the day more productive, comfortable, and beneficial for everyone. Each visit will be unique and we encourage Principal Partners to share any particular interests or ideas they have for the day with their host principal.

6. What other details do I need to know about October 8?

A Principal Experience will begin between 7:30 and 8:00 the morning of October 8, 2019. The specific start time will be decided by you and your school principal. We believe it is important for the Principal Partner to spend at least a portion of the lunch hour at the school, so we will not begin our debriefing session until 12:00 noon. At 12:00, all the school principals and Principal Partners will meet at the Alliant Energy Center for lunch and a facilitated program. *A Principal Experience* concludes by 1:30 p.m.

Due to the demand to participate, most schools host more than one Principal Partner. We will let you know who else is serving at the school to which you have been assigned.

7. Is Madison a large enough community to hold *A Principal Experience* annually?

The Foundation has been encouraged by the tremendous interest in *A Principal Experience* and continues to reach out to bring new participants into the program each year. Many community leaders have served as a Principal Partner more than once because they see the value in visiting a variety of schools and working with different principals. Numerous organizations recognize that this is a worthwhile experience and we are grateful that they have decided to give a number of their employees the opportunity to serve as Principal Partners over the years.