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A record 115 community leaders reported to the Principal's Office for A Principal Experience
Madison-nonprofit shows what it takes to lead a school, and how businesses can help students thrive

MADISON, Wis.—October 10, 2019— The Foundation for Madison's Public Schools sixteenth annual *A Principal Experience* took place earlier this week. The principals of each of Madison's 50 public schools were joined by local business and community leaders, dubbed Principal Partners, to see first-hand what it takes to make our public schools thrive.

"The 115 community members who gave their time yesterday during our 16th Annual *A Principal Experience* once again demonstrate Madison's commitment to our public schools," noted Foundation for Madison's Public Schools Executive Director, Melinda Heinritz. "Madisonians truly show up - as volunteers, taxpayers, voters, and donors. I'm so grateful to live in a place like this."

Principal Partners – including Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway who spent the morning at La Follette High School - had the chance to learn firsthand about the challenges and rewards local school principals navigate every day. More than one Principal Partner remarked how impressed they were with school administrators' personal connection to each student.

Kim Jones, with Dane County Regional Airport was impressed by her principal, Sandburg Elementary's Brett Wilfrid. "He knows the names and the life stories of each of the 500 scholars in this school. He strives to ensure that every kid is valued as more than a test score."

During the afternoon, Principal Partners met at the Alliant Energy Center for lunch and a discussion forum, hosted by Jason Ilstrup, President of Downtown Madison, Inc. Jason spent the morning shadowing Badger Rock Middle School's Hong Tran, and credits Tran and the Badger Rock community for great strides the school has made to ensure every scholar thrives. He notes the importance of strong schools for a strong community.

"When businesses are looking to move here to Madison or grow here, quality public schools that help build tomorrow's workforce are critical considerations."

Service in the Foundation's *A Principal Experience* is often the stepping stone that compels local leaders to formally link their company, church or group with a school as part of the Foundation's Adopt-a-School program. Alexandra Shade, the Director of Corporate Social Responsibility for CUNA Mutual Group, spoke about her morning at Hamilton Middle School – one of four schools formally adopted by CUNA Mutual. Reflecting on her morning as a Principal Partner, Shade notes that the larger community shares in the responsibility to support good public schools, and "to provide a diverse, equitable learning space were all scholars truly feel supported."

Through the Foundation, 75 different organizations serve as Adopt-a-School partners, committing a minimum of one full year of support and investing time, material, talent and financial resources into Madison's Public Schools, commitments which – in 2018 – were valued at over \$1 million.

To see a complete list of 2019 Principal Partners and learn more about *A Principal Experience* or Adopt-a-School, please visit the Foundation's website at SchoolsMakeMadison.org .

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Other Media Coverage: WKOW - Madison and CapTimes