

## **Focus Group Interviews with Participants of the Washoe Academy of School Leaders**

Office of Accountability

Washoe County School District

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## Introduction

This report presents the results of focus group interviews conducted in May 2020 with school leaders participating in the Washoe Academy of School Leaders (WASL). The purpose of WASL is to provide professional development, administrative support, and collegial mentoring to encourage the development of leadership skills among aspiring principals. The focus groups were conducted to capture participants' perceptions of the strengths of the program, weaknesses of the program, and opportunities to improve the program in the future.

Six semi-structured focus groups were conducted with the 32 participating Assistant Principals, Deans, Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs), and Lead Teachers enrolled in WASL. Focus group themes emerged through analysis of transcripts using the SWOT analytic framework, in which the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities for improvement, and external Threats to improvement of the program are identified (The moderator guide was used to facilitate the focus groups is included in the Appendix A on page 12). **What follows are the themes that emerged from each staff levels focus group, as well as the overall themes that emerged across all groups (starts on page 11).** *Some example quotes from participants that were used to create each theme are provided in italics.*

## Trends from Focus Groups

### Assistant Principals

The four Assistant Principals enrolled in WASL all participated in one focus group. What follows is a brief summary of this group's perspective on WASL.

#### Strength of WASL Curriculum

The discussion mainly focused on four areas of the curriculum.

##### #1) Personality Test

- All greatly appreciated the personality tests given on the first day of class.
  - o *“The tests remind us of how we work and how we work with other people.”*
  - o *“Most people have never done this, and each of the group believed it helped them manage their employees.”*

##### #2) Budgeting

- All agreed this is vital to help learn something educators typically don't have access to moving up the ladder.
  - o *“There are so many things schools have to include in the budget that people never think of.”*
  - o *“It's so vital; there is a semester in Nevada Leads.”*

##### #3) School Performance Plans

- Many valued the session on School Performance Plans.
  - o *“Many of us have experience in doing these, but too often it becomes a process and a check box.”*
  - o *“This session was did a good job at making it a useful exercise and something that can be beneficial in monitoring our schools.”*

##### #4) MTSS

- All also found the MTSS session beneficial and informative.
  - o *“The MTSS session helped me better understand the process.”*
  - o *“In spite of many PL meetings on the topic, I found this discussion of MTSS most helpful, as there are often questions about the process.”*

### Recommended Areas of Improvement in Future WASL Curriculum

The discussion mainly focused on three areas of curriculum that could be beneficial to their leadership.

#### **#1) Challenges of being an LEA**

- Many find leading LEAs a challenge, and all of the Assistant Principals agreed this would strengthen WASL.
  - o *“We do not have any practice and then are thrust into leading these meetings.”*
  - o *“Help with regard on how to plan, lead, and be effective would be very useful. There is an LEA question in hour principal interviews so it would help us prepare.”*
  - o *“Not sure where else you can even get that information.”*

#### **#2) Teacher Evaluations**

- Many felt that there is little guidance given from the district regarding how to conduct teacher evaluations.
  - o *“Outside of us being evaluated, there is no guidance given as to what to look for or how to evaluate the teachers and staff.”*
  - o *“Literally they all said the first time they evaluated someone is when they went into a room as an AP without much instruction on exactly what they were to look for.”*

#### **#3) Leadership Story could be revised**

- The participants felt this was a valuable exercise, but that it could use a little revision.
  - o *“The In the Arena books were fun, but the amount of reading seemed a lot. Almost extra and may not be worth doing again.”*
  - o *“The leadership story is important, but may be applied a little too much.”*
  - o *“This is not in the interview questions anymore it seems for those of them who are interviewing.”*

### Structure of WASL

The discussion here focused on two subjects, that everyone likes the half year, but that it may be better to hold WASL during the fall semester in the future.

#### **#1) Everyone liked the current 5 session structure.**

- The participants felt this was a valuable exercise, but that it could use a little revision.
  - o *“I am satisfied with half a year as the time commitment out of the building is hard, especially for APs.”*
  - o *“A full year would be a long commitment.”*

#### **#2) Recommendations WASL to the fall.**

- Might be better timed in the fall, due to work load issues as well as timing with regard to interviewing for principal positions.
  - o *“Spring is full of testing and planning that makes it even harder to be in the building.”*
  - o *“Dean and Admin happen in January, so it would be before the interview process.”*

### 30-60-90 Day Entry Plan

The conversation focused on two areas. First, all of the participants liked this activity, but had questions about the true intent, as well as how to complete the activity. Second, participants were hoping they would have received more detailed feedback on how well they completed the task.

#### **#1) The 30-60-90 Activity was Useful Activity**

- The participants believed it definitely helped prepare them for leadership.
  - o *“This activity is good, as it helps you wrap your head around what needs to be done.”*
  - o *“For me, it helped facilitates conversations with other administrators in their building.”*

**#2) Participants would have liked more detailed feedback**

- Each of the participants indicated that more detailed feedback would help them know what they were doing right and wrong as they prepared for that next step in leadership.
  - o *“We did a lot and did not get detailed feedback. Instead of just the rubric.”*
  - o *“It would be good to have more guidance on what would be useful, what would and should be in there.”*

**Becoming an Effective School Leader**

The discussion here was focused mostly on how WASL compliments the experience as AP, to which they believe it is definitely a useful tool to help them move forward.

- o *“It’s a good puzzle piece, but nothing beats on site experience and being in the job.”*
- o *“It gave me a lot of things to think about that I had not had to inside my building.”*
- o *“Helps me feel more confident and comfortable that I a can be successful. It helps build self-efficacy.”*
- o *“WASL is a piece that helps us transition to the next level of leadership.”*

**Concluding Thoughts**

The discussion concluded with the participants indicated they would recommend WASL to other aspiring leaders in our district.

- o *“It’s a good puzzle piece, but nothing beats on site experience and being in the job.”*
- o *“I enjoy the ability to collaborate more together and figure ways to develop relationships we can maintain moving forward.”*

**Deans**

Two focus groups were conducted with a total of the 13 deans enrolled in WASL. What follows is a brief summary of this group’s perspective on WASL.

**Strength of WASL Curriculum**

The discussion mainly focused on three areas of the curriculum.

**#1) MTSS**

- The discussion began by stating how much more they learned about the MTSS process.
  - o *“MTSS and equity topics/presentations resonated: What we say when we hear inequitable language being spoken, such as “the apple has not fallen far from the tree.”*
  - o *“I knew about MTSS before, but presentation reinforced need and ability to react and say something. We practiced what we would say to each other.”*
  - o *“I found T-Shaffer’s SEL/MTSS presentation very impactful. It allowed me to visualize how I would begin to implement MTSS, as a site level administrator.”*
  - o *“MTSS is beneficial, creating different groups allowed for many perspectives.”*

**#2) Personality Inventory**

- From here the discussion turned to the personality inventory.
  - o *“I greatly enjoyed the activity where we talked about ourselves/strengths and then we wrote what heard each other say.”*
  - o *“Initial meeting with ice breakers allowed us to feel more comfortable with each other moving forward.”*
  - o *“Self-reflective pieces throughout is a strength of WASL – having the time to reflect on selves.”*

**#3) School Performance Plans**

- The final area of the curriculum they discussed was the School Performance Plans.
  - o *“I really liked looking at SPP plans with Nick and Ron. Helped when looking at a new plan and realizing the frustrations as a team.”*
  - o *Information from school profiles was important and built an understanding for different locations.*

**Recommended Areas of Improvement in Future WASL Curriculum**

The discussion mainly focused on three ways this group thinks the curriculum could be improved.

**#1) Differentiating class discussions and activities by staff positions.**

- The first topic discussed involved a desire for people to be assigned to groups based on their roles when doing activities.
  - o *“WASL participants come from so many different places, roles, and all have different sets of prior knowledge, which sometimes made the conversations a little more difficult and also made the ability to get through the activity a little more difficult.”*
  - o *“Some people didn’t speak up because of dynamic.”*
  - o *“It might be useful to put groups with similar groups to help with the group dynamic.”*
  - o *“Have people self-identify level of knowledge and then group.”*

**#2) The Leadership Roles activity seemed challenging for those with less administrative experience.**

- The second topic discussed involved the leadership roles activity.
  - o *“The leadership role exercise was completed by yourself, and at times, felt like it would have been helpful to converse with others.”*
  - o *“You are all by yourself when you develop your leadership role is by yourself, need for a roadmap to not feel overwhelmed.”*
  - o *“Some people already have admin roles, some tasks were more challenging for some than for others. Varying levels of experiences. Some people were very experienced. Had to help people with less experience. Frustrating for the less experienced because of the gap in their knowledge.”*

**#3) Uncovered Topics**

- Near the end of this topic, participants listed off topics they felt would enhance the WASL curriculum.
  - o *“Instructional leadership & evaluations.”*
  - o *“An activity of role playing with challenging events (e.g., how do you approach some of these conversations?).”*
  - o *“We need to hear more about the legal aspects would have been nice. How to get support needed in case of legal (possibly job ending) issues.”*

**Structure of WASL**

This group focused their discussion on two themes, one that they had wished more curriculum could be covered and the second, recommending alteration to the format so that could happen.

**#1) Some participants wished for more time so that more topics be covered, others felt the time commitment was time enough.**

- o *“The 6 month duration of WASL is fine, but longer may be beneficial to cover more topics.”*
- o *“Wonder if we would get more out of WASL if was full year and topics/content/instruction aligned to those critical points in the school year.”*
- o *“Five sessions were adequate, good like once a month. Any more than that is too much. Might have dragged on a little bit toward the end.”*

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- #2) The format may be enhanced by splitting the day**
  - *“I appreciate the whole day format. Whenever half day off site it hard to stay focused. Better able to fully engage in whole day format.”*
  - *“The WASL instruction is meaningful online: The breakouts and activities are engaging.”*
  - *“Full day of zoom is arduous. Split up session, spreading out of all day for zoom session.”*
  - *“Less is more: 7 ½ hours of instruction is too much.”*

### **30-60-90 Day Entry Plan**

The overall perception is that this activity could have been more supported.

- *“I absolutely LOVED the Entry Plan Being in a unique situation I am in, opening a brand new school, I took my Entry Plan very much to heart.”*
- *“30-60-90 was too general. I was a bit confused with so many things to do on your own. More collaboration needed, too much done on our own.”*
- *Getting a chance of looking at everyone’s plan. A pass round would have been helpful.”*
- *“Felt like it had less feedback. Solo pieces felt disconnected form real world experiences.”*
- *“Is 30-60-90 plan required for an interview? Seemed like a filler (one person said, but still learned a lot).”*
- *“Wanted more feedback and discussion and/or sit down with feedback. Closure would have been very valuable.”*

### **Become an Effective School Leader**

This group overall believed that WASL help compliment information they have learned from various sources in the school district. After each participant mentioned they believed WASL helped them become a more effective leader. Then the discussion shifted to two things that would enhance their preparedness for leadership even further.

#### **#1) More help with teacher evaluations.**

- *“I need more on the evaluative piece – moving from supportive role to power shift. Doing lines and boundaries.”*
- *“Having a lot of effective and highly effective teachers is easy, but worried about when it is not all sunshine and roses, with ineffective teachers and giving justification for that evaluation of another is scary – treading those waters when less than ideal... feeling uncomfortable with doing that as an administrator.”*
- *“Want to know what to do when someone disagrees with their evaluation (e.g., marked as “developing”).”*
- *“We did not talk about evaluations and how to write them - Took observations and feedback course and that wasn’t down to the nitty gritty on how to actually write evaluations and do observations either... it would be great to cover this.”*

#### **#2) Help with Collaboration**

- *“Really this goes into depth about what I already know, but where WASL helps most is building relationships with people who you will rely on later. Feel comfortable reaching out.”*

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This group all indicated they would recommend WASL to other aspiring leaders. Their final thoughts focused on the facilitators.

- *“Aly’s commentary has been hugely beneficial. For example, talking about PLCs from a scholarly level then Aly brings it to the Boots on the Ground perspective. Taking from abstract to what is actually looks like.”*
- *“Having Kevin as instructor could work. Knowing your audience, how many people been there done that. Having instructors across grade levels is important and beneficial.”*

### **TOSAs**

One focus group was conducted with three TOSAs enrolled in WASL. What follows is a brief summary of this group’s perspective on WASL.

#### **Strength of WASL Curriculum**

The discussion mainly focused on three areas of the curriculum.

##### **#1) Entry Plan**

- The most talked about aspect of the curriculum with this group was the entry plan.
  - *“I was very involved in the entry plan. It gave a good overview of what it’s like to open a school and be prepared.”*
  - *“I really did enjoy doing the entry plan. The only thing with that I wish we had more...we did have a lot of examples to look out, but I wish we had a little more guidance, kind of like a starting point, but other than that, that whole process was really eye-opening.”*
  - *“As I did it, my core values really came out. For me it was really built in building relationships and what supports for a school really looks like. That came out in my plan and that was not my intention going in.”*

##### **#2) MTSS**

- Many also greatly learned from the day on MTSS
  - *“Hearing Trish talk about MTSS, Kelly and Aly talk, even if I’ve heard it before, they give it to you from the view of a principal so you see it from a different light so that’s been really important.”*
  - *“I loved SEL day. We had an entire day with Trish Shaffer and that was really valuable around how to build that positive school climate.”*

##### **#3) Budget Plans**

- Many also indicated this is the only area where they have discussed school budgets and had the opportunity to work with them.
  - *“Budgets is one of those areas where many people do not understand all that goes into one.”*
  - *“The budgets today was super important and helpful.”*

#### **Recommended Areas of Improvement in Future WASL Curriculum**

The discussion mainly focused on three areas of curriculum that could be beneficial to their leadership.

##### **#1) It would be helpful to have a mentor principal component**

- The topic most discussed was the benefit of having some sort of guidance from current principals.
  - *“All the components of WASL have helped me to repurpose my focus. I would still like to be assigned a mentor and continue with the cohort rather than just graduate and you’re done.”*
  - *“Visiting school sites would make us more prepared.”*
  - *“Would like to follow mentor principals.”*

- *“There’s someone in our cohort who is interviewing for AP jobs and isn’t getting them. So having a mentor to go to who isn’t just going to tell you are amazing, but someone who can give you that honest feedback.”*

### **#2) More strategic partnerships during activities to enhance collaboration**

- Many felt that differentiating the groups, as well as the activities, would enhance the WASL experience.
  - *“Maybe more strategic partnerships during activities because we are like children and tend to go with the people we know to partner up with.”*
  - *“Some strategy around making sure when we go out to reflect and to talk, there’s an elementary person, a secondary person, a dean, a coach so you can get different perspectives.”*
  - *“I know that’s on us as adults but I don’t know everyone so I wasn’t always sure who everyone was and what their roles might be.”*

### **#3) More work after turning in the Entry Plan**

- Many people would like to have continued to work on the entry plan.
  - *“It would have been nice to have an opportunity to review entry plans with each other.”*
  - *“Maybe after completing the entry plan, reviewing them. I don’t think we reviewed them with the exception of feedback. There was nothing in depth where we could go back and ask more questions on it.”*

## **Structure of WASL**

Three themes emerged from the discussion around the structure of WASL.

### **#1) Satisfied with Current Structure**

- *“I felt the time devoted was sufficient and did not eat into my time too much at all.”*
- *“I liked it. I don’t know what it looked like in the past...just because it has been such an amazing experience, maybe coming together more frequently with less time in between.”*

### **#2) This group would be willing to do more WASL**

- *“More sessions would be good.”*
- *“Maybe a group session and that’s followed with implementation and you bring it back and reflect.”*

### **#3) Other Recommendations**

- Many people would like to have continued to work on the entry plan.
  - *“WASL were very long days; especially the last few sessions. Maybe it would be better if some parts were in person and then follow ups can be done virtually.”*
  - *“Maybe starting earlier in the school year, say October, meeting once a month, we could get more covered.”*

## **30-60-90 Day Entry Plan**

The conversation indicated that participants were not clear with goal of the assignment, and were surprised at how little feedback was provided after turning it in.

### **#1) Satisfied with Current Structure**

- *“I felt the goals of this project were never made clear.”*
- *“I was a little unclear on the true intent.”*
- *“I didn’t get feedback on my 30-60-90 plan – I just got, ‘looks great’. I wish I could have gotten more feedback.”*



### **Becoming an Effective School Leader**

The discussion here focused on two areas.

#### **#1) WASL helps add onto their experience you have as an educator.**

- *“My experiences coming in and what I learned through WASL has helped me. So my answer is yes, but my prior experience has helped coming into WASL.”*
- *“Really good opportunity to reflect on who I am as a leader and if I go into leadership, what I would do different.”*
- *“It’s hard for me to know if it’s WASL what prepared me, given I’m 25 years into education, so my life experience prepared me for that. WASL refined my understanding for how things are done in Washoe County and what goes on in district leadership.”*

#### **#2) There needs to be more transparency with the interview process.**

- *“Even if it’s just written feedback, getting that thorough feedback, I got so much feedback from my entry plan to make it stronger, but I don’t feel that way when I get my feedback the last 5 years that I’ve tried to get into this pool. It’s frustrating because I don’t know what to improve on to pass.”*
- *“Maybe through WASL there could be mock interviews and go through interview questions and practice. Sometimes it’s the nerves and getting through those questions. And getting feedback on our mock interview questions.”*

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The discussion concluded with everyone indicating that they highly recommend WASL to other and that the facilitators really made the process more positive and seemingly obtainable.

#### **#1) Would you recommend WASL to other aspiring leaders?**

- All answered “absolutely.”

#### **#2) The WASL experience is aided by positive role models with hands on experience**

- *“Kevin and Aly have done a fantastic job. They are funny, happy, smiling, but also it’s real and it’s raw. This safe environment where you can ask a hard question and you’ll get a real answer. I can’t imagine doing this class with anyone else.”*
- *“Aly’s honest. Even if it’s an answer you don’t want to hear she’ll tell you the honest answer. And that’s what we need in this program. Because admin isn’t always fun, it isn’t always pretty, and she’ll tell you that.”*
- *“They make sure they answer every question and they are very observant of equity.”*

## **Teachers**

Two focus group was conducted with a total of 13 teachers who were enrolled in WASL. Among this group, 8 people indicated they have been or are currently enrolled in Nevada Leads at the University of Nevada Reno (NL). What follows is a brief summary of this group’s perspective.

### **Strength of WASL Curriculum**

Two areas of the curriculum emerged among the lead teachers during the discussion.

#### **#1) MTSS**

- All agreed that the MTSS class was outstanding and by far the most valuable!
  - *“MTSS was outstanding—very informative.”*
  - *“This topic is not well covered in Nevada Leads.”*
  - *“MTSS was very informative and well facilitated.”*

#### **#2) Leadership Stories**

- Many found this activity to be really valuable.

- *“The leadership stories were really valuable.”*
- *“The leadership stories is extremely helpful for teachers who have yet to be administrations.”*
- *“Leadership stories were really valuable.”*
- *“This is another topic not covered in NL.”*

### **Recommended Areas of Improvement in Future WASL Curriculum**

The discussion mainly focused on two topic areas.

#### **#1) Overall WASL seemed to be a condensed version of Nevada Leads (NL)**

- Many in both groups believed that WASL can serve as a wonderful refresher on many of the topics; however, the NL cohort just had experience with most of the material covered.
  - *“There seemed to be a lot of overlap with NL.”*
  - *“WASL did a very condensed version of what Nevada Leads (NL) did in 2 years.”*
  - *“WASL was redundant (duplicative) for NL, but very beneficial for others who did not have that educational background.”*

#### **#2) The School Performance Plan exercise was difficult for some, mostly because...**

- *“It is important to have some experience with SPPs to be able to work with one. Other students partnered with NL students did not know what they were doing and were really frustrated. NL students had to take the lead and help non-NL students.”*
- *“Session on data profiles was somewhat frustrating because the data presented was mostly positive, so it didn’t allow us to analyze it and make decisions for improvement.”*
- *“Disconnect with SPP because we had already covered that in depth in NL.”*

### **Structure of WASL**

The discussion about the structure of WASL was focused around two themes.

#### **#1) All participants said that the current structure of WASL is sufficient, and there does not need to be more sessions**

- *“Sequence, timing, and length were good—wouldn’t change.”*
- *“All are teachers and don’t like to be out of the classroom (too much time away from students)”*

#### **#2) Recommendations regarding the structure of WASL**

- *“A good thing for WASL to do is to differentiate between NL students and others. Suggest have two groups, where we would be able to go deeper into topics.”*
- *“Suggested a hybrid of in person and online, a little more frequent (every few weeks).”*
- *“Eliminate the month gap between sessions, hard to retain with longer gap.”*

### **30-60-90 Day Entry Plan**

Among the teacher groups, the conversation focused around strengths and areas to think about this activity.

#### **#1) Strengths**

- All of the participants felt the activity was fun and extremely valuable! Participants enrolled in NL said it was a culmination of everything they learned in the NL program—it took everything and put it into an organized document.
  - *“Liked doing the plan because you can take anywhere you go.”*
  - *“Helped focus on specifics about what you would do.”*
  - *“The examples were helpful as a template to start.”*
  - *“Helped with their own leadership story because it guided them to think about what was important to them as leaders.”*
  - *“It validated their 2-years of education with NL and made it worth the blood, sweat and tears that went into getting that degree. Made the time and money spent worth it.”*

#### **#2) Areas to think About**

- *“It would be nice to see what others incorporated in their plans, share ideas.”*

- *“Feedback from WASL was excellent; however, one student said they received irrelevant feedback, and one had not yet received feedback but was positive it would be done. WASL was very good about follow-up.”*
- *“NL graduates had to help other non-NL students in their triads who were really struggling because they did not have the benefit of everything that had been taught in NL.”*

**Becoming an Effective School Leader**

The discussion here focused on two areas.

**#1) Participants felt that, as teachers, they knew a lot on paper, but they still need practical experience.**

- *“Still daunting to think about, but they felt the same way when they were new teachers.”*
- *“WASL and NL greatest strengths are that they helped built connections with others.”*

**#2) WASL helped build confidence**

- *“I have confidence and feel knowledgeable.”*
- *“Have the confidence to make the big decisions for school, some may not be popular.”*
- *“Feel more confident making decision even when knowing some of the staff may be unhappy and unable to change that.”*
- *“Feel more confident with interviews”*

**Concluding Thoughts**

The discussion concluded with everyone indicating that, yes, they would recommend people to WASL. This recommendation is stronger for educators who have not had NL.

- When asked directly whether they would recommend WASL to other aspiring leaders, all answered “yes.”
  - *“WASL added another layer of knowledge was added by Aly who is super knowledgeable about the practical applications of what we learned.”*
  - *“WASL did add an additional layer of knowledge for many of us.”*

**Overall Trends across Educator Groups**

The major overall themes that emerged across all of the focus groups are synthesized in the box below.

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <p><b>All of the groups appreciated...</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">MTSS The Personality Inventory Budgeting School Performance Plans</p>	<p><b>Recommended Areas of Improvement</b></p> <p><b>WASL participant recommended...</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">More feedback on Entry Plan and the 30-60-90 activity More information on conducting Teacher Evaluations Creation of a mentor principal program</p>
<p><b>Structure</b></p> <p>Most liked the 5 session structure; with a few willing to do more to cover more information.</p> <p>Some recommend a hybrid format (online and in person) to add more time.</p>	<p><b>Becoming an Effective Leader</b></p> <p>WASL is perceived as providing valuable information that adds to the experience learned in the field.</p> <p>Collaboration, Sharing Information, and Listening to how Colleagues approach the topics covered is not found anywhere outside of WASL.</p>

## Appendix A

**2020 WASL Evaluation: Moderator Guide**

Hi there,

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am a program evaluator for the Office of Accountability
- Aly has asked us **gather feedback about your experience with WASL** to help make improvements to the program for next year.
- So, we are hoping to talk with you for **about an hour** today about:
  - what you found **useful** about the program,
  - what you would **want to see changed** for the next cohort of participants,
  - and hear about **how well (or not well) you think the program prepared you for the next steps in your career.**
- We are aware our school semester was disrupted in mid spring. That is not the goal of this particular discussion. **The goal of today's discussion is to focus on how the overall content and structure of WASL** (whether it had been completed or planned) helped your journey into school leadership.
- The results of these focus groups will be analyzed by our department and provided to WASL staff so they can make any needed adjustments to the curriculum and structure for next year. No names, school names, or other identifying information will be used in the reports. What you say here will be kept completely anonymous.
- We have about five main topic areas we'll be asking you questions about. We want to hear from everyone, so please feel free to jump in with your comments at any time. **I will post the main discussion question in the chat box.**
- However, if there is a question you do not want to respond to, you can always say "Pass."
- We also hope you don't mind that we will be recording this session. For anonymity, please try not to use anyone's full name or any specific school name unless it is your own school.

Before we begin, let's just do some quick introductions. I'd like to go around the group right now and have everyone say their name, their position, and their school site. Then I'd like you to tell me what you're most excited about in your job this month and what you are most worried or stressed about at your job this month. I'll start us off. <do the ice breaker>.

Great, thanks for that. I'll go ahead and turn the tape recorder on right now and we'll get started talking about WASL.

**1. Usefulness of WASL Curriculum****Which areas of the WASL curriculum did you find most useful?**

*Probe 1:* What areas do you think most helped prepare you to be a leader in the district?

*Probe 2:* What areas do you think helped you be more effective in your current role?

*Probe 3:* Was there any one presentation that you thought was particularly useful or that made you think differently about your leadership approach?

*Probe 4:* Was there any one activity you completed in your WASL training sessions that you thought was particularly useful or that made you think differently about your leadership approach?

*Probe 5:* Do you feel more confident in your ability to be an effective leader in your role as a result of WASL?

## **2. Areas of WASL Curriculum to Improve in Future**

**Which areas of the WASL curriculum do you think should be altered or omitted for future years?**

*Probe 1:* Was there any area that you wish you could have spent more time on?

*Probe 2:* Did you find any particular area irrelevant to what you do now or what you plan to do professionally?

*Probe 3:* For those of you who participated in the Nevada Leads program, did you feel WASL complemented your previous learning, or was it duplicative?

## **3. Structure of WASL**

**This year WASL began in January and included five consecutive sessions. What are your thoughts about how WASL was structured (outside of the Covid 19 closure)?**

*Probe 1:* How satisfied were you with the structure of WASL?

*Probe 2:* Was five sessions sufficient or would you have preferred more sessions?

*Probe 3:* How do you feel about the timing, length, or sequence of the sessions?

*Probe 4:* Were there any topics you would have liked to have covered in a session,

## **4. 30-60-90 Day Entry Plan**

**This year WASL required participants to complete a 30-60-90 day entry plan. What are your thoughts about this activity?**

*Probe 1:* How satisfied were you with the 30-60-90 day plan?

*Probe 2:* Were there any parts of the 30-60-90 day plan that could have been done differently?

*Probe 3:* What recommendations would have before implementing this activity next year?

## **5. Competency to Become an Effective School Leader**

**Looking to the future, how do you feel about your competence to transition into a role as a principal/assistant principal/other school administrator?**

*Probe 1:* Do you feel adequately prepared to make the transition to becoming an effective school leader/principal/assistant principal?

*Probe 2:* What do you think will be your biggest challenge if you were to transition from your current role to the role of principal/assistant principal/other administrator?

*Probe 3:* What do you see as the primary differences between your current role and the role of a principal/assistant principal/other administrator position?

*Probe 4:* In hearing leaders' stories and shadowing principals, what leadership qualities do you think are most critical to becoming an effective school leader? What, if any, areas of the WASL training program developed your skillset in those critical leadership qualities?

## **Wrap-Up**

Would you recommend WASL to other aspiring leaders in our district?