

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SECU Foundation

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE®

\$80,000 Grant from SECU Foundation Supports Leadership Development Program for Principals

Raleigh, N.C. – SECU Foundation is working with the North Carolina Alliance for School Leadership Development (NCASLD) and the North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals' Association (NCPAPA) to help increase leadership capacity among practicing school principals through a new initiative called the Distinguished Practitioners Network (DPN). Using a virtual platform, DPN will provide leadership development sessions to principals in high-needs schools addressing concerns highlighted by COVID-19. An \$80,000 grant from SECU Foundation will help fund costs to train and compensate program facilitators to bring the DPN platform to education leaders in approximately 180 North Carolina schools over the next two years. NCASLD and its affiliate NCPAPA provide professional development for school leaders by targeting improved student outcomes through research-based standards.



L to R: Jo Anne Sanford, SECU Foundation Board Chair and Dr. Shirley Prince, NCPAPA Executive Director.

Statistics provided by NCPAPA show North Carolina public schools must replace 300-400 principals who have left the field of leadership each year, and the 180 lowest-performing schools in the state lose more than 33% of their principals annually. DPN will enable school leaders to collaborate with peers focused on the same issues, increase leadership capacity, and apply new strategies to address three key concerns elevated by COVID-19. The three targets are: raising achievement in reading and math; seeking equity to reduce disparities in student success; and supporting social and emotional well-being to create a thriving educational environment.



Jo Anne Sanford

“SECU Foundation understands the importance of providing support for a community forum where principals can discuss shared school challenges and address educational concerns that have been further exacerbated by the pandemic,” stated Jo Anne Sanford, SECU Foundation Board Chair. “Both new and experienced school leaders who are facing mounting pressures will benefit from this additional support and professional development. We believe the Network will accelerate the development and dissemination of ‘leadership best practices,’ thus promoting school and student success.”

“Research shows that school leaders can improve student outcomes more quickly and significantly by learning from and collaborating with their peers who are focused on the same problems of practice. This is especially true as they navigate the uncertainty of instructional leadership during the pandemic,” said Dr. Shirley Prince, NCPAPA Executive Director. “With no clear roadmap,



Dr. Shirley Prince

principals must rely on the collective insight and instincts of other successful principals as they figure out how to apply what they know about effective school leadership to these new, unpredictable situations. School leader on-the-job professional networks have been shown to reduce isolation and promote principal retention and improved student performance.”

About SECU and the SECU Foundation

A not-for-profit financial cooperative owned by its members, SECU has been providing employees of the state of North Carolina and their families with consumer financial services for over 83 years. The Credit Union also offers a diversified line of financial advisory services including retirement and education planning, tax preparation, insurance, trust and estate planning services, and investments through its partners and affiliated entities. SECU serves over 2.5 million members through 271 branch offices, 1,100 ATMs, 24/7 Member Services via phone, a website, www.ncsecu.org and a Mobile App. Members can also follow and subscribe to SECU on Facebook and YouTube. The SECU Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization funded by the contributions of SECU members, promotes local community development in North Carolina primarily through high impact projects in the areas of housing, education, healthcare and human services. Since 2004, [SECU Foundation](#) has made a collective financial commitment of over \$200 million for initiatives to benefit North Carolinians statewide. In addition to the website, highlights are also available on the SECU Foundation Instagram page.