

# BYU School Leadership Newsletter

## A Call to Future Principals



Through the first McKay School Aspiring Principals' Academy, teachers thinking about becoming principals have the opportunity to learn in advance what it takes to be an educational leader.

The Aspiring Principals' Academy is part of a joint effort between the School Leadership Program and the BYU-Public School Partnership to encourage teachers to explore school leadership. The program will accept individuals into year-long cohorts each spring. These groups will attend four sessions that will teach them leadership skills, introduce

them to important aspects of administrative culture, and help them determine if educational leadership is the right path for them.

Pam Hallam, Chair of the School Leadership Program, said the idea for the academy is based on insights and research that shows how important a principal is to student learning. "We have research that the principal does make a difference in student achievement. With that importance, how can we leave leadership to chance?" Hallam asked. "We need to be conscious and deliberate about who we get into the pipeline to become future leaders because the education of our students is so important."

Steve Baugh, director of CITES, said the greatest benefit to members of the Aspiring Principals' Academy is the information they will receive. "The biggest advantage to the candidate is that the Aspiring Principals' Academy gives them an idea early on of some of the opportunities and challenges of becoming a school principal. They're able to [learn this] without the commitment of going to graduate school," Baugh said. "Hopefully it will also get them interested in perhaps pursuing [administration] in their master's degree program."

Mike Pratt, head of the Aspiring Principals' Academy, said "We are so excited about this first Aspiring Principals' Academy. Participants will receive a birds-eye view of the principalship, learn valuable leadership skills, and develop a network of like-minded friends and colleagues from across other school districts."

To encourage participation, the program is offered at no cost to those who enroll. School leadership speakers and McKay School professors teach the workshop.

## Alumni Spotlight: Mike Larsen

Principal Mike Larsen received a national award from the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) for the turnaround of Rees Elementary and mentoring BYU aspiring principals.

The annual Excellence in Educational Leadership Award recognizes practicing school administrators who have made significant contributions to the improvement of administrator preparation. Larsen was nominated through BYU's Educational Leadership & Foundations Department for this national recognition.



Larsen was able to turnaround Rees Elementary as a new principal using the Professional Learning Community techniques he learned through the Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling at BYU. "It was neat to see the school community rally around the school and to see positive things happening for that entire school community," Larsen said.

After serving as the principal of Rees Elementary for seven years, he was asked by Nebo School District to open a new elementary school, Sierra Bonita. Larsen has served as the principal of Sierra Bonita for two years, successfully creating a professional learning community in the school.

However, this is only part of the reason Larsen was nominated for this prestigious award. Larsen mentors approximately six BYU interns per year, engaging them from start to finish in long-term improvement projects, solving short- and long-term problems and supervising faculty to enhance their instructional capacity. He allows interns to shadow him in challenging situations, and develops a close relationship with them. He also assists in career development by allowing interns to attend district meetings where they are provided with networking opportunities.

Larsen is a McKay School graduate who served as an intern principal in the Leadership Preparation Program (LPP) while attending BYU 10 years ago. Larsen said he enjoyed his association with BYU and its caring professors and excellent program.

"I still tell stories of my experiences being an intern principal," Larsen said. "When I was asked if I would be willing to have interns come and be a part of my school, I was humbled and very grateful to be part of the LPP and to receive these amazing administrators who are coming into the schools."

## Student Spotlight: Kim Jones



Kim Jones took an untraditional career path in becoming a new assistant principal at Snow Springs Elementary, where she began her career as a school psychologist in the Alpine School District.

Jones completed her undergraduate degree in history teaching at BYU's McKay School of Education. She later decided to complete a master's degree in school counseling and psychology, also at BYU. At that point Jones was hired to work on the special education team in the Alpine School District.

"We're able to do assessments to help figure out what students' needs are in those various areas of well-being and how we can meet them," Jones said. "I find those [assessments] to be really rewarding."

Jones decided to return to the McKay School for a third time in the Educational Leadership (EdLF) PhD program, after recognizing her passion for educational leadership. "I've always been interested in organizational systems and learning about leadership," Jones said. "One individual can really make a difference in helping [create] a positive culture that's accepting of everyone and their opinions, making them feel valued." Through BYU, Kim also obtained her Utah administrative license.

She has enjoyed learning about school cultures in the EdLF department. She feels the program has helped her understand how a school has its own culture and environment.

Originally from Aztec, New Mexico, Jones enjoys watching BYU sports with her seven siblings and working in the Young Women's Program. Jones is excited to begin her new position at Snow Springs Elementary for the upcoming school year.

## Alumni Spotlight: Caleb Olson

College graduates sometimes do not find work in their chosen field; however, one McKay School student just landed what he considers the perfect job.

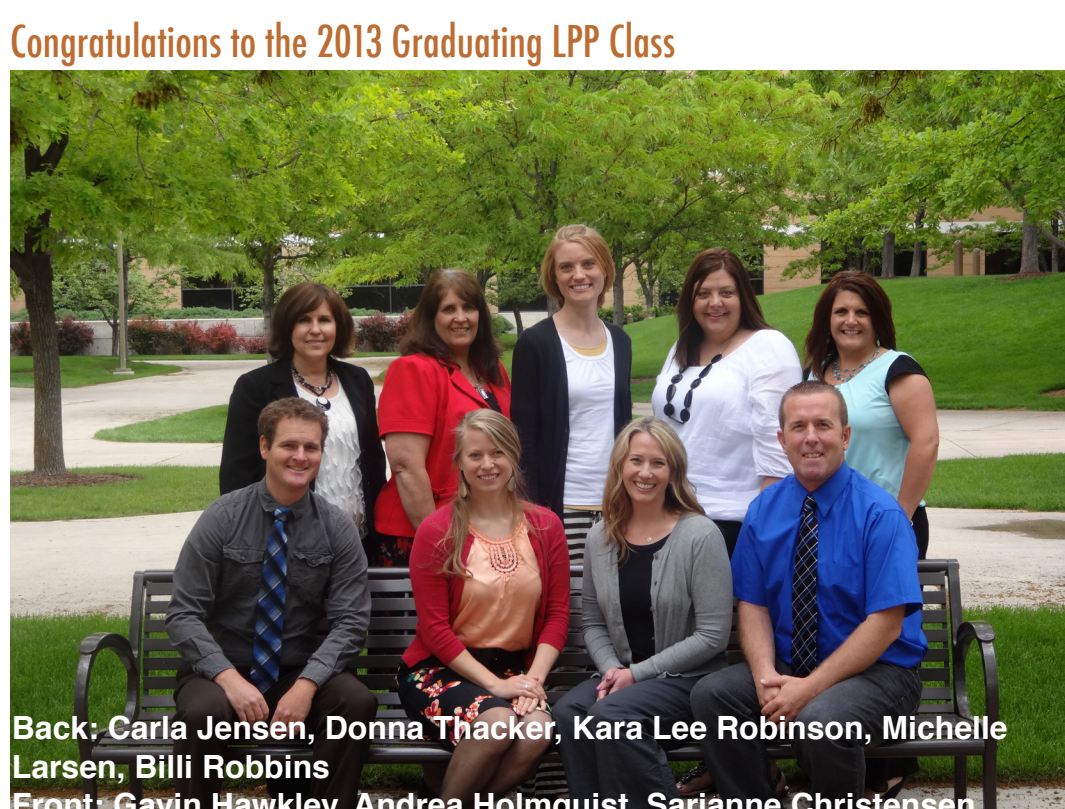
Caleb Olson envisioned becoming a school administrator from the time he completed his undergraduate degree from the McKay School in teaching social science. On July 1 Olson began as the new assistant principal of West Hills Middle School in West Jordan, Utah.

"I've always thought administration was something I wanted to work my way into doing," Olson said. "I really love being in the classroom, and I have never really wanted to give that up, but the challenges of the day-to-day activities of administration have always been interesting to me."

Olson began the BYU School Leadership Program in 2011, pursuing a degree in Educational Leadership. He feels the biggest benefit of the ExSL program was the relationships he formed. "I think the best part of the ExSL program was the individuals I had the chance to work with, from the professors to the members of my cohort," Olson said. "They each brought their own unique backgrounds and insights to the topics we studied. I can't imagine trying to do this program without those relationships."

Olson previously served as a teacher at South Jordan Middle School, teaching three geography courses in the Social Studies Department. As an administrator at West Hills Middle School, he looks forward to applying what he learned as a classroom teacher and a recent graduate of the ExSL program.

## Congratulations to the 2013 Graduating LPP Class



Back: Carla Jensen, Donna Thacker, Kara Lee Robinson, Michelle Larsen, Billi Robbins  
Front: Gavin Hawkey, Andrea Holmquist, Sarianne Christensen, Shawn Rawlings

## Congratulations to the 2013 Graduating ExSL Class



Back: Caleb Olson, Jory Schmidt, Justin Reeves, Thomas Paul II  
Middle: Carrie Rawlings, Cheryl Naegle, Trent Mikesell, Karl McKenzie  
Front: Lori Bellitti, April Leder, Corinne Soelberg, Brett Miller  
Inserted: Michael Christopherson (Left), Daniel Horne (Right)

## Announcements

**September 3**  
First Day of Fall Classes

## TEAC Accreditation

Brigham Young University School Leadership Program, which is designed to develop competent educational leaders of faith, intellect, and character, is granted Initial Accreditation by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) for a period of five years, from June 24, 2013 – June 24, 2018. This accreditation certifies that the forenamed professional education program has provided evidence that the program adheres to TEAC's quality principles.

## Program website resources

Our website has been redesigned to have information and resources that will help you learn more about and go through the School Leadership Program. You will find resources such as:

- Student Handbook
- Schedule (3-years)
- Course schedules for each semester
- Registration form for the internship project

## Placements

Kim Jones, assistant principal, Snow Springs Elementary

Caleb Olson, assistant principal, West Hills Middle School

Sarianne Christensen, assistant principal, Orem High School

Mike Christopherson, professor, Brigham Young University-Idaho

Carrie Rawlings, vice principal, Timanogos Elementary

## Alumni

If you have received a new position, moved or changed your contact information, we would love to know. We want to help you stay connected to the School Leadership Program.

Send any information updates to [edlfsec@byu.edu](mailto:edlfsec@byu.edu).

Thanks!

## New Mission Statement

The School Leadership Program embraces the mission and Aims of Brigham Young University and develops competent educational leaders of faith, intellect, and character

who have a vision and a compelling sense of purpose for the continuous improvement of schools and learning for all.