



Assistant Principal *Ex*celeration

What District Leaders Need to Know about APEX Community

We all know the principal pipeline is critical, that's why you've been working hard on creating robust professional development for your aspiring principals.

But what about all your other assistant principals?

- The new and inexperienced ones?
- The strong ones who don't want to move into the principalship, but still want to grow?
- The ones who are overwhelmed by discipline cases?
- Who want to do a better job supporting their early career teachers?
- Who want to become better instructional leaders?
- Or who feel isolated, alone, and adrift?

You may be able to meet the needs of one or two of these subgroups, but you probably don't have the time or human resources to see that every AP gets what they need.

So, what can you do?

A better question might be "what can *we* do?" I've developed the Assistant Principal Exceleration Community. Working together, we can identify the APs who can best profit from APEX Community and encourage them to join.

What is APEX?

APEX Community is designed to help assistant principals grow by becoming part of a vibrant network of other school leaders from around the country. APEX Community also offers rich and varied professional development opportunities, designed to meet members' needs.

Why community first?

- Many assistant principals feel isolated and alone. PD can't fix that, but a community of peers can.
- Members of a community have a shared responsibility to help each other. A community empowers each member to pursue their own growth, but to also support the growth of others.
- APEX Community has APs from across the country, from different types of schools, and varying backgrounds. A community can leverage that diversity into a rich environment that helps participants gain new perspectives.
- In a community, members' needs drive professional development, so PD opportunities are timely, relevant, and powerful.



Assistant Principal *Exc*eleration

Okay, community is important, but what about the professional development?

We have a diverse range of topics, including:

- Small but powerful coaching practices
- How to develop standard operating procedures
- Developing custom observation protocols to follow up on PD
- Effective ways to limit referrals

We also have access to stellar principals and district administrators to help us in areas where our own expertise may not be enough.

Why me?

I invested 13 years in developing, leading, and teaching in university administrator licensing programs. During that time, I prepared a lot of assistant principals. More importantly, I spent a lot of time with district leaders, principals, and assistant principals in all types of schools. I learned from all of them and have taken the best practices I have seen and packaged them into simple, effective, and actionable frameworks.

In January 2021 I launched APEX as a pilot project and ran it again in 2021-22. In August of 2021 I launched The Assistant Principal Podcast, and this July I will begin producing Quadrant2, a bi-weekly micro-journal focused on discrete learning and applying discrete skills essential to the assistant principalship.

I have a unique combination of k-12 teaching and administrative experience (17 years), higher education experience (13 years), and consulting and training experience in schools (16 years). I have a track record of preparing teachers to become assistant principals and assistant principals to become principals.

But we already have programs for AP development!

Great! If you are meeting all of those needs of your various APs then I applaud you. I also want to have you on The Assistant Principal Podcast to talk about how you are managing this, because others need to learn from you. If you are meeting everyone's needs, then you probably don't need APEX Community. If you think you may have some gaps, then keep reading. APEX is designed for individuals, and we might be able to meet their needs.

We don't have the funds!

Funding is tight and every professional development dollar matters. This year, we've shifted our funding model to focus on individual enrollments. In the past, a district could enroll all of their APs in APEX Community, but if an AP didn't participate, then dollars were wasted. With an individual funding model, APs are responsible for applying for funds through the district or paying their own way. This means that a principal asking for funding has already made an investment of time and is more likely to take advantage of the opportunities in APEX Community.

<https://www.frederickbuskey.com/apex.html>



Assistant Principal *Ex*celeration

How do we know we'll get results?

The sad reality is that nothing is guaranteed. Our schools are being impacted by factors beyond our control, and we don't know what is coming next. That said, the structures, content, and opportunities within APEX Community are research-based and mirror the best practices of adult learning. If an AP has gone to the trouble of applying for funding and applying to APEX, it is likely that they will invest in the community and the PD experiences.

Why do this now?

Why not? If we can stop a new AP from quitting, an experienced one from leaving, or support any of them to help teachers grow, then we should begin now.

What's next?

There are three things that would be helpful:

- Share information about APEX Community with your APs and encourage them to consider it.
- Let your APs know that you will support paying the APEX Community membership as long as long as you have funding available
- Let me know how I can make the funding application easier for them, and what we might be able to do to help them receive professional development renewal credits for the work they do in APEX Community.

Particulars:

- APEX Community registration is open from July 26-August 5
- An annual membership is \$1150
- We use a private and secure community software that includes desktop, iOS, and Android applications
- Monthly activities include webinars and group coaching
- We will develop small groups around special interests (e.g. new APs)
- Content comes in multiple formats, including written, audio, and video

Want to learn more?

- Visit my main assistant principal page [here](#)
- Visit the APEX Community page [here](#)
- Find out more about the types of things that I do by listening to [The Assistant Principal Podcast](#)
- Set up a meeting by accessing my calendar [here](#)