

THE PRINCIPAL STORY National Media Outreach Campaign

Station Activities: WFYI / Indianapolis, IN

Through its outreach campaign for **THE PRINCIPAL STORY**, WFYI¹ explored the role of the school principal and the critical nature of leadership. Focusing on Indianapolis and Fort Wayne, IN, project activities reached 560,000 people. The national documentary was aired on September 17, 2009 as part of Education Night.

Project Abstract: WFYI Public Television was awarded an outreach grant, funded by The Wallace Foundation and managed by Outreach Extensions, from April to October 2009. WFYI focused its efforts on production and partnership, creating a documentary, *The Good That You Do*, and a panel discussion show, *Reading, Writing 'n' Relevance*, to complement THE PRINCIPAL STORY.

When the project began, the station planned to produce a documentary on the changing role of school principals. The project made an abrupt shift, however, when all professional development days were eliminated and dramatic changes to teacher and principal licensure were proposed by the new chief state school officer. The context for the work became very political.

The Good That You Do presents Indiana-specific issues about principal preparation, supports and challenges in a rapidly changing, high-stakes environment. It has been presented with the national documentary in school and community settings to engage practitioners, policymakers, parents, pre-service administrators and the public.

Project Outcomes

- The viewing audience of WFYI's Education Night, according to PBS, was 67 percent higher than the same date in 2008, documenting viewers' interest in the topic of school leadership. WFYI successfully engaged other Indiana stations, notably WFWA (Fort Wayne) and WTIU (Bloomington) in presenting its local shows as part of an Education Night featuring THE PRINCIPAL STORY.
- As a result of the outreach project, principals, superintendents, parents and local school leaders have resources they can use to educate policymakers and constituent groups. 450 copies of *The Principal Story Video & Print Resources* DVD (outreach DVD) and 302 copies of the local show have been distributed. In discrete education settings; these resources have been viewed by more than 19,000 individuals.
- Based on 7,190 visits to WFYI's website, broadcast of the national and local shows, and distribution of DVDs, WFYI has contributed to the urgent debate in Indiana about principal selection, licensure and professional development.

Project Activities

¹ **Station Profile:** For nearly four decades, WFYI Public Broadcasting has served as a center for discovery for all ages. WFYI's wide variety of public radio and television programs and services provides a foundation for early learning, inspires curiosity and serves as a catalyst for lifelong learning. The station's audience comprises rural, urban and suburban viewers in a 33 county area, including a growing immigrant population and the two fastest-growing counties in Indiana. The demographics of Central Indiana are the most diverse in the state, and include about 1.4 million people. The station has 25,500 members, and 600,000 viewers per week. For more information on WFYI's programming and educational outreach services, visit www.wfyi.org.

1. Local Television Broadcast Productions

The Good That You Do: Creating pressure for principals, the landscape of Indiana education was in flux in summer 2009; standards were evolving rapidly. This half-hour film follows three Indiana principals – Joe Preda, Decatur Central High School, Indianapolis; Al Mihajlovits, Southridge Middle School, Huntingburg; and Carolyn Sleet, Harris Elementary School, Fort Wayne – as they juggle long hours and diverse responsibilities of school leadership. Comments are offered by Dan Bickel, director of elementary education for Fort Wayne Community Schools; Jay Wilson, principal of the Indiana School for the Blind and Vision Impaired; and Dr. Walter Bourke, superintendent, Franklin Township Schools.

Reading, Writing ‘n’ Relevance is a panel discussion show moderated by Marianne Holland, news director for Indiana Public Broadcasting. Panelists are:

- Representative Greg Porter, Chairman, Indiana House Education Committee
- Dr. Deb Lecklider, Associate Dean, College of Education, Butler University
- Dr. Wendy Robinson, Superintendent, Fort Wayne Community Schools
- Marsha Reynolds, Director, Elementary Education, MSD-Washington Township

The show examines the future of Indiana education and explores the recruiting, licensing, mentoring and evaluation of the state’s next generation of school leaders. Footage of Dr. Tony Bennett, state superintendent of public instruction, shows him at a press conference in which he announces sweeping changes.

Bill Gavaghan, former director of the now-defunded Indiana Principal Leadership Academy; Susan Kertes, newly-appointed professional development director for the Indiana Department of Education; and Gerald Mohr, executive director of the Indiana Association of School Principals; were influential in WFYI’s planning and outreach.

WFYI is creating a chaptered version of the local productions to facilitate utilization in diverse settings.

2. Education Night on WFYI, WFWA and WTIU

September 17, WFYI devoted two hours of primetime programming to explore the role of the school principal. The line-up was: THE PRINCIPAL STORY; *The Good That You Do*; *Reading, Writing ‘n’ Relevance*; and *Ready to Read*. WFWA (Fort Wayne) broadcast a three-hour education block on October 25; WFYI also rebroadcast its education block on October 25, beginning at 2 pm. WTIU (University of Indiana, Bloomington) slated the shows for broadcast on November 27.

3. Screenings and Events

- WFWI (September 9) in Indianapolis and WFWA (September 2) in Fort Wayne hosted preview screenings of the national and local programs. Among those present were school board members, state PTA board members, school administrators, principals, parent advocates, and department of education personnel. Tresa Dunbar (featured in THE PRINCIPAL STORY) spoke at the Indianapolis event. At each event, the outreach DVD was distributed and groups discussed how to use the films and DVD.
- WFYI presented the local documentaries at the state assistant principal conference on October 12 and at the fall principal conference on November 23. Combined attendance was approximately 700. The dean of education at Anderson University underwrote duplication of 75 copies of the local show.
- A Fort Wayne-specific clip reel of the local documentaries is being shown to school board members. One board member is also organizing “quadrant meetings” in the

city that will reach approximately 200 people. A nine-minute reel features Fort Wayne administrators.

- Plans are being made to convene approximately 400 Fort Wayne educators to view the programs. The school corporation also plans to stream the local documentary on its website and link to WFYI.

4. Activities to accompany *North Grand*

With an additional outreach grant, WFYI is conducting the following activities to support its local broadcast of *North Grand*.

- Produce a three-part series for WFYI 90.1 FM on the principalship and factors that influence student achievement. The series will be inserted into local broadcasts of *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*.
- Broadcast an Education Block with THE PRINCIPAL STORY, *North Grand* and the station's local documentary, *The Good That You Do*.
- Partner with Butler University to preview *North Grand* and host a panel discussion on the role of high school principals. The education dean has taken a leadership role in the statewide debate on principal preparation.

Promotion/Reach

- E-vites were sent to constituent groups in Fort Wayne and Indianapolis to attend the preview screenings. A total of 572 e-vites were sent by WFYI for the events.
- Promoted Education Night on WFYI 20.1 a total of 123 times over a two week period, viewed by 464,937.
- Highlighted Education Night in its member magazine sent to 35,000 households.
- Sent information about Education Night in its e-newsletter to a total of 28,000 discrete addresses.
- Featured Education Night on its home page on September 17, viewed by 1,679 persons.
- A total of 7,190 visited the local productions and national pages on WFYI.org
- The Indiana Association of School Principals sent information about Education Night to 2,165 school administrators in Indiana alerting them to tune in. Together, all station outreach partners reached 21,317.

