

# Preparing School Principals: A National Perspective on Policy and Program Innovations

Elizabeth L. Hale  
Hunter N. Moorman



Institute for Educational Leadership  
Washington, D.C.



Illinois Education Research Council  
Edwardsville, Illinois



# Preparing School Principals: A National Perspective on Policy and Program Innovations

*“No one can say for certain how the schools of the new century will differ from those of the past century – but there can be little doubt that these schools will require different forms of leadership.”<sup>1</sup>*

Elizabeth L. Hale  
Hunter N. Moorman

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<sup>1</sup> Statement by Member, Task Force on Reinventing the Principalship, (2000). School Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiative, Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, DC.

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## INTRODUCTION

Our nation is simultaneously acknowledging the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark report, *A Nation at Risk*,<sup>2</sup> and the widespread and bipartisan acceptance of the need for America's schools to improve. At the same time, implementing the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 is forcing us to confront the weaknesses of contemporary school leadership and is making it impossible to ignore the escalating need for higher quality principals — individuals who have been prepared to provide the instructional leadership necessary to improve student achievement.

Laser-like attention is being focused on one of the variables critical to effective education: leadership. Today, school leadership — more specifically, the principalship — is a front burner issue in every state.

The systems that produce our nation's principals are complex and interrelated — and governed by the states. Each state

establishes licensing, certification and re-certification requirements for school leaders and, in most places, approves the college and university programs that prepare school leaders. State policy leaders and institutional leaders, therefore, have become key players in efforts to improve principal preparation programs and processes. Their goal: to promote lasting improvements in school leadership development systems by identifying and then adopting change processes that combine the required policy and program elements.

While the jobs of school leaders — superintendents, principals, teacher leaders and school board members — have changed dramatically, it appears that neither organized professional development programs nor formal preparation programs based in higher education institutions have adequately prepared those holding these jobs to meet the priority demands of the 21st century, namely, improved

student achievement.<sup>3</sup> All aspects of the school leadership issue — the art and the science of principal leadership, as well as the policy and regulatory frameworks in support of a state's capacity to recruit, prepare and retain its educational leadership workforce — are on the table and are being scrutinized.

This report focuses on two areas in which state policies and programs can have particular influence on school leadership: licensure, certification and accreditation requirements; and administrator training and professional development.<sup>4</sup> This document is a distillation of the national conversation about school leadership and principal preparation programs. It also presents promising approaches and practices as illustrated by selected changes being made or promoted in and/or across state systems, in local school districts, in universities and colleges, and in new provider organizations across the nation.

<sup>2</sup> National Commission for Excellence in Education. (1983, April). *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

<sup>3</sup> The National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking and Management. (1999, June). *Policy Brief: Effective Leaders for Today's Schools: Synthesis of a Policy Forum on Educational Leadership*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

<sup>4</sup> State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP). (2001). *State Policy and Practice Compendium*. Denver: Author.

## THE NOT SO NEW NEWS

Recent studies and reports have sharpened our knowledge about the state of the principalship, but the news that the systems that prepare our educational leaders are in trouble comes as no surprise. Back in 1987, the education administration profession self-identified key trouble spots in *Leaders For America's Schools*, prepared by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)-sponsored blue-ribbon panel, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration. The report identified several problem areas, including:

- ◆ The lack of definition of good educational leadership;
- ◆ An absence of collaboration between school districts and colleges and universities;
- ◆ The low number of minorities and females in the field;
- ◆ A lack of systematic professional development;
- ◆ The poor quality of candidates for preparation programs;
- ◆ The irrelevance of preparation programs; programs devoid of sequence, modern content and clinical experiences;
- ◆ The need for licensure systems that promote excellence; and

- ◆ An absence of a national sense of cooperation in preparing school leaders.

The report offered recommendations targeted to particular policy and decision makers. Suggestions for improvement included: (1) public schools should share the responsibility for preparing school leaders with universities, (2) universities unable to support the report's spirit of excellence should stop preparing school leaders, and (3) state policymakers should base licensure procedures on defensible claims about what equips an individual to effectively lead a school.

The Commission's recommendations were both ahead of the times and beyond the capacity of the field to implement. To be successful, efforts to prepare school leaders in new ways require advocates who understand that school leadership is a multi-faceted issue that includes political and managerial as well as instructional and educational components. Acting alone, professional educators have neither the leverage nor the political capacity to conceptualize or implement the changes needed, to build the necessary broad-based coalitions or to attract the substantial

human and financial resources required.

While the Commission's sweeping recommendations failed to prompt action that might have changed the profession, the report spawned a number of smaller steps that have helped point the way to improvement. One such step was the development by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in 1996 of a set of standards for school leaders by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), a representative body of most of the major stakeholders in educational leadership including national associations, states and colleges and universities.

At least 35 states have adopted the ISLLC standards and use them to guide policy and practice related to principal preparation. But, the ISLLC standards have drawn criticism. Some suggest that the standards are not anchored in a rigorous research or knowledge base, that they unduly reinforce the status quo, and that they lack sufficient specificity or operational guidance to help school leaders figure out what to do.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the criticisms, the ISLLC standards are an important development in the

<sup>5</sup> Achilles, C. M., and William J. Price. (Winter 2001). "What Is Missing in the Current Debate About Education Administration (EDAD) Standards!" *AASA Professor* 24, 2 : 8-13. [http://www.aasa.org/publications/tap/Winter\\_2001.pdf](http://www.aasa.org/publications/tap/Winter_2001.pdf)



field of educational leadership. They were never intended to be all-inclusive. Rather, they were intended as indicators of knowledge, dispositions and performances important to effective school leadership. They established a new vision for thinking in terms of standards-based policy and practice and made a new dimension of accountability possible. The standards confirmed the centrality of the principal's role in ensuring student achievement through an unwavering emphasis on "leadership for student learning."

To date, the ISLLC standards have served in many states and institutions as the framework for

revising principal preparation programs and in-service professional development activities. The Educational Testing Service (ETS), in collaboration with ISLLC, recently created *The School Leadership Series*, a set of performance-based assessments based on the ISLLC standards and used for the licensure and professional development of school superintendents, principals and other school leaders. These assessments translate the ISLLC standards into performance measures on which candidates can *demonstrate* their qualifications, reflect on their professional responsibility and actions, and identify

information and strategies that will enable them to continue growing in knowledge and skills. Currently, 13 states use this ETS assessment system to gauge candidates' proficiency levels.

In 2002, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) aligned its accreditation standards for educational leadership training programs with the ISLLC standards. This merger provides a unified set of standards, the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards, for the review and accreditation of administrator preparation programs.

## TOWARD MORE COHERENT EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS — THE CHALLENGES

The intense pressure for principals to be instructional leaders who can more effectively implement standards-based reform has given unprecedented prominence and political visibility to the problems of preparing school principals. Few disagree about what is wrong with how our nation recruits and prepares school principals; the flaws are strikingly similar to the ones identified in 1987. The

disagreements arise when policy and institutional leaders try to address those flaws and create more coherent systems for developing and supporting educational leaders.

The challenges of trying to create more coherent statewide systems for developing and supporting school leaders are framed through the lens of four core questions: How do state

policies shape the talent pool? What is the current condition of leadership preparation? Why is change needed? What are the options for action? Asking these questions should be the starting point for policy and institutional leaders who are trying to improve a state's capacity to develop and support educational leadership.

## QUESTION 1: HOW DO STATE POLICIES SHAPE THE TALENT POOL?

*“Administrators are selected from a talent pool constructed without regard to aptitude for leadership and one that excludes many who may be well suited to serve.”<sup>6</sup>*

States have established policies on certification, licensure and program accreditation as well as standard processes to validate and accredit administrator preparation programs. Through these official tools and strategies, states control entry into the field of educational administration.

The fact that all states except Michigan and South Dakota currently require school administrators to be licensed illustrates how state policy constrains the administrator candidate pool. Generally speaking, becoming a licensed principal requires the successful completion of a fixed number of credit hours in an approved principal preparation program (historically in a college or university, but “the times they are a ‘changin’” as the final section of this document reports), certification as a teacher and classroom experience. These policies limit both the size and the overall quality of the administrator candidate pool and are the subject of much criticism and controversy.

A recent RAND report noted that, “formal barriers such as certification requirements and informal barriers such as district hiring practices all but exclude those without teaching experience from consideration for administrative positions.”<sup>7</sup> The Broad Foundation and The Thomas B. Fordham Institute’s report, *Better Leaders for America’s School: A Manifesto*, reached a similar conclusion: state licensure systems and processes contribute to and exacerbate the problem.

The *Manifesto* emphasized the impact of current policies on the quality of the candidate pool. “Our conventional procedures for training and certifying public school administrators . . . are simply failing to produce a sufficiency of leaders whose vision, energy and skill can successfully raise the educational standard for all children.”<sup>8</sup> The report suggested minimizing regulations (i.e., requirement for previous teaching experience) that choke off the pipeline and make it impossible for interested

applicants trained in other fields and disciplines to enter the profession. As a matter of record and formal policy in 48 states, able non-teachers interested in careers as school administrators are automatically barred from consideration.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), in an earlier report, also echoed the need for states to address certification issues in order to expand their pool of skilled leaders. Simply put, SREB suggested that what states needed to do was to create more flexible certification processes to enable individuals with proven skills to enter the principalship *before* they completed a university program.<sup>9</sup>

Data from the National Center for Education Information (NCEI) confirm that the states are not hotbeds of activity focused on bringing non-traditional professionals into school leadership positions. Data from NCEI also confirm that only eleven states report alternate

<sup>6</sup> Hess, F. M. (2003, January 31). A License to Lead? A New Leadership Agenda for America’s Schools. *PPI Policy Report*. Washington, DC: Progressive Policy Institute 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Project. p. 12. Available from [http://www.ppionline.org/ppi\\_ci.cfm?knlgAreaID=110&subsecID=135&contentID=251239](http://www.ppionline.org/ppi_ci.cfm?knlgAreaID=110&subsecID=135&contentID=251239)

<sup>7</sup> Gates, S. et al. (2003). *Who Is Leading Our Schools? An Overview of School Administrators and Their Careers*. Arlington, VA: RAND Education.

<sup>8</sup> The Broad Foundation and The Thomas B. Fordham Institute. (2003, May). *Better Leaders for America’s Schools: A Manifesto*. Washington, DC: Authors. p. 16. Available from <http://www.edexcellence.net/manifesto/manifesto.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Southern Regional Education Board. (2001, April). *Preparing a New Breed of School Principals: It’s Time for Action*. Atlanta: Author.

certification routes for principals and superintendents and that a whopping 99.3% of all principals have teaching experience.<sup>10</sup>

Since state licensure policies have such a direct impact on the ultimate quality of the talent pool, it is important to review accredited principal preparation

programs. The goal: to look for indicators of quality, as well as for alternatives to consider in their place.

## QUESTION 2: WHAT IS THE CURRENT CONDITION OF LEADERSHIP PREPARATION?

*“Those who seek entrance to leadership programs gravitate toward programs based on convenience and ease of completion; quality of program is hardly a leading criterion.”<sup>11</sup>*

Nearly 20 years of efforts to reform administrator preparation programs have produced little progress. The reforms prompted by such well-known national initiatives as the U.S. Department of Education’s Leadership in Educational Administration Development (LEAD) Program (1987–1993) and the Danforth Foundation’s Principals Preparation Program achieved rather limited success. Ample research on school leadership preparation programs makes it clear that many existing programs are in dire need of improvement.

Principals across the nation agree that administrator training programs deserve an “F.” In a survey of educational leaders conducted by Public Agenda, 69% of the principals responding indicated that traditional leadership preparation programs

were “out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s schools.”<sup>12</sup>

Other major voices in education who have reached the same conclusion include Joseph Murphy, co-author of the ISLLC standards, who characterizes the programs as “bankrupt,”<sup>13</sup> and Michelle Young, Executive Director of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), who concedes that university programs have been slow to change and that faculties are not connected to the field and often have a *laissez-faire* attitude about the need to adopt standards.<sup>14</sup>

So broad is the consensus for change that scores of individuals and organizations representing K-12 and higher education established the National Commission for the Advancement of

Educational Leadership Preparation (NCAELP) in 2001. Comprised of 40 individuals, including major scholars and leaders in the field of educational leadership and of national organizations, NCAELP’s charge is to examine and improve the quality of educational leadership in the United States. Six papers and two commentaries solicited by the Commission to guide discussions are available at the NCAELP Website, <http://www.ncaelp.org/>

The general consensus in most quarters is that principal preparation programs (with a few notable exceptions) are too theoretical and totally unrelated to the daily demands on contemporary principals. The course work is poorly sequenced and organized, making it impossible to scaffold the learning. Because clinical experiences are inadequate or

<sup>10</sup> Information provided to the *National Center for Education Information (NCEI)*, by state licensing officials, July-October 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Glasman, N., Cibulka, J., and Ashby, D. (2002). Program Self-Evaluation for Continuous Improvement. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 38 (2) p. 262.

<sup>12</sup> Farkas, S., et. al. (2001, November). Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk About School Leadership. New York: *Public Agenda*.

<sup>13</sup> Murphy, J. (2001, September). *Reculturing the Profession of Educational Leadership: New Blueprints*. Paper commissioned by the National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership Preparation, Racine, Wisconsin. 15 pages.

<sup>14</sup> Norton, J. (2002). *Preparing School Leaders: It’s Time to Face the Facts*. Atlanta, Georgia: Southern Regional Education Board.

non-existent, students do not have mentored opportunities to develop practical understanding or real-world job competence.

Admission standards to most accredited programs are too low and few, if any, efforts are made to identify high potential applicants, to target women and minorities for inclusion or to identify individuals interested in working in high needs rural or urban environments. School district pay policies may be part of the problem, too. Typically, a school district pay scale rewards those who accrue credits beyond the undergraduate level. Such credits can be easily obtained by taking courses through administrator preparation programs. This encourages self-selection by many applicants who may be of dubious quality and have little or no intention of ever seeking an administrative post.<sup>15</sup> Since self-selection is a standard practice, administrator programs

generally end up serving clusters of individuals operating on their own rather than serving cohorts of individuals who are developed into a learning community — an integral feature of an effective preparation program.

The lack of partnerships between colleges and universities and school districts affects the selection and admission of candidates and the design and conduct of the preparation program. Absent partnerships with school districts, there are no easily accessible mechanisms for identifying the best candidates — individuals who have shown the greatest promise of future success as a principal and who will be likely to return to the school district and make valuable contributions. 21<sup>st</sup> century partnerships between school districts and universities are not “your father’s Oldsmobile.” Today’s partnerships must focus on the areas of greatest need.

Schools and universities must work together to recruit and prepare diverse cohorts of highly qualified candidates — men and women who can serve in urban or rural settings, lead low-performing schools and prepare their communities to meet changing demographic, social, economic and political change.

The lack of strong working relationships with school districts also makes it impossible to develop learning laboratories in which “student-principals” can make protected or mentored mistakes from which they can learn and develop. As Cambron-McCabe and Cunningham have observed, “. . . the need for change in leadership preparation is not an issue. Rather, the possible approaches that can be taken to strengthen our field are the subject of debate.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> About 25% of those certified to be administrators actually enter the leadership arena. However, a recent study by the Illinois Education Research Council (DeAngelis, K.D. 2003. *In the Pipeline: The Early Career Paths of Administrative Certificate Holders in Illinois*. Edwardsville, IL: Illinois Education Research Council.) showed that, in Illinois, almost one third of recent recipients of administrative certification applied for such a position but either did not receive an offer or did not accept a position.

<sup>16</sup> Nelda Cambron-McCabe and Luvern L. Cunningham, “National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership: Opportunity for Transformation.” Commentary Paper commissioned by the National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership Preparation. February 2002. 4 pages.

### QUESTION 3: WHY IS CHANGE NEEDED?

“... the ‘leadership ability’ and ‘leadership values’ of the principal determine in large measure what transpires in a school; what transpires in a school either promotes, nourishes, or impedes and diminishes student academic success.”<sup>17</sup>

Our nation is now confronted by a profound disconnect between pre- and in-service training, the current realities and demands of the job and the capacity of school leaders to be instructional leaders. Strong leadership is the heart of all effective organizations, be they private, public or non-profit. An increasing body of evidence confirms that such leadership is also important for public schools – but it is leadership of a very special sort. The clarion call today is for adept instructional leaders, not mere building managers.

There is a growing consensus that “command and control” leadership models do not and will not work in today’s high accountability school systems. Good leadership for schools is shared leadership. It has many forms and many names: distributive leadership, change facilitation and constructivist leadership.

The old model of leadership with its strict separation of

management and production is no longer effective. “Principals must serve as leaders for student learning. They must know academic content and pedagogical techniques. They must work with teachers to strengthen skills. They must collect, analyze and use data in ways that fuel excellence.”<sup>18</sup> Principals also must be able to permit and encourage teachers to exercise leadership outside the classroom. Roland Barth, the founder of the Harvard Principals’ Center, notes that . . . “there are at least ten areas . . . where teacher involvement is actually essential to the health of a school, ranging from selecting textbooks and instructional materials to designing staff development programs to evaluating teacher performance.”<sup>19</sup>

Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century require a new kind of principal, one who fulfills a variety of roles:<sup>20</sup>

- **Instructional leader** — is focused on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development,

data-driven decisionmaking and accountability.

- **Community leader** — is imbued with a big picture awareness of the school’s role in society; shared leadership among educators, community partners and residents; close relations with parents and others; and advocacy for school capacity building and resources.
- **Visionary Leader** — has a demonstrated commitment to the conviction that all children will learn at high levels and is able to inspire others inside and outside the school building with this vision.

To be sure, all three types of leadership are important, but the priority must be instructional leadership – leadership for learning. Principals of today’s schools must be able to (1) lead instruction, (2) shape an organization that demands and supports excellent instruction and dedicated learning by students and staff and (3) connect

<sup>17</sup> Reyes, P. and Wagstaff, L. (2003). *How Can Educational Leaders Improve the Education of Students from Diverse Backgrounds?* Division A Task Force to Develop a Research Agenda on Educational Leadership. [www.cepa/gse/rutgers.edu/DivisionA.htm](http://www.cepa/gse/rutgers.edu/DivisionA.htm).

<sup>18</sup> Institute for Educational Leadership. (2000, October). *Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship*. Washington, DC: p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Barth, R. S. (2001, February). *Teacher Leader*. *Phi Delta Kappan*. p. 82.

<sup>20</sup> Institute for Educational Leadership. (2000, October). *Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship*. Washington, DC: p. 4.

the outside world and its resources to the school and its work. As a corollary proposition, preparation programs must fulfill the vision embodied in the ISLLC standards and develop principals who have the knowledge, skills and attributes of an instructional leader and the capacity to galvanize the internal and external school communities in support of increased student achievement and learning.

Traditionally, college- and university-based educational leadership programs have emphasized management and administrative issues rather than

curricular and instructional issues. The paramount nature of teaching and learning — the business of schools — has never been stressed. Recent findings from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) reaffirm the assertions the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration made more than 15 years ago: There is a need for better systems to support the recruitment and development of principals. SREB's report, *Good Principals Are the Key to Successful Schools*, exhorts the states to take “luck” out of the process and to

establish a leadership development system that produces principals who:

- Understand which school and classroom practices improve student achievement;
- Know how to work with teachers to bring about positive change;
- Support teachers in carrying out instructional practices that help all students succeed; and,
- Can prepare accomplished teachers to become principals.<sup>21</sup>

#### QUESTION 4: WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS FOR ACTION?

##### CHANGING POLICY

During the early 1990s, several states mandated policies to make fundamental changes in the structure and content of their state's leadership preparation programs. Through targeted policy reform processes, these states changed how and where they prepared educational leaders and began to develop more coherent educational leadership development systems.

In North Carolina, the reform process was initiated in the state legislature. Changes were made in licensure, stringent criteria for the approval of principal preparation programs

were adopted and a rigorous review of all such programs was undertaken. This process ensured that some preparation programs would be dropped and the state would be left with high-quality programs serving appropriate geographic regions throughout the state.

In Mississippi, the State Superintendent of Education initiated the reform process. His office controlled teacher and administrator program approval, but the university programs were under the general authority of another state agency, Institutions of Higher Learning, or of the

boards of trustees of private colleges and universities. The Chief created a special entity — the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, Licensure and Development — that developed rigorous, research-based criteria for the State Board of Education.

These reform efforts incorporated redesigns into formal state policies that reflected a reconceptualization of the administrator role as one focused on leadership for learning. Each state required interested higher education institutions to apply for program approval, absent

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<sup>21</sup> O'Neill, K., Fry, B., Hill, D., and Bottoms, G. (2003). *Good Principals Are the Key to Successful Schools: Six Strategies to Prepare More Good Principals*. Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board.

which program accreditation and professional licensure would be denied. The linchpin of these reforms was an objective external program review by a panel that made approval recommendations to the state's most influential policymakers. Such strategies gave external credibility to the reform process and, equally important, gave state officials a heat shield. The external panels' findings and recommendations led to state decisions to approve, delay or deny program approval. The overall result was a reduction in the number of accredited preparation programs and an improvement in the ones that continued.

More recent efforts to take a policy-focused approach to changing how a state prepares its educational leaders and to create more coherent educational leadership development systems are being promoted by the work of the Wallace Foundation through its *Leaders Count* initiative. The Foundation created the State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP), a consortium of national organizations serving state policymakers; the Council

of Chief State School Officers manages and supports the consortium.<sup>22</sup> SAELP awarded three-year grants of \$250,000 to 15 states to support the analysis of existing state-level policies and practices that enhanced or impeded the development of educational leadership. The states are charged with implementing policies that address education and professional learning; licensure, certification and program accreditation; professional practice conditions; governance structures; business priorities and practices; and diversification of the superintendent and principal candidate pool.

In Iowa, SAELP support is enabling the Director of the Department of Education to lead an effort focused on reforming administrator preparation programs. As in North Carolina and Mississippi, preparation programs in Iowa are now required to apply for re-approval. These programs, as well as new applications, are assessed against rigorous new criteria that reflect the roles and responsibilities of today's administrators. University and college faculty

members in Iowa are restructuring programs with the full knowledge that approval (and personal survival) will be predicated on changing traditional offerings to the satisfaction of the state's most authoritative policymakers.

Several important lessons emerge from such statewide reform actions:

- State policy levers that are part of a well-conceived and supported plan of reform can prompt change more effectively than can a reliance on market or professional incentives.
- The adoption of formal policy alone does not guarantee change. Implementation must be accompanied by complementary elements such as formal program review, technical assistance and monitoring.
- While the unit of change is the individual institution, the state can play an effective role by encouraging collaboration instead of competition among institutions.

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<sup>22</sup> SAELP members include: the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the Education Commission of the States.

## CHANGING PROGRAMS

University-based programs that get the highest marks for preparing principals who can meet the demands of the job in the 21st century are often viewed as deviations from the norm. Typically, such programs are cohort-based and serve between 20 and 25 students who enter the program at the same time and are bonded into a community of learners. Extensive clinical activities and field-based, mentored internships integrate the practical lessons of academic coursework and ground them in the day-to-day realities of schools. Students are given opportunities to solve real problems in real schools.

Faculty and other program staff work together, often with school district administrators, to develop and integrate the program in ways that enable students to master identified critical competencies. “[Such programs] . . . tend to be more demanding of participants and to have more careful selection and screening processes. . . . [They] are more coherent and focused and pay attention to the sequencing and scheduling of courses, and have strong collaboration with area districts.”<sup>23</sup>

There are some excellent principal preparation programs in existence. They are anchored by what the research tells us

about teaching and learning and about the role of the principal as an instructional leader. These programs strive to prepare individuals who can meet the challenges of school leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Illustrative principal preparation programs are reported here in four categories that denote the change strategy being used: Reform Programs in Universities – Inside Colleges of Education; Reform Programs in Universities – Outside Colleges of Education; Partnerships between School Districts and/or Other Organizations; and Nontraditional Providers. A fifth category, Principal Professional Development, provides a snapshot of selected programs using similar change strategies to improve principal professional development activities.

### REFORM PROGRAMS IN UNIVERSITIES — INSIDE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

When a diverse group of individuals was asked to identify innovative university-based principal preparation programs, three programs were mentioned more frequently than were others: *Delta State University*, *East Tennessee State University* and *Wichita State University*. The *Delta State University* program, inaugurated in 1998, was developed with assistance from a

panel of national experts. The focus is on preparing future principals to lead schools in the rural regions of the Mississippi Delta. Fifteen prospective principals are selected to participate each year. While some teachers apply on their own, most applicants are nominated by their employing school districts as individuals of “high promise.” Participants serve as interns under mentor principals for one year while simultaneously attending classes. Students who are on “paid sabbaticals” from school districts are required to work in the sponsoring school district after completing the program.

All students in the master’s degree program in educational leadership at *East Tennessee State University* move through the degree program as part of a cohort group. Students are selected on the basis of academic credentials, experience and leadership potential. They are required to complete an extensive, focused field experience as part of the program. Students also develop a professional portfolio, the presentation and committee review of which serves as a culminating experience. Development of the portfolio provides each student with opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation. The portfolio also serves to spotlight skills and

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<sup>23</sup> Jackson, B. L., and Kelley, C. (2001, September). *Exceptional and Innovative Programs in Educational Leadership*. Paper commissioned by the National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership Preparation, Racine Wisconsin, p. 7.



accomplishments that will be of interest to future employers. Students are assessed through such strategies as written examinations, videotaped performances, materials development, research projects, and oral presentations.

The state of Kansas is moving toward competency-based courses in educational administration. *Wichita State University's* innovative program leads to building-level licensure and a master's degree in educational administration. Students begin the program with a cohort that becomes their "learning family" during the two-year program. They begin to work "in the real world" of school leadership from the start. With the guidance of a mentor (usually the student's building principal), they assess their own strengths and weaknesses and identify strengths and weaknesses in their school. Students capitalize on strengths and work to correct weaknesses — individually and organizationally — throughout the two-year program. The program requires 33 credit hours of coursework plus a comprehensive examination during the last semester of enrollment. The required curriculum, delivered through seminars and complementary practica, is focused on educational leadership and school finance; interpersonal relations and supervision; school law and personnel management; curriculum and learning theory;

school closing and school opening; and diversity and social justice.

Three additional university-based programs conducting business in different ways were brought to our attention: the Principal Licensure Program (PLP), Antioch McGregor University; the Principal Leadership Institute (PLI), University of California, Berkeley; and the First Ring Leadership Academy, Cleveland State University. The PLP at *Antioch McGregor University* is designed for educators who (1) want to be school principals in the state of Ohio, (2) have a master's degree from an accredited regional college or university and (3) meet the state's requirements for licensure. It is a reality-based program focused on four themes: establishing trust, empowering stakeholders, reframing school structures, and creating new opportunities. The collaborative approach combines Antioch's tradition of addressing intellectual, emotional and ethical development with organizational management skills. Students learn through real challenges, interaction with successful school and district leaders, and guided inquiry into real school problems.

The *Kenneth E. Behring Center for Educational Improvement* at the *University of California, Berkeley* houses the PLI, an initiative to prepare a new generation of leaders for urban schools in the San

Francisco Bay Area. The PLI assumes that administrators should be educational leaders first and foremost, knowledgeable about instructional alternatives and able to work collegially with teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Students become familiar with the broadest possible range of reforms and are able to understand the processes of change in order to implement reforms. Strong relationships with area school districts facilitate field experiences, provide feedback on the program, and ensure a strong link between university coursework and urban school reality.

In a one-of-a-kind collaboration, the 13 school districts surrounding the city of Cleveland joined forces with *Cleveland State University* to create The First Ring Leadership Academy for aspiring school principals. Participants hold various positions in first ring school districts and have identified their desire to become school leaders. The non-traditional curriculum is performance-based and wrapped around the ISLLC standards. The field-based application of best practices occurs under the critical guidance of an exemplary principal. The Academy has special authorization from the Ohio Department of Education to serve as an alternative route to principal licensure. A Masters degree + the Academy + the

successful completion of the Praxis = grounds for licensure. Twelve graduate credits of traditional educational administration courses are waived!

**REFORM PROGRAMS IN UNIVERSITIES — OUTSIDE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION**

The principal preparation program at the *University of Central Arkansas* is now housed in the Graduate School of Management, Leadership and Administration. It is a performance-based program that is aligned with ISLLC standards and focused on providing prospective administrators with the skills necessary to effectively lead schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In a bold innovation designed to meet new demands, *Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Camden*, has created a new strand in its public administration program, Educational Policy and Leadership. Fifteen Camden school district teachers, selected by the school district, will participate in a three-year program emphasizing policy analysis, leadership strategies, communications skills and systemic school reform. The program includes an internship mentored by a Rutgers faculty member. Graduates will receive the MPA degree and fulfill the requirements for a certificate of eligibility as a school principal in New Jersey.

**PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND/OR OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

The partnership between the *University of North Texas* and the *Dallas Independent School District* is setting a high bar for principal preparation programs and for partnerships. As a starting point, the partners agreed on seven qualities that the leaders produced by the preparation program would possess (see Box 1). The district taps individuals of high promise, selecting teams of teachers who can meet the university's admission requirements and who have the potential to become outstanding school leaders. The two- to four-member teams use their schools as learning laboratories, conducting site-based projects and activities designed to lead to school improvement.

*The Holyoke Public School System* is partnering with the *University of Massachusetts* to

develop a leadership development program whose ultimate goals are to enhance student outcomes and the satisfaction of various community stakeholders. Key interventions include a two-year, onsite, NCATE-approved research- and problem-based program leading to a Massachusetts certificate for 18 aspiring principals (and a three-year professional development program in which every principal and assistant principal will participate on a monthly basis during the school year). Holyoke principals will serve as mentors for certification candidates. The U.S. Department of Education's School Leadership Program provides funds to support this initiative.

**NONTRADITIONAL PROVIDERS**

Currently, universities and colleges prepare the bulk of principals, but the times are changing. Reflecting a trend in

**Box 1: UNT–Dallas ISD Partnership  
7 Qualities of Leaders**

[www.sreb.org/main/Leadership/pubs/Leadership\\_newsletter\\_F2002.pdf](http://www.sreb.org/main/Leadership/pubs/Leadership_newsletter_F2002.pdf)

- Support rigorous academic standards and instructional methods that motivate and engage students.
- Make meaningful connections between abstract parts of the curriculum and the real world.
- Create and manage a system of support that enables all students to meet high standards and motivates faculty to have high expectations for all students.
- Set priorities for change that can be measured and managed realistically.
- Create a personal, caring school environment that helps students meet higher standards.
- Apply research knowledge to improve school practices.
- Use technology for management and instructional purposes.

all of graduate education, not just in the field of educational leadership, non-traditional providers have emerged to meet new demands. These new providers are offering principal preparation and professional development programs through new models and using delivery mechanisms that many think are more appropriate to the needs of principals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Two such providers have achieved national recognition.

*New Leaders for New Schools* (NLNS) (see Box 2), is a principal preparation program currently operating in New York City, Chicago and in the San Francisco Bay Area (two additional program sites, Baltimore and Washington, D.C., will be operational in the fall of 2004). It is focused on recruiting talented individuals who (1) have a diverse but proven set of skills, strengths and successes and (2) can become successful urban school principals. NLNS wants to create a pathway for principal recruitment, preparation and ongoing support that will serve as a model for school districts, universities and other providers. Partnerships with National Louis University (Chicago and San Francisco) and Baruch College (New York) ensure that the NLNS participants are certified.

### Box 2: New Leaders for New Schools

<http://www.nlins.org>

NLNS is focused on improving education for every child by recruiting and developing talented, individuals who will become successful principals in urban public schools. NLNS wants to create a pathway for principal recruitment, preparation and ongoing support that will serve as a model for school districts, universities and others.

The program operates in three locations (New York, Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area) (sites in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. will be operational in the fall of 2004) and recruits talented individuals with a diverse but proven set of skills, strengths and successes. Participants receive a full fellowship and living stipend. Aspiring principals are trained in an intensive summer institute developed and taught by leading practitioners and academics. This provides an essential foundation and toolkit of skills needed to lead instructional improvements, manage effective organizational change and school operations and engage parents and the outside community. Participants use these skills in a full-time yearlong internship guided by an exceptional mentor principal.

The program helps place graduates in urban public schools and provides them with ongoing support, networking and a community of peers. Working with National Louis University and Baruch College, graduates of the program are awarded formal, standard certification in their state. Applicants without a master's degree are not guaranteed administrative certification until they take nine credits of pre-determined coursework at their own expense.

The *Principal Residency Network* (PRN), (see Box 3 on next page) is based on the belief that school leadership can best be taught and learned in the schoolhouse. The program is individualized to meet the needs of aspiring principals and is dedicated to changing the conditions of work by designing and then partnering with small, personalized schools. The PRN relies on a careful selection process of both aspiring principals and the mentor principals with whom they work closely. Careful attention also is

paid to attract potential leaders of color. The program consists of individual work, group work and the demonstration of one's work in different ways. Aspiring principals document their efforts and create extensive portfolios. Performance is assessed through portfolios, public exhibitions, mentor narratives and a cycle of feedback. Certification is provided through arrangements with a growing number of colleges and universities.

**Box 3: The Big Picture Company – The Principal Residency Network (PRN)**  
<http://www.bigpicture.org>

Dennis Littky and Elliott Washor worked with Roland Barth, founder of Harvard Principals' Center, and exemplary principals from across the country to design the PRN to train principals in the schoolhouse. The program is individualized to meet the needs of aspiring principals and is dedicated to changing the conditions of work by designing and partnering with small, personalized schools where the rewards of leadership can be realized.

The program carefully selects both aspiring principals and mentor principals, with attention to people of color. The selection process involves the aspiring principal and requires an understanding and commitment on the part of a mentor principal, superintendent and the district that the applicant is heading for a principalship.

Consequential school-based projects are at the core of the program and contribute to the school while fostering the individual's leadership learning. The six focus areas are: moral courage; moving the vision; instructional leadership; relationships and communications; management through flexibility; and efficiency and public support. These areas correspond to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and to various state competencies. The program is comprised of individual work, group work and the showing of one's work in different ways. Aspiring principals document their efforts and create extensive portfolios. Performance is assessed through portfolios, public exhibitions, mentor narratives and a cycle of feedback.

Initially, Lewis and Clark College granted certification to aspiring principals who completed the program. Currently, Northeastern University, Johnson & Wales University, Rhode Island College, Providence College and Keene State College also put their college seals on the program.

Both of these highly visible, nationally known, non-traditional principal preparation programs have arrangements with various universities and colleges to certify their graduates. Resolving the certification issue puts them in a strong position to challenge university-based programs on several fronts: entrance requirements; curriculum; and duration, focus and location of training.

Professional associations at the state and national levels, as well as other established organizations, have taken on new roles: they are new providers of principal preparation programs. For example, the state of Massachusetts leads the way in

creating a statewide system of principal preparation programs that includes established traditional programs run by graduate level institutions of higher education and programs run by non-degree granting organizations such as administrator professional associations, educational collaboratives and school districts. The nontraditional programs are not required to partner with colleges or universities. The *Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association* (MESPA), the longest standing of the nontraditional programs, runs the MESPA Certification Program. Participants are involved in study and practice experiences that

include four curriculum blocks and an internship/practicum. The program can be completed in 11 to 18 months, depending on the participant's schedule and initiative. Affiliated with *Northeastern University*, this program is one of 11 preparation programs run by non-degree granting organizations that have been approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

The *Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association*, the *Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development* and *Teachers 21* sponsor an innovative program that is a rigorous, comprehensive course built on the knowledge base on effective teaching and learning and the best practices of effective instructional and organizational leadership. Designed with the practicing educator in mind, the program includes summer and weekend coursework, a practicum, a performance assessment, and beginning administrator induction. Highly skilled educational leaders teach the curriculum modules, while school mentors and program supervisors support participants' work in the practicum. The program begins in June and concludes the following May. (Box 4 lists all Administrator Licensure Programs sponsored by non-degree granting organizations in Massachusetts as of July 2003.)

**Box 4: Massachusetts Department of Education (MDE)  
Administrator Licensure Programs - July 2003**

(non-degree granting organizations operating with formal approval and/or informal approval (one-year agreement) to recommend candidates for licensure)

**Principal**

Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA):  
Springfield Public Schools  
Merrimack Education Center  
Boston Public Schools, School Leadership  
The Education Collaborative (TEC)  
EDCO Collaborative

**Principal, Supervisor/Director**

Leadership Licensure Program, Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association (MSSAA), Teachers 21, and Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (MASCD)

**Principal/Special Education Administrator**

South Coast Educational Collaborative

**School Business Administrator**

Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative

**Other**

MDE-sponsored Administrative Apprenticeship Pilot Program  
(presented by Framingham Public Schools and the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative)

In February 2003, the *American Association of School Administrators* (AASA) announced a partnership with a successful online-training corporation, *Canter & Associates*, a division of Sylvan Learning, and with a nationally ranked university, *Vanderbilt University*, to prepare an online principal preparation program that incorporates new standards. The two-year program will organize participants into small cohorts of 15-20 participants and take them through a curriculum based largely on the ISLLC standards. For example, the first course of the program deals with effective learning for all students and modules on recent research on

learning, effective teaching and the barriers to learner-center teaching. This program is not intended to serve those who are simply looking for a way to increase their salaries. Joseph Murphy, Professor of Education at Vanderbilt University, and Willis Hawley, former Dean, College of Education, University of Maryland, are leading a team of prominent administrators and scholars in developing a "world class" curriculum. The program will award graduates a master's degree in educational administration and the program organizers hope the degree will be accepted for licensure through reciprocity agreements. The curriculum will be tested this fall

and hopefully launched in the spring of 2004.

To education leaders and policymakers alike, web-based principal preparation programs probably sound far fetched or a little like a Harry Potter novel. However, a preliminary search identified no fewer than eight online educational administration degree programs designed to meet state licensing and content standards and to prepare individuals for the principalship. Universities providing programs that rely primarily on 21<sup>st</sup> century tools and resources are a diverse mix of institutions and include: University of Phoenix Online, Walden University, Jones International University, University of Cincinnati, Capella University (the first online university to receive state approval for K-12 educational administrator preparation), Emporia State University, Nova Southeastern University, University of Massachusetts Lowell and Electronic University Consortium (EUC) of South Dakota.

As stakeholders look closely at their state's educational leadership system, they will note obvious distinctions between traditional programs and those offered by the new providers. The demand for change in all of advanced or graduate education is being driven by the need to respond quickly to new

workplace needs. Nontraditional programs do not have the traditions of academic institutions and are freer to develop innovative courses and curricula. Personnel can be brought on board irrespective of academic rank or degree. Income can be returned to program operation instead of siphoned off for other institutional needs. It remains to be seen whether universities will embrace needed changes in order to create new ways of doing business.<sup>24</sup>

Patrick Forsyth, the Williams Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Oklahoma, observes that, “If university leadership programs expect to prosper in education’s high-stakes environment, they have to convince skeptical school systems that they can produce graduates who can lead schools to greater levels of achievement.”<sup>25</sup> The University of Oklahoma is one of 11 universities participating in a Wallace Foundation-funded initiative based at SREB and focused on the redesign of school leadership preparation programs by working with diverse partners including faculty, business leaders, exemplary principals, state education departments and school districts.

#### PRINCIPAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Many of the same strategies being used to improve traditional university-based principal preparation programs are also being used to improve principal professional development programs. New providers such as The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) are working on site with practicing principals. NCEE works through its National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) to help school districts prepare practicing principals to be outstanding instructional leaders in high-performance, standards-based schools. The program helps principals meet challenges such as thinking strategically, sharing responsibility for leading the school, getting staff and parents on board, implementing fully aligned standards and instructional systems and managing for results. Every NISL partner—whether a school system, a university or an education association—selects a team of local educators (from 4 to 12 individuals) to learn the NISL curriculum and then teach it to local principals. The core of the leadership curriculum is

taught during summer institutes. The first is a three-week session taught by NISL staff. Leadership teams work through units on strategic thinking, standards-based instructional systems, the principal as school designer, and other topics. The teams then return home to plan their training of local principals, which combines face-to-face instruction with state-of-the-art interactive Web-based learning.

Partnerships between school districts, colleges and universities and other entities are helping ensure that practicing principals are, in fact, instructional leaders. Three programs funded in part by the U.S. Department of Education’s School Leadership Program illustrate how more focused and targeted partnership arrangements are helping to change the nature of principal professional development.

The *University of Kentucky* is working collaboratively with *Morehead State University* and the *Pike County (KY) Schools* to develop and refine a model for improved leadership to ensure learning for at-risk students in rural school districts. The project, serving a cohort of 15 principals and/or individuals certified for the principalship, is focused on three themes:

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<sup>24</sup> Haiger, J. D. *Defining Graduate Education*, 55th Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools. St. Louis, MO, April 1999. [www.smsu.edu/mags/1999mags/Haeger.htm](http://www.smsu.edu/mags/1999mags/Haeger.htm).

<sup>25</sup> Forsyth, P. (2002, Fall). Uneasy Collaborators Must Learn to Redesign Leadership Preparation Together. *Universities in the Lead: Redesigning Leadership Preparation for Student Achievement*. Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board.

visionary practices, collaboration and school-based action research. Key objectives include establishing professional networks and career pipelines for the identification, preparation and ongoing development of school leaders; assuring ongoing learning for aspiring and practicing school leaders; offering situated learning and job-embedded development through mentoring by practicing principals; and assessing and exposing practicing principals' needs and challenges in assuring improved learning. The three-year program has the potential to provide a model for preparing, developing and re-culturing school leadership to assure learning for at-risk students in rural school districts.

The *Austin (TX) Independent School District* is working with the *University of Texas, Austin* and the *Texas Education Agency's Region XIII Service Center* to assess all district assistant principals and principals on the ISLLC standards. If a school leader shows a need for improvement on one or more standards, he/she receives intensive professional development assistance. Other assistance provided includes a focus on developing school leaders who can speak Spanish and understand the Hispanic culture, and intensive mentoring for first-year principals and/or for those new to the state of Texas.

The *Leadership for Learning Project* is a partnership between three urban New Jersey School Districts (Newark, Paterson and Trenton) and the *Center for Evidence-Based Education, New American Schools*. The goal is to build the capacity of both existing principals and vice principals to lead their colleagues in their work toward improved student performance. The program addresses participants' learning needs through a combination of targeted workshops, onsite leadership reviews, job-embedded practice assignments, mentoring and a dedicated Web-based program of participative inquiry.

Gathering a state's programs and resources under one umbrella is a strategy some states are using to strengthen principal professional development. In 2002, the state of Georgia created the *Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement*, a broad-based partnership devoted to the success of Georgia's educational leaders in meeting elevated expectations for student achievement and school performance. The partnership is comprised of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, business leaders, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, state government officials and K–12 educators.

The Institute's funding base is broad and includes the Wallace and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations, state government and business partners.

The Institute provides education and development for educational leaders and is working to research, define and institutionalize a "charter" leadership preparation program for aspiring principals that is job embedded and that operates outside existing higher education structures as an impetus to changing leadership preparation programs. The laboratories for this work are in the Atlanta Public Schools and at Georgia State University. The instructional design will ensure that leaders both "get it" and can "do it." The Institute has put Georgia on the road to creating a statewide system through which school leaders can be developed and supported.

The *Arkansas Leadership Academy*, established in 1991, is a nationally recognized statewide partnership of 44 organizations: universities; professional associations; educational cooperatives; state agencies; corporations and foundations. It is an innovative academy preparing educational leaders who can develop high performing learning communities throughout

Arkansas. Using research and best practices, the Academy designs creative and innovative approaches to establish learning communities in public schools by developing human resources and by modeling and advocating collaboration, support, shared decision making, team learning, risk taking, and problem solving. Partners commit to changing their organizations to support system improvement. The *Academy's Principal Institute*, offered through four residential sessions over a one-year timeframe, is focused on increasing the capacity of principals to build professional learning communities in Arkansas schools.

Traditionally, other countries rely less on institutions of higher education for the preparation of leaders. In England, for example, the *National College for School Leadership* (see Box 5) was created as a new partner on the nation's education stage. The College, funded by the Department of Education and Employment, is designed to provide a single national focus

for school leadership development and research, to be a driving force for world class leadership in the schools and to provide and promote excellence. Today, the College has three core areas of activity: national leadership development programs; research and development; and online learning, networks and

information. The College's main responsibility is to develop and oversee a coherent national training and development framework. This get-it-together, one-stop stopping center for school leaders is an idea from which the United States might take a few cues.

**Box 5: National College for School Leadership  
Department of Education and Employment, England  
Serving School Leaders – From Start to Finish  
<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/>**

At about the same time the United States developed the ISLLC standards (1997), England announced plans to create a National College for School Leadership (NCSL), an entity responsible for developing school leaders (*headteachers aka principals*) and supporting them throughout their careers. The College has three core areas of activity: national and partnership leadership development programs (National Professional Qualification for Headship – NPOH, Headteacher Induction Program – HIP, Leadership Program for Serving Headteachers - LPSH); research and development; and online learning, networks and information.

The NPOH is the qualification for aspiring Headteachers (principals) and is the benchmark for entry into the profession. The program prepares candidates for the challenging but rewarding role of headship. It offers stimulating, professional training that is focused on candidates' development needs and underpinned by the National Standards for Headteachers.

The HIP program is available to newly appointed headteachers in their first substantive headship. It provides a grant for training and development that can be used over a 3-year period. Key elements of the program include needs assessment, coaching, mentoring, and visioning. Individuals also can choose to take modules focused on issues such as raising pupils' achievement, leading schools facing challenging circumstances, inclusion and working with the governing body.

Experienced and practicing headteachers are served through the LPSH, a program that provides them with a chance to focus on how their leadership influences standards in schools. Another leadership development program, The Ithaka Leadership Program, enables headteachers to understand and make more effective use of their skills. This program is available only to heads with at least seven years of experience.



## A NEW GENERATION OF SCHOOL LEADERS

*"When ... expectations meet a system where the incentives for change are few and far between, the times demand bold solutions infused with large doses of imagination, creativity and inventiveness."*<sup>26</sup>

The bad news is that a radically new generation of school leadership is needed and the preparation programs of today are not yet up to the task of equipping these leaders for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, the good news is that we know much of what we need to know in order to address the situation with optimism.

New conceptualizations of the school administrator as the "leader of student learning" have opened the doors to changes in practice and preparation. Years of critique and experimentation have produced blueprints for change in preparation programs. There are good models of effective programs operating across the country that can serve as guides to others committed to change. And, many states have come to appreciate the critical role they can and must play in providing policy leverage as well as implementation frameworks in support of reform.

To recruit and prepare the principals a state wants and needs, policy and program leaders must know how their state answers the four core questions raised in this Report: How do state policies shape the

talent pool? What is the current condition of leadership preparation? Why is change needed? What are the options for action? Armed with the answers, states can continue to work to create educational leadership development systems that will ensure success.

While there are no simple solutions to the challenges facing states as they attempt to create better systems to support school leadership, policy and institutional leaders are pursuing new pathways to resolve the problems they and their constituents and customers identify. Equally important, they are strengthening existing practices and innovations that show promise of future success.

We know that little consequential or enduring change occurs in the absence of a well-crafted and well-disseminated bipartisan vision of education — one that anchors, supports and guides reforms. If our nation's efforts to implement the No Child Left Behind Act have taught us anything, it is that the principal's role in determining school quality and student achievement is decisive and that most incumbent and

newly minted administrators are poorly prepared to fill that role.

To amend this troubling state of affairs, policy and institutional leaders must demand that colleges and universities be innovative in their principal preparation programs. They must welcome and support new providers and they must regulate their entrance into the marketplace in ways that encourage a maximum of healthy innovation and competitiveness while concurrently encouraging novel collaborations that combine the best of what the different organizations have to offer. Policy and institutional leaders also must encourage all parts of the educational leadership development system to work together to make the system more coherent and, more important, to ensure that the system produces exemplary instructional leaders.

First and foremost, however, policy and institutional leaders must remember that the business of schools is teaching and learning, that all education policies must support student achievement<sup>27</sup> and that all preparation programs must develop school leaders who can provide instructional leadership.

<sup>26</sup> National Policy Board for Educational Administration. (2002, May). *Recognizing and Encouraging Exemplary Leadership in America's Schools: A Proposal to Establish a System of Advanced Certification for Administrators*. Arlington, VA: Author. p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Broad, E. (2003, April). *School Boards: Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution*. Paraphrase of comment at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Jacqueline P. Danzberger Memorial Lecture, Institute for Educational Leadership and the National School Boards Association,

## ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP



Since 1964, IEL has been at the heart of an impartial, dynamic, nationwide network of people and organizations from many walks of life who share a passionate conviction that excellent education is critical to nurturing healthy individuals, families, and communities. IEL's mission is to help build the capacity of people and organizations in education and related fields to work together across policies, programs, and sectors to achieve better futures for all children and youth. To that end, IEL works to: build the capacity to lead; share promising practices; translate our own and others' research into suggestions for improvement; and share results in print and in person.

IEL believes that all children and youth have a birthright: the opportunity and the support to grow, learn, and become contributing members of our democratic society. Through our work, we enable stakeholders to learn from one another and to collaborate closely—across boundaries of race and culture, discipline, economic interest, political stance, unit of government, or any other area of difference—to achieve better results for every youngster from pre-K through high school and on into postsecondary education. IEL sparks, then helps to build and nurture, networks that pursue dialogue and take action on educational problems. We provide services in three program areas: Developing and Supporting Leaders; Strengthening School-Family-Community Connections; and Connecting and Improving Policies and Systems that Serve Children and Youth.

1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20036

Telephone: 202-822-8405 • Fax: 202-872-4050

E-mail: [iel@iel.org](mailto:iel@iel.org) • Web site: <http://www.iel.org>

## ABOUT THE ILLINOIS EDUCATION RESEARCH COUNCIL



The Illinois Education Research Council (IERC) was established in 2000 to provide Illinois with objective and reliable evidence for P-16 education policy making and program development. It is housed at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. With the guidance of its Advisory Board, the Council initiates research and policy analyses that address issues of critical importance to Illinois as it strives to build a seamless education enterprise.

The Illinois Education Research Council publishes research reports and issues analyses that are written by IERC staff or commissioned by the IERC. It also hosts an annual Focus on Illinois Education Research Symposium.

This document was commissioned as part of IERC's *Issues in Education* series (IERC-2003-I-3). It provides a national perspective on school leadership issues and principal preparation programs. We hope that Illinois policy makers and practitioners will find the information useful as they continue their own work to influence the quality of school leadership.

Box 1064, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Illinois 62026

Telephone: 618 650 2840 • Fax: 618 650 2425

E-mail: [ierc@siue.edu](mailto:ierc@siue.edu) • Web site: <http://ierc.siue.edu>





**Institute for Educational Leadership**

1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20036

Telephone: 202-822-8405 • Fax: 202-872-4050

E-mail: [iel@iel.org](mailto:iel@iel.org) • Web site: <http://www.iel.org>



**Illinois Education Research Council**

SIUE Box 1064, 0107 Alumni Hall, Edwardsville, IL 62026-1064

Telephone: 618-650-2840 • Fax: 618-650-2425

E-mail: [ierc@siue.edu](mailto:ierc@siue.edu) • Web site: <http://ierc.siue.edu>