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# **Illinois School Leader Task Force**

## **Report to the Illinois General Assembly**

**February 2008**



February 13, 2008

Honorable Members of the 95<sup>th</sup> Illinois General Assembly:

The Illinois School Leader Task Force is pleased to submit this report. The document presents the recommendations of the Task Force, formed in response to House Joint Resolution HJ0066.

The quality of school leadership is a key factor in improving student achievement, second only to instructional quality, which leadership strongly influences. As such, it is essential that Illinois focus attention and resources to strengthen school leaders' capacity to improve classroom instruction, teacher knowledge and skills, and student performance.

The work of the Task Force builds on the August 2006 report of the Commission on School Leader Preparation entitled *School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change*. The Illinois Task Force was created to assess the findings and recommendations of the *Blueprint* and develop a sequence of strategic steps based on, but not limited to, the measures it recommends.

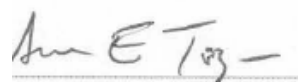
Over a four-month period, the Task Force brought together many of the State's most knowledgeable and influential educational leaders, from PreK-12 schools, higher education, business and state agencies. Despite the diversity of the organizations represented and the consequent differences in viewpoints on any specific recommendation, the report is submitted with the unanimous endorsement of the Task Force members.

From October 2007 through January 2008, Task Force members:

- Examined Illinois data collected by external sources, including a Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) state benchmarking report and an Illinois Council of Professors of Education Administration (ICPEA) gap analysis, as well as other data sources;
- Examined existing research on the impact of school leadership on student learning, as well as national reports on the state of school leadership preparation today and the need to strengthen preparation programs to improve student learning in schools; and
- Considered existing and emerging federal, state, and district policies that inform how leadership preparation may contribute to a leadership continuum for aspiring, new, and experienced school leaders.

The members are confident that the work of this Task Force will contribute to strategic action that will strengthen school leadership and measurably improve student learning in urban, suburban and rural districts throughout the State of Illinois.

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Tozer  
Task Force Chair

## **Illinois School Leader Task Force Members**

Dr. Steve Tozer, Task Force Chair, College of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago

The Honorable Deanna Demuzio, Illinois State Senator, Carlinville  
The Honorable Michael Smith, State Representative, Canton

Ms. Judy Erwin, Executive Director, Illinois Board of Higher Education  
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Mr. Jo Anderson, Jr., Executive Director, Illinois Education Association  
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Dr. Deborah Curtis, Dean, College of Education, Illinois State University  
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Mr. Edward Geppert, Jr., President, Illinois Federation of Teachers  
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Mr. Brad Hutchison, Superintendent, Olympia Community Unit District #16  
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Ms. Debbie Meisner-Bertauski, Associate Director, Illinois Board of Higher Education  
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Dr. John Murphy, President, Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration  
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Ms. Gail Ward, Chief Officer, Office of Principal Preparation & Development, Chicago Public Schools

## **Support Staff**

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## **Acknowledgements of Support**

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# Illinois School Leader Task Force

## Schedule of Meetings

### **October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007**

Doubletree Hotel  
10 Brickyard Drive  
Bloomington, Illinois 61701  
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

### **November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

Chicago Public Schools  
125 South Clark, Chicago, IL 60603  
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

### **November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

Illinois Principals Association  
2940 Baker Drive  
Springfield, IL 62703  
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

### **December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007 - CANCELLED (Weather)**

Illinois State University  
Bone Student Center, Old Main Room  
Normal, Illinois 61790  
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

### **January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

Chicago Public Schools,  
221 N. LaSalle, Suite 1550, Chicago, IL 60601  
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

### **January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008**

Illinois Principals Association  
2940 Baker Drive  
Springfield, IL 62703  
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

### **January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

Illinois State University  
Bone Student Center, Founders' Suite  
Normal, Illinois 61790  
9:30 – 1:00 p.m.

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# Illinois School Leader Preparation Task Force Recommendations

## Background

Since the Effective Schools research of the 1970s, school leadership has been increasingly recognized as a critical variable in improving student learning, but state policies and principal preparation programs have not responded effectively to that finding. During the 1990s and into the new millennium, studies commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, the Danforth Foundation, the Broad Foundation, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Southern Regional Education Board and others have called for new approaches to school leader preparation that would demonstrate impact on student learning in schools.

**In August, 2006, the Commission on School Leader Preparation in Illinois Colleges and Universities prepared an analysis and set of recommendations for improving PreK-12 school leader preparation in Illinois**, and submitted it to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Like the national reports, the Illinois report argued that principal preparation is a key component in improving student learning in schools. Upon receiving the Commission's report, *School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change*, the Illinois Board of Higher Education joined with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Governor's office to initiate a joint resolution in the Illinois General Assembly. This resolution created a Task Force charged with moving the *Blueprint* agenda forward. The Illinois School Leader Task Force was formed in October 2007 to execute the following charge:

Prepare a report to the General Assembly, the Office of the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the Board of Higher Education that details an action plan for strategically improving school leadership preparation in Illinois, based on, but not limited to, the measures detailed in the report of the Commission, *School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change*.

**The Task Force met six times from October 31, 2007 through January 30, 2008 and considered extensive resource materials in its deliberations.** Attendance was strong, debate was vigorous, and multiple drafts of the report were critiqued and revised before a final report could be produced. It is understood by all members of the Task Force that the report is a product of the group, and that not every individual necessarily supports each and every detail of our recommendations. The Task Force sends forward this Final Report, however, with a sense of urgency. ***Improvement of student learning in Illinois schools requires high quality leadership that establishes in every school a culture of high expectations and collaboration among all partners in support of student learning.*** The recommendations in this report, if implemented, will make important contributions to the quality of that leadership.

# Staying Focused on Student Learning: The Need for a Systemic Approach to Leadership Preparation

*Twenty-five years after the modern era of school reform was launched with the National Commission Report, *A Nation at Risk* (1983), hundreds of Illinois schools serving thousands of students are not showing acceptable levels of student learning. While some schools are performing well above the socio-economic “predictors” of their community environments, many others in similar or identical environments are lagging far behind.*

**Illinois schools have many things to be proud of, but our students are losing ground against the rest of the nation on key indicators of student achievement.** The most recent (2007) results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress show that only 32.2% of Illinois fourth-graders and 29.8% of eighth graders are proficient in reading. Not only are 29 states above Illinois in each of those categories, but Illinois lost ground against the average gains of the rest of the states over the past four years, 2003-2007. In fact, Illinois lost ground against national averages over the past four years not only in fourth and eighth grade reading, but also in fourth and eighth grade mathematics—all four of the student achievement measures reported in a current study by *Quality Counts* (January 2008). It is little wonder that Illinois received a grade of D+ for student achievement in the *Quality Counts* report. This is particularly frustrating when Illinois has invested many millions of dollars in school improvement initiatives over the past four years.

**If State resources are to be used in ways that improve student learning, leadership matters.** Within any Illinois school, the school principal influences, for better or worse, who gets hired to teach and whether they stay; the degree to which teachers feel they are members of a professional learning community focused on student learning; whether teachers are held accountable to high expectations for the quality of classroom instruction; how well the school curriculum is aligned across grade levels and subject matter; and many other things that we know influence student learning. It is reasonable to believe that student learning in any low-performing school in Illinois can be improved through high quality, learning-focused school leadership. Why is it that not every low-performing school in Illinois is steadily improving, as so many of them have been in the past five years? Quality of school leadership is an important explanatory factor. How many millions of dollars does Illinois invest each year in schools that show results in some schools—but show no improvement at all in others because their school principals simply don't have the leadership abilities to turn those funds into improved student learning outcomes?

**The Illinois School Leadership Task Force has found that the factors influencing quality of school leadership are many and diverse.** State agencies, private and public colleges and universities, local school districts, and professional organizations play roles in school leadership development that are at best “loosely coupled.” That is, although these organizations all interact to influence the preparation and development of school leaders, they do not work together *systemically* to produce the outcome they all agree can legitimately be expected: that capable school leadership should improve student learning in schools, particularly in lower-performing schools where students should demonstrate significantly greater learning than they do now.

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# Recommendations

## System, Sequence, and Implementation

### System

The members of this Task Force believe that efforts to improve PreK-12 student learning in Illinois must include focused and strategic measures to improve the consistency of school leadership quality throughout the state. Further, we believe that *three primary instruments* for improving leadership quality are most likely to result in real gains in student learning:

- (1) **State Policies** that set high standards for school leadership certification and align principal preparation, early career development, and distinguished principal recognition with those standards;
- (2) **Formal Partnerships** between school districts, institutions of higher education, and other qualified partners to support principal preparation and development;
- (3) **Refocused Principal Preparation Programs** committed to developing and rigorously assessing in aspiring principals the capacities that are most likely to improve student learning in PreK-12 schools.

These three instruments must be understood as components in a systemic approach to achieving consistently high quality support for the career-long development of Illinois school leaders, from aspiring to novice to master principals. In the past two years, Illinois has established new policies and practices for developing novice and master principals. With those instruments in place, refocused principal preparation is now in order to support improved student learning outcomes in schools.

### Sequence

To achieve these outcomes, the three major recommendations must be sequenced in the order in which they appear. Although significant movement can (and should) begin related to partnerships and preparation, partnership action steps cannot be finalized until policy is established, and preparation programs cannot be fully refocused without appropriate partnerships.

### Implementation

The implementation plan is presented as three major recommendations and a series of action steps for each. The three recommendations correlate to the three primary instruments for leadership quality: state policies, formal partnerships, and refocused principal preparation programs.

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## **Recommendation 1: State Policies**

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**State policies must set high standards for school leader certification that align principal preparation, early career mentoring, ongoing professional development, and master principal recognition with those standards, so that by 2013 all new principal preparation would be taking place through programs approved under these new standards.**

### **Action Steps**

***New structure for leadership certification and endorsements:*** In contrast to the current system in which a Type 75 certificate with General Administrative endorsement does not differentiate preparation or qualification among such school leadership roles as dean, department head, assistant principal, or principal, a specific Principal endorsement should be created for the Type 75, just as specific endorsements are now required for Superintendent, Chief School Business Official, and Director of Special Education. The Principal endorsement should require specific preparation for school improvement through instructional leadership and should be a prerequisite for the Superintendent endorsement. The Illinois State Board of Education should begin work on this new endorsement structure immediately upon passage of legislation to this effect in the Illinois General Assembly.

***School leadership standards:*** Immediately upon passage of this legislation, the State Board of Education must also begin to establish revised standards for school principal preparation and licensure that are distinct from standards for other school leadership roles. These standards will focus on the leadership knowledge and skills to improve PreK-12 student learning and will exceed the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards on which current licensure is based in Illinois. The new school leader standards for principals should support a clear ***career continuum*** of school leadership development that includes preservice principal preparation, novice principal mentoring, ongoing professional development for experienced principals, and Master Principal assessment

***Preparation program approval:*** The State Board of Education and Board of Higher Education must begin immediate collaboration to produce a single set of standards-based program approval criteria for all principal preparation programs. By July 2013 all programs seeking to prepare school principals must be approved under these revised standards.

***State school leadership exam:*** The State Board of Education should establish a new licensure exam for principals, based on newly designed school leadership standards and rigorous, state-of-the-field model exams developed at the state and national levels. This exam, to be designed and available before July 2013, may incorporate elements of performance-based and portfolio assessments such as are currently in use in Chicago Public Schools, the Illinois Master Principal assessments, and some existing state certification systems.

***Support for master's degree-level development of teachers and teacher leaders:*** Rather than creating unintended incentives for novice teachers to enter Type 75 programs, the new state policies on principal preparation should encourage teachers to pursue master's degrees or coursework in areas that will strengthen their students' learning, such as content area knowledge, curriculum and instruction, and teacher leadership. These programs would be designed to contribute to career ladders that would develop teacher effectiveness while supporting distributed school leadership in schools. They would also establish a firm foundation for those who later choose Type 75 options described above either at the master's or post-master's level.

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**Comment:** While it is beyond the purview of our charge to establish the new leadership standards for school principals in Illinois, our recommendation that the ISBE should be charged to do so celebrates the strong beginning that Illinois has already made. The Illinois Distinguished Principal Leadership Institute has developed a set of standards and assessments for Master Principals, and these should inform new state standards for all principals because *they are focused on leadership to improve student learning in schools*. The Institute "is designed to improve student performance by expanding the leadership knowledge, skills, and attitudes of principals in five leadership performance strands," including Leading and Managing Change, Developing Deep Knowledge about Teaching and Learning, and Building and Sustaining Accountability Systems (IDPLI 2007). Moreover, the new Illinois statute requiring new principal mentoring will have an enhanced effect when revised standards are in place to guide mentors in new principal development.

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## **Recommendation 2: Formal Partnerships**

**Formal partnerships must be established between school districts and principal preparation programs affiliated with state-accredited institutions to support principal preparation and development.**

### **Action Steps**

***District/Program Collaboration:*** Local school districts, most particularly the students, families, teachers and other school staff in those districts, bear the most important consequences of school leader preparation programs. Therefore, local districts should, where possible, welcome strong partnerships with the higher education institutions that prepare their school leaders, in order to co-design, co-implement, and co-assess new principal preparation programs. Such partnerships may also include other organizations qualified to contribute to these programs.

***Partnership-based Programs will:*** (a) meet state standards, (b) help respond to the leadership needs of school districts throughout the entire state, and (c) support the continuum of principal development from preservice through distinguished principal status.

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**Comment:** In an important sense, students in PreK-12 schools, and not just aspirants to the principalship, are the most important “clients” of principal preparation programs. For school districts to work closely with principal providers in the design, implementation, and assessment of programs better ensures that the needs of that young clientele will be served. This is largely because such partnerships acknowledge *the most important link between principal preparation and student learning: the quality of instruction PreK-12 students receive*. Accomplished teachers are emphatic that they have learned most of their craft “on the job,” and it is clear that schools can promote or inhibit the kinds of professional learning that best result in improved student performance. Good instructional leaders place a high priority on adult learning and job-embedded professional development so that teachers can learn what they need to know to serve students best. School districts engaged in strong partnerships with principal preparation programs find that they can help these programs produce principals with the instructional expertise to create effective professional learning communities and therefore improved learning for students in district schools.

## **Recommendation 3: Refocused Principal Preparation Programs**

**Refocused principal preparation programs must demonstrate that they develop and rigorously assess in aspiring principals *the capacities that are most likely to improve student learning in PreK-12 schools*. These capacities should (a) form the heart of the new Illinois School Leadership Standards previously recommended and (b) reflect the vision of school leadership identified in the Illinois Distinguished Principal Program.**

### **Action Steps**

These refocused principal preparation programs will be characterized by the following:

- ***Required partnerships between school districts and state-accredited institutions***, as noted in Recommendation 2;
- ***Highly selective admissions processes*** that emphasize such indicators as: (1) commitment and drive in supporting all students in achieving high standards of learning; (2) evidence of accomplished classroom instruction; (3) evidence of having taken significant leadership roles in the past; (4) strong communications skills, oral and written; (5) analytic abilities and dispositions needed to collect and analyze data for school improvement; (6) demonstrated respect for family and community as essential assets in supporting student academic success; (7) strong interpersonal skills. For admissions processes to be sufficiently selective for the limited number of places in principal-specific endorsement programs, simple paper qualifications may not be enough, and candidate interviews should be strongly encouraged;

- **Strategic use of high-performing, current or former administrative practitioners** in program design and delivery;
- **Extended, closely supervised residencies** designed to do the following: 1) integrate theory, research and practice by immersing candidates in full-time administrative duties with the support of an accomplished mentor while at the same time engaging in rigorous coursework; 2) develop and demonstrate candidates' ability to improve student learning outcomes in schools by engaging the candidate in significant instructional leadership responsibilities and by regularly supervising and assessing the candidate by university-based personnel experienced in school leadership;
- **Rigorous, systematic assessments of candidates and graduates:** Candidate assessments should be based on the qualities known to improve student learning in schools and aligned with the new Illinois School Leader Standards. Program assessments should be based on graduates' performance in school leadership roles as measured by student learning and other indicators of school improvement; and
- **Mentoring and early-career professional support and development of candidates** in collaboration with school districts and professional organizations engaged in novice principal mentoring and support, ongoing professional development, and master principal development.

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**Comment:** While some Task Force members urged that residencies should be an academic year in length as practiced in some programs in Illinois and elsewhere, others disagreed, arguing that duration of residencies should be left to program providers under state approval guidelines. What was clear from Task Force deliberations was the purpose of the residency: that principal preparation should include a substantial opportunity for hands-on, practical leadership experience in which candidate performance could be meaningfully evaluated. Analogous to student teaching or other professional internships, the residency should provide opportunity for principals-in-training to demonstrate, and to be evaluated on their progress toward, the full range of standards-based qualities they will need when they become school leaders. Residency requirements can be met in regularly-paid full-time administrative roles such as assistant principal, or they can be met by taking a residency leave from a non-administrative position such as classroom teaching, in which case the resident's salary and tenure status in the district would be protected.

While some principal preparation programs in Illinois and in other states are post-master's degree programs, the Task Force chose to leave the decision of master's level vs. post-master's level to the program providers themselves. The keys to success here will be program selectivity and rigor, which are ultimately independent of degree structure. Considerable support was expressed, however, for making sure that the new system reduces the current incentive for novice teachers to enroll in Type-75 programs when other master's degree programs could (a) provide greater support for their early-career development as classroom teachers and (b) lead to the principal residency experience later in their careers.

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## Implementation Considerations

**1. The Task Force emphatically urges that those of our recommendation that require new funding should be approved by the General Assembly only if accompanied by adequate State appropriations to support them. Three items among our recommendations represent the most significant costs:**

- **School districts will need varying levels of state funding to establish extended, supervised residencies** for those principal aspirants who are not already in administrative roles that could serve as full-time, rigorously assessed residencies for as long as an academic year. Because the number of candidates admitted to such residencies will be necessarily small and the results in student PreK-12 learning significant, this will prove to be a strategic investment of resources for the State.
- **Field supervision of principal candidates in extended residency experiences will place new demands on higher education.** While student-teacher supervision has long been recognized as an essential cost in producing new teachers, *close supervision of full-time principals-in-training is funded at a much lower cost and with much lower quality*, as numerous national studies have pointed out. Here again partnerships with districts are valuable. Field supervisors should ideally be accomplished, former or practicing principals who are working hand-in-hand with site-based mentors and academic faculty to develop and assess the candidates in their residency experiences. With 400 annual principal vacancies or fewer throughout the state, the staffing of clinical supervision will amount to only a fraction of such staffing for teacher preparation programs. High-quality principals cannot be produced “on the cheap” if we are serious about improving PreK-12 student learning outcomes.
- **Colleges and universities will need transition funding for the design and implementation of new, teacher-centered master’s degree or endorsement programs** for the large numbers of master’s degree seekers who will not be admitted to refocused, highly selective principal preparation programs. This approach is intended to result in greater support for distributed leadership of teacher expertise to support instructional improvement in specific disciplines, an arena that cannot be addressed completely by a single school leader.

**2. The Task Force emphasizes that (a) all principal preparation programs in the state should be held to the same standard, but that (b) state support should be provided to district/higher education partnerships to implement those standards where necessary.**

**3. It will be necessary to “grandfather” all current Type-75 holders into eligibility for the new principal-specific endorsement. As candidates prepared under the new principal-specific endorsement system enter the labor market, they will compete with candidates prepared under the previous Type 75 system.**

**4. For most districts in the state, this is not a “grow your own” approach to developing principals, though such an approach may be taken by some partnerships.** Medium and small districts all over the state will continue their current practices of hiring principals often (not always) from outside the district. The chief difference will be that the pool of principals available will increasingly consist only of those who have had rigorously supervised and assessed extended residencies.

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**5. To make the residency system work:** (a) candidates would not lose income nor tenure status during the residency experience; (b) graduates would not be guaranteed a leadership position in any school system, though it would be in the state's and district's interest to guarantee that they could return to a position in their district or region; (c) graduates would have to make a service commitment of some number of years to the state, region, or district yet to be determined to justify subsidies that would fund these residencies.

**6. Reciprocity with other states should be selectively determined** in a way that is consistent with revised Illinois standards, particularly because so many other states are on school leadership development paths similar to our own.

**7. The degree structure of the principal licensure program should be variable across colleges and universities,** because the proposed new Principal Endorsement on the Type 75 certificate could be embedded in a master's degree, an advanced certificate, or a doctoral degree program. It could also stand outside a specific degree program as a post-master's certificate/endorsement program. What all such programs will have in common will be that they will meet rigorous state standards and will include a full-time, extended residency that integrates academic coursework with school-based experiences.

**8. As universities reduce the number of candidates admitted to principal-specific endorsement programs, they do not need to reduce the number of master's degree graduates.** However, they should seek to tailor master's degrees more explicitly to attract early-career teachers to programs of study that will improve subject-matter knowledge, instructional quality, and teacher leadership capacities, all three of which can be firm foundations for later principal endorsement.

**9. If implemented, this approach to school leadership preparation in Illinois should require in 2018, five years after the target date for implementation of newly approved programs, a careful review by a panel jointly appointed by ISBE and IBHE to produce a progress report to the General Assembly.** A key element of this report should be examination of whether new principal preparation programs are producing principals who are measurably improving student learning in schools. The intent of the report will be to recommend one or more of the following: (a) continuation down the path created by implementation of these measures; (b) adjustments in implementation to ensure better achievement of the goals of implementation; (c) discontinuation of some or all of the measures implemented; (d) subsequent review and reporting as necessary.

# Illinois School Leader Task Force

## References/Resources

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## **Appendices**

**A - House Joint Resolution HR0066**

**B - *School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change*  
Executive Summary**

**C - Integrated Analysis of Task Force Members' Position Papers**

**D—A Review of Principal Internships**

## House Joint Resolution HR0066

WHEREAS, Hundreds of Illinois schools in rural, suburban, and urban areas are designated for federal and State improvement status to improve low student achievement levels; and

WHEREAS, Illinois is committed to closing the gap in learning achievement levels between low-income and middle-income or upper-income children and youth; and

WHEREAS, Research indicates that successful low-income schools where student achievement rates exceed State averages are led by an outstanding school principal; and

WHEREAS, An essential route to improving student learning in any low-achieving school is through the intervention of a school principal with the motivation, commitment, current knowledge, skills, and dispositions to attract, retain, and mobilize teachers to improve the quality of instruction and learning throughout the school; and

WHEREAS, It is a goal of the State of Illinois that all schools have leadership that improves teaching and learning and increases the academic achievement and development of all students; and

WHEREAS, In August 2006 the report, "School Leader Preparation: Blueprint for Change", commissioned by the Board of Higher Education, analyzed the mismatch between leadership credentialing and the needs of Illinois schools and recommended a total of 25 specific actions to be undertaken by the Board of Higher Education, the State Board of Education, the General Assembly, the Governor's office, college and university presidents, and school districts to improve school leadership in this State; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the State Board of Education, the Board of Higher Education, and the Office of the Governor shall jointly appoint a task force to recommend a sequence of strategic steps, based on, but not limited to, the measures detailed in "Blueprint for Change", to implement improvements in school leadership preparation in this State; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the task force shall include representatives from a statewide organization representing principals, an association representing Chicago public school principals, a statewide organization representing education leadership faculty, a statewide organization representing private college and university education deans, a statewide organization representing public university education deans, statewide organizations representing teachers, a statewide organization representing superintendents, a statewide organization representing school board members, the State Board of Education, the Board of Higher Education, and other appropriate stakeholders; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Governor shall appoint a chairperson in consultation with the State Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the chairperson and the task force shall designate staff from the appropriate State agencies or educational organizations with expertise in school leadership preparation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this task force shall file a report of its findings with the General Assembly, the Office of the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the Board of Higher Education on or before February 1, 2008; and be it further

RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be delivered to the State Board of Education, the Board of Higher Education, and the Governor.



**Commission on School Leader Preparation in Illinois Colleges and Universities*****School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change***  
**Submitted to the Illinois Board of Higher Education**  
**August 2006****EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Illinois is in an educational crisis. National and state tests of student achievement show that the state has some of the largest achievement gaps for poor and minority students in the nation. Large percentages of Illinois children are not meeting state or national standards, regardless of their income or race. According to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Illinois has hundreds of schools and districts designated for federal and state improvement status, and that number continues to rise. One of the surest ways to improve student learning is to improve the quality of school leadership, which in turn requires an improvement in school leadership preparation programs. It is the goal of the Commission that aspiring leaders across the state have equal access to high quality preparation programs.

**Illinois' Most Pressing Challenges**

The considerable variation in quality between school leader preparation programs in Illinois is a significant obstacle. While many programs are high quality and others are in the process of making improvement, there is still wide variability in admissions standards, coursework, clinical experiences, student assessment, and faculty qualifications across the state. This variability poses a problem, as not all aspiring leaders have access to the same high quality programs that will prepare them to improve the quality of schools and raise student achievement, especially in high-need schools. The Commission identified *three statewide challenges* facing Illinois and its leader preparation programs that must be addressed in order to reduce and eliminate the student achievement gap throughout the state.

**Challenge One: Recruiting and Admitting the Best Potential Leaders**

Securing more effective school leaders begins with recruitment strategies utilized by districts and educational administration programs. Inadequate admission standards and students' self-selection often do not produce the committed, high quality leaders needed in our schools—especially in our hard-to-staff, low-performing schools. School leader preparation programs need to reshape recruitment efforts to attract candidates with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are characteristic of effective school leaders.

**Challenge Two: Focusing Preparation Programs on Improving and Sustaining PreK-12 Student Achievement**

Because student achievement is directly linked to leadership in our schools, more must be done to prepare those individuals who aspire to leadership positions. The Commission identified six weaknesses in Illinois principal preparation programs that must be addressed, including an irrelevant and outdated curriculum, inconsistent and inappropriate use of practitioner or clinical adjunct faculty to complement academic faculty, and inadequate clinical instruction that is not sufficiently comprehensive to support learning the many facets of the principalship. Inadequate partnerships between school districts and higher education to meet the learning needs of students in schools through improved school leadership is another weakness, as is failure of leadership preparation programs to assess the quality of graduates adequately, including through assessments that provide evidence of their success as leaders who improve schools. Unclear distinctions between Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs must also be addressed.

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## **Challenge Three: Ensuring Quality School Leader Preparation Programs**

The state's quality assurance process has three key areas that need to be improved, beginning with an outdated certification process. The exam used to certify principal candidates is insufficient for assessing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective school leaders. It is not closely tied to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. A second weakness involves certifications that do not support a distributed leadership paradigm. Scholars and professional organizations in the field recommend that policy-makers forgo the reliance on models that situate all leadership skills and responsibilities in one person—the principal. Licensure policies that reflect a paradigm of distributed leadership in which teachers and staff are engaged in leadership roles should instead be developed. Finally, Illinois has inadequate assessments and disjointed accountability processes. School leader preparation programs are accountable to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the ISBE. The standards and processes followed by these separate boards have little in common. Communication between the agencies during program approval and review is not required, and often does not occur.

### **Goals and Recommendations**

In response to low student achievement, preparation program criticisms, and the challenges to improve higher education opportunities for educational leaders, this report focuses on goals and recommendations for change. The goals center around three general areas that are most crucial for the state of Illinois at this time. The recommendations are geared primarily to the preparation of the school principal, on whom all other leadership in a well-organized school should depend.

#### **Goal One: Recruit Strategically**

Principal preparation programs often do not attract the best potential school leaders. Preparation programs consequently need to reshape recruitment efforts to attract the best potential leaders to improve student achievement, especially in schools that are hard to staff.

##### **Recommendation 1: Restructure Admission Criteria and Recruit High Quality Principals**

- Initiate marketing plans that outline a strategy to advertise and promote preparation programs that attract a competent and diverse applicant pool.
- Adopt admission criteria based on the critical attributes known to improve student performance, and which holistically examine each candidate's qualifications and potential for leadership.
- Implement programs that create collaborations between preparation programs and primary feeder school districts, enabling them to grow their own leadership talent pool.
- Enlist faculty in educational administration and teacher education programs to identify students who demonstrate characteristics of effective leadership.

#### **Goal Two: Focus Preparation Programs**

The only legitimate response to the criticisms and challenges relative to the quality, content, and focus of school leader preparation programs is that broad, strategic change must occur. Preparation programs should focus on preparing leaders who can improve student achievement and overcome the myriad challenges facing schools today.

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## **Recommendation 2: Improve Programs Using Rigorous Assessment Data**

- Revamp the assessment system to determine if candidates demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of PreK-12 schools and to improve student learning; identify program improvements needed to consistently produce candidates who can effectively lead schools; and use findings to bolster the collaborations between school districts and higher education, and ultimately improve practices and programs in school leadership preparation.
- Require that principal preparation programs be approved by the state with the submission of assessment processes, findings, and action plans for making improvements mandatory.
- Require all Illinois school leader preparation programs to participate in the Education Administration Graduate Assessment Advisory Group project developed by the Illinois Association of Deans of Public Colleges of Education.
- Provide to the state and public the data collected from each program's assessment system.
- Establish advisory groups at the college and university level to assist with program assessment that ensures the programs are high quality, and to make certain that needs of schools are met.
- Form a task force through the IBHE to assist colleges and universities in establishing clear and distinct guidelines between Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs in educational leadership.

## **Recommendation 3: Create Meaningful Clinical and Internship Experiences**

- Require meaningful clinical and internship experiences that ideally extend an entire year. The internship should be a degree requirement in every program. Candidates should only be allowed to begin an internship after they are qualified by program faculty and have passed the certification exam. Students should be expected to demonstrate evidence of mastering ISLLC standards, as would be appropriate for an entry-level administrator.
- Strengthen university-school partnerships to better utilize field experiences available through school leader preparation programs.
- Provide meaningful training for mentors at the university level.
- Employ clinical faculty at the university level to supervise interns and assess their performance in the field relative to the goals of the preparation program.
- Find a variety of sources to fund internships, including but not limited to school district scholarships with post-certification employment agreements, university-funded scholarships and/or tuition waivers, scholarships funded by professional associations, or state-funded scholarships—particularly for leadership commitments to the lowest performing schools throughout the state.
- Design key assessments for the internship using best practices that include explicit definitions of who will use the assessment information, what is to be assessed, methods of assessment, what constitutes acceptable evidence, and accuracy (Stiggins, 2005). Show evidence that assessment processes are rigorous enough to make sharp distinctions in candidate performance, including distinctions that lead to formal remediation and to counseling low-performing candidates out of the program.
- Revise the ISLLC-based Illinois Standards for School Leaders so that field experience requirements and evaluations, as well as internship requirements, are consistent with Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards.

## **Goal Three: Improve Statewide Assessment and Coordination**

Statewide coordination and oversight of school leader preparation programs in Illinois must be improved. Specifically, three areas that need to be addressed relate to the certification exam, the certification structure, and the accountability mechanisms used by the ISBE and the IBHE.

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#### **Recommendation 4: Establish a Rigorous Certification Exam**

- Replace the current leader certification exams with the School Leaders Licensure Assessment and the School Superintendent Assessment, both developed by the Educational Testing Service.

#### **Recommendation 5: Revise the Certification and Endorsement Structure**

- Reserve the Type 75 certificate for principals only.
- Initiate an ISBE and Illinois State Teacher Certification Board joint review of certification requirements for school leadership positions other than the principalship, which currently requires a Type 75 certificate, to determine if these positions require the same knowledge and skills as the principalship. If not, change the statutory language that leads districts to require Type 75 certification for these positions. Create other pathways to leadership that allow teacher evaluation to be conducted by leaders who are certified other than with the Type 75, but whose leadership credential can accrue to Type 75.
- Develop through collaboration of colleges, universities, the ISBE, and school districts, certificate programs that correspond to the new areas of endorsement.

#### **Recommendation 6: Coordinate a Rigorous Program Review and Approval Process**

- Contract at the state level the services of an external third party (e.g., Southern Regional Education Board or the Institute for Educational Leadership) to review **all** preparation programs—public and private—to determine which programs should continue and which should close.
- Coordinate and develop through the IBHE and the ISBE a stringent program review and approval process in which the two agencies work collaboratively to evaluate programs and exercise their joint authority to close those found to be low quality and ineffective.
- Amend Illinois statutes to provide the IBHE with additional authority and/or review tools for recommending probationary status and closure of programs at public and private institutions.
- Appoint a statewide representative to be an active participant in the Interstate Consortium on School Leadership, and to participate in the review of the ISLLC standards and the ELCC standards that is currently underway.

## Conclusion

The quality of our schools and the effectiveness of those who lead our schools will determine the future of our children. Their success hinges on our recognition that school leaders play a critical role in shaping the environments in which children learn. Their future can and will be enriched if the Commission's recommendations are implemented. Each recommendation is within reach if state leaders and key entities aggressively work to initiate the suggested changes. The Commission recognizes the need for such shared responsibility, and therefore charges the following groups to take the action needed to guarantee a better tomorrow for our students and our state.

### **The Illinois Board of Higher Education should:**

- Ensure wide dissemination of this report.
- Revise, strengthen, and take active state leadership for Goal 2 of *The Illinois Commitment*, which should be revised to read: "Higher education will join elementary and secondary education to improve teaching and learning at all levels, and proactively work to improve all programs that train teachers, leaders, and auxiliary staff so that all who receive a certificate have the knowledge and skills necessary to improve student achievement."
- Provide funding to ensure that the Education Administration Graduate Assessment survey will be administered, analyzed, and reported annually.
- Seek legislative support for funding clinical faculty roles to be filled by experienced administrators who can show clear evidence of having improved student learning in schools.
- Provide funding to support pilot testing of innovative programs.
- Explore ways in which preparation programs can be rewarded for quality admissions and training.
- Require IBHE staff to provide annual updates on the progress of each recommendation to the IBHE at their August meetings and to Commission members.
- Reconvene the Commission in the fall of 2009 to re-evaluate the condition of school leader preparation in Illinois.

### **The Illinois State Board of Education should:**

- Take steps to reserve the Type 75 certification for principals only, and to utilize a more rigorous certification exam.
- Revise the certification and endorsement structure.
- Engage a qualified consultant to review all current preparation programs within the next two years.
- Lead the development of a new collaborative program review and approval process, through which the ISBE and IBHE review programs.
- Provide funding to ensure that the Education Administration Graduate Assessment survey will be administered, analyzed, and reported annually.
- Seek legislative support for funding clinical faculty roles to be filled by experienced administrators who can show clear evidence of having improved student learning in schools.

### **The Governor should:**

- Convene the Joint Education Committee or an otherwise appropriate statewide P-12 entity to review the report, determine priorities, and take the necessary steps to assure implementation of the recommendations across all sectors of our state.

### **The Legislature should:**

- Support legislation recommended by the Joint Education Committee or an otherwise appropriate statewide P-12 entity to improve school leadership.
- Support legislation qualifying school personnel to evaluate certified personnel through a practical means other than earning principal (Type 75) certification.
- Provide funding to support full-time internships for qualified school leader candidates.
- Make allocation of new funding for clinical faculty roles to be filled by experienced administrators who can show clear evidence of having improved student learning in school a high priority.
- Support legislation and funding to promote innovative partnerships and routes to principal certification.
- Create a system of public accountability to measure the combined efforts of various educational entities in their efforts to improve school leadership.

### **College and University Presidents should:**

- View administrator preparation programs as labor-intensive clinical programs, and treat them accordingly.
- Direct College of Education deans to staff administrator preparation programs with balanced faculty, and with current and former school leaders who can show clear evidence of having improved student learning in schools.
- Fund faculty salaries at levels comparable to the fields from which they are being recruited (e.g. from school districts).
- Recognize clinical faculty as essential, not auxiliary, to program success.
- Welcome partnerships with local school districts, as well as provide funding and forums for faculty and program collaboration.

### **School Boards should:**

- Establish partnerships with colleges and universities for the identification, preparation, and ongoing support of effective school leaders.
- Hire school leaders prepared by accredited programs designed to prepare leaders for the kinds of schools and communities they serve, with a focus on the knowledge and skills to improve student achievement.
- Support leaves of absence for certified employees participating in field experiences and internships required for certification as school leaders.

**School leaders assume tremendous responsibilities for the daily well-being and the lifelong success of our children. Illinois citizens should not be content with hiring school leaders who may be “good enough.” These principals must be extraordinary leaders who can instill the desire for academic excellence in children and faculty at the school site, while managing myriad other demands that are part of today’s principalship. Reaching this goal requires that school leader preparation programs provide a level and type of training that is reflective of all that has been learned over the last few decades and that continues to transform based on the knowledge learned through ongoing strategic partnerships with our schools. The Commission believes that Illinois has the capacity to provide schools and their communities with the best leaders. The challenge is whether Illinois has the will.**

## Integrated Analysis of Task Force Members' Position Papers

**This is a qualitative thematic analysis of members' position papers and the discussion during the January 8 Illinois School Leader Task Force meeting. This analysis attempts to integrate member statements as they are related to each other rather than an analysis based on frequency of responses.**

### *A Continuum of School Leader Development*

Several members suggested that we identify a continuum of school leader development recognizing that what a beginning principal should be expected to know or do is different from a master principal. There was also an indication that school leadership should recognize diverse forms of school leadership that begins with teacher leaders (or teachers who assume leadership responsibilities), aspiring leaders and encompasses assistant principals, principals, master principals, and other forms of building leaders (e.g., special education directors, department chairs, deans, etc.). This continuum might also stretch out to include superintendents and other district-office leaders.

For the purposes of this task force, members agreed to remain within the realm of the principalship (or other areas of leadership closely affiliated with the principalship). We need to identify the leadership characteristics (i.e., knowledge, skills, and dispositions) of principals at varying stages of development on the continuum. Jason Leahy, representing the School Management Alliance, suggested that we use the leadership characteristics of Master Principals (identified in the Illinois Distinguished Principal Leader Institute) and backward map the characteristics of principals at stages before the Master Principalship. These characteristics would be the outcomes, or benchmarks, by which the principal preparation and development system would be held accountable.

This continuum could then be used to articulate a system of preparation and professional development that would develop leaders with the skills needed at each stage. This continuum would inform:

- the admissions process and criteria to be admitted into preparation programs,
- the curriculum and field-based experiences/internships,
- assessments of candidate performance,
- the certification exam,
- induction supports,
- continuing professional development, and
- principal evaluation

John Murphy, representing the Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration (ICPEA), said that our efforts to develop and support school leaders should be a systems approach and this continuum would inform this systemic approach. Several other members (including members of the School Management Alliance, Carlene Lutz and Ed Geppert from the Illinois Federation of Teachers and Judith Hackett from IAASE) recommended that preparation programs and professional development programs should be aligned. Members from CPS' Office of Principal Preparation and Development provided this summary:

- What are the "look-for's"/attributes/competencies of high potential school leaders?

- What kind of curriculum grows these “look-for’s/attributes/competencies in potential school leaders?
- How does one structure internships that enhance these “look-for’s”/attributes/competencies in potential school leaders?
- How does one assess at the time of program completion for evidence of proficiency in the desired “look-for’s/attributes/competencies?

At its very essence, this system would be focused on creating learning-centered leaders, and the attainment of high student performance for ALL Illinois students would be the ultimate test of the system’s efficacy.

### ***University and School District Partnerships***

In the position papers and in task force discussions, members generally agree that university and school district partnerships are integral to the effectiveness of the preparation principals receive. The quality and work of these partnerships should focus on each of the strategies listed above (e.g., admission policies, curriculum development and implementation, field-based experiences and internships, and assessing candidate performance). Universities and districts may work together in a variety of functions to form advisory groups and “grow-your-own” programs. These partnerships should be a win-win opportunity for both the preparation program and the school district. Diane Rutledge said that the ISU-Springfield program was invaluable to producing school leaders who “hit the ground” running. The district profits by helping develop a program that meets the districts’ needs for highly effective school leaders; and the program benefits by having access to district resources (e.g., clinical sites, school staff serving as adjunct faculty).

Many members, particularly deans and program faculty, have raised the point that creating university-school partnerships may be difficult in some areas due to the size and scope of the preparation program’s service, particularly for some programs that serve very small, rural districts. However, it may be possible through creative collaborations to form partnerships with these schools on a regional basis by recruiting the help of certain agencies to facilitate these partnerships (e.g., regional offices of education). There should also be guidelines and criteria for selecting school sites and for outlining the partner responsibilities and commitments.

### ***A Selective Admissions Process***

Five members’ position paper explicitly stated that preparation programs should develop a more rigorous admissions process that screens applicants for their potential to be highly effective school leaders. April Ervin described the New Leaders for New Schools process which uses a multi-phase approach in which applicants must provide evidence of demonstrated leadership performance.

Linda Shay emphasized screening for those applicants that show a willingness and capacity for adaptive leadership (vs. technical leadership) who recognize a broader purpose for schooling to engage all stakeholders and to be able to adapt to the conditions of the school and community. Several members stated that applicants should possess and demonstrate that they can identify what good instruction is.

### ***A Relevant and Research-Based Curriculum***

The Alliance stated that the curriculum in preparation programs should reflect the real work of principals. Judith Hackett from IAASE stated that this curriculum should include instruction on student data analysis, interpretation and use as well as emphasizing a shared responsibility for all students including recognizing and meeting the diverse needs of students (e.g., special education, ELL/bi-lingual, and at-risk). Ed Geppert and Carlene Lutz (IFT) emphasized the importance of helping principals learn how to foster a shared school culture. They said “A



respectful and supportive atmosphere must be established by the principal in collaboration with teachers and school-related personnel. The principal must recognize that the school extends beyond just classes—that it includes students’ continuing social education through numerous extra-curricular activities, along with open communication with parents and other community members.” Members said the curriculum should:

- Teach current research-based practices that result in greater student outcomes
- Emphasize visionary leadership that will foster a healthy and prosperous school climate
- Have PreK-20 learning as their focus
- Be aligned to other preparation and professional development programs (e.g., teacher leader programs, the Illinois Mentoring Program, the IAA, and the Illinois Distinguished Principal Leader Institute)
- Incorporate meaningful and diverse field-based experiences that benchmark candidate development and performance
- Incorporate rigorous assessments that monitor candidate development, using this information to remediate or counsel out candidates and make programmatic improvements as necessary

Diane Rutledge, representing LUDA and reflecting on her experiences as superintendent of a LEAD district, stated that integrating the curriculum with course-embedded internships/field-based experiences allowed students to apply the knowledge they learned in the classroom into school settings. The candidates then used these experiences as a source of classroom discussion, personal reflection, writing and research. The district and preparation program provided a diverse set of experiences for candidates to expand their knowledge and skills. Many other members stated the need to integrate field-based experiences into the curriculum to improve the curricula’s relevance to the real-world of the principalship.

### ***Rigorous and Relevant Internship Experiences***

Seven of the ten organizations that presented position papers mentioned the importance of meaningful and sustained internship experiences. Several members said that ideally internships would be year long—much like a residency (CLASS, IAASE, IADPCE, LUDA, Prasse). In order that these internships are rigorous, members suggested that preparation programs:

- Employ clinical faculty to supervise interns and assess their performance
- Train mentors
- The state, university, and school districts pursue multiple sources to fund internships

Echoing the sentiments of fellow members, Faye Terrell-Perkins, representing CLASS stressed the importance of “rigorous year-long internships with standard benchmarks as a measure for evaluating candidates’ success.”

Diane Rutledge stated that these internships should provide authentic experiences in which interns “experience a school from beginning to end; build relationships with students, staff, and families; and have the time to develop their skills, values, and beliefs.”

### ***A Rigorous Certification Exam***

Several task force members suggested that the certification exam that principal candidates must pass in order to earn Type 75 certification (IEA, IFT, ICPEA, Alliance) must be rigorous and reflective of the principals’ duties. Jo Anderson, representing IEA, said that improving the rigor of the Type 75 assessment exam is the intervention

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with the greatest leverage for improving principal preparation. Furthermore, doing so would allow the system to focus on outcomes rather than inputs and drive improvements in all other elements in the system. This certification exam should be aligned with agreed-upon standards. During the discussion, some members suggested that the exam may be more than just a paper-and-pencil test.

### *State-Wide Database*

Several members suggested that the state develop a state-wide data system that tracks graduate performance linking multiple indicators of student performance outcomes (e.g., achievement test scores, attendance, mobility, graduation and drop out rates). These data will enable personnel from school districts, colleges, state agencies, and the legislature to evaluate the efficacy of the principal preparation system and make informed decisions to improve it as necessary.

### *Final Notes*

Members' positions are summarized in Table 1 on the following page.

Many members, particularly our deans and preparation program faculty, strongly urged that the standards or requirements that are developed from this task force should be required of ALL preparation programs across the state regardless of their status as a private or public college program, as an online program, or as a program offered by an alternative provider.

It was also noted that the strategies identified by this task force should address the needs of schools and students in ALL regions of Illinois including students in Chicago, urban, suburban, and rural locations.

Finally, Diane Jackman, as a representative the IADPCE, alerted the task force to the fact that some of these strategies may necessitate additional resources. She noted that the state's Colleges of Education have not received a base budget increase in the last eight years. Therefore, with that in mind, the task force will need to think about the strategies they decide to undertake, the resources the changes will demand, and where these resources will come from. At this time, it is safe to assume that the majority of the load will be placed on the universities and school districts, but the task force is encouraged to press the state to provide the necessary resources to carry out these strategies.

**Figure 1. Task Force Members' Positions on Key Strategies**

Strategy	Organization									
	CPS/OPPD	CLASS	IASSE	IADPCE	ICPEA	IEA	IFT	ISSMA	LUDA	CCD
Field-based experiences, rigorous, 1-yr, in-course		X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Selective admissions	X			X	X		X	X		
Relevant, research-based curriculum	X		X				X	X		X
University/District partnerships			X	X	X		X		X	
Rigorous certification exam					X	X	X	X		
Align preparation and professional development			X					X		
Differentiate Type 75 for principals; create new endorsements				X	X		X		X	
Keep Type 75 "as is"		X						X		
Require at least 3-4 years "effective" teaching		X					X			

CPS/OPPD: Chicago Public Schools Office of Principal Preparation & Development

CLASS: Chicago Principals & Administrators Association

IASSE: Illinois Association of Supervisors of Special Education

IADPCE: Illinois Association of Deans of Public Colleges of Education

IEA: Illinois Education Association

IFT: Illinois Federation of Teachers

ISSMA: Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance

LUDA: Large Unit District Association

CCD: Council of Chicago Deans of Education

## A Review of Principal Internships

The following are examples of state innovations related to field based experiences for principal preparation. These include one year full-time internships that are part of master's degree programs, structured internship requirements (though not full-time, one year) during preparation programs, pathway programs (Louisiana) that follow aspiring leaders (principals as well as teacher leadership) through the leadership continuum, and residency programs that follow a tiered certification model. We hope that providing a variety of examples will guide task force members in ways that the field-based experience component can be strengthened without negatively affecting principals in any particular demographic area of the state. When possible, strategies influencing principals in rural areas are addressed.

In an effort to build on an existing post-certification foundation, components of the Illinois Distinguished Principal Leader Institute (IDPLI) are highlighted and compared with selected field-based experience components from other states across the country. Illinois already has a foundation in place as to what distinguished principals should be able to know and do as well as the most effective learning activities that develop these distinguished leaders. It would be to the State's advantage to use the standards and learning and assessment activities developed for the IDPLI to backward map the competencies and training needed for novice and aspiring school leaders, in order to build a continuum of school leader development.

### Examples of States' Field-Based Experience Requirements

**Program:** *Illinois Distinguished Principal Leadership Institute*

**Website:** <http://www.ilprincipals.org/pages/IDPLI.html>

#### **Program Overview**

This is a 3-year program for experienced principals to transform them into visionary leaders of our schools. Principals will be expected to practice and demonstrate competencies in five leadership performance areas:

- Fostering the mission of the school;
- Leading change;
- Knowledge of teaching and learning;
- Building collaborative relationships; and
- Building accountability systems.

The crux of this program is to develop visionary leaders who improve student achievement.

#### **Program Components**

Principals participate in four in-person sessions per year that are guided by a trained facilitator. In between these face-to-face sessions, principals will receive support and build a professional learning community through electronic delivery systems such as webinars, listservs, and podcasts.

- Data analysis and use (school and student performance)
- Action research and collaborative work with faculty
- Receives support from at least one performance coach
- Peer networking and professional learning community with fellow program participants
- Develops a portfolio to reflect on and show the learning achieved during the program

#### **Assessments**

Program personnel conduct formative and summative evaluations of principal performance on criteria rubrics associated with all five leadership performance areas. Portfolio assessments are conducted twice a year for formative purposes, and the third time as the summative evaluation of principal performance. At the end of years one and two, principals are visited by program personnel. In year three, a 3-day site visit to principals' school (interviews & observations) are part of the summative evaluation of principal performance.

### **Exit Criteria**

Principals must demonstrate improved performance on rubrics related to the five leadership performance areas. Notably, principals must demonstrate improved student performance over the three years of the program to earn the distinguished principal designation.

## **Residency Programs**

As one way of addressing the rural issues in providing internships, these states established a provision that candidates who complete a school leader preparation program earn an initial certificate under which these leaders then complete a residency to earn standard principal certification. Therefore, the state is only investing its resources on those educational leadership master's degree holders who intend to pursue a school leadership position.

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**Program:** *New Jersey*

**Website:** <http://www.nj.gov/education/code/current/title6a/chap9.pdf> (p. 184)

### **Program Overview**

After earning a master's degree in educational leadership and passing the state's certification exam, principal candidates earn a provisional certificate. New principals must complete a one- two year state-approved residency in a public school district.

### **Program Components**

Develop and demonstrate a thorough understanding of New Jersey standards, core curriculum standards, professional standards for teachers and school leaders. Supervised by a state-approved and trained mentor. Meet with resident superintendent at least once a month.

### **Assessments**

The intern's mentor convenes an advisory panel to monitor interns progress who evaluates the intern at least three times during the year. The first two evaluations are formative and last evaluation is summative.

### **Exit Criteria**

Interns must demonstrate competency on the New Jersey professional standards for school leaders.

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**Program:** *Kentucky*

**Website:** <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/kar/016/007/020.htm>

### **Program Overview**

After earning a master's degree in educational leadership and passing the state's certification exam, graduates earn a provisional certificate. New principals are eligible to participate for one-year in the Kentucky Principal Internship Program (KPIP). To participate, principal candidates must obtain a school leader position. This is a standards-driven, performance-based residency with the purpose of providing supervised practice under experienced educators. The program provides the basis for subsequent certification.

### **Program Components**

The employing superintendent provides an orientation for the intern to clarify roles and requirements of the internship. The intern is supervised by the internship committee (principal mentor, superintendent or designee,

and an administrator educator (faculty member). The intern meets with committee to clarify roles, requirements, and procedures of the internship. The intern spends a minimum of 50 hours with the mentor.

#### **Assessments**

Interns are assessed by the principal internship committee. The committee observes and assesses the intern and portfolio at least three times during the year (allowing at least 30 days between assessments).

#### **Exit Criteria**

Interns must demonstrate competencies on the ISLLC standards to earn standard certification.

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**Program:** *Florida*

**Website:** <https://www.floridaschoolleaders.org>

#### **Program Overview**

In 2005, the Florida legislature re-enacted a residency program for Florida principals. After completing a master's in educational leadership and passing the state certification exam, principal candidates earn a Level I certificate. School leader candidates then participate in a one-year residency in their employing school district.

#### **Program Components**

The employing school district develops the standards and guidelines for the resident's program. This plan must be approved by the Florida State Department of Education. The district may choose to partner with a university to develop and implement the residency program. Florida's program puts districts in the driver's seats of these residency programs. Programs must align with the Florida Principal Leadership Standards. The program is based upon each individual intern's learning needs based on self-assessments and other data on the leadership competencies.

#### **Assessments**

Candidates are assessed on the competencies of the Florida Principal Leadership Standards. District programs design their assessment systems and have them approved by the Florida Department of Education in their program approval process.

#### **Exit Criteria**

After demonstrating competence in the Florida leadership standards, principals earn Level II certification.

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**Program:** *Louisiana Educational Leader Practitioner (residency) Program*

#### **Program Overview**

This is a new program that has not been implemented yet in the state. This is a voluntary provision in the state legislature that outlines the practitioner program that can be offered by private providers or Louisiana colleges or universities. This is a streamlined certification program that combines intensive coursework and on-the-job experiences. To be eligible for the program, candidates must have a bachelor's degree, three years teaching experience, and meet other criteria set by the program provider. The program provider partners with a school district personnel to tap potential participants.

Total hours required: Minimum 330 contact hours of coursework (22 credit hours) and a minimum of 125 days as a practitioner leader.

## **Program Components**

School leader candidates complete their coursework in the first and second summers using the Standards for Educational Leaders in Louisiana as the basis for the curriculum. Topics address: leading with vision, data to lead school improvement building a high-performance learning culture, leading a focused drive toward school achievement, and so forth. During the school year after the first summer of coursework, candidates assume a leadership role in a school district/charter school equivalent to an assistant principalship. The hiring school pays the candidate's salary. Interns serve in at least two different schools and experience a full range of leadership responsibilities. During the school year, the candidates participate in weekly sessions and four seminars for a minimum of 60 contact hours. Residents receive one-on-one supervision through a residency supervisor through the district and are mentored by a principal mentor.

## **Assessments**

The program provider, principal mentors, and principal coaches form a team to perform a mid-year review of the candidate's performance to assess the extent to which the candidate is performing educational leadership proficiency. The team will recommend types of support to address weaknesses. At the end of the year, this team performs a review to determine the extent to which the candidate has demonstrated competency and is eligible for Leader Level I certification.

## **Exit Criteria**

Candidates must demonstrate proficiency on the Louisiana leader standards, earn a passing score on the School Leaders Licensure Assessment, complete all coursework, complete all prescriptive plans (to remediate weaknesses), complete an Educational Leadership Development Plan for subsequent development, and complete a portfolio demonstrating leadership skills. Candidates earn Leader Level I Certification.

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**Program:** *North Carolina Principal Fellows Program*

**Website:** <http://www.ncfpf.org/>

## **Program Overview**

This is a two-year fellowship program for those educators who intend to pursue the principalship. To participate in the fellows program, an interested educator applies to one of North Carolina's Master's in School Administration (MSA) program. Once accepted, the educator applies to the fellows program. If selected, the aspiring school leaders take a 2-year leave of absence from their school in order to participate in the two-year fellows program. They receive scholarships/stipends during the 2-year fellows program. The first-year fellows receive \$30,000. The money is distributed to the fellow's university and is disbursed to the fellow through the university's financial aid office. The university deducts tuition and disburses the remaining money to the fellow over 10 months.

Of the 935 graduates of the program, 96% have obtained jobs as assistant principals, principals, central office executives, and superintendents. A program staff person admitted that they do struggle with getting educators from rural schools to apply for the program.

Aspiring principals who do not participate in this fellowship (and one-year internship) complete the internship requirements of their preparation program.

## **Program Components**

The first year, fellows complete the coursework in the MSA. The second year, fellows receive approximately \$38,000 and participate in a one-year (10 months) internship in a North Carolina public school or charter school. Staff at the fellows program provides an orientation for new fellows at the beginning of each year and enrichment activities throughout the program (e.g., podcasts; discounts to conferences; articles on leadership, job

searches, networking). Each university and school district designs the internship experience to meet the needs of the intern and district.

#### **Assessments**

Each participating university sets the guidelines and criteria for the internship.

#### **Exit Criteria**

At the completion of the fellows program, fellows are expected to pay back the stipend money either through cash or four years of service in the North Carolina public school system or charter schools. The only service that counts is in assistant principal or principal positions, and fellows have 12 years to pay the scholarships back (i.e., it does not have to be four years of successive experience as an AP or principal, and this allows time if the fellow does not immediately obtain an AP or principal position).

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**Program:** *University of Illinois at Chicago Urban Educational Leadership Program*

**Website:** <http://education.uic.edu/program.cfm?cat=uel-edd>

#### **Program Overview**

This educational leadership program offers three strands to meet the learning needs of the program's leader candidates. These three strands are: for those who already have a Type 75, those who have the Type 75 and are practicing principals, and those who do not yet have the Type 75. All candidates participate in a one-year internship. Although those the latter strand, must complete coursework and pass the certification exam meeting the requirements for the Type 75 and CPS principalship eligibility. Interns work in paid administrative internships or full-time leadership positions (e.g., assistant principals or principals). Interns put theory into practice into becoming transformative leaders for urban schools.

#### **Program Components**

Interns engage in school leader responsibilities such as: school improvement planning, observing classroom instruction, budgets, hiring/staffing, special education and bilingual education procedures, and data collection/analysis. Interns meet weekly with coaches for formative assessment discussions. They participate in a weekly practicum seminar with fellow program interns and receive group and individual coaching on job search and interview strategies.

#### **Assessments**

Interns are regularly assessed on their performance on the CPS competencies and 10 Indicators of School Capacity for Student Learning (which has incorporated the IL school leader standards).

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**Program:** *Montana*

**Website:** <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/Cert/PrinInternApp.pdf>

#### **Program Overview**

This internship requirement grew in direct response to Montana's growing problem of attracting candidates to fill principal vacancies. In this program, a district superintendent identifies teachers with leadership potential to fill principal vacancies. The district partners with one of the two universities that provide principal preparation programs to enroll this intern in a principal preparation program.

[Note: while this program is not ideal in terms of explicitly addressing standards or performance assessments, it does show that internships can be a strategy for recruiting leaders to rural areas.]



### **Program Components**

The principal intern participates in a three-week summer session of master's coursework (9 credits). During the school year, the principal intern carries out the duties of principal under the supervision of preparation program and with the support of the superintendent as a mentor. Preparation programs have also made the program more accessible through distance learning and intensive summer sessions. The state's professional associations also provide waived registration fees to annual conferences, special sessions for interns and mentors, and assigning them conference mentors to help interns network. Research on the program has indicated the importance of expanding the mentoring of these interns.

### **Assessments**

The intern must be annually visited by a faculty member from the preparation program provider. If the principal intern is the only administrator hired by the district, the district must contract with a licensed administrator to perform periodic and annual evaluations of the principal intern's performance.

## **Leadership Continuum Pathway Programs**

**Program:** *Louisiana*

Louisiana has developed a pathway of school leadership development and support that begins with a teacher leader endorsement and continues onto the superintendency. This pathway provides a framework for the state's preparation and professional development programs.

Louisiana has instituted a tiered certification system. The state's preparation programs align to this new structure. The first 6 hours of coursework leads to the teacher leader endorsement. Those who wish to pursue the principalship continue on in the program to earn certification. After certification, the new principals must participate in a two year Education Leader Induction Program. After completing the induction program, principals must receive a passing score on the School Leader Licensure Portfolio Assessment to earn the Level 2 certificate.

- Teacher Leader Endorsement (optional) (can be earned in the first 6 hours of the principal's master's level preparation program)
- Educational Leader Certificate – Level 1 (an initial/provisional certificate) (earned after completing the master's level program and passing the state certification exam)
- Educational Leader Certificate – Level 2 (standard certification) (earned after successfully completing Louisiana's 2-year induction program)
- Educational Leader Certificate – Level 3 (superintendent) (earned after completing additional coursework at a superintendency certification program)

Source: Louisiana Leadership Policies

<http://www.doe.state.la.us/lde/uploads/7365.doc>

[http://www.leadlouisiana.net/site100-01/1001669/docs/ed\\_leadership\\_certification\\_structure.pdf](http://www.leadlouisiana.net/site100-01/1001669/docs/ed_leadership_certification_structure.pdf)

<http://www.leadlouisiana.net/lelnitiatives.cfm>

## Structured Internship Requirements throughout the Course of the Preparation Program

**Program:** *Alabama*

Alabama does not require a full-year internship (each university and district sets the time limit according to the districts' needs). But, the state has outlined explicit criteria about the structure and content of the internships as well as a description of university and district partnerships as related to the internship.

### Components

Candidates in Alabama instructional leadership preparation programs must experience an internship in which the following occur: Collaboration between the university and LEA that anchors internship activities in real world problems instructional leaders face, provides for appropriate structure and support of learning experiences, and ensures quality guidance and supervision.

An explicit set of school based assignments are designed to provide opportunities for the application of knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking that are required to effectively perform the core responsibilities of a school leader, as identified in state standards and research and incorporated in the preparation programs' design.

A developmental continuum of practice progresses from observing to participating in and then to leading school based activities related to the core responsibilities of instructional leaders, with analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of real life problems at each level.

Field placements provide opportunities to work with diverse students, teachers, parents, and communities.

Handbooks or other guiding materials clearly define the expectations, processes, and schedule of the internship to participants, faculty supervisors, directing instructional leaders (principals), and LEA personnel.

Ongoing supervision is provided by program faculty who have the expertise and time to provide frequent formative feedback on interns' performance that lets them know how they need to improve.

Directing instructional leaders (principals) model the desired leadership behaviors and who know how to guide interns through required activities that bring their performance to established standards.

Rigorous evaluations of interns' performance of core school leader responsibilities are based on clearly defined performance standards and exit criteria and consistent procedures.

### Design

Universities and LEAs collaborate to insure that candidates have meaningful and practical experiences in actual school settings during the course of the instructional leadership preparation program. The internship is designed to place candidates in the cooperating school during critical times of instructional planning. This collaborative model requires that LEAs provide release time for candidates and for universities to work with LEAs so that the candidate's experiences are comprehensive and valuable. The internship experiences are the total sum of practical experiences, either field or clinical, as part of every course taken for preparation, plus a residency. The residency is uninterrupted service in an active school with students present. A residency shall be no less than ten consecutive full days in the school setting with students present. The residency allows interns to experience leadership in as many of the Alabama Leadership Standard indicators as possible. Candidates shall prepare and maintain a comprehensive portfolio which indicates the level of experiences and knowledge gained in instructional leadership during the intern experiences. The portfolio shall be juried by a committee of university and cooperating school staff before the candidate is recommended for instructional leadership certification by the university.

Source: [290-3-3-.48 Instructional Leadership](#). (September 30, 2007)

**Example:** At the University of South Alabama, the educational leadership program partners with two districts—Mobile and Baldwin to provide a 1-semester, full-time internship. Mobile is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the United States but it is not strictly an urban district. It contains schools that are rural and urban, poor and wealthy. Baldwin is a smaller wealthier school district. As partners, the school districts indicate the number of aspiring principals they are willing to sponsor during a full-semester residency. This becomes the cohort for the educational leadership program. If an aspiring principal wishes to enroll in the program, but does not have the sponsorship of the district, s/he may do so if they sign a waiver indicating their willingness to sponsor their own residency (i.e., pay for their own substitute).

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**Program:** *Iowa*

Like Alabama, Iowa does not require a full-year internship, but the state has outlined explicit criteria to guide the structure and content of the internship as well as criteria for university and district roles in partnering to create meaningful internship experiences. These guidelines are summarized below.

Administrator candidates study about and practice in settings that include diverse populations, students with disabilities, and students of different ages. Clinical practice supports dispositions and the development of knowledge and skills that are identified in the Iowa board of educational examiners' licensure standards, the unit's framework for preparation of effective administrators, and standards from ISLLC or other national professional organizations as appropriate for the licenses sought by candidates.

Clinical practice for candidates should also include clearly stated expectations that tie the experiences to coursework and that support learning in context, including: school settings, in contexts that provide high-quality instructional programs for children; opportunities for administrator candidates to observe and be observed by others and to engage in discussion and reflection on practice; and involvement in activities directed at the improvement of teaching and learning.

School administrators and institution faculty share responsibility for administrator candidate learning, including planning curriculum, teaching, and supervision of the clinical program. The institution should enter into a written contract with the cooperating school districts that provide field experiences, including administrator internships. Accountability for these experiences will be demonstrated through:

- Jointly defined qualifications for administrator candidates entering clinical practice;
- Selection of institution faculty and school administration members who demonstrate skills knowledge, and dispositions of highly accomplished practitioners.
- Selection of school administrators and institution faculty members who are prepared to mentor and supervise administrator candidates;
- Training and support for school administrators who mentor and supervise administrator candidates; and
- Joint evaluation of administrator candidates by the cooperating administrators and institutional supervisor.

Source:

Chapter 79 [Standards for Practitioner and Administrator Preparation Programs](#) (October 2004)

## SREB Core Components of a Quality Internship

As an outgrowth of their work on school leadership, the Southern Regional Education Board has identified eight core components of a quality internship that give aspiring school leaders opportunities to apply and master the skills and knowledge necessary to improving student achievement in today's schools. These core components were derived from the following sources: a review of school leadership literature, research on critical success factors of principals who significantly improved student learning in high need schools, a review of exemplary school leader preparation/professional development programs, and lessons learned from the on-going SREB University Leadership Development Network. The eight core components of effective internships are as follows:

1. Collaboration between the university and school district to anchor internship activities in real-world school problems.
2. Guided by explicit school-based assignments designed to provide opportunities for the application of knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking.
3. A developmental continuum of practice that progresses from observation to scaffolded practice to activities related to the core responsibilities of school leaders.
4. Opportunities to work in diverse settings with a diversity of students, parents, teachers, and communities.
5. Guided by handbooks or other materials that clearly outline the expectations, processes, and schedules to interns, faculty, and district personnel.
6. Ongoing supervision by faculty supervisors who provide feedback to interns for their further development and improvements in practice.
7. Mentored/coached by experienced principals who model effective leadership practices and know how to guide interns through educative experiences.
8. Rigorous assessments of intern's performance on clearly defined leadership standards and indicators of competency using consistent assessment procedures.

Source: Fry, B., Bottoms, G., & O'Neill, K. (2005). *The principal internship: How can we get it right?* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

[http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/pubs/05V02\\_Principal\\_Internship.pdf](http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/pubs/05V02_Principal_Internship.pdf)

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