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Principal Preparation Program Redesign: How Universities May Be Required to Redesign Their Programs

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With the advent of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) there has been a greater emphasis on the quality of those individuals who lead the efforts within each of our school buildings across the country. Even more so than district level leadership, an effort has been made to research the effectiveness and improve the quality of the principals who lead school level reforms that are being promoted by business leaders and mandated by legislatures throughout the country. Legislators at both the national and state levels have encouraged these efforts and have even passed legislation that have increased requirements and promoted a redesign of programs for those institutions of higher education which choose to offer coursework leading to their particular state's certification as a campus level administrator.

One such example of these efforts is the recent legislation which is now being enacted in the state of Illinois through the passage of Illinois Public Act 096-0903 (II P.A. 096-0903). This legislation which re-wrote 23 Illinois Administrative Code 30 covering the preparation of aspiring principals includes a requirement that institutions of higher education must show how they will document outcomes of both knowledge and leadership skills that must be demonstrated by graduates of their principal preparation programs prior to the institution sending a student's application to the state for certification.

These new requirements to revamp university preparation programs have been added to some already stiff sanctions that can come upon the principals themselves if the students within their schools continue to be low performing. One of the most notable of these sanctions within the four acceptable remediation plans approved for NCLB is the removal of the building principal as the first step of this process of reconstituting a failing campus. Thus with these high levels of punitive actions that can be taken against a principal in continually low performing schools, it is apparent legislative policymakers are concentrating on the quality of the preparation of aspiring principals in order to better assure their success in the position.

Key Research Behind The Illinois Initiative

A great deal of research on what outstanding principals know and do has been completed since the early 2000s. Much of this research was funded by the Wallace Foundation as part of their effort to improve the achievement of all students within the public schools across this nation. During a February 2012 review of a website developed by the Wallace Foundation designed to bring to a single source a number of these studies, it was identified that there were twenty-seven studies funded by the Foundation since 2000. This body of research has been referred to as the Learning from Leadership Project:

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Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning. These studies, completed by different researchers in the field of education, dealt with the issue of quality principal leadership that leads to higher student achievement. In addition, several of these studies reported on actions that state policymakers could take to improve the quality of principal preparation programs offered by universities within their states. The Foundation's efforts were designed to assure the quality of each state's program. An important aspect of all these successful programs was that their graduates could demonstrate both the knowledge and skills to be able to lead campus level reforms geared towards increasing the achievement levels of all students.

Initially, many Illinois university principal preparation programs and member professors of the Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration were utilizing a 2007 report completed by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (SELI) entitled "Preparing school leaders for a changing world: Lessons from exemplary leadership development programs" (Darling-Hammond, LaPoint, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007), as the research base to begin their redesign efforts of their principal preparation programs. This study reported five major findings from their work:

1. Exemplary pre- and in-service programs share many common features
2. Exemplary programs produce well prepared leaders who engage in effective practice
3. Program success is influenced by leadership, partnerships, and financial support
4. Funding strategies influence the design and effectiveness of programs
5. State and district policies influence program designs and outcomes (p. 5).

Within the executive summary of their report SELI presented the following implications for policy and practice:

1. First, recruitment and selection are central to program design, not incidental activities. The knowledge and skills of those who enter a program determine to a great extent what kind of curriculum can be effective and what kind of leader will emerge.
2. Second, professional standards provide an important tool for strengthening a program's focus on instructional leadership and school improvement.
3. Third, durable partnerships between districts and universities, as well as state supports, facilitate consistent, coherent professional development.
4. Fourth, while specific program features can be important, most critical are how features are integrated and how the program reinforces a robust model of leadership.
5. Fifth, effective programs require significant resources, especially human resources, to support learning embedded in practice (p. 21).

The Stanford team also presented two implications for policymakers:

1. First, the design, quality, and impact of principal preparation and development programs can be significantly shaped by purposeful state and district policies.
2. Second, state and district financing policies are critical (p.23).

As the Illinois State Board of Education began drafting legislation and delivering presentations on their efforts, it became clear that ISBE was utilizing research reports created by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Two reports from the mid-2000s supported by Wallace Foundation funding, appear to have served as the basis of the principal preparation redesign legislation in Illinois. The first report dealt with the status of the internship or practicum courses that serve as a culminating experience within most university preparation programs. This report by the Southern Regional Education Board Leadership Institute (SREBLI) entitled “The Principal Internship: How Can We Get It Right?” (Fry, Bottoms, & O’Neill, 2005) discussed the current status of such experiences for most students completing a principal certification program. SREB president at the time of this study, Mark Musick, in the preface to this report stated,

Responsibility for getting the internship right cannot be laid solely at the door of the educational leadership department, the university or any of the various state agencies responsible for higher education, program approval and licensure. They require simultaneous, aligned actions across the leadership preparation system (p.2).

Musick went on to list the important actions that needed to occur if we can expect the structure and content of educational leadership to make any significant changes to their programs in order to better prepare aspiring or current practicing principals. These actions included:

1. States must develop strong policies and procedures on leadership preparation and licensure that make it impossible to continue licensing graduates based on completion of a program inadequately designed for the needs of today’s students and schools.
2. University presidents must be challenged to make leadership preparation a priority of the institution and to confront the need for new resources required for redesigning programs to incorporate high-quality internships.
3. Departments of educational leadership must develop stronger relationships with local school districts that involve working together to select the most promising candidates and design and deliver programs that prepare leaders who can meet district needs for improved student achievement.
4. Local school districts must take on new responsibilities for recruiting aspiring leaders and then providing the support and conditions necessary for them to succeed in the preparation program (p.2).

The same 2005 SREB report on the status of principal internships related educational internships to those in other professional fields. The report stated that such courses will “expand the knowledge and skills of candidates.” It went further to state such experiences by principal candidates will identify their ability to apply what they had learned in their program in real-world situations. SREB’s view of the status of most of these internship programs was described as follows, “Today, in far too many principal preparation programs, the internship ‘vessel’ is leaky, rudderless or still in dry dock” (p.3).

As a follow up to their 2005 report, SREB concluded there needed to be more study of the content and structure of the courses being taught to principal candidates prior to beginning their culminating internship. This conclusion led to the release of a second study entitled, “Schools Can’t Wait: Accelerating the Redesign of University Principal Preparation Programs” (Fry, O’Neill, & Bottoms, 2006). As part of the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) presentations on efforts to re-write Illinois administrative code concerning requirements for university principal preparation programs, representatives of university principal preparation programs in Illinois were given a copy of the SREB report in an effort to garner support from university professors to support the legislative initiative undertaken by IBHE/ISBE. These early initiatives eventually led to the requirement that all principal preparation institutions submit a newly redesigned program that would require approval from both IBHE and ISBE. In many ways, the piece of legislation passed by the Illinois Legislature mirrored the recommendations in the SREB publications.

In a message presented in the preface of the 2006 SREB report by the organization’s president at the time the report was released helps to explain the premise behind the Illinois policymakers’ forceful actions to change principal preparation programs. President Dave Spence stated,

1. Current state policies and strategies intended to promote redesign of principal preparation programs have produced episodic change in a few institutions but have fallen short in producing the deeper change that would ensure all candidates master the knowledge and skills needed to be effective school leaders today.
2. There is a lack of urgency for refocusing the design, content, process and outcomes of principal preparation programs based on the needs of schools and student achievement and little will happen until there are committed leaders of change at every level — state, university and local school district.
3. States and districts cannot depend on universities to change principal preparation programs on their own because the barriers to change within these organizations are too deeply entrenched.
4. The issue is not whether principal preparation programs need to change, but how states can plan and carry out a redesign initiative that gets the right results (p.4).

Concerns presented by various stakeholder groups in Illinois were extensive, even from professor groups who were actively involved in the study of the need to redesign principal preparation programs. Several institutions within Illinois were actively involved in the process of redesigning their preparation programs at the time IBHE/ISBE began its legislative initiative to require the redesign of principal preparation programs. Several leaders of these institutions’ educational leadership departments were actively involved on a committee created by IBHE/ISBE for the purpose of making recommendations as to how the state should move forward on this issue. Without

previous notice, this committee was dissolved by IBHE/ISBE staff and they began to move forward with their legislative proposals. Reasons for the professors' concerns expressed to IBHE/ISBE's eventual proposed legislative initiatives were many, but it appeared that the strongest objections from university professors came from their feelings that the IBHE/ISBE did not follow a number of the recommendations made by its own organized advisory group and that the proposed legislative administrative rule changes were too prescriptive, concentrating on only one body of research, thus appearing to leave out a greater body of research that was available to be considered. Even with the objections by many university professors and certain universities led by their departments of educational leadership, the combined IBHE/ISBE legislative initiative was approved by both legislative chambers in the form of II P.A. 096-0903 signed into law by the governor in early 2011.

With the passage of II P.A. 096-0903, all universities that desired to continue or begin offering a program leading to certification as a principal in Illinois needed to meet a number of requirements, many of which were not already included in current principal preparation programs. All programs to be offered after July 1, 2014, were required to be presented to a joint committee of IBHE/ISBE to demonstrate that the newly redesigned program met all the requirements set forth in the legislation prior to final approval by both state education agencies.

Section 30.30 of the Illinois legislation established some basic principles that must be contained in each newly redesigned principal preparation program within the state. These include the creation of formal partnerships and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) by the university program with school districts and non-public schools in order to meet the 2008 ISLLC standards. These partnerships then work together to design curriculum that emphasizes the importance of student learning and school improvement including the special needs of all students

The influence of the initial 2005 SREBLI report entitled "The Principal Internship: How Can We Get It Right?" (Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005) can be seen within Section 30.40 of the bill that required university programs to develop internship experiences that will assure all principal candidates will be, "exposed to and participate in a variety of school leadership situations in school settings that represent diverse economic and cultural conditions." These internship experiences may take place in one or more public or nonpublic school so that the candidate will have an opportunity to meet the goal to interact with a variety of school stakeholders from the previously mentioned diverse economic and cultural conditions.

Section 30.45 of the legislation continued to stress the importance of the internship experience. This section established three statewide assessments that must be confirmed within each university's program in addition to separate institutional assessments that will ensure that each candidate understands the requirements for the development of individual education programs for students. Finally Illinois legislation included in this section a requirement that each university program will include a means to ensure that its

candidates meet “Critical Success Factors” which were identified as the thirty-six activities listed in SREB’s *Critical Success Factors for Principals* document.

More descriptive requirements for course content were also included in the IBHE/ISBE initiatives that were eventually included within the final approved legislation. These requirements included course components that cover more on school law, issues related to students with disabilities and the applicable school laws, the use of technology in teaching, learning and administration, utilizing a process to determine how children respond to scientific, researched based interventions, an understanding of age appropriate literacy and numeracy skills across various grade levels, issues of bullying, and finally the evaluation of certified staff.

Due to concerns brought forth by faculty from more traditional university programs that utilize primarily a face to face structure for course delivery, the state of Illinois included some additional requirements that must be met by those principal preparation programs that utilize primarily an online distance learning or video-conferencing technology to deliver 50% or more of their program. In addition, such programs must require at least two full days of internship site observations by full-time tenure track faculty per semester and at least twenty days of such observations through the entire program. Each candidate is also required to spend at least one day per semester in a facility located within Illinois, attend in person four meetings per year with a supervisor to discuss the candidates performance, and attend three in person seminars to discuss issues they have encountered during their internship experiences related to student learning and school improvement.

In an effort to assure the high quality of a university’s principal preparation program and to avoid concerns that some institutions might be using these programs simply to generate larger student numbers and thus related tuition dollars, requirements were included in Section 30.60 of the bill for student/faculty ratios. Each program must appoint at least two faculty members on a full-time basis for a program of 100 or fewer students. Once a program enrolls over 100 students on a full or part-time basis, the university must allocate on a full-time basis for each increment of 50 or fewer students. This means that when a program reaches a student enrollment of 101, the program will need to add one more full-time equivalent faculty member. “Enrolled” was defined as a student’s enrollment in one or more courses required for completion of the program. IBHE/ISBE clarified the intent of “full-time basis” for faculty members to include time the faculty member may spend teaching courses in the area of superintendent or school business official programs.

Section 30.60 went on to create additional requirements for staffing principal preparation programs. No candidate can receive more than one-third of his/her coursework from the same instructor, no more than 80% of the coursework in the program shall be taught by adjunct faculty, any faculty supervisor of student internships may not have more than 36 candidates at the same time during a 12-month period. Onsite mentors shall have no more than two candidates assigned to them during a 12-month period. However there is an exception where a mentor could be approved to supervise a third candidate during this

same time. Finally, each full-time faculty member and each faculty internship supervisor shall participate in the training required for the evaluation of certified personnel.

In order to increase the quality of candidates who enter into principal preparation programs, more specific candidate admission standards were also included in Il P.A. 096-0903. These requirements require an in-person interview of every potential candidate by no less than two of a program's full-time faculty members. In addition, part of the candidate selection process will require that a candidate has a valid and current Illinois teaching certificate, has passed the Illinois Test of Basic Skills, and has submitted a portfolio which presents evidence of both teaching proficiency and leadership experiences during the candidate's teaching experience.

University principal preparation programs leading to state certification after July 1, 2014, must follow all the procedures set forth in Illinois statute 23 Ill. Adm. Code 25.145 and specify how their program will meet all the designated requirements. A request for program approval will be submitted to the State Superintendent for consideration. The State Superintendent will then provide a completed request to the Principal Preparation Review Panel for its review and recommendation for approval by IBHE/ISBE.

These revised legislative rules show an emphasis on increasing the importance of the internship experiences for principal candidates including an increase in the number and length of internship observations by university personnel, new requirements for program course content, limits on the staffing for these programs, and the formation of more formal, documented, ongoing relationships with PK-12 public and non-public schools.

Several requirements in the Illinois law created concerns by university faculty and administrators due to the potential financial costs related to their implementation in relation to their current programs. Some of these include:

1. Increased need for university supervisors travel and time at internship sites.
2. Possible stipends needed for internship site supervisors due to increased demands and qualifications for site supervisors.
3. Need to add additional credit hour courses to the program to meet the increased curriculum components above their current programs.
4. Mandated student to full time faculty numbers.
5. Limit of no more than one-third of a candidate's coursework received from the same instructor.
6. No more than 80% of the coursework taught by adjunct faculty.
7. Limiting the number of candidates one site mentor may have to only two may force students in larger schools to have to travel to other sites.
8. Full-time faculty in the program and each faculty supervisor must participate in the training to evaluate certified personnel.
9. Increased time needed to complete candidate selection process which will include an in-person interview with no fewer than two of the program's full-time faculty along with the reviewing of each candidate's portfolio.

One University's Initial Step

The Illinois legislative administrative rules changes followed very closely the SREB recommendations of what state policymakers should do in order to assure that major revisions would be implemented in all principal preparation programs throughout the state. At the early stages of the redesign process, educational leadership faculty at Eastern Illinois University (EIU) began to take steps to expand their already established formal and informal relationships with the public and private PK-12 schools within the university's southeastern Illinois geographical area. It was apparent within the discussions, presentations and documents presented by IBHE/ISBE during the initial phases of the redesign process, seeking and documenting a strong effort to seek input from the educational leadership's partner schools and practitioners who were both graduates and non-graduates of the EIU program was essential.

Methods

In an effort to capture the perceptions of current practicing administrators regarding the topics currently covered within the core courses in the Eastern Illinois University (EIU) principal preparation program, a nineteen question survey seeking the respondent's perception of the importance of each primary topic as listed within the Department of Educational Leadership approved curriculum guide to be taught within each of the eight courses was developed. The respondents also had the opportunity to share their perceptions of other topics that should be taught within each class through the use of an open-ended question for each course. The survey engine program, Survey Monkey, was utilized to collect responses to the survey questions.

An invitation to participate in the survey and a link to access the survey was distributed electronically to all current district and school level administrators currently listed on the EIU Regional Offices of Education partner administrator email network. This network has been used on a regular basis to communicate information to practicing school and district level administrators from the Department of Educational Leadership at Eastern Illinois University.

The survey asked administrators, who chose to respond, to record their perceived level of importance for each topic by indicating the level of importance being "Very Important", "Important" or "Not Important." In addition respondents had the opportunity to respond to an open ended question for each course which stated, "Please list other topics that should be taught in this course." The final three open-ended questions in the survey gave respondents the opportunity to share their thoughts on either entire courses that might be added to the required program of courses or topics that should be included existing courses in a future redesigned program, any topics or courses that should be eliminated or no longer taught as part of the program, and to give their overall opinion of the Eastern Illinois University Principal Preparation Program.

The survey was available to potential respondents for a thirty day period after it was sent to the EIU Regional Offices of Education partner administrator email network for

distribution to all educators who were included on this email list. The data collected from the survey were reviewed and analyzed by members of the EIU Department of Educational Leadership, including this author. Percentages for the level of importance for each course's topics listed were calculated to determine which topics gained the greatest level of importance within each course and which topics respondents perceived as less important to be included within each course. An analysis of the open-ended responses for each course was also completed in an effort to determine any major themes that might exist for the need of new or revised topics within each course or any completely new courses that should be added within the redesigned program.

Findings

A total of sixty-four (64) individual educators from the EIU Regional Offices of Education partner administrator email network responded to the survey request. Of this total the largest number, twenty-four (37.5%) of individuals responding identified themselves as "Elementary Principal." The next largest group of respondents, fourteen (21.9%) identified themselves as a "Superintendent" with the remaining respondents by number and percentage of total respondents being "High School Principal" nine (14.1%), "Middle School Principal" nine (14.1%), "Other" four (4) (6.3%), "High School Assistant Principal" three (4.7%), and "Teacher" one (1.6%).

The state of Illinois has three types of school districts. These are Unit Districts which include students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, Elementary Districts which educate students in pre-kindergarten through grade eight, and High School Districts where students are in grades nine through twelve. Of the sixty-four educators who responded to this survey forty-one (64.1%) worked in Unit School Districts, sixteen (25%) were from Elementary School Districts, and seven (10.9%) were employed in High School Districts.

The greatest number of respondents, twenty-nine (45.3%) had been in their current position for one to five years, eighteen (28.1%) were in their current positions six to ten years, eleven (17.2%) were in their first year, five (7.8%) were in the eleven to fifteenth year in their current position, and one (1.6%) respondent was in his/her current position for over twenty years.

Sixty-three educators responded to the question of how many total years including their current year had they been in administration. Eighteen (28.6%) had been in administration for six to ten years, sixteen (25.4%) had one to five years of administrative experience, thirteen (20.6%) had eleven to twenty years in administration, seven (11.1%) were in their sixteen to twentieth year, six (9.5%) had more than twenty years of administrative experience, and three (4.8%) of the respondents were in their first year as an administrator.

Sixty-three of the respondents also answered questions concerning their relationships as students with the EIU administrative preparation programs. Forty-one (66.1%) of the respondents were graduates of the EIU Principal Preparation Program, twenty-two

(34.9%) had graduated from the EIU superintendent preparation program, three (4.8%) were currently enrolled in the EIU principal preparation program, and four (6.3%) were currently enrolled in the EIU superintendent preparation program.

According to the 2009 – 2011 online graduate catalog for Eastern Illinois University (EIU, 2009), there were eight core courses within the department of educational leadership that were required to be taken by all students who complete the Masters level degree program that leads to principal certification in the state of Illinois. These core courses did not include the practicum course hours or three other elective courses that were required to be taken from other departments. The core required courses in the EIU Principal Preparation Program included School Law (EDA 5410), School/Community Relations (EDA 5420), Introduction to Organization and Administration (EDA 5600), The Principalship (EDA 5630), Supervision of Instruction (EDA 5700), Personnel Administration (EDA 5870), Introduction to Research (EDA 5900), and Management and Analysis of Data (EDA 5960).

A summary of the results of the quantitative data and selected qualitative responses for each of the eight required courses included in the EIU program as listed in the 2009 – 2011 Eastern Illinois University Graduate Catalog included:

School Law (EDA 5410)

The topics judged most important within the School Law course with a response of “very important” by eighty percent or more of the respondents were Teacher Rights and Responsibility (87.5%), General Legal Principles (85.9%), and Student and Parent Rights and Responsibilities (81.3%). The three lowest rated “very important” topics were Church and State (21.9%), The Legislative Process (31.3%), and Law-Making Agencies Effecting Leaders and Educational Institutions (50.0%).

Issues that needed greater emphasis in this course from the responses to question number 9 of the survey highlighted the importance of special education legal issues and rights, developing issues related to social networking, and the growth of issues related to bullying within schools.

School/Community Relations (EDA 5420)

The three highest ranked course topics for the School/Community Relations course were Parent/Community Communications (89.1%), Public Relations During a Crisis (84.4%), and Aspects of Positive/Negative School Community Relations (75.0%). The three lowest ranked topics as to “very important” in this course were School/District Public Relations Audit (29.7%), Community Involvement in Planning and Policy Development (46.9%), and School Publications and Documents (47.6%).

The open ended responses suggested strategies for handling conflicts such as between parents and teachers, relating the school’s mission and vision more to the school improvement planning documents, and proper communications to school board members.

Introduction to Organization and Administration (EDA 5600)

The “very important” identified course topics for the Introduction of Organization and Administration course were School Culture (82.8%), Intro to School Improvement Planning (76.6%), and Change Process (73.4%). The three lowest rated topics for “very important” were Development of American Schools (10.9%), Review of NCLB (28.1%), and Structure of Schooling and Legal Basis of Education (43.5%).

Only two respondents expressed issues in the open ended response for this question. One commented that NCLB will be greatly modified or eliminated. Another respondent stated that there was a need for students in the principal preparation program to learn more about the core curriculum standards that were recently approved by the state of Illinois.

The Principalship (EDA 5630)

Some of the highest rankings for topics being considered “very important” were in the Principalship course. The highest of these were Principal as Instructional Leader (95.2%), followed by Roles of the Principal (92.2%) and School Improvement Planning (84.4%).

Four issues that were suggested for more coverage in the Principalship course were again core curriculum standards and special education issues along with master scheduling and utilizing data for school improvement.

Supervision of Instruction (EDA 5700)

The three highest ranked for “very important” in the Supervision of Instruction course were Supervision versus Evaluation (87.3%), Analysis & Strategies/Conferencing Marginal Teachers (76.6%), and Roadblocks to Effective Supervision (75.0%).

The area of concern expressed by one respondent regarding this course was how to best hold an effective pre and post conference, especially when the evaluation was for a marginal or low performing teacher.

Personnel Administration (EDA 5870)

The Personnel Administration course’s top three topics identified by respondents were Conflict Resolution (82.8%), Collaborative Decision Making (74.6%), and Team Building (73.4%). The lowest rated topics were Leave of Absences (15.6%), Substitute Services (17.2%), and Personnel Compensation and Fringe Benefits (32.8%).

Areas also considered important to be included in a personnel course were the procedures for releasing teachers under a reduction in force process, development of a teacher or

support staff seniority list, and any changes in the evaluation process due to new legislation.

Introduction to Research (EDA 5900)

The Introduction to Research course had only one topic covered in the course that over fifty percent of the respondents considered “very important” to be included in a principal preparation program. This single topic that was identified by over fifty percent of those responding to the survey was Understanding Basic Statistics and Graphic Representation of Data (54%).

In the open ended responses for this question, one respondent mentioned the need to include more information on research based interventions, but was not specific if that meant student, program or curriculum interventions.

Management and Analysis of Data (EDA 5960)

The final required course within the EIU principal preparation program also had a number of topics that were rated relatively low compared to other courses. The top three rated topics for Management and Analysis of Data were Needs Assessments (75.0%), Time Management (71.9%), and Types of Data (62.5%). The three lowest topics were Six Files to be Assessed on WebCt (22.2%), Word Processing (25.4%), and Web Page Construction (26.6%).

There were several comments concerning one general area for this course. All the comments dealt with the feeling that Microsoft Office types of applications should not be taught in a graduate course. Respondents felt that these skills should be taught in undergraduate courses or individuals should take some form of a workshop type course to learn these skills.

Conclusions

It was apparent from the further review of the Wallace Foundation website that the movement to encourage state school boards and legislatures to pass new rules or revisions of current rules that will require university programs to either totally redesign or at least make changes in their principal preparation program will not be going away soon. As mentioned at the beginning of this article there has been a number of research studies and reports funded by the Wallace Foundation to create a body of research referred to as the Learning from Leadership Project: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning. As recently as January 2012, the Wallace Foundation released a report entitled, “The school principal as leader: Guiding schools to better teaching and learning” (Wallace, 2012) which stated the five key functions that all principals must be able to do in order to be effective in their schools in efforts to increase student achievement. These five key functions were:

1. Shaping a vision of academic success for all students.

2. Creating a climate hospitable to education.
3. Cultivating leadership in others.
4. Improving instruction.
5. Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement. (p. 2)

Another current addition to the Wallace Foundation funded project was published in August, 2011, titled, “NASBE Discussion Guide: School Leadership: Improving State Systems for Leader Development.” This discussion guide was specifically directed to state level policymakers. In the introduction to the guide, author Sun (2011) stated:

This NASBE School Leadership Discussion Guide, developed with support from The Wallace Foundation, is designed to give boards the tools to:

- Create a brief inventory of current leadership policies and supports;
- Assist board members in developing state-specific questions to work through on school leadership; and
- Help boards use these tools and questions to craft policy directions for the state. (p. 3)

With research such as this being supported by a foundation with the size and stature of Wallace, the movement to improve the quality of those who lead our schools will continue. Some other factors that will influence state level policymakers to mandate the redesign of principal preparation programs could include: (1) an increase in the amount of research that is being done related to the effectiveness of building principals; (2) greater accountability for all areas of local school districts, especially of those in leadership roles at the building level; (3) new technologies for communicating with all stakeholders will increase the demand on principals to do so; (4) the change of majority/minority populations in many school districts throughout the United States will require principals to lead schools through such changes; (5) the business community will continue to demand that schools make significant changes in order to increase student achievement while at the same time being more efficient in their operations; and (6) continued expectations that all children will learn at high levels.

The results of the survey of Southeastern Illinois administrators support some of the specific rule changes made in the recent redesign of principal preparation programs as advocated by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and State Board of Education. Specific areas of agreement are found in Section 30-50 of the Illinois Administrative Code which deals primarily with the curriculum to be included within a principal preparation program. These include: (1) more emphasis on school law for principals; (2) specific laws related to students with disabilities and ELL laws; (3) new uses of technology in teaching, learning and administration; (4) use of a process that determines how children respond to scientific, research-based interventions; (5) understanding age-appropriate literacy; (6) numeracy skills across the grade levels; (7) bullying; and (8) evaluation of certified staff.

It will take time to see how successful the redesign of Illinois principal preparation programs will be for meeting its primary goal of increasing student achievement. The first principals to graduate from the new program will not do so until August of 2014 under the current plan by those designing the Eastern Illinois University program. This will be as soon as any principal preparation program in the state will be able to graduate its first candidates after implementing their newly approved principal preparation program.

Other states such as Texas have begun to make changes in rules related to its universities' principal preparation programs. Recently the passage of Senate Bill 1383 (2011) has placed requirements on the Texas Commissioner of Education to establish a comprehensive appraisal and professional development system for principals within the state and allows the Commissioner to establish a consortium of experts to assist in researching and developing the comprehensive appraisal and professional development system that will align with new leadership standards that will align to training, appraisal, and professional development programs.

Senate Bill 1383 requires the Commissioner "not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year" (p. 3), to submit a written report that includes: "1) any action taken under this section during the preceding two years; and 2) any recommendations for legislative action concerning the training, appraisal, professional development, or compensation of principals. (p. 3)

From recent presentations by staff members of the Texas Education Agency (TEA), it is appears that TEA has already begun to discuss the establishment of rules similar to Illinois. Two of these are: (1) an increase in the quality of the principal internship including mentor training and a requirement that university supervisors will make at least three site visits for a period of at least 45 minutes in length to observe the candidate performing principal related duties and conferencing with the site supervisor/mentor; and (2) the creation of an advisory board made up primarily of practicing building level administrators who give regular input on program improvements and suggestions of areas where the program could be improved. This mandated advisory board would meet at least two times during each academic year.

The opportunities to research principal preparation programs under the redesigned format will be many in the years to come. Whether the purpose of these studies were related to increasing student achievement, cost effectiveness of programs, types of delivery of courses or any number of other characteristics of the current or newly redesigned programs, researchers will have opportunities to complete numerous studies of university principal preparation programs. The emphasis on improving these programs will continue to be high as long as the business community and state policymakers continue to have a high interest to be involved through the passage of legislation which is designed to influence the direction that newly redesigned principal preparation programs will take within the improvement process of each state.

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