

IMPROVING THE PREPARATION OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS: AN AGENDA FOR REFORM

*Recommendations from the Executive Board of the
University Council for Educational Administration
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The University Council for Educational Administration is committed to the improvement of educational leadership. This document specifies an agenda for improving the preparation of educational leaders in our nation's elementary and secondary schools and school districts. The agenda is grouped into five leverage points for change: leadership preparation programs, Colleges of Education, school districts, professional associations, and states.

LEADERSHIP PREPARATION PROGRAMS

1. Vigorous recruitment strategies be implemented in cooperation with district partners to attract bright and capable candidates, of diverse race, ethnicity, and sex.
2. Entrance standards to administrator preparation programs be focused on ensuring candidates possess strong analytic ability, high administrative potential, and success in teaching.
3. Rigorous methods for screening potential leadership candidates implemented in cooperation with district partners.
4. Cap the number of leadership candidates admitted to the program each year, to ensure an effective professor-candidate ratio and a higher quality cohort of candidates.
5. Develop leadership preparation curriculum to transmit a common core of knowledge and skills, aligned with a national set of standards and grounded in the problems of practice
6. Provide specialty courses wherein candidates can focus their expertise for practice at elementary, middle and high school levels
7. Establish a signature pedagogy that acknowledges administration as craft wisdom linking conceptual and abstract knowledge, reflective thinking, case and problem-based work, and action research to the context of practice.
8. Provide full-time, well-planned and supervised internships in collaboration with school districts that involve increasing responsibilities with problems of practice.

COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

1. Ensure that educational leadership programs are well resourced by providing adequate faculty lines, resources for internship supervision, and effective faculty professional development.
2. Vigorous recruitment strategies be mounted to attract a strong faculty with an effective mix of research and practitioner experience who have demonstrated success in teaching, clinical activities, and knowledge development.
3. Develop effective ways to prepare a new generation of professors of educational leadership (and other areas) and to provide current professors (fulltime and adjunct) with relevant and high quality professional development.
4. Establish an environment in which program evaluation and improvement is expected and supported.
5. Support research on leadership development and establish a current and relevant knowledge base on school improvement and student learning
6. Establish a set of core courses for all students enrolled in College of Education Master's programs, focused on instructional and distributive leadership to be taken at the beginning of one's course of study. The core would be used to establish a common knowledge base among teacher and administrative leadership as well as to recruit and counsel candidates into or out of certain programs.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1. Identify strong potential leaders, of diverse race, ethnicity, and sex for participation in leadership preparation and development programs.
2. Develop strong leadership development programs, preferably in cooperation with university, professional association, or state partners.
3. Work with preparation programs to provide full-time, well-planned and supervised internships that involve increasing responsibilities with problems of practice.
4. Working with preparation programs to develop and implement a system of leadership assessments that extend from candidacy through on the job performance.
5. Work with preparation programs to facilitate placement of highly qualified candidates in leadership positions.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

1. Continue contributions toward strong accreditation.
2. Continue to provide and update a set of national leadership standards that can guide practice, preparation, and program accreditation.
3. A national professional standards board (e.g. ABLE) be established to develop and administer a advanced national certification for principals.
4. Continue to support career-long leadership development by creating and providing high quality materials and experiences.

STATES

1. Develop a budget that reflects the enhanced resources needed to prepare educational leaders adequately, including resources to support full-time leadership internships.
2. Establish a working committee with representatives from practice and higher education to establish minimum selection criteria for state approved programs that are more rigorous and more tightly linked to success in the practice of school leadership.
3. Work with key stakeholders to develop and update a set of state leadership standards that can guide practice, preparation, and programing.
4. Work with key stakeholders to use state standards to review all leadrship preparation and development programs, to support program improvement and to close those programs considered inadequate.
5. Invest in the development of a rigorous and useful program evaluation system.
6. Substantially enhance the quality of career-long professional development opportunities for existing educational leaders, including: (1) developing and funding State Leadership Academies; (2) linking license renewal with participation in Educational Leadership Academy programs; and (3) nurturing the growth of a consortium of decentralized professional development opportunities for school leaders.