

**Illinois Board of Higher Education
Commission on School Leader Preparation**

Date: September 27th Meeting

Time: 10:00-2:00 p.m.

Place: Illinois State University

In attendance: Dianne Ashby and Dea Myer (co-chairs), Randy Dunn, Alice Hayes, Allen Ellington, Jerryelyn Jones, John Haller, Cyndi Kuck (by phone), Fred Singleton, Dan Montgomery, Bonnie Smith-Skripps, Della Montgomery, Steve Tozer, Nick Osborne, Jenny Tripses, Diane Rutledge, Walt Warfield, Gary Alexander, Diane Dean, Norm Durlinger, Christy England-Siegerdt, Ross Hodel, Lisa Hood, Erika Hunt, Debbie Meisner-Bertauski, Lisa Hood

I. 10:10—The meeting started with a welcome and introductions by Gary Alexander (IBHE).

II. After introductions, Dea Meyer laid out the goals and purpose of the commission.

- A. To examine school leadership programs in college and universities around the state, and to recommend strategies that IBHE, ISBE, other state agencies, and higher education institutions might adopt to improve school leader preparation programs in Illinois.
- B. The purpose of these meetings is to review and evaluate the findings of several reports that have examined leadership programs around the nation, such as the Levine Report.
- C. From these meetings, the Commission should have:
 - a. Identified areas of future analysis
 - b. Developed a framework for the next meeting
 - c. Begun forming a working document that outlines the commission's views of the problem under examination, the state of leader preparation programs in Illinois, the context within which Illinois preparation programs reside, and a formation of recommendations for a set of principles that will guide the development, revision, and administration of school leadership preparation programs.

III. Dianne Ashby began her comments by asking Commission members to see themselves as a working study group. She asked members to check themselves (or their positions) at the door, using their professional expertise to offer and weigh information, but putting professional affiliations aside.

- A. Dr. Ashby then continued with an explanation of the purpose or structure for the series of meetings.
 - a. The first set of meetings will bring in experts who have studied educational leadership programs nation-wide. These include Betty Hale, Michelle Young, and Arthur Levine. These researchers will present the state of educational leadership programs in the nation and the Commission will consider these findings against programs in Illinois.

- b. The second round of meetings in December will include two hearings in which various stakeholders in Illinois will present their testimonies about the state of leadership preparation programs in Illinois—both the strengths and weaknesses as well as the challenges of the current programs and possible recommendations for their improvement. (Caveat: Commission members will not testify due to a possible conflict of interest.)
- c. During the final set of meetings in January through March, the Commission will turn their focused attention to the state of preparation programs in Illinois. In January, a speaker from ELCC will present the findings of NCATE accreditation reviews—both nationally and in Illinois. Strengths and concerns will be presented.
- d. In February and March, the structure of the meetings has been left open. Commission members may decide to use these as working meetings to review and discuss what has been learned thus far, and to begin forming a set of findings and recommendations.

IV. At this point, Dea Meyer pointed out to Commission members that with a process such as this, members will have to take the bitter with the sweet, and that consensus may not be possible. Thus, members were asked to accept compromise in the final recommendations.

V. Betty Hale was introduced as the guest speaker for the day. Betty Hale is the president of the Institute for Educational Leadership, an organization that researches and develops new concepts and tools to improve educational leadership across the United States. Dr. Hale brings to the commission a national perspective of work that is being done to improve educational leadership around the country. Dr. Hale's Power Point presentation is included as an attachment. During her presentation, she also references several resources, which are provided below:

Dr. Hale presented the study by NASSP that identified breakthrough schools. These are schools that are characterized by 50+% students who are eligible for free-or reduced lunch and 50+% students who are of color. These schools have shown above average achievement gains with 90% of students who graduate, and 90% who are admitted to postsecondary institutions. NASSP examined the leadership practices of school leaders to determine which practices made the difference in student achievement.

For information about Breakthrough Schools, go to:

http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec.asp?CID=66&DID=66

Each link is a copy of a report on the successful practices found in the school.

- This link connects to a section of the website directed toward the skills principals need to improve schools:

http://www.principals.org/s_nassp/sec.asp?CID=706&DID=49788

- This is a pdf file of a self-assessment for principals on the skills and strategies related to improving schools. A good list of essential competencies.

<http://www.principals.org/s%5Fnassp/bin.asp?CID=39&DID=47181&DOC=FILE.PDF>

- Dr. Hale also mentioned the program the Massachusetts Elementary School Association implements to prepare principals. It is a program that does not partner with a college or university. A brochure for this program can be found at:

<http://www.mespa.org/pdf/05Certbrochure.pdf>

- Dr. Hale pointed to elead.org that can be found at: <http://www.e-lead.org/programs/list.asp>. This organization has compiled a list of research-based standards for effective leadership and provides examples of professional development for principals based on these standards (but there is not evaluation data to provide evidence for its effectiveness). There are also self-assessment instruments for professional development programs that give direct links to the role of the academy, of mentoring, and so forth.

- Dr. Hale provided the names of 6 model programs identified by the USDOE as innovative school leadership programs. Information about these programs can be found by following the following links:

[Boston Principal Fellowship Program, Boston, Mass.](#)

[First Ring Leadership Academy, Cleveland, Ohio](#)

[LAUNCH \(Leadership Academy and Urban Network for Chicago\), Chicago, Ill.](#)

[NJ EXCEL \(New Jersey Expedited Certification for Educational Leadership\),](#)

[Monroe Township, N.J.](#)

[New Leaders for New Schools, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C.,](#)

[Memphis, and San Francisco Bay Area](#)

[Principals Excellence Program, Pike County, Ky.](#)

These are included in the DOE publication that can be found at:

<http://www.ed.gov/admins/recruit/prep/alternative/report.pdf>

- The American Enterprise Institute examined a cross section of syllabi from principal preparation programs around the country. Dr. Hale challenges the Commission to examine what is being taught in Illinois preparation programs.
- Maryland has developed a set of instructional standards. These standards outline the skills principals have to know and be able to perform.
- Jennifer Presley, Director of the Illinois Education Research Council, has studied the National College of School Leadership in England. It is offered as a model for states to emulate. Information about the college can be found at:
<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/>
- Jennifer Presley has also studied the career paths of administrative certificate holders in Illinois. She found that many certificate holders have no intention of obtaining a principal position, and that many preparation

programs use these students as “cashcows” to fund other programs in the college. The full report can be found at:

http://ierc.siue.edu/documents/IERC_03_1.pdf

- When contemplating standards of practice, Dr. Hale cautions us to consider some future scenarios. MCREL has developed some scenarios of what the educational context and structure may look like in the future. Will school always look like this in the future? Will the standards hold up?
- Terry Orr from Teachers College might be a good person to talk to as well as Todd Kern. Both have worked with principal preparation programs. The contact information for each of these is below:

Todd Kern
Chief Information Officer
New Leaders for New Schools
(working on evaluation)
tkern@nlms.org

Terry Orr
Teachers College
(evaluation “guru”)
Mto10@columbia.edu

VII. Dr. Durlinger gave the background of the IL-State Action for Educational Leadership Project (IL-SAELP). Currently, IL-SAELP membership is proposing a change to principal certification in Illinois, characterized by a multi-tiered system. After completing a Type 75 licensure program and passing the certification exam, the candidate receives the standard certificate. During the next five years to work toward renewing the standards certificate, the new principal participates in a New Principal Program, which is two years of induction activities. 40 hours of the 100 hours of required professional development are taken during these first two years, the remaining 60 hours are taken in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th years. First year principals will also be required to participate in a coaching program with an experienced and accomplished principal. Finally, to be eligible for renewing the standard certificate new principals must provide evidence of at least three positive performance evaluations, two of which are in the final two years of the five year licensing process.

The third tier of the certification process is the development of a voluntary Master Principal certificate. To earn this certificate, principals participate in the Master Principal Program, which is a series of performance-based experiences based on the needs of the principal.

IL-SAELP is also considering an alternative program for National Board Certified Teachers who want to work at principal certification; and a teacher leader endorsement for teachers who desire to perform instruction leadership duties in their schools.

Some of the work that IL-SAELP members are doing now could contribute to the Commission's deliberations. Currently, the administration preparation committee is working to develop a framework for quality educational administration programs. Other committees are looking at mentoring and principal professional development.

Dr. Durflinger said that the concern for how administrators are being prepared is evident in policy changes in districts around the state. For example, CPS requires principals to go through additional training to be eligible for a principal position in one of Chicago's public schools. In addition, Springfield School District also has a grown-your-own principal program in collaboration with ISU. Palestine School District has also followed this model.

There are several considerations the Commission must make in deciding how educational preparation programs should be improved, as suggested by Dr. Durflinger:

- First, is there a need for 27 principal preparation programs in IL?
- Should we look at the Massachusetts plan in which preparation programs are not delivered through colleges or universities? Could we do something like this in IL?
- Is it different being a principal in rural schools versus urban schools? Would the preparation a principal receives in leading urban school be adequate for the principal if he or she chose to move to a rural school? Would the skills transfer?
- How should we evaluate education administration programs? How would we measure outcomes?

Last year, the Illinois Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (IACTE) voted to recommend that the state develop new approaches to the approval of principal and superintendent preparation programs by requiring national accreditation. As a result the State Superintendent commissioned a taskforce to look at the redundancy in the program approval process. There was some discussion about NCATE standards and the process NCATE uses in their accreditation process. Should ISBE use this process to weed out the ineffective programs? Might this cause the less effective programs to benchmark to the most effective programs?

Should we have a joint study between IBHE and ISBE on the evaluation component? Currently, IBHE reviews the preparation program and gives it initial approval, it then goes before ISBE for final approval. Is this the way to review and approve programs? Should we develop a report card for educational administration programs?

In addition, the Illinois Association of Deans of Public Colleges of Education, IBHE, and ISBE are working to develop a centralized system for tracking school administrator program graduates, streamlining individual surveys into one statewide system of information.

Steve Tozer at UIC noted that UIC is trying to develop a strong assessment process, and he believes that the field is ripe for developing a strong program assessment.

VIII. At this point, Dea Meyer and Dianne Ashby asked the group to answer the following questions:

1. What is one new thing they learned today?
2. What does the Commission need to address?
3. What do you want to see or read before the next meeting?

The following includes a summary of the responses heard from commission members based on these three questions:

- We should have more discussion about standards. Is the problem a question of the quality of our system? We need a system to measure the product, and examine what we already have. Where are we now? We already have standards, is the assessment aligned with the standards?
- As a practitioner, would want to have practicing principals telling us what's effective and how it's impacting principal performance.
- Learned that other states are working collaboratively with other groups and other associations. How can we bring groups together? Is there a connection or collaboration between the 27 preparation programs?
- That it is hard to show evidence of effectiveness, but it is necessary.
- The Commission needs to talk with educational administrators and ask what they learned and at what point in their career path they learned it. The Commission also needs to address what we want educational leaders to know and when, and how we can measure their learning.
- Do leaders in rural or small towns need different training than those from urban or larger districts? Do they deal with the same issues?

The need to get a sense of what's out there. What is the similarity between Art Levine's national report and what we have in Illinois? The Commission needs a baseline from which to gauge where we need to go. What information is needed? Do we need to gather principals in focus groups and talk with them about the Levine Report and the state of preparation programs in Illinois?

There is a problem in Illinois in which educational administration programs are overproducing school administrators who don't meet the learning needs of kids. There's not a low-performing school out there that wouldn't be helped by a well-prepared and skilled principal.

Illinois is not unique in the problem the Commission is trying to address. (From the national reports, other states are suffering from this problem as well.)

The Commission needs more information about specific issues in Illinois. What are the inadequacies? At this time the problem is cluttered.

The Commission needs to say what administrators need to learn and when, being careful to distinguish between pre-service and in-service. The Commission also needs to establish a baseline and add to it. Finally, the Commission needs to clearly identify those things/issues that principals cannot control, for example teacher and student mobility and available funds for the budget. He also said that the quality of the program is based on the quality of the graduates.

If we designed a program aligned with Levine's recommendations, we still may not solve the problem of inadequate principals. We've had the same competencies for years, and we need to translate these to practice, which is a challenge, but we won't be able to achieve anything without doing this. Dr. Dunn also wondered, if we have known this stuff for 20 years, why haven't we made more progress in our programs? One thought is that structural factors are a barrier to progress, and the Commission needs to consider the micro and macro-political overlays. Often principals do not have at their disposal the levers needed to do what they need to do to improve the school. Alternative schools, like charter schools, cleaned out the underbrush of structural impediments giving school leaders more leeway to do what needs to be done. This has to be addressed. Finally, in response to the comment that the Commission needs to look at the market needs that surround preparation programs. Dr. Dunn said that the Commission actually needs to move away from market forces, that the notion of weeding out programs is not the tradition in Illinois. North Carolina tried to weed out weak programs and within a few years, all of the programs were reinstated.

It all basically comes back to student achievement which stems from: 1st teacher quality, and 2nd leader quality. As others have said the Commission needs to look at how things are being done, and not look at principal preparation programs in isolation. Leader preparation is a continuum of activities that are related, so the Commission needs to look at what Illinois does to prepare principals, and then what the state does to support them. This is a systems approach, not programs in isolation.

It's important that we understand whether we're going to treat potential leaders as scholars, or if they are being treated at the college/university as cash cows. How does the educational administration program support the mission of the college or university? Are leaders born or developed?

Dea Meyer and Dianne Ashby: A review of what they heard that the Commission needs to address.

1. The current set of standards and assessments and whether or not they are aligned with the standards.

2. How do we evaluate leadership programs? We need to talk to practicing principals about effective programs, as well as talk with school districts about the quality of programs' graduates.
3. Can we learn from other institutions/agencies that are partnering to deliver preparation programs? What are the benefits of partnerships?
4. What is the purpose of preparation programs?
5. What is the value or need for differentiated instruction (for rural and urban areas) versus standardized instruction?
6. What are some various delivery models? What works?
7. Are we using resources to meet the needs of school districts or colleges/universities?
8. Looking at the labor market, how might school leader programs be impacted by the needs of school districts in the future? What are the demands principals are trying to fill? What do schools need from their principals? What will they need 2, 5, 10 years down the road?
9. We need an overview of principal preparation in Illinois.

Diane Rutledge suggested that the Commission need to talk with school districts (superintendents and boards of education), about principal preparation.

Steve Tozer also suggested it would be nice to look at exemplary principals that have helped at-risk students achieve.

Cindy Kuck wanted to also know what makes for effective internships and mentoring? Dea Meyer suggested the need to see more information regarding about teacher and principal turnover? Why do principals leave their schools or the field before they retire?

Nick Osborne further recommended the Commission also needs to consider the disposition and values that effective administrator have. Is there a certain set of values that administrators should have? If so, what are these values? Are some values still emerging? We also need to be more selective in principal preparation programs.

Betty Hale brought up that National Louis works with New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) in 3 locations to certify principals. Is there anything innovative in NLNS that is rubbing off on National Louis?

Wrap Up:

For the next meeting: Michelle Young will be the speaker and the Commission will hear the results of surveys sent to Illinois superintendents and principals collected by IL-SAELP.

The meeting will be held October 26 at the offices of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, 431 East Adams.