

**A Foundation for Change:
A Gap Analysis of Illinois Leadership
Preparation Programs**

Submitted to the Illinois Board of Higher Education
By the ICPEA Task Force
November 27, 2007

The ICPEA Special Task Force used the following techniques for conducting the study of the gap analysis:

- Analyzed and used 17 McREL research-based principal skills/competencies for the study
- Used the Commission’s report “Blueprint for Change” recommendations as the foundation of the study.
- Surveyed superintendents, principals, and teachers on their perception of principals’ **degree** of attainment of the 17 McREL skills/competencies and the **importance** of them
- Conducted focus groups of superintendents and principals
- Surveyed chairs/coordinators of principal preparation programs for complete program data concerning their programs
- Surveyed chairs/coordinators and preparation program faculty of their perception of the degree of importance for each of the “Blueprint for Change” recommendations

The following is a summary of the findings of the ICPEA Special Task Force. The findings are organized around the “Blueprint for Change” report and address each of the recommendations from the report. The Special Task Force findings came from surveys, focus groups, and informational reports.

Recommendation One: Restructure Admission Criteria and Recruit High Quality Principals:

Implementation 1.1: Initiate marketing plans that outline a strategy to advertise and promote preparation programs that attract a competent and diverse applicant pool.

ICPEA Findings:

Most institutions have already implemented something toward this strategy; many have increased admission requirements and candidate screening mechanisms.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10) 3.80

Faculty (N = 37): 4.24

***For specific program information, see Appendix H.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 1.2: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

Most institutions have already implemented this strategy through increased admission requirements and candidate screening mechanisms.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10) 4.60

Faculty (N = 37): 4.13

***For specific program information, see Appendix H.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 1.3: Implement programs that create collaborations between preparation programs and primary feeder school districts, enabling them to grow their own leadership talent pool.

ICPEA Findings:

Many institutions have cohort partnerships with districts to help them “grow their own leaders.” These partnerships have allowed for creative collaborations between preparation program faculty and the cohort institution such as co-teaching; use of district faculty to teach classes; and various forms of technology for delivery of content.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10) 3.80

Faculty (N = 37): 4.13

***For specific program information, see Appendix J.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 1.4: Enlist faculty in educational administration and teacher education programs to identify students who demonstrate characteristics of effective leadership.

ICPEA Findings:

Many of the students that are now participating in Leadership Preparation programs have been encouraged by district leaders to seek administrative certification because of their promising leadership potential (anecdotal data).

This item was not included in the survey of Chairs/coordinators and Faculty.

Recommendation Two: Improve Programs Using Rigorous Assessment Data

Implementation 2.1: Revamp the assessment system to determine if candidates demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of P-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.

ICPEA Findings:

All preparation programs who meet NCATE requirements must use up to eight comprehensive assessments to determine whether or not candidates demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of P-12 schools and to improve student learning based on the ELCC Standards and standard elements. These 27 Standard Elements provide assessment data for use to continuously improve program curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

	Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10):	Faculty (N = 37):
2.1a – demonstrate	4.60	4.72
2.1b – identify	5.00	4.89
2.1c – use	4.70	4.62

***For specific program information, see Appendix H.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 2.2: Require that principal preparation programs be approved by the state with the submission of assessment processes, findings, and action plans for making improvements mandatory.

ICPEA Findings:

All NCATE approved programs are also approved by the State during the same accreditation visit. The State accreditation team has complete access to all NCATE documents, assessments, assessment data, and how each program uses their data for program improvement as required by NCATE.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10):

Faculty (N = 37):

2.2a – assessment	3.80	3.70
2.2b – findings	3.80	3.59
2.2c – action plans	3.80	3.38

***For specific program information, see Appendix H.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 2.3: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

All “public” preparation programs are participating in this study and look forward to having the data available for use in improving programs and program offerings.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 3.50

Faculty (N = 37): 3.61

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 2.4: Provide to the state and public the data collected from each program's assessment system.

ICPEA Findings:

	Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10):	Faculty (N = 37):
2.4a – state	4.20	3.91
2.4b – public	3.80	3.55

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 2.5: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

Most public preparation programs have advisory groups that help in the assessment of programs and provide input for improvement.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 4.70

Faculty (N = 37): 4.48

***For specific program information, see Appendix J.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 2.6: 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.

ICPEA Findings: There was no input to this recommendation because it was not included in the survey.

Recommendation Three: Create Meaningful Clinical and Internship Experiences

Implementation 3.1: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

All NCATE approved programs must meet the following internship standards: that must be substantial – provide each candidate experience in each of the NCATE standards and standard elements; the experiences must be in multiple settings; the experiences must be for at least one semester; the experiences must have oversight by both a district mentor and a college supervisor; and each candidate is to receive credit (a minimum of 3 credit hours) for the experience.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10):

3.1a – one year	3.70
3.1b – required	4.70
3.1c – qualify	3.00
3.1d – demonstrate	4.80

Faculty (N = 37):

4.13
4.35
3.37
4.62

***For specific program information, see Appendix K.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 3.2: Strengthen university-school partnerships to better utilize field experiences available through school leader preparation programs.

ICPEA Findings:

Preparation program experiences for program candidates are only as good as the schools in which they are placed and the experiences in which they are allowed to participate. Due to the stress of NCLB on some principals, they are now reticent to allow internship candidates to do some important learning tasks because their job is on the line, not the intern.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 4.80

Faculty (N = 37): 4.62

***For specific program information, see Appendix K.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 3.3: Provide meaningful training for mentors at the university level.

ICPEA Findings:

Most classes at the university level follow a “theory to practice” format. Learn the theory and then apply it directly in a real school setting or a simulated setting in the classroom.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 4.10

Faculty (N = 37): 4.35

***For specific program information, see Appendix K.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 3.4: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

For NCATE schools this is already being implemented because it is a requirement.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 3.40

Faculty (N = 37): 4.08

***For specific program information, see Appendix K.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 3.5: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

All preparation programs are always looking for more funding!

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 3.20

Faculty (N = 37): 4.29

***For specific program information, see Appendix K.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 3.6: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

All preparation programs who meet NCATE requirements must use up to eight comprehensive assessments to determine whether or not candidates demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of P-12 schools and to improve student learning based on the ELCC standards and standard elements. These 27 standard elements provide assessment data for use to continuously improve program curriculum, instruction, and assessment. NCATE requires that all assessments must be aligned to a scoring guide that tell candidates how they can demonstrate success on the ELCC standards and standard elements; data tables must be designed to collect data on all candidates to demonstrate their proficiency on the standards and standard elements.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): Faculty (N = 37):

3.6a – design 4.20 4.45

3.6b – show 4.10 2.64

***For specific program information, see Appendix H and K.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 3.7: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

All NCATE preparation programs would vigorously agree with the recommendation.

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 3.40

Faculty (N = 37): 4.67

***For specific program information, see Appendix H and K.**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Recommendation Four: Establish a Rigorous Certification Exam

Implementation 4.1: Replace the current leader certification exams with the School Leaders Licensure Assessment and the School Superintendent Assessment, both developed by the Educational Testing Service.

ICPEA Findings:

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10):	3.70
Faculty (N = 37):	3.37

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Recommendation Five: Revise the Certification and Endorsement Structure

Implementation 5.1: Reserve the Type 75 certificate for principals only.

ICPEA Findings:

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10):	3.80
Faculty (N = 37):	2.45

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 5.2: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 3.80

Faculty (N = 37): 3.37

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 5.3: Develop through collaboration of colleges, universities, ISBE, and school districts, certificate programs that correspond to the new areas of endorsement.

ICPEA Findings:

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 3.80

Faculty (N = 37): 3.72

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Recommendation Six: Coordinate a Rigorous Program Review and Approval Process

Implementation 6.1: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): **2.60**

Faculty (N = 37): **2.38**

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 6.2: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 4.80

Faculty (N = 37): 3.37

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 6.3: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 4.40

Faculty (N = 37): 2.78

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

Implementation 6.4: 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.

ICPEA Findings:

Chairs/Coordinators (N = 10): 4.30

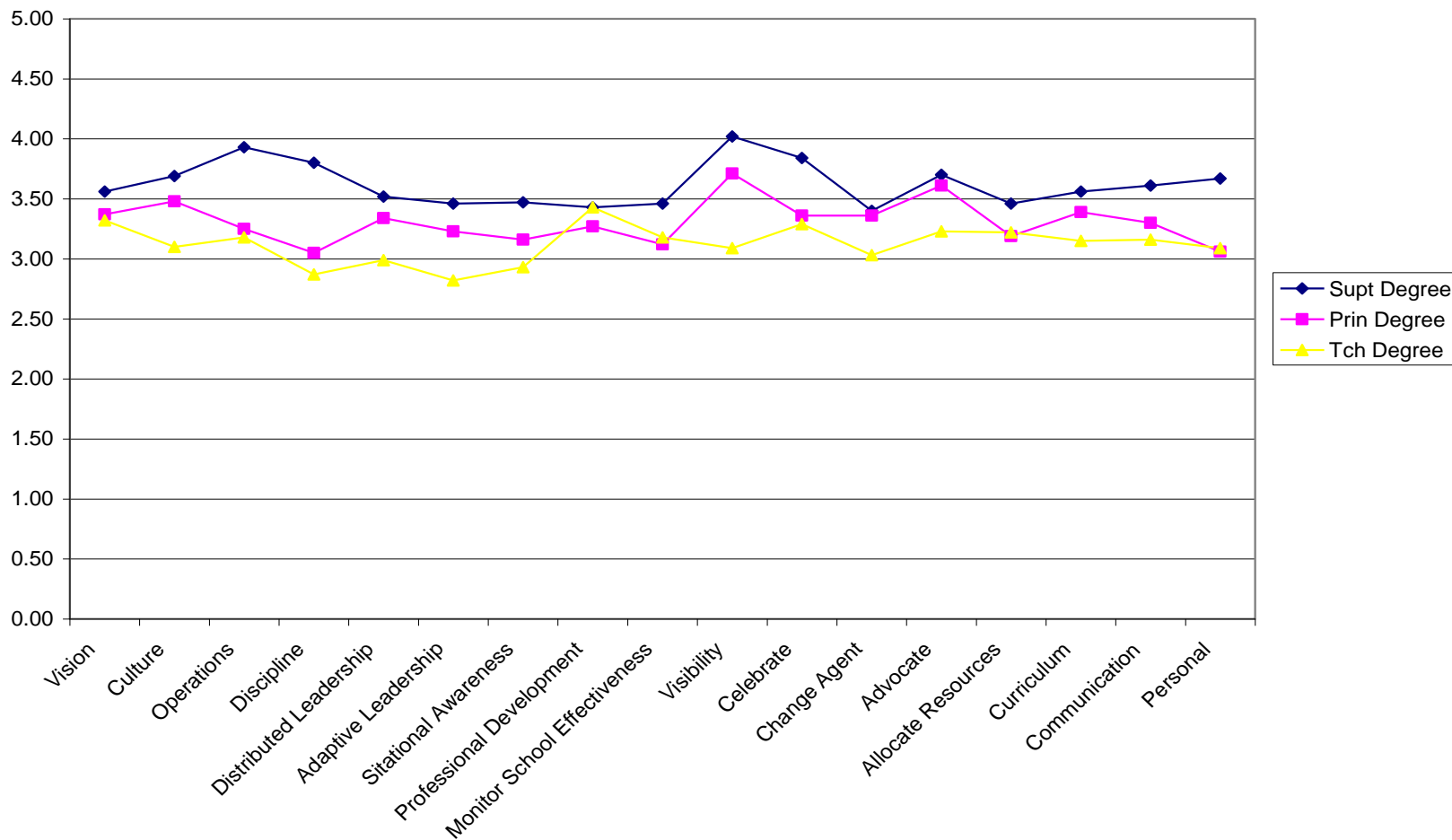
Faculty (N = 37): 4.13

Scale: 1 = Not Important 3 = Neutral 5 = Important

The next three charts represent the data that was gathered from Superintendents, Principals, and Teachers concerning their perception of principals' **degree** of attainment of the 17 McREL skills/competencies and their perception of the **importance** of the skills/competencies.

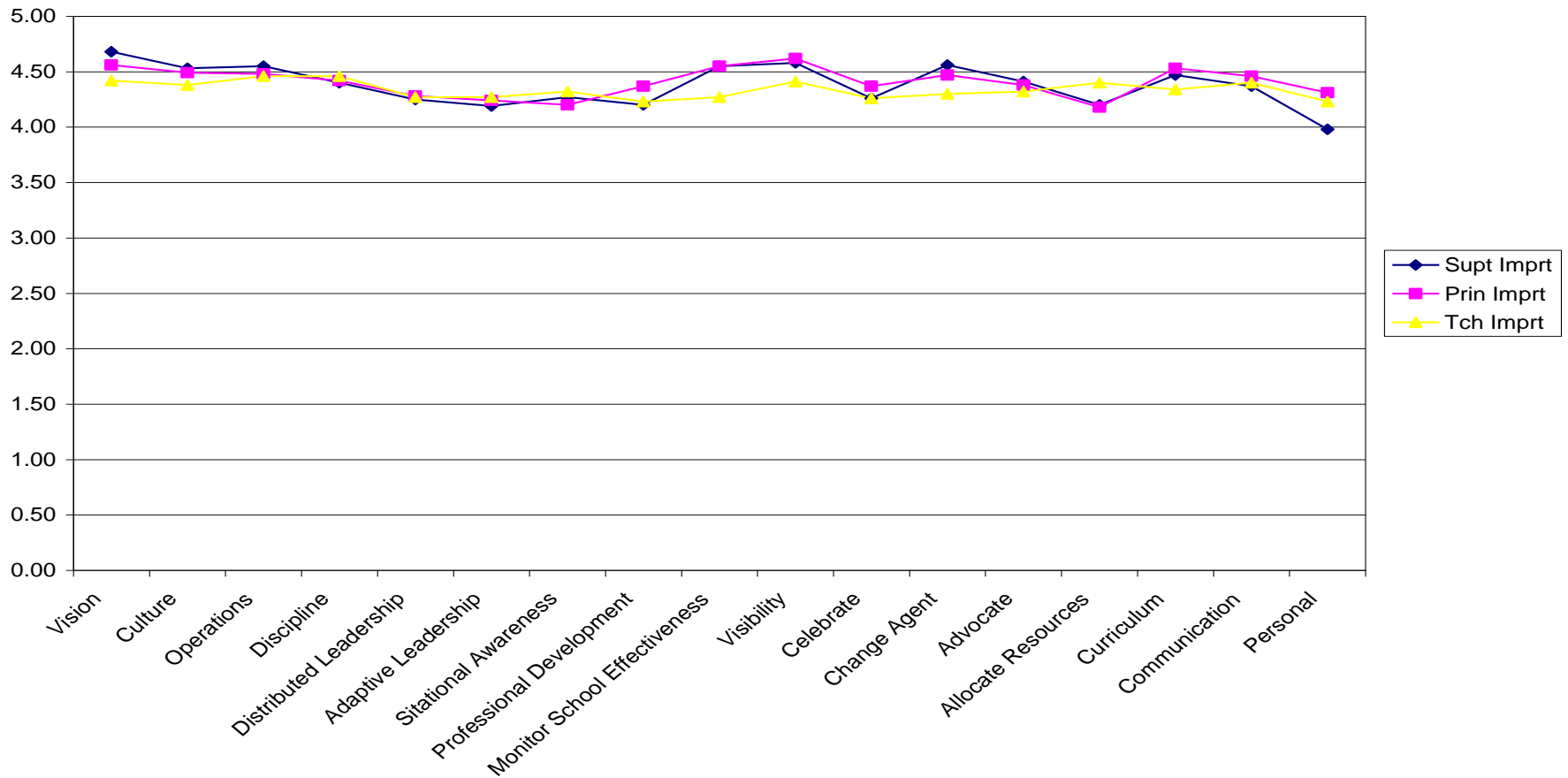
Superintendent, Principal, Teacher survey responses of the “degree of attainment” of each Principal Skill/Competency

Attained Degree of Principal Preparation Skills/Competencies



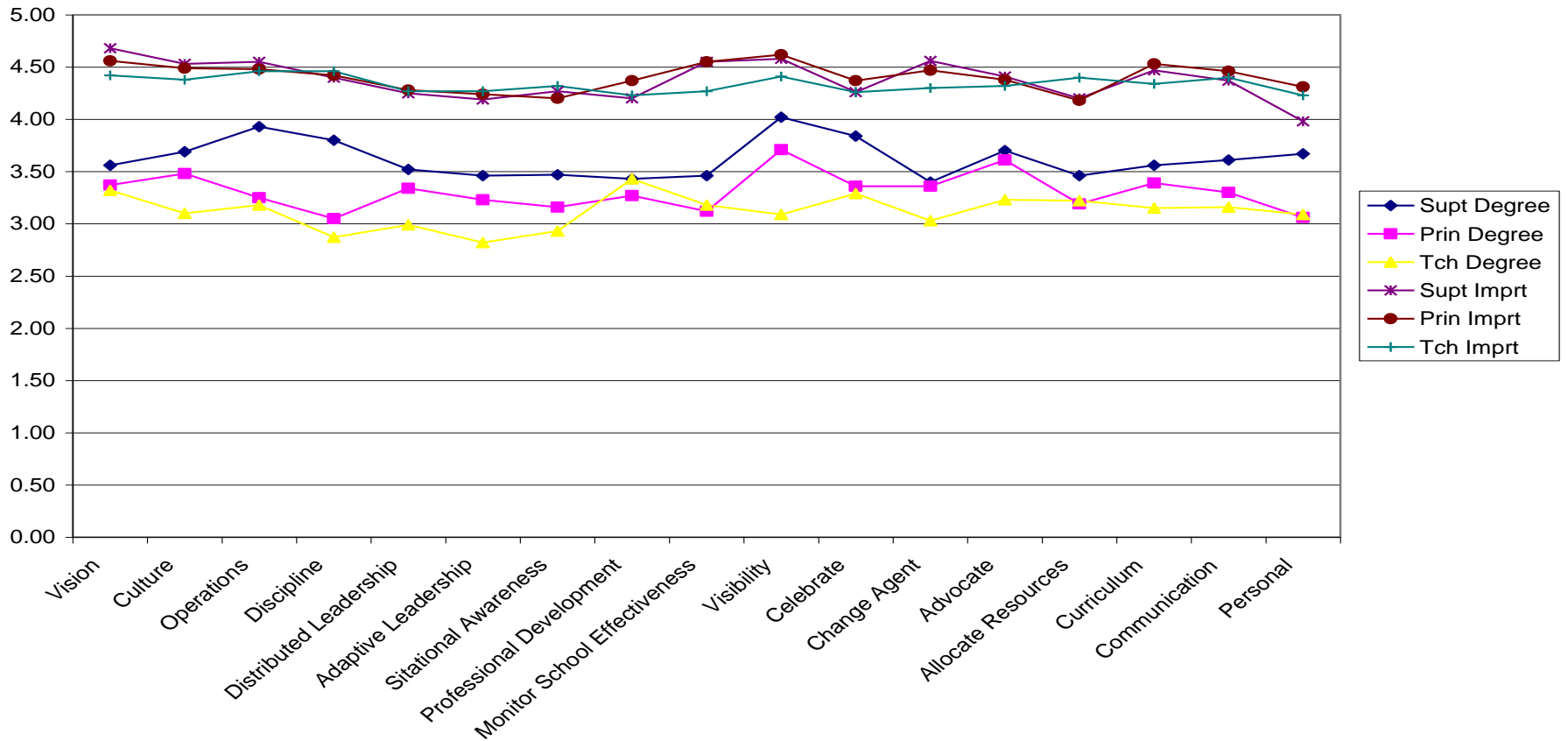
Superintendent, Principal, Teacher survey responses of the “estimate of importance” of each Principal Skill/Competency

Importance of Principal Preparation Skills/Competencies



“Degree of attainment” and the “estimate of importance” of Principal Skills/Competencies.

Attained Degree of Principal Preparation Skills/Competencies and Importance of Principal Preparation Skills/Competencies



Focus Group Findings:

Question 1. How well prepared are your principals?

	<u>Superintendents:</u>	<u>Principals:</u>
Very Well:	5	3
Good, well:	10	9
Poor:	3	5

2. What performance strengths do you attribute to principal preparation programs?

Superintendents: Learning Standards (4); Leadership (4); Data based decision making (3); Prep by experienced K-12 faculty with practical knowledge (2); School law (2); Teacher evaluation (2); Curriculum (2); Public relations (1); Networking with other candidates (1); Finances; School climate; Screening of candidates; Technology / communications; School safety and security; School improvement; Student achievement; Theory to practice; Development of planning processes.

Principals: Prep by experienced K-12 faculty with practical knowledge (3); Public relations and communications (2); People skills; Organizational skills; Being a leader rather than a manager.

3. What areas of improvement are needed for your principals?

Superintendents: Teacher evaluation (5) People skills (4); Finance & budgets (4); Data analysis (3); Ability to facilitate/run meetings or groups (3); Internship [more experiences; as a one year practicing administrator not as a full time teacher (3); Time management skills (2); special education training (2); Curriculum development (2); School improvement planning (1); Test score analysis (1); Global view of the position (1); Discipline (1); Technology skills; less theory and more practice; contracts; weed out poor ones; delegation skills; law; hiring practices; dealing with difficult people; AYP understanding; instructional leadership; dealing with difficult parents; ethics and importance of the position.

Principals: “Real life internships” (5); Data analysis (2); Ability to facilitate/run meetings or groups; Time management skills; Finance; Special education training; Curriculum development; Test score analysis; Dealing with difficult people.

4. Who should address gaps between principal strengths and weaknesses?

Superintendents: Joint responsibility - better articulation/collaboration/partnership between graduate cert. programs, ROE's IASA, IPA, and recertification programs (8); Superintendents (5); ISBE (2); Mentoring program (2); Universities(1); Universities and school districts (OJT); Individuals should address their own gaps; Teach individuals how and when to seek help/advice; Full service NCATE accredited universities; School boards; IPA

Principals: Form a committee of interested principals to help (3); Veteran Administrators (2); IPA

5. What gets in the way of principals being instructional leaders?

Superintendents: Putting out fires/too many hats/too many expectations/non instructional duties (6); time management (5); Discipline (3); Extra-curricular (3); Supervision of students (3); Special education (3); State mandates (2); Excessive paperwork (2); Parents / parent-teacher conflicts (1); Failure to earn staff and parent trust (1); Maintenance concerns / health life safety concerns (1); Lack of understanding of the demands of job (1); NCLB; Communications with staff; Lack of resources; Lack of follow through; Politics; Lack of ability to delegate; Superintendents; Insufficient number of administrators to do all the work

Principals: Putting out fires/too many hats/too many expectations/non instructional duties and day to day operations (7); Time management (3); Discipline; Extra-curricular; State mandates and excessive paperwork; Politics

Other Data:

In the Appendices of the report, there are several other items that demonstrate the work of Principal Preparation Programs in the state.

Appendix H is a report of institutional information including accreditation information, number of candidates in the program served, faculty data, courses required for the Type 75 certificate, and admissions requirements.

Appendix I is a report of the “best practices” from those programs that reported information about the innovative and best aspects of their programs. Also included in this report are the current “barriers” these programs reported that inhibit their effectiveness in the preparation of principals.

Other Data (cont.)

Appendix J is a chart of each reporting preparation program's involvement with advisory boards and/or partnerships. Due to the time restraints on conducting the research for these reports, additional information about the definitions of these partnerships and advisory boards was not able to be collected.

Appendix K is a report from the principal preparation program chairs/coordinators of information about internships. The report gives internship length, number of credit hours, full or part-time and other clinical experience requirements, when the internship is in the program, supervisor visits and information, communication tools used, selection of sites, compensation for mentors/site-supervisors, and internship assessment information. It is a comprehensive report of internship requirements and processes used by preparation programs.

So what does all this mean? After gathering all of this data into a 72 page report, what should be done to improve principal preparation programs in the State of Illinois?

The following recommendations are made from the point of view of practitioners in the field who have worked in PK-12 schools and from many who are now helping prepare candidates to be school leaders.

Recommendations:

1. Principal preparation programs must have “PK-12 teaching and learning” as their central focus.
2. A rigorous state certification examination must be aligned to agreed-upon standards (i.e. ELCC) that will provide valid, useable data and information for program improvement.
3. Certification preparation programs provide “initial principalship skills and knowledge,” not experienced principals. There is a gap between the two. To address this gap, ongoing professional development beyond the initial certification should be explored, developed and funded.

Recommendations (cont.)

4. Internship data shows that there is little program consistency across the state. If internships are to be vital in the preparation of candidates, consistency of knowledge, skills and experiences must be at a benchmark level. A benchmark (such as the NCATE standards) should be applied to all internship programs in the state.

5. Based on data from the surveys and focus groups, principal candidates need longer classroom teaching experiences before being admitted to our programs (recommendation of a minimum of 4 years of successful teaching experience).

6. Partnerships should be an integral part of preparation programs. There needs to be funding and recognition of the regional diversities within the state to support these partnership experiences.

Recommendations:

7. College and university standards for tenure and promotion must recognize the service, support, partnerships, and other work of principal preparation faculty.
8. Support the “Blueprint” recommendations that pertain to IBHE and ISBE for oversight and assessment of Illinois principal preparation programs.
9. Support greater curricular content consistency of principal preparation programs.
10. Preparation program faculty should possess successful experiences in PK-12 educational settings.

In summary, the challenge in restructuring Illinois principal preparation programs is to create 21st century programs that are adaptive to the needs of the new learners who are coming to our schools today and in the future.