

# Leadership Preparation in Illinois

ISBE/IBHE Conference

May 29, 2008

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# Problem 1

- For most Illinois school children, demographics are destiny. Why?
- We are not implementing what we already know about creating successful learning environments for children and youth.

# Problem 2

- Increasingly, policy makers, funders, and legislators are looking outside higher education for the solutions to problem #1; “breaking the monopoly” of higher ed on teacher preparation and principal preparation; while developing accountability measures that exacerbate problems for higher education resources.

# Solution to both problems:

- we in higher ed must address ourselves NOT primarily to quantity but to quality, in terms of:
- the demonstrated improvement of student learning in pre-K-12 schools (“student learning focused” professional preparation)

# Using What We Know

- The Urbanski postulate
- The NCTAF postulate
- The EOL postulate: quality of classroom instruction at the school level is a function of how schools are organized to support adult learning and program coherence

# Corollaries 1 & 2

- We know what successful low income schools look like.
- The factors that these successful schools share in common are directly related to quality of school leadership.

# The Crucial Hypothesis

- **Higher education, working collaboratively with school districts, can regularly and reliably produce school leaders whose schools demonstrate sharply improved student learning where it is most needed.**

# TF Recommendation 1

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

# Implication

- Our current approach to licensure is not adequate to the task.
- Evidence: school performance in Illinois and Type 75 enrollments in Illinois

# TF Recommendation 2

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

# Implications 1, 2

- higher education alone is not likely to get the job done.
- our most important ethical obligation is not to the graduate student, but to the high school senior.

# TF Recommendation 3

- Refocused principal preparation programs must demonstrate that they develop and rigorously assess in aspiring principals *the capacities that are most likely to improve student learning in preK-12 schools*. These capacities should . . .

# TF 3 Continued

- (a) form the heart of the new Illinois School Leadership Standards previously recommended and (b) reflect the vision of school leadership identified in the Illinois Distinguished Principals Program.

# Implications 1, 2

- The burden is on higher education to prove the crucial hypothesis.
- We know enough already about candidate selection and program design to prove the hypothesis; the obstacles are economic and political.

# The problem of scale

- We have the opportunity to be more selective about who becomes a principal than about who becomes a physician
- The scale of the problem is solvable if we manage our resources strategically