

**School Leader Task Force
Position Paper
IADPCE
January 4, 2008**

The Illinois Association of Deans of Public Colleges of Education (IADPCE) is pleased to have an opportunity to express their views regarding the recommendations in the *School Leader Preparation: Blueprint for Change*. The preparation of administrators, teachers, and other school personnel is central to our mission, and we take this role very seriously. Not only do we routinely submit ourselves to external review by national accrediting agencies, each of our programs engages routinely in annual internal review. Data collected from these reviews allows us to refine and better prepare the educational professionals of the future. In addition, IADPCE just completed the pilot administration of what will become a yearly evaluation of administrator preparation programs.

IADPCE agrees that the preparation of future K-12 administrators is important: for the future of K-12 students and for the state of Illinois. The time has come to reinvest in the preparation of education professionals. The *School Leader Preparation: Blueprint for Change* presented many ideas for change – some will require minor modifications while others will require a major investment in resources. The resource issue is one that is of concern to the deans as most of us have not had a base budget increase in the last eight years. We are hopeful that the state will partner with the deans to lobby for the necessary resources to make our programs national models for administrator preparation.

In December 2007, the deans were asked to complete a short survey that asked them to prioritize the recommendations from the *School Leader Preparation: Blueprint for Change*. Not surprisingly, the recommendations were prioritized differently by the deans. One could assume this may have been related to the type of institution, the type of program at their institution, or the dean's personal beliefs. The recommendations that received the highest prioritization were:

- Revamp the assessment system and use findings to bolster the collaborations between school districts and higher education, and ultimately improve practices and programs in school leadership preparation.
- Strengthen university-school partnerships to better utilize field experiences available through school leader preparation programs.
- Provide meaningful training for mentors at the university level.
- 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.
- Implement programs that create collaborations between preparation programs and primary feeder school districts, enabling them to grow their own leadership talent pool.
- Revamp the assessment system to identify program improvements needed to consistently produce candidates who can effectively lead schools.

- 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.
- Require meaningful clinical and internship experiences where candidates should be expected to demonstrate evidence of mastering ISLLC standards, as would be appropriate for an entry-level administrator.
- 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.
- Appoint a state wide representative to be an active participant in the interstate Consortium on School Leadership, and to participate in the review of ISLLC standards and the ELCC standards that is currently underway.
- 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.

While these recommendations were ranked the highest by the deans participating in the survey, an additional five recommendations need to be noted as they were ranked just below those listed above.

- Revamp the assessment system to determine if the candidates demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of P-12 schools and to improve student learning.
- 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.
- Require meaningful clinical and internships experiences that ideally extend an entire year.
- Require meaningful clinical and internships experiences as a degree requirement in every program.
- Develop through collaboration of colleges, universities, ISBE, and school districts, certificate programs that correspond to the new areas of endorsement.

All leadership preparation programs in Illinois should be held to the same standards and must submit to state program review or SPA review with national accreditation. Regardless of which review is undertaken, all programs must be held to the same standards and rigorous review of those standards.

In summary, the IADPCE is supportive of the work of this task force. The preparation of highly qualified school leaders for the future is crucial for our state and we are looking forward to partnering with other interested constituents in this endeavor.