

# Suggested Considerations for School Leadership Task Force

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**Preface:** The Illinois Education Association-NEA supports the development and support of high quality principals. We have been working to provide high quality induction and mentoring for new principals. We recognize how important high quality school leadership is to both teacher and student performance. In many ways, the quality of the principal has more impact on the quality of our members' work lives than even our own leadership.

We would offer the following suggested considerations for the Task Force. The first two go beyond any specific IEA policy or position. The third suggestion is an IEA position.

- 1) It seems to me the intervention with the greatest leverage is to dramatically improve the rigor of the assessment required to get the Type 75 certificate. This would allow us to focus more on outcomes rather than inputs. This could drive all other improvements. Given that we are talking about a relatively small number of new principals needed each year, about 500, the cost of developing and implementing a rigorous, standards-aligned assessment is relatively cost effective. Illinois could build on the work of Vanderbilt University which has been developing a more comprehensive and rigorous principal evaluation system. The Wallace Foundation has been supporting this work.
- 2) With the same rigorous, standards-aligned assessment required for all new principals, Illinois should open up the market for providers. More competition in the relatively closed market of current providers would encourage all providers to improve the quality of their programs and to do so more quickly. This is what Massachusetts has done. According to Katie Haycock, Education Trust, Massachusetts has the best results of any state in improving their NAEP results, including progress in closing the achievement gap.
- 3) Illinois should allow districts and their local unions to voluntarily bargain peer review programs that do not restrict the evaluation of teachers only to those who hold the Type 75 Certificate. A number of major districts across the country already do this, including Cincinnati, Columbus, and Toledo in Ohio, Rochester, New York, and Seattle, Washington. According to the book, *United Mind Workers*, by Charles Kerchner, Julia Koppich, and Joseph Weeres, these programs are more effective in removing poor quality teachers and do so in greater numbers. This expansion of distributed leadership would allow principals to focus more time and attention on student learning and also lessen some of the tensions between principal and staff contributing to a more

collaborative culture in the school. IEA does have a formal position that supports the voluntary bargaining of peer review programs.