

School Leadership Task Force
Meeting Minutes – January 8, 2008

Task force members present: Jo Anderson-IEA; Mike Bartlett-IASB; Ed Geppert-IFT; Judith Hackett-Special Ed; Diane Jackman-EIU; Jason Leahy-IPA; Carlene Lutz-IFT; Debbie Meisner-Bertauski-IBHE; Peg Mueller-Chicago Community Trust; John Murphy-ICPEA; Patrick Murphy-ISBE; David Prasse-Private Deans; Faye Terrell Perkins-CPAA; Linda Tomlinson-ISBE; Steve Tozer-UIC; Joyce Weiner-Early Learning; Betty Cittadine-CPS; Linda Shay-CPS; Janet Knupp-Chicago Public Education Fund; Deb Curtis-ISU; April Ervin-New Leaders for New Schools; Doug Johnson-Kane County Regional Superintendent; Alicia Howard-CPS; Rich Voltz-IASA.

Task force members on conference call: Jessica Handy-Senate Staff (on behalf of Deana Demuzio); Diane Rutledge-LUDA.

Task Force members not present: Michael Smith - State Representative; Jeff Mays - Illinois Business Roundtable; Brad Hutchison - Olympia School District; Chris Koch - Illinois State Board of Education; Judy Erwin - Illinois Board of Higher Education.

Staff members present: Michele Seelbach - Illinois Board of Higher Education; Erika Hunt - Illinois State University; Lisa Hood - Illinois State University; Norm Durflinger, Illinois State University, and Dennis Williams - Illinois State Board of Education (on phone)

10:00 – 10:45 a.m. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting opened with introductions. The first topic of discussion was the resource binder, which was sent to members. Everyone acknowledged receiving the binder and were asked to contact staff members if they had additional resources to add. A new index for the binder was included that reflected the two additional articles and summaries suggested by Don Hackman at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

A target draft of the task force report was discussed. This report was based on the response of the survey distributed to task force members. Four areas of which the recommendations could be couched were listed:

1. Admission selectivity
2. Structure of principal prep programs – one year internships and assessment measures
3. Partnerships between universities and districts
4. State level support for partnerships

Steve said that the group will need to reach some agreement on the areas and the recommendations. Members should identify the fewest possible interventions/recommendations that would have the biggest impact. Discussion also occurred on resources to contribute to change and the task force noted that no one should expect to rely on the state but more on higher education and districts. The task force also discussed what must be included in the report and the recommendations. Steve indicated that by January 22, the group will have a mature draft to react to.

10:45 – 11:00 a.m. Program Presentation on New Leaders for New Schools

April Ervin gave a presentation on New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) noting that the program arose because schools were not happy with the preparation programs currently available. District staff at CPS felt that the abilities that principals needed in CPS went beyond the skills and behaviors acquired in a traditional Type 75 certificate program. Accordingly, NLNS was established in 2001 and was jointly funded by New York City and Chicago to find transformational leaders for urban leaders. The program focuses on high academic achievement for every child and candidates need to show evidence they have been able to achieve that goal. Blueprint regulations are now in place and include rigorous guidelines for admission. This is a three phase self-selected/application process including:

1. Information on applicant background that includes three essays. Candidates must demonstrate a strong foundation in education and classroom teaching experience with at least two years teaching according to Illinois school code.
2. The interview – with guided rubrics and section criteria that is evidence based.
3. Final selection – Day-in-the life of a principal scenarios, they can do five or six candidates per day.

Since NLNS is located in other urban cities throughout the country, a five to six week foundation program exists that brings all candidates together. NLNS also includes a one-year internship and uses sitting principals as mentors. Once the training is completed, candidates receive ongoing support during the first two years of their leadership position. Ninety-two percent of NLNS graduates are placed in either principal or assistant principal position. Of those, 30% are placed in Charter Schools.

NLNS has multiple measures of success for their program. They track the placement rate of all of their students, chart progress related to student achievement in the schools they serve and also collect anecdotal information pertaining to retention of teacher and the culture and climate of the school served. In addition, the Rand Corporation is conducting an in depth study of the success of the NLNS program in Chicago as well as nationally.

NCLS is finding that some of their graduates move up in the district, which has required them to develop a succession plan. They are currently working with the local school councils to market their program. Fellowships have been developed for participating students, which provide salary and benefits from Chicago Public Schools while enrolled in the program. Some enrollees already have their Type 75 certificate and are interested in advanced training.

11:00 – 11:30 a.m. Lunch

Members broke for a short lunch break

11:30 – 2:00 p.m. Position Statement Presentations

Following lunch, members who submitted position papers were given the opportunity to present on their papers. For a more detailed analysis of members' position statements, please refer to the crosswalk. Each member received a copy of the position papers as well. Summaries of the presentations are as follows:

David Prasse – David presented his position paper on behalf of the Council of Chicago Area Deans of Education. He emphasized that knowledge of good instruction and evidence based to instruction should be at the top of the list. He included that a common goal is a positive academic outcome. It was also noted that the decision making of this task force must be data-based, noting that people are often quick to jump on trends without the data and as such are not able to adequately shape policy without data.

John Murphy – John Murphy presented on behalf of the Illinois Council of Professors of Education Administration noted that although not all points in the “Blueprint Report” were supported by their group, they feel that they seemed reasonable. A question was presented to John about the difference between enrollments at public and private university programs in terms of the perceived “cash cow” persona that many preparation programs have. A short discussion was held to clarify this perception. Jo Anderson raised the question of whether unions should not put into place policies that discourage incentives for teachers who go into Type 75 programs without the intent of going into a leadership position

Diane Jackman – Diane Jackman presented on behalf of the Illinois Association of Deans of Public Colleges of Education (IADPCE). Diane asked IADPCE members to rank the recommendations of the Blueprint and presented that in her position paper. She noted that many of the rankings were close together differing only by a point or two, but some of the recommendations receiving the strongest endorsement by her group included: more rigorous assessment of candidates, development of strong university/district partnerships, need for meaningful clinical experiences, more meaningful training for mentors. Diane also asserted that if assessment standards are revamped, we need to be sure that everyone is held to the same standards.

Ed Geppert – Ed Geppert presented on behalf of the Illinois Federation of Teachers. The IFT noted that the ultimate test of principal preparation programs was to correlate principal leadership with student achievement growth tied to team building working as a community and Ed remarked that school culture and learning outcomes are closely tied. Principal candidates should have a minimum of four years of effective teaching experience.

Jo Anderson – Jo Anderson presented on behalf of IEA-NEA. Jo began his presentation by emphasizing how important high quality school leadership is to both teacher and student performance.

Linda Shay – Linda Shay presented on behalf of Chicago Public School’s Office of Principal Preparation and Development and passed out both CPS’ competencies used to guide screening and evaluation processes for CPS principals, as well as their position paper. Linda referenced the competencies, which are aligned with the standards, but go deeper into expected skills and behaviors than the standards. Highlighted in the position paper, Linda talked about the need for more technical training for leaders, especially those willing to work in and change district environments that are less than ideal.

Judy Hackett – Judy Hackett presented on behalf of the Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE) reviewing the nine main points of their paper that address the shared responsibility for all students as well as the application for learning.

Jason Leahy – Jason presented on behalf of the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance. Instead of repeating what was said in the position paper, Jason suggested that what was needed was a group to backwards map from criteria for a master principal – a principal at the top of the profession – to the induction, preparation, and even the teaching ranks. Doing so, will allow for a holistic view of what is needed at each level to develop a principal with needed skills and behaviors and will move the conversation from inputs to outputs and outcomes. John Murphy supported this idea but suggested that drilling down more to the context of elementary, middle and secondary school principals might also be needed.

Faye Terrell Perkins – Faye presented on behalf of the Chicago Principals and Administrators Academy noting that the strengthening of leadership preparation in the state of Illinois is a critical invest in our future.

Diane Rutledge – Diane presented on behalf of LUDA – During the presentation by Diane it was noted that leadership is a continuum that starts at the teacher level. Giving examples, Diane talked about the leadership continuum that was put into place in Springfield School District, emphasizing that this partnership prepared leaders for not only the principalship but other important leadership positions in the district. An important aspect of this program was also helping leaders to strengthen collective bargaining skills viewing the union leadership as a partner in school improvement efforts. Diane noted that while this work occurred in Springfield, she also sees the role of LUDA to take pieces of this work and replicate it into other districts throughout the state.

Linda Tomlinson and Debbie Meisner-Bertauski – Linda and Debbie presented discussion points drafted collaboratively by ISBE and IBHE to the task force emphasizing that this is a new era in which the two agencies are working collaboratively to develop strategies for change. They noted that the bar should be set high for quality and the action agenda must be systemic. They realize that funding and resources will continue to be an issue. Linda talked about some research that ISBE is doing, including a survey to find out other leadership positions that are out there in the state using Type 75 beyond principal, as well as a study on the possibility of changing the certification to a single certification with different types of endorsements.

Norm Durflinger asked if he could give a few remarks and did so by presenting some key questions to the task force:

- First, what data is out there that suggests that a certificate must come with a degree? Why is certification linked to the master's degree?
- Second, why do we have certificates run through a university? Why shouldn't organizations be able to credential (or police) themselves?
- Why do we keep stopping at the 'but'? Why can't we just try something like the one-year internship and react to the ramifications?

Steve noted that Norm's questions made a good transition into the next part of discussion, guiding the drafting committee for the report.

3:00 to 4:00 p.m. Guiding the Drafting Committee

Steve began this discussion by asking members if, based on today's discussion, they wanted to nominate any recommendations for inclusion in the draft report. Some recommendations nominated included:

- The need for mentoring and on-going training and support after a principal completes a Type 75 program
- To approach this topic systemically
- To include rigorous assessment that levels the playing field
- To require strong district/university partnerships
- To remember that we are designing policies for the entire state
- To create a more rigorous exit assessment for candidates completing Type 75 programs

After initial input from the group, Steve noted that a shell bill is being introduced this week (the LRB deadline for submission is January 11) and asked task force members what title the shell bill should be given. After much discussion, it was decided that the following would be the title of the shell bill: "Developing high quality school principals for Illinois".

Steve also notified the group that he would be contacting selected people to serve on the writing and editing group for the draft report. He also asked for volunteers.

Following this, Steve concluded the meeting noting that the next (and last) meeting of the task force is scheduled for Tuesday, January 22nd from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Illinois Principals Association building in Springfield. The time for this meeting has been extended to make up for the canceled December meeting.