

Preparing Highly Qualified
School Leaders
Illinois Benchmarking Report
Executive Summary

Submitted to the
Illinois State Board of Education
Illinois Board of Higher Education
School Leader Task Force

PRELIMINARY - FOR REVIEW

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Learning-Centered Leadership Program
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Southern Regional Education Board

SREB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that helps government and education leaders in its 16 member states work together to advance education and improve the social and economic life of the region. **Member states include: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.**

SREB assists state leaders by directing attention to key education issues; collecting, compiling and analyzing comparable data on P-20 education; and sharing its analyses of actions and issues that help states and institutions form long-range plans and policies.

SREB is governed by a Board that consists of the governor of each member state and four gubernatorial appointees, including at least one state legislator and one educator. SREB is supported by appropriations from its member states and by funds from foundations and state and federal agencies.

SREB's Learning-Centered Leadership Program

The **Learning-Centered Leadership Program** stimulates and supports states by

- conducting research on the preparation and development of school principals and preparing benchmark reports that track the progress of the SREB states in achieving the *Challenge to Lead* goal: *Every school has leadership that results in improved student performance — and leadership begins with an effective school principal*
- developing training modules that support aspiring principals' preparation and current principals' on-the-job application of knowledge and practices that improve schools and increase student achievement, and preparing trainers to deliver the modules through university preparation programs, state leadership academies and other professional development initiatives
- providing guidance and technical assistance to states interested in leadership redesign and keeping policy-makers aware of the urgency for change, spurring them to action and maintaining momentum by convening annual forums and disseminating publications focused on key issues
- assisting states to develop policies and plans for providing high-quality training and assistance to leadership teams in low-performing schools that result in improved school and classroom practices and increased student achievement.

The Learning-Centered Leadership Program, with funding provided by the Wallace Foundation, has developed training materials for states' use in redesigning educational leadership programs. Training is customized and conducted at local sites and also offered semiannually in Atlanta.

A number of leadership publications are available for purchase or downloading at no cost from the SREB Web site at <http://www.sreb.org/main/Leadership/pubs/pubsindex.asp>

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A Leadership Imperative

The first decade of the 21st century will soon be over. Does Illinois have enough learning-centered school leaders to ensure that your schools — and your next generation of workers and citizens — will succeed in a fiercely competitive, knowledge-based global economy?

Despite the time and attention states have devoted to this question, in most cases the answer continues to be: “No, we do not.”

Since 2002, SREB has used six indicators to track the progress of states in creating a leadership system that produces cutting-edge school principals. At best, the advances have been modest. Only three states — Alabama, Louisiana and Maryland — have made “promising” progress on several indicators, with other states only pacesetters on individual indicators.

Why should Illinois’ state leaders and policy-makers care about these indicators and these states? The indicators grew out of SREB’s deep understanding of effective school leadership — gleaned over two decades of on-the-ground work with many hundreds of schools and universities across the southern region. These indicators and the progress made by pacesetter states will help Illinois leaders determine whether the state is creating a school leadership system that can improve student performance in every school — or whether, in the midst of unprecedented 21st century challenges, Illinois must continue to rely on the luck of the draw to find the leaders your schools need.

Learning-Centered School Leadership

What do we mean by a learning-centered school leader? The demands of 21st century life and work call for principals with a deep understanding of how students learn and at what levels they need to learn. Schools must have principals who can provide teachers with the leadership and support they need to help students gain the skills and knowledge now identified as important for success in a “flat” world filled with uncertainty and constant change.

A learning-centered school leader puts curriculum and instruction first. He or she understands what students should be learning, how today’s students learn best, and how to assess and develop the capacity of teachers to use proven instructional methods. Learning-centered school leaders know how to create a professional environment where all the adults in the school are constantly improving their own skills and knowledge, and helping and challenging each other to serve the particular needs of every learner.

To achieve and maintain a high level of learning-centered leadership, school principals require support from school system, university and state education leaders who also have a good understanding of what the 21st century demands of every school and classroom.

Learning-Centered School Leadership Systems

Every state needs to provide public schools that help all students reach high academic standards and graduate well-prepared for college and careers. Research strongly confirms that an effective principal in every school is crucial to improved student performance. After two decades of depending mostly on state academic standards, classroom teachers and statewide tests to help raise student achievement, policy-makers now realize that schools are unlikely to show substantial improvements without *highly effective principals*.¹

Schools need leaders who are passionate about helping students learn, who understand that quality teaching improves student learning more than any other school variable, and who keep a relentless focus on instructional improvement.

Improving school leadership requires states to create a learning-centered school leadership system with a sharp focus on improving the skills and abilities of principals to guide teaching and learning in schools. It means more targeted recruiting of promising candidates for principal preparation programs; developing new statewide standards and making the content and field experiences of graduate programs more relevant; changing the licensure and professional development policies at the state and district levels; and improving the conditions and circumstances within which principals work. It involves redesigning each of these components so that school leaders give priority to student learning instead of mainly budgets, schedules, personnel and student discipline.

As an Illinois policy-maker or education leader you should examine your state's school leadership system to determine how to increase the focus on student learning. Research and lessons from SREB's seven years of work on school leadership point to seven core components of a learning-centered system.

Leadership standards: Learning-focused leadership standards emphasize the principal's role in curriculum, instruction and student achievement. These statewide standards should describe explicitly the practices of effective principals and how to measure them.

- *Has Illinois adopted learning-focused school leadership standards?*

Recruitment and selection: Universities and school districts should work together to recruit, select and prepare candidates to lead schools effectively.

- *Has Illinois developed essential criteria for recruiting and selecting principal candidates who have the capacity to improve student learning?*

Leadership preparation programs: University-based, graduate-level principal preparation programs should provide both academic study and rich field experiences. These programs should emphasize student learning, including how to support grade-level achievement and college- and career-readiness for all students. They should also develop aspiring principals' abilities to solve problems and lead school improvement, including effective ways to support and assist teachers; and they should help leaders learn how to transform schools into high-performing, continuously improving organizations.

- *Has Illinois redesigned leadership programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning? Has your state developed preparation programs with school-based*

experiences that prepare participants to lead improvement of teaching and learning?

Tiered licensure: A tiered licensure structure can ensure that both entry-level and experienced principals continually demonstrate the abilities to improve classroom practices and student learning.

- *Has Illinois begun to base entry-level licensure on evidence of performance that meets the state standards? Has your state begun to base professional-level licensure on evidence of improved school and classroom practices and student achievement?*

Alternative licensure: Alternative pathways to licensure should be available to provide high-performing teachers and other professionals with master's degrees in fields other than education administration with access to entry-level licensure and job-embedded training in school leadership.

- *Has Illinois created alternative pathways to entry-level licensure?*

Professional development: Professional development should be available to strengthen principals' capacities to improve curriculum and instruction and create a highly effective organization. It should give special attention to building strong leadership teams, including teachers, in low-performing schools.

- *Does Illinois provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools?*

Building a learning-centered school leadership system entails more than fixing problems within any one of these core components — or putting each of them in place. **All components need to fit and work together to improve student learning.** For example, how can Illinois hold school principals accountable for student learning if preparation programs do not train them for such work, if your state does not provide helpful professional development, and if your state and its school districts only evaluate principals on school management issues and not student achievement and learning? Most states leave the principal evaluation to school districts, and few states have a required statewide principal evaluation process.

Even with the recent changes to school leadership in some states, it may not be enough to ensure that states have a system for producing the skills in leaders that all schools need. Policies often are too vague about the expected changes. Provisions for the training and technical assistance that university faculties and district staffs will need and the resources required for effective implementation are either not included or inadequate. In most instances, the **policies also fail to make high-level university and district leaders accountable for improved principal preparation programs, and to make district leaders and school boards accountable for creating supportive working conditions for principals.**

In sum, the capacity of states to improve the quality of schools is greatly diminished when the whole leadership system is neither in place nor effective to meet the leadership challenges in its schools. For states to have cohesive school leadership systems, they need carefully designed policies that point state agencies, universities and school districts toward a new model of school leadership. They need to provide incentives, training and conditions that support change, and they need to hold all parties accountable for better results.

Rating the Leadership System in Illinois

This report summarizes the ratings assigned to evidence ensuring that every Illinois school has a leader who can help improve student achievement. (See below for the rating scale.) The SREB scoring guide for measuring state progress on school leadership is available in Appendix A.

Rating the State's Actions: Implementation of a Learning-Centered Leadership System

No action - States received this rating if there were *no actions that addressed the criteria* for an indicator of a Learning-Centered Leadership System.

Little action - States received this rating if there were *limited or emerging actions that addressed (or had potential for doing so) the criteria* for an indicator of a Learning-Centered Leadership System.

Some action - States received this rating if there were *some, but not a majority of, actions that addressed (but not implemented) the criteria* for an indicator of a Learning-Centered Leadership System.

Promising action - States received this rating if there were *a majority of actions that addressed and were beginning to implement the criteria* for an indicator of a Learning-Centered Leadership System.

Substantial action - States received this rating if there were *substantial actions that implemented the criteria* for an indicator of a Learning-Centered Leadership System, and *intended results were being achieved*.

Since 2002, SREB has tracked sixteen states' progress on adopting and implementing policies, practices — and in providing statewide systems — to prepare highly qualified school leaders. The SREB Learning-Centered Leadership Program reviewed research and worked with state education agencies, universities, leadership academies and school districts to determine how to measure progress. In 2002, SREB reported for the first time on six indicators, and again in 2004 in *Progress Being Made in Getting a Quality Leader in Every School*.ⁱⁱ Since then, SREB has added a seventh indicator, which will track progress on learning-focused leadership standards. SREB also has made the criteria used to measure the existing indicators more rigorous.

Pacesetter State Scores and Progress Levels

State	Progress Scores by Indicator*						Total State Score	Mean State Score	Overall State Progress Level***
	A	B	C	D	E	F			
Louisiana	3	3	3	3	3	3	18	3.00	Promising progress
Alabama	3	3	3	2	2	3	16	2.66	Promising progress
Maryland	2	3	3	2	3	2	15	2.50	Promising progress
Illinois	0	1	1	1	2	0	5	.833	Little action (baseline)
SREB Region: 2006 Indicator Mean Score	1.69	2.50	2.31	1.69	1.88	2.38	No progress = 0 points Little progress = 1 point Some progress = 2 points Promising progress = 3 points Substantial progress = 4 points		
2002 Indicator Mean Score	.75	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.25	1.50			

* **Column headings – A, B, C, D, E, F – refer to the following indicators:**

A = Recruit and select future school leaders

B = Redesign leadership programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning

C = Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement

D = Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices

E = Create alternative pathways to initial licensure

F = Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools

QUESTION 1:

Are Illinois' leadership standards learning-focused — defined in terms of principals' knowledge, skills and responsibilities — and measured by specified performance criteria?

RATING:

Some Evidence

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

Revise the state's leadership standards to have a strong focus on learning and explicitly define the knowledge, skills and responsibilities principals are expected to demonstrate.

Implement state-developed criteria for differentiating levels of performance on the standards throughout all components of the school leadership system.

Use the revised standards to guide the redesign of every other part of the school leadership system, such that all parts of the system are closely aligned with the standards and with each other.

Insist on concrete evidence that the standards, definitions and performance criteria are the foundation for a) content, instructional methods, assessments of participants and exit criteria in approved preparation programs; b) examinations, performance measures and other requirements for licensure; c) hiring practices and expectations districts have for the performance of the principals they employ, and d) induction and continuing professional development of school leaders.

QUESTION 2:

Does Illinois require universities and districts to work together to recruit, select and prepare future principals with the most promise of improving classroom practices and student achievement?

RATING:

No Evidence

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

Develop state policy or administrative rules that provide specific criteria and guidelines for universities and districts to work together in developing and implementing an effective process for a) envisioning the characteristics of the ideal principal — including personal attributes; learning-centered knowledge, skills and beliefs; and leadership ability — and b) continually collaborating on the recruitment, selection and preparation of future school leaders.

Require that all universities offering approved programs meet state criteria and guidelines for working with district partners to recruit and select future school leaders.

Require university and district partner(s) to continually evaluate and improve the joint recruitment and selection process and consider these results in the renewal of state approval.

Develop a comprehensive statewide database to track principal supply and demand, and use it to determine whether the joint recruitment and selection process is producing a diverse pool of well-qualified candidates in adequate numbers to fill vacancies and meet district needs.

QUESTION 3:

Has Illinois taken steps to redesign university-based leadership preparation programs to emphasize the principal’s responsibility for improving curriculum, instruction and student learning?

RATING:

Minimal Evidence

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

Develop state policy or administrative rules governing approved preparation programs to incorporate conditions and requirements for the design of quality learning-centered program that are based on research and effective practice, including at least the following:

- a shared vision of the characteristics of a learning-centered principal, developed through a district-university partnership;
- research-based content centered on the knowledge, skills and responsibilities that principals are expected to demonstrate;
- varied instructional methods — including structured coursework, simulations, school-based observations and assignments, participation on school improvement teams at diverse sites, self-reflection, seminars, internships and other strategies — that engage participants in problems solving and application of essential knowledge and skills in ways that mirror the processes used on the job;
- well-planned internships with quality mentoring that provide candidates a sustained period of hands-on experiences in the responsibilities of school leadership, including leading a substantial school improvement project;
- rigorous and valid assessments of knowledge, skills and performance that are aligned with the standards and defined performance criteria and administered throughout the program to provide feedback to candidates on how they need to improve;
- staffing by university faculty, district- and school-based practitioners and others with broad, research-based and practical knowledge of leadership behaviors linked to increased student achievement, school improvement strategies and school management and development processes; and
- resources (time, money, and people) provided by the state, university and district partners that support effective implementation of a quality learning-centered program.

Develop state policy or administrative rules that include specific expectations and guidelines for universities and districts to work together and share accountability for all aspects of the design, delivery and evaluation of principal preparation programs, as evidenced by all universities with approved programs having partnerships with local districts that are based on formal agreements delineating how the partners will meet the conditions of quality for a learning-centered program and other expectations.

- All programs have a design team comprised of university faculty and district-and school-level practitioners who continually work together to create a program design that is based on a shared vision of principals who can improve teaching and learning.
- The university and district continually work as partners in the delivery and systematic evaluation and improvement of the program and its outcomes.

Develop a well-developed redesign support component that provides university and district administrators and staff the following:

- thorough orientation to the state’s learning-focused standards and expectations for redesign;

- training and intensive assistance in such areas as developing strong partnerships, creating a learning-centered curriculum, and planning high quality standards-based field experiences and internships, with incentives and financial support for participation; and
- access to model program design sites, exemplary curriculum materials and assessment protocols and other design aides.

Develop program approval standards and process that provide for rigorous, objective audits of all aspects of program design and evaluations of program effectiveness that focus on state and district goals for improved student performance, as evidenced by these practices:

- using panels of external experts to review program proposals for alignment with learning-centered standards and defined conditions for quality learning-centered program design;
- systematically collecting and analyzing data on graduates' on-the-job performance and its impacts on schools and student achievement; and
- denying approval of programs that do not fully meet the standards and closing programs producing graduates who fail to affect positive changes in school and student performance, after serving as principal for a reasonable period of time.

Allocate necessary funding and align the state's, universities' and local districts' budgets with the actual costs of designing and implementing programs that meet the conditions for quality learning-centered preparation.

QUESTION 4:

Have all preparation programs in your state developed school-based experiences and internships that prepare participants to lead school improvement?

RATING:

Minimal Evidence

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

Develop and implement state policy or administrative rules that require approved programs to include coherent, logically organized real-world experiences that develop competent performance of the leadership standards and prepare participants to lead school improvement.

Specify conditions for quality school-based experiences and internships in policy or administrative rules and include at least the following:

- experiences organized in a continuum of practice that progresses from observing to participating in school leadership at a variety of school sites, and then to a substantial internship.
- experiences that engage participants in analyzing and solving a range of school problems and using processes that mirror those required by the job, including leading at least one substantial project to improve curriculum, instruction and student achievement.
- guiding materials developed by the university and district partners that define the structure, expectations, roles and responsibilities, and processes of school-based experiences and internships to participants, faculty supervisors, mentor principals and district personnel.
- clinical supervision provided by faculty and others who have the expertise and time to guide and assist the mentor principal and intern through the process of setting goals, planning learning experiences, assessing performance and providing formative feedback, and taking action to remedy any deficiencies in achieving the standards.
- quality mentoring and performance coaching provided by seasoned principals who model the standards in their daily practice and are trained in guiding interns through activities that enable them

to demonstrate the standards.

- rigorous performance evaluations, based on defined criteria and consistent procedures, used throughout the program to measure participants' progress in mastering the standards.

Require all approved programs to incorporate school-based experiences and internships that meet these conditions.

Explicitly address the joint responsibility and accountability of universities, districts and mentors for providing high quality internships in state policy or administrative rules.

Provide faculties and district staffs training on developing standards-based internships.

Develop and implement criteria for mentor selection and quality training in all preparation programs.

Develop and implement an exemplary mentor training program that is available for use in all universities and districts.

Establish model internship sites to develop and share design aides and exemplary practices with all universities and districts preparing future principals.

Expect all programs to implement standards-based formative and summative evaluations that meet identified criteria and take steps (such as developing prototypes or standard portfolios) to ensure their rigor and consistency.

QUESTION 5:

Is your state developing a licensing system that ensures only individuals with the knowledge and skills required to improve student performance are eligible to serve as principals?

RATING:

Minimal Evidence

QUESTION 6:

Is your state implementing alternative pathways to licensure for candidates who hold a master's degree in another field and demonstrate the potential to be effective school leaders?

RATING:

Some Evidence

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

Develop and implement policy that provides a licensing system to ensure entry-level principals are competent in the job responsibilities and those employed as school principals continually develop expertise and demonstrate job performance that improves schools and student outcomes. Open entry-level licensure to highly-qualified candidates with a master's degree in education or another professional field, a record of high performance and demonstrated leadership ability, and a passing score on a state-specified, performance-based examination emphasizing learning-focused standards. Require alternative pathway candidates to complete a state-approved, on-the-job preparation and induction program that includes a) customized professional development focusing on assessed needs for increased knowledge and skills and demonstration of learning-focused standards, and b) mentoring and performance coaching by successful peers and other qualified individuals who have completed high-quality mentor training.

Base entry-level licensure on completing an approved principal preparation program and demonstrating competent-level performance of learning-focused standards. Demonstration of the standards is measured by a) state-identified performance criteria and consistent evaluation strategies that meet standards of high quality, and b) a performance-based examination that emphasizes learning-centered standards.

Base advancement to professional-level licensure on completing a two-year principal induction program that provides professional development, mentoring and performance coaching that develops proficient-level performance on learning-centered standards. Evaluate performance according to a state-developed strategy and criteria which includes measures of the candidate's leadership in implementing research-based school and classroom practices that are linked to increased student learning. Require evidence of continuing development of school leadership expertise and effective performance, including data on improved school and student performance for renewal after the initial five-year period and each five-year period thereafter

Base advanced professional certification on a) continuing professional learning that develops special expertise in school leadership, b) using leadership expertise to produce results for schools and students, and c) assisting others to prepare for, succeed and advance in the school leadership profession. Evaluate performance on a portfolio that includes a) multiple measures of the candidate's impacts on schools and student learning in diverse school settings, and b) evidence of assistance to others in developing and improving their school leadership practices.

QUESTION 7:

Is your state providing training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools?

RATING:

No Evidence

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

Develop and implement state policies and initiatives to create academies and other well-designed training and support strategies that can effectively building the capacity of leadership teams (including the principal, aspiring principals, teacher leaders and district staff) to implement a continuous improvement process in low-performing schools, as evidenced by measures of improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.

Develop training and support for school leadership teams designed as a coherent series of workshops over a period of time, with structured activities for school-based application of research-based knowledge and skills to solve real problems and improve learning for all groups of students. Provide coaching and long-term support by district staff and others with special expertise.

Provide training for school boards and district staffs to enable them to put into place a research-based school reform framework that supports the efforts of leadership teams in low-performing schools. The framework includes at least the following: identified needs and performance goals, a system-wide approach to improving curriculum and instruction in core subject areas, effective approaches to professional development aligned with the goals and the instructional improvement plan, redefined roles and responsibilities of district staffs, and commitment to sustained reform.

Provide substantial incentives to attract and retain increasing numbers of highly-qualified principals and teacher leaders in low-performing schools.

In Summary: What Can You and Your State Do?

Through the *Blueprint for Learning* and the establishment of the School Leader Task Force, Illinois is beginning the process to ensure that every school has leadership that improves student performance. **Illinois will need to expand the role of the Task Force to develop a learning-focused leadership system that has all of the necessary components and is cohesive.** The expanded charge of the commission should include:

- recommending policies and procedures that will help focus all components of the school leadership system on the principal’s responsibilities in improving teaching and learning;
- providing oversight for the development and implementation of the new system; and
- developing strategies for evaluating the system’s effectiveness in achieving state goals and expectations — including the quality of principal preparation programs, principal-candidates, induction and professional development programs for principals, and principals’ performance and impact on teaching and learning.

Illinois will need to provide sufficient resources — in time, money and people — to develop and fully implement a redesigned leadership system and obtain assistance from national or regional organizations with expertise in improving school leadership.

Based on years of concerted work with state policy-makers and education agencies, universities and school systems, these are the strategies that SREB’s Learning-Centered Leadership Program identifies as most crucial to help each state build a dynamic, high-functioning system of learning-centered leadership development.

Say What You Mean About School Leadership

Make sure Illinois’ leadership standards say exactly what you expect of a school leader. What are the principal’s responsibilities, and what must he or she know and be able to do to meet those responsibilities? These leadership standards not only lay the foundation for principal preparation programs and principal evaluations; they make a powerful statement about what we want our schools to be and what we expect our school systems and universities to accomplish.

Do not be satisfied with simply adopting the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, as many states have. They place too little emphasis on the responsibilities today’s school leaders have for improving schools and student learning. They are vague about what principals must know and do to lead successful schools. To make sure your state’s students are ready for tomorrow’s challenges, tell every stakeholder in the leadership development system precisely what you expect of principals.

Choose the Right People for the Job

Only the most promising individuals should be prepared as school leaders. Yet many states and districts still draw primarily on a volunteer pool that includes many untested and often poorly qualified would-be principals. We can develop a ready supply of well-prepared school leaders if universities and districts work together to recruit, select and prepare future principals with the most promise of improving classroom practices and student achievement.

In our experience, this working partnership rarely emerges without clear state mandates and support. States should expect districts and universities to jointly develop rigorous selection criteria for principal preparation programs — including candidates’ evidence of expertise in curriculum and instruction, a record of improving student achievement, and proven leadership abilities.

States then can provide guidelines to assist universities and districts in recruiting and preparing a high-quality pool of potential principals to meet current and projected needs. A key element in this design is the “leadership succession plan,” in which districts regularly identify promising teachers and other candidates and create early opportunities for them to develop leadership skills. States can offer incentives to universities that create degree programs emphasizing teacher leadership of school improvement — providing an advanced degree for leaders not interested in working as principals.

Get University Leadership Programs on Track

In an age of high-stakes accountability, too many university-based principal preparation programs still are offering a last-century curriculum overloaded with courses on management and administration. These programs do not spend enough time helping aspiring principals develop the competencies they need to lead a team of highly skilled and motivated teachers.

The know-how is out there to build a better system. But SREB’s research suggests that state policies and strategies intended to promote the redesign of principal preparation programs have produced only marginal improvements. Policy-makers can accelerate change by making program development and delivery the joint responsibility of universities and districts — and holding them accountable for providing relevant content, quality school-based internships, and strong support for candidates, including released time, tuition assistance and access to district staff.

Every action taken in these programs should be driven by one essential question: *What do principals need to know and do to improve teaching and learning in their schools?*

Make Sure Aspiring Principals Learn on the Job

You don’t learn to be an effective school leader in today’s high-demand school environment from textbooks and lectures alone. Today’s principals are constantly solving problems and analyzing issues in a complex environment with many competing interests. To develop and test these skills, aspiring principals need on-the-job training that requires them to grapple with real dilemmas, under the guidance of a fully engaged mentor, before they are licensed to lead.

Few aspiring principals are getting this kind of experience today. Many current programs provide internships in name only. They allow interns to choose their own mentors and internship sites, or fail to ensure that all interns are guided by trained principal-mentors who can expertly demonstrate the state’s leadership standards — and have the time to do so.

Quality, school-based experiences and internships do not happen by chance. In our view, state leaders (and universities and districts) have three choices:

- Invest at the level necessary to provide quality internships and mentoring for all principal-

candidates in all state preparation programs.

- Reduce program enrollments and allow university faculties, mentor principals and district staffs to concentrate on preparing candidates with the most potential.
- Reduce the total number of university programs approved to prepare leaders, and invest the savings in high-quality, fully supported programs with strong internship components.

Use Your Licensing Power to Drive Reform

The state’s power to license principals can be an effective tool to ensure schools have learning-centered principals. Through their ability to determine licensing standards, policy-makers can directly influence the size and nature of the applicant pool and mandate a de facto “screen” for minimum competencies.

Learning-centered licensure requirements go far beyond background checks or academic degrees that tell us little about a candidate’s capacity for school leadership. A quality system will include performance criteria and evaluation measures for entry, professional and advanced levels of licensure. Such a system will offer the assurance that a licensed principal has mastered the knowledge and skills — and demonstrated the leadership ability — to serve effectively. License renewal should be contingent on continuing evidence of work to improve student achievement. And the principal who earns the highest professional license will be expected to provide plentiful evidence of significant accomplishment.

Developing a new licensure system will require persuasion, fortitude and persistence. State policy-makers should be clear about purpose and should work to build support among educator groups. Policy-makers also will need to create and support high-quality induction programs for new principals (most states don’t have them). To drive these reforms, states will need new performance-based assessments, tests of knowledge for entry-level licensure, and tools for evaluating on-the-job performance, all aligned with a state’s learning-centered leadership standards.

Cast a Wider Leadership Net

Former teachers make up the vast majority of today’s school leadership workforce. While good teachers with a talent for leadership will continue to become effective principals, research shows that leaders in fields other than education often have the skills that good principals need. These skills include organizational development, entrepreneurship, experience in leading change, team building, problem-solving and working with communities.

Policy-makers need to consider individuals who hold a master’s degree in a field other than education administration as potential principal leaders. These may include not only leaders from other professions, but persons who have been guidance counselors, leaders of youth-oriented programs, or those who have earned graduate degrees in teacher leadership. Alternative candidates who show the most potential for becoming effective school principals should be allowed to prove themselves on the job, while completing training that develops their capacity to provide instructional leadership and improve schools.

Make Low-Performing Schools a Top Priority

Every state has a sharp accountability focus on low-performing schools. Yet policy-makers have not always given sufficient attention to building leadership capacity in these high-demand work environments. In a learning-centered leadership system, principals of low-performing schools will not have to turn schools around on their own. State policy-makers need to ensure that districts build effective leadership teams in low-performing schools who can work alongside principals to promote school improvement.

The right state policies will require teams of principals, teachers and aspiring leaders in low-performing schools — along with representatives from the school district — to participate in leadership training that involves them in using new knowledge and skills to solve school problems. These state policies also will ensure that the training is of high quality and targeted at schools' specific needs — and that there are processes in place to monitor and evaluate the progress of the leadership teams in using their new skills and knowledge to improve classroom practices and student achievement.

Illinois policy-makers must ask themselves: *What policy changes are needed to guarantee that every public school has learning-centered leaders? How can policies and procedures be carefully crafted to ensure that state agencies, higher education and school districts are held accountable for improved school leadership development?* **But asking is not enough.** It will take action and accountability to ensure that you have the learning-centered school leaders to ensure that your schools — and your next generation of workers and citizens — will succeed in a fiercely competitive, knowledge-based global economy.

APPENDIX A

SREB Scoring Guide for Benchmarking States' Leadership Systems

Since 2002, SREB has tracked states' progress on adopting and implementing policies and practices that will ensure every school has a leader who can successfully engage the faculty and community in improving student performance. At regular intervals, progress is measured on key indicators of how well each of the 16 SREB states and the region as a whole are doing on going to scale on a school leadership system that will achieve the *Challenge to Lead* goal:

Every school has leadership that results in improved student achievement — and leadership begins with an effective school principal.

SREB has conducted research and worked with state policy-makers and education agencies, universities and leadership academies to identify meaningful criteria for assessing the progress being made on the goal. This Scoring Guide describes the SREB process for measuring state and regional progress, including the following:

- Data collection and analysis procedures
- Indicators and criteria for progress
- Definition of progress levels
- Derivation of indicator scores and overall progress ratings

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The data collection procedures for each biennial measurement of states' progress on the SREB *Challenge to Lead* goal for school leadership includes telephone interviews with key state agency staff and review of existing and proposed state policies and regulations.¹ State agency staff members with primary responsibility for implementing policies and regulations related to each of the indicators are first contacted by SREB to determine whether they are the appropriate persons to interview, identify others who should be interviewed and schedule individual or group interviews. A standard interview protocol is designed to gather pertinent information about state actions related to each indicator, forwarded to interviewees prior to the scheduled date and used to elicit responses during the interview. Responses are recorded verbatim during the interviews. Follow-up calls are made and relevant documents obtained as needed to ensure a complete and accurate set of data for each state.

Initial analyses of interview data and assignment of state progress ratings on the six indicators are performed independently by the SREB interviewer and two other senior members of the Leadership Program team, using the indicators and criteria and the definitions of progress contained in the Scoring Guide for Evaluating State Progress. The three sets of independent progress ratings are then compared to identify any differences. The team resolves differences and

¹ SREB currently makes no attempt to assess the extent to which adopted state policies and regulations are fully or effectively implemented, nor does it consider any requirements and practices implemented by state agencies but not specifically authorized by policies or regulations and promulgated by the state. However, future assessments of progress on the school leadership goal may include measures of the depth and quality of implementation and the impacts of state policies or regulations.

reaches consensus on ratings through collaborative reexamination of data and analytical processing. Additional calls are made to interviewees as necessary for clarifications and additional information that will enable the team to reach a defensible rating.

When the analysis is complete, a one-page report containing a slide displaying the 2002 and current ratings on each indicator and a narrative describing the rationale for changes in a state's ratings is prepared and forwarded with a copy of the Scoring Guide to interview participants in each state. The recipients are requested to review the report and contact SREB staff if there is a need for further discussion of progress ratings or corrections to the information contained in the report.

Indicators and Criteria for Progress

Seven indicators with supporting criteria were identified for the 2006 assessment of progress. The indicators are:

- **Adopt learning-focused leadership standards**
- **Recruit and select future leaders**
- **Redesign leadership programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student achievement**
- **Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement**
- **Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices**
- **Create alternative pathways to initial licensure**
- **Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools**

In 2006, criteria for each indicator were modified to incorporate additional features of cutting-edge policy and practice. The basis for modifications to the indicators was lessons learned from SREB's work with states, universities and leadership academies, recent research reports and definitive literature on school leadership. The 2006 scoring guide incorporates important changes in criteria for each indicator since 2002, and delineates rules for determining five levels of progress based on the strength of state actions.

Indicator:

Adopt learning-focused leadership standards.

No progress:

- No state action on adopting learning-focused leadership standards.
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Little progress:

- The state has adopted a set of leadership standards, but it focuses on learning only to a minimal degree.
 - Specific knowledge, skills and responsibilities that principals are expected to demonstrate to meet each standard have not been defined and criteria for differentiating levels of performance on each standard have not been developed.
 - There has been some effort to ensure that licensure and preparation are closely aligned with the standards, but there is no plan for undertaking a whole-system redesign.
-

Some progress:

- The state has adopted and implemented a set of leadership standards that focuses on learning to a moderate degree, but without explicitly defined knowledge, skills and responsibilities that principals are expected to demonstrate to meet each standard.
 - Development of criteria for differentiating levels of performance on each standard is an issue of concern, but the state has no plan to address it in the near future.
 - Some effort has been made to closely align major components (e.g. preparation, licensure, and professional development) of the leadership system to the standards, but a whole-system redesign has not been undertaken.
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Promising progress:

- The state has adopted leadership standards that have a considerable degree of focus on learning, with explicitly defined knowledge, skills and responsibilities that principals are to demonstrate.
 - Criteria for differentiating levels of performance are under development or plans for developing these are firm.
 - The state is using the enhanced standards as the starting point for a comprehensive redesign of all components of the school leadership system.
-

Substantial progress:

- The state's leadership standards have a strong focus on learning and explicitly define the knowledge, skills and responsibilities principals are expected to demonstrate.
 - State-developed criteria for differentiating levels of performance on the standards are implemented throughout all components of the school leadership system.
 - The standards have been used to guide the redesign of every other part of the school leadership system, such that all parts of the system are closely aligned with the standards and with each other.
 - There is concrete evidence that the standards, definitions and performance criteria are the foundation for a) content, instructional methods, assessments of participants and exit criteria in approved preparation programs; b) examinations, performance measures and other requirements for licensure; c) hiring practices and expectations districts have for the performance of the principals they employ, and d) induction and continuing professional development of school leaders.
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Indicator:

Recruit and select future school leaders.

- No progress:**
- No state action on recruitment and selection of future school leaders.
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- Little progress:**
- A state-appointed committee or task force is charged with recommending policy, administrative rules or guidelines for recruitment and selection of future school leaders; or
 - Pilot initiatives to inform policy are being planned or conducted; or
 - Policy or administrative rules requiring recruitment and selection are pending adoption.
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- Some progress:**
- State policy or administrative rules requiring universities and districts to work together to recruit and select future school leaders have been adopted, but criteria and guidelines for an effective process are not specified and implementation is not systematically monitored or evaluated.
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- Promising progress:**
- State policy or administrative rules provide specific criteria and guidelines for universities and districts to work together in developing and implementing an effective process for envisioning the ideal principal and recruiting and selecting future school leaders.
 - All universities offering approved programs are developing formal agreements with district partners for collaborating on the recruitment and selection of future school leaders, in accordance with state-specified criteria and guidelines.
 - Evaluation of the plan for joint university-district recruitment and selection has been incorporated into the state's program approval process.
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- Substantial progress:**
- State policy or administrative rules provide specific criteria and guidelines for universities and districts to work together in developing and implementing an effective process for a) envisioning the characteristics of the ideal principal — including personal attributes; learning-centered knowledge, skills and beliefs; and leadership ability — and b) continually collaborating on the recruitment, selection and preparation of future school leaders.
 - All universities offering approved programs meet state criteria and guidelines for working with district partners to recruit and select future school leaders.
 - The university and district partner(s) are continually evaluating and improving the joint recruitment and selection process and the results are considered in the renewal of state approval.
 - The state has developed a comprehensive database to track principal supply and demand, and it is used to determine whether the joint recruitment and selection process is producing a diverse pool of well-qualified candidates in adequate numbers to fill vacancies and meet district needs.
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Indicator:

Redesign leadership programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning.

No progress:

- No state action on redesigning principal preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning.
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Little progress:

- The state has no proposed policy or plan for comprehensive program redesign, though individual institutions may have undertaken a self-initiated redesign.
 - Programs are required to develop content, assignments and assessments that are aligned with all state standards; decisions about special emphases are left to the discretion of the program faculties.
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Some progress:

- State policy or administrative rules require all universities to complete a program redesign that addresses state standards and emphasizes the principal's responsibilities for improving student learning, but conditions that specifically define the design of such programs are not identified. Redesign of all programs is underway, in accordance with these requirements.
 - State policy or administrative rules include a general requirement for universities and district to work together in preparing school principals, but specific expectations for how the partners are to work together in designing and delivering principal preparation programs are not defined.
 - Support for program redesign is provided primarily through written guidelines and directives. Design aides such as model program development sites, curriculum frameworks, assessment protocols are not provided and there is no special training for faculties and district staffs.
 - The program approval standards and process may have been revised to align with policy and administrative rules, but objective audits by external panels and evaluations of program effectiveness that focus on state and district goals for improved student performance are not included in the process.
 - There has been no state action on funding to support quality learning-centered preparation programs.
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Promising progress:

- State policy or administrative rules governing approved preparation programs incorporate some conditions for quality learning-centered program design, but these may need to be expanded to include other research-based components or more explicitly defined. All universities and districts offering principal preparation programs have completed/are currently undergoing redesign to meet these conditions.
 - State policy or administrative rules include specific expectations regarding how universities and districts are to work together in designing and delivering principal preparation programs and these expectations are addressed in a program approval audit.
 - All programs are working to create partnerships that meet the expectations, though many do not have formal agreements delineating how they will meet the conditions.
 - All universities have formed a design team, but some may not include a strong district representation that is integrally involved in program design.
 - There is state support for redesign, but it may be limited to a few statewide opportunities such as
 - an orientation session on the standards and the redesign expectations and process;
 - a limited amount of training on such topics as developing strong partnerships, creating a learning-centered curriculum, and planning high quality standards-based field experiences and internships; and
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- one or two model program design sites that receive special funding to serve as sources of exemplary curriculum materials and other design aides for all universities and districts, but these sites are not fully developed.
- The state’s program approval standards and process have been revised to include audits of all aspects of program design by a state-selected panel that includes one or more consultants from outside the state, but the panel’s recommendations may be subject to reconsideration by the state approving agency.
Plans for evaluating program effectiveness may include measures of graduates’ on-the-job performance and impacts on school and student achievement, but these strategies and protocols have not been developed and implemented.
- Requests for additional funding to support quality learning-centered principal preparation may have been included in state budget initiatives, but the legislature has not taken action or has funded only a limited number of special projects.

Substantial progress:



- State policy or administrative rules governing approved preparation programs incorporate conditions and requirements for the design of quality learning-centered program that are based on research and effective practice, including at least the following:
 - a shared vision of the characteristics of a learning-centered principal, developed through a district-university partnership;
 - research-based content centered on the knowledge, skills and responsibilities that principals are expected to demonstrate;
 - varied instructional methods — including structured coursework, simulations, school-based observations and assignments, participation on school improvement teams at diverse sites, self-reflection, seminars, internships and other strategies — that engage participants in problems solving and application of essential knowledge and skills in ways that mirror the processes used on the job;
 - well-planned internships with quality mentoring that provide candidates a sustained period of hands-on experiences in the responsibilities of school leadership, including leading a substantial school improvement project;
 - rigorous and valid assessments of knowledge, skills and performance that are aligned with the standards and defined performance criteria and administered throughout the program to provide feedback to candidates on how they need to improve;
 - staffing by university faculty, district- and school-based practitioners and others with broad, research-based and practical knowledge of leadership behaviors linked to increased student achievement, school improvement strategies and school management and development processes; and
 - resources (time, money, and people) provided by the state, university and district partners that support effective implementation of a quality learning-centered program.

All universities and districts offering principal preparation programs have completed a redesign that meets these conditions.
- State policy or administrative rules include specific expectations and guidelines for universities and districts to work together and share accountability for all aspects of the design, delivery and evaluation of principal preparation programs, as evidenced by all universities with approved programs having partnerships with local districts that are based on formal agreements delineating how the partners will meet the conditions of quality for a learning-centered program and other expectations.

- All programs have a design team comprised of university faculty and district- and school-level practitioners who continually work together to create a program design that is based on a shared vision of principals who can improve teaching and learning.
 - The university and district continually work as partners in the delivery and systematic evaluation and improvement of the program and its outcomes.
 - The state has a well-developed redesign support component that provides university and district administrators and staff the following:
 - thorough orientation to the state's learning-focused standards and expectations for redesign;
 - training and intensive assistance in such areas as developing strong partnerships, creating a learning-centered curriculum, and planning high quality standards-based field experiences and internships, with incentives and financial support for participation; and
 - access to model program design sites, exemplary curriculum materials and assessment protocols and other design aides.
 - The state's program approval standards and process provide for rigorous, objective audits of all aspects of program design and evaluations of program effectiveness that focus on state and district goals for improved student performance, as evidenced by these practices:
 - using panels of external experts to review program proposals for alignment with learning-centered standards and defined conditions for quality learning-centered program design;
 - systematically collecting and analyzing data on graduates' on-the-job performance and its impacts on schools and student achievement; and
 - denying approval of programs that do not fully meet the standards and closing programs producing graduates who fail to affect positive changes in school and student performance, after serving as principal for a reasonable period of time.
 - The state, universities and local districts have taken steps to allocate necessary funding and align their respective budgets with the actual costs of designing and implementing programs that meet the conditions for quality learning-centered preparation.
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Indicator:

Develop programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.

No progress:

- No state action on developing programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement.
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Little progress:

- State policies or administrative rules require an internship, but conditions and criteria for its structure, focus, activities, staffing and other aspects are not specified or they do not ensure quality opportunities for mastery and demonstration of standards and learning to lead school improvement.
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Some progress:

- State policies or administrative rules require school-based experiences and internship that focus on the standards and school improvement, but there are few conditions of quality such as providing a continuum of observing, participating in and leading school improvement and focusing on experiences that engage participants in analyzing and solving a range of school problems are not addressed.
 - Faculty supervision and mentoring are addressed in a general way in policy or program approval standards, and criteria for the selection, training and responsibilities of mentors are not specified.
 - All programs are expected to evaluate participants' progress in demonstrating the standards, but criteria and expectations for the evaluation process are so general that rigor and consistency are doubtful. Little assistance is provided universities and districts in this area.
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Promising progress:

- State policy or administrative rules require approved programs to include real-world experiences that develop competent performance of the leadership standards and prepare participants to lead school improvement
- Conditions for quality school-based experiences and internships are specified in policy or administrative rules, but these may need to be expanded or more explicitly defined. All approved programs are currently redesigning school-based experiences and internships to meet these conditions.
- Training on developing standards-based internships is offered for faculties and district staffs, but it may be somewhat limited in scope and depth.
- Criteria for mentor selection and training have been developed and universities and districts are beginning to implement these. Exemplary training materials are not currently provided by the state, but development of these may be planned.
- Model internship sites designed to provide all universities and districts access to design aides and exemplary practices may be planned or under development.
- All programs are expected to develop and implement standards-based formative and summative evaluations that meet identified criteria and the state has taken some steps to ensure rigor and consistency.

Substantial progress:

- State policy or administrative rules require approved programs to include coherent, logically organized real-world experiences that develop competent performance of the leadership standards and prepare participants to lead school improvement.
- Conditions for quality school-based experiences and internships are specified in policy or administrative rules and include at least the following:
 - experiences are organized in a continuum of practice that progresses from observing to participating in school leadership at a variety of school sites, and then to a substantial internship.
 - experiences engage participants in analyzing and solving a range of school problems and using processes that mirror those required by the job, including leading at least one substantial project to improve curriculum, instruction and student achievement;
 - guiding materials developed by the university and district partners define the structure, expectations, roles and responsibilities, and processes of school-based experiences and internships to participants, faculty supervisors, mentor principals and district personnel;
 - clinical supervision is provided by faculty and others who have the expertise and time to guide and assist the mentor principal and intern through the process of setting goals, planning learning experiences, assessing performance and providing formative feedback, and taking action to remedy any deficiencies in achieving the standards;
 - quality mentoring and performance coaching is provided by seasoned principals who model the standards in their daily practice and are trained in guiding interns through activities that enable them to demonstrate the standards; and
 - rigorous performance evaluations, based on defined criteria and consistent procedures, are used throughout the program to measure participants' progress in mastering the standards.

All approved programs now incorporate school-based experiences and internships that meet these conditions.

- The joint responsibility and accountability of universities, districts and mentors for providing high quality internships is explicitly addressed in state policy or administrative rules.
- Training on developing standards-based internships is provided faculties and district staffs.
- Criteria for mentor selection and quality training have been developed and implemented in all preparation programs. The state has developed an exemplary mentor training program that is available for use in all universities and districts.
- Model internship sites have been established to develop and share design aides and exemplary practices with all universities and districts preparing future principals.
- All programs are expected to implement standards-based formative and summative evaluations that meet identified criteria and the state has taken steps (such as developing prototypes or standard portfolios) to ensure their rigor and consistency.

Indicator:

Base professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.

No progress:

- No state action on developing a licensing system that bases professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices.
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Little progress:

- A state-appointed committee is charged with studying and recommending a licensing system that is based on standards and emphasizes knowledge and skills for improving schools and student learning.
 - Current requirements include completion of an approved preparation program and a passing score on a school leader examination.
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Some progress:

- State policy provides a licensing system that bases entry-level licensure on completing an approved principal preparation program requiring demonstration of essential competencies for improving schools and student learning. A passing score on a performance-based school leader examination is required.
 - Professional licensure is based on completing a principal induction program that meets state criteria for continuing development of leadership knowledge and skills, on-the-job application of essential competencies for improving schools and student learning, and satisfactory job performance.
The evaluation of performance includes measures of the candidate's use of leadership practices linked to increased student learning.
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Promising progress:

- State policy provides a licensing system that bases entry-level licensure on completing an approved principal preparation program and demonstrating competent-level performance of learning-centered standards.
Performance of the standards is measured by a) state-identified performance criteria and evaluation strategies developed by university-district partners in accordance with state guidelines, and b) a passing score on a state-identified, performance-based examination, but the examination may not be aligned with learning-centered standards.
 - Professional-level licensure is based on completing a one- or two-year principal induction program that meets state criteria for a) continuing development of leadership expertise, and b) demonstrating proficient-level performance of state standards.
The evaluation of performance is conducted according to a district-developed strategy incorporating state-identified performance criteria and it includes measures of the candidate's leadership in implementing research-based school and classroom practices linked to increased student learning.
The evidence is evaluated by a practitioner panel trained in the evaluation process.
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Substantial progress:

- State policy provides a licensing system that ensures entry-level principals are competent in the job responsibilities and those employed as school principals continually develop expertise and demonstrate job performance that improves schools and student outcomes.
- Entry-level licensure is based on completing an approved principal preparation program and demonstrating competent-level performance of learning-focused standards.

Demonstration of the standards is measured by a) state-identified performance criteria and consistent evaluation strategies that meet standards of high quality, and b) a performance-based examination that emphasizes learning-centered standards.

- Advancement to professional-level licensure is based on completing a two-year principal induction program that provides professional development, mentoring and performance coaching that develops proficient-level performance on learning-centered standards. Evaluation of performance is conducted according to a state-developed strategy and criteria which includes measures of the candidate's leadership in implementing research-based school and classroom practices that are linked to increased student learning. The evidence is evaluated by a practitioner-expert review panel trained in the evaluation process. Renewal of the professional-level license after the initial five-year period and each five-year period thereafter requires evidence of continuing development of school leadership expertise and effective performance, including data on improved school and student performance.
 - Advanced professional certification is based on a) continuing professional learning that develops special expertise in school leadership, b) using leadership expertise to produce results for schools and students, and c) assisting others to prepare for, succeed and advance in the school leadership profession. Evaluation of performance is based on a portfolio that includes a) multiple measures of the candidate's impacts on schools and student learning in diverse school settings, and b) evidence of assistance to others in developing and improving their school leadership practices. Portfolios are reviewed by a state-appointed and trained panel of experts and practitioners.
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Indicator:

Create alternative pathways to initial licensure.

No progress:

- No state action on alternative pathways to entry-level licensure for principals.
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Little progress:

- A state-appointed committee or task force is charged with developing recommendations on alternative pathways to principal licensure that are open to high-performing candidates with a master's degree in education.
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Some progress:

- Entry-level licensure is open to candidates with a master's degree in education and record of high performance who complete a state-approved, standards-based alternative preparation program provided by an institution of higher education, regional service center, school district or other entity authorized by state policy, and obtain a passing score on a state-specified examination.
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Promising progress:

- Entry-level licensure is open to candidates with a master's degree in education or another professional field, a record of high performance and demonstrated leadership ability, and a passing score on a state-specified, performance-based examination emphasizing learning-focused standards.
 - Candidates complete a state-approved principal induction program that includes professional development focused on learning-centered standards. A mentor is assigned but may not have any special training in mentoring.
 - Mastery of the leadership standards is measured by a district-developed evaluation strategy that incorporates state-identified performance criteria and meets other state guidelines. The evidence of performance is evaluated by a panel of local practitioners who are trained in the district evaluation process.
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Substantial progress:

- Entry-level licensure is open to highly-qualified candidates with a master's degree in education or another professional field, a record of high performance and demonstrated leadership ability, and a passing score on a state-specified, performance-based examination emphasizing learning-focused standards.
 - Candidates complete a state-approved, on-the-job preparation and induction program that includes a) customized professional development focusing on assessed needs for increased knowledge and skills and demonstration of learning-focused standards, and b) mentoring and performance coaching by successful peers and other qualified individuals who have completed high-quality mentor training.
 - Mastery of the leadership standards is measured by state-developed performance criteria and consistent evaluation strategies that meet high standards of quality. The evaluation includes evidence that the candidate is competent in leading the implementation of research-based school and classroom practices that are linked to increased student learning. The evidence is evaluated by an external panel of practitioners who are trained in the state-developed evaluation process.
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Indicator:

Provide training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.

No progress:

- No state action on establishing academies and other strategies to provide training and support that builds the capacity of leadership teams to implement a strategy of continuous school improvement in low-performing schools.
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Little progress:

- A state-appointed committee may be charged with developing or refining strategies for providing training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools, but current efforts focus mainly on various training opportunities for the principal or assigning external support teams/support administrators to the school.
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Some progress:

- State policy and initiatives provide training academies and other strategies that offer training and support for low-performing schools, but these do not specifically focus on building the capacity of school leadership teams to implement continuous school improvement.
 - There are no provisions for training district staffs and school boards in putting into place a strategy of continuous school improvement.
 - The training design may include a series of workshops over a period of time, but it does not provide structured activities for school-based application of new knowledge and skills to solve real problems and improve learning for all groups of students.
 - Long-term coaching and support for implementing research-based school and classroom practices are not a part of the training and support design.
 - Evaluations of the training and support provided low-performing schools are limited to measures of participant's satisfaction and what they learned.
 - Incentives are not provided to attract and retain highly-qualified principals and teacher leaders to serve in low-performing schools.
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Promising progress:

- State policy and initiatives have created academies and other strategies specifically designed to provide training, coaching and long-term support that builds the capacity of leadership teams to implement a continuous improvement process in low-performing schools.
 - The training design provides a coherent series of workshops over a period of time, with structured activities for school-based application of research-based knowledge and skills to solve real problems and improve learning for all groups of students, but coaching and long-term support are limited.
 - School boards and district staffs have some opportunity to receive training on how to put a research-based school improvement framework into place, but it is limited in depth, participation is voluntary, and its impacts are not measured.
 - Evaluations of the training and support provided leadership teams include measures of the scope and depth of implementation of research-based practices, but measures of changes in student achievement are not included.
 - Some incentives are provided to attract and retain highly-qualified principals and teacher leaders to serve in low-performing schools, but these have not yet produced any notable increases.
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Substantial progress:

- State policies and initiatives have created academies and other well-designed training and support strategies that are effectively building the capacity of leadership teams (including the
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principal, aspiring principals, teacher leaders and district staff) to implement a continuous improvement process in low-performing schools, as evidenced by measures of improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.

- The training and support design provides school leadership teams a coherent series of workshops over a period of time, with structured activities for school-based application of research-based knowledge and skills to solve real problems and improve learning for all groups of students. Coaching and long-term support is provided by district staff and others with special expertise.
 - There is evidence that training for school boards and district staffs is enabling them to put into place a research-based school reform framework that supports the efforts of leadership teams in low-performing schools. The framework includes at least the following: identified needs and performance goals, a system-wide approach to improving curriculum and instruction in core subject areas, effective approaches to professional development aligned with the goals and the instructional improvement plan, redefined roles and responsibilities of district staffs, and commitment to sustained reform.
 - Substantial incentives are serving to attract and retain in low-performing schools increasing numbers of highly-qualified principals and teacher leaders.
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ⁱ Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. Toronto: Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, University of Minnesota and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

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ⁱⁱ Southern Regional Education Board. (2004). *Progress Being Made in Getting a Quality Leader in Every School*. Atlanta, GA: Author.