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United States Organization Working to Strengthen School Leadership Preparation

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[United States Organization Working to Strengthen School Leadership Preparation](#)

This paper provides a brief historical background on the redefinitions of school leadership preparation programs in a particular state (Illinois) in the United States. The paper chronicles the collaborations, challenges, and accomplishments of a professional organization, from the period of 2001 to 2010. Set in the context of concerns about school leadership preparation at the national level, the paper focuses principally on the work of the Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration (ICPEA) as it engaged with multiple stakeholders at university and state levels to strengthen school leadership preparation.

In the spring of 2001, Dr. Dianne Ashby, then Dean of the College of Education at Illinois State University, convened a group of Illinois professors of educational leadership to address issues related to the development of the national Educational Leadership Constituency Consortium (ELCC) standards. At that time, ICPEA had not met for several years. Dr. Ashby described it this way, “Simply put, Illinois Educational Administration programs, public and private, had not been actively enough involved with the formation of national standards, the changes in NCATE, and the development of ELCC to understand, appreciate and respect the power/influence these things/organizations would have on their programs” (personal communication, April 3, 2008). Recognizing the opportunities created through participation as well as the challenges associated with lack of involvement, Ashby sought to involve the Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration in the process to create and implement standards for the preparation of school leaders.

Since that meeting in 2001, members of ICPEA have collaborated with various stakeholders throughout Illinois to develop common understandings of effective school leadership preparation programs. Members of ICPEA conducted statewide studies on educational leadership programs, published the results of some of that work, served as chairs of committees to address issues of school leadership preparation, and served on three statewide groups convened to study school leadership preparation.

This paper addresses activities and accomplishments of the Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration (ICPEA) with other organizations in the state based upon changes related to educational leadership graduate programs in accreditation standards (ELCC) from 2001 to 2010. The description of ICPEA’s work in Illinois school leadership preparation reform can be divided into three overlapping and continuous collaborations: to understand and respond to changing national ELCC accreditation requirements (2001-2004), to develop common understanding of effective principal preparation programs (2004-2006) and to engage with other state stakeholders in the development of new processes for Illinois principal preparation graduate programs (2006-2010).

The purpose of this study was to chronicle and analyze the redesign process of a particular state (Illinois) in the United States. Investigators sought to conduct historical research to provide an analysis of the processes and procedures that ICPEA, in partnership with various organizations throughout the state, engaged in over a nine year period (2001-2010) to dramatically change school leadership preparation through requirements for state accreditation. Without state accreditation, Illinois programs cannot issue certification to graduates for positions as principals in schools. Specifically, investigators sought to (1) document the collaborations, interactions, challenges, opportunities and accomplishments with multiple stakeholders, (2) provide a framework for other state organizations and universities to consider in restructuring processes, and (3) integrate current understandings of school leadership program redesign in the United States.

Historical research focuses primarily on the past and seeks to reconstruct what happened

during a particular period of time as completely and accurately as possible and explain reasons for the events and outcomes. Historical research is a systematic collection and evaluation of data gathered to describe, explain, and understand past actions or events. The purpose of historical research is to provide insights into particular events so that others can benefit from past experiences (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

The steps taken in this historical research involved location of relevant sources of historical information based upon the research questions, summarization and evaluation of the information and interpretation of all information related to the process. The authors were active participants in various roles throughout the period described. Others engaged in the various stages of the process were asked to provide input regarding their perspectives. Data collected included agendas and reports of meetings throughout the period, publications and presentations, and focused interviews of individuals in leadership positions. Participants in the study included past and present ICPEA leaders, the Executive Director of Illinois School Action for Educational Leadership Preparation (ILSAELP) and leaders of various phases of the process of statewide redesign of school leadership preparation.

Analysis of the data collected was reviewed through two lenses. First, an external criticism that asked who wrote the document, what was the purpose of the document, and under what circumstances was the document written? The second level of critique asked whether the document genuinely represented events as they transpired (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

The authors recognize three issues for consideration when conducting historical research. First, the slant or biases of information gathered including potential biases by the historians themselves, which in this case are the authors. Second, there are many factors that contribute to historical events, and finally, evidence should not be examined from a singular point of view (Harter and Busha, 1980). To the extent possible, the researchers sought to gather information from multiple perspectives and to rely on published accounts of events. Taking into consideration that others not included in this historical study may have different perspectives; the authors take sole and full responsibility for all descriptions and analyses in this manuscript.

School Leadership Preparation Reform at State and National Levels

Issues related to school leadership preparation reform in the United States in general and Illinois in particular, are stymied by uneasy relationships among national, state and local organizations, each

playing a role with no centralized plan on ways to accomplish the desired end of school reform. The process is riddled with various interests, power structures, and purposes. In some cases, those involved in school leadership preparation reform could be accused of having solutions looking for problems. In other cases, motivations may be more closely tied to the maintenance or establishment of power over Illinois school leader preparation. At any rate, the process of school leadership preparation reform clamors with the opinions of many different Illinois constituencies.

Illinois higher education school leadership preparation programs operate within a complex arrangement where one agency, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), grants initial approval of educational administration programs, thus allowing graduates of their programs eligibility to take the qualifying exam for a Type 75 Administrative Endorsement. Another agency, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) periodically monitors quality of such programs. Add to the mix the fact that approximately half of Illinois principal preparation programs are nationally accredited leaving quality oversight the responsibility of one state agency, ISBE. Consideration of the effects of Illinois school leadership preparation standards upon higher education programs must include the systems within which higher education programs operate. The various Illinois constituencies concerned with strengthening school leadership preparation are not a singular organization, but rather a loose conglomeration of agencies, interest groups, higher education programs, and state professional organizations. Senge (1990) explains "The learning organizations of the future will make key decisions based on shared understandings of interrelationships and patterns of change" (p. 204). Senge goes on to say that deep learning in an organization requires thinking beyond mental models dominated by events to those that recognize longer term patterns of change. Given the various missions, interests, and motivations of multiple constituencies, recognition of longer term patterns related to the common stated goal of strengthening school leadership seems ambitious at best

Kowalski (2004) identified three special interest groups in the United States, each with different values and beliefs engaging in the school leadership preparation change process. The first group, the anti-professionists, is comprised of individuals outside of school leadership such as corporate executives, current or former political office holders, foundation officials, and would-be school reformers. Their agenda is to deregulate the practice of school administrators and increase local control over schools. The second group, referred to as the status-quo professionists, is predominantly composed of education practitioners and professors united by the belief that school administration is a legitimate profession under significant and unfair criticism. This group is relatively passive in the debate over professionalism of school administrators. Kowalski identifies the last group as reform-professionists, composed primarily of education professors and practitioners unified by a belief that school administration is a quasi-profession in need of becoming a full profession. This group advocates for reform in administrator preparation, program accreditation, and state licensing standards. They hold the position that deregulation will make local schools even more vulnerable to political manipulation than is currently the case.

In 2001, few of the issues related to the preparation of United States school leaders were new to the profession of educational administration. Scholars in the field of educational administration along with leaders in professional school administrator organizations have worked together for years to apply guidelines and standards in order to create a knowledge base that would assure competent professional school leaders.

The development of professional standards in educational administration/leadership is a continuous quest to find consensus among scholars and practicing administrators about a common body of knowledge and a set of competencies, dispositions, and language to seek quality in the professional preparation and development of school leaders” (Hoyle, 2005, p. 23).

In his keynote address at the National Council of Professors of Education (NCPEA) national conference in 2003, Creighton advocated three major steps to take back the profession: (1) development of a new program improvement process, (2) a national research study (using evidence-based data) to investigate thoroughly what works and what does not work in university preparation programs; and (3) communications with policy makers at the national level. Creighton (2003) argued that responsibility for new program improvement does not lie with national accreditation agencies (NCATE or ELCC), but rather with NCPEA, which represents over 400-university preparation programs nationally. This position addresses two weaknesses of accreditation processes. The first is that while accrediting bodies maintain high standards, the process generally discourages highly innovative program development, thus perpetuating sameness across college and university offerings (Rowling, Lujan, & Dolence, 2001). The second weakness stems from the reality that not all programs seek accreditation which is particularly relevant in Illinois where approximately only half of the programs have national accreditation.

The knowledge base of school leadership is a continuing issue. Elmore (2007) asserts that education in general is a profession without a practice because there is an absence of a core set of practices around which to organize a body of knowledge.

The work of educators has little or no social authority, no matter how well-grounded it is in craft knowledge and systematic research, because it is not defined by a core set of practices that can be used to define collective identity and to exclude unqualified practitioners from practice” (p. 2-3). Elmore describes characteristics of professions as hierarchies that distinguish expert, experienced, and novice practitioners based upon a relevant body of knowledge. He concludes by entreating educators to understand that without this body of knowledge, education and the professionals who call themselves educators will continue to be victimized by competing interests that currently define good educational practice (p. 2-3).

Those fitting Kowalski’s characterization as reform professionalists seeking to provide evidence of successful leadership preparation have engaged in several promising initiatives in the last several years. Participants in those efforts at the national level come from several national professional organizations comprised of educational administration professors. The primary organizations are the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), and American Education Research Association (AERA)-Division A. The primary aims of their efforts are to (1) provide a foundation about existing research and theory in the field of leadership preparation; 2) identify gaps and new directions for research and leadership preparation; 3) stimulate more, better quality research in the field of leadership preparation; 4) encourage new and experienced researchers to undertake research in the field; and 5) provide a community of scholars for on-going conceptual and methodological work (Orr, 2006). Other initiatives revolve around publication of research on effective school leadership preparation. (Hoyle, 2006).

Other promising rigorous empirical evidence of school leadership effectiveness includes Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) *School Leadership that Works: from Research to Results*. This work is a

meta-analysis of research based upon research between 1978 and 2001 on effective school leadership that provides 21 responsibilities of school leaders. Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2006) contend that quite a lot is known about effective school leadership.

With all this confusion about the concept of leadership in our environment, we might be persuaded to think that hard evidence about what is good or successful or effective leadership in education organizations is lacking – or at least contradictory – but we would be wrong. We actually know a great deal about the leadership behaviors, practices, or actions that are helpful in improving the impact of schools on the pupil outcomes that we value” (Leithwood, et al. p. 8).

Educational administration is not alone in lacking convincing research evidence that its graduate programs produce successful graduates. Graduate programs in business administration, public administration, hospital administration, health administration, and sports management suffer from a lack of solid research evidence that their graduates become successful as a direct result of their graduate studies. Programs in architecture, medicine, agriculture, computer science, and engineering, and other professional schools claim to have tighter links between preparation and practice due to the more measurable skills and performance expectations of meeting professional standards. Thus, while educational administration continues to question which set of preparation standards are superior measures of successful practice, the gap remains between what skills are taught and what skills really make for successful practice (Hoyle (2006).

Collins (2005) offers some solace to those engaged in what he terms the social sector professions. Based upon his seminal work on leadership in the business sector, *Good to Great*, Collins (2001) makes distinctions between the types of leadership required in business and social sector endeavors such as education.

We must reject the idea well-intentioned, but dead wrong- that the primary path to greatness in the social sectors is to become “more like business. Most businesses – like most anything else in life- fall somewhere between mediocre and good. Few are great (p.1).

Collins’ intention in writing the monograph from which this quotation comes was the promise of research in the same veins as that which came from *Good to Great* on leadership behaviors in professions such as education, health care, etc. This work is currently under way and will not be completed for several years. In the meantime, Collins (2005) makes two points relevant to school leadership preparation reform. First, that leadership in the social sectors is much more complex than leadership in the business sector primarily because social sector leadership requires getting people to follow when they have the freedom to decline. The second point is that in the social sectors, there are fewer widely held metrics of performance which makes measurement of accomplishment of goals more complex than a simple business bottom line metric. Collins’ proposed work, which should be completed in the next few years, has significance for the issues of school leadership preparation reform.

A summary of the complex issues and players interested in school leader preparation reform at the national level seems appropriate. Unlike many other countries, the United States is organized around principles of local control of schools at all levels. School leader preparation in the United States has traditionally been the purview of universities, both private and public, which are accredited at state levels. Accreditation at the state level is important because graduates of the program cannot obtain

jobs as school leaders without state approval. In the past ten years, formerly unknown configurations for school leader preparation have come into play including online programs, privately funded “innovative” programs that provide opportunities for candidates not afforded in traditional university programs, and programs taught primarily by practitioners in the field.

States organize in different ways and some are more centrally organized than others. National accreditation through ELCC has traditionally been regarded as providing evidence of higher quality in programs, but this perception has shifted over the past decade. Nonetheless, national accreditation is optional and in Illinois, over half of the programs do not seek such designation. Over the past decade, a significant level of uncertainty exists for all organizations involved in school leader preparation.

Unless research directs greater efforts to reveal more reliable evidence that the course work and related clinical experience prepares more effective school leaders, other providers (not university programs) will fill the void with on-line and less expensive degrees and credentials. The Broad Foundation, on-line universities, i.e., Phoenix, Devry, and others are making claims that their programs for preparing school leaders are as successful as the traditional graduate schools and departments and at less cost and greater convenience to school administrators in full-time jobs who claim time constraints bar them from entering traditional, research-based, on-campus graduate programs (Hoyle, New Research Initiatives, para 1, 2006).

Shifting expectations for school leadership are due in part to increasing diversity of students, financial disparities (particularly in Illinois, which consistently ranks in the bottom 10% nationally in state support for public schools), accountability through No Child Left Behind and other initiatives, and a projected retirement of a high percentage of experienced administrators. Criticism of old “factory” models of schools created at the turn of the last century during another time of rapid societal change (industrialization and high immigration rates) that are alive and well in many principal preparation programs, presents the impetus for the call for new models of principal preparation in Illinois.

Other constituents interested in school reform have realized the need to focus on school leadership including preparation at state policy levels (Augustine and Russell, 2010 & Wilhoit, 2010). Education leader Gene Wilhoit called on “states and districts to work together to develop policies that support improved leadership” (p. 19). Such advocacy is based upon the recognition that school reform must be viewed as a systemic issue that involves change at all levels, building, district, universities and state. All parts of the system must work together to align and support intended improvements. Reform effects must recognize the need for policy decisions to align with district leadership needs and state standards for school leaders. The issue was not which state-level agency coordinates leadership improvement work (which indeed would be impossible since U.S. states organize education individually), but rather whether the decisions are driven by the context, structures and capacities of the state, and that leadership improvement strategies promote engagement across all participating organizations (Augustine & Russell, 2010, p. 34).

Three Phases of ICPEA Involvement in School Leadership Preparation Reform

Additional details about the activities of ICPEA’s work in Illinois school leadership preparation reform follow. The three phases include: to understand and respond to changing national Educational Leadership Constituency Consortium (ELCC) accreditation requirements (2001-2004); to develop a common understanding of effective principal preparation programs (2004-2006); and to engage with

other state stakeholders in the development of new processes for principal preparation programs (2006-2010).

Response to Changing Accreditation Requirements (2001-2004)

In the early phases of ICPEA's new reorganization, the membership focused on two primary goals: to help one another understand and address newly created ELCC national accreditation standards and develop networks with other Illinois organizations concerned with school leadership preparation.

The first president of the reorganized group, Dr. Maggie Noe from the University of Illinois at Springfield was particularly instrumental in forging these relationship with other Illinois organizations concerned with school leadership preparation... One of the first networks was the Illinois State Action Educational Leadership Project (IL-SAELP), an initiative funded through The Wallace Foundation and housed at Illinois State University.

IL-SAELP provided support and a forum for Illinois principal preparation programs to collaborate on issues based upon the increasing recognition that expectations for school leaders were changing rapidly, requiring university preparation programs to adapt programs to changing expectations. When asked what she viewed as one of the greatest accomplishments during her involvement both nationally and locally as Dean of the College of Education at Illinois State University, Dianne Ashby said, "One of the greatest accomplishments was securing a Wallace funded multi-year policy grant that has kept the issues associated with quality ed leadership preparation in front of policy makers, chairs, deans, and others concerned about school leadership" (personal communication, April 3, 2008).

Dr. Norman Durlinger, Director of IL-SAELP described his role as director this way,

I became director of IL-SAELP in March 2004. My original role was to get consensus from over 60 individuals and organizations on the leadership policies developed by the Consortium. February 2005 we had consensus on the 36 IL-SAELP Leadership policies. Wallace funded the Center (housed at Illinois State) to proceed into SAELP II and we were to start implementing and institutionalizing the policies of the Consortium's choosing" (personal communication, June 5, 2008).

A description of the history of Illinois SAELP can be found on the Illinois State University Policy Center website (Illinois Statewide Action for Educational Leadership Program). In 2001, Illinois was one of fifteen states across America selected and funded by the Wallace Foundation to conduct work aimed at strengthening education leadership throughout the state. IL- SAELP, which was housed in the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University, focused on designing strategies to create an aligned system of leadership in the state that addressed both the *conditions* that enable effective leadership and *leadership development* in Illinois schools. Aligned with the goals of the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* legislation, these strategies centered on (1) strengthening leaders' decision-making authority and ability to address issues of student achievement and (2) stimulating administrator preparation, induction, and professional development programs that focus on improving student achievement.

As ICPEA and others throughout the state engaged in conversations about effective principal preparation programs, gaps in knowledge about existing programs emerged. In 2004, Lee Patton, newly retired from the Illinois State Board of Education, asked to speak at an ICPEA meeting. She

urged the group to conduct a study on current practices of the internship with Illinois principal preparation programs. Five members of ICPEA responded by conducting an on-line survey of Illinois programs to determine current practices. At that time there were 27 programs in Illinois. The response rate to the survey was similar to subsequent surveys (48%) and results showed a wide variance in practices, which was not surprising given there were no requirements from the state for an internship (Tripses, et al, 2005).

Research into existing realities of principal preparation programs nationwide revealed issues from the national level. The published manuscript of the internship study concluded

We recognize that there are groups who would like to take administrator preparation out of the universities to the private sector. We understand the need to collaborate with other stakeholders in the state to identify and address common goals towards providing the best educational system possible for Illinois children. We recognize that we have a responsibility to work diligently with those with whom we agree and disagree towards that goal. We intend to exercise leadership through a newly defined sense of identity, a clearer vision of what leadership for Illinois schools needs to become, and a strong sense of commitment to work with others to make that vision a reality. (Tripses, et al, 2005, p. 55).

From that point forward, members of ICPEA understood a new mission for their organization. The mission was to collaborate with all Illinois stakeholders.

Common Understanding of Effective Principal Preparation Programs

Coming together with the over 60 individuals and agencies described earlier by Norman Durlinger, was enlightening and at times frustrating. Different perspectives of the problem abounded. In a presentation to IL-SAELP in February 2005, Jenny Tripses, past president of ICPEA, described some of the issues. Schools need principals who are strong instructional leaders who understand how to work with teachers to radically change instruction, curriculum and assessments. In order to accomplish these aims, effective communication with diverse publics and rapidly changing media will be absolutely essential.

The policy implications of the conditions noted above were significant. Tripses cited a study from the North Central Regional Education Laboratory (Thompson and Legler, 2003) that defined the need to reevaluate the role of principals, to strengthen collaboration between academic and practice components of principal preparation programs, to increase the role of National Policy Board for Educational Administration, increase the amount of time for graduate students in practicum or internship, to review and strengthen induction programs after new principals are hired, to integrate technology into preparation and practicum experiences, and to increase instruction and practice in data analysis.

In 2005, IL-SAELP organized committees established around major activities related to the IL-SAELP initiative to develop or identify model prototypes related to the two key strategies. Several of the committees were co-chaired by ICPEA members and practitioners in the field; leaders of statewide organizations involved in school leadership preparation. The following list indicates the co-chairs in parentheses with the ICPEA member listed first.

- Administrative Preparation Committee (Jenny Tripses and Diane Rutledge, then

Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools)

- School Leader Licensure Assessment Committee (Margaret Noe and Christy Coleman from the Illinois Association of School Boards)
- Enhanced Administrators Academy Mentoring Committee (Linda Morford and Sallie Penman from Chicago Public Schools)
- Administrative Professional Development Committee (Nick Osborne and Sue Dole, then Assistant Superintendent Springfield Public Schools).

Other committees in this endeavor not co-chaired by ICPEA members included Committee on Leadership Routes for National Board Certified Teachers, Principal Evaluation Committee, and IL-SAELP Assessment Committee.

Development of New Processes for Principal Preparation Programs (2006-2010)

In August, 2006, the Commission on School Leader Preparation in Illinois Colleges and Universities prepared an analysis and set of recommendations for improving PreK-12 school leader preparation in Illinois, and submitted it to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Like the national reports, the Illinois report argued that principal preparation is a key component in improving student learning in schools. Upon receiving the Commission's report, *School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change*, the Illinois Board of Higher Education joined with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Governor's office to initiate a joint resolution in the Illinois General Assembly. This resolution created a Task Force charged with moving the *Blueprint* agenda forward. The Illinois School Leader Task Force was formed in October 2007 to execute the following charge:

Prepare a report to the General Assembly, the Office of the Governor, the State Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education that details an action plan for strategically improving school leadership preparation in Illinois, based on, but not limited to, the measures detailed in the report of the Commission, *School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change*. (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2006).

Goals and recommendations for Illinois school leader preparation programs identified from the *Blueprint* included:

- (1) Recruitment and admission of the best potential school leaders which involves restructuring of admission criteria and recruitment practices,
- (2) Stronger focus by preparation programs on improving and sustaining P-12 student achievement through rigorous assessment data and meaningful clinical and internship experiences, and
- (3) Higher assessment standards that ensure quality school leader preparation programs through a more rigorous certification exam, revision of the certification and endorsement structure, and rigorous program review and approval process (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2006).

In the late summer of 2007, ICPEA was asked by IL-SAELP to conduct a gap analysis of Illinois principal preparation programs to determine perceptions of graduates of educational leadership programs, their teachers, employers, and university faculty on program quality. The questions asked if

candidates were prepared with the needed competencies/skills to be effective and the extent to which respondents perceived the importance of those competencies/skills. A list of 17 principal competency/skills was organized from a comprehensive literature review. These skills were then used in surveys to address two questions: (1) to rate the degree of the quality of the 17 skills/competencies they received from their principal preparation program and (2) to rate how important it is for principal preparation programs to teach the competency/skill. Surveys were distributed to superintendents, principals, and teachers. The data summaries, findings, and the implications for preparation programs in the state of Illinois resulted in several conclusions: (1) principal preparation programs are perceived to be doing an “adequate” to “outstanding” job of preparing entry level skills/competencies for those seeking the principalship by all three responding groups, (2) superintendents believe that principals are better prepared than reported by principals, and (3) teachers on the other hand, perceive principals are less well prepared than either the principals or the superintendents reported. The data indicated that from the viewpoint of superintendents, principals, and teachers, the 17 skills/competencies are the necessary skills to guide principals in their work. Data from superintendents, principals, and teachers have very minimal variation in their responses and the average of the responses for all groups was above 4 on a 5 point scale. A limitation of this analysis was not disaggregating the data, namely, separating superintendent, principal, and teacher responses by years in their profession (Pacha et. al, 2008).

The gap analysis suggested other research questions revolving around differences between entry level skills. Specifically, the researchers identified a need to differentiate entry level skills/competencies versus those of experienced principals. Based upon those delineations the authors asserted that principal preparation programs be held accountable for the development of entry level principal skills/competencies versus the skills/competencies of experienced principals. (Pacha et al, 2008).

The work of the Task Force built upon the August 2006 report of the Commission on School Leader Preparation entitled *School Leader Preparation: A Blueprint for Change*. The Illinois Task Force was created to assess the findings and recommendations of the *Blueprint* and develop a sequence of strategic steps based on, but not limited to, the measures it recommends. Over a four-month period, the Task Force brought together many of the state’s most knowledgeable and influential educational leaders, from PreK-12 schools, higher education, business and state agencies. Despite the diversity of the organizations represented and the consequent differences in viewpoints on any specific recommendation, the report was submitted with the unanimous endorsement of the Task Force members. From October 2007 through January 2008, Task Force members:

- Examined Illinois data collected by external sources, including a Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) state benchmarking report and an Illinois Council of Professors of Education Administration (ICPEA) gap analysis, as well as other data sources;
- Examined existing research on the impact of school leadership on student learning, as well as national reports on the state of school leadership preparation today and the need to strengthen preparation programs to improve student learning in schools; and
- Considered existing and emerging federal, state, and district policies that inform how leadership preparation may contribute to a leadership continuum for aspiring, new, and experienced school leaders.

The final recommendations, presented to the Illinois General Assembly included three goals with accompanying recommendations for implementation. The goals focused on state policies, formal partnerships and refocused principal preparation programs. Recommendations were:

Recommendation 1: State policies must set high standards for school leader certification that align principal preparation, early career mentoring, ongoing professional development, and master principal recognition with those standards, so that by 2013 all new principal preparation would be taking place through programs approved under these new standards.

Recommendation 2: Formal partnerships must be established between school districts and principal preparation programs affiliated with state-accredited institutions to support principal preparation and development.

Recommendation 3: Refocused principal preparation programs must demonstrate that they develop and rigorously assess in aspiring principals *the capacities that are most likely to improve student learning in PreK- 12 schools*. These capacities should (a) form the heart of the new Illinois School Leadership Standards previously recommended and (b) reflect the vision of school leadership identified in the Illinois Distinguished Principal Program (Illinois School Leader Task Force).

The Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Board of Higher Education convened stakeholders in May 2008 to work collaboratively to produce a single set of outcomes-based program approval criteria for all Illinois principal preparation programs. All university programs were informed that Illinois principal preparation programs would be required to reapply for state accreditation by 2013 based upon outcomes-based program approval criteria to be developed in part through this process. Programs unable to comply with new criteria would no longer be able to certify graduates. Essentially, principal preparation programs not in compliance will no longer be in business.

Five redesign teams were formed: School Leadership Standards co-chaired by Dr. Cynthia Kuck, Argosy University and Dr. Don Hackman, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana; Leadership Certification and Endorsement co-chaired by Dr. Margaret Tribus, Concordia University and Dr. Scott Day, University of Illinois at Springfield; School/University Partnership and Selection Process co-chaired by Dr. Jenny Tripses, Bradley University and Dr. Kathleen Brown, Illinois Education Research Council at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville; Residencies/Internships co-chaired by Dr. June Grivetti, University of St. Francis and Dr. Linda Morford, Eastern Illinois University; and Assessments co-chaired by Dr. Kristine Servais, North Central College and Dr. Joe Pacha, Illinois State University. These teams collaborated with various stakeholders to develop specific recommendations to design principal preparation programs (Illinois School Leader Redesign).

At the end of the two-year Working to Prepare School Leaders process, a number of concerns became evident to the ICPEA membership. After the conclusion of the subcommittee work, a group of interest groups was convened by ISBE and IBHE. These groups recommended modifications and additions to the work of the subcommittees which were incorporated into the final document. For example, some of these suggestions involved the inclusion of specific content into each course taught, including special education, English language learners, gifted education, and early childhood. The nature of the administrative internship was also modified, becoming very prescriptive in nature, particularly regarding areas involving special education. While many ICPEA members were uneasy with some changes, they felt that they would still have a chance for input during the administrative rulemaking

process typically conducted by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR), a committee of the Illinois General Assembly.

In a meeting of the ICPEA held on April 15, 2010, the membership was informed that ISBE had introduced a bill in the legislature which would subvert the normal rulemaking process. This bill contained a number of new provisions which the membership considered. Among these were a shortening of the internship period from twelve months to nine (while still requiring the same number of hours of work), a provision that the universities be responsible for paying for substitutes to release interns for their duties, and creating a panel for approval of programs, which would constitute a third level of approval of universities seeking recognition of their administrative programs. The ICPEA became aware of this bill when one of the ICPEA members was contacted by Representative Roger Eddy for input. Representative Eddy had been asked to sponsor the bill in the legislature by ISBE. ICPEA's concerns led to two conference calls involving key ICPEA members, Representative Eddy, Norman Durflinger, and representatives of ISBE, including the State Superintendent, Christopher Koch. As a result of these two conference calls, the following agreements were reached on May 4, 2010:

1. The responsibility of universities to pay school districts for residencies was removed from the law;
2. The timelines for implementation were delayed for one year, which would make implementation at the university level more feasible;
3. The proposed third level review panel was dropped;
4. The shortened timeframe for the internship residency was removed from the law; and
5. Assurances were given that out-of-state universities would be held to the same standards as Illinois universities regarding all elements of administrative certification. (J. Rosborg, personal communication, May 11, 2010).

After these conference calls, the Illinois House passed the revised bill, but it has yet to clear the Senate.

Summary

The Illinois Council of Professors of Educational Administration pledged to work with other Illinois stakeholders in 2005 to improve and strengthen school leadership preparation. Since that time ICPEA members have fulfilled up to that promise in various capacities. Evidence of contributions is chronicled in this paper. ICPEA can claim many accomplishments towards their intention to work with others to create the best educational system possible for Illinois children through school leadership preparation. Elmore (2006) defines a professional network as "a group of people engaged in the common enterprise of developing their knowledge and practice through systematic, sustained work with each other around specific problems of instructional quality and student performance" (p. 3). Based upon that definition ICPEA can claim some success since 2001 in terms of accomplishments for Illinois school leader preparation programs through collaborative networks between programs and other agencies throughout the state. Set in the context of state and national efforts aimed at school leadership preparation reform, ICPEA and various members accomplished the following:

1. Collaborations to understand and successfully respond to ELCC accreditation requirements

2. Dialogue with various agencies and organizations through IL-SAELP at the state level to strengthen school leadership preparation
3. Published research on the internship and perceptions of practitioners in the field (teachers, administrators, and professors of educational administration) on the effectiveness of school leadership preparation programs
4. Established a national presence through the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration
5. Served in various capacities in efforts to develop a knowledge base through Connexions, an online publications consortium focused on educational administration.

These accomplishments must be qualified by another position taken by Elmore (2006) who states the need to build a culture of professionalism cannot come solely from or even predominantly from institutions of higher education that prepare school leaders. The final recommendations of the two Illinois task force bodies would bear out Elmore's assertion. While each recommends strengthening principal preparation programs, recommendations for implementation of the goals fall outside the immediate purview of ICPEA.

ICPEA has not worked alone. In fact, one of the primary contributions would have to be that the organization has worked with others. The Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Board of Higher Education intentionally involved universities in the development of school leadership preparation reform. IL-SAELP, funded by the Wallace Foundation, provided a forum starting back in 2004 to engage stakeholders in serious conversations about changing needs of schools and implications for school leadership preparation. At every step, ICPEA members were actively involved in the creation of new program criteria. Going back to Dianne Ashby's reasoning for convening ICPEA back in 2001, Illinois professors of educational leadership had not been involved in the process of reform. If the organization had not come together at that point, Illinois school leader preparation reform would have been created without the coordinated input from the organization. ICPEA was one voice, that voice was informed and responsive to calls for improvement in principal preparation.

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Appendix A

ICPEA's Response to the Call to Strengthen School Leadership 2001-2010

2001 Dr. Dianne Ashby (then Dean of the College of Education at Illinois State University) reconvenes ICPEA.

Dr. Maggie Noe (then Assistant Professor at University of Illinois at Springfield) elected president of ICPEA.

ELCC training at Bradley University September 2001.

Networks formed with other statewide professional organizations, Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators, and Illinois Principal Association.

2002 ELCC standards adopted.

2003 Dr. Jenny Tripses (then Assistant Professor at Bradley University) assumed president role in April.

2004 ICPEA internship study conducted.

ICPEA By-Laws and Code of Ethics written and approved by ICPEA membership.

2005 ICPEA internship study published in the NCPEA Education Leadership Review.

Dean Halverson (Assistant Professor at Western Illinois University) assumes presidency, several members of ICPEA served as co-chairs for committees through IL-SAELP.

Levine Report released.

Illinois Blueprint Commission formed in response to Levine report. Several members of ICPEA served on the Commission.

2006 Blueprint for Change published.

Linda Morford serves as president of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (August 2006-August 2007).

Article on work of the SAELP Administrative Leadership Preparation Committee published in the 2006 NCPEA Yearbook.

2007 John Murphy (Assistant Professor Northern Illinois University) assumes presidency

Gap-Analysis study led by Joe Pacha, Linda Morford and other members of ICPEA presented to IBHE.

ICPEA hosts the NCPEA national conference in Chicago, IL.

Article on internships published in the 2007 NCPEA Yearbook.

Joe Pacha, Assistant Professor at Illinois State University is elected to the NCPEA board.

2008 School Leader Task Force published.

Article on work of the Gap Analysis Task Force published in the 2008 NCPEA Yearbook

John Hunt (Assistant Professor Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville) assumed president role in April 2009.

Jenny Tripses, Associate Professor at Bradley University is elected to the NCPEA board.

School Leader Redesign is convened by the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Board of Higher Education. Each of the five subcommittees is co-chaired by a university professor from a public and private university.

2009 Tom Kersten, Associate Professor Roosevelt University elected to the NCPEA board.

Joe Pacha, Associate Professor at Illinois State University is elected president of NCPEA (August 2009-August 2010).

2010 Legislation for school leader preparation reform is introduced in the Illinois General Assembly.

The rules and regulations are written on the criteria principal preparation programs will follow to reapply for accreditation.

July 14, 2010 The Illinois State Board of Education invites stakeholders to a discussion of leadership reform efforts and the proposed reform rules for newly enacted legislation.

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