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Are Educational Leadership Candidates Prepared to Address Diversity Issues in Schools?

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Research and Best Practices That Advance the Profession
of Educational Administration

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A Message From the Editor

Frederick L. Dembowski
Southeastern Louisiana University

In the first research article in this issue, Tak Chan discusses the need to evaluate the effectiveness of diversity preparation in educational administration programs. Chan reports the findings of a study on 221 students from nine educational leadership programs in Georgia. The participants were asked to rank (on a five-point Likert scale) their knowledge, skills, and dispositions toward diversity and how well their program prepared them in specific areas. Two open-ended questions gave participants the opportunity to share specific experiences and offer suggestions for improving educational administration. Chan discusses both quantitative and qualitative analyses which confirm the diversity effort of the leadership programs and display the dissatisfaction of program candidates.

In the second research article, Marcia Lamkin, Shelly Albritton, Jack Klotz, and Jackie McBride explore the perceived effectiveness of the implementation of parental involvement programs mandated by Arkansas Act 603. Surveys from 1,114 parents of elementary and secondary students attending 18 different schools were analyzed to determine if differences existed between grouping variables, to learn if school size impacted parents' perceptions, and to determine over a three-year period if schools were making progress in their implementation of parental involvement programs. Results include two key issues that appear to predict parent satisfaction. Implications to improve parental involvement programs are also discussed.

In the first article of best practice, Patricia Gaudreau, Andrew Kufel, and David Parks identify the attributes of a quality internship determined by leading researchers and organizations in the field. Research-based guidelines, performance assessment techniques, and mentoring practices outline the essential components most commonly cited as having strong correlations with providing effective internships.

In the closing article on best practice, Kelly McKerrow, Gayle Crawford, and Patricia Cornell examine the Interstate School Leaders Licensure's standards for best practices. The authors present current research data that supports the efficacy of the standards, the importance of the dispositions, and the impact of both on administrative practice. There were significant effects found in the areas of ethics, school community relations, and school improvement. The researchers tested for gender effects but did not find any. Implications are drawn and specific recommendations for both educational administration programs and administrative practice are made.

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Are Educational Leadership Candidates Prepared To Address Diversity Issues in Schools?

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Introduction

Standard 4 of the Educational Leadership Constituency Council (ELCC) Standards (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2002) addresses school diversity issues and specifies requirements that all educational leadership programs need to meet. In response, all educational leadership programs in Georgia referenced ELCC Standards and have worked to foster diversity as a priority in their programs. The faculty has been given guidelines to respond to diversity issues by implementing a variety of constructive strategies. For all that the faculty has done to foster diversity in the educational leadership programs, do program candidates get the message?

Purpose of the Study

Most of the literature on leadership diversity is focused on the significance and strategies of fostering diversity into the educational leadership programs. Research is lacking on assessing the outcomes of the faculty's effort toward diversity implementation. Therefore the purpose of this study is to examine program candidates' perceptions of their diversity preparation in educational leadership programs.

Results of the survey will reflect the effectiveness of our diversity effort as perceived by program candidates.

Research questions

1. How do candidates of the educational leadership programs in Georgia perceive diversity preparation in their programs?
2. Do gender, age, race and teaching experience make any difference in the candidates' perceptions of diversity preparation in their programs?
3. What fields of diversity do candidates perceive that they are better or worse prepared?

Literature Review

The significance of fostering diversity in teacher education programs was documented. Analyzing data from student journals and discussion transcripts, Sax (1999) found that infusing diversity into an education program encouraged students to challenge their beliefs and values. Simerly (1991) identified managing diversity as a critical issue for the preparation of continuing educators. Torrey (2002) found that diversity was

a key issue in faculty development of higher education.

However, Billingsley (2005) identified difficulties in promoting diversity in higher education: a lack of knowledge about diversity, inherited prejudices and stereotypes, and feelings of guilt, anger, frustration and anxiety. Despite these difficulties, faculty members in Helton's study (2000) were motivated to foster diversity for self-satisfaction and a desire to help diverse students.

Strategies of fostering diversity in college teaching were implemented by many teacher educators. Barnett and Caffarella (1992) advocated the use of cohort experiences to address diversity issues. Billingsley (2005) recommended a comfortable environment for students to engage in meaningful human exchange on diversity issues. Scholars in University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1997) asserted that teachers also brought a range of diversity concerns to the classroom. Hammond (1996) employed class activities to allow students to feel what the other person might feel. Nagy (2000) explored free-write and case study as teaching techniques that linked to the creation of diversity curriculum in higher education. In teacher education, Gaughan (1998) found no significant relationship between faculty diversity awareness and their teaching effectiveness.

Though Maxcy (1998) reported the failure of university programs to prepare school leaders for a culturally diverse America, in educational leadership most related literature maintained a constructive attitude in addressing diversity issues. Calabrese and Bartz (1991) proposed a reformed model of educational administration programs to include "increasing cultural diversity" as an overriding theme. Paull (1995) restructured an educational leadership academy to prepare school leaders to create schools in diverse societies in California. Parker

and Shapiro (1992) found that graduate students in educational leadership learned far more about diversity through informal peer learning than they did in classrooms. The need to address diversity issues across program areas was identified by He and Chan (2001). Creating an interdepartmental course on affirming diversity in teaching and administration, they encouraged teachers and administrators to collaborate on diversity issues.

Methodology

Participants

A total of 221 candidates of nine educational leadership programs in Georgia universities participated in the study. All candidates were in their last semester of graduate work in their respective master of education programs of educational leadership.

Instrumentation

A 26-item researcher-designed Likert-scaled questionnaire was used to survey graduate candidates' perception of their diversity preparation in the educational leadership programs of Georgia universities (see Appendix A). The contents of the questionnaire were derived from current literature. Part A relates to the candidates' demographic information. Part B pertains to candidates' perceptions of their diversity preparation in school operation. Part C links to candidates' preparation to handle specific diversity issues: age, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, geographical location, giftedness, language, religion, and socioeconomic background. All 26 items were assigned a scale from 1- to 5 to indicate the extent of the diversity preparation (1 = very poorly prepared, 2 = poorly prepared, 3 = adequately prepared, 4 = well prepared, and 5 = very well prepared). All the questions in the survey were designed with three diversity themes in mind: knowledge (Questions 4, 8, 10, 12, and 13), skill (Questions 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 16), and disposition (Questions 2, 3, 11, 14, and 15).

Two open-ended questions were included to encourage respondents to provide additional information about their diversity preparation. The instrument was tested for content validity through a panel of 10 diversity professionals who critically examined its content, format, and language used. Pilot pre- and post- tests of the questionnaire were performed with 17 program candidates. Pilot test data were analyzed to determine the test-retest reliability coefficient (.87). Internal consistency of the questionnaire was determined by using Cronbach Alpha Test (Alpha: pretest = .952; posttest = .924).

Data Analyses

Quantitative data were analyzed by descriptive statistics in general and by subsets of knowledge, skill, and disposition to determine the extent of candidates' perceptions on diversity preparation of the leadership programs. Analysis of variance was used to compare candidates' perceptions by ethnicity, age, gender, and teaching experience. Qualitative data were classified by categories and analyzed by observing their consistencies in patterns and styles. Results of qualitative analyses served well in validating the results of quantitative analyses.

Results

Quantitative Analysis

Results of data analysis indicated that the general mean of the candidates' responses was 3.6639 out of a five-point scale. The means of knowledge, skills, and disposition subsets were 3.5249, 3.8456, and 3.7298 respectively (see Table 1). Candidates' perception means indicated that candidates in general had an above-average positive perception of their diversity preparation. Means of general responses from the nine leadership programs were significantly different with 4.2813, the highest, and 3.3125, the lowest. Means of knowledge showed 4.1818, the highest, and 3.0606, the lowest; means of skill showed

4.3611, the highest, and 3.3431, the lowest; means of disposition showed 4.2407, the highest, and 3.3203, the lowest (see Table 2). In comparing the means of the nine programs, significant differences were found in knowledge ($F = 4.763$), skill ($F = 4.114$), disposition ($F = 3.889$), and general perceptions ($F = 4.147$) (see Table 3). Diversity areas where candidates were most prepared were socioeconomic status ($M=3.7981$) and gender perspective ($M=3.7081$), and the least prepared areas were religion ($M=3.2367$) and giftedness ($M=3.3140$) (see Table 4). Data analysis also showed that candidates' age, gender, ethnicity, and teaching experience did not make any significant difference in their perception of diversity preparation in the educational leadership programs.

Qualitative Data

A total of 74 candidates responded to the open-ended questions. The qualitative data in this study helped draw a realistic picture of the candidates' perception of their diversity preparation in the leadership programs. They helped validate the findings of the quantitative analysis.

When asked to relate an experience in the program that challenged or repositioned their belief system in multicultural education, most candidates reflected that the program experiences had helped them develop respect for the diversity of all cultures.

Gender-based classrooms, education of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students, and differentiated instruction were cited as class experiences being helpful to their understanding of the diversity issues. Several program candidates applied what they learned about diversity in the program to help address the needs of multicultural students, develop objectives for school improvement plans, and organize programs of minority history in their schools.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics – Candidates' Perception

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.
Knowledge	203	1	5	3.5249	.74642
Skill	217	1	5	3.8456	.73605
Disposition	213	1	5	3.7298	.73688
General	199	1	5	3.6639	.70278

Table 2

Analysis of Variance – Comparison of Candidates' Perception by Program

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Knowledge	Between groups	18.476	8	2.310	4.763	.000
	Within groups	94.066	194	.485		
	Total	112.542	202			
Skill	Between groups	15.987	8	1.998	4.114	.000
	Within groups	101.036	208	.486		
	Total	117.023	216			
Disposition	Between groups	15.233	8	1.904	3.889	.000
	Within groups	99.881	204	.490		
	Total	115.114	212			
General	Between groups	15.181	8	1.898	4.147	.000
	Within groups	92.432	202	.458		
	Total	107.611	210			

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics (Mean) – Candidates' Perception by Program

	Prgrm 1	Prgrm 2	Prgrm 3	Prgrm 4	Prgrm 5	Prgrm 6	Prgrm 7	Prgrm 8	Prgrm 9
Knowledge	<u>4.1818</u> (H)	3.4656	<u>3.0606</u> (L)	3.6932	3.1152	3.5759	3.8706	4.1364	3.6250
Skill	<u>4.3611</u> (H)	3.8312	3.5115	4.1667	<u>3.3431</u> (L)	3.9000	4.2976	3.9405	3.7604
Disposition	<u>4.2407</u> (H)	3.7128	3.3487	3.7143	<u>3.3203</u> (L)	3.7389	4.1905	3.9487	3.7569
General	<u>4.2813</u> (H)	3.7303	3.4095	3.8125	<u>3.3125</u> (L)	3.8191	4.2210	3.9519	3.7500

(H) = High

(L) = Low

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics – Candidates' Perception of Strengths and Weaknesses of Diversity Preparation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.
Age	209	1	5	3.4928	.96137
Disability	207	1	5	3.5169	.97962
Ethnicity	209	1	5	3.6699	.94620
Family Structure	206	1	5	3.6553	.91739
Gender	209	1	5	3.7081	.91251
Geographical Area	207	1	5	3.5024	.95975
Giftedness	207	1	5	3.3140	.91532
Language	208	1	5	3.4135	.91272
Religion	207	1	5	3.2367	1.06443
SES Background	208	1	5	3.7981	.94158

Additionally, candidates recommended a multiculturalism course be initiated early in the program, a focus on diversified techniques for educating multicultural students, and a revised curriculum to include the impact of social and religious differences on student learning.

Discussion

As a result of data analysis, the following four observations were made:

1. Statistics in this study seemed to indicate that candidates of educational leadership programs in Georgia rated their diversity preparation above average (mean = 3.6639). However, this was not necessarily true. An examination of the program ratings indicated that the mean was skewed by the candidates' high rating of one program. The standard deviation of the program ratings remained large. Candidates' perceptions of their diversity preparation were deeply divided.
2. One program that offered an independent course in multicultural education received highly favorable ratings. Candidates may learn more from a course specifically designed to cover multiculturalism and diversity.
3. The most discussed diversity areas were socioeconomic background, ethnicity, and gender while the least discussed areas were religion, giftedness, and disability issues. Candidates have expressed their anxiety to acquire additional preparation in the least discussed areas.
4. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses result in confirming the diversity effort of the leadership programs and displaying the dissatisfaction of program candidates.

Quantitative data identified diversity areas that needed improvement while qualitative data included candidates' improvement recommendations.

Implications for Teaching and Educational Leadership

This survey of leadership candidates' perception of their diversity preparation was conducted in Georgia; however, fostering diversity in educational leadership programs is a national issue. Results of the study have special implications for teaching in educational leadership programs nationwide. The results disclose the candidates' needs that leadership program designers have to address for program improvement. They also help confirm the directions diversity is fostered in the educational leadership programs.

Additionally, the findings contribute to developing the readers' professional insights in the following diversity channels: (1) developing a culturally diverse curriculum to infuse diversity in educational leadership; (2) developing instructional strategies to lead candidates to think diversely in leadership issues; (3) exploring diverse political, social, and economic impacts on the teaching of educational leadership; and (4) inquiring into educational leadership development in conjunction with diversity issues.

Conclusion

Educational leadership programs in Georgia received an average grade in diversity preparation from participating candidates. Even though candidates did recognize the effort of the programs in preparing them to face diversity challenges at school, the dissatisfaction of their diversity preparation was clearly displayed by both statistics and their qualitative feedback. While the educational leadership faculty can cherish their

accomplishment in making a difference in the candidates' knowledge, skill, and disposition of diversity, they need to recognize the fact that much improvement has to be initiated to better foster diversity in educational leadership programs. Faculty of educational leadership nationwide needs to take the findings of this

study seriously by paying particular attention to the candidates' comments and recommendations of program improvement. A complete realignment of course contents and program delivery activities to reflect the ELCC Standards is recommended to foster diversity in the educational leadership programs.

Author Biography

Tak Cheung Chan, professor of educational leadership at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia, is a graduate of the University of Georgia. He was a classroom teacher, assistant school principal, school principal, and district office administrator. His previous experiences in higher education include serving as an assistant professor at Valdosta State University and as an associate professor at Georgia Southern University. His research interests include educational planning, facility planning, school business administration, school finance, and international education.

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Appendix A

Survey on Diversity Preparation in Educational Leadership Programs

A. Demographic Information:**Gender:**

- Male
 Female

Years of Teaching:

- 1 – 5
 6 – 10
 11 – 15
 16 – 20
 21 – 25
 25+

Age:

- 21 – 30
 31 – 40
 41 – 50
 51 – 60
 60 +

Race:

- Caucasian
 African American
 Hispanic American
 Asian American
 Other

In the following items (#1 to #26), rate your program to the degree it has prepared you in dealing with diversity issues in schools. (1 = very poorly prepared, 2 = poorly prepared, 3 = adequately prepared, 4 = well prepared, and 5 = very well prepared)

B. The program has prepared me.....	1	2	3	4	5
1. To adjust my teaching and/or leadership strategies to accommodate different learning styles.					
2. To demonstrate high expectations for students regardless of ability or disability.					
3. To demonstrate high expectations for students of all ethnic/cultural backgrounds.					
4. To facilitate opportunities for all students to express, celebrate and maintain ethnic and racial distinctions.					
5. To incorporate a variety of classroom materials that are bias-free, fair, and respectful of diverse groups.					
6. To assess students in multiple ways to demonstrate positive impact on student learning.					
7. To infuse multiculturalism into my teaching/leadership—not just teach it separately.					
8. To develop partnerships with parents, community members and service providers from diverse backgrounds.					
9. To communicate and work effectively with colleagues from diverse backgrounds.					
10. To use community resources to assist in the development of multicultural activities.					
11. To react positively in diverse school climate of multicultural communities.					
12. To understand and apply rehabilitation and disability laws to diversity school situations.					
13. To set my goals to incorporate the benefits of multiculturalism into classroom instruction to maximize student learning.					
14. To appreciate and value the strength of a diverse teaching and learning environment.					
15. To foster a diversified student culture to the advancement of respect, love, and care for others.					
16. To take advantage of diverse resources in support of multicultural education.					

C. The program has prepared me to raise my awareness level and incorporate strategies within my teaching and leadership practices in the following multicultural aspects:	1	2	3	4	5
17. Age					
18. Disability					
19. Ethnicity					
20. Family Structure					
21. Gender					
22. Geographical Area					
23. Giftedness					
24. Language					
25. Religion					
26. Socioeconomic Background					

27. Briefly relate an experience in the program that challenged or made you reposition your personal belief system in regard to diversity education.

28. Other comments or suggestions to the program for future development to incorporate diversity issues:

Parent Impressions of the Implementation To Date of Arkansas Act 603 of 2003: Parent Involvement in the Public Schools

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This study, conducted through Arkansas State University and the University of Central Arkansas, examined parents' perceptions in the initial year of a three-year period (2004-2007) to determine whether public schools have made progress in their implementation of the parental involvement programs mandated by Arkansas Act 603 of 2003 (known as the Parent Involvement Plan), passed by the State of Arkansas in the 84th General Assembly's regular session. This Act rested on the diverse literature which demonstrated the many benefits of parents' active involvement in the education process of their children. At the end of this first year of implementation of the study,

the researchers sought to determine preliminary differences in perceptions about the parental involvement plan at school between respondents' age groups, race/ethnic groups, family structures, gender, grade level groups, school building size, and school setting.

Review of Literature

Politicians and policymakers placed a renewed emphasis on parental involvement in the 1980's. In the past decade, parent involvement became a crucial issue in the educational community with the advent of accountability models and standards-driven assessments in the driver's seat for new laws and policies on

educational reform (Davies, 2002). Not until No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was enacted, however, were school administrators forced to recognize the importance and implications of parental involvement (Wraga, 2002); and “[it] seems that everybody talks about, studies, and advocates parent and family involvement. The ‘whole village’ idea is widely embraced, and ‘partnership’ has become a mantra. There is hardly a politician, educational leader, organization, or conference that doesn’t highlight in some way families, parent involvement, and partnership” (Davies, 2002, ¶ 3). NCLB has continued a legislative commitment to parental involvement that began in 1965 with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Gomez & Greenough, 2002).

Studies have indicated that the single most important factor to assure student success was consistent parental involvement in the child’s education (Epstein, 1991, 1995; Fuller & Olsen, 1998; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Lewis, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 1994). According to Clay (1993), Coleman (1966), Epstein (1991), and Walberg (1984), academic success was determined more by family efforts to prepare children for school than by family wealth. Children whose parents have been involved in their formal education have experienced better test scores, long-term academic achievement, improved attitudes and behavior, and less engagement in undesirable activities involving violence and drugs than those students with less involved parents (Child Trends Databank, 1999; Henderson, 1988).

NCLB, however, failed to outline specific ways for school districts to encourage parent involvement, leaving the details to individual states. Arkansas followed the example of other states during the 2003 regular legislative session, when the 84th General Assembly passed Act 603 of 2003, which required each Arkansas public school

district and each public school within the district to create and implement parent involvement plans by September 1, 2003. Additionally, the Act detailed specific issues that each school’s plan should address in order to involve parents. It was evident that the Arkansas legislators were influenced by Epstein’s (1995) six standards for parent involvement programs (also adopted by the National Parent Teacher Association) in which schools and parents engage in two-way and meaningful communication, provide support for parenting skills, assist in student learning, promote parent volunteerism, develop full partnership in advocacy and decision-making, and collaborate with the community.

When schools and parents build partnerships, “children feel that these two institutions – by far the most important in their lives – overlap and are integrated. Parents who help their children succeed academically gain a sense of pride in their children and themselves. Such parents are strong advocates for the district” (Peterson, 1989, ¶ 5). With the development and implementation of Act 603, Arkansas schools and families have the foundation for just such a full partnership.

Methods

Five professors at Arkansas State University (ASU) and University of Central Arkansas (UCA) combined their research efforts and recruited and trained graduate students in educational administration through a uniform procedure to seek permission from the school superintendents of the districts in which the students worked, to distribute and collect parent surveys, and to answer necessary questions about the research. This research was designed to ascertain parents’ perceptions of the schools’ implementation of Act 603, to determine if differences existed between grouping variables, to learn if school size impacted parents’ perceptions, and to determine over a three-year

period if schools were making progress in their implementation of parental involvement programs.

The survey instrument (see Appendix A) consisted of 37 multiple-choice items, including 32 questions about the local school buildings' implementation of Act 603 and five demographic questions. The 32 questions that focused on Act 603 were worded with language directly from the law, while the demographic questions requested voluntary information about the grade levels of students in the home; race/ethnicity, age range, and gender of the participant; and family structure of the home. Along with the survey instrument, a detailed cover letter was distributed from 18 school buildings to explain the research project and to solicit the support and participation of the parents of public school students: parents who chose to participate in the survey research were assured of total anonymity for their responses. From the total of 9590 surveys distributed, 1114 completed surveys were returned for a return rate of 11.6%.

Using SPSS (Statistical Program for Social Sciences, Version 13.0.1), frequencies, cross-tabs, and a full set of correlations were conducted, partly in order to determine the internal consistency reliability of the instrument and partly to estimate whether any of the relationships between responses might have led to predictive indicators among the information.

To examine the possible differences among groups based on grade levels of students in the homes, race/ethnicity, age range, gender, and family structure, simple analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted separately on all 32 survey questions related to Act 603 based on divisions in each of those categories. Two post-hoc tests were employed in order to pinpoint specific differences between groups: Bonferroni and least significant difference.

Results

Participants who returned the 1,114 completed surveys were predominantly the parents of elementary students (62.5%), predominantly Caucasian (82.1%), mostly in the age ranges between 31-35 years (22.6%) and 36-40 years (23.5%), and mostly female (82.2%). Further, the majority of the participants lived in two-family homes (73%). School buildings from which the research was conducted were predominantly (53.1%) medium-sized buildings (351-700 students) in rural settings (62.7%).

Correlations among the 32 questions about the implementation of Act 603 indicated strong relationships among virtually all the statements ($p < .05$; $r =$ range from .916 to .059) and confirmed the internal consistency reliability of the survey instrument. Only eight of the approximately 500 relationships did not show statistical significance (see Appendix B).

Separate simple ANOVA tests demonstrated statistically significant differences in response to 23 of the 32 items based on the size of the school building, 21 based on grade-level of the students in the home, 15 by ethnicity, and 14 by school setting. The preponderance of the significant differences among responses by size of the school building lay between small school buildings (<350 students) and medium school buildings (351-700 students), while the significant differences among responses by grade-level of the students in the home occurred between early grades (Prekindergarten-3) and secondary grades (9-12).

Discussion and Conclusions

Very few differences in response were identified based on ethnicity, age of respondent, gender, or family structure. Instead, the size of building and the grade level of

students in the home produced the greatest differences in response to most questions on the survey. Parents from small school buildings and of young students answered questions most differently from all others who responded. Further, two issues on the survey appeared to predict parent satisfaction with school operations in all school settings: an awareness of the identity of the parent coordinator and receipt of the parent involvement “kit.”

At this time, these researchers call the attention of educational leaders to a preliminary and therefore tentative set of recommendations. First, in order to comply with the spirit of Act 603, large schools and secondary schools need to emulate the behavior of small schools and elementary schools in their relationships with parents and families. Consistent individual contact appeared to make the difference between responses among such schools. These researchers suggest that large schools subdivide their populations and assign separate parent coordinators to each subdivision, thus making personal contact easier to facilitate. Next, public schools do not need to spend large sums of money, time, or effort in order to make the schools’ buildings and programs more accessible to parents and families. Instead, an increased emphasis on the identity of the designated parent coordinator and on materials

available to all parents appeared significantly to increase parent satisfaction. Secondary schools need to use websites or newspaper and radio announcements in order to replace the “backpack” notices distributed routinely in elementary classrooms.

On the other hand, fewer than expected statistically significant differences appeared among ethnicity or school setting and very few such differences in response appeared among age groups, gender, or family structure. All schools need to focus on closing gaps in parent satisfaction based on school size and grade-level of students while at the same time spending less time or energy on gaps based on ethnicity, school setting, parents’ age, gender, or family structure. Educational leaders, based on these data and these results, need to focus on concrete ways to more frequently involve all parents and families in school activities.

The results from these surveys are preliminary. Although the actual number of completed surveys seemed high, the percentage of return was low: the data themselves and the conclusions drawn to date must be regarded with caution. Data collection continues through 2007: Results will be both compared from year to year and combined to produce general responses to the questions at hand.

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Appendix A

Act 603—Parental Involvement Plan Survey

Please circle the number that indicates your response to each of the following statements.

4=Strongly Agree (SA) 3=Agree (A) 2=Disagree (D) 1= Strongly Disagree

Survey Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1. I am aware of Arkansas's Act 603 that requires schools to develop a parental involvement plan.	4	3	2	1
2. I am aware of the parent involvement program in my child's school.	4	3	2	1
3. I was invited to help develop the school's parent involvement program.	4	3	2	1
4. I am actively involved in my child's school.	4	3	2	1
5. I regularly receive communications from my child's school and the communication is meaningful.	4	3	2	1
6. I regularly communicate with my child's school and the communication is meaningful.	4	3	2	1
7. I feel as if I am a full partner with the school in my child's education, as well as decisions that affect my child and my family.	4	3	2	1
8. My paycheck from my employer includes a card from my child's school with tips for how parents can foster a child's success.	4	3	2	1
9. I know who the parent involvement coordinator is at my child's school.	4	3	2	1
10. I have received a family kit prepared by my child's school.	4	3	2	1
11. The family kit tells me how I can be involved in my child's school.	4	3	2	1
12. The family kit tells me how I can be involved in my child's education.	4	3	2	1
13. The family kit informs me of parent involvement activities for the school year.	4	3	2	1
14. The family kit gives me a description of the communication system in my child's school.	4	3	2	1
15. My child's school schedules at least two parent-teacher conferences per year.	4	3	2	1

16. My child's school plans and engages in other activities besides parent-teacher conferences which supports responsible parenting.	4	3	2	1
17. My child's school provides, advertises, and gives me an opportunity to borrow parenting books, magazines, and other informative material regarding responsible parenting through the school library.	4	3	2	1
18. My child's school publishes a notice in the local newspaper at the end of each school year honoring parents who attend all parent-teacher conferences scheduled by the school.	4	3	2	1
19. My child's school has created a parent center.	4	3	2	1
20. My child's school schedules parents' informational evenings.	4	3	2	1
21. At the parents' informational evenings, I am given a report on the state of my child's school.	4	3	2	1
22. At the parents' informational evenings, I am given an overview of what students will be learning and how they will be assessed.	4	3	2	1
23. At the parents' informational evenings, I am given an overview of what parents should expect for their child's education.	4	3	2	1
24. At the parents' informational evenings, I am given an overview of how parents can assist and make a difference in their child's education.	4	3	2	1
25. I volunteer at my child's school.	4	3	2	1
26. My child's school has a volunteer resource book that lists volunteers for the school staff to use.	4	3	2	1
27. I have completed a survey from my school asking me about my interests and the school matches my interests with their needs.	4	3	2	1
28. My child's school has asked me how frequently I would like to volunteer.	4	3	2	1
29. My child's school has given me an option to volunteer from home.	4	3	2	1
30. My child's school has informed me about how I can resolve problems/concerns about my child's educational progress.	4	3	2	1
31. My child's school has informed me about how to define and develop solutions when I have problems/concerns about my child's educational progress	4	3	2	1
32. My child's school has informed me about whom to approach first when I have problems/concerns.	4	3	2	1

Please tell us about yourself. [The following questions are optional.]

33. What grades are your children in? Circle all that apply.

- a. Preschool
- b. Grades K, 1, or 2
- c. Grades 3, 4, or 5
- d. Grades 6, 7, or 8
- e. Grades 9, 10, 11, or 12

34. What race/ethnicity best describes you? Circle one.

- a. African American
- b. Hispanic
- c. Native American
- d. Asian/Pacific Islander
- e. Caucasian
- f. Other_____

35. Which age range best describes you? Circle one.

- a. 18-20
- b. 21-25
- c. 26-30
- d. 31-35
- e. 36-40
- f. 41-45
- g. 46-50
- h. 51-55
- i. 56-60
- j. 61 and above

36. What is your gender? Circle one.

- a. Female
- b. Male

37. How is your family structured? Circle one.

- a. One parent home
- b. Two parent home
- c. Extended family

Comments: _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!!

Appendix B

Correlation relationships without statistical significance

“My child’s school schedules at least two parent-teacher conferences per year” with:

I was invited to help develop the school’s parent involvement program.	$p = .264$
I have received a family kit prepared by my child’s school.	$p = .201$
The family kit tells me how I can be involved in my child’s school.	$p = .065$
The family kit tells me how I can be involved in my child’s education.	$p = .216$
The family kit informs me of parent involvement activities for the school year.	$p = .107$
The family kit gives me a description of the communication system in my child’s school.	$p = .078$
My child’s school publishes a notice in the local newspaper at the end of each school year honoring parents who attend all parent-teacher conferences scheduled by the school.	$p = .335$
I have completed a survey from my school asking me about my interests and the school matches my interests to their needs.	$p = .135$

Articles of Best Practice

Quality Internships for School Leaders: Meeting the Challenge

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Identifying a Quality Internship

An internship is essential for the development of competency-based leadership (Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Mitgang, 2003; Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 2003). Variation in the quality of time spent in clinical settings depends on the use of approaches that provide interns with opportunities to observe, participate in, and reflect on the problems of leadership and management found in schools (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). In essence, the internship is an apprenticeship for aspirants to experience job-embedded learning through problem solving and coaching (National Staff Development Council, 2000). As a working definition, the principal internship is a planned

and sustained clinical experience that is supervised by an expert. The purpose of this paper is to move from defining to identifying a quality internship.

Policy analysts urge the use of research-based practices to improve internships. The Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB; Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005) conducted a survey of department heads from 61 university-based programs to find the activity level for interns as well as key program features. From their findings, SREB recommended the following policy guidelines for states seeking to improve the quality of internships: (a) ensure that state guidelines for internships are based on research for effective school leadership, (b)

develop a valid and reliable performance evaluation system, and c) provide comprehensive training to all mentor principals. Each of these recommendations is addressed below.

Research-Based Guidelines

Ensuring that all internships are based on research for effective school leadership requires standards, and with standards comes accountability for alignment. For the field of educational leadership, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) has developed standards that are widely used as a framework by state-accredited programs (Hale & Moorman, 2003). These indicators of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions important to school leadership have been adopted by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council as a basis for national recognition of programs.

There are over 300 leadership preparation programs approved by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and 152 are nationally recognized by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC). In spite of the successful accreditation of so many programs, the quality of preparation remains in doubt (Bottoms, Fry, & O'Neill, 2004; Daresh, 2002; Levine, 2005; Littky & Schen, 2003; Milstein & Krueger, 1997; National Staff Development Council, 2000; Waters & Grubb, 2004). The ISLLC standards have been criticized for a lack of operational guidance or specificity upon which research can be conducted to determine the inclusivity of the knowledge base (Achilles & Price, 2001). While the ISLLC standards may serve well as a framework for programs, alignment with more specific, research-based performance objectives may create a more meaningful accreditation process.

Recent research has been conducted that informs the best leadership practices for increasing student achievement. The Mid-

continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) lab conducted a meta-analysis to determine which leadership practices impacted student achievement and which should take primacy (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). The selected studies represent a total sample of 1.4 million students and approximately 14,000 teachers in 2,802 schools. There were 66 leadership practices found to have statistically significant relationships with student achievement. Some of the most important principal practices were not specified in the ISLLC standards.

Performance Evaluation

The Educational Testing Service designed an assessment to align with the ISLLC standards. Fifteen states currently require the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) as a condition for licensure. While the test provides a content validated measure of entry-level skills for principals, it consists entirely of paper and pencil responses. Studies were not found that show the relationship between performance on the SLLA and successful school leadership. Additional validated measures are needed to fulfill the current policy recommendations for a research and performance-based assessment.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, 2002) developed the program *Selecting and Developing the 21st Century School Principal* in an effort to provide educational organizations with a diagnostic tool to determine the presence and strength of leadership skills. A number of “validity generalization studies” were conducted resulting in findings that demonstrate considerable predicative validity (International Task Force on Assessment Center Guidelines, 2000).

The set of NASSP activities uses situational behavior to assess skills. The situations include individual and collegial opportunities to solve problems, analyze data,

prioritize tasks, and communicate on a number of school related events. Integrated simulations involving written, oral, and interactive responses are utilized. Based on the ISLLC standards, skills in administration, communication, self-knowledge, and relationships are assessed. NASSP works with providers of school leadership programs to set up centers, train assessors, and provide coaching and ongoing support. There are currently 20 operational assessment centers.

Lack of a nationally-administered performance assessment creates dependency upon surveys to establish the presence of leadership competencies (Murphy & Vriesenga, 2004). Surveys completed by coworkers may be biased by personal relationships between the observers and the new school leader. In addition, sporadic opportunity to observe specific behaviors affects the accurate measurement of new principal strengths and weaknesses. Basing curriculum and assessment for principal interns on research requires multiple empirical works on the effectiveness of clinical work aspects found within preparation programs. Only five such articles on this topic were published in the top four refereed journals in school administration from 1990 to 2004 (Murphy & Vriesenga).

Mentor Training

In a study sponsored by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), a 35-question national survey was electronically submitted to approximately 70 universities to find the range of mentoring practices and their reported strengths and weaknesses (Wilmore & Bratlien, 2005). The response rate was 61% and included universities from 22 states with diverse size, Carnegie ratings, and missions. They found that school systems assumed responsibility for intern guidance in 75% of the programs. No formal mentor training was reported by 60% of the respondents. Mentor training, when offered,

ranged from informal to specific and often took the form of an internship handbook. The lack of a full-time internship was cited as the most significant barrier to quality in mentoring by 67% of the respondents. Seventy-one percent of the responding universities cited a lack of quality or dedication on the part of the mentor. This descriptive study points to the need to formalize the selection and training of mentors.

The need for an objective, research-based method for selecting mentor principals was the catalyst for researchers wanting to know “To what degree can successful mentoring behavior be predicted from scores on principal competencies?” (Geismer, Morris, & Lieberman, 2000). A Delphi-like panel of experts was used to reach consensus on 24 behavioral indicators (traits) of good mentoring which were combined with competencies already identified in the local merit evaluation.

The subsequent instrument was mailed to all the principals in one Florida county. Canonical correlation was used to determine the multivariate overlap between competency clusters and trait clusters. Further analysis resulted in three prediction models that were significantly greater than would have been expected by chance ($p < .005$). Good mentors were most accurately classified with the purpose and direction competency.

The prediction model that most accurately classified non-mentors consisted of three competencies: cognitive skills, organizational ability, and quality enhancement. Cognition, organization, and attention to quality are certainly desirable competencies for principals; however, all competent principals do not make good mentors.

Selecting good mentors requires more effort on the part of program providers. This recommendation is supported by Cordeiro and

Sloan (1996) in their study of mentors and interns participating in one of the Danforth Foundation's 20 funded programs.

The researchers collected data over two years in the form of interviews, audiotapes of conversations between mentors and interns, and journal entries. Based on responses from all 36 participants, the mentor was the most important factor in a quality internship. Implications from this work include the primacy of mentor selection and the need for mentors to know how to scaffold learning opportunities for their interns.

Meeting the challenge of ensuring quality internships requires more research targeting effective field-based practices, performance assessments, and strong mentoring.

Examples of these targets have been described in this paper, but new research efforts must link internship components with a valid, objective measure of readiness to lead. As this is accomplished, thoughtful program providers can begin addressing these needs through evaluation of their own programs.

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Best Practices Among Educational Administrators: ISLLC Standards and Dispositions

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Introduction

Ten national educational leadership associations that make up the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) and 24 state departments of education joined forces in 1994 to put together a knowledge base, performance standards, and professional dispositions for administrators. The result was a publication by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO, 1996) entitled, *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders*. The ISLLC standards for school leaders represent the best practice of representatives from K-12 schools, districts, universities, and professional associations at both the state and national levels. They define the responsibilities of effective school leadership in 21st century schools (Murphy, 2002, 2003, 2005; Shipman, Topps, & Murphy, 1998).

There has been little research (Milstein, 1999) on leadership preparation programs generally and only modest attempts have been made to assess students' perceptions of their coursework (Orr, Doolittle, Kottkamp, Osterman & Silverberg, 2004). Likewise, there has been little research on the impact of the standards and dispositions. If ISLLC has had an impact on the field, it is assumed that the curriculum of educational administration programs would have changed and that administrators taught in these programs would view the standards and dispositions as important to their practice. This study was designed to determine the importance of the six ISLLC standards generally and the 42 dispositions specifically. In addition, it examined the extent to which the ISLLC standards and dispositions were emphasized in preparation programs. Given the increasing

participation of women in administration, this study also tested for gender effects in the administrators' perceptions.

Development of National ISLLC Standards and Dispositions

Murphy and Forsyth (1999) describe four noteworthy events leading to the improvement of educational administration preparation programs. The creation of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) was first. Second, the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) in conjunction with the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEA, 1987) published a knowledge base for administrators entitled, *Leaders for America's Schools*. The commission also instituted UCEA program centers nationally. Third, the American Educational Research Association (AREA) published the *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration* (Murphy & Seashore-Louis, 1999). Finally, the ISLLC created standards and dispositions for school leaders (Murphy, 2003, 2005).

The effort by ISSLC was designed to change the way educational administrators thought about leadership. The ultimate goal was to raise the quality of school leaders and the expectations of those who teach and hire them. Two implicit assumptions guided the ISLLC commission. First, it was assumed that many university educational administration programs were inadequate in preparing candidates as school administrators. Second, creation of the ISLLC standards would improve the quality of the preparation programs (Murphy, 1999). The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium's vision for promoting quality leadership was to set criteria and standards for the professional practice of school leaders built upon knowledge and understanding of effective leadership.

The result of the consortium's effort was six standards that each contained three specific elements. They were knowledge, performance measures, and dispositions. In 1996, the ISLLC formally adopted the national ISLLC standards and each of the elements. To date, all educational administration professional organizations and approximately 40 states have adopted or adapted the ISLLC standards for use in licensing school administrators, developing or revising programs in educational administration, and creating professional development programs for current practitioners. Testing companies are using the standards to construct test items on administrator certification examinations (Bryant, Hessel, & Iserhagen, 2002; Green, 2001; Hale & Moorman, 2003). Currently, there is a reexamination of the standards taking place at the UCEA.

The development of new standards for educational administration preparation programs, the inclusion of a specific knowledge base, and the addition of specific performance measures that accompany them are not unfamiliar to most educators. What was unique to the ISLLC commission work was the creation of 42 dispositions that were included in the final document. The dispositions describe what the authors of the document felt were those beliefs and values a quality administrator ought to possess. Murphy (2000) believed that these traits differentiated effective leaders from less effective ones. The search for specific traits in successful leaders has not yielded a definitive list that is consistent over time yet there are some characteristics that consistently emerge in the research on good leaders.

Frameworks Emerging From the ISLLC Standards and Dispositions

Murphy (1999) identified democratic community, social justice, and school improvement as three synthesizing paradigms

embedded in the changing field of education. These three paradigms are reflected in the ISLLC standards and dispositions. Schwan and Spady (1998) identified courage. Lee (1995) suggested school leaders ought to promote democracy, empowerment, and social justice. Abbott (2001), following Lee, consolidated three ISLLC standards and dispositions into a category called *democratic leadership*. Abbott asserted that school leaders are responsible for identifying and supporting a shared vision for school improvement, should possess character traits of integrity, fairness, and ethics, should encourage collaboration, and should respond to diversity.

Sergiovanni (1992) as well as Beck and Murphy (1997) emphasized the need for active cultivation of moral principles in the training of educational administrators during their preparation. Finally, Cornell (2005) and Crawford (2004) identified four discrete categories of dispositions after an extensive review of the literature and an analysis of the dispositions themselves. Those categories were social justice, school improvement, democratic administration, and courage/risk-taking.

The trend toward national standards, the subsequent widespread acceptance of the ISLLC standards and dispositions, and the recent impact they have on programming and professional development may well cause administrators to rethink their notion of leadership (Bogotch, 2002; Coleman & Creighton, 2002; Young & Petersen, 2002). The literature suggests leadership programs should have standards that reflect best practice and that administrators should bring particular dispositions to leadership positions. It is important to ask the question, "Are the ISLLC standards and dispositions important to educational administration programs or the professional development and practices of current administrators?" This research was designed to answer that question.

Methodology

The specific purposes of this survey research were fourfold. The first purpose was to examine the extent to which a randomly selected sample of K-12 Illinois public school administrators perceive the importance of the ISLLC standards and dispositions to their actual practice. Second, it was to examine the extent to which preparation programs emphasized the ISLLC standards and dispositions. Third, it was to test for differences in those perceptions between two groups, namely, younger administrators trained under ISLLC standards and those who were not. Finally, it was to test for gender effects.

Instrumentation

Work began by collapsing the 42 dispositions into four categories: dispositions toward social justice, democratic administration, courage/risk-taking, and school improvement. Categorization made an examination of the dispositions reasonable since analysis of 42 separate dispositions across six standards would be unmanageable. As previously mentioned, there was precedent in the literature for categorization across the dispositions (Abbott, 2001; Cornell, 2005; Crawford, 2004; Murphy, 1999; Schwann & Spady, 1998). The six ISLLC standards were examined separately. In short, they were a promoting a shared vision, encouraging professional growth, managing learning, collaborating with all stakeholders, acting ethically, and appreciating the political and cultural context.

The survey was divided into two parts. Part I of the survey asked for basic demographic information. Part II had a description of each of the six standards and all 42 dispositions. Next to each were two columns. The first one (A) had the respondents rate, on a Likert scale, the level of importance each standards and disposition had to their current practice. One was *very important*. The

second column (B) had the respondents rate the degree to which each disposition was emphasized in their preparation programs. One was *strong emphasis*.

Validity and Reliability

A panel of experts was asked to review the instrument for content validity (Alreck & Settle, 2004). The panel was comprised of 25 local public school administrators and 10 local professors in the metropolitan St. Louis area and southern Illinois. Thirty-one of the thirty-five professionals responded. All 31 respondents agreed that the survey was valid, accurately represented the ISLLC standards and dispositions, and that the questions were readable, understandable, and reasonable. Survey responses were entered into the SAS statistical program and analyzed for reliability. The Cronbach Coefficient Alpha score was .96 indicating that the survey was reliable. Finally, a pilot survey was mailed to 100 randomly selected practicing administrators throughout the state of Illinois. The results of the pilot survey did not result in any changes either section of the survey.

Sample

The population for this study consisted of all 2,575 K-12 principals in the state of Illinois who are current members of the Illinois Principals Association. Assistant principals were excluded from the sample. A statistical sample size of 335 was necessary (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). In order to obtain 335 useable surveys twice that many (750) were sent to the randomly selected Illinois Principals' Association members. A letter was included with each survey explaining its purpose and detailing all of the Human Subjects guarantees. Follow-up surveys were sent to non-respondents over the next two months. The final return rate was 49 % or 343 surveys, enough to secure a statistically powerful analysis.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were completed, specifically means, standard deviations from those means, Pearson's correlation coefficients, and multiple t-tests. In order to obtain scores for the standards and the categories of social justice, democratic administration, school improvement, and courage/risk-taking, each of the standards and dispositions was rated separately. The scores for each of the standards individually were used in the analysis. The scores for all 42 dispositions were collapsed into one of the four categories established for this research. These scores were added together to get a composite score. The composite score was analyzed for this study.

Findings

The demographic information gathered from the respondents was compared to state and national data from the National Center for Education Statistics. Demographically, this sample represented Illinois administrators and compared favorably to national statistics. The majority of principals were white (66.7%), males (54.5%) with a master's degree (64.04%) and 13.7 years experience as an administrator. It should be noted that this sample had more females (45.5%) in administrative positions than the national average that is closer to 34.5 %. This sample was drawn from elementary (50.15%), middle (18.66%) and high (23.32%) schools which also reflected the national average. Slightly over 70 % of the respondents had eight or more years experience in educational administration. Again, this is similar to the state and national averages.

Standards and Dispositions - General Effects

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the overall importance of the standards and dispositions to practice and the degree to which they were emphasized in administration programming. The mean scores and standard

deviations in Table 1 indicate that collectively these administrators felt that the ISLLC standards were very important or important to their current practice. Similarly these administrators agreed that the disposition categories of social justice, democracy, school improvement, and courage-risk taking were also important to their profession and their practice.

Table 1 also indicates that the six ISLLC standards and the four categories of dispositions were indeed emphasized in the preparation programs of these administrators. Surprisingly, acting ethically was perceived to receive more emphasis than any other standard. These K-12 Illinois administrators perceived the strongest emphasis in their program was on the disposition toward school improvement. This is not surprising given the passage of *No Child Left Behind* (2001) legislation. In order to test for the specific effects of the ISLLC standards and dispositions since their adoption in 1996, inferential analyses were conducted. There is an assumption that, if the

ISLLC standards had an impact, there would be a demonstrable relationship between perceptions about ISLLC and the years of experience in administration. In addition, one should be able to detect differences between those administrators exposed to ISLLC standards and dispositions during training and those who were not formally exposed them.

Standards and Dispositions - Specific Effects

Two inferential statistics were used to examine the specific effects of ISLLC. The first was the Pearson correlation to see if there was any relationship generally between years of practice in administration and perceptions about the ISLLC standards and dispositions. Then, the respondents were divided into two groups, one group had been practicing before the ISLLC standards were adopted in 1996 and the other began practicing after their adoption. The differences were tested using a Satterwaithe T-test. Finally, the data were examined for gender differences. Significance was set at .05 for all inferential statistics.

Table 1

Means – ISSLC Standards and Dispositions Importance to Practice and Emphasis on Program

Standards and Dispositions	Importance to Practice Emphasis in Program	
	Mean SD	Mean SD
Standard 1-a shared vision	1.28 .58	1.57 .76
Standard 2-professional growth	1.24 .56	1.56 .77
Standard 3-manage leaning	1.20 .50	1.45 .71
Standard 4-collaboration	1.52 .75	1.70 .84
Standard 5-acting with integrity, fairness, ethics	1.38 .72	1.36 .64
Standard 6-political and cultural context	1.67 .69	1.91 .88
Disposition – social justice	1.42 .42	1.74 .58
Disposition – democracy	1.36 .37	1.73 .52
Disposition – school improvement	1.42 .40	1.57 .46
Disposition- courage/risk-taking	1.37 .40	1.72 .56

Importance to Practice

The data indicate that there is a negative and statistically significant correlation between years of experience and administrators' perceptions about the importance to administrative practice of two of the six ISLLC standards (Table 2). Those were collaboration with all stakeholders (Standard 4), and acting ethically (Standard 5).

The data also indicate that there is a negative and statistically significant correlation between years of experience and administrators' perceptions about the importance of social justice and school improvement (Table 2).

This suggests that younger administrators, those more likely to be exposed to ISLLC, perceive that collaborating, acting ethically, social justice and school improvement are more important to their

practice than to the practice of their older counterparts. This strengthens the probability that these particular ISLLC standards and dispositions had some effect on administrators' practice.

It is important to keep in mind that four of the six standards (Standards 1, 2, 3, and 6) and two of the four dispositions did not have such an effect. That is, perceptions about promoting a vision, encouraging professional development, managing learning, appreciating the political/cultural context, democratic administration, and courage/risk-taking were unrelated to years in administration. In addition to exploring relationships, the data were analyzed using a Satterthwaite T-test to look for differences in perceptions between two subpopulations, administrators practicing before the ISLLC standards were adopted in 1996 and those practicing since their adoption.

Table 2
Correlation-Years in Administration and Perceived Importance of the ISLLC Standards

Standards and Dispositions	Correlation p value	
Standard 1-a shared vision	.03350	.5364
Standard 2-professional growth	.05332	.3248
Standard 3-managing a safe, effective learning environment	.04710	.3845
Standard 4-collaboration with families and community	.16438	.0023**
Standard 5-acting with integrity, fairness, and ethics	.22872	<.0001**
Standard 6-influence the political and cultural context	.00884	.8704
Disposition - Social justice	.10720	.0473*
Disposition - Democracy	.02832	.6011
Disposition - School improvement	.15485	.0040**
Disposition - Courage/risk-taking	.00638	.9063

*Significant at .05

**Significant at .01

Table 3 shows there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups in their perceptions about acting with integrity, fairness, and ethics (Standard 5). That is, administrators beginning their practice after the ISLLC standards were adopted in 1996 perceived that acting ethically was significantly

more important than administrators practicing prior to the adoption of the ISLLC standards. There were no significant differences between the groups on the remaining five standards or four dispositions. Gender differences were also tested with no differences found.

Table 3
Differences in Perceptions of Importance of Standards and Dispositions By Experience

Standards and Dispositions	T-value	Pr > [t]
Standard 1-a shared vision	.39	.6991
Standard 2-professional growth	.10	.9209
Standard 3-managing a safe, effective learning environment	-0.94	.3471
Standard 4-collaboration with families and community	1.76	.0803
Standard 5-acting with integrity, fairness, and ethics	2.89	.0043**
Standard 6-influence the political and cultural context	-0.95	.3422
Disposition - Social justice	.97	.3352
Disposition - Democracy	.23	.8201
Disposition - School improvement	1.29	.1996
Disposition - Courage/risk-taking	-0.35	.7642

*Significant at .05

**Significant at .01

Emphasis in Preparation Programs

There were no significant correlations between the respondents' perceived level of emphasis of the standards and dispositions and administrators' years of experience. Interestingly, it should be noted that encouraging professional growth (Standard 2) and the disposition category of courage/risk-taking both approach statistical significance. This particular ISLLC standard and this particular ISLLC disposition may be having an initial effect on educational administration preparation programs that will get stronger and more significant over time. However, the relationship is not statistically significant so the effects on preparation programs cannot be drawn conclusively. Finally, no statistically significant differences between administrators practicing before the ISLLC standards were adopted in 1996 and those practicing since their adoption were found on any of the six standards or five dispositions.

Summary and Conclusions

It is clear that, on average, these principals felt that the standards and dispositions were important to administrative practice and that all of them were emphasized in their preparation programs. This simple descriptive analysis offers little in terms of whether or not the formal adoption of the ISLLC standards and dispositions in 1996 had any effect on the actual practice and preparation of educational administrators. To that end, more nuanced analyses were conducted and some suggestive results found.

First, there was a negative and statistically significant relationship between years of experience in administration and perceptions about the importance of collaboration with communities and families and acting ethically. Second, there was a modest, negative, and statistically significant correlation between years of experience in

administration and perceptions about the importance of social justice and school improvement. This means that the younger, less experienced administrators in this representative sample perceive collaboration, ethics, social justice and school improvement as more important to practice than their older counterparts.

Third, there were significant differences in perceptions about acting ethically between younger and older more experienced administrators such that acting ethically was significantly more important to less experienced administrators. Fourth, no significant relationships or differences emerged when examining the extent to which the standards and dispositions were emphasized in preparation programs. Finally, no gender differences in this sample were found. The ISLLC solicited the input of educational administrators throughout the United States when they developed the six standards and the forty-two dispositions. It is not particularly surprising that this representative sample of K-12 Illinois school administrators agreed about their level of importance. What was not known was whether establishment of national ISLLC standards and dispositions would translate into practical and programmatic differences. The answer, according to this research is an equivocal maybe.

It might be the case that administrators have always focused on the content described in the standards and the dispositions. The data suggests as much when it reveals that, on average, the standards and dispositions were rated as important to the practice of these administrators. In addition, the ISSLC standards and dispositions emerged from practice since the ISSLC commission solicited input from all of the representative professional organizations in educational administration nationwide.

It might also be the case that the ISLLC standards and dispositions are beginning to have an impact and that these data simply glimpse the tip of an iceberg. The optimistic conclusion is that the ISLLC standards and dispositions explain the significant relationship between younger administrators and the importance they placed upon collaboration, ethics, social justice and school improvement. Additionally, it is optimistic to suggest that a focus on the ISLLC standards and dispositions explains why newer administrators think acting ethically is significantly more important than more experienced administrators. Neither explains the fact that no significant relationships or differences were found in perceptions about the degree of emphasis on standards and dispositions in preparation programs. This is precisely where one would expect to find the most dramatic changes over the last 10 years.

The realistic view is that there is a complex interplay and effect on the field of educational administration by a number of variables. First among these is the extensive literature in educational administration emphasizing the content from which the standards and dispositions were drawn. This would certainly explain the traditional focus in educational administration programs and practice on vision, management, politics, professional development, and school improvement. It would also explain the current emphasis on collaboration ethics, culture, social justice, democratic administration, and courage/risk-taking. One recent example is the focus on democracy, social justice, and ethics. This movement is playing an important role in the profession generally and in educational administration programs specifically.

These data support Murphy's (2000) contention that, "the standards are exactly what they claim to be—what practitioners and researchers have told us are critical aspects of effective leadership" (p. 411). They are a framework that mirrors the best practices shared by professionals. What the data do not support is the call for national licensure or the move toward a standardized curriculum (Murphy, Hawley, & Young, 2005). English (1997, 2000) makes the point that reliance on standards reduces program variance and disrupts the curriculum. He advises that programs should encourage intellectual explorations of current trends and issues seen in the field, that they should be flexible, and that they foster knowledge in the variety of leadership styles.

A single set of standards and dispositions do not change systems, institutional structures, or provide material resources to make the leaders and their organization fit some predetermined view of leadership. What they do is to focus attention on those elements that ought to establish the broad parameters necessary to frame the way that administrators operate within a particular educational context. This respects the reality of personal, political, economic and educational forces without sacrificing important standards and dispositions required for serving all students. There is a conventional wisdom in making sure that administrators frame their work around a shared vision, professional growth, management, collaboration, ethics, the political and cultural context, social justice, school improvement, democracy, and courage. It appears from this research that the ISSLC standards and dispositions provide that framework.

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Addendum

Announcing the 2007 AASA National Conference on Education™

The American Association of School Administrators is pleased to announce that the annual National Conference on Education™ will be held in New Orleans, March 1-March 4, 2007.

Following the devastating hurricane that hit New Orleans over a year ago, AASA is committed to doing its part in helping restore the spirits and economy of the people of New Orleans.

Speakers and programs have been identified to help school system leaders and higher education professionals increase their leadership skills and professional competence.

General Sessions

Each day a general session speaker will present a compelling perspective dealing with educational leadership as it affects the future. **Sandra Day O'Connor** will address the role and status of civics education in our democracy. **Daniel Pink** will talk about the implications of moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age. **John Kotter** will discuss leadership and institutional change. And **Larry Sabato** will discuss recent political events and electoral trends.

Distinguished Lectures and Featured Speakers

A wide variety of leadership issues will be discussed by distinguished lecturers and featured speakers who include **Terrence Deal, Charles Haynes, Tim Waters, Mark Stock, Clayton Wilcox, Daniel Pink** and **David Berliner**.

Pre-conference Leadership Institutes

Eight half-day and three full-day leadership institutes are planned for Thursday, March 1 for participants who pre-register. The institutes feature a cross-section of issues facing school leaders today including two compelling panels titled “Key Performance Indicators” and “Board-Superintendent Relationships: Guiding Principles.”

Program Tracks

Five topical tracks or “Focus Zones” each contain 8-12 workshop sessions on the topics of leadership; policy and politics; public engagement; systems thinking; and instruction, assessment and data management.

Conference registration rates for AASA members in the college professor and aspiring school system leader (formerly graduate student) member categories are discounted more than 60% from the regular member registration rate. For professors and aspiring school system leaders who are not members, consider joining AASA for daily education news, access to *The School Administrator* archives, member discounts and much more.

Additional information about the National Conference on Education™ and access to online registration is available at www.aasa.org/nce. Information on membership is found at <http://www.aasa.org/member/index.cfm>.

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