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The Role of Project LEAD in Increasing the Numbers of Minority and Female Educational Administrators

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One of the objectives of Project LEAD is to address the underrepresentation of minorities and women in educational administration. In this paper, I summarize the activities that are designed to meet this objective that are being sponsored by the various LEAD centers. The paper begins with a summary of existing data concerning minority and female administrators and a brief analysis of why the underrepresentation exists. That discussion is followed by a report on a survey of the LEAD centers' activities specifically related to minority and female administrators. Finally, I present a brief assessment of the activities currently under way along with recommendations for further work.

Current Status of Minorities and Women

Data concerning the numbers and positions of minorities and women in educational administration are reported by the professional associations (American Association of School Administrators; National Association of Secondary School Principals; and National Association of Elementary Principals) and the National School Boards Association.

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There are almost always at least minor differences in the numbers reported, and there are differences in the definition of "secondary principal"—that hinge on the issue of whether or not middle and junior high school principals are included in the data. However, even with these problems, the trends reported are clear.

The numbers of both minorities and women who serve as educational administrators are increasing after notable declines. For women, the period of decline began in 1928 (when women held 55 percent of all elementary school principalships) and accelerated following the end of World War II. Minority representation in school administration declined from 1964 to 1970 as an unintended consequence of desegregation. Since the mid-1970s, however, there have been some increase in the numbers of women and a lesser increase in the numbers of minorities:

Total Percent Female Administrators:

	1981	1984	1988
Superintendent	1.8	2.7	5
Deputy/Assistant Superintendent	9	15	15
Principal	16	21	51

Total Percent Minority Administrators:

	1981	1984	1988
Superintendent	2	3	3
Deputy/Assistant Superintendent	11	9	10
Principal	12	17	20

The future looks brighter for women than it does for minorities. Women are getting certified as administrators in greater numbers than are all men (over 50 percent of doctorates in education in 1987 went to women). Perhaps more important, however, is the fact that administrators are drawn from the pool of teachers, and minorities (particularly blacks) are currently tending not to enter teaching. It is clear, then, that the underrepresentation of minorities in educational administration stems from different causes than does the underrepresentation of women, a point I will return to later in the paper.

Despite increases, particularly in the number of female principals, neither minorities nor women are represented in the ranks of administrators either in proportion to their numbers among students or their numbers among teachers. The largest percentage displayed is of female principals (51 percent). The largest group of them are elementary school principals, with women occupying 33 percent of those principalships. But women constitute over 90 percent of elementary school teachers, and girls a bit over 50 percent of students!

Further, the data indicate some other important differences between minorities and women and white men. Unlike white men, both minorities and women are more likely to be found in positions that do not have career paths to the superintendency. For example, minority men are likely to be assistant principals; minority and white women to be consultants and supervisors of instruction. These staff positions are more likely to be end points than stepping stones.

There is a significant body of literature about the reasons for underrepresentation, particularly of women. The most comprehensive analysis comes from Shakeshaft (1987). A brief summary of phenomena that apply both to minorities and to women include: exclusion from "old boy networks;" and the consequent lack of access to information, opportunities for socialization, and mentoring; lack of role models; lack of support, both financial and psychological, for efforts to attain administrative positions; lack of male participation in child rearing (particularly affecting women's attendance at evening events); and difficulty in being no-

ticed by supervisors as a potential administrator. For minorities, there is the added problem of the declining numbers in the pipeline to college and into teaching.

Current data reveal that the problem of underrepresentation of minorities and women in educational administrative positions has *not* been resolved. Although the trend lines are particularly positive for women, in fact, there are many more qualified women than are currently occupying administrative positions. For minorities, the positive trends may only be temporary, given the decline in the numbers in the pipeline toward administrative positions.

Survey of LEAD Centers

In order to assess the activities that the LEAD centers were sponsoring under the objective of addressing the problem of the underrepresentation of minorities and women in educational administration, I surveyed the centers. Twenty of them responded. In this section, I will list the types of activities that are under way. In the final section of the paper, I will assess the likelihood that these activities will be useful in addressing the issue.

Networks: LEAD centers have created formal networks of minorities and women administrators or supported existing ones. Of the existing networks that are being supported, the American Association of School Administrator's Project ACCESS is the most common. More networks have been created for females than for minorities. Most of the networks have regular meetings with speakers and clear agendas. In at least one case, a group of women who had attended a conference sponsored by a LEAD center decided to create a network, and the state center agreed to support it.

Seminars/Conferences: The most common method of addressing the issue of minorities and women was to sponsor special training opportunities, in the form of conferences and seminars, for them. Slightly more of these opportunities were directed at women than were directed at minorities. Topics ranged from understanding and developing leadership styles to facilitate upward mobility to confronting racism, sexism, and ageism to how to interview to how to dress. The numbers of participants in a given state's special seminars/conferences ranged from 28 to over 200. In some states, there were a series of events; in others, one one- to two-day session. Some states included both minorities and women in the same sessions; others ran separate sessions for each group (although it is likely that minority women were involved in "women's" activities).

Funds for Training Opportunities: A third approach used by LEAD centers was to provide funds to minorities and women so that they could participate in in-service training activities. The activities themselves were usually short term training sponsored by a third party, and the LEAD center had a process for selecting a number of minorities and women to attend. The granting of funds was intended to ensure that women and minorities, who are frequently overlooked by their districts when such opportunities arise, would be represented. A further intention was to bring those selected to the attention of district staff as "rising stars." These funds tended to be more available to women than to minorities.

Scholarships for Pre-service Preparation: A limited number of centers provided support for pre-service preparation. In these programs, individuals who had already been accepted into administrative preparation programs could apply for and receive stipends to cover their tuition. Although the total number of such scholarship programs was small, more were addressed to minority preparation than to women.

Mentors: A number of LEAD centers identified mentors and assigned either new or potential administrators. These programs generally were implemented in conjunction with either an internship or a series of training sessions. Some of the centers use only women to serve as mentors to women, minorities to minorities. Others, however, do not limit themselves to like-mentoring-like, but include white male administrators. All programs screen the mentors as well as those being mentored, and a number provide training to potential mentors. One project directly addresses the fact that "societal stereotypes may inhibit cross-gender relationships" by raising awareness about behaviors that might be suspect.

Internships: LEAD centers are providing internship opportunities for certified minority and female administrators. Internships range from short term to full year programs. In some, the intern acts as an "assistant to" and is mentored by a practicing administrator. In others, the intern rotates through a variety of administrative positions, both in schools and in the central office. Almost all the internship programs have a mentoring component (but not all mentor programs involve internships).

Recruit Teachers into Administration: A small number of projects have programs to recruit teachers into administrative training programs. Generally working with state teachers' associations, the programs are designed to identify teachers who seem willing to leave the classroom and have the qualities of successful school leaders. Once they are identified, the LEAD center works with them to find the appropriate preparation program. These projects are directed at both minorities and women.

Workshops for Potential Employers: Two LEAD centers provide workshops for school board members and superintendents to encourage them to hire minority and women administrators. In one, there are special seminars and in the other, presentations at the state association meeting. The workshops address issues of stereotyping and the availability of minority and female administrators.

Data Bank of Certified Minority and Female Administrators: In order to assist in placing minorities and women who are certified administrators, at least one LEAD center has a data bank that lists them. It makes the data bank available to districts that have openings.

Information Dissemination: Many LEAD centers publish newsletters or have gained space in the regular communication medium of another organization. Some of these include information of particular interest to minorities and women in the newsletters. Others use the newsletters to inform others of issues that particular affect minorities and women.

Activities to address the special concern of increasing the numbers of minorities and women in educational administration look much like other activities involved in training and placing school administrators. The LEAD centers provide special content for minorities and women or sponsor separate tracks of activities that address their particular needs as well as being included in the mainstream activities of the centers.

Analysis and Recommendations

The LEAD centers tend to address both minority and female issues with the same strategies. Further, there are, in fact, more activities designed for women than there are for minorities. This may reflect the fact that LEAD is a state-based program, and there are a number of states without a significant minority population. It may also reflect the fact that LEAD focuses on administration—and increasing the number of minorities in the pipeline for educational administration positions requires intervention at earlier points

than administrators' organizations and departments of educational administration are accustomed to thinking about. Nonetheless, lumping the two populations together is probably not appropriate given the differences in the causes of the underrepresentation. The most significant recommendation for LEAD centers and others interested in increasing the representation of minorities and women in educational administration positions is: *Provide different interventions for minorities and for females.* However, because there is less of a decline in the number of minority females entering education professions than there is of minority males, interventions designed for them may need to be somewhat different from those for either minority males or majority females.

The vast majority of activities sponsored by the various LEAD centers for women focus on *their* knowledge, skills, appearance, etc. Some even assist women in attaining certification. Given the large number of women who hold administrative certificates but who have yet to be placed in administrative positions, *an increased emphasis on changing employers' stereotypes and hiring practices is needed.* Women *do* need to learn different skills from men to perform the same job, in part because women are perceived differently from men—and formal courses seldom address those differences. As a result, there is an important place for special focus seminars and workshops. At the same time, however, changing women will not change the numbers in administrative positions if employers do not begin to understand how their stereotypes deprive them of much needed talent. Those LEAD centers that provide workshops or conference sessions for potential employers are addressing this issue.

Similarly, while women need to create their own networks in order to provide support and share knowledge, the networks created for and by women frequently lack one element in the traditional "old boys network"—access to power. *Those concerned with increasing women's visibility and access to administrative positions need to supplement women's networks with strategies for penetrating the existing networks.* Some strategies already used by LEAD centers, such as involving white males as mentors and providing internships that are highly visible, accomplish this. Including training of mentors and monitoring of internships will ensure that those strategies not only make women and minorities ready to be administrators but also make employers ready to hire minority and female administrators.

Finally, the problem of the declining numbers of minorities, particularly minority males, in the education profession needs to be addressed if the number of minority administrators is to increase. *Those concerned with minority representation among administrators need to enter, coalitions with others who are concerned about the number of minority teachers—and minority college students.* In those states with significant minority student populations, we who are involved in administrator training cannot just wait until minorities become teachers—we need to be involved with those who are encouraging college attendance by minorities.

The activities sponsored by LEAD centers demonstrate positive effort toward addressing the problem of the underrepresentation of minorities and women in educational administrative positions. Strengthening these efforts will increase the impact of Project LEAD.