

# Leveraging Leadership to Meet the Learning Needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



National Conference of State Legislatures

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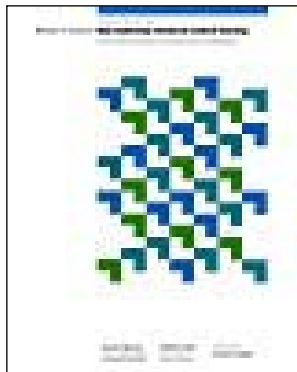
# Public education is more challenging

- Changing demographics in public schools
- Heightened demands for accountability – AYP
- Increasing skills needed for young adults to be successful in the workplace
- Many solutions tried to close achievement gap:
  - Teacher quality, class size, small schools, time, adequacy and equity of funding, professional development, standards & accountability, technology & the list goes on...
- **But something has been missing...**

# Leadership is key – to improving teaching & learning

“Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.”

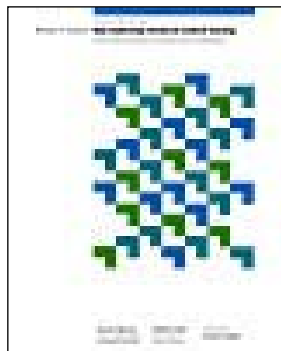
*--How Leadership Influences Student Learning, 2005*



# Leadership is key – especially in difficult situations

“...there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader.”

*--How Leadership Influences Student Learning, 2005*



# Leadership is key – especially where it is needed most

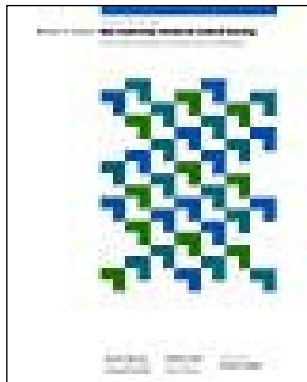
Teachers cite effective principals as one of the main reasons to get them to teach in low achieving schools and keep them there

**...So investing in effective leaders is a smart strategy to closing the achievement gap**

# Leadership is critical to making school reform succeed

“There seems little doubt that both district and school leadership provides a critical bridge between most educational reform initiatives, and having those reforms make a genuine difference for all students.”

*--How Leadership Influences Student Learning, 2005*



# Wallace's aim...help find solutions

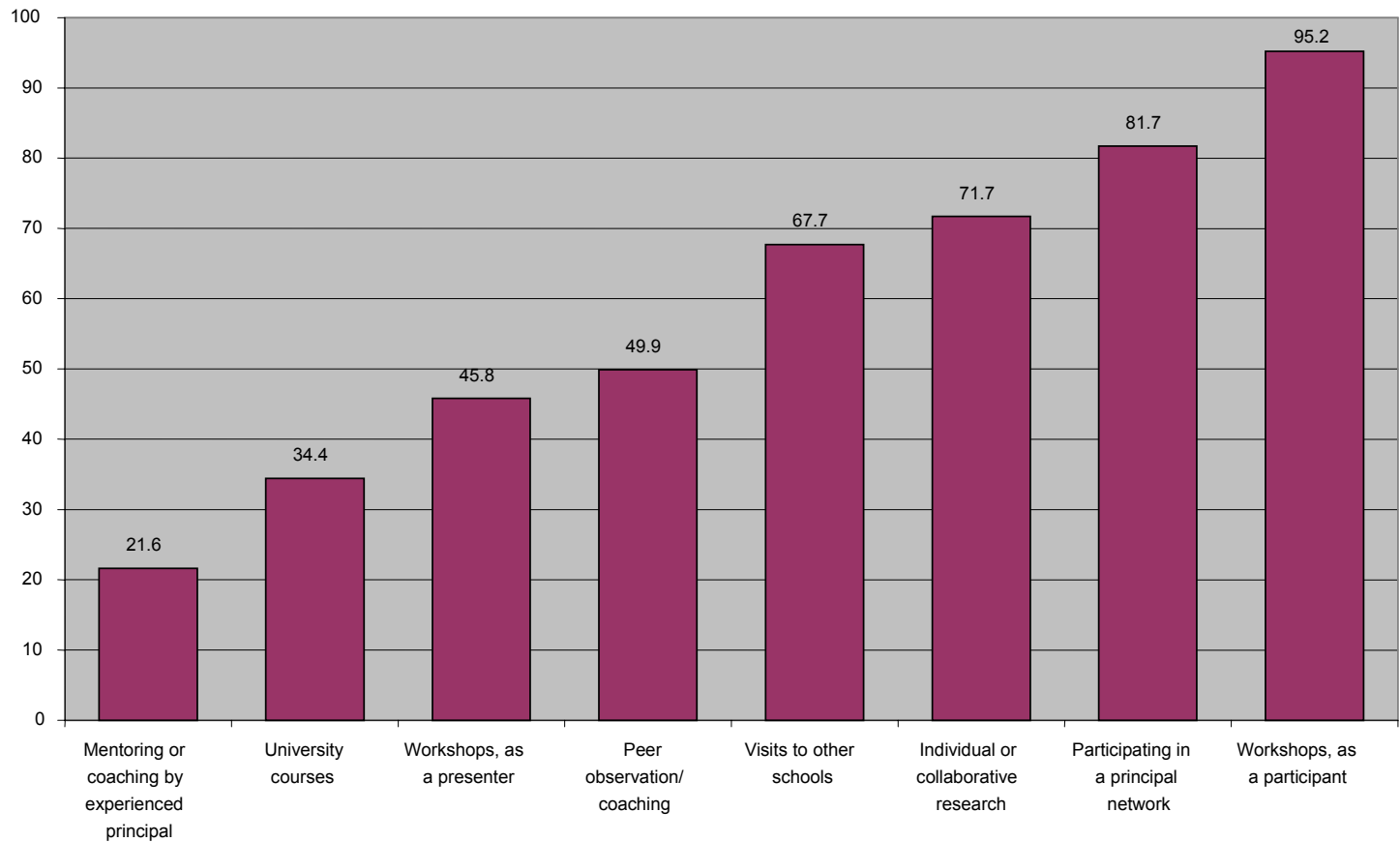
- Innovative work going on in 24 states and countless districts
- New research being undertaken
  - New leader assessment system being developed at Vanderbilt
  - New research report by Linda Darling-Hammond and team on characteristics of effective principal training programs
- A commitment to capture and share lessons

# Themes across quality programs

- Purposeful recruitment and selection
- Use of professional and state standards
- Collaborative partnerships
- Integrated coursework focused on instructional leadership, organizational improvement, and change management
- Productive pedagogy including cases, action research, performance assessments
- Robust internship
- Cohort as a long-term support

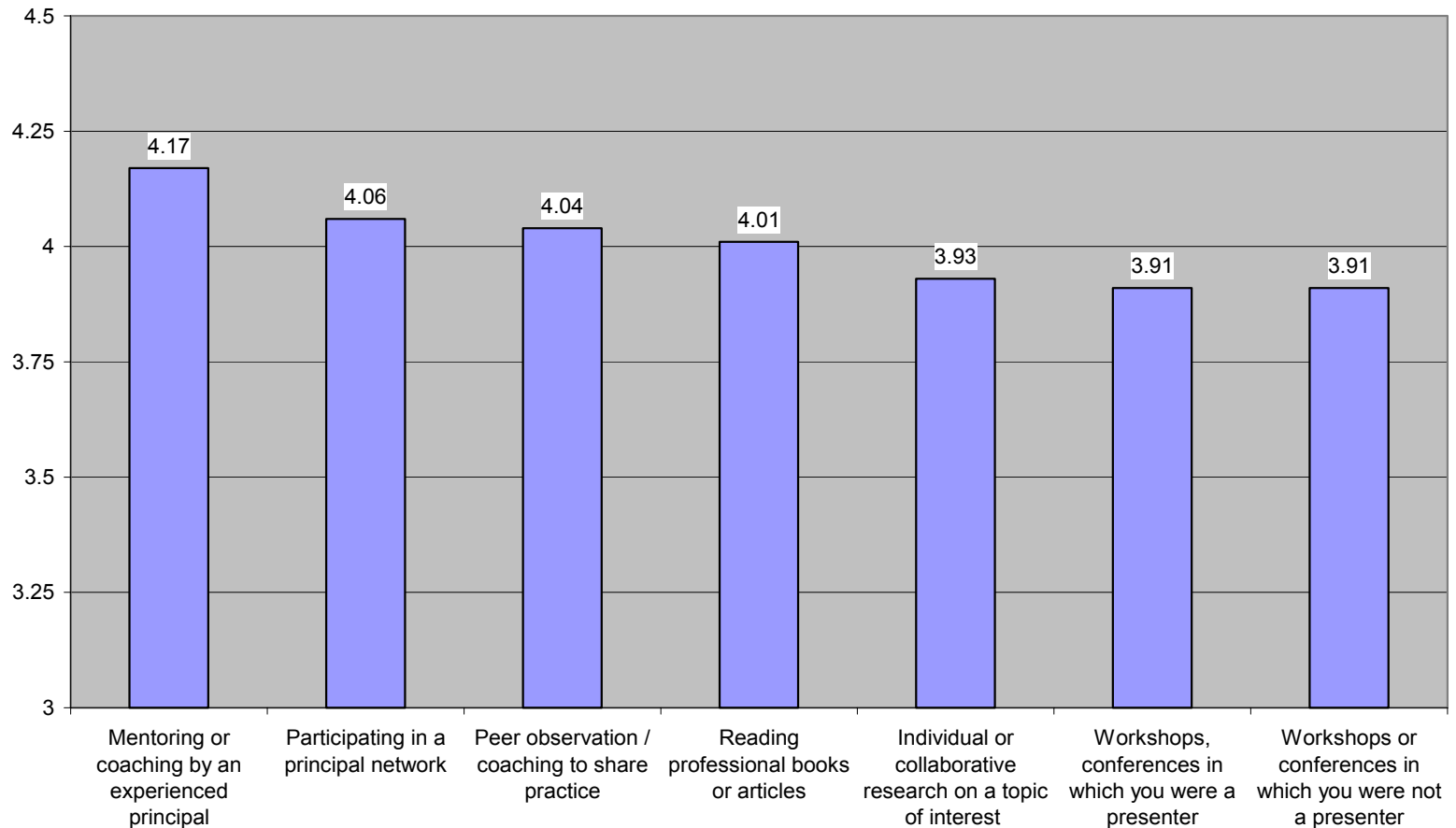
# What principals typically experience

**Figure 1 - Principals' Access to Professional Development in Last 12 Months**  
(% of Principals Participating )



# What principals actually value

**Figure 2 - Principals' Views of the Helpfulness of Professional Development**  
(1= Not at all Helpful; 5= Very Helpful)



# Elements of effective mentoring

- Carefully selected and well-trained mentors
- Lasts for at least a year, ideally two or more
- Supported by state and local funding that ensures mentors receive quality training & appropriate stipends
- Be focused primarily on fostering effective instructional leaders

# Grads of exemplary program more likely to become principals

## Exemplary programs:

- 60% of the '02-'04 graduates of exemplary programs were principals by '05
- Another 20% were assistant principals

## Typical administrator preparation programs:

- 20-30% of graduates become principals within a few years
- fewer than half ever enter any administrative position

# Exemplary program grads more focused on instruction

- building a learning community
- fostering teacher development
- providing feedback to teachers to improve teaching and learning
- using data to monitor progress, identify problems and propose solutions
- facilitating student learning

# New Vanderbilt assessment tool focuses on instructional leadership

## **Instructional focus targets:**

- High expectations
- Accountability – individual and collective
- Rigorous curriculum
- High quality instruction
- Culture of learning and professional behavior
- Linkages to external community

# What we are learning about developing school leaders

- Effective principal training programs emphasize careful selection of candidates, coursework focused on instructional leadership, organizational improvement and change management and include rigorous internships
- Leadership development needs to occur along a continuum, not just at the beginning of a principal's career
- **Improving leadership training is essential, but it's not enough**

# Training is key but not sufficient...

Early efforts focused on putting better trained leaders in the same old system...

...If that's where we stopped, we would bet on the system

Therefore, we must focus not *only* on improving leaders' **training**, but also on enhancing the **conditions** within which education leaders work

# State policy levers to improve training

## ➤ **Standards & accountability**

- ISLLC standards (for leaders)
- Certification
- Accreditation and program review

## ➤ **Fiscal support for recruitment, internships, mentoring and training**

- Sabbatical/fellows programs for aspiring leaders
- Leadership academies

## ➤ **Continuum of learning opportunities**

- Teacher leaders and aspiring principals' training
- Induction/mentoring programs for new principals
- Continuing education requirements

# State policy levers to improve conditions

## ➤ **Data & accountability**

- Assessment and information systems that provide credible, actionable and timely data
- Accountability systems with incentives focused on learning
- Performance assessment for license

## ➤ **Flexible use of resources (people/time/money)**

- Resources focused on meeting student needs
- Incentives to get needed talent to high need schools
- Streamlining of rules and regulations to give leaders the ability to lead

## ➤ **Utilize state policy to change district practice**

# Closing the gaps...

- **The opportunity gap** – between students' needs and equitable resources and opportunities
- **The achievement gap** – between affluent and less affluent students and minority and white students
- **The skills gap** – between what better paying jobs will require and what most graduates acquire
- **The earnings gap** – between wages earned by college grads & high school graduate

# The time to act is now

- If we are balancing reality with urgency..... We need to change reality, not our sense of urgency
- If we are balancing results with expectations... We need to change results, not our expectations
- If not us, who? If not now, when? If not, why not?