STATE POLICY OPTIONS TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION: PROGRAM RESEARCH LESSONS

Margaret Terry Orr, PhD, Bank Street College
National Conference of State Legislators Meeting, Wallace Foundation, New York
March 12, 2010
Exemplary principal preparation and development: Two studies


Preparing and developing educational leaders: institutions, targets and processes

- **Universities**
  - Aspiring leaders
  - Leadership preparation

- **Districts and others**
  - New principals
  - Leadership development

- **Districts and others**
  - Experienced principals
  - Leadership development
Key findings on the nature of quality preparation

Qualities of exemplary programs (which differentiate them from conventional programs):

- Vigorous recruitment and selection
- Well-articulated program theory organized around effective leadership and school improvement
- Coherent standards-based curriculum
- Active-learning strategies
- Quality internships (full-time, authentic leadership work)
- Knowledgeable and competent faculty
- Social and professional support, including cohort membership
- Candidate and program assessment linked to standards and program mission and objectives
Key strategies for leadership preparation

- District-university partnership for program design, delivery and oversight
- Program focus around district leadership priorities and school improvement needs
- Intensive and extensive internship opportunities
- Connection to a continuum of leadership development into and beyond initial leadership positions
- Responsive to university and state higher education standards and accreditation expectations
Key findings on the nature of quality leadership development

- Well-articulated approaches for principals to learn how to develop stronger schools
- Emphasis on more effective teaching and learning
- Coherent view of student learning, teacher development and school leadership
- Connected and aligned as an on-going approach to the development of a holistic, identifiable professional practice—a learning continuum
- Grounded in theory and practice
Key strategies for principal development

- Types of extensive, high quality learning opportunities:
  - Participating in a principal network
  - Conferences
  - Mentoring and coaching
  - School visits
  - Engaging in individual or collaborative research

- Having multiple opportunities

- District-based or intermediary-based (such as university or other educational entity)
Nature of state policy for leadership preparation and development

- **Fragmented** by differences in higher education and K-12 policies for universities and districts

- **Lack of coherence** in educational leadership preparation and development policies for:
  - Program accreditation
  - Licensure/certification requirements
  - School and district performance expectations
  - Principal evaluation
  - Funding for leadership preparation and development
Reflections of state policy in principals’ preparation program experiences

- Leadership preparation programs are improving based on quality indictors.
- Principals’ ratings (for all exemplary and comparison principals combined) of their programs’ qualities varied by state suggesting policy differences and that policies matter.
- Some program features appear most often in some states:
  - Whether candidates had an internship
  - Whether the internship is full time
  - Whether the internship reflected national accreditation standards for quality features
Reflections of state policy in principals’ leadership development experiences

- **Access** to different types of leadership development experiences **varies** by state, reflecting state policy investments, particularly for:
  - Peer coaching
  - Mentoring or coaching by an experienced leader
  - Professional learning opportunities
Facilitating conditions

- Champions/Designers/Architects
- Financial supports
- Policy and standard alignment
State policy options for better leader quality through improved preparation and development

- **Mandates** (through regulations, requirements and sanctions)
- **System change** (through restructuring at the state and provider levels)
- **Capacity building** (through professional development and access to data)
- **Inducements** (through grants and other investments)

State leadership development policies:
Combining mandates and system change

- **Establish vision and standards for school leadership**
  - Adopt the ISLLC standards
  - Use the standards as a framework for improving program accreditation, licensure, and coordination of all forms of leadership education

- **Use of accreditation or program review**
  - Leverage program change or reform (e.g. close existing programs and require all institutions to reapply under new guidelines)
  - Require national accreditation (NCATE or TEAC) or state accreditation
  - Externally review programs, using quality performance measures and assessment

- **Enable alternative providers (with or without university involvement) for leadership certification**
Mandates and system changes (continued)

- Use principal assessment for program and candidate improvement, either:
  - Adopt a nationally available test
  - Develop a state designed assessment that reflects local priorities
  - Link assessments to program completion and licensure

- Create a continuum of leadership preparation, development and training, such as:
  - Tiered licensure requirement
  - Continued professional development requirements
State leadership development policies: Combining capacity building and inducements

- Develop inducement strategies to recruit individuals for the principalship
  - Create funding for competitively-earned internships (paid to candidates directly or to university-based programs)
  - Create alternative licensure options for nontraditional candidates
- Provide grants to districts or to universities for new or redesigned programs using state or federal funding
Combining capacity building and inducements (continued)

- **Build or fund an infrastructure for on-going professional development**
  - Statewide organization or association
  - Collaboration with statewide associations
  - Local or regional intermediary educational agencies (such as Academies)

- **Fund professional development for districts and universities on leadership preparation modules or district-university partnerships (Southern Regional Education Board--SREB)**
Combining capacity building and inducements (other strategies)

- **Fund professional development for faculty, institutions, and intermediaries on new approaches to leadership preparation and development**

- **Make data on graduates available to universities for program improvement purposes:**
  - State leadership assessment
  - Career information
  - Performance of schools lead by graduates

- **Support program evaluation**
Contact information:

Margaret Terry Orr
Department of Educational Leadership
Bank Street College of Education
610 W. 112\textsuperscript{th} Street
New York, New York 10025
212-875-4546, morr@bnkst.edu