STATE POLICY OPTIONS TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

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Purpose

- To provide research-based guidance on how state policy can leverage improved leadership preparation
Background

- State and higher education advisement on quality preparation
Context for 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 (as differentiated 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 better 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
- Accountability and evaluation
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 indicators.

- 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
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)

Improving leadership preparation through policy mandates

- Establish vision and standards for school leadership
  - Adopt the ISLLC standards or develop state 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
Improving leadership preparation through policy mandates

- **Require content and strategies**
  - Competency
  - Content
  - Internship

- **Use principal assessment for program and candidate improvement:**
  - Adopt a nationally available test, or develop a state assessment that reflects local priorities
  - Link assessments to program completion and licensure for program evaluation
Improving preparation through system change

- Enable alternative providers (with or without university involvement) for leadership certification
- Require preparation programs to partner with local districts
- Create a continuum of leadership preparation, development and training:
  - Establish tiered licensure requirement
  - Create continued professional development requirements
Improving leadership preparation through 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**
Improving preparation through capacity building and inducements

- **Build or fund an infrastructure for on-going professional development for school leaders**
  - Collaboration with statewide associations
  - Create or fund 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)
Improving through 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
Key state policy decisions

- How much to prescribe?
  - Standards
  - Program features
  - Use of evaluation outcomes

- What type of policy leverage to use
  - Mandates
  - System change
  - Inducements and capacity building

- Type of infrastructure for decision making, support and oversight?
  - Role of practitioners
  - Role of IHEs
  - Resources
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