Improving School Leadership by Building Cohesive Leadership Systems

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We Conducted Cross-Case Analyses on Ten Purposively Sampled Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>School District</th>
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<td>Indiana</td>
<td>Ft. Wayne</td>
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<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>Providence</td>
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### States Pursued a Variety of Policies and Initiatives in Six Policy Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Area</th>
<th>Initiatives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>• Broadening positions addressed by standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>• Revising evaluation processes and tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Licensure</td>
<td>• Revising requirements for initial licensure and re-licensure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-service and recruitment</td>
<td>• Sunsetting programs</td>
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<td>In-service</td>
<td>• Mandating mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>• Providing necessary data</td>
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*District and state roles converging*
Prevalence of Policy Areas Varied

- Most common policy areas:
  - Standards
  - Pre-service & recruitment
  - In-service

- Less common policy areas:
  - Licensure
  - Evaluation
  - Conditions
Favorable Conditions Positively Related to Instructional Leadership

- Most conditions positively associated with time spent on instructional leadership practices
  - Professional development, tools, and evaluations associated with all but one practice
- Better resources, support, and data all associated with satisfaction with time spent on most instructional leadership practices
  - Better resources related to greater satisfaction on time spent on all practices
Creating Positive Conditions Necessitates Coordination Between State and District Actors

• Increasing authority over various schooling decisions could require both legislative and collective bargaining agreement changes.

• Legislatures can shape quality of evaluation systems and professional development.
  – Then implemented by districts.

• States impact school funding.
  – And districts make allocation decisions.
States Pursued Eight Strategies to Build a CLS

• Identifying strong individuals with political and social capital to lead the work
• Building trust
• Creating formal and informal networks
• Fostering communications
• Exerting pressure and influence
• Promoting improved quality of leadership policies and initiatives
• Building capacity for the work
• Connecting to other reform efforts
States Rated Most Cohesive Shared Some Common Approaches

- Pursued all eight strategies
  - Especially building capacity, identifying strong leaders, and connecting to other reform efforts

- These states also fostered more strategic communications

- They also used a combination of pressure and support to further CLS agenda
Across The Ten Sites, Many Contextual Factors Favored CLS Work

• Common structures and policies
• History of collaboration
• Strong pre-existing social networks
• Wallace funding and technical assistance
• Political support
Other Contextual Factors Inhibited Progress

• Limited resources (people and time)
• Key staff turnover
• Limited SEA capacity
• Too many organizations, too far apart
• Culture of independence
• Discord across organizations
Important to Both Shape the Workforce and Support the School Leaders

• Many states have made progress on standards, some have made progress on pre-service training
  – Policies necessary for shaping the workforce
• Equally important to support the new workforce
  – Meaningful evaluations tied to the standards
  – Timely data
  – Sufficient authority
  – Adequate resources (staff, time to learn, funding)
http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG885/
Principals’ Satisfaction with Their Conditions Mixed

- State and district data are organized, reliable, useful
  - State data not timely

- Have authority over various schooling decisions
  - Want more authority over removing teachers

- Districts provide them with quality professional development, evaluations, and other tools

- Do not have sufficient leadership support
  - Desire assistant principals, coaches, etc.

- Do not have sufficient resources (funding, time, staff)
Different Paths Taken to Build Cohesive Leadership Systems

- In some states, districts took the lead
- Structures for convening and leading stakeholders varied
- Lead organizations varied across states
  - As did extent to which CLS efforts were aligned to other reform efforts in the state
- Primary focus varied
  - In-service vs pre-service, for example
Recommendations for States Considering Development of CLS

• Consider their context, particularly whether they have
  – A culture and history of collaboration and strong social networks

• Identify strong lead organizations and individuals
  – Willing and able to combine pressure with support
  – Skilled at system-building

• Engage a broad coalition of stakeholders
  – Build trust
  – Identifying “lead learner” districts
  – Establish networks and communications media