

STATE POLICY OPTIONS TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

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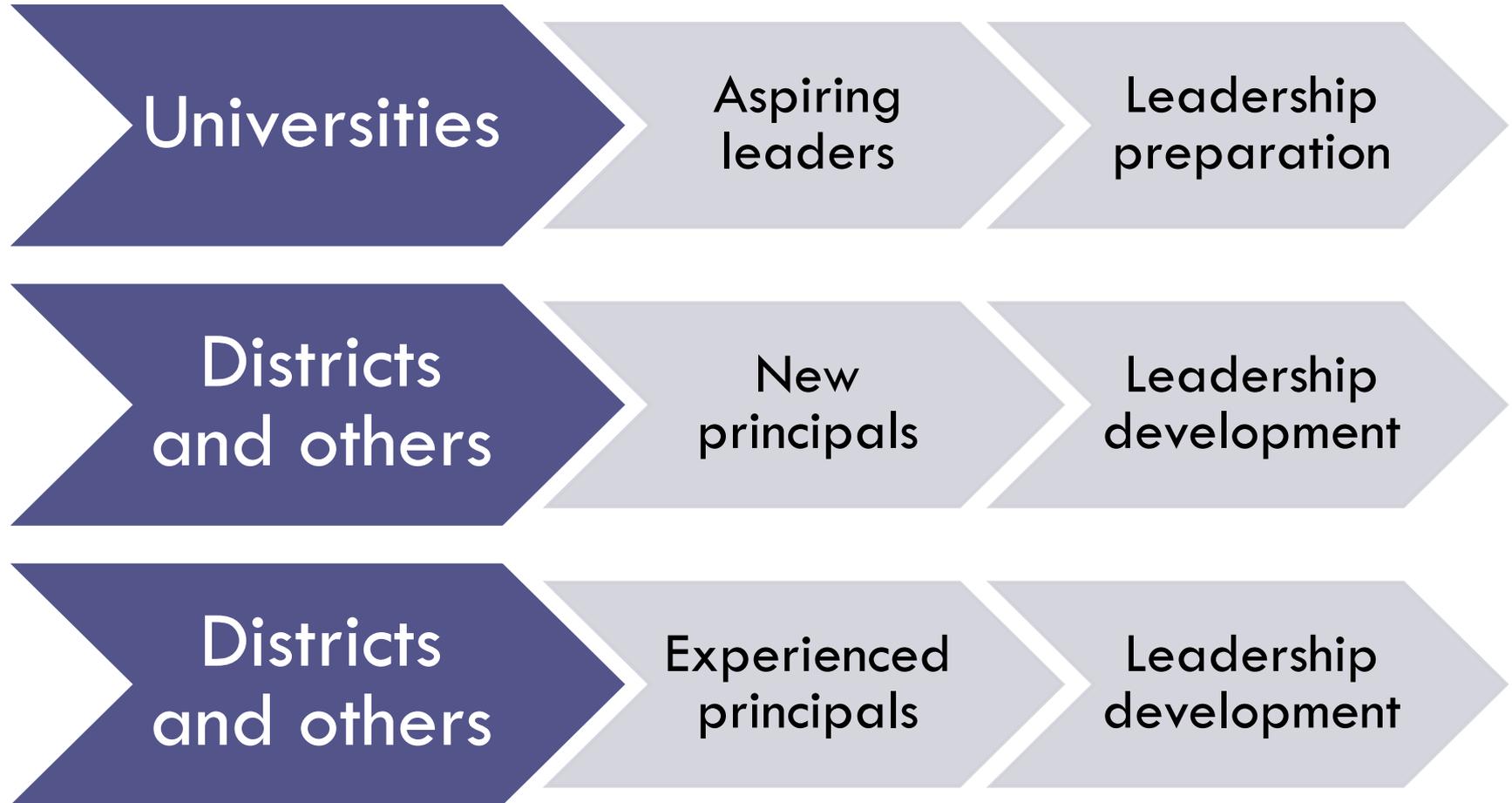
Purpose

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

Background

- State and higher education advisement on quality preparation
- A study of 8 exemplary leadership preparation and development programs and their comparative effects on principals and their leadership practices (Darling-Hammond, L., Meyerson, D., La Pointe, M. M., & Orr, M. T. (2009). *Preparing principals for a changing world*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.)
- A study of 8 Wallace-funded urban districts and their investments in leadership preparation through policy, programs, university collaboration and internships. (Orr, M. T., King, C., & La Pointe, M. M. (2010). *Districts developing leaders: Eight districts' lessons on strategy, program approach and organization to improve the quality of leaders for local schools*. Report prepared for The Wallace Foundation. Newton, MA: EDC.)

Context for preparing and developing educational leaders: institutions, targets and processes



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)

(source: McDonnell, L. M. & Elmore, R. F. (1987). Getting the job done: Alternative policy instruments. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 9(2), 133-152.

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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