

September 21, 2016 Meeting of the Principal Project Advisory Team

Agreements Reached and Transcription of Small-Group Notes from Chart Paper

Terms used

- IHE refers to institutions of higher education
- PSEL refers to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders
- ISLLC means Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium

Agreements reached

- Starting assumptions
 - Only consensus recommendations emerge
 - To do this work well, the team needs relevant data
 - Handle sensitive data appropriately
- Norms
 - Minutes reflect official account
 - Jointly support what we help create
 - Reach consensus using an established process
 - Meetings are held in public but are not meetings of the public, i.e., conversation is among Team members
 - “No stripes” - members and contributions valued equally
 - To responsibly handle sensitive material, disclose if/when results are preliminary; forgo non-disclosure statement
- Repeatable process to reach group consensus (“Fist to Five”)
 - When considering an option, the goal is to find something that every Team member can live with and support.
 - When co-chairs call a question, members show hands to show support.
 - Those who hold up 5 fingers support the option enthusiastically
 - Those showing 4 fingers indicate the option is good but not perfect
 - 3 fingers means “it may not be ideal but I can live with it & support it”
 - 2 fingers means “I cannot live with it ‘as is’”
 - 1 finger means “A larger reservation prevents me from supporting it”
 - Showing a fist means “I cannot support it, as a matter of conscience.”
 - The options that survive and are forwarded as enjoying consensus support are those for which every Team member shows 3, 4, or 5 fingers. Those who show a fist, 1, or 2 fingers will be asked, “What would it take to make this something you can live with and support?”
- How do we stem “mission creep?”
 - Lock in agreements, record them in minutes, and post them prominently
 - Avoid revisiting decided issues; so cross each proverbial bridge once.
 - Use a “Parking Lot” to record promising ideas that are beyond our charge
 - Avoid trying to cure world hunger, refrain from prescriptions beyond charge
- All agreed to “reasonable and flexible”
 - That is “subordinate self-interest so we achieve our objective & accomplish as a team what no one of can alone”

Transcription of Post-it Notes (and small-group notes from chart paper)

Takeaways from team workouts

- Start Point exercise: post-it notes were organized into four categories that follow (each category answers a question)
 - Mission (What business are we in?)
 - Deal with the challenges of poverty.
 - Prepare principals to include families and students with disabilities in their schools?
 - Work we do in the next few months impacts future leadership programs statewide.
 - Discussion leads to actionable recommendations.
 - Professionalize educators within schools (teachers and school leaders)
 - Power (Who makes decisions and how?)
 - How do we get statewide “buy-in?”
 - Bringing consensus to all of the various folks (herding cats).
 - Will our work be collaborative and lead to a solid consensus?
 - Structure (What roles, rules, and schedules guide action?)
 - Assessing and evaluating current standards
 - Development of (or innovation of new) standards to provide access to all principals & communities
 - Making sure principal prep programs strike balance between experience-based & standard-based prep
 - Creation of a rigorous program with authentic experiences that reflect issues of today and tomorrow
 - Incorporating an “externship” component for ongoing training (continued requirement)
 - Mentoring programs and PD or professional development for principals (ongoing)
 - Providing a network of professional learning needs to support the work
 - Prep principals for roles they have (prof’l developer, evaluator, instrct’l leader, manager, motivator)
 - University principal prep programs are not “in touch” with the realities of K12 principal expectations
 - Resources (What are the requirements in terms of people, time, money, and tools?)
 - Funding high quality full time internships regardless of location
 - Rather limited time for the committee to be together
 - Would love to hear of others’ prep programs for school building leaders, especially internships
 - Attracting young people to go into education and supervising leadership roles
- Chief learning from the Start Point exercise
 - Conversations on impending change tend to focus on lower levels (resources). To be effective in leading change, instead focus conversation on the top level (mission). Progress will be difficult until and unless agreement is gained about mission. Once consensus emerges on mission, other considerations are addressed more easily (power, structure, and resources).
- Exercise focused on the question; What problem are we trying to solve?
 - Directions for exercise (note: this was not a consensus-building activity; instead it sought to generate ideas)
 - Consider slides 6-8 from the Sept. 12, 2016 Board presentation.
 - Describe what, if anything, is missing from the problem statement.
 - If you identify something (and agree to it) record it on chart paper
 - Small groups of Advisory Team members listed possible additions to a problem statement
 - Leading “from the middle” is hard
 - Look more at the future shifts in education instead of the past history
 - Challenges include instructional leaders, access to resources, and data systems
 - [It isn’t just that many are certified but few are ready] there is an unwillingness of many to take the job
 - Dynamic nature of education requires more “check-ins”, support networks, and continuing education
 - Evolving external expectations among colleges/employers on one hand & parents/community on other
 - How do we gauge if a building leader is still relevant?

Indented items = responses to prompt (“list most important concern you have about the work”)

Member responses to prompt

- Indented items = responses to prompt ("what problem are we trying to solve?")
 - Lack of:
 - A clear understanding of what the "well-prepared principal" is [and can do]
 - Effective models to select (and professionally develop) building leaders
 - Use of data to evaluate improvement
 - A "continuous improvement/growth mindset" for leaders and teachers
 - Shared leadership
 - Shared vision and strategic planning for systems
 - Consistency of expectations (job clarity) for principals
 - Knowledge of professional learning and facilitation
 - Cultural competency and partnerships within communities
 - Relationships and trust
 - Systems that enable principals to be successful
 - Job satisfaction for some/many with the job; fewer want to be principal and some want to leave
 - Need for:
 - Effective, authentic, practical training
 - Better systems of communication between P12 and Institutions of Higher Education
 - Principals as instructional leader (includes structural support for lack of staff)
 - Recruitment of leaders
 - Prof'l commitment to school leaders including mentors for future leaders (pay it forward),
 - Prof'l commitment to school leaders including investing in career-based evaluation
 - School funding channeled to unfunded mandates
 - Principals to have the capacity to engage students, parents, the community, and partners.
 - Side note: Preparation standards are under development (aligned w/Prof'l Standards for Educ'l Leaders)

- Exercise using homework, "If you could have what you want in an ideal principal prep program what would you have"?

- Directions for consensus-building exercise

- Work individually and silently
- Review the table of member responses to the homework prompt
- Identify two important "takeaways" from the homework
- Turn to your two neighbors to form a group of three
- Compare notes on your "takeaways"
- Reach as much consensus as you can on rank ordering of takeaways
- Write the consensus list on chart paper and place it on the wall
- Be ready as a team to report out

- In small groups, members came to consensus on important "takeaways" from the homework assignment

Indented = responses to prompt ("what are homework takeaways?")

- Consensus within team #1 (David C, Jim M, and Marc B)
 - Clinical-practice experience with a qualified mentor (one full year)
 - Consistent curricular components across programs
 - Continued professional support and growth (post-certification)
 - Future superintendents academy (recruitment)
- Consensus within team #2 (Soribel G, John B, and Kathleen F)
 - > stakeholder engagement emphasis (intern- & extern-ship, community partnership, citizenship)
 - Guidance-based practices (leadership, diversity, special needs)
 - Continuing education (variable, mentoring)
- Consensus within team #3 (Annette R and Adrienne G-B)
 - Look to medical model . . . that requires internships throughout training (& is ongoing once in job)
 - Focus on authentic projects/work/research resulting in positive student gains anchored in PSEL
 - Flexible model that utilizes IHE faculty as well as current practitioners (mentoring + instruction)
 - Partnerships with communities/districts of varied contexts, multiple departments, agencies
 - Focus on curricular expertise
- Consensus within team #4 (Carron S, Marie G, and Steve T)

Indented = responses to prompt ("what are homework takeaways?")

- Authentic experiences are critical in principal preparation
- Attention to ISLLC standards for preparation and evaluation
- Consensus within team #5 (Nell S-P and David F)
 - University-District partnership [where] the work is real
 - For those intending to move into principal-ship, additional year-long "internship" (in a cohort)
- Consensus within team #6 (Colleen T and David B)
 - Mentorship
 - Clinical experience
 - Deep understanding of effective teaching for all
- Consensus within team #7 (Michelle Y, Larry W, and John M)
 - Attention to foundational skills such as community building and situational awareness
 - Authentic & powerful learning experiences where qualities seen above can be seen & practiced
- Consensus within team #8 (Sister K, Shireen F, and Lynn L-M)
 - Ongoing networking and support with various stakeholders
 - System thinking
 - Shared leadership
- Dial-in team input (Omar T, Howard S, Erika H, Grace B, Hazel C, Greg M, Pamela O, & Moses O)
 - On-site mentoring for aspiring principals
 - Importance of knowledge of different cultural practices in response to changing demographics
 - Partnership programs involving school districts [& presumably institutions of higher education]
- Due to time, exercise ended with small group report; the exercise will be continued at the upcoming meeting.
- It was pointed out in the meeting that nearly every team included mention of "internship" or "mentoring"

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