

New York State Education Department
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
Proposed “High Concept Idea” Summary
Supporting Excellent Teaching and Leading

Topic: State Support for the Development of School Building Leadership (SBL)

High Concept Idea:

Alter certification to better prepare aspiring principals so they have the knowledge & skill to improve teaching & learning

- a. Organize certification around the 2015 *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders*
- b. Create a pathway for a full-time, year-long, school-based internship for aspiring principals
- c. Pilot Leadership Academies that more-closely link university-based SBL programs and extended school-based internship
- d. Before certification, candidates apply knowledge/skill from SBL programs under authentic conditions & in real settings

Additional Information about the High Concept Idea:

When it comes to principal preparation, the challenge facing New York State can be summed up in a single statement. Many are certified, but few are ready to step into a principal position prepared to improve a school beginning day one. Chiefly, this can be traced to a shortcoming in the design of the statewide system of school building leader preparation.

Presently, principal certification in NYS is a three-legged stool. Candidates seeking SBL certification must have:

- a. A statement from an SBL program attesting that the candidate completed a program that included an internship
- b. A satisfactory score on the state-approved SBL exam that is externally administered by Pearson
- c. Three years of teaching experience (or three years in pupil personnel services)

What is absent is what matters most. That is any formal expectation that aspiring principals take what they learn in an SBL program and apply it successfully in an authentic setting to improve student learning, staff functioning, or school performance. Under this high concept, before any university can attest that a student who completed its SBL program is “certification-ready,” two individuals from the District that is sponsoring the internship (one is the Superintendent and the other is the mentor) sign off saying that the aspiring school building leader demonstrated the desired competencies by successfully completing a set of projects that demonstrate accomplishment of the 2015 standards. These “standards” refer to the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders*.

By making the judgment about when a candidate is ready for certification a joint responsibility of the institution of higher education and the Internship sponsors (District superintendent and mentor), the internship becomes a responsibility that is truly shared.

Relevant Requirements of ESSA law and/or draft Rulemaking:

With its September 27, 2016 publication of non-regulatory guidance, the United States Department of Education opened the door for states to use Title II (Part A) funds in new ways to advance the preparation of school building leaders. (see *Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Leading*, USDOE, September 27, 2016, page 5)

“Title II, Part A funds may be used to support both traditional and non- traditional pathways through the development of new teacher, principal, or other school leader preparation academies.”

§ 2002(4) of ESSA explicitly authorizes States to establish such academies, and §2101(c) authorizes States to use up to 2% of the required 5% set-aside of Title II, A funding to support the development of these academies.

Rational for High Concept Idea:

The importance of competency-based demonstrations of knowledge and skill is growing given the ascendancy of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). This is especially the case given standard 4 where CAEP emphasizes that institutions of higher education must provide outcome-based evidence showing that program graduates provide leadership that contributes to the improvement of students, staff, and schools.

Under ESSA and this non-regulatory guidance, a permissible expenditure of Title IIA funds is the establishment or expansion of Leadership Academies that couple universities and districts that partner to provide school building leader preparation.

In part, leadership academies in New York State will contribute to the improvement of aspiring principal preparation by altering guidelines that govern the relationship between a university-based principal preparation program on one hand and the districts that host internships for aspiring principals on the other hand.

In part, leadership academies in New York State will contribute to improved principal preparation by more-systematically utilizing the expertise of non-profit organizations that are located in NYS. New York State is home to institutions with nationally-recognized expertise in the field of school leader preparation; the expertise of these institutions could be utilized more fully (*New Leaders* and *New York City Leadership Academy* are two examples).

As well, 38 different BOCES organizations are located throughout the State; while these vary in their talent bench, because they are geographically dispersed they act as a resource hub and conduit for learning. By creating a structure that better utilizes these resources, leadership academies will expand the network of support for the preparation of future school building leaders and thereby improve the training of future principals.