

CHALLENGE  
TO LEAD

# SREB

LEADERSHIP  
INITIATIVE

## The Principal Internship: How Can We Get It Right?

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## A Message from the President of SREB

“Every school has leadership that results in improved student performance — and leadership begins with an effective school principal.”

One of SREB’s *Challenge to Lead* Goals for Education, which assert that SREB states can lead the nation in educational progress

Schools need good leaders. High-quality preparation programs can produce good leaders. Leaders in the SREB states recognize this and most have taken steps to “do something” about the school leadership pipeline. However, these steps have not yet addressed one of the most serious problems of leadership preparation — the quality of internships for aspiring school leaders.

A well-planned and well-supervised internship is not all that it takes, but is essential if we are to prepare school leaders who know how to improve schools and increase student achievement. If the internship in the preparation program is seriously flawed, then states and districts cannot expect to have a supply of highly-qualified aspiring principals who have mastered the knowledge and skills to reach this goal. For example, only 15 percent of the department heads responding to the SREB survey indicated that their internships required candidates to work with groups of teachers on literacy and numeracy issues — a critical need in many elementary, middle grades and high schools.

Responsibility for getting the internship right cannot be laid solely at the door of the educational leadership department, the university or any of the various state agencies responsible for higher education, program approval and licensure. The problems are system problems. They require simultaneous, aligned actions across the leadership preparation system.

- **States must develop strong policies and procedures on leadership preparation and licensure** that make it impossible to continue licensing graduates based on completion of a program inadequately designed for the needs of today’s students and schools.
- **University presidents must be challenged to make leadership preparation a priority** of the institution and to confront the need for new resources required for redesigning programs to incorporate high-quality internships.
- **Departments of educational leadership must develop stronger relationships with local school districts** that involve working together to select the most promising candidates and design and deliver programs that prepare leaders who can meet district needs for improved student achievement.
- **Local school districts must take on new responsibilities for recruiting aspiring leaders** and then providing the support and conditions necessary for them to succeed in the preparation program.

It is possible for us to get it right in our work to prepare school leaders. While this report puts the spotlight on the problems within internships, it also provides ideas on how they can be designed to ensure that aspiring principals are prepared for the work they must do in schools. We hope that state leaders will use the report to begin a statewide leadership redesign initiative. SREB stands ready to assist those states that want to begin the journey.

Mark Musick  
President

# The Quality of Field Experiences in Educational Leadership Programs

## *Background*

In many professional fields, the **internship** is the ultimate performance test, the final rite of passage before gaining an initial license to practice. A well-designed internship expands the knowledge and skills of candidates while also gauging their ability to apply new learning in authentic settings as they contend with problems that have real-world consequences. Built right, the internship becomes a sturdy vessel upon which new practitioners can navigate the swift, unpredictable currents that separate classroom theory and on-the-job reality.

**Today, in far too many principal preparation programs, the internship “vessel” is leaky, rudderless or still in dry dock.**

This study of educational leadership degree programs in the SREB region reveals a sparsity of purposeful “hands on” experiences that would prepare aspiring principals to lead the essential work of school improvement and higher student achievement *prior to being placed at the helm of a school.*

These findings are disheartening in an era when every state has an urgent need for capable principals who know how to lead changes in school and classroom practices — especially in low-performing schools. Such principals are in great demand, but in short supply. The potential pool is large, but many candidates are either unwilling or unprepared to do the work that must be done.

Leadership is learned through studying the key concepts and skills used by effective leaders, observing good models and by one’s own trial and error in the workplace. Graduates of principal preparation programs consistently report that their most significant learning occurred during their internship experience. At the same time, many of these graduates say the internship experience was the component of their preparation program *most in need of being expanded and improved.* Why are these preparation programs failing to capitalize on the most powerful component in their leadership curriculum? Plain and simple: university-based educational leadership programs are rarely held accountable for results.

Quality internships demand careful planning, coordination with local school systems, and close supervision by knowledgeable experts who have a track record as successful school leaders. Quality internships cannot be accomplished during “seat time” in a university classroom. Like any results-driven work, they require significant investments of energy, time and resources — investments that many university leadership programs have thus far been reluctant to make.

While state policy-makers have expended great effort aligning other parts of the education system with state goals, university-based school leadership programs *remain virtually untouched* by state educational accountability. In the absence of real accountability, many of these programs continue to ignore the judgments of their own graduates and the widespread belief concerning the critical importance of quality internships in fully preparing new principals for the challenges of leadership.

### ***The Critical Success Factors*** **What Today’s Principals Must Know and Do**

Through literature reviews and research data from its own school reform initiatives, SREB has identified 13 *Critical Success Factors* associated with principals who have succeeded in raising student achievement in schools with traditionally “high risk” demographics. These factors, organized under three *Overarching Competencies*, are the driving force behind SREB’s leadership redesign work and the SREB leadership curriculum. The competencies and critical success factors are summarized in Appendix 1 of this report.

## **Critical Success Factors for Effective Principals**

### **Successful school leaders —**

- 1.** Create a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.
- 2.** Set high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.
- 3.** Recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement.
- 4.** Know how to lead the creation of a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.
- 5.** Use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.
- 6.** Keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement.
- 7.** Make parents partners in their student's education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration.
- 8.** Understand the change process and have the leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.
- 9.** Understand how adults learn and know how to advance meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that benefits students.
- 10.** Use and organize time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.
- 11.** Acquire and use resources wisely.
- 12.** Obtain support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for their school improvement agenda.
- 13.** Continually learn and seek out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

### Current Internship Programs Are Producing Many Ill-qualified, Unprepared Principals

#### A Disconnect Between the Work of Today's Principals and the University Preparation New Principals Receive

Many internships offered to aspiring principals by university preparation programs fail to provide authentic leadership opportunities. A survey of 61 programs in the 16-state SREB region found that:

- Barely a third of the universities require aspiring principals to lead activities that create a mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.
- Fewer than one-fourth require aspiring principals to lead activities that implement good instructional practices — such as leading groups of teachers in developing assignments and assessments aligned with curriculum standards or monitoring implementation of the curriculum.
- Only 15 percent require aspiring principals to lead the work of literacy and numeracy task forces to improve student performance in these critical areas.
- Only a third of the universities require aspiring principals to lead activities — such as creating or using authentic assessments of student work — that set high expectations for all students.
- Fewer than half require aspiring principals to lead activities in which faculties analyze schoolwide data and examine the performance of subgroups within the school.
- About half of the universities require aspiring principals to lead activities that support change through quality sustained professional development.
- About one-fourth require aspiring principals to lead activities for organizing and using time and acquiring and using resources to meet the goals of school improvement.

#### ■ *Preparing school reform leaders is not a high priority.*

Preparing new principals to become leaders of change is not a top priority of most university leadership programs. Only about a third of the programs surveyed put interns into situations where they can gain a comprehensive understanding of what they must know and do to lead changes in school and classroom practices that make higher student achievement possible.

#### ■ *Principal interns are more likely to follow than to lead.*

Current internship programs provide more opportunities to observe or participate as a group member rather than leading a group engaged in school improvement activities. Only a small percentage of programs offer a developmental continuum of practice that begins with the intern observing, then participating in, and then leading important school reform work. Without such a continuum, aspiring principals have, at best, moderate opportunities to become competent in the 13 Critical Success Factors associated with effective principals who know how to improve schools and increase student achievement. (See Appendix 1, SREB Competencies and Critical Success Factors.)

#### ■ *Leadership departments and school districts are not working together to provide well-structured, well-supervised internships for aspiring principals.*

More than two-thirds of the university-based leadership departments surveyed in the SREB region are not establishing the strong working relationships with local school districts that would promote *joint ownership* of leadership preparation and that support well-structured, well-supervised internships for aspiring school leaders. Barely 50 percent of the departments report that interactions with districts occur *regularly*.

- *Many aspiring principals are under-supported during their internship experience.*

The number of interns assigned to a faculty supervisor ranges from three to 35 among the programs responding to SREB's survey, with the most frequent range being seven to 12. It is doubtful that a faculty member who has responsibility for more than six or seven interns, while also carrying other teaching, research and service responsibilities, will be able to provide frequent individual feedback and guidance during internship experiences. Additionally, fewer than half of the universities sponsor meetings between faculty, interns and cooperating principals to clarify expectations, plan quality experiences and evaluate performance. Less than two-thirds of the universities provide cooperating principals with handbooks or other materials describing the required activities and other expectations or conditions for internships.

- *Performance evaluations of principal candidates often lack a high degree of rigor.*

Districts and schools that must hire new principals put their faith in a state-issued license. New principals receive the license after approved university preparation programs certify that the candidates have mastered professional standards and competencies. *Many preparation programs provide this certification even though evaluations of candidates' performance during their internships lack a high degree of rigor.* More than one-half of the universities in the SREB survey sample are graduating aspiring principals without strong evidence that they are prepared for the job. Only 45 percent of those surveyed reported that they assess interns' performance using evaluations they consider to have "a great degree of rigor and validity."

- *University department heads are overconfident about the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs and the quality of the internships they offer aspiring principals.*

Department heads' confidence in the effectiveness of their programs is high, despite their failure to provide aspiring principals opportunities to lead essential school improvement activities, their lack of close collaboration with the districts that employ their graduates or evidence that competencies have been demonstrated during internships through use of rigorous evaluations. About three-fourths of the department heads reported *a great degree of belief* that their course work matches essential leadership functions and skills required by the job.

- *Principal preparation is out of sync with accountability demands.*

Results from SREB's survey of university principal preparation programs make it clear that current systems for developing and placing a qualified principal in every school are unreliable. In many programs, the lack of attention to high standards and the failure to support quality internships have resulted in a "disconnect" between policy-makers' demands for school accountability and the supply of new principals who are prepared to meet those demands in today's challenging school environments. It's as if the leaders of a large automotive company introduced a new car designed for high efficiency — only to discover after the fact that middle managers are still producing parts for the gas guzzlers of yesterday.

While the educational leadership departments of some universities are retooling to produce the principals we need,<sup>1</sup> there is little reason to believe that the large majority — due to the lack of support, know-how and perceived need to change — will initiate the changes needed to make their programs more relevant and effective. Some form of external intervention will be necessary if states expect to prepare new school leaders who can meet high performance standards.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 2, SREB University Leadership Development Network, for a description of how universities in the network are working to redesign their principal preparation programs around a framework of Conditions for Redesign and Critical Success Factors identified by SREB.

## Core Components of Getting the Internship Right

In making judgments about the quality of university-based principal internship programs, evaluators should look for evidence of these critical features:

- Collaboration between the university and school districts that anchors internship activities in real-world problems principals face, provides for appropriate structure and support of learning experiences, and ensures quality guidance and supervision;
- An explicit set of school-based assignments designed to provide opportunities for the application of knowledge, skills and ways of thinking that are required to effectively perform the core responsibilities of a school leader, as identified in state standards and research, and incorporated in the preparation program's design;
- A developmental continuum of practice that progresses from observing to participating in and then to leading school-based activities related to the core responsibilities of school leaders, with analysis, synthesis and evaluation of real-life problems at each level;
- Field placements that provide opportunities to work with diverse students, teachers, parents and communities;
- Handbooks or other guiding materials that clearly define the expectations, processes and schedule of the internship to participants, faculty supervisors, directing principals and district personnel;
- Ongoing supervision by program faculty who have the expertise and time to provide frequent formative feedback on interns' performance that lets them know how they need to improve;
- Directing principals who model the desired leadership behaviors and who know how to guide interns through required activities that bring their performance to established standards; and
- Rigorous evaluations of interns' performance of core school leader responsibilities, based on clearly defined performance standards and exit criteria and consistent procedures.

## Taking the Measure of Principal Internship Programs

Before state, higher education and district leaders can take action to reform the preparation, licensure and professional development of school leaders, they need to become aware of the current system's "disconnects" in design and delivery. One sure way to determine how well leadership preparation programs are preparing new principals for the work that schools urgently need them to do is to take a measure of the field experiences these programs offer.

A quality internship program creates the opportunity for aspiring principals to demonstrate, under the guidance of an experienced and trained school leader and a university supervisor, that they have mastered the necessary knowledge and skills to change schools and classrooms *and can apply these skills effectively* in a school setting where they must work with real teachers to accelerate student achievement.

When we put principal preparation programs to the test, we need to ask questions like these: Are the internships aligned with the requirements of the job? Are the activities anchored in real-world problems that principals face? Are principal interns given opportunities to first observe, then participate in, and finally lead real school-change activities? Are interns working under the direction of an accomplished principal who can model key leadership behaviors and guide interns to higher levels of performance? Are interns placed in diverse settings? Do interns receive frequent, meaningful feedback that lets them know how they need to improve? Are they rigorously evaluated on mastery of essential leadership responsibilities?

To probe for answers to these kinds of questions, SREB conducted a survey of educational leadership programs offered by universities in the 16-state SREB region.<sup>2</sup> About half of the programs contacted chose to respond to the questionnaire. (A detailed description of the survey methods and results begins on page 11 of this report.)

<sup>2</sup> The survey questions were based on core features of effective internships that were derived from four SREB initiatives: a review of the literature on leadership for school improvement; research that identified critical success factors of principals who succeeded in raising student achievement in schools with traditionally high-risk demographics; examination of programs widely recognized as exemplary; and lessons learned from ongoing work with the SREB University Leadership Development Network that focuses on program redesign.



## A CALL TO ACTION:

### What Can States, Universities, School Districts and Professional Organizations Do to Improve the Quality of Internships for Aspiring School Leaders?

To date, efforts to improve the training of aspiring principals have relied mostly on passive strategies — adoption of standards, program approval and accreditation by regional or national accrediting organizations. These necessary steps may produce minor improvements, but they have rarely resulted in a dynamic shift from compliance-driven to results-driven preparation programs.

Clearly, state policy-makers expect new principals to lead school change and raise student achievement. Policy-makers also expect preparation programs to match their training to the demands of the principal's job. Yet many university programs have shown little commitment to the *major redesign* necessary to accomplish this match. A recent SREB study of educational leadership programs offered by 22 universities in the SREB region revealed that only one-third had made substantial progress in redesigning their programs to focus on what school leaders need to know and be able to do in order to succeed at changing schools in ways that increase student achievement.<sup>3</sup>

Quality internships are a critical component of this redesign. Preparation programs must be held accountable for matching the field experiences of aspiring principals to the critical success factors found among highly accomplished principals.

**So who will be the match-makers? Who will ensure that university preparation programs get *their* job done?**

The SREB University Leadership Development Network has proven that individual programs can be changed when their leaders commit to a sound redesign framework, are supported by external technical assistance, and receive strong encouragement and tangible support from administrators within their own institutions. However, changing one program does little to change an entire state system.

**That will require a concerted effort, beginning at the statehouse.**

### *What State Policy-makers Can Do*

State policy-makers can adopt policies to ensure all persons preparing to become school leaders have a quality internship experience that adequately prepares them for the job. To accomplish this, policy-makers can do the following:

- **Develop guidelines that require aspiring school leaders to have a *broad range of experiences in leading school improvement*.** These experiences should include working with teachers on what it means to teach to a standard in a core academic area (such as language arts), what represents good teaching practice, and what evidence indicates a student has met or exceeded a standard. The guidelines should also require that aspiring leaders work with teachers to carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices; work with faculty and parents to build support for improvement efforts; and work with faculty to manage an improvement initiative and evaluate its effectiveness. Meeting these guidelines for a quality internship *should become a major requirement* for universities and other entities that seek approval to offer a leadership preparation program.

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<sup>3</sup> Report in progress.

- **Require and provide training for mentor principals.** The training should focus on (1) the competencies the intern is expected to demonstrate; (2) what “ideal performance” looks like; (3) how to observe and evaluate performance; (4) how to provide effective feedback; and (5) opportunities to practice, as needed, to develop proficiency. The quality of the internship depends upon much more than selecting a mentor who is recognized as an effective principal. Mentors must also be skilled *in designing and coaching the learning of novices*. States should standardize the training of mentor principals around adopted leadership standards and assign an appropriate state agency to take the lead in ensuring that a high-quality training program is developed for use by all universities and districts.
- **Assign to the state the responsibility for developing uniform procedures to measure an intern’s performance, using the state’s own adopted standards.** This means allocating the time, effort and resources necessary to develop performance evaluation systems *that stand up to the rigorous standards of reliability and validity required for professional licensing*. Comparisons of leadership standards adopted by different states in the SREB region show significant commonalities. Forming a consortium of states to pool resources and develop a common set of standards and a shared internship assessment system would conserve resources, facilitate the completion of a sound assessment design, and promote licensing reciprocity among states.

### ***What University Leaders Can Do***

University presidents and deans of colleges of education can elevate the importance of a quality internship and ensure that all aspiring principals are prepared to become effective school leaders. To accomplish this, university presidents and deans can do the following:

- **Make field experiences a high priority for their leadership preparation programs and allocate the necessary resources.** Pre-service teacher preparation programs usually provide frequent faculty supervision and numerous joint meetings between cooperating teachers, principals and university personnel. Principal internship programs require and deserve the same level of attention and financial support. *If adequate funding to support a quality internship for all participants cannot be provided, then program enrollments should be reduced or the program discontinued.*
- **Provide enough of the right staff with sufficient time and resources to do a good job, and recognize and reward them for doing so.** Faculty with a strong knowledge base and experience in school leadership should be recruited for this phase of the educational leadership program. Deans and department heads need to devise innovative strategies to create faculty workloads that allow more time for one-on-one and small-group guidance — and for planning and delivering problem-based instruction that makes for effective leadership preparation. The current pattern of seven to 13 interns to one faculty supervisor indicates that this is not occurring in most programs. A more reasonable ratio would be 6-to-1, with the load of supervision responsibilities equivalent to a course assignment. *Those faculty members who provide quality field experiences and who contribute ongoing research to support program improvement make contributions that are unique and invaluable.* The “publish or perish” requirements of many colleges and universities — the usual requirement of tenure track positions — often do not recognize the constraints or the contributions of faculty working with students in the field and researching school leadership from this perspective.
- **Support the design and implementation of a structured internship focused on essential competencies for leading curriculum, instruction and student achievement.** Internships in school leadership must be organized around school achievement problems and research on effective school and classroom practices. *Creating such a program involves working closely with local districts* to analyze needs, select and prepare mentor principals and arrange day-to-day supervision, evaluation and feedback regarding the performance of interns.

## *What School Districts Can Do*

Local superintendents and school board members have a vested interest in the preparation of future school leaders and need to become proactive in ensuring the availability of a high-quality pool of new principals. To accomplish this, superintendents and school board members can do the following:

- **Develop and implement a leadership succession plan.** School leadership is too important to the performance of schools and the achievement of students for districts to depend on the “luck of the draw” from a pool of self-selected volunteers with administrative credentials. *Districts should develop a reliable system for identifying, recruiting and developing people* who have proven records of raising student achievement and taking a leadership role with other faculty to change school and classroom practices in ways that raise student achievement.
- **Become a key partner with universities in the preparation of school leaders.** Districts that are serious about principal preparation *will assign a staff member with interest and expertise in the development of school leaders to lead and coordinate university partnerships.* The district must accept responsibility for: (1) scheduling release time for internship activities; (2) developing specific policies and procedures for field placements; (3) integrating internship experiences with local professional development programs; and (4) developing procedures for selecting, preparing and supporting mentor principals.
- **Work with universities to track the performance of their leadership program graduates.** Are the graduates of leadership programs able to bring about positive changes in school and classroom practices and student achievement? *Universities and districts share a critical need for this information and must work together to evaluate new-principal performance.* These evaluations can help identify the professional development needs of individual leaders and provide valuable feedback to universities as they refine and improve their programs. They can also become the basis for action research aimed at improving leadership practice in schools.
- **Provide district-funded opportunities for continuing leadership development.** Continuous improvements in curriculum, instruction and student achievement come about when school leaders and school leadership teams have regular opportunities to develop their own professional knowledge and skills. One of the essential conditions for school improvement is *building the capacity of school-site leadership teams.* When district leaders invest in this kind of capacity building, they receive a side benefit — a growing pool of teacher leaders with the skills and knowledge to become effective principals.

## *What Professional Organizations Can Do*

Professional organizations can become a voice for best practices in preparing and developing new principals. To accomplish this, they can do the following:

- **Advocate for quality internship experiences in school leader preparation.** Professional organizations can use their journals, conferences and workshops — their “bully pulpit” — *to underscore the importance of quality internships* for aspiring principals and to showcase the essential ingredients of purposeful field experiences.
- **Support quality principal preparation in the political arena.** Professional organizations are uniquely positioned to advocate for higher standards in educational leadership programs. They can use their access to education decision-makers to make the case for quality internships that give aspiring principals opportunities to become proficient in the 13 Critical Success Factors of effective school leaders before they take the helm of a school. And they can *support requests for resources to build effective partnerships* between local districts and universities around quality internship programs.

# The SREB Survey of Principal Internship Programs

To help answer important questions about the alignment of principal internships with the job requirements of today's school leaders, SREB — with the assistance of Tom Glass, professor of education administration at the University of Memphis, and doctoral student Susan Copeland — conducted a survey of educational leadership programs offered by universities in the 16-state SREB region.

The survey was mailed in January 2003 to department heads at 156 institutions of higher education that offer programs for the preparation of principals in the SREB region. Of the 156 institutions, 28 reported having no program leading to the school principal license and two others could not be contacted, leaving 126 institutions. Sixty-one institutions submitted completed surveys — for a return rate of slightly more than 48 percent. Because returns were not identified by university, no attempt was made to determine what variations exist for different types of institutions.

## Most Current Principal Internship Programs Fail to Provide a Developmental Continuum of Practice

Most leadership preparation programs in the SREB region are not providing the quality of “hands-on” experiences that would prepare aspiring principals to lead the essential work of school improvement. SREB survey data indicate that current internship programs provide more opportunities to observe or participate as members of a group engaged in school improvement activities *than opportunities to lead*. Further, it appears that no more than 15 percent of the programs *provide a developmental continuum* of observing, participating in and leading such activities. Based on the scoring guide used to analyze data from this survey, the majority of the universities provide their interns, at best, a moderate level of practice to build these important leadership capacities instead of the *intense practice* that is more likely to bring them to the competent level of performance.

## Survey Background

The two-part survey — completed by educational leadership department heads — collected descriptive data about their programs *as currently implemented*. SREB used four **guiding questions** to design the survey:

### Guiding Questions

1. Are educational leadership programs providing internships for future school leaders that develop the competencies essential for improving schools and raising student achievement?
2. Do the leadership preparation programs equip aspiring principals with the knowledge and skills needed to perform the leadership functions and tasks required on the job?
3. Are universities and school districts working together to provide a well-structured, well-supervised internship program for aspiring principals?
4. Are universities conducting rigorous evaluations of aspiring principals' performance during the internships?

## Survey Part I — Essential Competencies

Part I of the survey gathered information on the extent to which aspiring principals are required to observe, participate in or lead school-based activities that develop the **essential competencies** for improving schools and raising student achievement. The survey focused on three competencies identified by SREB as critically important in effective school leadership:

### Essential Competencies

#### Effective principals have —

- a comprehensive understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to student achievement;
- the ability to work with teachers and others to design and implement a system for continuous student achievement; and
- the ability to provide the necessary support for staff to carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices.

These competencies were further defined by 13 practitioner-validated Critical Success Factors that effective principals employ to improve schools and increase student achievement. These competencies and success factors served as a framework to develop the items in Part I of the survey.<sup>4</sup> (See Appendix 1, SREB Competencies and Critical Success Factors.)

For each Critical Success Factor, the survey described one or more activities that would provide the intern with opportunities to apply and extend knowledge and skills through practice in a school setting. For example, Critical Success Factor 10 states that *the school leader is able to organize and use time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement*. A quality internship program would ensure that the aspiring principal had opportunities to engage in activities like:

- scheduling classroom and/or professional development activities in ways that provide meaningful time for school improvement activities.
- scheduling time to provide struggling students with the opportunity for extra support (e.g., individual tutoring, small-group instruction, extended-block time) so that they may have the opportunity to learn to mastery.

Department heads were asked to respond to a total of 36 activities associated with the SREB Critical Success Factors by indicating the level at which interns are involved in each activity. The levels included: **Observe** (O), **Participate In** (P), **Lead** (L). If the activity did not match any program requirement, department heads could indicate **Not Required** (NR).

<sup>4</sup> The three competencies and their related Critical Success Factors were identified through prior SREB research on essential knowledge, skills and dispositions successful principals use to lead school improvement as reported in the SREB publication, *Preparing a New Breed: It's Time for Action*, 2001.

### Survey Part I: Response Definitions

- **Not required (NR):** Education Leadership Intern does not have the opportunity for involvement in this activity or the activity is not a part of the field experiences.
- **Observing (O):** Education Leadership Intern has the opportunity to watch the activity without any active involvement in the activity.
- **Participating (P):** Education Leadership Intern has the opportunity to join and share in the activity and the decision-making that may result from it.
- **Leading (L):** Education Leadership Intern has the opportunity to plan, direct and develop the activity and oversee decision-making that may be required by, or result from, the activity.

Respondents were instructed to check the response options that accurately reflected the requirements of their programs, resulting in seven possible response patterns on each item: NR, O, OP, P, OPL, PL, L. (See Appendix 3, Internship Survey.) Based on the intensity of application and practice participants are expected to experience during internship, a scoring guide was developed to sort responses into three groups.

### Definitions and Response Options Linked to Each Group

<i>No application and practice</i>	=	NR (Not Required)
<i>Moderate application and practice</i>	=	O (Observe); OP (Observe and Participate); P (Participate)
<i>Intense application and practice</i>	=	OPL (Observe, Participate and Lead); PL (Participate and Lead); L (Lead)

## Survey Part II — Program Leader Perceptions

Part II of the survey probed the perceptions of leadership department heads about key features of their programs:

- The degree to which the course work in the program prepares aspiring principals to perform the responsibilities and tasks required by the job;
- The degree of collaboration between the university leadership program and local school districts and the amount of structure and supervision given to internships; and
- The degree to which rigorous evaluations of aspiring principals' performance are conducted during their internships.

## What the Survey Revealed: Disappointing Answers to SREB's Guiding Questions

### GUIDING QUESTION #1:

*Are educational leadership programs providing internships for future school leaders that develop the competencies essential for improving schools and raising student achievement?*

### ANSWER:

**Internships generally are not planned and structured to provide a continuum of observing, participating in and leading activities that develop competency in the Critical Success Factors principals use to improve schools and increase student achievement.**

- Across 36 school-based activities designed to develop capacity to apply the 13 Critical Success Factors for school principals, the percentages of universities requiring interns to take a leading role range from 15 percent on one activity to 50 percent on another, while the percentages of universities requiring interns to observe or participate in these same activities range from 42 to 63 percent and the percentages of universities requiring no involvement range from 1 to 27 percent.
- A little more than a third of the universities require aspiring principals to lead activities that create a mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.
- About a third of the universities require aspiring principals to lead activities that set high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content such as creating or using authentic assessments of student work.
- Fewer than one-fourth require aspiring principals to lead activities that implement good instructional practices such as leading groups of teachers in developing assignments and assessments aligned with curriculum standards, monitoring implementation of the curriculum, and working on literacy- and numeracy-improvement task forces.
- Fewer than half require aspiring principals to lead activities for analyzing data and facilitating faculty in data disaggregation.
- About half require aspiring principals to lead activities that support change through quality sustained professional development.
- About one-fourth require aspiring principals to lead activities for organizing and using time and acquiring and using resources to meet the goals of school improvement.

### GUIDING QUESTION #2:

*Do the leadership preparation programs equip aspiring principals with the knowledge and skills needed to perform the leadership functions and tasks required on the job?*

### ANSWER:

**The survey results show a major “disconnect” between the confidence of department heads in the effectiveness of their programs and the indicators of quality that can be identified in the programs themselves.**

Department heads' confidence in the effectiveness of their programs is high, despite their failure to provide opportunities to lead essential school improvement activities, lack of close collaboration with the districts that employ their graduates, or evidence that competencies have been demonstrated during internships through use of rigorous evaluations.

- Slightly over three-fourths of the department heads reported a **great degree of belief** that course work matches essential leadership functions and skills required by the job.

- Nearly one-fourth reported **an average degree of belief** regarding the alignment of program course work with the real world of leadership practice.

Based on the survey results, it appears unlikely that the vast majority of leadership departments will initiate the changes needed to make their programs more relevant and effective on their own. Some form of external intervention will be necessary if states are to have leadership preparation programs that better prepare principals.

### GUIDING QUESTION #3:

*Are universities and school districts working together to provide a well-structured, well-supervised internship program for aspiring principals?*

#### ANSWER:

**A large majority of leadership departments and school districts have not taken the necessary steps to create and sustain effective partnerships that can provide well-structured, well-supervised internships for aspiring principals.**

- More than two-thirds of the university-based leadership departments in the SREB region are not establishing the strong working relationships with local school districts that would promote joint ownership of leadership preparation and support well-structured, well-supervised internships for aspiring school leaders.
- Only 52 percent of the departments reported that interactions with districts occur regularly.
- The most common intern/faculty supervisor ratio is in the range of seven to 12 interns per supervisor, but among the 61 responding programs, the range is from three to 35 interns per faculty supervisor. It is doubtful that a faculty member who has responsibility for more than seven or eight interns, while also carrying other teaching, research and service responsibilities, will be able to provide frequent feedback and guidance during internship experiences.
- Fewer than half of the universities sponsor meetings between faculty, students and cooperating principals that would allow for clarifying expectations, planning quality experiences and evaluating the performance of interns.
- More than one-third of the universities do not provide cooperating principals with handbooks or other materials describing the required activities and other expectations or conditions for internships.

### GUIDING QUESTION #4:

*Are universities conducting rigorous evaluations of aspiring principals' performance during their internships?*

#### ANSWER:

**More than one-half of the universities in the survey sample are graduating aspiring principals without strong evidence that they are prepared for the job. Even so, these preparation programs attest to the state that professional standards and competencies have been mastered. As a result, states grant certificates to new principals even though evaluations of candidates' performance during their internships often lack a high degree of rigor.**

- Forty-five percent of the programs reported that they conduct evaluations of interns' performance that have **a great degree of rigor and validity**; another 45 percent reported **an average degree of rigor and validity**; and 10 percent reported **a small degree**.

Without rigorous and valid assessment systems in place, districts and schools cannot rely on a state-issued license as evidence that a principal is qualified — and policy-makers have no means of ensuring that only qualified principals are placed in every school.



# The SREB Survey of Principal Internship Programs

## *Discussion of the Findings*

The SREB Leadership Initiative framework identifies 13 Critical Success Factors for effective principals, organized under three key Overarching Competencies. This section considers each of the Guiding Questions for the SREB survey from the perspective of the Competencies and Critical Success Factors. Findings at the competency level represent general conclusions that were derived by examining the results across all related Critical Success Factors taken together. Reports on individual Critical Success Factors begin with a brief description of the knowledge, skills and ways of thinking that principals apply in their daily practice, followed by a discussion of findings and presentation of data tables that substantiate the findings and conclusions.

### **GUIDING QUESTION #1:**

***Are educational leadership programs providing internships for future school leaders that develop the competencies essential for improving schools and raising student achievement?***

*Competency I: Effective principals have a comprehensive understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to student achievement.*

**Many of the internships offered by leadership programs do not have as a primary objective helping aspiring principals gain a comprehensive understanding of what they must know and do to lead changes in school and classroom practices that make higher student achievement possible.** Only about one-third of the programs surveyed require interns to actually lead school-based activities that would provide practice in applying the three Critical Success Factors related to Competency I, while a little more than half of the programs only require them to observe or participate in these activities. (See Table 1.)

Further, there are some pronounced weaknesses in preparing aspiring principals to recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practices (Critical Success Factor 3). When requirements related to the principal's role in supporting good instructional practices are compared to those for all others, internship programs appear to be weaker here than they are on any other Critical Success Factor. (See Tables 1-3.) These findings are particularly troubling because they address core elements of the school program — effective instruction, standards-based curriculum, and literacy and numeracy — that directly impact the learning of all students and their ability to succeed at higher levels of education and career preparation.

*More than three-fourths of the programs responding to the survey do not require interns to take a **leading role** in activities such as helping teachers “unwrap” standards and create aligned student assignments, working with literacy and numeracy task forces, or creating an interdisciplinary curriculum that helps students apply knowledge in various modalities across the curriculum. Worse yet, at least 20 percent report that activities that would hone future leaders' knowledge and skills in these essential areas are **not required**.*

### ***Critical Success Factor 1.***

**Successful school leaders create a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.**

They begin school improvement by establishing a mission to improve student achievement and developing a consensus of need for achieving the mission. Good leaders are sufficiently versed in research-based school and classroom practices to lead the faculty in redesigning the instructional program in ways that keep everyone focused on student learning. Effective leaders put the focus on preparing students for successful transitions to the next school level and benchmark the quality of their own schools by this measure.

*The survey revealed that about one-third of the programs currently require interns to engage in intense practice to develop these capacities through such activities as leading groups of teachers in implementing proven curriculum that produces gains in student achievement, working with administration and faculty to define and adapt effective practices*

that support the school's vision, and assisting with transitional activities. A noticeable weakness is the finding that the activities are **not required** in 20 percent of the programs and only 28 percent provide interns practice with transitional activities for students as they progress to higher levels of school placement. (See Table 1.)

### **Critical Success Factor 2.**

#### **Successful school leaders set high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.**

They know the research on the relationship between expectations and student achievement and have the communication and facilitation skills to engage a school faculty and community in setting high expectations for all students. They know that increasing academic rigor and eliminating low-level courses are practices that have a positive impact on student achievement. They understand that they must help teachers share and confront their beliefs about students' learning and commit to the idea that all students — with effort, enough high quality instruction and support — can learn what they have previously taught to only their best students.

*About half of the programs require aspiring principals to observe or participate in activities that are designed to help them develop these capacities, but only about one-third require interns to lead a group of teachers in tasks such as developing or implementing academic recognition programs and raising academic standards by creating authentic assessments of student work that include evaluation rubrics, end-of-course tests and projects. (See Table 1.)*

### **Critical Success Factor 3.**

#### **Successful school leaders recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement.**

Good school leaders have deep knowledge of research-based instructional methods that motivate and engage students. They have the analytic skills needed to recognize best practices in all subject areas, to judge the quality of programs and instructional materials, and to assess the quality of instruction in the classroom by talking with students, looking at their work, and observing the interaction between students and their teachers. They know the importance of giving teachers personal attention and making use of their capacities to increase teachers' enthusiasm, reduce frustration, transmit a sense of mission and indirectly increase performance. They act on this knowledge through such practices as offering teachers intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support and providing appropriate models.

*Only one-third of the programs require interns to hone their knowledge and skills in supporting effective instruction by taking a leading role in evaluating the quality of instructional practices being implemented in a school. Fewer than half require them to lead the selection and implementation of instructional strategies that address identified achievement gaps. (See Table 1.)*

Successful principals are well-versed in national, state and local standards and know how to keep a constant focus on aligning teacher assignments, student work and classroom assessments to higher content and performance standards.

*Fewer than one-third of the programs require interns to lead a school team in prioritizing standards and mapping curriculum in at least one content area across all grade levels of the school, and 22 percent require no activities in this category. Fewer than one-fourth require them to lead a group of teachers in unwrapping adopted standards and developing assignments and assessments aligned with the standards, and 15 percent require no activities. Fewer than one-third require interns to lead a school team in monitoring the implementation of an adopted curriculum. (See Table 1.)*

Successful principals are especially conversant with the essentials of teaching literacy and mathematics to all students, know how to align the other aspects of school life to support these programs, and are able to provide leadership for the development of effective programs.

*Only 15 percent of the programs require interns to lead activities with literacy and numeracy task forces, and 27 percent require no activities in this category. (See Table 1.)*

*For three of the seven activities related to recognizing and encouraging good instructional practices, at least 20 percent of the programs have **no required practice**; for three of the seven activities, less than 25 percent of the programs require interns to **lead** the activity.*

**Table 1**  
**Competency I: Effective principals have a comprehensive understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to student achievement.**

CSF/Activity Category No.	Critical Success Factor and Activities	No practice NR	Moderate practice O, OP, P	Intense practice OPL, PL, L
1	<b>Create a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.</b>			
1a.	...working with teachers to implement curriculum that produces gains in student achievement as defined by the mission of the school.	3%	58%	38%
1b.	...working with the administration to develop, define and/or adapt best practices, based on current research, that supports the school's vision.	3	60	37
1c.	...working with the faculty to develop, define and/or adapt best practices based on current research that support the school's vision.	8	55	37
1d.	...assisting with transitional activities for students as they progress to higher levels of placement (e.g., elementary to middle, middle to high school, high school to higher education).	20	52	28
2	<b>Set high expectations for all students to learn high-level content.</b>			
2a.	...developing/overseeing academic recognition programs that acknowledge and celebrate student's success at all levels of ability.	13%	52%	35%
2b.	...activities resulting in raising standards and academic achievement for all students and teachers.	7	57	37
2c.	...authentic assessments of student work through the use and/or evaluation of rubrics, end of course tests, projects.	7	63	30
3	<b>Recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement.</b>			
3a.	...using a variety of strategies to analyze and evaluate the quality of instructional practices being implemented in a school.	3%	62%	33%
3b.	...working with teachers to select and implement appropriate instructional strategies that address identified achievement gaps.	7	53	40
3c.	...working on a school team to prioritize standards and map curriculum in at least one content area across all grade levels of the school.	22	48	30
3d.	...working with a group of teachers to unwrap adopted standards and develop assignments and assessments aligned with the standards.	15	62	23
3e.	...working with a school team to monitor implementation of an adopted curriculum.	12	60	28
3f.	...involvement in the work of literacy and numeracy task forces.	27	58	15
3g.	...working with curriculum that is interdisciplinary and provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge in various modalities across the curriculum.	20	62	17

NR = Not Required      O = Observing      OP = Observing, Participating      P = Participating  
OPL = Observing, Participating, Leading      PL = Participating, Leading      L = Leading

Source: SREB Survey of Principal Internships

*Competency II: Effective principals have the ability to work with teachers and others to design and implement continuous student achievement.*

**Many internship programs in the SREB region are not preparing aspiring principals to lead the work with teachers and others that is required for fashioning and implementing a process of continuous student improvement.** Fewer than half of the leadership department heads responding to the survey require interns to practice leading the kinds of school-based activities that would develop their capacity to apply each of the four Critical Success Factors related to implementing continuous student improvement. (See Table 2.)

This means that each year, many hundreds of schools that hire a recent graduate of a leadership program could be at risk of getting a principal who has not mastered the knowledge and skills necessary to 1) work with adults to determine student needs; 2) collaborate with adults from within the school and community to provide mentors for all students; 3) engage parents as partners in their students' education; and 4) engage parents, students and faculty in developing long-term educational plans for students. Some could be at risk of getting a principal who has had *no practice* in collaborating with adults to provide mentors to students who need them, including high schools where large numbers of students report that they drop out because they believe that no one cares about their future.

Many schools would likely get a new principal who is not prepared to analyze the results of standardized tests scores and to help faculty use data to determine how well their current instructional activities are working and where to make changes that will increase student learning. Finally, many would get a principal who lacked the skills to keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement — one of the most critical factors in continuous improvement and accountability.

#### ***Critical Success Factor 4.***

**Successful school leaders know how to lead the creation of a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.**

Good leaders know how to organize a school, large or small, and to provide a personalized learning environment by creating small learning communities, schools-within-a-school, adviser-advisee programs, tutoring and after-school programs that provide extra help to struggling students. They have the ability to make parents partners in supporting and participating in their students' education. They work with faculty, parents and community members to ensure that every student has an adult mentor in the building who can help him or her learn about options, set goals, choose courses and get extra assistance to meet standards.

*Fewer than one-half of the programs require interns to lead activities that would provide intensive practice in working with staff to identify needs of all students, collaborating with a broad base of adults to provide mentors for all students, and involving parents and engaging them in developing long-term educational plans for their students. About one-half do provide for some observation and participation in activities designed for this purpose.* (See Table 2.)

It is especially troubling to find that 27 percent of the reporting leadership programs require *no practice* in leading activities that hone aspiring principals' skills for collaborating with adults from within the school and in the home and community to provide adult mentors for all students. (See Table 2.)

#### ***Critical Success Factor 5.***

**Successful school leaders use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.**

Collecting, interpreting and using data are essential skills for leading school improvement. Research verifies that in schools where teachers analyze data and study research about effective teaching methods, more effective instructional strategies emerge in the classrooms. Successful school leaders use data as a catalyst for shaping new attitudes and behaviors about students and their learning. They rely on data for identifying weaknesses, planning interventions that lead to higher student achievement and tracking improvements. Effective leaders are adept at leading their faculty in data disaggregation and in using technology to analyze data. They know how to guide their faculty in conducting their own action research. They also work with parents to increase their comfort level in interpreting data about their students.

*Nearly half of the responding leadership programs have aspiring principals lead faculty in analyzing and disaggregating a variety of data to determine needs and develop appropriate instructional goals and activities. Half of the programs provide a moderate level of practice, requiring participants to observe and participate in these activities, but a few give this Critical Success Factor no attention. (See Table 2.)*

***Critical Success Factor 6.***

**Successful school leaders keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement.**

They know how to keep everyone focused on what's important by staying visible in the school and classrooms. Effective leaders lead the conversation about what matters most to student achievement by using new channels of communication such as Web sites, electronic distribution lists, group e-mails and listserv discussions.

Successful principals also know how to get and use feedback to stay aware of how well they are getting their messages across to teachers, parents and the community; what they need to do differently to maintain the focus and momentum of school improvement; and about what transitioning students need to know and be able to do at the next educational level.

*About one-third of the programs are providing interns intensive practice in leading school-based activities that keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement; a little less than two-thirds provide a moderate level of practice on this critical success factor by requiring that interns observe and participate in these activities. (See Table 2.)*

***Critical Success Factor 7.***

**Successful school leaders make parents partners in their student's education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration.**

Research documents the positive relationship between high-quality parental involvement and high student achievement. Effective implementation involves setting into motion an intense effort to make parents partners in their students' education. This means knowing and using such strategies as sending staff to a student's home to explain how the school operates, asking parents to sign a learning contract, or establishing community and family traditions that foster involvement in the school.

Successful school leaders are adept at building structures for parents and educators to work together. For example, in high schools they do this by creating long-term plans for students, telling the truth about students' progress and establishing shared ownership of problems. Leaders understand that the school cannot do these things alone, and they know how to get teachers, parents and students to work with them.

*Forty percent of the programs require aspiring school leaders to take a leading role in activities that make parents partners in their students' education and create structures for collaboration, but nearly 60 percent provide only a moderate level of practice through observing or participating in these activities. (See Table 2.)*

**Table 2**  
**Competency II: Effective principals have the ability to work with teachers and others to design and implement a system for continuous student achievement.**

CSF/Activity Category No.	Critical Success Factor and Activities	No practice NR	Moderate practice O, OP, P	Intense practice OPL, PL, L
4	<b>Create a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.</b>			
4a.	...working with staff to identify needs of all students.	3%	55%	42%
4b.	...collaborating with adults from within the school and community to provide mentors for all students.	27	42	32
4c.	...engaging in activities designed to increase parental involvement.	7	48	45
4d.	...engaging in parent/student/school collaborations that develop long-term educational plans for students.	1	52	38
5	<b>Use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.</b>			
5a.	...analyzing data (including standardized test scores, teacher assessments, psychological data, etc.) to develop/refine instructional activities and set instructional goals.	2%	55%	43%
5b.	...facilitating data disaggregation for use by faculty and other stakeholders.	7	47	47
6	<b>Keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement.</b>			
6a.	...analyzing and communicating school progress and school achievement to teachers, parents and staff.	5%	62%	33%
6b.	...gathering feedback regarding the effectiveness of personal communication skills.	12	62	27
7	<b>Make parents partners in their student's education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration.</b>			
7a.	...working in meaningful relationships with faculty and parents to develop action plans for student achievement.	3%	57%	40%

NR = Not Required

O = Observing

OP = Observing, Participating

P = Participating

OPL = Observing, Participating, Leading

PL = Participating, Leading

L = Leading

Source: SREB Survey of Principal Internships

*Competency III. Effective principals have the ability to provide the necessary support for staff to carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices.*

**Large numbers of leadership preparation programs are not preparing school leaders to plan and implement changes that improve schools and increase student achievement.**

Most obviously missing from programs are opportunities to lead groups in scheduling time to give struggling students extra help; in communicating the school's improvement agenda to the school board and community stakeholders; proposal writing and partnership development or facilitation to support school improvement; developing school schedules that maximize student learning; and working with professional groups as a means of keeping abreast of research and effective practice. The results of the survey clearly indicate that university programs do not emphasize the leader's responsibility for making change happen in schools.

*Intensive practice in providing support for school staff to plan and carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices is not a required part of 50 to 75 percent of the internship programs represented in the survey. The percentages of those requiring some observation and participation in activities designed to develop this competency range from 48 to 63 percent, and those programs requiring **no practice** is 20 percent or higher for some activities. (See Table 3.)*

**Critical Success Factor 8.**

**Successful school leaders understand the change process and have the leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.**

They know that things will remain the same unless they take action and challenge people in a way that requires changes in their priorities, their values and their habits. They understand that they must capture the attention of school personnel and create urgency for change by organizing experiences and presenting data that make staff dissatisfied with the current level of student achievement and with traditional school and classroom practices that might be limiting what some students have the opportunity to achieve.

Successful school leaders use effective strategies for generating meaningful dialogue around student achievement by making study groups a regular part of the school culture. They have the skills, personal strength and persistence to manage the dissonance that is likely to arise when different ideas are expressed and new strategies implemented. They work to generate consensus among the staff because they know that the job of the leader is to take people where they would not go on their own, but they also understand that they cannot take them where they have not agreed to go.

*No more than one-half of the programs reported that they provide opportunities for aspiring leaders to take the leading role in activities that are part of the school change process. (See Table 3.)*

**Critical Success Factor 9.**

**Successful school leaders understand how adults learn and know how to advance meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that benefits students.**

Leaders who change what students learn, how they are taught and what they achieve understand that they must promote adult learning to achieve these ends. They understand how adults learn and how to advance meaningful change by providing the faculty and staff of their schools high quality, sustained professional development that targets specific needs and benefits students.

*Forty-two percent of the responding universities require interns to lead professional development activities such as study groups, problem-solving sessions and ongoing meetings to promote student achievement. Fifty percent require them to schedule, develop and present professional development to faculty. About the same percentage require them to engage in these activities through observing or participating, but not leading. A small percentage indicated that they require **no practice** of this Critical Success Factor. (See Table 3.)*

### ***Critical Success Factor 10.***

#### **Successful school leaders use and organize time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.**

They are not prisoners of traditional ways of organizing and using school time and they protect it for important purposes. They know and advocate a variety of scheduling models that maximize time and support for students to learn, including use of technology to increase student achievement.

Successful principals know that some students need extra time and support to meet standards. Because they believe that effort is a far greater indicator of success than ability and that most students can achieve at high levels when given enough time and support, they address this need not by watering down courses or slowing the pace, but by organizing in-school, before-school and after-school tutorial programs and developing innovative summer school models that provide intensive tutoring on specific needs.

Successful leaders know that teachers must spend more time planning classroom instruction if they are going to consider student needs, add relevancy to lessons, align classroom assignments and students' work to higher standards, select more effective instructional strategies, and help all students achieve at higher levels. They work with faculty to establish a school culture in which time is viewed as a limited commodity that must be used for these purposes.

*One-third or fewer of the programs require interns to lead activities that would help them develop the capacity to use time in the ways successful principals do. A little more than one-half require observing or participating in such activities, but as many as 15 percent have no requirements for practice of this Critical Success Factor. (See Table 3.)*

### ***Critical Success Factor 11.***

#### **Successful school leaders acquire and use resources wisely.**

Effective school leaders link school resources to improving their students' learning, and they allocate and reallocate school resources based on current priorities. They constantly search for funding and other resources needed to achieve the school's mission and goals. They creatively coordinate the use of available human, material, financial and social resources. With the help of the faculty, they write proposals for grants and develop partnerships with businesses, universities and community agencies that have a vested interest in quality schooling and student achievement.

*One-fourth or more of the program leaders provide interns opportunities to lead proposal writing, partnership development, and development of school schedules that maximize student learning. About 50 percent provide some practice and application of this Critical Success Factor through observing or participating in such activities; almost one-fourth require no practice in acquiring and using resources wisely to promote student achievement. (See Table 3.)*

### ***Critical Success Factor 12.***

#### **Successful school leaders obtain support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for their school improvement agenda.**

They know how to develop champions for the school's improvement agenda by continuously sharing with parents and community leaders the most meaningful information. They know how to involve key central office staff and community and parent leaders as friendly critics and advisers in developing and carrying out an improvement agenda in order to establish key spokespersons in the larger community.

Successful leaders develop relationships with central office personnel who can give them the necessary support for their improvement agenda. They cultivate allies among community and parent leaders who can provide critical support when things become confrontational.

*About one-fourth of the program leaders reported that they include activities in their internships that provide aspiring principals practice in leading a school faculty in communicating with school board and community stakeholders to garner support for improvement initiatives and build collaboration and support for the school's agenda. (See Table 3.)*



***Critical Success Factor 13.***

**Successful school leaders continually learn and seek out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices.**

They view themselves as lifelong learners and make their habit of learning visible to teachers and students through modeling. They create ongoing professional conversations among peers, share reading materials and interesting Web sites, and participate in professional development with the faculty and school system staff. They establish relationships with national, state and local professional organizations and informal networks to learn from other schools and glean cutting-edge information on effective educational practices.

*Fewer than one-third of the program leaders indicated that interns are required to take a leading role in working with faculty to implement research-based instructional practices and with professional groups and organizations to keep abreast of new research and proven practices. Nearly one-fourth of the programs require no practice in working with professional groups and organizations for this purpose.(See Table 3.)*

**Table 3**  
**Competency III: Effective principals know how to provide the necessary support for staff to carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices.**

CSF/Activity Category No.	Critical Success Factor and Activities	No practice NR	Moderate practice O, OP, P	Intense practice OPL, PL, L
8	<b>Understand the change process and have the leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.</b>			
8a.	...working with faculty and staff in professional development activities.	2%	48%	50%
8b.	...inducting and/or mentoring new teaching staff.	12	50	38
8c.	...building a “learning community” that includes all stakeholders.	2	63	35
9	<b>Understand how adults learn and know how to advance meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that benefits students.</b>			
9a.	...study groups, problem solving sessions and/or ongoing meetings to promote student achievement.	5%	53%	42%
9b.	...scheduling, developing and/or presenting professional development activities to faculty that positively impact student achievement.	7	43	50
10	<b>Use and organize time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.</b>			
10a.	...scheduling of classroom and/or professional development activities in a way that provides meaningful time for school improvement activities.	13%	55%	37%
10b.	... scheduling time to provide struggling students with the opportunity for extra support (e.g., individual tutoring, small-group instruction, extended-block time) so that they may have the opportunity to learn to mastery.	15	60	25
11	<b>Acquire and use resources wisely.</b>			
11a.	...writing grants or developing partnerships that provide needed resources for school improvement.	23%	50%	27%
11b.	...developing schedules that maximize student learning in meaningful ways with measurable success.	20	55	25
12	<b>Obtain support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for the school improvement agenda.</b>			
12a.	...working with faculty to communicate with school board and community stakeholders in a way that supports school improvement.	17%	58%	25%
12b.	...working with faculty, parents and community to build collaboration and support for the school’s agenda.	8	63	28
13	<b>Continually learn and seek out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices.</b>			
13a.	...working with faculty to implement research-based instructional practices.	7%	63%	30%
13b.	...working with professional groups and organizations.	23	51	25

NR = Not Required      O = Observing      OP = Observing, Participating      P = Participating  
OPL = Observing, Participating, Leading      PL = Participating, Leading      L = Leading

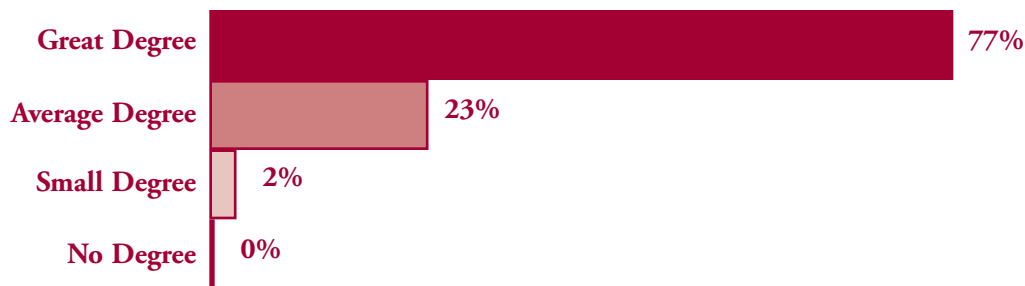
## GUIDING QUESTION #2:

*Does the leadership preparation program equip aspiring principals with the knowledge and skills needed to perform the leadership functions and tasks required on the job?*

States currently place confidence in their program approval and licensure policies and procedures to ensure that there is a ready pool of qualified candidates. School districts depend on these state-administered processes to guarantee that the aspiring principals they hire are ready to do this work. Most states in the SREB region issue the initial license in educational leadership based on completion of a graduate program that includes an internship in addition to other requirements that are defined in their policies and rules.

*About three-fourths of the department heads reported **they believe** that their programs prepare aspiring principals to perform the functions and tasks required in leadership positions **to a great degree**; about one-fourth seem to be less confident that their programs are doing this. (See Figure 1.)*

**Figure 1**  
**Preparedness for the Job**



Source: SREB Survey of Principal Internships

Respondents were not given specific criteria for making their judgments and were not asked to provide a rationale or evidence to support their beliefs. However, it is reasonable to expect an internship for aspiring school leaders to focus on the most important functions and tasks and provide the venue for authentic practice that gets individuals prepared for these job responsibilities. **Based on the results of this survey, most internships in school leadership are not meeting this expectation. Evidently, preparedness for leading school improvement is not a dominant criterion that drives current leadership preparation programs — even when the state standard requires it.**

### The Gap Between Preparation and Desired Practice

When survey data for all Critical Success Factors are considered as a whole, about one-third of the programs require interns to actually lead the kinds of school-based activities successful principals engage in to improve schools and raise student achievement. There are major gaps between what leadership department heads believe about their programs' effectiveness in preparing aspiring leaders to do the job, the work that schools and districts need them to do, and the activities that interns are exposed to during internship as reported by leadership department heads. **These gaps are wide**

**As long as leadership departments believe that they are providing the right experiences, there will be no change.** If aspiring principals are to be prepared for the work schools need them to do, immediate steps need to be taken to persuade and assist university leadership departments to:

- adopt a new criterion of program effectiveness that puts the focus on preparing school leaders who know how to do the essential work of school improvement and use it to drive the redesign, implementation and evaluation of their programs; and
- design new internship activities that provide practice in leading the real work of school improvement.

### GUIDING QUESTION #3:

#### *Are universities and school districts working together to provide a well-structured, well-supervised internship program for aspiring principals?*

Internships are not well-structured and well-supervised, nor have leadership departments developed the kind of partnerships with local school districts that would make this possible.

Universities can't create quality internship programs alone, nor can they achieve the desired outcome through partnerships that marginalize the district's role in principal preparation. **High-quality preparation of school leaders depends upon both university and district partners committing to a shared vision of school leadership that makes a difference in student achievement, bringing special expertise and resources to the table, and sharing ownership and accountability for results.**

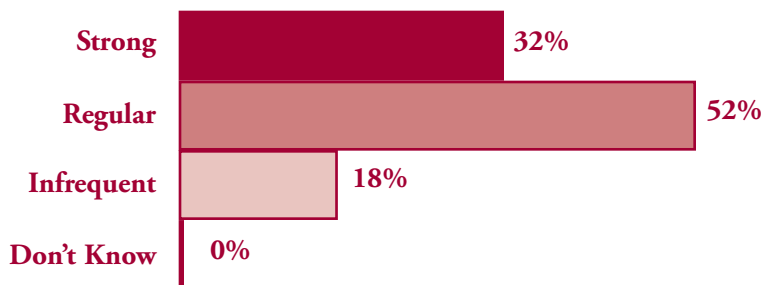
Schools are the settings that make it possible for aspiring principals to observe, participate in and lead real school improvement work. Internships exist because they provide real-world opportunities for aspiring principals to demonstrate that they are capable of being school leaders. The structure of internships is dependent upon the amount of time districts can afford to release participants from their teaching or other duties. The overall quality of the experiences and the guidance interns receive are hugely dependent upon the district providing cooperating principals who model effective leadership practices and know how to help other adults master these practices.

**Effective leadership preparation requires that the university establish funding for the kind of clinical preparation provided in other fields such as nursing and medicine.** School leadership preparation programs must be a high priority of university presidents and deans. This includes investment in faculty members who are in touch with today's schools as they struggle to improve achievement of all groups of students and have a passion for preparing leaders who can make a difference. It also means making clinical supervision a high priority in faculty job descriptions and reward systems.

**Districts must see leadership development as a long-term process and commit time, talent and resources to the work.** Districts must work hand-in-glove with universities to identify potential school leaders, to help shape the curriculum for school leader preparation, and to make sure that key district personnel are committed to providing quality internship experiences. Both districts and universities will need to find resources to train and support cooperating principals and to conduct valid evaluations of graduates from leadership preparation programs.

*No more than one-third of the reporting universities currently have a strong working relationship with school districts that would promote joint ownership of leadership preparation and provide the support necessary for high-quality internships. (See Figure 2.)*

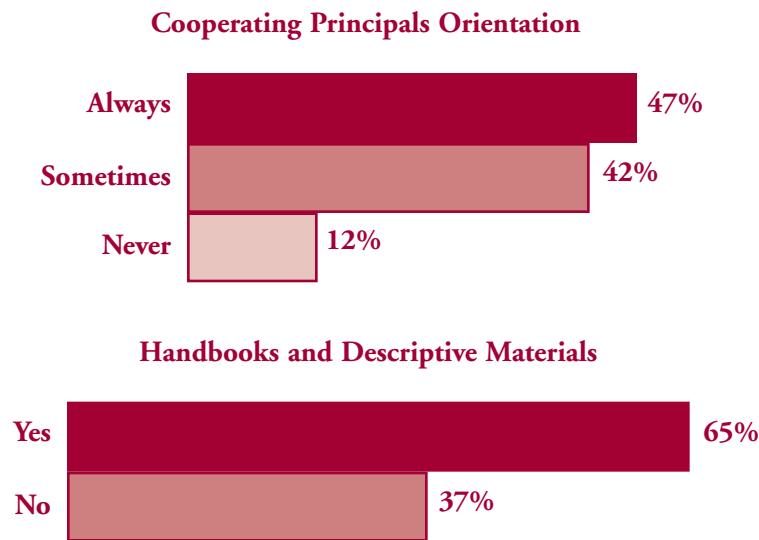
**Figure 2**  
**University/District Collaboration**



Source: SREB Survey of Principal Internships

More than 50 percent of the programs fail to provide the orientation that cooperating principals need in order to understand their role in working with faculty to create the right learning activities, providing models of effective practice, and guiding interns through these so they acquire the desired competencies. (See Figure 3.) Moreover, more than one-third of the programs do not furnish handbooks and other descriptive materials to interns and cooperating principals that would keep the work focused on the right things and ensure that sound procedures are followed. (See Figure 3.)

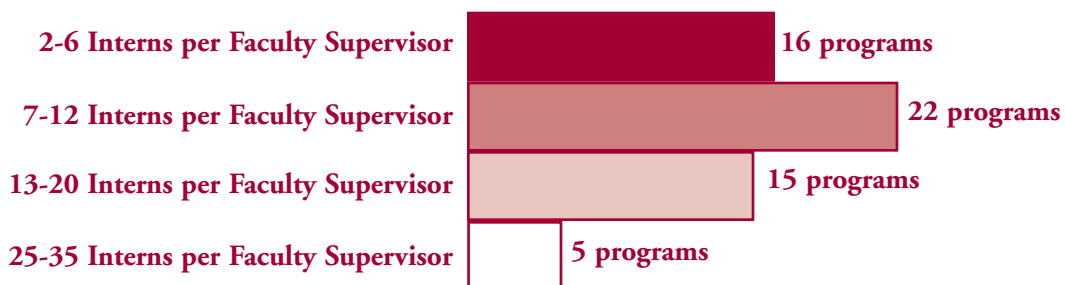
**Figure 3**  
**Provide Cooperating Principals Orientation and Handbooks**



Source: SREB Survey of Principal Internships

The intern/faculty supervisor ratio among the reporting universities ranges from three to 35 per supervisor, with the most frequent between seven and 12 interns per supervisor. It is unlikely that leadership interns receive the continuous feedback and performance assessments that are needed to help them stay focused on their learning experiences, address weaknesses in performance, and develop the habit of continuous self-assessment of their own performance that successful principals use to guide their practice. (See Figure 4.)

**Figure 4**  
**Intern/Faculty Supervisor Ratios**



Source: SREB Survey of Principal Internships

Without these supports from the university and district, there is no assurance that interns will have access to good models of effective leadership practices — practices they should emulate during a continuum of activities that develop their capacity to execute them effectively when they assume the helm of a school.

#### GUIDING QUESTION #4:

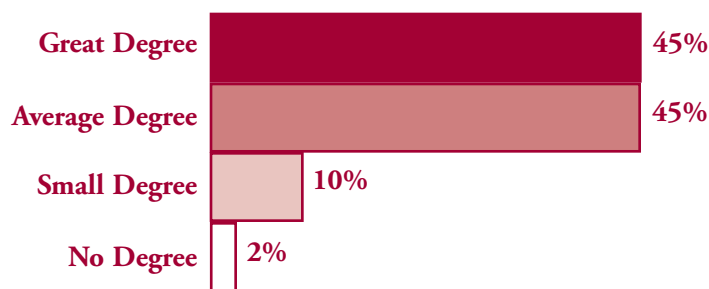
### *Are universities conducting rigorous evaluations of aspiring principals' performances during the internship?*

When states adopt leadership standards for aspiring principals, their policies usually direct that these standards be demonstrated and evaluated during the preparation program and internship or during the beginning years of employment as a school administrator.

University leadership programs are accountable for producing graduates who are ready and able to do what principals must do to succeed at the job of making schools better. Districts are held accountable for hiring new principals based on evidence that they can step into the job as competent leaders. Neither universities nor districts can meet these responsibilities in the absence of sound performance evaluations, conducted during leadership preparation or prior to licensing.

*Forty-five percent of the programs reported that they conduct evaluations of interns' performance that have a great degree of rigor and validity; another 45 percent reported an average degree of rigor and validity in their evaluations; and 10 percent reported implementing evaluations that have these qualities only to a small degree. Portfolios are used in 95 percent of the programs for purposes of improvement. (See Figure 5.)*

**Figure 5**  
**Rigorous Evaluation of Interns' Performance**



Source: SREB Survey of Principal Internships

Based on the data from this survey, it is not possible to make a defensible argument for or against the issue of rigor and validity in evaluations conducted in leadership programs, since department heads were not asked to use specific criteria to make their judgments. **However, almost half of the universities participating in this survey are, by their own perception, graduating aspiring principals without strong evidence of their performance of essential competencies in the school setting.** These findings are not surprising, given that other components of the internship such as handbooks and orientations for cooperating principals, have not been formalized by more than one-third of the programs. **It is impossible, as well as contrary to acceptable evaluation practice, to conduct rigorous evaluations of mastery when expectations are not clear and structures and procedures that would help participants achieve these are not in place.**

Further, the survey results underscore the need to conduct a comprehensive review of evaluation methods and protocols used by leadership programs, both to determine their true characteristics and to develop a more definitive answer regarding the degree of rigor they entail. States need this information to improve the evaluation of aspiring principals' performance during internship. **In most states, there is no state policy requiring leadership programs to use a comprehensive performance assessment to determine the level of preparedness of their graduates.** Such performance assessments must be based on specific criteria and the process of implementation sufficiently defined so that application to individual cases can be reviewed by external audits.

## Appendix 1

# SREB Competencies and Critical Success Factors

*Competency I: Effective principals have a comprehensive understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to student achievement.*

- CSF 1. Focusing on student achievement:** creating a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.
- CSF 2. Developing a culture of high expectations:** setting high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.
- CSF 3. Designing a standards-based instructional system:** recognizing and encouraging good instructional practices that motivate students and increase their achievement.

*Competency II: Effective principals have the ability to work with teachers and others to design and implement continuous student improvement.*

- CSF 4. Creating a caring environment:** developing a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.
- CSF 5. Implementing data-based improvement:** using data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and in student achievement.
- CSF 6. Communicating:** keeping everyone informed and focused on student achievement.
- CSF 7. Involving parents:** making parents partners in students' education and creating a structure for parent and educator collaboration.

*Competency III: Effective principals have the ability to provide the necessary support for staff to carry out sound school, curriculum and instructional practices.*

- CSF 8. Initiating and managing change:** understanding the change process and using leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.
- CSF 9. Providing professional development:** understanding how adults learn and advancing meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that leads to increased student achievement.
- CSF 10. Innovating:** using and organizing time and resources in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.
- CSF 11. Maximizing resources:** acquiring and using resources wisely.
- CSF 12. Building external support:** obtaining support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for the school improvement agenda.
- CSF 13. Staying abreast of effective practices:** continuously learning from and seeking out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices.

## Appendix 2

# The SREB University Leadership Development Network

With support from the Wallace Foundation, SREB organized the SREB Leadership Initiative to work with SREB states on a long-term basis to redesign leadership preparation and certification systems to focus on the core functions of the school — curriculum, instruction and student learning. To begin this work, SREB conducted research, collected data about the need to reform educational leadership preparation programs, and created a model for the redesign of educational leadership preparation programs. A set of conditions of redesign was developed to provide a vision of more effective programs and guide the redesign process in the desired direction. The conditions are as follows:

- Create an advisory board made up of faculty, business leaders, exemplary principals, state education department representatives and other school leaders with diverse backgrounds who represent a wide range of schools and school systems who meet regularly to assist in designing the program.
- Plan learning experiences in which leadership candidates apply research-based knowledge to:
  - solve field-based problems;
  - concentrate on learning about core functions of the school, including instruction and student achievement; and
  - engage in internship experiences that are well-planned, integrated throughout the preparation program, and allow aspiring leaders to receive mentoring from and practice skills with master leaders.
- Create a preparation program that can be customized for individuals on the basis of their experience in providing leadership while serving in other positions.
- Provide faculty, practicing educators and others with broad, research-based knowledge, and redesign university leadership preparation to provide emphasis on school-based learning.
- Contribute staff time and expertise to design, develop and field test leadership training modules that address problems leaders must solve in school, and develop a team structure among leadership faculty to facilitate their working together to teach modules that are, at least in part, school-based.
- Support faculty with time to conduct school-based research and to participate in an ongoing evaluation process to determine if program adjustments are preparing leaders who demonstrate the ability to increase student learning and produce high-achieving schools.
- Realign the faculty advancement and reward system to include acceptance of school-based work as part of tenure and promotion requirements.
- Support school districts in identifying potential leaders with demonstrated leadership ability, knowledge of curriculum and instruction and a proven record of high performance.
- Adjust budgets to allocate additional time, resources and staffing to coordinate, develop and implement a new curriculum for school leader preparation.
- Solicit waivers from state agencies as needed to address certification issues.

Beginning in 2001, the SREB Leadership Initiative organized a small network of universities as demonstration sites to show states that the conditions of redesign could be used as a framework for university program redesign and that the redesign of leadership preparation was achievable. The university network members work to:

- Shift the preparation focus for school leaders toward a greater emphasis on curriculum, instruction and student achievement;
- Create and support partnerships that develop models, document lessons learned and disseminate successful programs and policies across the SREB states and nationally; and
- Create conditions that encourage school districts and universities to work together to design leadership preparation programs and to select principal candidates based on proven performance.



**The 11 Members of the SREB  
University Leadership Development Network**

Jacksonville State University	Alabama
Western Kentucky University	Kentucky
University of Louisiana at Lafayette	Louisiana
Towson University	Maryland
Jackson State University	Mississippi
Appalachian State University	North Carolina
Oklahoma State University	Oklahoma
Clemson University	South Carolina
East Tennessee State University	Tennessee
University of North Texas	Texas
Old Dominion University	Virginia

## The Internship Survey

### Definition of Key Terms for SREB survey

**Field Experience:** School-based experiences that engage the student in observing, participating or leading, as described in the Response Key.

**Response Key:**

- N R Not Required:** Education Leadership Student does not have the opportunity for involvement in the activity or the activity is not a part of the field experiences.
- O Observing:** Education Leadership Student has the opportunity to watch the activity without any active involvement in the activity.
- P Participating:** Education Leadership Student has the opportunity to join and share in activities and decision-making that may result from the activity.
- L Leading:** Education Leadership Student has the opportunity to plan, direct and develop activities and oversee decision-making that may be required by, or result from, the activity.

### *Directions for Responding*

For each item, check all responses (you may check more than one) that reflect the practices followed in your program.

Be sure to read the numbered, boldface statement for each section of the survey before responding to the items in that section.

- (NR) Not Required** No opportunity for involvement is offered nor is the activity part of field experiences.
- (O) Observing** Has opportunity to watch activity without any active involvement.
- (P) Participating** Has the opportunity to join/share in the activity and decision-making resulting from it.
- (L) Leading** Has the opportunity to plan, direct and develop activities and oversees decision-making that may be required by or result from the activity.

## CHECK ALL BOXES THAT APPLY

### 1. School leaders are able to create a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
1a.	...working with teachers to implement curriculum that produces gains in student achievement as defined by the mission of the school.				
1b.	...working with the administration to develop, define and/or adapt best practices based on current research that supports the school's vision.				
1c.	...working with the faculty to develop, define, and/or adapt best practices, based on current research, that support the school's vision.				
1d.	...assisting with transitional activities for students as they progress to higher levels of placement (e.g., elementary to middle, middle to high school, high school to higher education).				

### 2. School leaders are able to set high expectations for all students to learn high-level content.

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
2a.	...developing/overseeing academic recognition programs that acknowledge and celebrate student's success at all levels of ability.				
2b.	...activities resulting in raising standards and academic achievement for all students and teachers.				
2c.	...authentic assessments of student work through the use and/or evaluation of rubrics, end-of-course tests, projects.				

**3. School leaders are able to recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
3a.	...using a variety of strategies to analyze and evaluate the quality of instructional practices being implemented in a school.				
3b.	...working with teachers to select and implement appropriate instructional strategies that address identified achievement gaps.				
3c.	...working on a school team to prioritize standards and map curriculum in at least one content area across all grade levels of the school.				
3d.	...working with a group of teachers to unwrap adopted standards and develop assignments and assessments aligned with the standards.				
3e.	...working with a school team to monitor implementation of an adopted curriculum.				
3f.	...involvement in the work of literacy and numeracy task forces.				
3g.	...working with curriculum that is interdisciplinary and provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge in various modalities across the curriculum.				

**4. The school leader is able to create a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
4a.	...working with staff to identify needs of all students.				
4b.	...collaborating with adults from within the school and community to provide mentors for all students.				
4c.	...engaging in activities designed to increase parental involvement.				
4d.	...engaging in parent/student/school collaborations that develop long-term educational plans for students.				

**5. The school leader is able to use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
5a.	...analyzing data (including standardized test scores, teacher assessments, psychological data, etc.) to develop/refine instructional activities and set instructional goals.				
5b.	...facilitating data disaggregation for use by faculty and other stakeholders.				

**6. The school leader is able to keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
6a.	...analyzing and communicating school progress and school achievement to teachers, parents and staff.				
6b.	...gathering feedback regarding the effectiveness of personal communication skills.				

**7. The school leader is able to make parents partners in their student’s education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
7a.	...working in meaningful relationships with faculty and parents to develop action plans for student achievement.				

**8. The school leader is able to understand the change process and have the leadership and facilitations skills to manage it effectively.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
8a.	...working with faculty and staff in professional development activities.				
8b.	...inducting and/or mentoring new teaching staff.				
8c.	...building a “learning community” that includes all stakeholders.				

**9. The school leader is able to understand how adults learn and knows how to advance meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that benefits students.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
9a.	...study groups, problem-solving sessions and/or ongoing meetings to promote student achievement.				
9b.	...scheduling, developing and/or presenting professional development activities to faculty that positively impact student achievement.				

**10. The school leader is able to organize and use time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
10a.	...scheduling of classroom and/or professional development activities in a way that provides meaningful time for school improvement activities.				
10b.	... scheduling time to provide struggling students with the opportunity for extra support (e.g., individual tutoring, small-group instruction, extended-block time) so that they may have the opportunity to learn to mastery.				

**11. The school leader is able to acquire and use resources wisely.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
11a.	...writing grants or developing partnerships that provide needed resources for school improvement.				
11b.	...developing schedules that maximize student learning in meaningful ways with measurable success.				

**12. The school leader is able to obtain support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for their school improvement agenda.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
12a.	...working with faculty to communicate with school board and community stakeholders in a way that supports school improvement.				
12b.	...working with faculty, parents and community to build collaboration and support for the school's agenda.				

**13. The school leader is able to continuously learn and seek out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices.**

Field experiences require		(NR)	(O)	(P)	(L)
13a.	...working with faculty to implement research-based instructional practices.				
13b.	...working with professional groups and organizations.				

## Program Features

1. Do you offer a variety of leadership preparation programs, each following a different model?

- yes       no

If yes, check the ones that apply:

- traditional     innovative     cohort       other

If other, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the average ratio of students in the field to supervising university personnel per semester?

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_

3. To what degree do collaborative interactions occur among school districts and the university to ensure that field experiences develop the future leaders that are needed by districts?

- Strong Collaboration       Regular Collaboration  
 Infrequent Collaboration     Don't Know

4. Approximately what percentage of graduates obtain administrative positions within 3 years of licensure?

\_\_\_\_\_ %       Don't Know

5. Are there pre-experience briefings/meetings/conferences held between university staff and cooperating principals?

- Always       Sometimes     Never

6. Are there "cooperating principal handbooks" or other literature describing the program and the expectations?

- yes       no

## Summary Items

Please respond to the following statements on the basis of the best information available.

7. Students are completing the program adequately prepared to perform tasks required in leadership positions.

- To a Great Degree       To an Average Degree  
 To a Small Degree       To No Degree

8. Course work matches leadership functions and skills.

- To a Great Degree       To an Average Degree  
 To a Small Degree       To No Degree

9. Students are prepared to lead in all levels of education in which they will be licensed.

- To a Great Degree       To an Average Degree  
 To a Small Degree       To No Degree

10. Rigorous and valid evaluations of the field experiences are used to measure student performance.

- To a Great Degree       To an Average Degree  
 To a Small Degree       To No Degree

11. Review of student portfolios is used to provide information for program improvement.

- Yes       No



## **Acknowledgements**

This report was prepared by Betty Fry, Gene Bottoms and Kathy O’Neill of SREB.

The publication is supported by the Wallace Foundation, which seeks to support and share effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people. Its three current objectives are to 1) strengthen education leadership to improve student achievement, 2) improve out-of-school learning opportunities and 3) expand participation in arts and culture. In pursuit of these goals, Wallace supports the development of knowledge and analysis from multiple sources and differing perspectives. The findings and recommendations of individual reports are solely those of the authors. For more information and research on these and other related topics, please visit Wallace’s Knowledge Center at [www.wallacefoundation.org](http://www.wallacefoundation.org).

## ***Challenge to Lead Goals for Education***

1. All children are ready for the first grade.
2. Achievement in the early grades for all groups of students exceeds national averages and performance gaps are closed.
3. Achievement in the middle grades for all groups of students exceeds national averages and performance gaps are closed.
4. All young adults have a high school diploma — or, if not, pass the GED tests.
5. All recent high school graduates have solid academic preparation and are ready for postsecondary education and a career.
6. Adults who are not high school graduates participate in literacy and job-skills training and further education.
7. The percentage of adults who earn postsecondary degrees or technical certificates exceeds national averages.
8. Every school has higher student performance and meets state academic standards for all students each year.
9. Every school has leadership that results in improved student performance — and leadership begins with an effective school principal.
10. Every student is taught by qualified teachers.
11. The quality of colleges and universities is regularly assessed and funding is targeted to quality, efficiency and state needs.
12. The state places a high priority on an education *system* of schools, colleges and universities that is accountable.

The Southern Regional Education Board has established these Goals for Education, which challenge SREB states to lead the nation in educational progress. They are built on the groundbreaking education goals SREB adopted in 1988 and on more than a decade of efforts to promote actions and measure progress.

