

THEMES FROM LISTENING TOUR AND REPRESENTATIVE REMARKS FROM PARTICIPANTS SEPTEMBER 28, 2017 TO NOVEMBER 21, 2017

Theme #1: *PSELs* make sense because of the focus (on equity and cultural responsiveness).

“*PSELs* represent a welcome improvement. In large part that is because of the emphasis on equity and cultural responsiveness. The *PSELs* are a step in the right direction because they put us in position to better prepare aspiring school building leaders to meet the challenges of the job.”

“The *PSELs* are moving in the right direction. They are moving us toward the kind of preparation that will equip [aspiring principals] to thrive in the conditions that exist in schools today. They aren’t the whole story, but they help create a better talent pipeline because they focus on the right stuff.”

Theme #2: Widespread support exists for a closer relationship between universities and districts (and sometimes BOCES).

“Everyone benefits when there is a healthy and sustained relationship between a university-based principal preparation program and a local school, school district, or schools (and school districts). An ongoing dialogue can be focused on planning and modifying program offerings. It can be focused on identifying future talent and it can help ensure that the internship decisions that are made are productive.”

Theme #3: Support exists for pilot arrangements that enable NYS to learn what works.

“Universities and school districts absolutely need to co-develop preparation programs. Pilot projects can be really helpful especially if they enable us to identify effective approaches and share promising practices with others in the field. This can help us scale up approaches that work.”

Theme #4: The most valuable internship is year-long and includes expectation that a candidate will lead efforts to solve a real school problem. The presumption is that these internships are well supervised learning experiences for the candidate.

“We’d like to see better alignment between what is taught and expected in the university-based principal preparation program and the realities of the P12 school setting. We could see a local district identifying a specific problem of practice (or set of problems) that the aspiring principals would take on as part of preparation. Collecting these can really help the district build a collection of tools, techniques, and approaches that can assist the district and practicing administrators. It might even be a textbook that is created that includes a collection of these problems of practice.”

“We should not under-state the value of an extended period (year-long, if possible), job-embedded, internship (that is ideally paid). The experience should call upon the aspiring school building leader to actually lead, not watch or simply participate as another member of staff.”

“I think we agree that the internship ramp or the runway to the principal-ship needs to be longer and rich with practice, not just observation or sitting on the sidelines, but in there leading the work on the ground.”

“When I did my internship, I had the luxury of a paid internship. A Co-Ser with a local BOCES coupled with university creativity made it a possibility. I see a lot of value in a full time paid internship for candidates who are working to become principals in a system that is organized around *PSELs*.”

Theme #5: Principals (both novice and experienced) benefit from high-quality coaching and mentoring coupled with initial and ongoing professional development.

“A vitally-important piece is the provision of coaching, not just for new principals but for all principals.”

“Skilled coaches (on site, not virtual) can be the lifeline that a principal needs so (s)he can work in a safe environment on areas of need.”

“Coaching and mentoring are vital here. In their university training, candidates may or may not have read a book [about a particular topic] but through coaching and mentoring they can learn what is needed here.”

“The quality of the mentors matters. If you look at the three *PSEL* standards (#3, #5, and #8) that represent a big change from 2008 ISLLC Standards, then aspiring principal candidates need to be in settings with mentors that are high-quality. Mentors need guidance and training too.”

“*PSELs* seem to tie together preparation and practice. I hope that what we create helps us go beyond ‘luck of the draw’. By that I mean that the field experience that aspiring principals have could benefit from quality control. It would help if we tightened expectations. For instance, specify that all candidates who enter the internship should draft the next school-year budget for the building (other examples cited). With due respect to the researchers and post-docs at universities, what they are offering may not be what is needed most. Aspiring principals need close contact with a polished practitioner. So many parts of the job of principal are learned on the job. There we tie together our beliefs and knowledge.”

“I want to revisit this ‘luck of the draw’ idea. The internship is important but I wonder if there is some way to systematize it so the experience is more consistent across the state. During my own preparation to become a principal, I happened to be able to take off from work to do the internship. I was fortunate. But it shouldn’t have to be the case that a full-time, year-long internship is only available to those who can step away from a job for a year. So for me, the ‘luck of the draw’ means that those who are fortunate can have what is needed but others who don’t have the family resources cannot. But ‘luck of the draw’ means something else. The pairing of the candidate and mentor matters. How people are matched up (interns and mentors) is an important consideration.”

Theme #6: Dec. 2020 is a realistic date for university-based principal preparation programs to register their programs consistent with the *PSELs*. And, Dec. 2022 is realistic deadline for principal evaluation that is organized around *PSELs*.

“The date of 2020 is a realistic timeline for universities to adjust their principal preparation programs so they are organized around the 2015 *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders*.”

“The deadline of 2022 is OK for the evaluation of principals using a rubric that is based on the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders*.”

“We don’t think it is that difficult for a university to meet the 2020 deadline, at least when it comes to adjusting the content of courses. But it is another matter with respect to the internships. Creating meaningful internships that really align to the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* could take some doing. That is going to take some thought.”

Theme #7: Alignment matters. It is desirable for standards that guide university-based preparation programs to be aligned to *PSELs*; thus *NELP Standards (National Educational Leadership Preparation Standards)* will be valuable. And

professional development must align to support implementation. Likewise, efforts should also be made to ensure that the expectations that pertain to principal supervisors and the superintendents of local school districts are similarly aligned.

“There is a lot to like about the *PSELs*. They’re aligned to important things. As an administrator in a school and a district that experienced the Comprehensive Diagnostic Need Assessment that NYSED conducts (where a tool is used called the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness or DTSDE), I think there should be alignment between the *PSELs* and these processes. As well, I think there should be alignment between *PSELs* and Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR).”

“Down the road, it will be important to be sure that the requirements that university-based preparation programs must meet (either through CAEP or some other state-approved system) are aligned with the *PSELs*.”

“Healthy implementation means aligning standards. In this city the NYCDOE has its standards. CAEP has its standards. We have the 2008 ISLLC Standards. NYS has its own set of standards that come into play for target and focus schools. And now we have *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders*. They are presented to us in a clear and impressive document [but] I wonder how all these standards intersect. I want them to intersect so we don’t have disconnected things.”

“It seems to me the biggest adjustment is trying to achieve a common language and understanding of what these standards really mean so we can all be evaluated fairly. So that makes me wonder what kind of professional development will be available. We’ll probably need lots of professional development for teacher leaders too.”

“I agree that the PD (professional development) is needed across the board so everyone gets a unified understanding of what this looks like in practice (by ‘this’ we mean cultural responsiveness and the *PSELs*).”

“I’ve been thinking about Professional Development. PD is a learning process. It is not (or should not be) an inoculation. I think the 5th year principal needs a mentor just as much as the first year principal.”

“What is missing is recognition of the time it takes to do this preparation well. What is somehow glossed over is how we support those whose job it is to prepare aspiring principals. What is the professional development for those teaching in preparation programs.”

Theme #8: Attention should be paid to growth.

“My question in all of this is this. What master do these new standards serve? If it is accountability, then they are just going to be perceived as leverage for discipline. I would hope instead that they exist to support the growth and development of educators. Successful implementation depends on being as clear about that as we can be.”

“Let’s remember that the standards are the goals. We are trying to implement them so students flourish. There isn’t enough of a ‘growth mindset’ around here.”

“I am looking at the question about ‘what are the precursors to a smooth and effective implementation?’ Adapting a growth mindset seems most important here. If we can all come to agreement about the importance of a growth mindset, that will help pave the way.”

“We need to continue to harness up with growth. Buy-in among those in the field will be greatest if we focus on principal growth.”

Theme #9: It is important to translate *PSELs* into competencies to focus professional development and principal evaluation.

“A lot of work will be needed to translate these standards into measurable competencies. That is especially true for something that is new like cultural responsiveness.”

“With cultural diversity such a reality for us, we need to infuse preparation with as many points of view as possible. What does a set of competencies look like not just for principals but for their supervisors.”

“I completely agree that we need to move away from one size fits all. The standards will be translated into competencies. That makes sense. But then, depending on the community that is being served, some competencies may have more weight; other competencies may have lesser weight. And if candidates have been exposed to different kinds of schools and different kinds of school communities, then they will see how some competencies are more in play in one community than in another.”

Theme #10: *PSELs* are ambitious; if adopted, they should be translated into expectations (rubrics) appropriate for new principals versus experienced principals.

“It seems like we need to have a consistent set of standards, but we need a graduated set of expectations. The novice principal is not evaluated in precisely the same way or with the same expectation of performance as the apprentice or the master principal. Local standards and state standards need to match up.”

“I look at the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders*. While they are good, there are 100 items (if you count each item under every standard). It is a bit like an arms race. We just keep stockpiling. We need to remember that work-life balance matters. Let’s bear in mind that we have novice principals, apprentice principals, and those who are highly experienced.”

“I understand the philosophy behind the *PSEL* framework, but until such time as we have performance expectations for new principals and for experienced principals, it is hard to say that we have what we need.”

“The challenge I see here with the *PSELs*, is that I don’t see any rubric or any performance standards. If I were to give you advice about what is needed for implementation, I would say we need those things.”

Theme #11: When it comes to P20 partnerships, we need standards without standardization.

“I think we need standards but not standardization. If we standardize around one approach a handful of people will fall through the cracks. The exact form of the partnership will reflect the kind of community that is being served. What we need is standards but enough flexibility in the system that we’re responsive to community needs.”

Theme #12: As we plan for implementation, it is important to be mindful of the impact of these changes on equity.

“I want to return to our conversation about standards and standardization. I just ask us all to think about and commit to making sure that we keep a clear focus on one thing. That is equity. Through

the transition, will or how will these standards and/or standardization impact equity? It is easy to say that implementation matters. What really matters today is that equity is advanced.”

Theme #13: If *PSELs* are adopted, it is important to adjust expectations of principal supervisors (so principals receive needed guidance and support).

“For me, alignment is the main idea. We need to know that the superintendent has a good understanding of the *PSELs*. I want to be sure that the way I as a principal am evaluated is well understood by the superintendent and by my supervisor.”

“So where does School District Leader (SDL) preparation fit in this conversation? I suggest we think about that. Principals need supportive supervisors. That takes preparation.”

Theme #14: In NYC, the *Quality Review* (used to organize school improvement) and the principal evaluation process were conflated. Consequently, *QR* lost its value. Let’s avoid a repetition. The *PSELs* have the potential to be a helpful way to learn how to improve principal preparation and practice.

“I worry that *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* will suffer the same fate as *QR* (Quality Review) rubric. The *QR* rubric could have been a guide to what ‘good education process’ looks like. But when it was used more for principal evaluation it became tainted. Healthy implementation means we do whatever it takes to avoid that.”

“I think two things matter in implementation; one is prominence and the other is resonance. For implementation to succeed we need both prominence and resonance. I’ll explain. The *QR* is very prominent (that’s good) but does not resonate with those in the field (that’s bad). So, the challenge for the state is to work with those of us in this city (and elsewhere in the state) to make sure the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* are both prominent and that they resonate. For aspiring principals in NYC, getting into the principal pool is the big concern. How will *PSELs* figure into that? Aspiring principals will want to know that.”