

Principal Preparation Project (September 21, 2016)

Table 1: Verbatim responses from 20 Advisory Tm members to a prompt: "If you could have what you want in a program that prepares school building leaders what would you have?"

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1			<p>Most important element to include in Principal preparation program is a mechanism to provide ongoing networking, mentoring, & professional learning once the candidates have completed their initial studies and have entered the world of school leadership. School leaders need a network of trusted confidantes, advisors, and mentors to turn to for advice and support. A mechanism for ongoing networking and professional learning needs to be embedded in the process. The realities of the field are such that no program can possibly cover every possible contingency or "what if"...building leaders will encounter a wide variety of circumstances, and they need to have a network of support moving forward that will help them to harness the collective wisdom of their advisory network and learn from each new scenario.</p>
2			<p>A program that prepares school building leaders should be P-12 certificate that incorporates training principals on serving children pre-school through grade 12, including children of all needs & diversity (ELL, special education, gifted). Included in the content should be training principals on how to work with parents & the community to serve whole child as well as access community resources for support. The program should be focused on district as consumer, in which the district(s) serve as critical partners at each step of the training (recruitment, admission, course design and delivery, clinical, placement, and assessment). Courses and clinical experiences should be embedded in competencies that frame the program in which the principal candidate has to show mastery of knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Programs should include continuous improvement feedback loops to continually assess candidate progress, candidate outcomes, program effectiveness, and content relevancy.</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mandatory internship alongside mentoring principal for 6 mnths-1 yr for purpose of experiencing real situations (vs theoretical ones in textbooks).. Hands-on exposure to curricula, teacher development, day-to-day issues that occur, & how students learn best would is key in leader preparedness. - Emotional intelligence & cultural diversity training to ensure leaders are equipped to engage with diverse academic & ethnic populations (students/adults). - Action research project to addresses current district challenge/need. For ex: currently students in gr 3-12 in 6 districts score low on math NY assessments. What research can determine what hinders math achievement? What can increase achievement? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University/College leadership programs that survey superintendents to gain knowledge about specific district needs, and invite them to participate as guest speakers to discuss current district trends, challenges and areas of focus, as well as the type of leaders they are seeking. Building this type of program/partnership would help potential principals to understand expectations and build relationships with district superintendents who are in a position to hire them. - Attention to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards to help strengthen school leadership.

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4			<p>The successful leader must :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish clear vision, mission goals & values. Everyone should know mission including students. Should be reviewed at each faculty mtg. - Establish a Professional Learning community based on shared decision making and distributed leadership. - Establish systemic operating procedures and structure including vertical and horizontal teams to vertically articulate curriculum and expectations throughout the school. Committees and meeting dates should be set on day 1. - Establish a system monitor & evaluate progress on a daily, weekly, monthly & quarterly basis. System must be eclectic & include formative, summative & anecdotal info. Needs to be set on day 1. - Be an optimizer, be visible and build positive relationships with all stakeholders. - Have a school wide management system that emphasizes personal leadership. I recommend the “Leader in Me” that teaches students Covey’s 7 habits. - Actively participate in community service projects to show the importance of good citizenship. - Provide intellectual stimulation and current research and best practices to the staff to keep them current. Provide staff development opportunities that are aligned with school goals. Have staff present to other staff and use in house expertise to provide cost effective staff development. - Provide ample internships and real world experiences to learn alongside established outstanding role models. - Required Reading : School Leadership That Works (Marzano), What Great Principals do Differently (Whitaker), Failure is Not an Option (Blankstein), Getting Started : Reculturing Schools to Become Professional Learning Communities (Dufour/DuFour) and Leading in a Culture of Change (Fullan) - Lastly building leaders must grasp the appropriate “situational awareness” before they implement any decision and understand the importance of culture and undercurrents in a school or district. To be a successful change agent you must know the people and potential problems. Many good ideas fail and people have lost their jobs because of a failure to acknowledge the reality (good, bad and ugly) of a situation.

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5	<p>A base level standardized curriculum that addresses nationally agreed upon content knowledge that a school leader needs to know (at least 24 credit hours). Followed by an area of specialization that the individual wants to practice (medical model); i.e. urban educator, instructional observation/evaluation specialist (additional 12 credit hours).</p> <p>A minimum year-long FT internship under a mentor that has taken a state approved program related to the principles and practices of a quality mentoring (renewable every five years). The internship would have a set of skills that must be demonstrated rather than the current subjective judgment of “has the knowledge and skills necessary to”.</p> <p>District would nominate an individual for an internship. The district would pay the person’s full time salary and a stipend to the mentor. The state would reimburse the district for the cost of the substitute and the stipend.</p>		
6	<p>SBL preparation would be a first step in a 2-step process leading to principal’s annotation on the SBL certificate. Design of 1st step would be largely province of the IHE & would terminate in assessment leading to SBL & successful completion of required examinations. Achievement of “Principal Annotation” would require a second phase modeled after the various preparation academies that are currently provided for many superintendents-in-training. An exemplar exists in the Future Superintendents Academy currently offered by the NYS Council of School Superintendents. This year-long professional development experience requires a one-week introduction followed by monthly “long weekend” seminars. During the year there are various assignments that prepare candidates for future seminars. The program is directed by experienced superintendents who are assisted by experts in the various areas explored</p>		

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7			<p>I want programs to focus more on the importance of effective professional development that involves partnership building and community involvement. As a community leader, the principal shares leadership among educators and community partners and has close relations with parents. However, education leaders need to develop structures and activities that support collaboration. These include shared decision-making and site-based management models, regular communication of ideas, interdisciplinary curriculum projects, collective work on new instructional methods, team teaching, and peer observation and faculty groups (Peterson, 1994). A key approach to improving schools and addressing the needs of all students is the development of a collaborative culture in the school building. School leaders can support collegiality by promoting teacher leadership: encouraging staff to exchange ideas and work together; creating a time and place for professional dialogue and team work; and, providing substitute teachers to cover classes for faculty who wish to participate in collaboration activities (Peterson, 1994).</p>
8			<p>According to the 2012 Education Trust - West study, a low-income student is more than twice as likely to have a low-value-added ELA teacher as a higher-income peer and 66% more likely to have a low-value added math teacher. While the impact of a high performing teacher is important, more important is the impact of consistent effective teaching for all students. As a society that is positioned in developing a future of equitable attainment, that will require the refinement of high-level innovative skills by all citizens who need better abilities of seeing things in different views, improved self-efficacy, and related characteristics as possible inventors of awareness. In order for this to occur, teacher and principal effectiveness are the two most significant school-based factors contributing to student achievement, and principal effectiveness alone accounts for 25 percent (Seashore Louis et al., 2010). It will take teachers time to learn an innovation, adapt the innovation, and then reestablish coordination with each other (Bryk et al, 2015a, 2015b; Fullan 2010, 2011). As a result, aligning effective and competent leaders with teachers takes time.</p>
9			<p>Prep activities focus on 4 topics. The 1st is <i>parent & community engagement</i> with a focus on <u>going to</u> families & the community & collaborating as partners in educating children. The 2nd is <i>inclusive schooling</i> where school leaders are prepared to change NY's schools their 1st day on the job by ensuring all children with disabilities have access to least restrictive environment. The 3rd is to ensure all children regardless of race, nationality, religion, or income feel welcomed in schools. Last is <i>identification & dedication of evidence based interventions</i> across all curriculum areas. Each would be addressed via workshops by leaders in those fields, opportunities to work alongside competent administrators, & mentorship & monitoring of school leaders during first 3 years of their career.</p>

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10	<p>There's a need for principal preparation that integrates on the ground experience with best practice. A successful Principal Preparation program would be a combination of both. It would involve instruction grounded in national leadership standards and otherwise acknowledged best practices and a school-based residency of one-year or more under the auspices of an experienced and successful Mentor Principal. Instruction would occur on a regular basis and would come from a faculty of superintendents, experienced principals and district staff as well as outside experts. The program itself would last at least a year and involve networking opportunities as well inter- & intra-district learning.</p>		
11			<p>The most important ingredient to a school's success is extraordinary leadership from all stakeholders. Many programs adequately prepare building leaders in nuts & bolts of the profession by applying Educational Leadership Standards in an effort to support candidates acquiring concepts, interpreting and integrating new knowledge, & applying that knowledge to real world dilemmas. One area needing further refinement in leadership program is mentorship opportunities—the ability to both mentor other administrators as well as seeking out advice of exceptional leaders thus creating network of transformational leadership. Secondly, there are too few schools that are “beating the odds” at closing persistent achievement gaps that marginalize students of color & underrepresented groups. Future educ'l leaders must participate in programs grounded in social justice. It is the principals who must shape an environment for teaching and learning; creating a vibrant learning community where everyone works together to help maximize student potential.</p>
12			<p>If I could have what I wanted in a program that prepares school building leaders, it would have to be a program that focuses classroom instruction. Instruction should be the fundamental focus of every building leader in order to lead classroom teachers through PD, data and differentiated instruction. The principal is the first instructional coach of every building. Since every principal is the first person responsible for the success of every child, he/she needs to know the academic curriculum in order to ensure teachers are successfully teaching. In short, building the capacity of building leaders as instructional leaders should be a major focus of an Educational Leadership Program.</p>

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13			My ideal principal prep program incorporates the following: An equal blend of theory & application of theory , which takes form of practicums, shadowing & internships throughout the program . Candidates should have exposure to rural, urban & suburban settings, with accompanying coursework focusing on each. Courses “cross over” into other schools within the School of Education, so principals have sufficient knowledge of literacy, numeracy, & other disciplines to enable them to be instructional leaders. There should be an emphasis on cradle-to-career systems , which include reciprocal partnerships with various elements of the community. Instructors should be varied in background, including researchers & practitioners. School districts could partner with preparation programs for effective succession planning &/or recruitment. ISLLC standards should be utilized to anchor authentic work of the principal highlighted and experienced by the students within the program
14	I want strong university-district partnership programs that engage candidates in clinical leadership development programs. Such clinical programs would be characterized by an intentionally & coherently designed cohort program in which candidates would spend three-quarters of their time in a funded school-based internship and one-quarter of their time engaged with their cohort members in powerful learning and reflection experiences. Curriculum and learning experiences would be designed to build leadership that meets specific regional needs, while exceeding state and national standards. These programs would be supported by supervision and coaching provided by designated university and district personnel, who would meet to discuss and plan for candidate growth. Following graduation, candidates would move directly into an Assistant Principalship position for a period of one year that is complemented by high quality induction program and coaching; subsequently, they would be eligible for a principalship position.		
15	Authentic experiences that promote a deep understanding of data & how to improve achievement; & understanding brain development & how it pertains to educating our youth.		Authentic experiences that promote interaction with families; building & sustaining a culture of continuous improvement; being proactive & building trusting relationships; understanding the Superintendent Hearing process - how to prepare & present; learning about & demonstrating an understanding of the culture & expectations of the local community; conducting meaningful teacher & support staff evaluations; demonstrating an understanding of NYS Educational Law; knowing & interpreting contracts; a working knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Critical "soft" skills like problem solving, conflict resolution, critical thinking, creativity, building sustainable positive relationships, etc should be demonstrated throughout the internship.

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16	<p>The program should include input from all key education stakeholders and be subject to periodic evaluation with a dashboard of objective criteria to measure the efficacy of the program, including performance of graduates to develop a success profile for future candidates to be measured against. The program should include an externship – rotational assignment outside education sector to understand desired outcomes. The program should also include elements of mentoring of candidates, as well as a requirement to “give back” by graduates mentoring future candidates. Also, program should outline/offer regional social networks for support. The program should also have ongoing requirement for continuous education of graduates in key tenets such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Safety, security, compliance -- Student achievement -- Leadership -- Best practices in learning -- School partnerships -- Budget/Finance -- Labor relations -- Media relations/PR -- Managing conflict -- Analytics/benchmarking 		
17	<p>It would be paid release time for internship. Ordinarily, a practicing principal recommends a talented, organized, helpful teacher for SBL certification; preparation courses take place after a full workday "in-between spaces" in their full time work. A worry-free internship is full time with no loss of seniority or position; there is a "real-life" project of improvement for which they have responsibility and the authority to carry out the improvement; there is time to visit schools, districts, nearby states to see how improvement is handled elsewhere. This requires a paid semester (year?) to intern; a supportive principal who does not see the position as a burden; an intern who does not see the position as an escape from the classroom; instead preferring to stay a teacher so teaching and learning are not trivialized. Instead learning is the fulcrum for decision-making, the mission becomes "more learning for more "kids" in more ways more of the time!"</p>		

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18			<p>Principal preparation requires an internship for the SBL certification. These internships look vastly different from district to district and should have basic requirements that insure that all candidates complete their hours with exposure to a variety of skills.</p> <p>Building leaders should be able to articulate their educational philosophy and expectations clearly and consistently and it should be aligned with the district vision and community. They should be able to identify their teacher leaders within their building and be able to utilize their strengths. In addition, they need to be supportive of teacher exploration of new strategies and personal growth encouraging risk taking that is based in data supporting student achievement and advancement. The preparation program should be able to convey that while districts across the state are extremely varied, these basic points should be covered.</p> <p>In terms of their learning profiles, SBL should be required to build and foster relationships with nearby higher education institutions so that they remain current with requirements and trends in pre-service training. This P-20 vision allows for SBL to expand resources for their schools and build better teachers coming out of certification programs.</p>
19			<p>Administrator preparation programs should focus a great deal on communication and effective leadership. However, I'm certain these are universal criteria that most programs try to focus on. Therefore, I thought about what that might look like and how a program might achieve that. Recruitment of gifted teachers that have leadership skills, apprenticeship programs that start with teacher leaders as interns for two-three years and learn the work before they get their own building, would be a great start. Providing access to different types of schools (inner-city, rural, suburban, charter, Montessori) to see different systems and build up a base of experienced administrators to help provide mentoring. This brings me to the idea that after they complete the program the real work needs to be done with proper On-boarding, a good Mentor program and in my opinion a support program like Peer Assistance to help them deal with the challenges in running a building or an office. Finally, I wonder if there would be two tracks- one that deals with instructional leadership (helping our teachers find the right programs to be better and more effective in the classroom) and another track that deals with Management (the nuts and bolts of running a school or the physical plant, discipline, HR issues, budgets, etc.).</p>

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20			A well-developed recruitment program that selects candidates based on interest, passion, knowledge, and proven leadership in a teaching/support staff setting. The preparation program must be taught by experienced practitioners who can provide real-world experiences about navigating the challenges of school leadership in urban, rural, and sub-urban settings, while meeting students' needs. Following the recruitment and coursework, an administrative internship would commence that allows candidates to experience decisions made pertaining to governance, budgeting, curriculum, and school improvement under the tutelage of effective principals.

Note: While suggestions that are listed do not appear to require any change to collectively-bargained agreements, adjustments to policy and/or regulations within some districts may be required. Such cases are not reflected here.