

PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP

ESEA TITLE II, PART A

BACKGROUND

Investment in principal effectiveness needs to be commensurate with its importance

ESEA Title II, Part A funds can be spent on a wide range of human capital activities, including recruitment, professional development, and career development for teachers and school leaders, as well as class-size reduction.

School leadership is underfunded. Unfortunately, school leadership is significantly underfunded. A representative sample of 800 districts reported spending just four percent of Title II-A funds on professional development for administrators, compared to 40 percent for teachers and paraprofessionals.¹

Current funding is not being used effectively. The funds currently allocated towards school leaders are not focused on the most effective activities,² such as high-quality preparation, job-embedded professional development, and reducing the number of principals supervised by each principal manager.

Federal policy needs to shift the balance and the focus of investments in school leadership.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

New Leaders recommends increasing funding for ESEA Title II-A and setting aside funds for states and districts to address cross-cutting leadership needs—an efficient use of dollars that will pay dividends in building great schools where teachers thrive and student excel.

Reserve Title II-A funds at the state and local levels for principal effectiveness activities

Reserve funds at the state level: Increase the state-level reservation of Title II-A funds to 10 percent and set aside at least half of that specifically for principal effectiveness activities. A set-aside for school leadership could support revising leadership standards, improving principal preparation, and implementing evaluation and support systems. At a minimum, states should have the option of accessing a portion of Title II-A funds specifically for principal effectiveness.

Use funds effectively: Ensure that funds are spent on activities that research has proven effective. For example, consider high-quality professional development where principals and teachers share leadership, resulting in stronger relationships and higher student achievement.³ Provide detailed guidance that includes a deeper focus on school leadership.

1 According to [findings from the 2012-2013 Survey on the Use of Funds Under Title II, Part A](#) (June 2013), in a representative sample of 800 districts, just four percent of federal Title II funds were reportedly spent on professional development for administrators as compared to 40 percent for teachers and paraprofessionals.

2 Chait, R. & Miller, R. (2009). [Ineffective Uses of ESEA Title II Funds: Funding Doesn't Improve Student Achievement](#). Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.

3 Seashore Louis, K., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K.L., & Anderson, S.E. (2010). [Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning](#). University of Minnesota and University of Toronto.

PRINCIPALS MATTER

Research shows—and our experience confirms—that strong school leaders have a powerful multiplier effect, dramatically improving the quality of teaching and raising student achievement in a school. Principals account for 25 percent of a school's impact on student achievement, which is significant for a single individual. Moreover, 97 percent of teachers list school leadership as essential or very important for their career choices—more than any other factor. The bottom line: school improvement simply does not occur without strong leadership, particularly in under-performing schools.

ABOUT NEW LEADERS

New Leaders is a national nonprofit that develops transformational school leaders and promotes the system-level conditions that allow strong leaders to succeed. Founded in 2000, New Leaders has trained nearly 2000 principals and teacher leaders who are building vibrant schools and elevating student achievement and graduation rates in high-need schools across the country. Beyond its flagship principal training program, New Leaders provides a comprehensive portfolio of leadership development programs to support educators at all levels, from teacher leaders to district administrators. It also advocates for effective leadership policies and practices in school systems nationwide. For more information, visit www.newleaders.org.

CONTACT

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PROGRAM IN PRACTICE

How school leadership funding helped Cleveland students: As Chief Academic Officer for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD), New Leader Michelle Pierre-Farid has an enormous scope of responsibility. She oversees principal supervisors, curriculum and instruction, school improvement, data and accountability, special education, athletics, supports for English learners, and social and emotional learning.

Despite the many issues competing for her attention, Pierre-Farid maintains a strong focus on principal leadership. “Looking at the research, leadership matters. A principal’s impact on student achievement is second only to teachers.” Recognizing this, CMSD has strategically increased principal autonomy as a key school improvement strategy. “Principals should have more authority in the hiring and placement of teachers. The selection process is important: create a framework and allow schools to find teachers who best fit. They should also be able to remove teachers fairly and quickly. Principals should have flexibility in how to use funds and how they use their school day. If I believe in a later start time or in a double block of math, if I provide data on the reason why, that should be allowed to occur.”

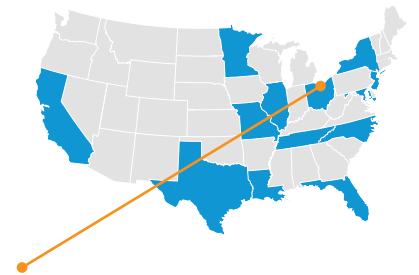
To support principals, Pierre-Farid works through the district’s seven principal supervisors. “With a caseload of 15 principals each, they are a lever for change, so we have created a community of practice to increase their capacity to support principals.” She has also made a number of investments directly in principals, including an onboarding program, leadership coaching, an aspiring principals program, professional development on key issues (e.g., setting academic goals, implementing new academic standards, and supporting social-emotional learning), and targeted support for turnaround principals. Pierre-Farid says that principals need support specific to their role. “If you expect teachers and teacher teams to make decisions based on formative assessment results, then as a principal I need to look at data with my instructional leadership team.”

How school leadership funding could be improved: Pierre-Farid has leveraged district funds, federal grants, and foundation dollars to pay for investments in principals. “So many times under Title II guidance, leadership is not included, so you have to look all over the world for funding for principals.” She laments not having enough flexibility and clarity in Title I and Title II guidance and she points to the planning process for Race to the Top as a possible model for prioritizing principal leadership through formula funds. In those plans, states and districts had to articulate how they were building the capacity of principals. “Districts should show how they are leveraging leaders and teachers to implement key strategies. If you’re building understanding of new standards, how are you doing it for teachers and how are you doing it for principals? If you want to change practice, you have to get people to change.”

With competing priorities and unclear federal direction, using existing formula funds for school leadership can be difficult. Yet strong district leaders know that they must pay attention to how schools are organized and led if they want to create schools where teachers love to teach and students love to learn. “Explicit uses of funds for school leadership, a needs assessment and planning requirements that recognize the important role of teachers and school leaders, and clearer direction from the federal government would help districts leverage formula funds to help principals create the best learning environments for all students,” says Pierre-Farid.

Fund leadership to activate its transformative potential

MICHELLE PIERRE-FARID LEADERSHIP IN ACTION



Cleveland Metropolitan
School District
Cleveland, Ohio

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District serves 39,000 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. It is a high-need district: 65 percent of students are low income. Sixty-seven percent of students are Black and 14 percent are Hispanic.

Michelle Pierre-Farid joined CMSD as Chief Academic officer in the fall of 2012 and has been instrumental in designing and implementing the district’s new strategic plan, the Cleveland Plan.

Pierre-Farid was herself a New Leader turnaround principal for six years, leading two schools to double-digit gains in student achievement. Under her leadership, Tyler Elementary School, one of the lowest-performing schools in Washington, DC, improved 40 percentage points in reading and 20 percentage points in math.