



**CHANGE AGENTS: HOW STATES CAN
DEVELOP EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERS
COMPANION GUIDE**

July 2013

NewLeaders 

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About New Leaders

Founded in 2000 by a team of social entrepreneurs, New Leaders is a national nonprofit that develops transformational school leaders and designs effective leadership policies and practices for school systems across the country. Our experience preparing principals and recommending them for licensure in eight states as well as our services work at the state level informed our recommendations in this paper.

Principals are change agents—the lynchpin of effective implementation of any school-level reform. School leaders are critical to effective teaching at scale and student success. But to ensure all students receive a high-quality education in every classroom every year, states must improve the way they recruit, prepare, and license principals. Many principals entering the profession are not equipped with the skills they need to succeed. And state licensure systems are not measuring the competencies principals should demonstrate to receive an initial license or renew that license. The lack of an outcomes-oriented focus in principal preparation and licensure negatively impacts quality of the principal pipeline.

This guide is a companion to a concept paper entitled *Change Agents: How States Can Develop Effective School Leaders*, which describes the latest research and makes the case for taking action through several priority policies. Below you will find a framework to explore the fundamental questions of purpose and design to create outcomes-based systems for approving principal preparation programs and licensing and re-licensing principals.

ROADMAP TO USING THIS COMPANION GUIDE

This companion guide is divided into two major sections that describe how to create a pipeline of change agents:

- 1 | Evaluating and Approving Preparation Programs**
- 2 | Using Licensure and Re-Licensure to Ensure Effective Educators**

In each section, the guide begins with data you can gather in order to better understand your state's unique context. After gathering relevant data, begin to ascertain your needs and the ultimate goals of any new systems you design. The guide also provides questions to analyze the collected data and assess state context, including considering how to be sensitive to the landscapes of various local education agencies (LEAs) (*e.g.*, urban and rural).

Then, the guide walks through recommendations for the purpose of each system (a principal preparation program approval system and a principal licensure¹ system, respectively).

Finally, the guide suggests methods for designing systems that meet the recommended purposes. Each set of recommendations is broken down into manageable goals with detailed explanations. While not a comprehensive implementation tool, the recommendations help outline a policy framework for use as you embark on this work.

Consider the recommendations in the context of your own needs and goals. Since state-level influence can take many forms—some direct and some indirect—this paper does not make specific recommendations on which types of influence to use. Depending on your state context, you may pursue different strategies. You may work with legislators to redefine the expectations for preparation programs or choose to build upon existing statutory authority to further define those expectations by working with the state board of education on revised regulations. For more information on the types of influence states might consider, please refer to the New Leaders' publication *Re-Imagining State Policy: A Guide to Building Systems that Support Effective Principals*.

1. Please note: While certification and licensure are both commonly accepted terms, this paper will use the terms licensure and re-licensure to describe the process of obtaining an initial state license (or certification) and renewing that credential.

I. EVALUATING AND APPROVING PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS

State policy plays a critical role in ensuring principal preparation programs are producing future principals with the necessary skills to become change agents and effectively lead a school. Major levers are **initially approving programs to operate in their state** (based on a review of a program’s capacity to run a program, its operational structure, and plan to offer programmatic elements aligned to the latest research), **subsequently renewing or revoking program approvals** (based on a review of a program’s outcomes, its implementation of research-based best practices, and its plan for continuous improvement based on data), and **ongoing monitoring and accountability**.

UNDERSTANDING STATE CONTEXT

Gather relevant data and information on current policies and practices in your state, including current statutes, rules, and regulations that impact the way principals are trained in order to understand your context and what actions you might want to take to improve the quality of school leaders in your state. Also consider the implementation of these policies to date.

Use the questions below to reflect on current practices as compared to goals for your system and leading research on the topic. In addition to these questions, consider other resources to analyze state context. For example, the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) at the University of Washington recently released a set of powerful tools—*Principal Concerns: Leadership Data and Strategies for States*—to help state policymakers gather and analyze principal quality data in order to diagnose their principal workforce needs and develop comprehensive strategies to address them.² The Alliance to Reform Education Leadership (AREL) at the George W. Bush Institute recently produced snapshots on state principal policy, including the type of data collected by each state on principal preparation programs. To see your state’s policy snapshot, and that of other states, visit the *Operating in the Dark* website.

QUESTIONS ON STATE CONTEXT

- What is the goal of the principal preparation system you are trying to create? Is it to raise the quality of principals entering the profession, to ensure principals are trained for specific contexts (e.g., turnaround schools), to help match supply with demand, or something else?
- Who has authority over approving principal preparation programs in your state? The state educational agency (SEA)? The state board of education? A higher education entity?
- Do you allow all types of preparation programs (including LEAs and non-profits) to prepare principals in your state without a partnership with an institution of higher education (IHE) as long as they meet your high bar of excellence?
- What criteria do you use to measure programs for program approval?

2. Campbell, C. & Gross, B. (2012). *Principal Concerns: Leadership Data and Strategies for States*. Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education.

- Is meeting your state’s leadership standards considered a part of preparation program approval?
- Do your preparation programs include coursework aligned to standards and other key programmatic elements that research has shown to be effective? Specifically, do they include any of the following?
 - Competency framework
 - Proactive recruitment
 - Rigorous selection
 - Research-based curriculum and clinical component
 - Participant assessment
 - Support for graduates
 - Program review and improvement³
- What data does your state currently collect on principal preparation programs? How does this data relate to your system goals? Does it include any of the following:
 - Placement rates
 - Retention rates
 - LEA satisfaction
 - Leadership effectiveness of program graduates
 - Impact of program graduates on student outcomes
- Is the data collected on principal preparation programs analyzed and reported upon in a timely fashion?
- What new data do you need to collect on principal preparation programs to assess the progress of institutions toward your intended outcomes? What are the challenges to gathering and linking this data, especially given that key data on program graduates, principal hiring and retention, principal licensure, and principal effectiveness often are gathered and tracked in different places, if at all?
- How do you use data about principal preparation programs to hold them accountable for outcomes?
- Which preparation programs are doing the best job at leader preparation in your state? How do you know?
- How many graduates are coming from preparation programs in your state? Are there enough high-quality graduates ready to lead schools effectively to meet your needs? Are your preparation programs producing enough school leaders in specific areas of need (*e.g.*, high school, turnaround, or under-served geographic areas)?
- What actions can your state take to move underperforming programs to higher levels of performance? Are key programmatic elements in place? How long can a program operate in your state if it is not meeting the bar?

3. Cheney, G., Davis J., & Holleran, J (2010). A New Approach to Principal Preparation: Innovative Programs Share Their Best Practices and Lessons Learned. Fort Worth, TX: Rainwater Leadership Alliance.

SETTING A PURPOSE

The purpose of principal preparation programs is to develop a pipeline of educators ready to effectively lead schools that achieve results for students. In order to reach this goal, set specific expectations for preparation programs that are grounded in the state's leadership standards. To qualify for initial licensure, expect aspiring principals to be trained in a research-based program of study with hands-on opportunities to practice and demonstrate mastery of adult leadership before graduation. Programs can develop strong partnerships with LEAs to provide these clinical experiences and build bridges between pre-service and service as a principal. In order to hold programs to those expectations, raise the bar for all types of preparation programs, develop initial review and renewal processes, and hold programs accountable for results.

DESIGNING A SYSTEM

When making changes to your preparation program approval process, engage a broad coalition of groups interested in improving principal preparation, including consumers (teachers and aspiring principals, school leaders that have been through preparation programs, and leaders from LEAs who hire principals), representatives of the preparation programs (IHEs, LEAs, and non-profits) and the business and policy communities. It is important to define stakeholders broadly and ensure that the voices of principals and superintendents are well represented. Take care to ensure that the process is informed by the experience of principals who have been through traditional and nontraditional preparation programs and superintendents that can speak to the quality of program graduates as well as LEA hiring needs. The goal of any system redesign is to ensure aspiring leaders are prepared to improve student achievement. Stakeholders can help states drive towards this goal instead of defending an outdated system.

As you endeavor to improve principal preparation, these external stakeholders help improve the substance and credibility of any changes. Be clear upfront regarding any guidelines for stakeholder engagement. For example, make it clear early on that the program review process will include measures of graduate outcomes and indicate that the inclusion of these measures is not negotiable. It is important to take time to message the need for such changes. Sharing data on the variability in quality across programs and how current principals are struggling to meet expectations for the new role of the principal (aligned to other state reforms) can create a sense of urgency to improve preparation programs.

Convene stakeholders early in order to establish a shared understanding of state leadership standards. This common understanding of effective leadership will prevent divergence and is important at all levels—from principal preparation programs that need to know the caliber of candidate necessary for licensure to superintendents that need to know what qualifications to look for when hiring new principals. After establishing a shared vision of leadership, a focused subgroup of experts can provide recommendations on what the program approval process should look like.

FROM THE FIELD: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The work to redesign principal program approval in Illinois began in 2005 with the Commission on School Leader Preparation. Then, in 2007, Illinois established the Illinois School Leader Task Force (ISLTF) to evaluate how the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) could influence the quality of principals trained in the state. The taskforce, along with support from Advance Illinois, used data to make the case for change and built a coalition of supporters. This multi-year process of stakeholder engagement helped to create a sense of urgency and demand for policy change. The result was new legislation in 2010 requiring all programs to reapply under new, more rigorous approval criteria. All programs must be approved under the new standards by July 2013.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are five main policy recommendations with a checklist of smaller goals for you to consider as you redesign the current system to evaluate and approve principal preparation programs. More detail on each policy recommendation and sub-goal is provided in the following sections.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION	GOAL
Raise the bar for all preparation programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an efficient state structure that provides support and holds all programs accountable • Select and train expert reviewers, including LEAs leaders and principals, for the program approval process • Create a governance structure that promotes accountability • Incent programs to address areas of state need
Create an initial review process for program approval that focuses on capacity to implement a rigorous plan	Require preparation programs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include research-based programmatic elements • Demonstrate that new institutions have the capacity to run a successful program • Provide clinical practice and a participant assessment • Develop partnerships with LEAs to meet the needs of the field
Create a renewal process that focuses on outcomes and continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use outcome measures to inform program renewal decisions and related state policies • Streamline data collection and share information publicly • Differentiate the review process based on outcome measures
Hold all programs accountable for results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow all programs that meet a high bar to prepare principals • Create an accountability structure that promotes improvement and supports making difficult decisions • Enforce consequences for under-performing programs • Provide incentives to high-performing programs
Reinvest the fruitless “Master’s Degree Bump” in more effective approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibit salary increases based on credentials instead of increased responsibilities or outcomes • Invest savings in more effective approaches

RAISE THE BAR FOR ALL PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Hold all preparation programs to the same, high standard, but do not limit the types of organizations that can prepare principals.

Goal: Create an efficient state structure that provides support and holds all programs accountable

Research has shown that “exerting pressure and influence” is an effective state strategy for improving leadership systems. The same study found that an even more effective strategy was combining that pressure with support.⁴ Given this finding, create a single, clear system for approving principal preparation programs regardless of the type of preparation program. This system allows you to effectively determine how well each program is preparing future principals without being overly complex or bureaucratic. In order to reduce confusion, have one state entity lead the program approval system and eliminate duplication. Ideally, make this the same entity that is tasked with principal licensure in the state.

4. Augustine. C. et al (2009). Improving School Leadership: The Promise of Cohesive Leadership Systems. Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation.

As discussed in the concept paper, in addition to the state role, there is also a national accreditation process. Eight states rely solely on the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) certification as sufficient evidence to approve preparation programs in their states and ten more states consider NCATE accreditation along with another process (either state developed or outsourced). While the NCATE accreditation process can provide important formative feedback to preparation programs and is one indicator of program quality, you must be ultimately responsible for deciding who can operate in your state. Whether you base the process on NCATE's standards or devise your own system, have the program approval processes reflect your vision for effective principals and use outcomes-based measures to differentiate program review. NCATE has shared draft standards for teacher preparation program accreditation (which are on track for implementation in 2016) and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) has decided to revise corollary Educational Leaders Constituent Council (ELCC) standards for principal preparation program approval. In the meantime, however, take the lead on raising expectations for program approval. Your lessons may also help shape the revision of ELCC standards.

Start with clear state leadership standards and a common understanding of effective leadership. For example, if your leadership standards call for engaging families and the community in a vision of success for the school, look to see how principal candidates are practicing this skill during their clinical experience. Focus on demonstrating alignment to those standards through the capacity to effectively run a preparation program and an operational plan to execute on a rigorous program design (described in more detail below). Based on those standards and expectations, select and train teams of four to five expert reviewers—all with some experience in school leadership—to carry out program reviews with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Identify a state educational agency staff person to ensure consistency; direct reviewers to work off a common rubric aligned to your leadership standards with accompanying examples of acceptable evidence. After reading a program's application as well as collecting and reviewing appropriate evidence through site visits and other means, instruct review teams to prepare a report outlining their findings, recommendations for state action, and relevant feedback for program improvement. Consider creating an oversight mechanism, such as an accuracy audit or other process, to ensure fair and consistent results across review teams. Also use this mechanism as a tool for continued calibration over time.

Start the review cycle with an initial approval. First renew a program after two years of program operation. Thereafter, initiate a renewal cycle every five years informed by program outcomes.

FROM THE FIELD: CLINICAL EXPERIENCES

One program design standard for educator preparation programs in Washington State is that candidates receive a field experience with clinical practice (established in WAC 181-78A-264 Approval Standard for Program Design). For principals, this means serving as an intern under a mentor principal for a full school year. The internship must provide the principal candidates with opportunities to demonstrate mastery of the state's principal standards, including setting a vision and engaging stakeholders, improving instruction, managing the learning environment, and collaborating with families and the community.

Goal: Select and train expert reviewers, including from LEAs and high-quality preparation programs, for the program approval process

As described above, establish a clear process for selecting and training qualified reviewers. When staffing review teams, be especially thoughtful when creating teams to review programs with poor results—ensuring that reviewers on those teams are prepared to provide clear, actionable feedback for taking the necessary improvement steps.

Make serving on a review team an honor by selecting those inside and outside the IHE community, including current and former principals that have demonstrated growth in student achievement, LEA leaders who hire principals, representatives from high-performing principal preparation programs, and other experts in school leadership. Depending on resources, pay review team members or ask for volunteers.

By connecting program results with the ability to review others, the review team will be well positioned to share best practices with low-performing programs and high-performing programs will be recognized for their expertise, adding credibility to the review. Carefully vet the qualifications of the review team members to ensure reviewers have an appropriate background in educator preparation. Consider including a strong SEA staff person on the review team to project manage, including answering questions, guiding the conversation, and facilitating a high-quality review across programs. The SEA staff person does not have to be a voting member of the group, but ensures review teams are implementing a consistent review based on the SEA's expectations for each preparation program.

Train reviewers to equip them with a clear understanding of your expectations for preparation programs and include an explanation that there are many ways a program could meet the program standards. Use the training to prepare reviewers to use the common rubric (described above), analyze acceptable evidence, and provide feedback that will support program improvement.

Goal: Create a governance structure that promotes accountability

Elevate the preparation program approval or non-approval decision to one person (*e.g.*, the chief state school officer) or a select group of people in order to create additional accountability for the process and support for making difficult decisions, as needed. In order to make this possible, make at least one person at the state level responsible for all reviews, including in-depth knowledge of the review criteria, experience conducting strong reviews of documentation and site visits, and responsibility for staffing review teams. And, provide the decision-makers (either a single person or a small group of people) access to robust information—including milestones and benchmarks for improvement—from low-performing programs in order to keep the program open.

Goal: Incent programs to address areas of state need

Offer incentives to existing or new programs that address state priorities like specialized turnaround preparation programs or preparation in rural areas. Consider such incentives as fast-track reviews for expansion of programs with a demonstrated record of producing principals who drive large gains in student outcomes or establishing new programs for untested programs with strong plans to address a shortage area. Also consider providing loan forgiveness to graduates from these institutions that serve in the area of need for which the candidate was prepared.

CREATE AN INITIAL PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

As an approved principal preparation program provider in five states and a partner to IHEs in three other states, New Leaders has learned from a number of state examples. For initial approval, establish a set of requirements, aligned to principal standards, that a preparation program is expected to meet. Focus this initial approval on institutional capacity to run a program and the rigor of the operational plan and program design to deliver a high-quality program.

Goal: Create an initial review process for program approval that focuses on capacity to implement a rigorous plan

It is important to ensure that new institutions have the capacity to design and implement a successful program. Although initial program approval cannot take into consideration the effectiveness of program graduates, ask institutions—universities, LEAs, or non-profit organizations—to demonstrate:

- A rigorous program design and operational plan.
- The capacity to effectively run a preparation program.

Measure a rigorous program design and operational plan by a demonstration that the program includes all of the necessary, research-based programmatic elements (described in the next section). Measure the capacity to effectively implement a program by reviewing operational systems, financial structures, and the experience of the leadership team (described in more detail below).

Goal: Require preparation programs to include research-based programmatic elements

Require preparation programs to demonstrate that their programmatic content is aligned to your leadership standards and includes the research-based components⁵ described below. But, to ensure that the review process is not simply a box-checking exercise, distinguish between programs that truly meet the standard of excellence and programs that address these components in a cursory manner. Build the review process design (described above) and the examples of evidence collected (examples provided below) to create an authentic picture of the programmatic components and allow the state to differentiate between excellent, mediocre, and sub-standard components when making an initial approval decision.

- **Competency framework:** A defined competency framework—aligned to your leadership standards—that describes the competencies a principal must have to influence school practices and culture in order to drive student achievement gains. The other program elements are aligned to this framework.

5. Darling-Hammond, Linda, LaPointe, Michelle, Meyerson, Debra, and Orr, Margaret, (2007). Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs – Final Report. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation. Cheney, G. et al (2010).

FROM THE FIELD: LEA PARTNERSHIPS

Gwinnett County, Georgia, is taking a number of steps to influence the quality of the preparation of their incoming principals. In addition to providing their own preparation through Quality-Plus Leaders Academy, the LEA is creating a guide to influence the way local universities prepare school leaders. Entitled *Guide to Leadership Education Programs in Georgia for Aspiring Leaders in Gwinnett County Public Schools*, the tool will highlight the programs the LEA identifies as providing exceptional preparation. The LEA has also developed explicit partnerships with several preparation programs to ensure participants in those programs receive the necessary training to meet LEA needs and the opportunity to practice those competencies through hands-on internships.

- **Proactive recruitment:** Intentional recruitment strategy based on projected school leader need and targeted at attracting and matriculating teacher leader candidates and others with the potential and desire to become effective school leaders. Suggest LEAs support recruitment efforts by marketing opportunities to effective and highly-effective teachers and teacher leaders as well as asking principals to nominate promising principal candidates.
- **Rigorous selection:** Highly selective criteria based on a rigorous evaluation of candidates' competencies, including two years of effective school-based experience (such as effectiveness as a teacher where those data are available),⁶ strong instructional skills, belief in the potential of every child, demonstrated adult leadership potential, and a goal of actually becoming a school leader.⁷ Skills from a variety of careers can enhance leadership potential; guard against barriers to entry into preparation programs for candidates whose school-based education experience was not immediately prior to attending the preparation program.
- **Research-based curriculum:** Research-based content and curriculum aligned to your definition of leadership effectiveness, including how to evaluate and support teachers and provide instructional leadership aligned to college- and career-ready standards. Encourage programs to have a deep research base, while also allowing room for innovation to reach specified outcomes. Consider a waiver for innovative programs that are piloting new methods for training leaders. In either case, expect the curriculum to be integrated and coherent such that courses build on each other to convey the competencies outlined in the program's framework (discussed above). Also expect the curriculum to include opportunities to apply what participants have learned through simulations and case studies as well as provide opportunities to assess the competencies of each program participant in order to develop personalized growth plans based on identified strengths and weaknesses. Instead of prescribed seat time requirements or a large number of credit hours, expect a program to describe how they will use non-clinical time to provide sufficient instruction to complement and enhance the clinical practice. Finally, require the program to have plans to review and revise curriculum over time as new developments and innovations in principal preparation arise.
- **Clinical component:** Clinical practice in an authentic setting with opportunities to lead adults, make mistakes, and grow that is aligned to the competency framework and the assessment of candidate practice as a part of program completion. Because this is such a critical component, it is discussed in detail in the next section.
- **Participant assessment:** Expect programs to assess and evaluate each principal candidate throughout his or her experience and at program completion to ensure mastery of the necessary competencies. As part of participant assessment, require programs to attempt a number

6. New Leaders sets our own Aspiring Principals Program (APP) selection criteria at two years of effective teaching, but focuses more intensively on certain capacities, such as pedagogy, instructional strategies, and data driven instruction. While most of our program participants have more than two years teaching experience, our emphasis on competency keeps us from artificially limiting our talent pool while ensuring that candidates have the necessary experience to enter a principal preparation program.

7. New Leaders uses the following criteria for our Emerging Leaders Program (ELP):

- Demonstrate relentless drive, confidence, and belief in students, despite adversity;
- Create and maintain a sense of urgency and commitment to high academic achievement for all students;
- Accurately assess instructional quality and demonstrate excellence in planning for and delivering instruction;
- Diagnose complex issues and identify challenges to inform strategic planning process;
- Continuously reflect on performance, seek feedback, and pursue opportunities to improve personal leadership; and
- Demonstrate influence of and support for other adults, such as supporting peers in teacher team meetings and providing recommendations and informal feedback to fellow teachers.

of course-correcting strategies to assist candidates who struggle with developing the required competencies, but at the end of the day, if the participant is consistently falling short of expectations, he or she should be counseled out of the program. An assessment administered at program completion will aid in making recommendations regarding initial licensure based on a demonstration of attainment of the necessary competencies.

- **Support for graduates:** Ongoing, on-the-job support for program graduates for at least one year to ensure new principals make a successful transition and are meeting their goals. Provide flexibility regarding who administers this induction support—the preparation program, the LEA, or another strong partner organization, but require that it be aligned with LEA needs, the preparation program’s curriculum, and your leadership standards. Investigate using Federal Title II funds for this purpose (as well as for supporting aspiring principals) at the state or LEA level.
- **Program review and improvement:** Continuous improvement based on data from graduates to determine the effectiveness of their program based on the placement and retention of principals, the satisfaction of LEAs partners, and the student outcomes associated with their principals.

Rigorous Program Design and Operational Plan

Simply having a recruitment strategy is not sufficient. The evidence described below includes examples for review teams to use in distinguishing between a mediocre program and an excellent program. Many programs in your state may say they meet most of these criteria; the review process will help differentiate among programs by identifying those that met the standard for excellence and those with components in place, with significant room for improvement.⁸

MEASURES	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
Competency framework	<p>Review the standards that structure coordination across the full program continuum—from recruitment to selection to curriculum to participant assessment to ongoing support. There should be evidence that this vision of the principalship guides all programmatic decisions.</p> <p>Request the research base for the competency framework and a demonstration of how the skills are calibrated for the various roles for which the program prepares candidates.⁹</p> <p>For each role, programs should be able to articulate which of the necessary competencies they select for (the attributes a candidate must have to be accepted into the program), which are developed through training (the skills learned through coursework and through clinical experiences), and how they evaluate mastery before program completion (the skills that a graduate must master and the skills that a principal will continue to develop on-the job).</p>
Proactive recruitment	<p>Review the program’s proactive recruitment strategy and how that strategy targets people that are similar to the program’s candidate profile (described below). Gather information on the staff assigned to this stream of work, the audiences the strategy targets, any relevant partnerships, predicted yields, and their process for tracking success. If the strategy has been in place, ask for data on matriculated candidates over time.</p> <p>Ask for evidence of partnerships with LEAs to market opportunities to effective teachers, teacher leaders, assistant principals, and other recommended potential candidates.</p>

8. A similar structure for program self-assessment known as the Quality Measures™ Rubrics and Program Self-Assessment Process was designed by the Education Development Center.

9. For some examples of standards, see New Leaders’ Urban Excellence Framework or Principal Evaluation Handbook.

MEASURES	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p>Rigorous selection</p>	<p>Review the program’s profile of an ideal candidate. The profile should be clear and include a description of the competencies and dispositions that the program selects for (as opposed to builds through training). The profile should align with the role and context described in the program’s mission as well as the attributes outlined in the competency framework.</p> <p>Review the program’s selection process. There are three main characteristics of a strong selection process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Candidates objectively assessed on selection criteria that are predictive of success and aligned to the competency framework. 2. Candidates provide concrete evidence of results in previous roles, such as effectiveness in teaching. 3. Candidates demonstrate their skills in practice, including simulations, responses to videos and case studies, role-plays, and questions designed to elicit specific experiences and actions. <p>Review the program’s objective tools (e.g., rubrics) used to measure and score candidate performance against selection criteria. Gather information on how scores are calculated (individual criterion and overall) for admission purposes, interviewers are calibrated to ensure consistency and objectivity, and improvements are made to the process over time.</p> <p>Ask how the selection process takes into account the needs of the LEA(s) with which it partners.</p>
<p>Research-based curriculum</p>	<p>Review syllabi to ensure alignment with leadership standards in the competency framework, connections to the participant assessment, and overall curriculum coherence. Instead of disconnected courses, the curriculum should build towards the skills outlined in the competency framework and measured by the participant assessment. The program should describe how candidates will use non-clinical time and how candidates are given opportunities to practice skills during the curriculum.</p> <p>Request a demonstration of how faculty (those with a research or practitioner background) will help convey this content. Gather evidence of faculty’s current or recent track record of improving student achievement.</p> <p>Determine if the preparation program has partnered with LEAs to create bridges between program exit and job readiness or includes coursework that addresses LEA-specific competencies.</p> <p>Ask for a description of how the program assesses individual growth needs throughout the program and differentiates learning opportunities to ensure program completers have mastered the competencies in the program’s framework.</p>

MEASURES	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
<p>Clinical component</p>	<p>Review the structure, format, requirements, and expectations of program candidates in their clinical experiences. Ensure that these experiences provide candidates with real responsibility to move the practice of a subset of teachers, ensure common planning time to engage in instructional leadership activities (such as team unit planning and vertical alignment), allow candidates to engage in data analysis and support teachers in data-driven instruction, and provide opportunities to lead coaching activities, including observing and providing informal feedback to peers.</p> <p>Also review the selection protocol and expectations for mentor principals or school-based clinical faculty to ensure they have demonstrated effectiveness, have the ability to mentor an adult (e.g., high marks on the relevant portion of an evaluation system), and are expected to provide hands-on support throughout the residency. Ask how the program will overcome a shortage of qualified mentors, as needed.</p> <p>Gather evidence of how the program will provide practicum positions (e.g., letters of support from LEAs to establish partnerships), the types of setting in which residents are placed, and the intentionality of those decisions.</p>
<p>Participant assessment</p>	<p>Either: 1) mandate the administration of a new set of state-developed assessments as a condition for graduation, as described below; or 2) require preparation programs to have competency-based assessments for all program participants and offer these new assessments as an option for fulfilling that requirement. Either way, the assessments should be aligned to the state’s leadership standards, be based on research and best practices, and simulate real-life, school-based situations.</p> <p>These assessments should measure the competencies required for success on the state’s leadership standards and those named in the program’s competency model. Assessments must also be designed to measure the impact the candidate has on teacher effectiveness and student learning during his or her clinical experience. For example, New Leaders requires aspiring principals to identify four teachers that he or she will work with throughout the residency. Participants are expected to gather baseline data at the beginning of the school year and set goals for instructional practice improvement (e.g., increasing the rigor of student questioning). Participant impact on improving the practice of those teachers is factored into his or her final assessment.</p> <p>In the case of a program-designed assessment, programs can be expected to demonstrate the alignment between their course content and the assessment in a standardized manner. Programs should be able to determine if participants are implementing their lessons with fidelity over the course of their training. The use of video and portfolio artifacts to demonstrate a competency in action (and in a context that is relevant for the program participant) are powerful tools to demonstrate mastery of certain standards, engage in self-reflection, and receive feedback for ongoing improvement. For example, if a principal candidate is expected to demonstrate the use of clear protocol to lead meetings, she could record herself leading a team of teachers through an analysis of student data. Then she could reflect on her video, giving her instructor the opportunity to gauge her ability to accurately self-assess and to provide her with feedback for improvement. Finally, the instructor would use a standardized protocol or rubric to review the video or artifact against the standard. Programs should be able to describe how they measure achievement of competencies (e.g., a numbered scale). Finally, the review of on-site mentor principal or clinical faculty should also be included in the summative assessment of licensure readiness. Programs might also survey the teachers the participant worked with for a 360-degree view.</p>

MEASURES	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
Participant assessment (continued)	<p>New Leaders uses four measures to capture multiple perspectives and evidence on participant practices and impacts. Participants must become proficient in each of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent to which participants meet program standards and competencies, measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A portfolio that includes artifacts demonstrating proficiency on the standards described below; ▪ An evidence-based review by their program lead against a program standard rubric; and ▪ A 360-degree survey, including mentor principal and teacher team perceptions of participant practice against targeted competencies. ▪ The extent to which target teachers under the leadership of the participant improved their instructional practice over the year. <p>Below are the standards based on New Leaders' program and experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning and Teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successfully leads instruction, including standards-based planning. ▪ Supports appropriate pedagogy and instructional strategies to increase student achievement. ▪ Uses data to drive instruction and meet the needs of all students. ▪ Shared Vision, School Culture, and Family Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creates a compelling vision, mission, and set of values for student success. ▪ Diagnoses complex challenges and facilitates collaborative development of strategic plan. ▪ Communicates effectively and builds strong interpersonal relationships with stakeholders to inform decision-making. ▪ Strategic Planning and Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sets ambitious but achievable goals and develops a school-wide sense of efficacy and urgency to attain academic excellence for all students. ▪ Implements appropriate data collection systems to track progress against goals. ▪ Creates an equitable and inclusive school climate. ▪ Operationalizes the school's vision through systems, routines, behaviors, and code of conduct. ▪ Talent Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improves instruction through professional learning communities, teacher observations, and feedback. ▪ Builds the leadership capacity of teachers and other school leaders. ▪ Defines clear performance expectations for all staff and holds staff accountable for meeting them. ▪ Personal Leadership and Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflects on professional practice and strives for continuous improvement even in the face of adversity. ▪ Effectively manages change by identifying root causes adapting accordingly.
Support for graduates	<p>Review structure, format, and expectations for ongoing support. Gather evidence on partnerships with LEAs that clearly delineate roles and responsibilities for each partner in providing ongoing support for at least one year after principals are hired. Potentially review survey data from recent program completers.</p>
Program review and improvement	<p>Review process for reviewing data (e.g., program completion, placement, retention, effectiveness, and impact on student achievement) and making ongoing improvements to program structure. Gather information on the types of data and method for collection (e.g., surveys, observational data, calibration of observations, etc.). Determine how the program is able to evaluate the fidelity of implementation of the program components described above. Determine how the program evaluates the impact of their graduates.</p>

Goal: Ensure that new institutions have the capacity to run a successful program

Measure capacity to effectively run a program by reviewing a program’s:

- Operational systems required to implement the proposed curriculum.
- Financial structure to ensure proper management of the program’s funds.
- Experience of the program’s leadership team and staffing structure.

Capacity to Effectively Run a Program

Review teams will need to look for evidence of an institution’s capacity to effectively run a program. The examples described below help reviewers differentiate between programs that demonstrate success and those that have room for improvement.

MEASURES	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
Operational systems	<p>Review systems to operate the program, including partnerships and processes for implementation. Assess organizational capacity to execute on proposed curriculum.</p> <p>Review the program’s articulated mission for clarity of purpose. A program should be clear on both role and context.</p> <p>Role: The program’s mission should describe who their program is designed to prepare (e.g., teacher leaders, assistant principals, principals, etc.).</p> <p>Context: The mission should also describe for what situation leaders are prepared (e.g., geographic area (rural, urban), grade span (elementary, secondary), type (traditional public, public charter), stage (start-up, succession), performance (turnaround, fast-improving, high-performing), etc.).</p> <p>For programs that prepare leaders for a variety of roles and contexts, dig deeper to discern how their program content (from selection to curriculum, to clinical experiences and placement support), expectations, duration, and costs are differentiated.</p>
Financial structure	<p>Review fiscal and administrative resources, including the financial management structure to ensure proper management of funds. Ask how resources will be allocated to support program design, including recruitment and selection, curriculum components, clinical experience and partnerships with LEAs, participant assessment, and ongoing support.</p>
Leadership team and staffing structure	<p>Review the qualifications and backgrounds of the program’s leadership team to assess their expertise for the work of preparing principals. Look for experience, skills, knowledge, and track record of success in similar work.</p> <p>Review the staff expertise to deliver on the program design and operational plan. Pay particular attention to staff expertise to meet the program’s mission (i.e., is the staff able to prepare leaders for the various roles and contexts articulated in the program’s mission?).</p>

Goal: Require preparation programs to include clinical practice and a participant assessment

Being an effective school leader takes work. Being able to sit down with a teacher and have a difficult conversation about performance while still keeping that educator inspired is a skill mastered through repeated practice.

Require preparation programs to pair traditional classroom preparation with hands-on learning that provides a practice-rich clinical component (or practicum). This practice needs to be in an authentic setting where candidates can be evaluated on their leadership skills as part of program completion. Statewide programs can partner with a number of LEAs to offer clinical experiences.

The ideal structure for a clinical experience is a full-time residency with clear opportunities to take a leadership role in the school. Other models include a split residency or exposing candidates to varied experiences in diverse settings. In any case, expect that principal candidates serve as a leader in some capacity that includes responsibility for moving adult practice forward. Potential placements include roles as assistant principals, teacher leaders, or full-time residents. Note: this type of practice-based learning and assessment is not possible when serving as a full-time classroom teacher with a full teaching load.

Requiring a robust clinical experience will also help reduce the number of principal candidates that pursue an administrative degree but do not intend to become school leaders.

Goal: Require preparation programs to partner with LEAs to meet the needs of the field

In order to connect supply and demand, require each principal preparation program to develop a meaningful partnership with one or more LEAs. Partnerships should not be established merely to meet legal requirement, but should instead be meaningful to both parties. The vision is not that every LEA has a partnership with a preparation program, but instead that every preparation program provider has at least one formal mechanism with at least one LEA to inform program design, create meaningful clinical experiences, and help the program better meet the needs of the field.

Robust partnerships, where the delineation of roles and responsibilities for each partner (the preparation program and the LEA) are clearly defined, share the responsibility for recruiting, selecting, and preparing leaders. Partnerships allow LEAs to identify and recommend promising school leaders from within their current pool of educators.

MODEL LANGUAGE

Illinois S.B. 226 (2010) requires principal preparation programs and LEAs to partner and established a process for monitoring and assessing these partnerships.

“Include a description of the partnership/s between the principal preparation program and one or more public school districts or nonpublic schools. Document should include descriptions of:

- how the partners share responsibility in the development, design, implementation, and administration of the program;
- the roles of each partner;
- how the partnership will continue to operate; and
- how the partnership will be evaluated.

Include a written agreement (MOU) which is signed by each partner and addresses the following:

- the process and responsibilities of each partner for the selection and assessment of candidates;
- the establishment of the internship and any field experiences, and the specific roles of each partner in providing those experiences, as applicable;
- the development and implementation of a training program for mentors and faculty supervisors that supports candidates’ progress during their internships in observing, participating, and demonstrating leadership to meet the 13 critical success factors and 36 associated competencies outlined in “The Principal Internship: How Can We Get It Right?”*
- names and locations of non-partnering school districts and nonpublic schools where the internship and any field experiences may occur; and
- the process to evaluate the program, including the partnership, and the role of each partner in making improvements based on the results of the evaluation.

Include a copy of any agreements with school districts or nonpublic schools (other than those participating in the partnership) that will serve as sites for the internship or field experiences.

Provide written evidence of how data on the program will be collected, analyzed, and used for program improvement, and how these data will be shared with the educational unit or not-for-profit entity and the partnership school district or nonpublic school.”

*SREB Board, 2005 http://publications.sreb.org/2005/05V02_Principal_Internship.pdf

Encourage programs and LEAs to tailor curriculum to create bridges between program completion and entrance into the job of principal. For example, LEA staff can teach courses on how a principal is expected to create a budget in their school system or on understanding the contractual expectations of a particular LEA. Finally, working together on residency-based models has the dual benefits of allowing preparation programs to diagnosis, support, and approve candidates while giving an LEA the opportunity to see a candidate in action before hiring that person into a leadership role. This observation can ease the transition from a preparation program to a principalship by informing induction and helping LEAs tailor support to new principals.

There are various ways programs and LEAs may establish partnerships; be flexible to allow for different configurations. For example, individual LEAs might form a number of small partnerships with preparation programs or consortia of LEAs might work together with multiple providers. Be explicit that these partnerships do not need to be regional or geographically based and that LEAs can work together in order to have their needs met by preparation programs. Regardless of a formal partnership, LEAs can establish expectations for candidate readiness and preparation program improvement through increased selectivity in principal hiring.

Consider the following process for approving partnerships:

- **Alignment of priorities:** Expect programs to partner with LEAs that are aligned with their program priorities (*e.g.*, if a program is focused on training principals to turnaround low-performing schools, it should partner with LEAs that have low-performing schools). Measure this alignment by a complete analysis of the partnerships with LEAs and site visits.
- **Authenticity:** Expect programs to be constantly taking input and feedback from partner LEAs and making adjustments accordingly. Include in the approval process an assessment of whether such continuous improvement practices are occurring.
- **Clinical practice:** Expect programs to partner with LEAs to ensure their graduates have a practice-rich clinical component and can be evaluated in an authentic school leadership setting, as described above. Candidates need to have substantial leadership responsibilities for other adults and be responsible for improving the quality of teachers' instructional practices.
- **LEA satisfaction:** Assess programs on LEA satisfaction with the quality of program graduates. Develop and administer an annual online survey of LEA leaders to gauge satisfaction.

CREATE A PROGRAM RENEWAL PROCESS

The renewal process often does not receive the same amount of attention as initial program approval. Require programs to demonstrate their effectiveness after several years in operation. Consider a renewal process that looks at outcomes, as well as implementation of research-based practices and continuous improvement strategies.

Use impact data to differentiate the intensity of program renewal. Subject programs that can document strong performance of their graduates to a fast track renewal process with incentives to grow. Subject low-performing programs to a more intensive review process and ultimately, if no improvement is seen, do not renew them.

Finally, use this data collection to inform policymaking regarding other aspects of the principal pipeline. Leverage publically reported data to inform preparation program improvement strategies, serve as a data point in principal hiring decisions, and provide information regarding program quality to aspiring principals.

Goal: Create a renewal process that focuses on outcomes and continuous improvement

For established programs seeking renewal of their approved status, focus the process on three areas:

- Outcome measures such as placement rates, retention rates in school leadership roles, LEAs' perceptions of graduate quality, and measures of graduate effectiveness where possible.
- Implementation of research-based best practices in leadership development.
- Continuous improvement and use of data to assess the effectiveness of their principals and their programs, such as a review of how program completer survey data (*e.g.*, graduate perceptions regarding their preparedness for the principalship) is used.

Goal: Use outcome measures to inform program renewal decisions and related state policies

Start by investing in a data system that can track important outcomes, if it does not already exist. Accurate and updated information regarding where individual principals are placed is required to calculate placement, retention, and student outcomes. Use the below outcome measures to assess the effectiveness of established preparation programs:

- **Placement rates:** The number and percentage of graduates who take positions as school leaders (including assistant principals and principals) within five years of program completion.
- **Retention rates:** The number and percentage of graduates who remain in the principalship after a certain number of years, especially after a principal's first year.
- **LEA satisfaction:** LEA leadership team's perceptions (as measured by surveys) of the quality of program graduates.
- **Leadership effectiveness (methodologically sound data is needed):** The number and percentage of graduates who are endorsed as being effective school leaders by a high-quality LEA or state evaluation system that has been shown to be reliable in differentiating strong and weak performers.

- **Impact on student outcomes (methodologically sound data is needed):** The number and percentage of graduates who improve the student achievement outcomes (based on consistent and methodologically sound measures of aggregated individual student growth) after three years leading a school.¹⁰
- **Other:** If a rigorous, performance-based licensure test exists, consider pass rates by institution. If principal evaluation data are reliable, assess whether or not passage of the licensure test is predictive of effective leadership before using this measure.

As an organization dedicated to using the outcomes of our program completers to improve our work, we have partnered with the RAND Corporation to evaluate the impact of our Aspiring Principals Program since 2006.¹¹ Their *Addressing Challenges in Evaluating School Principal Improvement Efforts* report¹² describes a number of key design parameters for using the outcomes measures described above. Be thoughtful in the way that principal effectiveness and student outcome data are used for accountability. Specifically, a program needs a sufficient number of graduates with at least three years of experience as principals in order to use this type of data. And the use of student progress—the change in student proficiency performance—is not sufficient. Ensure a consistent (*i.e.*, similar measure for all principals across the state) and methodologically sound (*i.e.*, tested for validity and reliability) measure that is an aggregation of student-level growth (*e.g.*, school-level value-add data or school-level student growth percentiles) controlled for prior student performance. Also ensure data systems have the needed components, such as accurate and reliable placement and tenure data, outcome measures for high schools, and longitudinal data. Be prepared to invest in calculating these measures; preparation programs may have difficulty accessing student-level assessment data. As student graduate effectiveness data accumulates, consider an initial heavy focus on program success in graduate placement as school leaders and satisfaction measures from LEA partners and participants. Use these data as part of a continuous learning agenda to refine and improve state policies on principal preparation, evaluation, and licensure, including the refinement of measures used to hold programs accountable.

If there are a large number of preparation programs, consider creating common survey instruments to collect data on LEA satisfaction of principal preparation. If not, ask the preparation programs to create surveys along with their LEA partners and provide multiple years of responses as part of their renewal submission.

Goal: Streamline data collection and share publicly

To report on their outcomes, programs need timely access to accurate outcomes data. When preparation programs serve more than a few LEAs (within or across states), data collection can become difficult. Collect data (such as principal placement, principal retention, leadership effectiveness, and student outcomes) in a central location. Include unique identifiers in data systems to enable program evaluations that link various data points for an individual principal, such as preparation program, school placement, performance evaluation scores, and student achievement measures. While the preparation program can be expected to identify which principals it trained (and recommended for licensure), principal placement, principal retention, leadership effectiveness data, and student outcomes are metrics that are more easily calculated and tracked at the state level. Since programs are unlikely to have sufficient privileges to handle individual performance evaluation data or individual

10. A number of states and LEAs are considering impact on student outcomes in their determination of leadership effectiveness.

11. Burkhauser, S., Pierson, A., Gates, S.M., & Hamilton, L.S. (2012). *Addressing Challenges in Evaluating School Principal Improvement Efforts*. Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation.

12. Ibid

student achievement data, create reports that aggregate the outcomes by program and share those reports with preparation programs for evaluation and improvement purposes.

Consider making reports of program impact on outcomes publicly available in order to inform future principal candidates' program selection decisions and LEA hiring decisions. Also consider convening LEAs or sharing programmatic data releases to support your LEAs in being better consumers of data. Highlight high-performing programs in order to encourage LEA hiring of principals from more effective programs.

In addition to informing individual program improvements, use results of outcome analyses as part of a continuous learning agenda to refine and improve state policies on principal preparation, evaluation, and licensure. Also consider disaggregating data by placement in Title I or other high-needs schools to determine if programs are preparing principals to address that area of need.

Finally, since a number of principals are prepared in different states from the state in which they are hired, it is sometimes difficult to track their progress. Work with other states to assign principals with unique identifier numbers that can be used to track principals across states. If those identifiers are created as a person enters a preparation program then the data can be connected back to that institution regardless of the state in which the principal is ultimately hired.

Goal: Differentiate the intensity of the review process based on program outcomes

Differentiate the intensity and frequency of the renewal process based on outcome results. If a program does not have strong outcomes, based on the new programmatic requirements and data collection (described above), use greater scrutiny in reviewing the alignment of program's practices with best practices—placing a very high bar on their demonstration of selectivity on the front end, quality of content aligned with expectations of new principals, quality of clinical practice, rigor of participant assessment, and strength of LEA partnerships. For programs that do not consistently meet program design criteria or improve outcomes, require program improvement for renewal.

Require all programs to submit yearly data reports as part of the monitoring process, but differentiate the review process so that lower-performing programs are subject to a more intensive and more frequent process. Base this decision on:

- Program outcome measures.
- The implementation of research-based best practices in leadership development.

Implement a fast-track renewal process for high-performing programs whose graduates have high placement and retention rates and demonstrate evidence of effectiveness once they are placed as principals and have been leading the same school for three years. Given limited bandwidth,

FROM THE FIELD: DATA SHARING

As a part of its Race to the Top application, the New York State Education Department is gearing up to provide all teacher and principal preparation programs with data profile reports. The reports, slated to be released in the fall of 2013, will include performance on licensure tests, placement and retention rates, and impact on student learning. The data are intended to help programs reflect on their outcomes and facilitate collaboration between LEAs and preparation programs. It will also increase transparency and hopefully reduce reporting duplication.

spend time doing a more in-depth review on a more frequent basis for programs that have weaker outcomes. Data can also help identify high-performing programs to conduct an occasional in-depth visit to determine why the program is high performing and extract best practices to inform the improvement of other programs. In order to foster program change and transition to the new expectations, offer a combination of accountability and support (described in more detail in the next section) to ensure principal preparation programs understand the changes that are being required and why they are needed.

For programs that do not yet have outcome data, or if necessary data systems do not yet exist, review the implementation of research-based best practices using criteria similar to the initial review process.

HOLD ALL PROGRAMS ACCOUNTABLE FOR OUTCOMES

If a program does not have strong outcomes, consider your options—review the data and program context and demand improvement, take a stronger role in the oversight of the program, or do not renew the program. Remember that preparation programs serving areas with fewer options—like rural areas—may need a different lever.

Goal: Allow all programs that meet a high bar to prepare principals

Allow any program that meets your rigorous bar of program approval to prepare principals. Innovative programs—including non-profit organizations and LEAs—can prepare principals to meet specific needs and discover important lessons that can benefit the entire sector. Offering multiple, high-quality routes will also help build a robust pipeline of diverse school leaders with the talents and competencies to meet schools' needs. Ensure that your process does not require programs to create “IHE-like” structures or systems such as a prescribed faculty composition or number of hours of seat time. Program expectations should be high, but there should be multiple pathways for meeting them.

Goal: Create an accountability structure that promotes improvement and supports making difficult decisions

Maintain the final authority for program approval and avoid turning approval decisions over to an outside accreditation process that is not explicitly aligned to your leadership standards. Include in the accountability structure support for program improvements with both incentives and consequences.

To further accountability, make clear whether or not a preparation program has met an acceptable level of performance. Developing absolute performance standards—similar to an achievement cut score for student academic achievement—gives programs a consistent target against which to assess their performance, provides reviewers with a description of the state's expectations for preparation programs, and provides the public, including potential applicants, the knowledge of what it means to fall short. Consider publishing a simple report card. To encourage transparency, require preparation programs to post the institution's report card on their website in a prominent manner.

Reward high-performing programs and shutdown persistently low-performing programs. For programs that do not consistently meet outcomes or program design criteria, require that they improve before being renewed. In order to continue to operate, require a clear plan from these under-performing programs to deliver significant improvement in outcomes. Include clear benchmarks towards required milestones, identify the parties responsible, and describe how their actions will lead to program improvements based on the weaknesses identified by the state's review team.

Goal: Provide feedback and support to promote program improvement

In order to provide actionable feedback to preparation programs, train reviewers in identifying weaknesses and providing specific feedback in areas where the program did not meet standards. Expect programs with significant weaknesses to design and implement a clear plan for improvement or face non-renewal. Condition renewal upon specific actions. Highlight and disseminate promising practices to all preparation programs and create policy conditions that encourage their replication.¹³

Goal: Enforce consequences for under-performing programs

Subject programs that—even with support to improve—continue to produce the lowest-performing principals to consequences. These consequences can range from probation, to loss of state funds, to tighter state control, to closure. If programs do not make improvements after receiving critical feedback and being subject to more intensive and frequent reviews, do not renew them.

Goal: Provide incentives to high-performing programs

Recognizing providers with exceptional outcomes is important. Through existing resources (*e.g.*, larger portions of state aid) or in partnership with philanthropic organizations, provide incentives to programs that consistently prepare exceptional principals. Consider attaching a requirement to disseminate best practices, work with struggling programs that are trying to improve their results, or scale their own work. Also consider giving candidates that attend exceptional programs scholarships or loan forgiveness after serving a specified term of service in the state.

MODEL LANGUAGE: SALARY STRUCTURE

Florida S.B. 736 (2011) prohibits LEAs from using advanced degrees to set the salary structure unless that additional credential was in the individual's area of certification. Go even further by limiting the salary increase to proven effectiveness or taking on additional responsibilities.

“Advanced degrees.—A district school board may not use advanced degrees in setting a salary schedule for instructional personnel or school administrators hired on or after July 1, 2011, unless the advanced degree is held in the individual's area of certification and is only a salary supplement.”

13. Augustine. C. et al (2009).

REINVEST THE FRUITLESS “MASTER’S DEGREE BUMP” IN MORE EFFECTIVE APPROACHES

The current principal preparation structure is producing many certified administrators who lack the necessary skills to be effective school leaders. This quality challenge is driven in part by local salary structures, which incent teachers to seek administrative degrees regardless of interest in leadership roles. This provides few incentives for programs to improve the rigor of their coursework. New endorsements—if not implemented properly—exacerbate this problem by encouraging programs to prepare a glut of certified teacher leaders with no intention of taking on additional roles and responsibilities.

Goal: Prohibit salary increases based on credentials instead of increased responsibilities or outcomes

Require LEAs to link salary increases to a teacher or principal’s actual job and their effectiveness in the role. While licenses and endorsements can be an important signaling tool, do not base compensation structures on credit accumulation. Focus compensation increases to support educators who take on additional roles and responsibilities or who are highly effective in their current role.

This requirement also helps reinforce the preparation program admissions requirement that prospective candidates should have a goal of actually becoming a school leader.

Goal: Invest savings in more effective approaches

Encourage LEAs to redirect savings towards more effective approaches. For example, use funds for pilots of comprehensive compensation reform—similar to the Federal Teacher Incentive Fund 4 (TIF4) grant competition—in order to create a system of differentiated pay and recognition for teachers and principals based on effectiveness as well as additional leadership responsibility. Performance based compensation (salary structure based on effectiveness) may be a more effective method than performance pay (annual bonuses for that year’s achievements) as it helps people envision a longer term role for themselves as effective educators in the system. LEAs could also pursue other approaches that help support and retain change agents.

2. USING LICENSURE TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE EDUCATORS

Revise the licensing process to improve school leadership. The major levers are [granting an initial license](#) (based on successful completion of an approved preparation program), [periodically renewing leadership licenses](#) (based on actual performance in the position of principal), and [creating other endorsements to promote priority areas](#).

By changing the way principal preparation programs operate (described above), you have greater confidence that graduates practiced and demonstrated the necessary competencies to lead a school. These changes help ensure that initial licenses are granted to principals ready to lead a school successfully.

UNDERSTANDING STATE CONTEXT

As in the previous section, gather relevant data and information on current policies and practices in your state, including current statues, rules, and regulations that impact the way principals are licensed. This information gathering helps you understand your state's context and what actions will improve the quality of school leaders in your state. Also consider the implementation of these policies to date.

Reflect on your current practices as compared to your goals for your system and leading research on the topic using the questions below, CRPE's *Principal Concerns: Leadership Data and Strategies for States* publication, and AREL's *Operating in the Dark* website as potential resources.

QUESTIONS ON STATE CONTEXT

- What is the goal of the licensure system? A career ladder, a backstop for LEA variance in implementing educator evaluation systems, or something else?
- How many principals are licensed in your state each year?
- What are the requirements for initial licensure? Must candidates complete a program of study, pass an exam, or have certain work experiences?
- Does your state require a licensing test? If so, what does it assess and how are cut scores established? How many times are principals allowed to take the test?
- Does your state differentiate licenses based on grade level or type of school?
- Does your state offer an alternative route to licensure? If so, how is it different from the traditional route?
- Does your state have a tiered licensure system? Or does your state grant a single leadership certificate with no distinction for experience or effectiveness?
- If your state offers a tiered system, what new authorities does each license provide?

- Is everyone that is licensed to serve as a principal each year in your state ready to fulfill that role? If not, what is most important change in your policies to make that the case without choking your supply?
- Does your state require re-licensure? If so, how frequently must principals renew their licenses?
- What are the requirements for renewal? Must candidates demonstrate effectiveness, complete a certain amount of professional development, or serve as a principal for a specified number of years?
- Does the current license renewal process further your state's goal to have more effective principals in all of its schools?
- Does your state offer additional endorsements?
- Does your state offer reciprocity with any other states? If so, how many principals are licensed annually using this method?
- Does your state or LEAs in your state provide a salary increase for teachers that receive an administrative Master's degree even if they do not take on additional leadership responsibilities?

SETTING A PURPOSE

The purpose of a principal licensure system is to:

- Ensure new principals are prepared to enter the profession and current principals are demonstrating effectiveness in order to stay in the profession.
- Safeguard against insufficient use of high-quality principal evaluation data to make difficult personnel decisions at the LEA-level (i.e., LEAs that continue to employ principals with poor evaluation results year after year or principals with low evaluation ratings that move between LEAs).

DESIGNING A SYSTEM

Create a simple tiered licensure system that differentiates between a probationary license for early career principals (based on graduating from a state-approved preparation program) and a professional license for educators who have demonstrated effectiveness in their role (based on principal evaluations that reliably differentiate strong and weak principals). Articulate in your leadership standards the expectations for both licensure levels.

Consider going beyond the two tiers to offer advanced or master endorsements to identify the most accomplished practitioners or offer teacher leader endorsements to identify effective teachers that want to expand their reach. But, be careful not to create unnecessary levels of licensure that inadvertently become artificial barriers to teachers seeking additional leadership roles.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are five major policy recommendations with a checklist of smaller goals for redesigning current licensure and re-licensure systems. More detail on each policy recommendation and sub-goal is provided in the following sections.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION	GOAL
Streamline and increase the rigor of licensure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a single licensure system for principals completing traditional or alternative preparation programs Limit the types of licenses provided
Develop an initial certification process focused on a skills demonstration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base initial licensure requirements on a limited number of critical inputs License based on a demonstration of the competencies necessary to lead a school Consider an additional provisional license for administrators enrolled in approved preparation programs
Create a renewal process focused on a demonstration of ongoing effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require license renewal on a regular basis Tie renewal decisions to effectiveness as a school leader and other critical competencies
Recognize ongoing achievements with a limited number of endorsements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for teacher leaders with an optional endorsement Incent and reward advanced achievements with additional endorsements
Work with other states to create a simple, but rigorous reciprocity process	<p>Work with other states to develop consensus regarding the definitions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical inputs for initial licensure Evidence of effectiveness for license renewal

STREAMLINE AND INCREASE THE RIGOR OF LICENSURE

License based on a demonstration of skills. For principals, this skill-based demonstration will be driven by the competencies outlined in your leadership standards, such as instructional leadership, adaptive leadership, setting school culture, using data to drive instruction, and other facets of the job that enable principals to strengthen teacher practice and drive higher student achievement. While you could develop a performance-based assessment, preparation programs are best situated to assess readiness since they have the ability observe candidate practice in an authentic setting as a part of program completion.

Goal: Provide a single licensure system for principals completing traditional or alternative preparation programs

Create a single license for entry into the profession, regardless of the pathway a principal took to get there. Ensure principal candidates—whether from an IHE, LEA, or non-profit based program—are ready for a full initial license by establishing a high bar for program approval. Creating one initial license will also support reciprocity across states.

Goal: Limit the types of licenses provided

Be careful not to create a complex licensure system with too many levels of licensure or endorsement. For example, it is not necessary to differentiate licenses for principals based on grade level (elementary or secondary) or type of school.

While tempting to create specific licenses and endorsements for various areas of expertise, licensure systems are more effective when they are streamlined and focused on a demonstration of critical skill sets. Detailed decisions regarding a principal's individual skills are better made by LEAs through robust hiring practices in the domain of selection and school match than during licensure at the state-level.

DEVELOP AN INITIAL CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOCUSED ON A SKILLS DEMONSTRATION

Require completion of an approved preparation program, including a robust clinical experience, and passage of any relevant performance assessments, for receipt of an initial—or probationary—license. This will reinforce your program approval requirement that preparation programs provide a hands-on practicum.

Goal: Base initial licensure requirements on a limited number of critical inputs

Require prospective leaders to demonstrate that they meet a limited number of requirements that correlate to effectiveness on the job to become licensed school leaders. Most important is graduation from an approved program or record of effective leadership as a principal in another state. Limit a probationary license to at least three years and no longer than five years. Set the frequency based on the number of years served in a principalship, not the number of years since the previous license was obtained. Also expect principals to have demonstrated the necessary competencies through either completion of an approved preparation program or a performance assessment (described below).

Goal: License based on a demonstration of the competencies necessary to lead a school

Determine sufficient skills in one of two ways. Either, base it on completion of an approved preparation program which requires demonstration of the necessary competencies to succeed. Or, base it on passage of a performance-based assessment that reflects authentic work of school leaders and is completed as a part of their principal pathway prior to initial licensure (described in more detail below). While either method provides important information on principal candidates, a preparation program with a hands-on clinical component can better assess future principals' performance in an authentic environment. Note: assessing competencies should not turn into a box-checking exercise. Both preparation program completion and performance-based assessments must measure skills that correlate with success on the job.

FROM THE FIELD: PERFORMANCE BASED LICENSURE EXAMS

While a number of states (including Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New York) are exploring or developing performance-based licensure exams, Indiana is moving forward with their partner Pearson to implement a new exam next school year. In response to concern that new principals were not prepared to carry out the increasingly complex expectations of the principalship, the new test aims to measure necessary competencies through practical applications and case-studies. It will replace Indiana's traditional multiple choice-test.

Or, consider establishing a new set of formal licensure assessments that would be required to earn a school leader license. Ground these assessments in your leadership standards and base them on research and best practices in certifying school leaders. In a robust entry assessment, require candidates to demonstrate their leadership skills and abilities in practice through real-life, school-based situations. Include in the process written, verbal and performance-based tasks, including simulations of realistic leadership situations (such as developing an entry plan, budget, or school improvement plan) and responses to video scenarios (such as supporting a teacher to diagnose student data and adjust instruction accordingly). Use data from performance assessments to serve as a determining factor in licensing decisions and share it with preparation programs to inform program improvement.

Goal: Consider an additional provisional license for administrators enrolled in approved preparation programs

Consider one potential addition to the two-tiered licensure system described above (with one initial or probationary license and one professional license). Add a third license for provisional certification of aspiring principals enrolled in an approved preparation program. Encourage deep clinical practice opportunities by creating this structure for provisional licensure that allows candidates enrolled in approved programs to serve as assistant principals. This method ensures that principal candidates are engaging in authentic leadership experiences and reduces the costs associated with full residency-based preparation. Place a specific expiration date on the provisional license and connect it to ongoing and successful participation in the preparation program. Revoke the license of any participant that is dismissed from the program. And, given the increasing expectations of teacher evaluation, train the provisionally licensed assistant principal to meet the requirements for observing and evaluating teacher practice.

FROM THE FIELD: TIERED LICENSURE

Rhode Island recently revised its teacher and principal certification standards based on Rhode Island's Strategic Plan and its Race to the Top (RTT) priority areas. A cross-office team was established to develop recommendations for the Board of Regents based on best practices from leading states and input from stakeholders in Rhode Island. New regulations were approved in November 2011. The changes included the creation of a tiered certification process, including a three-year initial license, a five-year professional license, and a seven-year advanced license. The latter two licenses are based on performance and renewal decisions are based on a determination of effectiveness rooted in the new evaluation system.

14. Wiseman, S. (2012). *Evaluating Efforts to Improve School Leadership: Challenges and Recommendations*. Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation.

CREATE A RENEWAL PROCESS FOCUSED ON A DEMONSTRATION OF ONGOING EFFECTIVENESS

Tie effectiveness data (from a robust evaluation system that reliably differentiates strong and weak principals) to license renewal. Grant a professional license to school leaders who have demonstrated effectiveness over time (according to fair and methodologically appropriate measures¹⁴). If quality data to measure effectiveness do not yet exist, create or improve data systems that enable fair and methodologically appropriate measures. A New Leaders commissioned report by the RAND Corporation provides states with guidance on how to address data challenges relevant to evaluating principal preparation programs (the aforementioned *Addressing Challenges in Evaluating School Principal Improvement Efforts*). As with program evaluation, provide adequate time for demonstrating effectiveness—at least three years' worth of data as a school leader must be collected before the first judgment of professional licensure is made. Include in the determinations appropriate measures of student outcomes as part of the full picture. Create a renewal process that maintains focus on outcomes, but does not create unnecessary hurdles.

Goal: Require license renewal on a regular basis

When establishing the frequency of renewal decisions, collect at least three years of data on principal on-the-job performance. Renewing a professional licensure every five years is reasonable. Set the frequency based on the number of years served in a principalship, not the number of years since the previous license was obtained. In this manner, renewal decisions will not be required when a principal is on leave.

Goal: Tie renewal decisions to effectiveness as a school leader and other critical competencies

In order to streamline the process and focus on the most important information, tie determinations directly to a robust evaluation system. Do not require principals to jump through a number of hoops in order to renew their licenses and link important data in a cohesive system. For example, if a principal ever falls to the ineffective rating on a single evaluation, or if a principal does not maintain an effective or above rating over a five year average, do not award a professional license. If an individual with an initial administrator's license is not immediately hired into a principal position, but serves in another administrative role (*e.g.*, an assistant principal) consider as part of license renewal data from his or her evaluations in that school leadership position.

If you do not yet have confidence in your evaluation system, consider additional factors in renewal decisions such as the submission of a professional development plan and how the principal has executed against it to demonstrate continued professional growth.

RECOGNIZE ONGOING ACHIEVEMENTS WITH A LIMITED NUMBER OF ENDORSEMENTS

Endorsements are a tool to develop a pipeline of change agents. Grow the bench of effective principals by encouraging effective teachers to become teacher leaders and aspiring principals.

For the endorsements described below, strongly consider the frequency of renewal and if a demonstration of specific skills or accomplishments will be required to gain renewal.

Goal: Provide opportunities for teacher leaders with an optional endorsement

By endorsing—instead of licensing—teacher leaders, you:

- Identify high-performing teachers and put them on career ladders.
- Utilize teachers in new leadership roles, such as peer evaluators.
- Provide a structure for job-embedded evaluation and support of teacher leaders, thus ensuring they are evaluated in their specific role—not as teachers or principals.

When endorsing a teacher as a teacher leader, consider a demonstrated pattern of effectiveness (based on your teacher evaluation system) as well as a demonstration of adult leadership potential and other necessary competencies. Since teacher leaders will take on a variety of leadership roles that will likely vary across schools and LEAs, ensure that your endorsement sends a clear signal regarding readiness for an expanded role. Receipt of this endorsement signal readiness for a role that allows them to grow in the teaching profession (such as taking responsibility for additional students or opening their classroom up to other teachers to observe their practice) or a role that provides opportunities to move towards school leadership (such as providing instructional coaching to peers, or serving on a school-wide leadership team). Of course, LEAs could consider additional criteria when hiring teacher leaders, but a state-level endorsement is an important first step.

Be careful not to create any unnecessary, process-driven requirements that act as barriers for teachers taking on increased leadership responsibilities or for principals drawing on the expertise of their teaching team. Teachers should still be able to take on new responsibilities without this endorsement; it serves to identify and honor excellent educators, not create barriers.

Also, take care not to inadvertently create a new “Master’s Degree Bump,” by which teachers receive a teacher leader endorsement for a salary increase but do not assume additional responsibilities. The goal of the endorsement is to signal that a teacher is ready to take on additional responsibilities. Only adjust salaries when a teacher is hired into this new role, not upon receipt of the endorsement.

Goal: Incent and reward advanced achievements with additional endorsements

Incent and reward high levels of performance—as well as increase retention rates and provide opportunities for growth—by creating additional endorsements to recognize outstanding principal performance. This serves as a signaling device to LEAs regarding the professional expertise of educators. Base additional endorsements on performance (as measured by a principal evaluation system) thereby maintaining a high standard and avoiding creating bureaucratic hurdles for principals deserving of recognition. Be clear on the goals for additional endorsements: are they intended to create an on-ramp for LEA leadership positions? Signal to LEAs that a principal is deserving of increased compensation and responsibilities? Facilitate reciprocity across states?

CREATE A SIMPLE, BUT RIGOROUS RECIPROCITY PROCESS

Work with other states to create a simple, but rigorous licensure reciprocity process for talented educators from other states to become certified. The system stands to consistently lose principals who seek out another profession rather than jump through complicated state licensing procedures.

Goal: Work with other states to develop consensus regarding the types and definitions of critical inputs for initial licensure

Many candidates for the principalship are trained in states other than the one in which they are hired to lead a school. Agreement on the types of evidence that principals need to receive an initial license develops confidence in comparability across states. Include the role of preparation programs in recommending candidates for licensure, how those programs (and their components such as clinical practice) are approved by each state, cut scores on licensure exams, and any other requirements. Discuss how the various states will hold preparation programs to rigorous program outcomes so as not to create perverse incentives for principal candidates to cross state lines to attend an institution with lower expectations.

Goal: Work with other states to develop consensus regarding the types and definitions of evidence of effectiveness for license renewal

While measures of student achievement and principal evaluation systems vary state-to-state, streamline certain evidence for renewal decisions in order to facilitate reciprocity among states. With the rollout of the new consortia assessment systems to measure student achievement aligned with college- and career-ready standards (The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)), states will have more comparable data points on which to draw. Even where states' systems do not align, agree on acceptable types of evidence to engender confidence that principals with experience and success in another state are fit to lead a school in your state.



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