For over a decade, significant amounts of time, human energy, and financial resources have been expended toward improving the preparation of school leaders. Much of that effort has been funded by philanthropies, most notably The Wallace Foundation, and by the federal government through its U.S. Department of Education School Leadership Program. Regardless of funding sources, the intent was to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative programs that ultimately improve P-12 student learning. Another intended outcome was sustained continuation of programs beyond funding period. This Brief presents findings from a 2011 study conducted by The Wallace Foundation to assess sustainability of its programs.

BACKGROUND
The Wallace Foundation spent approximately $220 million between 2000 and 2010 through grants and technical assistance to improve educational leadership in 24 states and 15 large urban districts. The goal was creation of a cohesive leadership system that assured principal effectiveness through alignment of state leadership standards, state policies, and innovative principal preparation and development. According to a RAND study, among 6 states that received sustained financial support from Wallace, only Delaware, Iowa, and Kentucky came closest to achieving fully developed and implemented cohesive leadership systems (Augustine et al., 2009).

Because 2010 was last year that The Wallace Foundation funded its “first generation” education leadership projects, the Foundation had the opportunity in 2011 to investigate which projects were sustained beyond funding. To gather specific data related to sustainability, a survey was sent to 30 grantees (15 states and 15 districts) that asked them to report the status of their work launched through Wallace’s financial support. All 30 grantees completed the survey; a subset of the group responded to additional data-collection probes for clarity.

Among the 140 projects that received grants from 2006 to 2010, 117 (84%) were still active in 2011 and 99 (71%) anticipate continuation through 2013. Further analysis revealed that the 140 initiatives could be grouped into one of four categories: (a) leadership programs (largest category); (b) policy changes; (c) establishment of nonprofit organizations to continue leadership work; and (d) development of assessment tools (smallest category). This Brief focuses only on Wallace-supported leadership programs.

Sustainability Findings
Grantees reported that 37 (82%) of the 45 aspiring leadership development programs and 6 (75%) of the 8 additional aspiring leader district-university programs existed in 2011. Of the 45 programs, 34 (76%) of the aspiring leadership development programs and 5 (63%) of additional programs are projected to be sustained through 2013. All 15 (100%) of the university-based programs supported by Wallace were operational in 2011 and projected to continue for the next two years.

Funding Sources
As would be expected, all 15 (100%) of the university programs sustained in 2011 and projected to continue through 2013 rely on university funding for financial stability; 2 also receive state or district funding, and 1 is supported by non-Wallace grants and contracts. In contrast, programs for aspiring principals delivered by districts or district-university partnerships rely on more of a mix of funding sources: 18 (53%) obtain university funding, 14 (41%) have state or district funding, 5 (15%) receive non-Wallace contracts and grants, 3 (9%) collect participant fees, 2 (6%) collect fees for service, and 1 (3%) receives federal funding.
Core Elements
In an open-ended question, grantees were asked to identify the core elements of their program. The four most commonly listed core elements for sustained university-based programs (N=14) and all aspiring-principal training programs (N=23) were the same: (a) ISLLC standards, (b) experiential learning, (c) internship or residency, and (d) cohort delivery model. The district-university programs (N=5) listed in order of frequency internship or residency, ISLLC standards, experiential learning, cohort delivery model, and rigorous in-take process. Although four aspiring training programs and two additional district-university programs identified focus on district needs as a core element, only one university-based program indicated focus on district needs was a core element.

Lessons Learned
These survey findings reinforced lessons learned by The Wallace Foundation that are relevant to universities and colleges that prepare principals. First, it is critically important to plan for sustainability at the outset of program development—with special attention given to leadership transitions that may occur during implementation. Second, selective hiring and on-the-job support for novice principals are essential components of effective school leadership. Sources listed in below provide additional information, most informed by research, about preparing effective principals.

Improving School Leadership
The work by The Wallace Foundation suggests that effective leadership described in this Brief requires four critical strategies: (a) defining the job of the principal and assistant principal, (b) providing high-quality training for aspiring school leaders, (c) hiring selectively, and (d) evaluating principal and giving them the on-the-job support they need. To assure that states, districts, universities, and other partners have the tools necessary to train, hire, support, and evaluate principals, the Foundation provides free access to its commissioned research reports, such as those listed in references below, through the Knowledge Center on its website (http://www.wallacefoundation.org).

References
Hitt, D. H., Tucker, P. D., & Young, M. D. (2012). The professional pipeline for educational leadership (White paper developed to inform the work of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration). Charlottesville, VA: UCEA.