A Research-Based Framework for District Effectiveness

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It is both a moral and political imperative to focus educational research on how to improve schools for all children. Typically, research on school effectiveness is conducted at the building level, but it is becoming abundantly clear that more attention must be paid to effective practices at the district level. Although the nature of the link between districts and student achievement is difficult to delineate, empirical evidence has indicated that districts matter.

The strongest empirical support for the role districts play in supporting student achievement is a series of studies conducted by Iatarola, Stiefel, and Schwartz (2002) and Galvin (2001). These studies used large-sample quantitative designs to explore the role of districts in school and student success. In 2002, Iatarola et al. reported on a study in New York City that analyzed 3 years of test score data while holding constant school, teacher, and student-level characteristics. Using regression analysis, these scholars found a statistically significant ($p < .01$) relationship between district effects and test scores. Galvin used hierarchical linear random analysis of variance to determine that 30% of the variance in statewide assessments over 5 years was due to district-level factors. In a related study, Galvin used a repeated-measure analysis with hierarchical linear modeling and found that 25% of variance in school-level performance in Utah could be attributed to district-level factors. Taken together, these studies established a relationship between district-level factors and school improvement and student learning. However, what is less clear is which district factors, from practices to structures, are most likely to support effective schools and consequently student success.

In our effort to take stock of both what is already known and what is yet to be explored, we began with the body of currently available evidence (Boote & Beile, 2005; Hallinger, 2013). Close to three decades have passed since the first major study was published on district effectiveness (Murphy & Hallinger, 1988); since then, hundreds of journal articles have been published. Taken together, this body of research provides insight into the characteristics of effective districts (Hightower, Knapp, Marsh, & McLauglin, 2002). Our definition of district effectiveness considers the influence of district-level practices that promote a mission of delivering high-quality and equitable educational experiences for each student. These practices are organized into three domains focused on (a) developing and delivering a high-quality education, (b) structuring and managing...
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Contributing to the Review

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Deadlines: April 1, August 1, December 15

The purpose of this study was to examine the body of research on effective district practices published over the last 30 years and develop a framework for district effectiveness that reflects that research. We sought to explore two research questions:

1. Is there evidence that district practices and structures matter for school performance and student achievement?
2. If so, what district practices and structures matter for effective schools and student achievement?

This examination of the literature on school district effectiveness revealed a significant amount of reliability among key findings related to the characteristics of district structures and practices. In the following sections, we provide an overview of our review methods and then present the Framework for District Effectiveness. Subsequently, we provide an overview of the evidence supporting the 13 practices described in the framework. We close by providing insight into productive directions for future research.

Methods and Database

Importantly, the methodology used for this exploratory research review of district practices was shaped by three goals: (a) to examine patterns among the research findings produced over the last 30 years; (b) to examine patterns among the methods, sample, and designs of the research studies; and (c) to assess the utility of the recommendations offered through this literature base for promoting district effectiveness in varying contexts. Within this paper, we present, in detail, our findings related to the first goal.

The first stage of our research review involved establishing a database of published research that reflected the above three goals. Our second step consisted of examining and comparing the studies included in our database with regard to their methods, samples, and research designs. Our third step included the development of the Framework for District Effectiveness based on patterns among the research findings. A fourth step involved an exploration of how studies in our database were used in subsequent district effectiveness literature. Finally, we examined our data within and across stages to draw out pertinent findings, implications, and recommendations.

Search Procedures

When we began our project, our focus included both district structures and practices. We identified literature to include in the review database using the search terms district practices and district structures. We applied the search terms within Google Scholar as well as seven EBSCO databases related to education: (a) Education Full Text (H.W. Wilson), (b) Education Index Retrospective: 1929–1983 (H.W. Wilson), (c) Education Research Complete, (d) ERIC, (e) Index to Legal Periodicals & Books Full Text (H.W. Wilson), (f) Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, and (g) SPORTDiscus with Full Text. Literature identified through these processes was reviewed and added to our database. Subsequently, we examined literature cited in these initial references for additional pieces to include in our review. Publications that were cited in two or more of our original sources were added to our list. This process continued until

the organization and its resources, and (c) supporting and leading people who work in schools and districts. Each of these practices is delineated in the framework for district effectiveness practice described in this paper.
the list of articles reached saturation.

For this review we examined a range of sources, including both empirical and conceptual scholarship. As noted above, we sought to include as much of the research relevant to our research questions. The total number of articles, reports, and books making up our original database was 237. Following a closer read of each publication, the database was reduced to 97 sources. Despite our efforts to conduct an exhaustive review of the existing research base between 1985 and 2014, we recognize we might have missed some relevant publications.

The final database consisted of publications representing different methodologies and publication outlets. Table 1 provides an overview of the publications included in the final sample. In total, around 51% of the sources were qualitative, 19% utilized mixed methods, 17% were conceptual, and 10% were quantitative studies.

Table 1
Summary of Publications in Final Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Reports</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Papers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed method</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over half of the publications included in the final database consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, which are deemed by the academic community as the most rigorous of the four publication types. The reports included in this review were drawn from a variety of centers, both university based and private. Fourteen of the studies came from university-based centers for educational research (e.g., the University of Washington Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy), and the remaining studies were produced by privately funded centers with a concentration on educational research (e.g., the Wallace Foundation). The sample also included seven books and book chapters along with three working and conference papers. Although these sources had not undergone peer review, they were included because they were cited in multiple comprehensive research reviews and journal articles.

Data Extraction and Treatment

Data extraction and treatment involved excerpting information from each of the pieces of scholarship included in our database and organizing them into an Excel chart. The chart included the following categories: (a) additional notes, (b) argument/questions, (c) citations, (d) connections, (e) district characteristics, (f) Framework for District Effectiveness themes (Anderson & Young, 2014), (g) methodology, (h) participants/study sample, (i) publication authors, (j) publication findings, (k) publication source, (l) publication title, (m) publication type, and (n) quality of research/methodology. The articles were reviewed to gather information for each cell. In some cases, information was directly extracted (e.g., research questions, descriptive information), whereas in other cases, information was summarized (e.g., ascertaining connections to other research). Finally, we gathered citation information from Google Scholar for each publication.

We reduced the number of sources included in our database by reviewing each source twice or more to ensure accurate data extraction. Then, we eliminated sources that did not fully satisfy our review criteria. To be included, the research must have (a) examined either district practices or district structures; (b) focused on district effectiveness; (c) been published during or after 1985; (d) resulted in an empirical study, a review of empirical research, or a conceptual piece that referenced key empirical pieces; and (e) taken place within the United States. The most common reason for removing a source from our database was its lack of relevancy to district effectiveness.

Data Evaluation and Analysis

After we developed an initial database of information, we were able to consider questions about the nature of this research base. As we explored the data, we took an iterative approach to our inquiry. A primary goal of this review was to examine the research findings in an effort to develop the Framework for District Effectiveness. Thus, our analysis involved a close examination of research findings for key themes and a comparison of findings across studies.

In addition to the above steps, it is important to share two additional items of information. First, our database initially included research focusing on district practices and structures. However, preliminary analyses yielded no significant relationships related to research questions concerning structures; as a result, publications focused on structures were removed from our database, and analyses of this research are not included in this publication. Second, although a goal of our larger project is to review the nature of research findings produced over the last 30 years, these results are not reported in this manuscript.

Findings

We have organized the review of research literature focused on the practices of effective districts into the Framework for District Effectiveness as displayed in Table 2. In this section, we share this framework, describe each of the 13 themes, and provide an assessment of the degree of research evidence supporting each.

Anchoring the Framework for District Effectiveness are two seminal pieces of research: Murphy and Hallinger (1988) and Leithwood (2010). Murphy and Hallinger’s “Characteristics of Instructionally Effective School Districts” was an exploratory study involving interviews with superintendents from 12 districts in California that were identified as effective, designed to identify a set of district characteristics that lead to greater school effectiveness. The authors divided their findings into major categories and subcategories.

The second study, published 22 years later by Leithwood (2010), was titled, “Characteristics of School Districts That Are Exceptionally Effective in Closing the Achievement Gap.” For this study, Leithwood conducted an extensive review of research and found the same eight characteristics elicited
by Murphy and Hallinger (1988), though he used different labels to describe those characteristics. These characteristics were (a) having a district-wide focus on student achievement; (b) using proven approaches to curriculum and instruction; (c) using evidence for planning, organizational learning, and accountability; (d) fostering a district-wide sense of efficacy; (e) building and maintaining good communications and relations, learning communities, and district culture; (f) investing in instructional leadership; (g) targeting and phasing in an orientation to school improvement beginning with interventions on low-performing schools and students; and (h) facilitating infrastructure alignment. In addition to confirming the findings of Murphy and Hallinger, Leithwood added two new characteristics: (i) implementing district-wide, job-embedded professional development; and (j) engaging strategically with the government’s agenda.

Table 2
A Framework for District Effectiveness: Practices, Definitions, and Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District practices</th>
<th>Definition of effective districts (EDs)</th>
<th>Primary source of definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain 1: Developing and Delivering a High-Quality Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a district-wide focus on student learning and instruction</td>
<td>Have a district-wide focus on student achievement; a vision about student achievement, including goals for high expectations and closing achievement gaps. An ED’s vision focuses on continuous improvement with a strategic plan for meeting goals.</td>
<td>Hallinger &amp; Murphy (1988); Leithwood (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use proven approaches to curriculum and instruction</td>
<td>Use proven approaches to curriculum and instructional approaches capable of achieving the standards, monitor the instructional and curriculum focus, and ensure the consistency and coordination of instructional activities. An ED aligns all elements of the technical core.</td>
<td>Hallinger &amp; Murphy (1988); Leithwood (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement professional development for leaders and teachers</td>
<td>Implement professional development for leaders and teachers. Ensure that development opportunities reflect the needs of individual schools, administrators, and teachers.</td>
<td>Leithwood (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in instructional leadership</td>
<td>Invest in instructional leadership. Ensure that time and money is allocated to professional development.</td>
<td>Hallinger &amp; Murphy (1988); Leithwood (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain 2: Structuring and Managing the Organization and its Resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate alignment of the infrastructure</td>
<td>Facilitate alignment of the infrastructure. They seek to provide a well-conceived efficient system that supports school autonomy and avoids layers of bureaucracy.</td>
<td>Hallinger &amp; Murphy (1988); Leithwood (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use evidence for planning, organizational learning, and accountability</td>
<td>Use evidence for planning, organizational learning, and accountability.</td>
<td>Hallinger &amp; Murphy (1988); Leithwood (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret and initiate policy to align with change agenda</td>
<td>Interpret and initiate policy to align with change agenda.</td>
<td>Leithwood (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have an openness to and capacity for change</td>
<td>Have an openness to and capacity for change.</td>
<td>Duke (2011); Petersen (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach school improvement in a directed and strategic manner</td>
<td>Approach school improvement in a directed and strategic manner.</td>
<td>Hallinger &amp; Murphy (1988); Leithwood (2010)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain 3: Supporting and Leading People in Schools and Districts</th>
<th>Definition of effective districts (EDs)</th>
<th>Primary source of definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build and maintain good communications, relationships, and district culture</td>
<td>EDs develop good relationships and a sense of community within the districts, establish collaborative and congenial working relations with school administrators and teachers, and nurture teacher–teacher relationships through support for professional learning communities. EDs also build external relationships by fostering board support and building close ties with external community groups.</td>
<td>Hallinger &amp; Murphy (1988); Leithwood (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster district-wide sense of efficacy</td>
<td>EDs provide extensive opportunities and organizational structures for teachers and administrators to develop expertise relevant to achieve the district’s goals and enhance staffs’ work and learning. School-level staff should be held in high regard, have autonomy, and share leadership.</td>
<td>Hallinger &amp; Murphy (1988); Leithwood (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place importance on personnel and the roles they play</td>
<td>EDs recognize the importance of school and district personnel and the roles they play as “boundary spanners” between the district, schools, and other entities. EDs carefully select individuals to work in key leadership positions and develop their human capital to foster strong district–school relationships, communication, and effective working relationships.</td>
<td>Honig (2003, 2006, 2008); Spillane &amp; Thompson (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus district on equity</td>
<td>EDs have explicit goals focused on fostering equity; highlight inequitable practices and results; and establish and implement policies, structures, programs, and practices intended to eradicate inequity, mitigate the negative effects of inequity, and support the success of all students. EDs align resource distribution, teaching practices, and personnel and staffing decisions with equity beliefs and goals.</td>
<td>Koschoreck (2001); Rorrer &amp; Skrla (2005); Rorrer et al. (2009); Skrla et al. (2000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplementing the 10 factors identified by Murphy and Hallinger (1988) and Leithwood (2010) are three additional themes with significant empirical evidence (i.e., appeared in more than one peer-reviewed, empirical research publication). They are (k) focusing the district on equity (Koschoreck, 2001; Rorrer & Skrla, 2005); (l) placing importance on the individual (Honig, 2003, 2006, 2008; Spillane & Thompson, 1997); and (m) having an openness and capacity to change (Duke, 2011; G. J. Peterson, 1999). All 13 themes and their definitions are included in our Framework for District Effectiveness as captured in Table 2.

Support for the Themes

We organized the support for the themes into four categories: strong, moderate, limited, and weak. Figure 1 shows the number of publications, by publication type, that emphasized each of the framework themes.

**Strong support.** As Figure 1 demonstrates, the theme with the strongest representation in our database was *facilitate infrastructure alignment*. This theme includes the alignment of financial allocations, personnel policies and procedures, and organizational structures, which are core responsibilities of the central office. The theme appeared in the literature base 65 times, appearing almost equally in peer-reviewed journal articles (n = 29) and reports (n = 28).

The next two themes are *have a district-wide focus on student achievement and build and maintain good communications and relations, learning communities, and district culture*. The focus on student achievement concentrates on instruction as the technical core of schooling and reflects the need to provide a high-quality education to all children. Evident in six fewer publications than the most cited theme, this theme was discussed in 31 peer-reviewed journal articles. This theme only appeared in 21 reports, as well as six books and two articles, contributing to a total of 59 references. Also with 59 total references, the *build and maintain good communications and relations, learning communities, and district culture* theme, as the definition in Table 2 conveys, represents a broad category of findings focused on the importance of strong internal and external relationships, including relationship building within central office, between central office and schools, between central office schools and the board, between central office schools and the community, and within the school community. We found evidence supporting this theme in 29 peer-reviewed journals and 22 reports, as well as five books and two articles.

The last theme that had a strong level of support, as compared to the other themes, is *use evidence for planning, organizational learning, and accountability*. This theme addresses the need for creating district-wide information systems and emphasizes data use for both instructional planning and accountability. Support for this theme was consistent across peer-reviewed journal articles (n = 22) and reports (n = 23), with some support in one article and four books.

**Moderate support.** Our analysis revealed a comparable base of support for the following four themes: *use proven approaches to curriculum and instruction; interpret and initiate policy to align with the change agenda; implement professional development for leaders and teachers; and invest in instructional leadership capacity*. These four themes were supported with 43–46 publications, including 16–29 journal articles, 11–21 reports, and an almost equal breakdown of articles (n = 0–3) and books (n = 3–4). All four of these themes have appeared more recently in the research base, with professional development and instructional leadership gaining popularity over the last
decade. As the role of the federal government in education increases, so does the importance of aligning district-level decision-making with the policies and resources provided by the government. Finally, the idea of using proven approaches to curriculum and instruction comes out of the reform research that often relies on the implementation of a proven strategy.

**Limited support.** Two more recently developed themes, place importance on district personnel and the roles they play and have an openness to and capacity for change, have limited support in the existing literature base. These themes were discussed within 39 and 37 publications, respectively, with nearly equal evidence for these themes appearing in peer-reviewed journal articles \((n = 20, n = 16)\) and reports \((n = 17, n = 16)\). Although the newer framework themes are less well supported in the research literature, our review of research indicated they are likely to become the focus of further research. There is an increasing understanding of the attention to district- and school-level personnel and the roles they play, calling attention to the need to fill those positions with strong people. Furthermore, there is growing support for the notion that districts must be prepared and dedicated to making the necessary changes to provide high-quality learning experiences to all students.

The next two themes, which were among the original eight effective district framework themes identified by Murphy and Hallinger (1988), also have limited support within our database. This limited support seems to have to do with a shift in the research towards district- and school-level reform. As the interest in school improvement and accountability has grown, so has support for these themes. These themes, foster a district-wide sense of efficacy and approach school improvement in a directed and strategic manner, had at least 29 supporting publications and 14 peer-reviewed journal articles supporting each theme.

**Weak support.** The theme with the weakest support is the need for the district to have a focus on district equity. Although this theme has not been prevalent in the current research base, it is an important emerging priority for districts. Seven peer-reviewed journal articles, nine reports, and one book, for a total of 17 sources of evidence, suggested districts should be fostering equity and implement policies, structures, programs, and practices intended to eradicate inequity.

**Citations by Methodology**

In addition to looking at support across the types of publication, we were interested in the methodology used in the study.
and how these research methods were distributed across the 13 themes. Figure 2 presents the total number of citations by methodology.

We found across the themes a fairly consistent breakdown of the methodology used to support each theme, with qualitative research making up the majority of the research. Two themes, use evidence for planning, organizational learning, and accountability and focus on district equity, have not been supported by any quantitative studies, which tend to have larger samples and be more generalizable and are not common in district effectiveness studies as a whole.

![Figure 2. Framework for District Effectiveness themes by methodology.](image)

**Conclusion**

Based on our review of three decades of literature on the practices of effective districts, we identified a consistent set of practices linked to district-wide improvement. The 13 key practices associated with enhanced school performance and student achievement have varying degrees of support. This differential support is to some degree due to the importance of the specific practice to district effectiveness. The level of support is also impacted by when the practice was first noted in the research. Although some of the practices arose 30 years ago and have continued to be identified in the research as important, such as building and maintaining good communications, the identification of other practices as important has surfaced more recently, such as a district-wide focus on equity.

The purpose of this Framework for District Effectiveness is to provide both researchers and practitioners a foundational awareness of the areas connected to highly effective districts. According to the research we reviewed, there is a significant and positive relationship between the 13 practices identified in the framework and district effectiveness. That is, the stronger a district’s practices are aligned with the 13 practices, the more likely the district is to have effective schools and strong student learning outcomes. Even with the limitations of this research base, which we discuss in detail in E. Anderson and Young (2014), we believe this framework can be used to guide further research and improvement efforts focused on district effectiveness.
One possibility for future research would be developing a survey tool, aligned with the framework, that provides a valid and reliable measure to test both the applicability and the generalizability of the framework. These data may help to identify which, if any, of the framework practices are of greater importance across and within various district contexts. Alternatively, the Framework for District Effectiveness provides a comprehensive examination of research on district effectiveness and as such contributes to contemporary understandings of district effectiveness. However, we contend that further research should be conducted on district effectiveness to help understand the relationships between the different variables within each practice and how they influence the effectiveness of a given district. Furthermore, although there is enough support to suggest that district leaders should consider the 13 practices when planning for improvement, there is not enough research to suggest that all parts of the framework are equally important to all districts (see also E. Anderson & Young, 2014). Our hope is that this framework will be instrumental in guiding research on effective district practices, particularly large-scale studies across a variety of district types. Such efforts would significantly expand our understanding of district effectiveness and contribute to the improvement of our schools and districts.

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Petersen, G. J. (2002). Singing the same tune: Principals’ and school board members’ perceptions of the superintendent’s role as instructional leader. *Journal of Educational Administration, 40*, 158–171. doi:10.1108/09578230210421114


New UCEA Review Point/Counterpoint Editor: Johanna P. Hanley

Johanna is a PhD student in Educational Administration and Policy at the University of Georgia. Her research interests include school choice, locally elected school boards, education finance, the politics of education, and school desegregation. Her dissertation research investigates how Los Angeles Unified School District board members make decisions regarding charter schools and the fiscal and political sustainability of the district, and how these debates and decisions are influenced by intermediary organizations. She currently works as a graduate research assistant on a William T. Grant Foundation-funded study, Intermediary Organizations and Education Policy: A Mixed-Methods Study of the Political Contexts of Research Utilization. The purpose of this study is to investigate how political contexts inform research utilization and to understand how intermediaries are working within and across urban district contexts around incentivist education policies in Los Angeles and New York City. In addition, Johanna works as a Governing Board Monitor for the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia and as an after-school program teacher at a charter school in Atlanta. She volunteers for a nonprofit, Educate West Point, working to improve access to education in Monrovia, Liberia. Contact Johanna regarding Point/Counterpoint articles at johanna.hanley@uga.edu.

The Ninth Principal Study of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)

by
Edward J. Fuller,
Michelle D. Young,
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Andrew Pendola, &
Kathleen M. Winn

The Pre-K-8 School Leader in 2018

A 10-Year Study

https://www.naesp.org/10-year-study

UCEA Convention Session:

122. The Elementary School Principals: Lessons Learned From the NAESP 10-Year Study
Friday November 16, 2018 9:30 to 10:45 am
Marriott Marquis Houston

See www.ucea.org for Convention details and updated schedule.
From the Director: 
Building Capacity for Program Excellence

Michelle D. Young  
UCEA Executive Director

Over the course of its history, UCEA has supported, sponsored, and engaged in significant efforts to support quality leadership development (e.g., sponsoring national commissions, supporting research taskforces, developing publication outlets, and facilitating professional learning opportunities for university faculty). In this essay, I discuss UCEA’s key contributions to supporting quality leadership development over the last two decades while I served as the Executive Director.

How do you change a storyline? For almost two decades, I have thought about and worked on this question. Prior to joining UCEA, I represented the University of Iowa on a state-wide taskforce focused on the supply of educational leaders in the state. At the time (late 1990s), some entities were predicting a shortage of educational leaders, given predicted retirements and perceptions about the increased difficulty and reduced desirability of the work of educational leadership. What quickly happened within this taskforce was a shift in focus from the quantity or availability of candidates to the quality of candidates and, in particular, their preparation.

The notion that university preparation might be to blame for the shortage of quality candidates, due to the quality of its program offerings, was both a new and disturbing concept for me. This issue had never come up during my graduate studies, and if it was a “hot topic” within UCEA and American Educational Research Association (AERA) convention programs, it wasn’t one that I followed. However, it was clear that this was not an issue to be ignored. It was one to be understood and challenged.

After joining UCEA, it seemed that the volume had been turned up on critiques of leadership preparation. This was due in large part to what UCEA and the UCEA Executive Director position represents to many stakeholders. For better or worse, UCEA = university leadership preparation. I no longer represented a single university within a single state; rather, I represented university preparation across the nation. As such, I quickly became very familiar with concerns about and critiques of leadership preparation.

The critiques of leadership preparation in the late 1990s and early 2000s weren’t much different than they are today. They focused on almost every feature and practice of preparation, including how students were recruited and selected into programs, who taught them, what they were taught, how they were taught, and where they were taught (Murphy, Young, Crow, & Ogawa, 2009), and the critiques generally painted all leadership preparation programs with the same critical brush. Rather than working to differentiate quality preparation programs from those that provided subpar preparation experiences, critics were content throwing the entire enterprise under the bus. The pedagogy and content of educational leadership preparation were common targets for critics. Coursework was described as disconnected from practice; fragmented; and composed primarily of war stories, faculty members’ pet research projects, and un-useful theory (Cooper & Boyd, 1987; Hess & Kelly, 2005; Peterson & Finn, 1985; Young, Petersen, & Short, 2002).

Programs were also portrayed as university cash cows, where the focus was more on bringing in tuition revenue than providing quality preparation experiences. Along these same lines, candidate abilities and intentions were questioned. Many were portrayed as seeking out a quick and easy way to attain a master’s degree to attain a salary bump, rather than being interested in or qualified to lead.

Quite frankly, after each opportunity to engage with critics of leadership preparation, I became more frustrated. There seemed to be an endless string of criticisms, concerns, and finger pointing, the majority of which lacked both evidence or ideas for how the field might address the more substantive concerns. I had been in my position of UCEA Executive Director for only a year, and it was clear that many leadership stakeholders were quite comfortable framing higher education as the cause for all leadership ills. Yet it was also clear that understanding and addressing the real challenges facing educational leadership could not be achieved by finger pointing. We needed a different and more effective strategy. We needed to chart a path forward that was both data based and collaborative.

A National Commission

Concerns about the quantity and quality of educational leaders drew quite a lot of attention, some from well-established scholars and organizations and some from individuals and entities new to educational leadership. For example, the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) had been working to develop and disseminate national standards for school leaders since the early 1990s. The Wallace Foundation had just begun to focus on leadership, and New Leaders for New Schools was poised to launch a national leadership development program. In most cases, the discussions, plans, and work took place in silos.

We discussed this silo phenomenon during an UCEA Executive Committee strategic planning meeting and agreed...
that the field needed to get in the same room, get on the same page, and develop a plan together. In the summer of 2001, my first Associate Director, George Petersen, and I worked with a group of educational leaders, researchers, and policymakers to establish the National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership Preparation (NCAELP; Young, 2004). NCAELP included representatives from all the major stakeholder groups in the U.S. educational leadership field. It was hoped that through facilitated deliberation these representatives would develop a common understanding of challenges concerning educational leadership preparation and a strategy for collaboratively addressing those challenges.

The commission held its first meeting in February 2002 at the Johnson Foundation’s Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. During this initial meeting, the commission focused its efforts on our vision for leadership and a path for attaining that vision. The commission members agreed that our ultimate goal and responsibility was to provide every student with an intellectually challenging and supportive education and that, to reach that goal, every school must be led by a highly trained, skilled, and knowledgeable leader.

There were a number of “aha” moments during the two-day meeting. For example, we found that commission members had more beliefs in common than not. We also discovered that the projections of leadership shortages were based on anecdotes, convenient data, and questionable methods, ushering in the realization that our field had no reliable way of predicting demand for new leaders. Similarly, concerns and claims about leadership preparation and candidate quality were rarely based on solid evidence. It was clear that the field lacked a strong base of evidence from which to make policy or practice recommendations. Thus, a major strand within UCEA’s postcommission work was building a research base on leadership preparation.

NCAELP commissioners identified several initial goals for moving forward: (a) developing a complex understanding of contemporary contextual factors affecting educational leadership and leadership preparation; (b) examining exceptional and innovative educational leadership preparation and professional development programs for insight into key features and practices; (c) defining clearly and precisely how educational leadership preparation and professional development support learning-focused leadership; and (d) creating action plans for preparation program change, evaluation, and continual improvement.

Additionally, the commissioners agreed that the field would be better served through collaboration. Young et al. (2002) offered the metaphor of a league as a framework for a new approach. The notion of a league, as described by Costas (2000), strips away superficial turf and boundary issues to reveal the interdependence of entities within a given industry:

A league is not like 30 restaurants on a busy street and each owner has no real concern about the success of the other 29. Properly understood, it is less like 30 different restaurants and much more like 30 franchises within a single restaurant chain. (p. 46)

In a league, members have the same ideal outcome in mind. As Young et al. (2002) further explained, they are competitive, they want the prestige of a five-star rating, but they are not trying to put each other out of business. Each unit (franchise) is dependent on the success of the other. Although the responsibility of each franchise is to win championships, they must also maintain an obligation to the welfare of the league as a whole. (p. 158)

Although relationships did not transform overnight, conversations began to focus more on understanding and working inclusively. A good example was the reconstitution of the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) to include organizations representing higher education. The ELCC, which served as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education specialty-area review organization for educational leadership preparation, originally was comprised of AASA, The School Superintendents Association; the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; the National Association of Secondary School Principals; and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Following the reconstitution, UCEA joined ELCC, and later the National Council for Professors of Educational Administration joined as well. This ensured that program reviewers and key decision makers represented both preparation and practice, and it provided additional opportunities for conversation and collaboration.

Building a Research Base

UCEA took the lead in mapping out the development of a research base on educational leadership preparation with a 2002 special issue of Educational Administration Quarterly featuring a set of commissioned papers that responded to the goals set by the national commission. The issue included six articles providing in-depth examinations of the field of educational leadership, including the practice of educational leadership; the preparation and development of educational leaders; the evaluation of programs; and the context within which practice, preparation, and development take place. Each set of authors took up the questions: “What do we know?” and, therefore, “what do we need to do next?”

Subsequently, UCEA worked with AERA Division A and the National Council for Professors of Educational Administration to develop the joint research taskforce on educational leadership preparation, where researchers worked in teams to identify, develop, and conduct research reviews and research projects focused on the history of leadership preparation, the context of leadership preparation, recruitment and selection, program content, program teaching practices, program delivery practices, candidate assessment, program assessment, faculty quality, and global trends in educational leadership preparation. The goals of this effort included both charting what was known and stimulating more and better research on the preparation of leaders (Young, 2004).

The taskforce worked over the course of several years. Teams expanded, new teams emerged, and members presented their findings at UCEA and AERA conferences. Faculty affiliated with other specialized groups, like the Leadership for Social Justice Special Interest Group, also turned their attention to issues of preparation (e.g., O’Malley & Capper,
The Handbook (Young & Crow, 2016; Young et al., 2009) offers a macro level perspective on the leadership preparation research base, charting research, exploring critical areas, and identifying significant gaps and unanswered questions. Chapters inform readers about what is known about a specific area of leadership preparation (e.g., pedagogy), highlight the nature of the research base (e.g., research type, depth of empirical evidence), and identify research questions that are critical to address as we move forward. The first Handbook maps the landscape of leadership preparation research, providing both a cohesive empirical assessment of the knowledge base and provided important insight into the methodological features, focus, and findings of research produced on leadership preparation up to 2005-2006 (Young et al., 2009). The Handbook also exposes a significant shortage of empirical research on the preparation of school leaders. As Kottkamp and Rusch (2009) put it, what scholars in our field have produced thus far is like a lot of islands sprinkled across a vast sea. A few islands are large because they consist of clusters of research done with different methods but focused on the same questions or problems, built upon one another to form substantial knowledge masses. A larger number of islands are small, arranged in archipelagoes, composed of loosely related research pieces generally about similar phenomena but spread out, not building solid knowledge masses. More numerous are tiny atolls sprinkled widely apart, with no possibility of building knowledge masses of substance. (p. 80)

What was known, we learned, was based on a limited set of methodological approaches, including descriptive, survey, and cross-sectional studies (Crow, Young, Murphy, & Ogawa, 2009).

These early efforts spurred and supported significant research activity on educational leadership preparation and development and have provided important resources for scholars, policymakers, and leadership preparation faculty. Though it is clear that more work is needed. As demonstrated by Browne-Ferrigno and Muth (2009) in the first Handbook, for example, research on the recruitment and selection of preparation program participants was too limited to specify what procedures or decision rules, if any, were actually driving recruitment and selection. While the volume of research has increased, we still need to know more about the practices that are used, their purposes, and their results.

Evaluating Leadership Preparation

During my first UCEA Plenary Session as UCEA Executive Director, Professor Robert Kottkamp implored UCEA to take up the question of how preparation matters. It was clear that much work needed to be done in this area, from gaining a sense of what UCEA programs were doing and what candidates were learning to what graduates were able to do once in a leadership position as a result of their preparation. Working in collaboration with the Learning and Teaching in Educational Leadership (LTEL) Special Interest Group of the AERA, the two groups developed an evaluation research taskforce, which worked with a national network of programs to think through and begin to develop a process for evaluating leadership preparation.

Taskforce members created and piloted surveys of various sizes and foci and developed a logic model of how preparation impacts leadership learning and practice, charting the path toward understanding the impact of leadership preparation. Although contributors to the Handbook identified few publications focused on evidence of impact, research efforts focused on the evaluation of leadership appeared to be increasing starting in 2001. A similar increase was reported in several other areas as well, particularly research focused on candidates (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2009), faculty (Hackmann, Bauer, Cambron-McCabe, & Quinn, 2009), and efforts to develop national databases of information on leadership preparation (Orr & Barber, 2009). However, the lack of large-scale studies at the state or national level, authors agreed, continued to limit our understanding of quality leadership preparation.

In an effort to provide a central housing for data and to establish survey validity, UCEA developed the National Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice, with several goals, including (a) developing additional survey instruments; (b) establishing a national longitudinal database of program data to support research and program improvement; (c) developing evaluation training and data analysis resources; (d) establishing strategies for tracking graduate outcomes from preparation programs; and (e) intentionally working to share research with preparation programs, policymakers, and other stakeholder communities. The UCEA center adopted and revised the survey in 2008 and named it the School Leadership Preparation Program Survey (Pounder, 2012). In 2011, representatives of UCEA center and the Utah Education Policy Center established the Initiative...
for Systemic Program Improvement through Research in Educational Leadership (INSPIRE) Leadership Collaborative to reconstruct, expand, and validate a set of aligned survey instruments that could be used by UCEA and other preparation program providers to inventory program practices, obtain graduates’ perceptions of their preparation, and collect 360-degree data of the practice of program graduates once they have obtained a leadership position. As a result of this research and development work, the INSPIRE Leadership Collaborative launched the new INSPIRE Leadership Survey Suite in 2013.

The INSPIRE Leadership Survey Suite provides valid and reliable data that examine the programmatic elements of educational leadership preparation programs and the experiences of program participants as well as those participants once they have taken leadership positions. The INSPIRE Leadership Surveys are aligned to PSEL and NELP standards and provide data to help programs examine relationships between their program features, graduate students’ experiences and their practice once they assume leadership roles. (Anderson et al., 2017, p. 3)

Currently, the primary users of the INSPIRE surveys are leadership preparation providers who are interested in engaging in data-informed, continuous program improvement and who participate in the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation leadership program review process. However, the standards could be used at a state level to gain a better sense of program quality.

In 2013, the Alliance to Reform Educational Leadership (AREL) published an influential report titled Operating in the Dark, an analysis of AREL’s Principal Policy State Survey findings. The report explored how states used their authority to increase the supply of effective principals. The findings, based on self-reported data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia, drew attention to the significant lack of data that states had available about educational leadership. The AREL provided a set of recommendations for how states could use their authority to strengthen principal effectiveness standards, principal preparation program oversight, principal licensure, and principal outcome data. A subsequent critique of the report by Young and Fuller (2013) noted that while AREL’s efforts to encourage the participation of state education officials and policymakers in ensuring high-quality principal preparation programs and the call for states to collect both more data and more accurate data about school leaders and their preparation programs were important, the specific recommendations concerning how to measure program quality were inappropriate and lacked a sophisticated understanding of quality leadership preparation and the principal pipeline.

Without question, states can play a critical role in improving principal preparation. They are uniquely positioned to ensure that program quality improves because they often have specific statutory authority to do so. For example, most states grant initial and ongoing approval for principal preparation programs to operate, and they issue licenses for individuals to serve as principals. Despite their central role in authorizing principal preparation programs, states lack strong models for assessing the quality of programs to promote improvement, and they rarely have the resources to support program redesign effectively or to sustain program improvement efforts over time.

Based on an understanding that a growing number of states will develop statewide systems for evaluating leadership preparation but will lack the expertise to do so effectively, in 2013 UCEA began working with New Leaders to develop a research-based evaluation tool kit for states: the State Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation Programs (SEP3) ToolKit (Ikemoto, Keleman, Tucker, & Young, 2016). The SEP3-ToolKit includes a state guidance document, a program evaluation model, and a set of tools designed to provide state education agencies with detailed guidance on fair and reasonable data sources and processes such agencies might use to evaluate preparation programs. The model reflects the research-based logic model developed by the UCEA-LTEL evaluation taskforce on how leadership preparation impacts leader practice and includes five categories of indicators that reflect program inputs, program processes, program outputs, graduate outcomes, and student outcomes. The individual tools include a state self-assessment of readiness, goals, and resources; an annual evaluation report that includes state-gathered data sources; an in-depth review process that includes a program review rubric; and a variety of related research and resources related to the evaluation of educational leadership preparation programs.

**National Standards for Preparation**

Integral to the evaluation of educational leadership preparation programs is ensuring that the standards used for program development and accreditation review reflect the growing body of research on leadership preparation. Standards became firmly established in educational leadership beginning in the mid-1990s when 24 states and major professional associations developed the first set of standards for educational leaders: the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. Approved by NPBEA in 1996, the ISLLC standards standards were revised in 2008 and again in 2015, the latter effort resulting in a change of name to the Practice Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL). As a member of the NPBEA, UCEA has played an important role in the development of the ISLLC standards, and during the development of the new PSEL standards, I served as a member of the standards steering committee along with Joseph Murphy and our colleagues from the Council of Chief State School Officers.

Since the early 2000s, the ELCC standards have informed the work of educational leadership preparation, playing an important role in setting commonly agreed-upon expectations for effective leadership and providing a conceptual framework that guides preparation, practice, and policy (Young & Mawhinney, 2012). Scholars who have conducted research on the influence of the standards have indicated that a growing number of educational leadership preparation programs are aligned either directly or indirectly with ELCC standards, including the ELCC standard on the internship (Machado & Cline, 2010; Young, Mawhinney, & Reed, 2016). Whereas the ISLLC standards offered guidance for a host of policy efforts at the national, state, and local levels that inform practice, the ELCC
program standards provided specific direction for preparation programs and were used for program review and accreditation of building- and district-level leadership preparation programs.

The revision of the ISLLC in 2015 resulted in a need to revamp the preparation standards, an effort I chaired and that just recently concluded with the approval of the standards by NPBEA and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Similar to ISLLC being renamed the PSEL standards, the ELLC standards were renamed the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards (Young, 2015). The new NELP standards provide guidance for both building and district-level leadership preparation programs, and the new standards documents include a wider variety of resources for program and candidate assessment. Additionally, we created a companion guide for leadership preparation programs to use in their program development and continuous improvement work. In addition to the standards’ use by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation to review educational leadership preparation programs, states increasingly are in the process of adopting these national preparation standards as well. Furthermore, 13 states use the School Leadership Licensure Assessment, which is aligned to both the PSEL and NELP, providing an important leverage for standards-based alignment of preparation.

Supporting Programs Directly

As described above, UCEA has implemented several high-impact initiatives focused on supporting quality in educational leadership preparation, including its participation in the development of leadership and program standards, its investment in developing the research base focused on educational leadership preparation, and its program evaluation work. This work has been complemented by efforts to directly support leadership preparation programs and faculty. Prior to my joining UCEA, for example, UCEA established the Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, and prior to that UCEA supported an ambitious simulations project called the Monroe City School District simulation. Within the last 20 years, efforts have included the Developing Leaders to Support Diverse Learners (LSDL) curriculum development initiative, the UCEA Program Design Network (PDN), and UCEA Study Visits to exemplary preparation programs.

The LSDL project began as the Urban Leadership Development Initiative in 2007, when faculty from UCEA member institutions with urban leadership programs gathered together to identify signature pedagogy and recommended curriculum for the development of urban leaders who could support equity and social justice. UCEA’s Powerful Learning Experiences framework was developed as a result of this work. Powerful learning experiences have the following nine features:

1. They are authentic, meaningful, relevant, problem-finding activities.
2. They involve sense-making around critical problems of practice.
3. They involve exploration, critique, and deconstruction from an equity perspective (e.g., race, culture, language).
4. They require collaboration and interdependence.
5. They develop confidence in leadership.
6. They place both the professor and the student in a learning situation.
7. They empower learners and make them responsible for their own learning.
8. They shift the perspective from classroom to school, district, or state level.
9. They have a reflective component.

The Powerful Learning Experiences framework is designed to engage learners in authentic problems of practice, problems they are likely to face when they assume leadership positions (Young, 2011).

Several years later, we were able to focus our efforts even further and support its impact with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Secondary Education. Seven institutions teamed up to develop curriculum modules intended to foster opportunities for powerful learning in the educational leadership classroom. The developers asserted,

If we intentionally design comprehensive and connected learning experiences situated in authentic contexts that provide graduate students the opportunities to explore and apply leadership knowledge and skills, and disseminate these modules to leadership faculty then together, we will develop leaders who can address increasingly complex challenges so that all children do learn. (UCEA, 2014)

The LSDL developers focused on student-centered, active learning intended to promote content mastery, improved practice, and the ability to think critically. In the LSDL project, learning experiences that reflected these goals were considered Powerful Learning Experiences.

Starting in the fall of 2016, the UCEA launched the PDN for UCEA member institutions interested in engaging in program design, redesign, or improvement efforts. The initiative was structured to engage UCEA faculty within cross-institutional teams in one of five facilitated networked improvement communities (NICs) to support efforts to engage in program design, redesign, or improvement. After completing a program self-evaluation, program faculty in each one of the NICs identified an area for (re)design. NIC meetings were then designed to support dialogue, inquiry, and analysis to understand the participating programs’ organizational contexts, program strengths, theories of action, and articulated steps to advance improvement efforts. The improvement work involved purposeful collaboration to address the following fundamental questions around each PD-NIC problem of practice:

1. What are we trying to accomplish?
2. How will we know that a given change is an improvement?
3. What changes can we make that will result in improvement?
4. What will we do next, based on what we have learned?

A signature component of the UCEA-PDN is the UCEA Study Visit. Study visits were organized around PD-NIC focal areas and took place at universities whose leadership preparation programs were recognized by the UCEA-sponsored...
Excellence in Educational Leadership Preparation award. The Excellence in Educational Leadership Preparation award was created in 2012 to recognize those programs that demonstrate excellence in educational leadership preparation, strong alignment to UCEA membership standards, and commitment to UCEA’s mission to advance the preparation and practice of the educational leaders for the benefit of all children and schools.

The purpose of the Study Visits is to coordinate inquiry-based experiences for educational leadership faculty that offer an opportunity to see and experience exemplary leadership preparation programs and practices. During Study Visits, PDNIC faculty members visit with faculty, students, and district partners; observe faculty meetings and processes; engage in activities that foster exploration of key issues in leadership preparation design, delivery, and sustainability; and engage in generative discussions that foster the deepening of professional knowledge and spark program innovation. For example, during the Study Visit to North Carolina State University, visitors had an opportunity to learn more about, explore, and participate in the university’s candidate assessment day and selection process. It was a Powerful Learning Experience that generated questions and ideas and spurred change.

Where We Are Today

Where are we today? In many respects our field is in a much stronger position today than it was two decades ago. We have a much stronger research base on both leadership practice and preparation. We have program faculty dedicating their careers to supporting quality preparation in ways and numbers that outpace prior periods. We have partnerships with districts, professional organizations, and policymakers that are substantive and focused on mutually agreed-upon goals: to foster the development of high-quality leaders. We have programs to point to that exemplify quality leadership preparation. We have research-based preparation standards, evaluation tools and program resources. All of these assets (and others I didn’t highlight) matter, and they are supporting exciting and high-quality work. None of this would have been possible if not for the dedicated efforts of UCEA member faculty.

We have changed the storyline. Although the story may not be exactly as we wish, we have changed it, and through continued efforts in research, development and application, we will continue to change it. Providing high-quality preparation is an enduring challenge. As knowledge, expectations, demographics, politics, and technology change, so must leadership practice and preparation. To move the field forward will require a continuous concerted effort to build knowledge around key questions—the kinds of questions we have been asking others that are emerging as a result of that work. Furthermore, it will require continued collaboration among faculty and between stakeholder groups. Finally, there is more to changing a storyline than evidence, partnerships, and examples of effective practice. Though these are the substantive elements, we also must get smarter about framing and managing our stories for external audiences.

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Murphy, J., Young, M. D., Crow, G. M., & Ogawa, R. T. (2009). Exploring the broad terrain of leadership preparation in
Statement From the UCEA Executive Committee and Headquarters Regarding the Trump Administration’s Detention of Immigrant Children

As members of the Executive Committee of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), we represent a global community of professionals dedicated to preparing educational leaders and influencing local, state, and national educational policy to benefit children. With almost 100 member institutions, we are deeply committed to fostering the well-being of all children, especially those who are most vulnerable. We stand with immigrant families and support their human rights. We are appalled by the inhumane treatment of children and their families as they enter the United States. While a recent executive order ends the future separation of young children from their families, it does not address the grave psychological harm and trauma these children have already endured while separated from their families. We continue to fight for their human and civil rights.

We join with other educational organizations around the country in speaking up against such harmful policies. UCEA is an organization dedicated to inclusive practices that act in the best interests of all children. As such, we strongly encourage faculty members in principal preparation programs to discuss the impact of such immigration policies in their courses, and to include activities that will support the development of aspiring school leaders who may face these issues directly with the students and families that they serve. We also encourage engagement in the policy realm to help protect vulnerable children from trauma and harm. Such examples of engaged learning and research will help to prepare future school leaders to make better informed decisions rooted in social justice.

UCEA Executive Committee
June 27, 2018

Have you checked out the Quality Leadership Matters blog? Updates, initiatives, and more.

http://www.ucea.org/blog/
Has the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) been on your radar? At the risk of overloading already stressed attention spans at the start of new academic years, let me explain why reauthorization of the HEA should be on your radar, as these important developments have the potential to be hugely impactful for educational leadership program and faculty.

Title II of the HEA Impacts all Educator Prep Programs

The HEA was last authorized in 2008, and debates on reauthorizing the legislation have emerged on Capitol Hill (Douglas-Gabriel, 2018). Partisan legislation to reauthorize the entire HEA has been presented by both sides of the aisle (Garza, 2018). Here I focus specifically on proposals to amend Title II of the HEA (U.S. Department of Education, 2017), as its provisions specifically for the preparation of educators (Teacher Quality Partnership Grants) and accountability for preparation programs (state and institutional report cards) are most relevant for educational leadership providers. The legislative calendar is highly unlikely to have room the remainder of this year for the HEA. Thus, the time to help shape strong higher education policy is now before proposals are fully solidified and partisan lines drawn. Read on to learn about key points of proposed legislation on which to provide feedback to inform the legislative vehicle moved forward in 2019 (or whenever Congress acts).

There Are Two Proposals Presenting Vastly Different Views of Educator Prep

At the end of July 2018, Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) introduced a bill to amend Title II of the HEA, entitled Preparing and Retaining Education Professionals (PREP) Act (Kaine, 2018). A few days later, Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Michael Bennet (D-CO), John Cornyn (R-TX), and Mark Warner (D-VA) introduced a competing bill that also sought to amend Title II of the HEA (U.S. Department of Education, 2017), as its provisions specifically for the preparation of educators (Teacher Quality Partnership Grants) and accountability for preparation programs (state and institutional report cards) are most relevant for educational leadership providers. The legislative calendar is highly unlikely to have room the remainder of this year for the HEA. Thus, the time to help shape strong higher education policy is now before proposals are fully solidified and partisan lines drawn. Read on to learn about key points of proposed legislation on which to provide feedback to inform the legislative vehicle moved forward in 2019 (or whenever Congress acts).

Key Difference 1: Who May Provide Educator Preparation?

The LEADER Act and PREP Act make different provisions for alternative preparation providers and have different accreditation requirements. Please see Table 1 for comparative text from both legislative proposals along with the text from the currently authorized HEA legislation. The emphasis in bold is added by the author.

The LEADER Act opens up pathways to provide partnership grants to alternative providers and does not emphasize state certification requirements. The PREP Act specifies the need for a graduate-level program and state certification requirements.

From the standpoint of maintaining the highest quality leadership preparation programs, all programs—alternative and traditional—must be subjected to the same accountability requirements. It is equally critical that rigorous state accreditation requirements are strongly enforced as a means to maintain quality.

In addition to legislative language establishing the definition of a partnership eligible for funding under grants authorized by Title II of the HEA, the proposals also include distinct differences in their definition of partner institutions. Again, please see in Table 2 comparative text from both legislative proposals along with the text from the currently authorized HEA legislation. The emphasis in bold is added by the author.

Key Difference 2: Who Are High-Need Local Education Agencies (LEAs)?

The LEADER Act defines the term high-need LEA as one for which “not less than 20% of the children served by the agency are children from low-income families.” This is unchanged from current HEA legislation. The PREP Act requires that 40% of children come from low-income families.

The PREP Act continues to refine the definition of high-need LEAs by adding explicit language focusing on the need to document teacher and leader shortages, which is not included in either the LEADER Act or current HEA legislation. The PREP Act stipulates that in addition to having 40% of children come from low-income families, high-need LEAs have

- a high percentage of teachers not teaching in the academic subject areas or grade levels in which the teachers were prepared or fully certified to teach;
- a high teacher turnover rate or a high percentage of teachers with emergency, provisional, or temporary certification of licensure;
- a high percentage of positions in state-identified areas of teacher of school leader shortage; and
- a majority of schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement.
### Table 1
**Definition of Eligible Partnership From Current HEA Legislation and Proposed Changes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **LEADER Act**   | The term “eligible partnership” means an eligible entity that is in partnership with at least one of the following entities whose practices have a demonstrated record of success:  
|                  | • a school, department or program of education within such partner institution, which may include an existing teacher or school leader professional development program with proven outcomes that provides intensive and sustained collaboration between faculty, or program staff, and local education agencies consistent with the requirements of this title  
|                  | • Any entity operating a program that provides alternative routes to State certification of teachers or school leaders  
|                  | • A public or private non-profit educational organization                                                                                                                                              |
| **PREP Act**     | The term “eligible partnership” means an entity that SHALL include:  
|                  | • a school, department or program of education within such partner institution, including a graduate level program, that is State-accredited and is eligible to receive federal funds under title IV, which may include an existing teacher or school leader preparation program with proven outcomes within a 4-year institution of higher education that provides intensive and sustained collaboration between faculty and local educational agencies consistent with the title  
|                  | The term “eligible partnership” means an entity that MAY include any of the following:  
|                  | • A public or private non-profit educational organization  
|                  | • A teacher or school leader organization  
|                  | • A State accredited non-profit entity that is eligible to receive funding under title IV operating a program that provides alternative routes to State certification of teachers of school leaders                                                                 |
| **Current HEA legislation** | • A public or private nonprofit educational organization  
|                  | • A teacher organization  
|                  | • An entity operating a program that provides alternative routes to State certification of teachers                                                                                                                                 |

*Note:* LEADER = Teacher and School Leaders Need Education and Development to Be Empowered Resources in Schools. PREP = Preparing and Retaining Education Professionals. HEA = Higher Education Act. Note that not all eligible entities are listed for the sake of brevity. Attention was focused on where the bills diverged.

### Table 2
**Definition of Eligible Partner Institutions From Current HEA Legislation and Proposed Changes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEADER Act</strong></td>
<td>The term “partner institution” means an institution of higher education (which may be a 2-year institution of higher education offering a dual program with a 4-year institution of higher education), a local educational agency, or a private nonprofit organization that is participating in an eligible partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREP Act</strong></td>
<td>The term “partner institution” means a public or non-profit institution of higher education eligible to receive Federal funds under Title IV, which may include a 2-year State or regionally accredited institution of higher education offering a dual program with a 4-year State accredited institution of higher education, participating in an eligible partnership that has a State-accredited teacher, or, where relevant, school leader, preparation program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current HEA legislation</strong></td>
<td>The term “partner institution” means an institution of higher education, which may include a 2-year institution of higher education offering a dual program with a 4-year institution of higher education, participating in an eligible partnership that has a teacher preparation program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* LEADER = Teacher and School Leaders Need Education and Development to Be Empowered Resources in Schools. PREP = Preparing and Retaining Education Professionals. HEA = Higher Education Act.
Similar to the detailed description of the high-need LEAs, the PREP Act includes qualifications for the definition of a high-needs school, including that 50% of enrolled elementary students and 40% of enrolled secondary students come from low-income families.

The proposed changes are significant because in defining partnerships eligible for grant funding, both the PREP and LEADER Acts require participation by high-need LEAs. Raising the threshold for qualification as a high-need LEA will focus the support to LEAs most in need. The nuances in the PREP Act’s definition of a high-need LEA will ensure that support is dedicated to schools with demonstrated cases of teacher and leader shortages.

Key Difference 3: How Will Grant Applications Be Evaluated?

The HEA, Title II proposals also contain significant differences in their stated priorities to be given when considering applications. The language in Table 3 is taken from the legislative text with emphasis added by the author. Note that in explicitly encouraging a “broad base” of partnerships, the legislative text in the LEADER Act is promoting grant applications in the HEA outside of institutions of higher education, including businesses (see Key Difference 1 about the definition of an eligible institution). Notably, the PREP Act again reinforces the notion of addressing teacher and leader shortages and promoting diversity in the workforce.

Each legislative proposal also includes explicit language on how the grant applications will be evaluated, which reveals key differences. See Table 4.

Table 3
Funding Priorities in Considering Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADER Act</th>
<th>PREP ACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Eligible partnerships that include a partner institution whose teacher or school leader preparation program has a rigorous selection process to ensure the highest quality of students entering such program</td>
<td>• Support a State-accredited teacher or school leader preparation program that has a rigorous selection process and demonstrated success in having a diverse set of candidates complete the program, and entering and remaining in the profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High-quality applicants, including those whose practices have the strongest evidence of effectiveness in preparing teachers, teacher leaders, principals or other school leaders</td>
<td>• Provide a 1-year preservice clinical or residency experience that includes the integration of coursework and clinical practice and offers cohorts of candidates the opportunity to learn to teach or lead in partner schools or teaching academies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equitable geographic distribution of grants among rural and urban areas</td>
<td>• Provide for an equitable geographic distribution of grants among rural and urban areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Applicants from a broad base of eligible partnerships that involve businesses and community organizations</td>
<td>• Address rural teacher and leader shortages or increase the diversity of the teacher and leader workforce (including through supporting Grow Your Own models and partnerships between community colleges and 4-year institutions of higher education)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. LEADER = Teacher and School Leaders Need Education and Development to Be Empowered Resources in Schools. PREP = Preparing and Retaining Education Professionals. HEA = Higher Education Act.

Table 4
Basis of Evaluation of Partnership Grant Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADER Act</th>
<th>PREP ACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The percentage of program participants who complete the program</td>
<td>• School leader retention in the first 3 years and the first 5 years of a school leader’s career after completion of the program and attainment of State certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The percentage of program participants who, subsequent to completing the program, receive full State licensure for positions in school leadership</td>
<td>• Improvement in the pass rates and scaled scores for initial State certification or licensure of school leaders, including performance on a school leader performance assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The percentage of program completers who subsequently take school leadership positions in the high-need local educational agencies (LEAs) in the eligible partnership</td>
<td>• Percentage of school leaders by the high-need LEA who lead in a high-need school, disaggregated by the elementary and secondary school levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The percentage of program completers who subsequently take school leadership positions in the high-need schools served by the high-need LEAs participating in the eligible partnership</td>
<td>• Where available, data from the high-need LEA including strengths and weaknesses of school leader candidates that would inform improvements in the partner institution’s program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The percentage of program completers retained in school leadership positions in the high-need LEAs participating in the eligible partnership and in the high-need schools served by such agencies for 3 or more years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Difference 4: How to Promote the Diversity of School Leaders?

The PREP Act uniquely provides explicit attention to “Grow Your Own programs eligible for grant funding to address subject or geographic areas of teacher or school leader shortages or increase diversity of the teacher or school leader workforce.” The PREP Act also includes specific provisions to support predominantly Black institutions and other minority-serving institutions to promote a diverse educator workforce. The LEADER Act, however, requires the director of the Institute of Education Sciences to independently evaluate the effectiveness of grant programs and conduct research to identify effective teacher and school leader preparation practices.

Act Now

The stakes for reauthorization of the HEA are exceedingly high for universities, leadership preparation programs, and, in particular, university-based leadership preparation programs. All invested and interested parties are encouraged to focus attention to recent legislative proposals. Adding a voice of research and knowledge of best practices will help ensure that the next reauthorization of the HEA supports the highest quality preparation for school leaders.

References


NOTE: Attend UCEA Convention Session 250, The Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act: What You Need to Know! Saturday November 17, 12:00 to 1:10 pm, with Marcy Reedy, Ed Fuller, Maricela Oliva, and Victor Saenz.
School Leader Standards From ISLLC to PSEL: Notes on Their Development and the Work Ahead

Mark A. Smylie
University of Illinois at Chicago (Emeritus)

Joseph Murphy
Vanderbilt University

It has been more than 20 years since Scott Thomson and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) initiated the creation of professional standards for school leaders. In retrospect, the beginning of the work was an amazingly low-keyed, straight-forward, noncontentious effort to forge standards that states could use to strengthen school leadership. Using a “committee of the whole” approach, the ad hoc Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) developed the first set of standards in 1996 (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 1996). These first ISLLC standards were endorsed by each of the consortium’s 24 state members. In 2008, the NPBEA decided to update the 1996 ISLLC standards. It constituted a task force that revised the standards, and the board approved them before the end of that year (CCSSO, 2008). In 2014, responding to growth in the knowledge base and changes in the job of school leadership, it was decided to further update the standards. Through the work of several committees representing research, practice, and policy arms of the profession, as well as through several public and stakeholder reviews, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) were created and approved by NPBEA in late 2015 (NPBEA, 2015).1

PSEL 2015 represents a significant step forward in the history of the standards. This version of the standards stands on the solid building blocks of the 1996 and 2008 ISLLC standards and extends and elaborates them. PSEL 2015 looks to the future and to the leadership required to address the challenges and opportunities to come. As with preceding versions of the standards, PSEL 2015 holds great potential to advance the profession of school leadership and promote students’ success in school. Yet, as we have learned from more than 20 years of living and working with the ISLLC standards, the real contributions of PSEL 2015 will come with the hard work that follows their development and approval.

In this essay, we examine briefly developments in several important elements of the standards, from ISLLC to PSEL. We outline three crucial areas of work that lie ahead and conclude with a discussion of the important roles that higher education can play in this work.

Developments in the Standards

Several important elements of the standards have developed from ISLLC to PSEL. These developments stand to enhance the prospects that the standards will contribute to advancement of the profession and student success. Here we look at four elements.

1 NPBEA member organizations included at the time the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, American Association of School Administrations, Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation, CCSSO, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Council of Professors of Educational Administration, National School Boards Association, and UCEA.

Foundations of Knowledge About School Leadership

First, the development of school leader standards during the past 20 years has been driven by dynamic, expanding, and deepening foundations of knowledge. This knowledge, from both research and practice, anchors leadership on understandings of good schools and elements of schools and classrooms that promote student success (Murphy, 2017). As understanding of what is required for students to succeed has evolved, so too have the standards.

This evolution is illustrated in the movement away from the near monopoly enjoyed by academic research in developing the standards and toward a more inclusive fund of knowledge from both research and the practice of leadership. There has been a shift from an emphasis on the management sciences and their focus on discrete functions of leadership (e.g., personnel administration, budgeting, facilities management, etc.) to an emphasis on leadership of the core function of schooling—student instruction. Moreover, the emphasis has shifted toward more systemic and organizational perspectives on leadership. These developments better reflect the realities of schools and leadership practice.

Just as important has been the greater infusion of knowledge and values from practicing school leaders. In addition to current academic research on leadership, PSEL 2015 drew on the wisdom and experience of nearly 1,000 practicing school leaders (not to mention the feedback from hundreds of practicing educators as part of public reviews). Indeed, the professional associations played larger roles in the development of PSEL 2015 than earlier versions of the standards. This infusion of knowledge from practice has led to a more comprehensive, useful, and potentially influential knowledge base. Arguably, greater involvement of practicing school leaders and greater inclusion of knowledge from practice lend credibility and legitimacy to the standards as expressions of practicing members of the profession itself.

Vision of School Leadership

A second element of the standards that has evolved is the vision they convey of school leadership. Initially reflecting a managerial view of leadership, the standards have come to embody a more positive, future-oriented, and aspirational vision of leadership. This vision is derived from growing knowledge of effective schools and leadership that moves from deficit-oriented, corrective thinking about students, schooling, and the functions of leadership toward more asset-based,
growth-oriented thinking (Murphy, Seashore Louis, & Smylie, 2017). This places new emphases on service and its moral underpinnings, on the best interests of others, and on “building up” human capacity and community.

While anchored in knowledge of effective schools and leadership in the present, the standards always have looked ahead to opportunities and challenges for schools and leadership in the future. Each version has provided a vision for school leadership to develop. PSEL’s emphases on positive leadership, equity and ethics, balancing high academic expectations and rigor with care and support for students, and leadership for continuous school improvement are important now but will be even more important in the future. Moreover, the standards have been consistently aspirational in at least two ways. To reiterate, they always have presented a sense of what leadership will need to look like to engage effectively the opportunities and challenges of the future. And since their first iteration, the standards have presented school leadership in terms of levels of high accomplishment to which we should aspire.

**A Statement of Principles and Values**

The standards also have become oriented more explicitly toward principles of practice and professional values. As such, they are neither abstractions too vague to be useful nor lists of discrete knowledge, skills, and behaviors that may limit professional discretion and necessary variation in practice. As statements of principles and values, the standards provide clear direction without being overly prescriptive and restrictive of practice across situations, settings, and time. As statements of principles and values, the standards provide both direction and room for improvement.

From their inception, the standards also have been inclusive. They were written to apply to all school leaders regardless of role or level within the education system. Historically, the standards have acknowledged variations that correspond to different leadership roles. Each version has reaffirmed the belief expressed in the ISLLC 1996 standards that the central aspects of leadership are the same for all school leadership roles. As such, it was from the beginning most important to focus the standards on the “heart and soul” of effective leadership (CCSSO, 1996, p. 8). Consistent with the orientation toward principles and values, this focus on the central functions continues to provide a common focus for professional advancement, providing direction and latitude for role and situation-specific practice and its improvement.

**Emphasis on Student Success**

From their inception, the standards have been directed toward those aspects of leadership that directly or indirectly promote student success. All three versions anchor each standard on student success. Yet, small but important changes in the wording of the standards have strengthened this emphasis. One change involved moving from attention given in 1996 to the success of “all students” toward attention in 2008 and 2015 to the success of “every student” and “each student.” This change defines a leader’s responsibility not simply as improving the overall collective or the average success of students in school but as ensuring that each and every individual student succeeds. This change in emphasis mirrors the elevation in PSEL of equity as a crucial dimension of leadership work.

Another important change has occurred in the language of student success. From the beginning, the standards have left the definition of student success ambiguous and flexible, letting states, districts, and schools give it specific meaning. But as success has been defined almost singularly as academic achievement, notably increases in standardized test scores, it became important to stress that student success can and should be construed more broadly. Whereas the 1996 and 2008 versions of the standards referred generally to “student success” as the focus of leadership work, PSEL 2015 frames student success as both “academic success” and student “well-being.” While maintaining ambiguity and flexibility for local definition, this new language makes clear that while student academic achievement is crucial to promote, so too are other aspects of student learning and development, including social, psychological, and emotional development as facets of well-being. This more comprehensive expression of student success parallels the dual emphasis that PSEL places on leadership for supporting high-quality, intellectually rigorous curricula, instruction, and assessment and for cultivating inclusive, caring, and supportive school communities for students.

**An Evolving “Theory-of-Action”**

The standards have developed to reflect a growing understanding of pathways, or points of leverage, by which they can influence school leadership. ISLLC 1996 simply noted the prospect of standards to provide “an especially appropriate and particularly powerful leverage point for reform” and to “drive improvement efforts along a variety of fronts,” noting in particular licensure, preparation program approval, and candidate assessment (CCSSO, 1996, p. 7). Critically, the standards were linked early on to preparation programs for school leaders, and the work to keep preparation programs aligned to the standards continues. ISLLC 2008 introduced a more elaborated logic, emphasizing the standards’ contributions to state policy making. ISLLC 2008 considered standards “a foundational piece for policy makers as they assess current goals, regulations, policies, and practices of educational leaders” (CCSSO, 2008, p. 4). Accordingly, standards could inform all elements of “an aligned and cohesive system” of policies concerning leader development, helping states set expectations for preparation, licensure, hiring, induction, and career-long professional development.

PSEL 2015 set forth a more systemic and potentially more efficacious “theory-of-action” of how standards might function to enhance leadership practice and outcomes (NPBEA, 2015, pp. 5-6). Following the general logic from other human service professions, this theory-of-action contends that standards can have direct influence on members of a profession by creating expectations for practice and outcomes. Standards can have indirect influence on practice and outcomes by shaping the actions of professional associations and the system of supporting institutions involved in member preparation and development. They also can have indirect influence by serving as a foundation for policy and regulations regarding the profession and its practice, including those concerning initial preparation, certification, program accreditation, professional
development, and evaluation. Finally, standards can shape public expectations for a profession, its members, and the institutions that support them.

PSEL 2015 describes several specific ways in which the standards can advance professional practice and outcomes for school leaders. Following ISLLC 2008, standards can guide states and leadership preparation programs to identify and develop specific knowledge, skills, dispositions, and other qualities required of school leaders to achieve student success in school. States can use standards to ensure that policies and programs set consistent expectations for school leaders over the course of their careers from “initial preparation, [to] recruitment and hiring, to induction and mentoring, to evaluation and career-long professional learning” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 6). The standards also can be used to guide the “operationalization” of practice and outcomes and the development of tools for leadership development, evaluation, and accountability.

PSEL’s more expansive theory-of-action suggests how standards can inform the work of other important actors in the profession. For example, standards can communicate what is important about school leadership to professional associations, school districts, and schools themselves. They can guide district-level systems of development, support, and accountability for school-level leadership, helping to ensure that central offices serve the needs of schools to the benefit of students. Standards can guide professional associations and other entities in their support and development of practicing school leaders and work to help shape policy development. Importantly, standards can communicate to the public, particularly parents and communities, what they should expect from the practice and outcomes of school leaders and what they should expect from those actors that develop, support, and regulate school leaders. Even as it presents a more systemic theory-of-action, PSEL 2015 continues to emphasize the role of standards as a common statement of expectations for the present and the future. PSEL 2015 continues to emphasize that standards can bring direction, coherence, and alignment across different programs and policies and among different actors that compose and relate to the profession.

Of course, it is one thing to have a robust theory-of-action for standards to advance the practice and outcomes of school leadership. It is another to enact that theory in practice (Argyris & Schön, 1974). We return to this important point shortly when we come to discuss the work ahead. First, we consider one more development.

**Shifting Centers of Gravity**

Across the history of the standards, we have seen shifts in several “centers of gravity.” We have noted shifts in orientations toward leadership and shifts toward greater reliance on knowledge and values from practice. We have noted shifts from focusing the standards primarily on policy making to establishing them as a source for the profession broadly constituted. We also have noted that the standards have drawn attention to a wider array of actors and points of leverage.

One of the most important shifts has been in ownership of and responsibility for the standards. In a formal, operational sense, ownership and responsibility have passed from CCSSO, an organization supporting the heads of state departments of elementary and secondary education, to NPBEA, an alliance of a broader array of professional organizations concerning school leadership (of which CCSSO is a member). Along with the growing involvement of professional associations and practicing members of the profession in the development of the standards, this shift in ownership and responsibility moves school leader standards closer to the standards of other human service professions as the work of the profession, by the profession, and for the profession (NPBEA, 2015). Practically, this shift distributes responsibility for the standards to a broader range of institutional actors represented by NPBEA. We must be cautious, knowing that when responsibility becomes diffused among many, it is more difficult to get things done. As the axiom goes, “When everyone is responsible, no one is responsible.” Yet, it is arguably true that expanding ownership and responsibility for the standards can help promote, given good management thereof, advancement of the profession.

**The Work Ahead**

In the introduction to this essay, we made the point that simply developing and adopting standards—“having” them—is important but not enough for them to contribute meaningfully to advancement of the profession. The contributions of standards come primarily from the hard work that follows development and adoption. They come as a “theory-of-action” becomes a “theory-in-practice” (Argyris & Schön, 1974). Certainly, as an expression by a profession of what should be expected of it, standards may possess some inherent influence, some moral force—practicing school leaders and their associations speak. Beyond this potential, the power of the school leader standards comes from what is done with them across the array of actors that constitute and support the profession.

Now we take a look at three big next steps. In the last section of this essay, we look at the role that higher education may play in this work. It is important to note that during the past 20 years we have grown in understanding more and less effective processes by which standards may be developed, communicated, and employed. From the history of working with school leader standards, and from documents associated with the standards, we can trace both macro and micro storylines about the knowledge and values that have supported the evolution of the standards. We have a reasonably clear understanding of problems and successes that, if taken seriously, can inform the work ahead.

**Bringing the Standards to Life**

As with preceding versions of the standards, a major challenge following the development and adoption of PSEL 2015 is to animate them, to bring them to life. In the past two years this work has begun on several fronts. It is only a beginning. The two versions of the ISLLC standards have been used voluntarily as frameworks for policy on education leadership in 45 states and the District of Columbia. These states will need to adopt PSEL 2015 and adapt their frameworks accordingly. To date, to our knowledge, states’ movement to PSEL has been slow going and needs to be encouraged. So too, work to promote PSEL as a framework for programs of initial preparation of school
leaders and ongoing professional development provided by higher education, school districts, professional associations, and other entities should be encouraged. NPBEA recently began an advocacy campaign for PSEL that involves its member organizations and will encourage states to adopt PSEL. We are hopeful for its success.

Bringing PSEL to life also can be encouraged by efforts to align to them other standards concerning school leadership and its development. For example, recent standards for the work of principal supervisors are anchored on PSEL 2015 (CCSSO, 2015). As the Educational Leadership Constituent Council Standards for review of school leadership preparation programs were anchored on the ISLLC standards (e.g., NPBEA, 2011), the new National Educational Leadership Preparation or NELP standards are linked to PSEL 2015. Due for release in early 2018, the NELP standards will tie review and accreditation of educational leadership programs to PSEL through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

Another way to bring PSEL 2015 to life is through developing various “tools” that states, districts, professional associations, and higher education, among others, can use to act upon the standards. An early example of such a tool was the certification examination developed by the Educational Testing Service through CCSSO to use the ISLLC standards in determining the fitness for employment of school leader preparation program graduates. Recently, the American Institutes for Research’s Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (2016) developed a manual to help states and others adapt their current leadership standards to PSEL 2015. CCSSO and the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform Center at the University of Florida (2017) prepared a report for states and professional preparation programs that identifies knowledge, skills, and dispositions of principals, consistent with PSEL, that promote the success of students with disabilities. Other types of tools that could be developed include model competency and practice assessment systems, curriculum for professional development, and so forth. Faculty members at the University of Delaware have begun to help that state realign its statewide principal assessment instrument to PSEL.

Continuous Inquiry, Learning, and Improvement

Another area of work ahead involves continuous inquiry, learning, and improvement of the standards. As discussed earlier, the substantive evolution of the standards has been guided by growth in knowledge from research and the practice of school leadership. Such inquiry will need to continue if school leader standards are to reflect the most current, efficacious knowledge of effective schools and leadership now and in the future.

It should be said that after more than 20 years since their inception, very little has been written about the school leader standards themselves. To be sure, descriptive and promotional pieces as well as some critiques have appeared in academic and practitioner literatures. The content of the standards has been validated through reviews of literature. But lessons on processes of development and enactment have been learned primarily from the lived experiences of working with the standards rather than systemic investigation. And few of these lessons have been recorded. There have been almost no tests of the theory-of-action that drives the standards or of the theory-in-practice. Few analyses have been conducted of the use of the standards or of their impact on policy, programs, or practicing school leaders. Peer-reviewed work is conspicuous by its absence. Empirical understandings are rudimentary at best. In short, while we know a great deal about effective schools and leadership, we really do not have much systematic evidence and understanding about how much difference the standards make, explanations for their impact, and how to improve their impact. Whereas a good amount of money has been available for development, relatively little money has been available for such inquiry.

There is also important work to be done to tie new learning from inquiry into processes of using and updating the standards. PSEL 2015 stresses the need for school leaders to use inquiry and data for continuous school improvement, among other purposes. Yet, no such processes are in place for ongoing assessment of the standards, their use, and their impact that may inform their ongoing improvement. Development of the standards has been driven by episodic recognition that in the presence of new knowledge about school leadership, changing conditions, and new challenges, they needed to be updated.

Institutional Stewardship

A third area of work concerns the cultivation of institutional stewardship for the standards. As alluded to earlier, although developed by the NPBEA, for reasons having to do with funding and administration of the work, school leader standards were first part of the portfolio of CCSSO. With the development of PSEL 2015, “ownership” of the standards was “returned” to the NPBEA. And since this change, NPBEA has wrestled with what it will do with the standards beyond being a repository for them. In initiating its advocacy campaign, NPBEA took an important step in the promotion and care of the standards. Another step it can take is to seek and secure funding for using the standards and for studying their impact.

Among the most important things that the NPBEA can do is to engage its member organizations with the standards. As a national alliance, an umbrella organization, of major membership organizations committed to the advancement of school and school-system leadership, the NPBEA can exercise convening, coordinating, and accountability functions to encourage its member organizations to own the standards and engage in the work the board lacks the organizational, financial, and human capacity to perform. It makes sense that as the standards have become statements of expectations of the school leader profession, the professional associations that comprise the board take responsibility for them. The NPBEA is the central body that can promote such institutional stewardship.

The Role of Higher Education

For any set of standards to advance a profession and its contributions, the work of many is required. As in other professions, professional associations, members themselves, the entities that support the profession, and governmental
bodies play a part. We conclude this essay with a few thoughts about the role of higher education in the work ahead. Higher education has been central to the creation and ongoing development of school leader standards. And higher education is uniquely positioned to promote and care for the standards and to further their contributions to professional practice and outcomes.

Some time ago, Ernest Boyer (1990) argued for the importance of four forms of scholarship to be performed across different institutions that compose the “system” of higher education. These forms remain particularly relevant to work of the standards. The scholarship of discovery involves disciplined, investigative efforts to generate new knowledge. The scholarship of integration draws together, interprets, and brings new insight and meaning to existing knowledge. The scholarship of application applies knowledge through service to addressing problems of interest to the larger community. The scholarship of teaching concerns the communication of knowledge and, through communication, extending and transforming knowledge.

These four types of scholarship align closely with the work ahead for the standards. The scholarship of discovery will be needed to continue to generate new knowledge of effective schools and leadership, as well as new knowledge of the use and impact of the standards in professional advancement. The scholarship of integration has played a central role in developing the standards during the past 20 years and will continue to play a central role. As knowledge from academic research and professional practice expands and deepens, the scholarship of integration will become even more important to bring together and give meaning a greater amount and range of knowledge. The scholarship of application is crucial to developing programs, policies, and tools to bring the standards to life. It is also important for the role that higher education might play, with others, in continuously improving the standards over time. And finally, the scholarship of teaching not only is important with regard to higher education’s work to prepare aspiring school leaders and provide professional development opportunities for practicing school leaders, but also lies at the heart of policy advising and collaboration in policy making, in working with professional associations and other entities, and importantly, in public informing.

Beyond these types of scholarship, higher education can make other contributions. Notably, institutions of higher education can perform an important convening function, that is, bringing other entities together around the work of the standards, leveraging partnerships, and bridging and boundary-spanning. In this regard, higher education institutions can help manage and coordinate joint work with others. Moreover, institutions of higher education may have greater access to certain resources than other entities in the profession of school leadership to engage the work of the standards. This may be particularly true with regard to resources for knowledge production and integration and for professional, public, and policy informing.

The encouraging thing about the role of higher education in the work of the standards is it is not too big a stretch beyond what higher education, across different types of institutions, can and should be doing now. Higher education can and should engage the scholarships of discovery, integration, application, and teaching. And, in the field of educational leadership, it can, and we think should, focus these scholarships in meaningful ways on the work of the standards and their role in advancing school leadership.

References
UCEA Convention Sessions on PSEL and NELP Standards
Nov. 14-18, 2018
Marriott Marquis Houston, TX

100. Preparing Leaders with PSEL/NELP Standards: Announcing the New UCEA Book Series
Thursday Nov. 15  4:40 to 5:50 pm

The symposium features the UCEA-Routledge series on the PSEL-NELP Standards for Leadership Preparation and Practice. This session highlights the latest volume on Ethical Principles for School Leadership and a preview of the upcoming volume on Human Resources and Strategic Talent Management.

Friday Nov. 16  4:35 to 5:50 pm

Planning to revise your ethics course? Or developing a new course or curriculum module on ethical educational leadership? This workshop is designed for you. The session features UCEA’s latest textbook breaking down the new PSEL and NELP Standard Two: Ethics and Professional Norms. Editors and contributing authors will share their chapters, the supporting research, and sample curriculum units and then engage participants in curriculum development activities and discussion.

Saturday Nov. 17  4:00 to 5:10 pm

Representatives from the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, the NELP Specialized Professional Area for CAEP, and the NELP standards development committee will share the final version of the NELP Standards as well as a companion guide developed as a resource for faculty who are planning to go through accreditation review. The session will include plenty of time for questions and discussion.

Note: Times and session numbers subject to change. Check the final Convention Schedule at ucea.org.

From UCEA:
Developing Ethical Principles for School Leadership: PSEL Standard Two

Lisa Bass, William C. Frick, & Michelle D. Young, Eds.

This textbook is part of the PSEL/NELP Leadership Preparation Series by UCEA. It tackles Standard 2 of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL) and the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards—Ethics and Professional Norms. This volume includes specific strategies for school leaders to develop knowledge and skills in supporting the learning and development of all students, as well as understanding the dynamics and importance of ethics in leadership practice. By presenting problem-posing cases, theoretical grounding, relevant research, implications for practice, and learning activities, this book provides aspiring leaders with the background, learning experiences, and analytical tools to successfully promote ethical leadership and student success in their contexts. Special features include:

- Case Studies—provide an opportunity to practice ethical reasoning and engage in the discussion of complexities and debates within each case.
- Learning Activities—a range of exercises help readers make connections to the PSEL standard.
- Important Resources—includes resources that support and encourage students to explore each of the chapter’s elements.

For more information or to order a copy, visit https://www.crcpress.com/Developing-Ethical-Principles-for-School-Leadership-PSEL-Standard-Two/Bass-Frick-Young/p/book/9781138918856

Since 1954, UCEA and its member faculty have initiated and supported improvement in research and the preparation and practice of educational leaders. The PSEL/NELP Leadership Preparation Series is one example of the high-quality, research-based program design, evaluation, and improvement resources UCEA offers. If you are interested in submitting a proposal for this textbook series, please contact UCEA Associate Director of Publications Michael O’Malley at mo20@txstate.edu.
Innovative Programs:
Anchoring on Student Needs: The K-12 Professional Leadership Program of University of Houston

Contributor: April Peters-Hawkins
University of Houston

Editor: Grace J. Liang
Kansas State University

The K-12 Professional Leadership Program in the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies at the University of Houston is a fairly new program. A recent reconfiguration of programs within the College of Education led to its inception and has brought opportunity for innovative ways of programming and serving targeted student populations and broad communities. With its mission to “prepare compassionate, ethically centered, public intellectuals to become effective and transformative leaders committed to social justice in America’s schools,” the program offers MEd and EdD degrees as well as building and district licensure. Informed by their rich K-12 experiences, the faculty strive to develop scholar practitioners who can lead schools and districts that serve diverse student populations effectively and school leaders who are culturally responsive critical thinkers and problem solvers who think about the impact of issues not only on student outcomes, but also on the value of relationships.

Innovative Program Element Highlights

• Thoughtful course content and sequencing. Faculty engage in ongoing discussions about the value of the course content for students and align content with certification requirements and research on promising practices for school and district leaders.

• Students engaging and networking with faculty and each other beyond their courses. Faculty instituted a Saturday Seminar (for both master’s and doctoral students in their first year) to provide additional networking and professional learning for students. This is also an opportunity for students to receive advising, academic support, and peer mentoring.

• Embedded internship hours into coursework. Faculty have thoughtfully redesigned the internship experiences to be aligned with the program mission so that they are meaningful and rigorous opportunities for students. Faculty also have been thoughtful and deliberate about the coaching and mentoring that students receive during the internship experience. Because some courses embed internship hours, the learning and practice are simultaneous, and the assignments reflect this intentionality as well.

• Thoughtful about adjuncts. Faculty work with the partner districts to select and train adjunct professors who are proven effective leaders from these partner districts. Faculty developed a training module for the adjuncts so that they are teaching in ways that reflect the program mission. In this way, faculty are dually accountable and invested in the process.

• District partnerships tailored to the needs of the district. Faculty have thoughtfully recruited partner districts throughout the Houston metro area. The partnerships look differently in various districts. Faculty have had in-depth discussions about the needs of the partners. For instance, faculty are currently working with one partner to develop a common understanding of a “profile of a graduate.” The plan is to take the lessons learned from this process and develop a similar profile with other district partners.

• Innovative collaboration. Faculty are collaborating with one district partner to engage in a project that examines social justice and equity issues within district feeder patterns. This collaboration started with a conversation between the superintendent, Dr. April Peters-Hawkins (Associate Department Chair), and Dr. Bradley Carpenter (Program Director, K-12). Through this discussion, the faculty learned about the ways the program could support doctoral students in certain courses that would inform their work on a district project supporting their dissertation work. Students were able to self-select into the project based on their interest.

The Executive EdD in K-12 Professional Leadership

To obtain an Executive EdD in K-12 Professional Leadership, students must complete 51 semester hours, successfully pass the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TexES) Superintendent exam, and defend their doctoral thesis. This degree has a structure that enables fully employed professionals to earn a doctorate in less than 3 years in face-to-face sessions at the University of Houston main campus, while continuing to manage their career if they are registered full time, which includes summer semesters. Some of the most distinctive benefits of the EdD degree program are the following:

• It embeds dissertation into the EdD process with benchmarks to help students identify what they need to accomplish each semester in addition to coursework.
• Students take two different Labs of Practice during the course of the EdD. These labs are designed as research and writing intensive units to support students in writing Chapters 2 and 3 of their dissertations. During the labs, faculty meet specifically with their advisees in small groups to provide advising, instruction (as needed), and intensive support for the advisees’ writing.

• The program embeds the certification (principal and superintendent) preparation into coursework and offers a prep session on a Saturday or evening before the exam. Embedding the prep into coursework allows faculty to identify collective areas of strength and areas where support is needed prior to students taking the actual exams. This intentional arrangement also helps students to feel more comfortable about taking the test. As a result, the program has enjoyed a high pass rate.

• Students are admitted into cohorts. In the cohort structure (both the master’s and doctoral levels), students help one another and develop a learning community. Students have remarked that this structure has been helpful to their academic and professional growth. They are able to engage in peer mentoring and support via the cohort process. In some cases, students have grown in their professional careers as a result of the cohort networking (for example, they have interviewed and received jobs in each other’s districts based on these relationships). Each cohort selects a captain. The captain is often a very organized student and a great communicator who serves as the “communication leader” for the cohort. The captain makes inquiries and initiates communication with faculty on behalf of the cohort. This process has worked amazingly well.

• Most of the courses are offered in hybrid fashion. Most of the students enrolled in the Executive EdD in K-12 Professional Leadership program are working professionals; this is the configuration that they prefer. Such delivery format allows students to engage and interact with peers, cohort members, and faculty while also offering them the flexibility of not having to be on campus weekly.

More information about the University of Houston K-12 Professional Leadership Program can be found at http://www.uh.edu/education/departments/elps/degrees-and-programs/

For further inquiries please contact Program Director Bradley Carpenter at bccarpenter@uh.edu

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### Revision of the School Leader Licensure Assessment

As part of the test regeneration process, Educational Testing Service has completed a major revision of the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA). The assessment has been regenerated to reflect the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL), developed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). These standards were previously known as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. The SLLA (6990) will be available September 1, 2018.

As recommended by the Advisory Board on Teacher Education and Licensure, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the following passing score and implementation date for the SLLA (6990) required for individuals seeking an Administration and Supervision PreK-12 endorsement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test name</th>
<th>Passing score</th>
<th>Effective dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Leader Licensure Assessment (6990)</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>For the period of September 1, 2018 to January 1, 2020, individuals may take either the SLLA (6011) or the SLLA (6990). Effective January 1, 2020, the SLLA (6990) is required for individuals seeking an Administration and Supervision PreK-12 endorsement.</td>
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</tbody>
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Score reports for individuals who took the SLLA (6011) prior to January 1, 2020, will be accepted provided the candidate met the passing score effective at the time the test was taken.

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Get to Know the Graduate Student Council:

http://www.ucea.org/grad-student-focus/get-to-know-the-graduate-student-council/
Spotlight on Research by The Wallace Foundation: A New Role Emerges for Principal Supervisors

Wesley Henry  
*California State University, Monterey Bay*

The principal supervisor role is intended to support principals in their challenging jobs and, ultimately, improve instruction. But in many large school districts, supervisors are faced with an array of demanding administrative, compliance, and operational responsibilities that interfere with their ability to provide meaningful support for the principals they oversee.

In 2014, The Wallace Foundation launched the 4-year, $24 million Principal Supervisor Initiative (PSI) to determine whether it was possible to redefine principal supervision in six urban school districts. A new study of the initiative shows promising results.

*A New Role Emerges for Principal Supervisors*, a joint research study between Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College and Mathematica Policy Research (Goldring et al., 2018), documents the implementation of the first 3 years of PSI and reports that all six districts made meaningful changes to the supervisor role. Subsequent reports will investigate the final year of implementation and explore the effects of the initiative on principal performance. Researchers also will compare the principal supervisor role in PSI districts with a national sample of urban districts. Participating districts are

- Baltimore City Public Schools, Maryland;
- Broward County Public Schools, Florida;
- Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Ohio;
- Des Moines Public Schools, Iowa;
- Long Beach Unified School District, California; and
- Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota.

The report describes principal supervisors as a “potential point of leverage for supporting and developing principals,” and documents how PSI districts embraced the pivotal role principal supervisors can play in supporting instructional leadership. The study provides insight into how the role of principal supervisors changed during the initial implementation phase and how these changes impacted supervisors’ ongoing interactions with principals.

The five PSI components support the central goal of improving principal effectiveness. See Figure 1.

1. **Revising the principal supervisors’ job description to focus on instructional leadership**

Revising the role of principal supervisors was the first component of districts’ work, and a broad range of stakeholders was engaged in the process as well as resources such as the 2015 draft Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Ultimately, revising the role description for principal supervisors required redistributing responsibilities to other personnel in order to balance principal supervisors’ time spent on central office activities while prioritizing more time spent in schools supporting principals. Following the redistribution of duties, support of principals shifted from reactively responding to needs to proactively supporting principals to improve schools. In 2017, principal supervisors reported spending an average of 63% of their time either in schools or working directly with principals. While principal supervisors reported an increase in time spent on school visits, they also reported an increased focus on spending time during school visits in partnership with principals on instructional leadership activities, such as conducting classroom observations and walkthroughs with principals.

2. **Reducing principal supervisors’ span of control (the number of principals they oversee) and changing how supervisors are assigned to principals**

Districts reduced the number of principals working with each principal supervisor, and doing so allowed districts to more closely align principal supervisor expertise with individual principal and school needs. There was great variation between assignment methods (e.g., academic needs, school level, etc.). Although this was a “quick win” early in the initiative for several districts, most districts struggled with ensuring continuity of supervisor assignments from the 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 school years due to supervisor and principal turnover, changes

![Figure 1. The five core components of the PSI.](image-url)
to assignment policies, and hiring additional supervisors to reduce average span of control. Yet, while there was variation between and within districts, the span of control in PSI Year 3 averaged 12 principals to one principal supervisor, a decrease from the average of 17 before the PSI began.

3. Training supervisors and developing their capacity to support principals

For the first time, principal supervisors received ongoing, dedicated training for their specific role. Training provided to principal supervisors during PSI focused on developing instructional leadership and high-quality instruction, though identifying shared, district-wide understandings of high-quality instruction remains a challenge in districts for a variety of reasons. Through non-job-embedded approaches and job-embedded opportunities (which increased over time), principal supervisors were generally positive regarding their training but noted that classroom-based instruction reduced their time in schools. Principals and principal supervisors reported the benefits of engaging in the job-embedded learning opportunities together, through observing each other in their work with principals through collaborative peer feedback and work with technical assistance providers.

4. Developing systems to identify and train new supervisors

Succession planning for principal supervisors was a key component of PSI, and three districts created apprenticeship programs to facilitate training principal supervisors. The training yielded a number of benefits, including establishing a pool of candidates well positioned for principal supervisor vacancies. This also posed some challenges due to a general surplus of apprenticeship program completers compared to open positions. Districts sought opportunities to keep program completers engaged in system-wide leadership work in other ways, such as through special projects.

5. Strengthening central office structures to support and sustain changes in the principal supervisor’s role

A key component of the PSI was the restructuring and reculturing of the central office to support and sustain the changes in the principal supervisor role. PSI required districts to create detailed plans for sustainability to “independently support the systems put in place.” The report (Goldring et al., 2018) details the structural adjustments districts have explored to redistribute operational responsibilities to allow for continued expansion of principal supports.

Conclusions

As the report previews,

The six PSI districts demonstrated the feasibility of making substantial changes to the principal supervisor role, across all components of the initiative. The districts revised the job descriptions for principal supervisors, reduced the span of control, implemented new training programs, and restructured roles and responsibilities in the central office to support changes to the principal supervisor role. (Goldring et al., 2018, p. xii)

By Year 3 of the initiative, the daily work of principal supervisors changed, and principals reported more productive relationships with supervisors. Indeed, principals reported having deepened trust with their principal supervisor, a role that serves as both coach and evaluator.

While undertaking PSI also ultimately has led to rethinking school supports more broadly, the districts face ongoing challenges developing shared definitions of instructional leadership within their complex, multifaceted contexts. The report provides priority areas for continued support of PSI, and subsequent reports will explore how ongoing challenges are addressed, adjustments made during the latter phase of the initiative, and how principals’ performance changed in light of the redefined principal supervisor role.

This report explores how districts with varying local realities are navigating tradeoffs between operational needs and increasing their focus on instructional leadership and school supports and provides powerful context for preparation programs focused on administrator effectiveness and instructional leadership.

The work of school and district leadership requires administrators to wear many hats effectively, and the report shares the wisdom gained through the PSI’s promising but difficult challenge of rearticulating the relationship between central offices and schools and deepening the supports districts can provide school leaders.

To learn more, please attend the special session at the UCEA 2018 convention, sponsored by The Wallace Foundation, featuring the authors of the recent report: Session 123, A New Role Emerges for Principal Supervisors: Evidence from Six Urban Districts in The Wallace Foundation’s Principal Supervisor Initiative (currently scheduled for Friday Nov. 16, 9:30 am).

References


UCEA is thrilled to share with you a set of resources and tools designed to help states improve principal preparation by reforming their current approach to evaluating educational administration programs. Created in partnership with the New Leaders, the State Evaluation of Principal Preparation Programs Toolkit—or SEP³ Toolkit—provides essential guidance on implementing a more in-depth and rigorous principal preparation evaluation process, thereby enabling states to accurately assess quality, promote improvement, and intervene in the case of performance that raises concerns. Download these materials:

www.sepkit.org

The Initiative for Systemic Program Improvement through Research in Educational Leadership (INSPIRE) Surveys include a suite of evaluation resources made available by the UCEA Center for the Evaluation of Educational Leadership Preparation and Practice. These surveys are available for leadership preparation programs to produce evidence helpful in improving programs, meeting accreditation requirements, and making the case for support among various constituencies. INSPIRE is aligned with national educational leadership standards and the UCEA Institutional and Program Quality Criteria and provides a source of evidence on program outcomes.

www.ucea.org/resource/inspire-leadership-survey-suite/

Job Search Resources

Subscribe to the UCEA news feed to get new job postings in your e-mail inbox or RSS reader. Search by date, state, or type of position. The site aggregates in one place all of the jobs posted at the UCEA Ed Leadership Jobs Board, HigherEdJobs, the Chronicle (Vitae) Job Board, UCEA CASTLE, and the AERA Jobs Board.

UCEA Educational Leadership Jobs Board:
https://members.ucea.org/edleadershipjobs

HigherEdJobs: https://www.higheredjobs.com


Stage-by-stage assistance for graduate students new to the academic job search process. The site includes a plethora of helpful tips and strategies and has been highly acclaimed by past job seekers. Please publicize these resources to your graduate students.

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A Plática With Fernando Valle

Juan Manuel Niño

The University of Texas at San Antonio

Fernando Valle, EdD, is an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at Texas Tech University. After serving as a teacher, school counselor, and principal, Dr. Valle transitioned into academia. As a professor, Dr. Valle advances research on distributive and transformative leadership practices in schools that improve instruction. Additionally, he leads $12 million in U.S. Department of Education federal grants including the i3 Innovation and Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED), TAP Connect National Pilot, and the LIFT Program. The grant partnerships across the state inform his teaching, practice, and research in the field. His most recent publications include a coedited book, Latino Educational Leadership: Serving Latino Communities and Preparing Latinx Leaders Across the P-20 Pipeline, and articles in the Journal of Teacher Effectiveness and Student Achievement, Journal of Hispanics in Higher Education, and National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal. He received a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from The University of Texas Pan American, and a Master’s in Educational Leadership and a Master’s in Counseling also from The University of Texas Pan American. Dr. Valle earned a Bachelor of Science from The University of Texas at San Antonio. The University of Texas Pan American is now The University of Texas Rio Grand Valley (UTRGV).

JMN: Hello, how are you doing?
FV: Aquí, nomás. I have been working, traveling, and more working, but all has been good.

JMN: I want to thank you for this opportunity to share aspects of your research and teaching. I think the work you are doing at Texas Tech, nationally, and internationally speaks to the audience of UCEA. Can you share a little bit of information about your background?
FV: Certainly. I grew up in South Texas, the Rio Grande Valley. I think my K-12 experience was special. I was very fortunate because, even though we were a migrant family, we traveled to work in West Texas, our parents kept us in the same community. My brothers and sisters went to the same high school. We all finished school, and that continuity really helped us.

JMN: How did being a migrant impact your educational experience?
FV: I mention the migrant experience because that was part of my public school experience. Unfortunately, because I was a migrant student, I was also identified as an illegal and was routed to the minimal opportunities in education. Luckily, that came around after my high school graduation, and I used my migrant status to help me get through college by using financial assistance through migrant programs. That experience has always been with me in the back of my mind as I graduated and became a teacher and worked in public schools. I understood the struggle of the border mobility. We had a lot of migrant students and a lot of first-generation students. We had a lot of newcomers to the country.

JMN: You experienced ways that are very unique to the border context.
FV: Yes, having lived some of those experiences has helped me better understand our students and teachers who were starting an educational pathway in the Rio Grande Valley.

JMN: What educational experiences did you have while being in practice?
FV: My experience in school were extensive. I spent time in schools as teacher, as a counselor and as a principal. All those experiences really were the impetus for pursuing the doctoral degree, which is now at UTRGV. I was fortunate to have mentors while in practice. I listened and learned from mentors. Many of them reminded me that they couldn’t get the doctorate because there were no programs close to the Valley. One of them shared with me that he couldn’t move his family to San Antonio, Austin, or Dallas to get the doctorate degree as a working superintendent.

JMN: How did their words encourage you to get a doctorate?
FV: Well, most shared about their experiences as district leaders. They would go to superintendent conferences and see superintendents who have been in the field 30 or 40 years with terminal degrees, and they remembered that. So, they would encourage and push us to make sure we continued our educational pathways to the doctorate and to really take advantage of the opportunity through UTRGV.

JMN: How do you jump from being a school administrator to a professor?
FV: To me, it was very intentional on my part, knowing that theory and practice was something I read in the program as a doctoral student. I became familiar with research in using theory and understanding methodology. Understanding that space was so valuable to my growth. My personal challenge was how do I bring that, theory and practice, how do I make that come alive? How do we make sure that it is happening?

JMN: How do you align your work with your thinking?
FV: It comes naturally. I think it is based from my experience in schools. For example, I tell my students social justice isn’t just a topic, it’s something you practice every day;
our equity lens is ongoing. We have to practice social equity every day with every decision and action. That’s something we keep our eye on. We train with the mindset of advocacy and action.

JMN: What does that look like daily?

FV: We know through our networks and from our colleagues that we can refer to scholarship. We have valuable graduate student work across the country to serve as a tool. Whatever our context may be, whether it is rural, urban, or suburban, with the diverse populations we serve, families and children and educators may need that support. I bring that approach to what we do in developing mindsets with an advocacy skill set.

Again, thinking back to my own personal experience growing up, having multiple identities with a Border consciousness and understanding that, both as an educator and now as a researcher, I rely on that perspective for the work that we do with our school partners. Yes, we do work at a university. Yes, we are scholars. Yes, we do write and teach and run graduate programs, but at the end of the day, for a lot of us, there is a practitioner inside who authentically wants to help make those connections. I see our work as a gift of leveraging skills with theoretical knowledge and bringing it to life in practice.

JMN: You mention the multiple identities, and it’s something some folks continue to problematize at this level. As a scholar, how do you approach doing the research work and the practitioner aspects?

FV: That’s something I negotiate in my own scholarly identity; researcher identity–practice and that space between. It is more a hybridity of our identity, because there are multiple layers. For me, I see being a true scholar and a professor as advancing knowledge in doctoral coursework through research partnerships across the country. I, and some colleagues, do federal grant work. We partner with other institutions and scholars. We collaborate with them in research and publications. We are always advancing that knowledge. We approach our work with the practitioner in mind and know we are there for a purpose. We cannot forget about the practitioner hoping; hope is not a strategy. I always tell my educators hope is not a strategy. It is a mindset. It is the vision that we have. But you can’t just write it down and hope that the school fixes itself or hope that the problem gets solved or that things work out. We have to lead that effort and be conscious of that space.

JMN: How do you ensure that approach in research with schools is protected in your projects?

FV: That is a continuous negotiation in terms of the barometer. I see it as moving the slider. Where do I move too much as a practitioner and think about the K-12 environment and the failing schools, the improvement-required campuses, our English learners, our special education, our marginalized students; they continue to be ignored. It’s the same thing with our educators and our leaders.

We bring that praxis of our research into the field and help them resolve issues. It is a constant ongoing journey for me individually. It is constantly moving back and forth. I think, for me personally, moving back and forth through languages, through cultures, through borders has been a natural way I have viewed the world. It is part of my identity. I’m comfortable doing that—moving in and out of scholarship spaces, theoretical spaces, and different conferences. Whether it is practitioner based or an academic one. I’ve learned over the years to see the value and connection of both and bring that intersection into the work that we do.

JMN: As a former practitioner, I understand your thinking and need to engage in research with a purpose. You mentioned you are heavily involved in different projects; how do you prioritize your participation?

FV: One of the things our new dean, who came from Arizona, brought to us as a challenge was to figure exactly that. He challenged us to identify the needs of our rural partners. He asked, “Have you really identified the needs of the different communities that you are serving?” As a department we had a handle on that. However, what we didn’t have was the strategic partnerships. So, about seven years ago with leadership and vision of our team we really started engaging scholarship focused on the educational needs of our partners. So, we started to ask and see what they were facing. The result was most school districts couldn’t find educators. Rural schools versus suburban versus urban districts; they all have challenges. Our role as scholars advancing research and service shifted, and we reconsidered our approach to see how were and how we responded to those needs.

JMN: You and your colleagues used your district partners to connect your research with community needs. What does that work look like?

FV: One of the approaches was to partner with districts to meet their needs in a grow-your-own format. Some districts needed grow-your-own teachers and principals, others a school improvement format where we trained existing leaders to use the tools we have as researchers and practitioners to improve the praxis.

We have been very intentional on working with adults and addressing the deficit lens in the communities we serve. It’s very easy, as we know in our work, to blame, to be oppressive and blame the students instead of the system and the educators who lead it. One of the things we really pressed on in our program at Texas Tech is to really grow the adults with the mindset, with the equity lens, with the skills that they need to unpack data and to do the jobs they need to do to better serve the community.

JMN: Have districts responded to your suggestions?

FV: We have infused social justice into our partnerships, our graduate programs, our doctoral programs. We are very intentional in having our current K-12 leaders who are in our doctoral programs focus on addressing current
problems of practice. We make sure that their research and their passion are also placed at the center of school improvement and the populations they are serving. Especially, focusing on marginalized populations, areas of need, whether it’s content, leadership, or support services for students. I mean there’s just so much.

JMN: How does faculty support this work in school districts?

FV: We weave our work into what we teach and how we move forward. It’s really about developing trust with your partners. Many organizations are maintained in a status quo space, and when you bring in the research, especially with a critical lens, there’s push back. In order for partnerships to exist, there has to be a lot of navigation. We have been developing the trust with our partners over the past 5–8 years. Many of our programs are still in place, even though leadership has come and gone with different superintendents and different school boards, but the programs are still there. I take pride in what we do, and the sustainability is a testament of the work. Many universities focus and are strategic with partnerships so that they are sustainable in the midst of leadership change.

JMN: That is one of the challenges: creating and implementing. And more importantly, sustaining those partnerships so that we continue to learn from each other. What do you think are the challenges of academic life and work? With all these different responsibilities that you just mentioned, there is so much work. What is the challenge?

FV: That’s an ongoing and very intentional question. I’m glad that you asked me, because it’s something that I really work at. Many professors work in a closed environment; however, we work in a close environment. We embrace that proximity and we co-teach together. We try to break that stereotypical silo that as a researcher, every once in a while, you do a project with colleagues and you write, but everything you do on your own. Here we focus on our scholarship, our thinking, and our teaching. One of the things we’ve done in the Educational Leadership program is really construct a model where we teach together. We have three or four of us in the room who are working with doctoral or master’s students. We support each other in the field. We try to do and model a professional learning community collaborative setting for our students.

JMN: How does that look like when you have multiple professors sharing a space?

FV: It is truly a model of the distributive leadership effort to get everything in the programmatic work done with curriculum revisions to support graduate students. We are intentional in taking time to meet and plan, not just to have meetings because we have to for university compliance, but to plan the learning. We meet to write and really encourage the writing-retreat mentality and focusing on projects that are beneficial to multiple stakeholders. One of the things we get supported with at our college and institution is the engaged scholarship of the partnerships of collaboration. We are very fortunate to have resources and support to do the engaged scholarship. That really helps us think about and balance the work we do as faculty in there, because it’s ongoing and it never stops.

JMN: It sounds like coteaching is part of an ongoing research project where faculty come together to support graduate work and provide resources to the partnering districts...

FV: Yes, in a very intentional way. Semesters really don’t dictate anymore the ongoing nature of the work. There are always dissertations to read. There are always publications to finish. There are always ongoing projects. Students always need advisement and mentorship; it can be a little overwhelming. You do have to, every once in a while, bow out or literally say no to projects because you have so many on the plate. That’s something that I continue to grow with. What should I take on? What should I allow to leave my plate of scholarship or work? Because sometimes we want to get our hands in everything.

JMN: Yes, many faculty may understand that feeling; however, what approach do you embrace to share work with colleagues?

FV: We also model and grow the people around and respecting your team, where everyone has a bigger bite of being a stakeholder in the program. However, this mindset requires throwing out some of the more traditional model of how higher education operates. It is a system and it’s organizational behavior; we understand that. But, we are really the ones that make the program run. Some elements don’t change. What does change is the way we approach it. Technology is one of those approaches. We can have distance courses, briefings, and orientations. We refine how we approach conference calling and work so that we can still be mobile, meet with our program, and try to maintain some time for work balance, if you will.

JMN: This approach requires a constant learning approach, because learning styles and the modalities of effective instruction are shifting every day to meet the needs of our students, the aspiring school leaders. What are the challenges of this model? For instance, with coteaching, when you have differences of viewpoints and paradigms as cofacilitators in the learning process, how does that play out? How do you weave social justice leadership into the preparation programs within coteaching models?

FV: We model the preparation of working professional learning communities in schools. The intentional preplanning helps us prepare and address any differences. We don’t leave any of the teaching, the drafting of the syllabus, and the work we are doing to chance. We plan so that we know what models are being presented, what literature is being used, and how field work is being used. We purposely look at how we can intersect the different
points of view. I think it’s a great approach to have different points of view of critical paradigms of practice in the field.

JMN: That is a great approach to collaborative teaching and working. How are differences addressed within the program?

FV: One of the big things in our program has been the shift over the last 5–7 years of partnership work, curriculum alignment, and teaching that is all student centered. We write it in our mission statement, and we enact it. We remind ourselves by placing it on our course syllabi. We really honor the decisions we make to be authentically student centered. Over the years, we have been negotiating where we need to understand what we are sharing, what we are teaching, what we are facilitating and providing for the students. It does take some work and negotiation to scrap the ego and the all-knowingness off the table, because at the end of the day everyone has something to contribute for the learner.

We do approach this through the learner stance. We are very intentional in our planning and teaming, and it’s worked for us. We are trying to bring it to life, what we do in our research from different voices and lens. The students appreciate it, and they are also responsible to do that in their own schools as leaders by bringing departments together, bringing grade levels together to establish school climate. Especially understand how we can learn from each other as adults. It is an ongoing process for us. It’s something we refine every year. We take our work to different places and virtual spaces.

JMN: Does the approach change in virtual classrooms?

FV: In the virtual space, we take the pedagogy of the classroom. For example, if we have 15–20 students online and 5 professors, you have 25 people participating online. The technology is so fluid that we put 5 or 6 people into a chatroom to discuss a topic, a theory, a practice, and about intersections. Everybody shares their ideas and has a micro-conversation and then shares, just like you would do in a traditional classroom. It is the breakdown of learning that comes back to the group at large. We use the same tenets of professional learning and professional spaces, of classroom engagement and modalities through online spaces. That’s what we’ve been refining over the years. That’s how we are able to facilitate.

JMN: As education continues to shift, that’s one of the platforms that we are moving toward. No longer are classrooms of brick and mortar but virtual spaces. Where does learning happen? Learning can happen anywhere. For instance, rural communities who don’t have access to a higher education program might benefit greatly from your approach. Like you mentioned earlier—leaving the valley to go get a doctorate degree. Going back to that student-centered approach, how do universities create opportunities so that all learners are invited or have access to it? It’s about being more inclusive in that approach.

FV: Absolutely. We are able to host a rural school principal who has two teachers at every grade level to a very small community where the principal is also the bus driver and coach. As a small community, they don’t have the resources that larger communities have. For example, the Dallas metropolex, where it is hyper-competitive, families drive 20 minutes in any direction and see seven different school districts, not to mention privates and charters. You encounter that kind of disconnection with how to reach and best serve the population, the school leaders, and the educators. That is one of the reasons why in serving 20 counties in the panhandle area in Texas, we moved to an online model to be able to serve as many educators as we could. That brought a lens of equity.

JMN: Your approach is an aspect of equity for rural communities. How do you shift from traditional to online classrooms? Are faculty required to engage in this form of teaching?

FV: It was challenging when you move a lot of work to that modality, into hybrid spaces, but it was required to properly serve our communities. That brings a lens of equity as faculty of what we can do to reach our schools and communities. We still do face to face, but we are able to reach students in their space wherever they are. It would be a 2- or 3-hour drive for them to come to campus. That’s not realistic on a Wednesday afternoon or a Saturday. The time is of the essence.

In modeling the professional learning community model of coteaching, students have the opportunity to see how we can facilitate the learning and how that space becomes part of equity-driven instruction. What we are doing is not only being inclusive and giving everybody a voice, but everybody then can take the lead on unpacking different areas that really need to be addressed. We focus on depth and complexity of school issues so that whoever is in the room knows that we are going to unpack the data, process, policy, and the unwritten rules. Whatever the issue is in the K-12 arena, we start with that critical lens, and we build from there.

We are intentional about the modeling, the curriculum, and really getting students to understand through their own data sets their own student population. This is your data, your community, and you are a part of it. This is what happens if we continue practice as usual and what doesn’t happen. Now that you are aware of inequities in your system, you cannot ignore it. As educators, we address the opportunity gaps. I think those are the most powerful and most difficult conversations we have, but we introduce them during orientation about the scope of our programs. They think they know how deep we are going to go. Many educators have not been afforded the opportunity to examine data through multiple lenses, multicultural lenses, and identity lenses. All the research that we bring exposes a lot of the inequities that have just been ignored. That’s where we start and continue to address.
JMN: As a former principal, you know the language and practice; however, for our colleagues who don’t have that experiences as teachers and administrators, how can they begin partnering with communities to inform research and practice in a more intentional approach?

FV: One of the opportunities for that conversation that I’ve shared with young scholars, not just in age but that are newer to the profession, is to tell my colleagues who were not K-12 practitioners but who are leaders in their own right with community engagement, with policy, with parental advocacy, is to really be the listener and the learner. To hone in on a neighboring school district to partner. Start with one, gain the trust, really be authentic. Focus on what needs are and how you can serve the community with your specialized training and knowledge.

It’s about being intentional as a scholar and researcher and not just going in there to collect. What is your intervention? What are you giving back? My advice to those who have come into academia is to be very intentional and focused with their service to adopt a school; work with one principal. Really meet with that principal and ask what are the needs for instruction, students, and staff.

It’s really about wanting to embed yourself in a realistic space. To become more knowledgeable, more aware, and also understand the current complexity of where you are. We have very intelligent scholars, very heavy scholars who can bring ideas to the table. Also, listen to the feedback of the principals of where they would like that to happen and where they would like it to work. There is plenty of opportunity for scholars to really become engaged with different levels of our kids in K-12.

JMN: What do you hope your work does in practice and in academia?

FV: We always talk with our colleagues about becoming advocates in action. Wherever we go we learn to model what social justice leadership looks like every day in little bits and pieces. In our scholarship and in our work, we hope we model the ethic of care with the people we work with. At the end of the day it’s about bringing the humanity to our work.

We are educators because we are passionate; because we don’t tolerate injustices; because we have a heart not only for the children, but also the adults we work with. You can’t love the children and hate the teachers and the principals because they are the enemy. We have to grow everybody. My hope is that, although hope is not a strategy, my thought process is that school improvement work done through an equity lens and through a social justice lens will continue to provide a skill set and a cognitive awareness to help educators continue to grow each other and learn from each other. Respect that reciprocity. Just continue to grow each other.

JMN: Has your role as a tenured Latino scholar evolved since you started in academia?

FV: Absolutely, now I can take a seat in the table where decisions are made. For example, one of the intentional things I do after an interview selection process is finished, I will find a faculty member who has worked with that individual candidate to provide feedback. I don’t want to violate any protocol or ethics, but I give them feedback on what that potential candidate can do in the future. Whether it’s job market talk or scholarship, I think it’s about being intentional that you are prepared to be in the market as much as possible. It is highly competitive but it’s still a who you know game; we all have our biases. One of the things that I have been very vocal about is the micro-aggressions that come out. Is this person a good fit? Well, what do you mean by that? People know if they are going to put me on the committee, I’m going to be a pain, and I’m going to ask you to confront your biases. Because the majority of members want to replicate and just hire people that fit a certain mold, whatever that mold is, whether it’s a gender or an identity. We try to replicate what we are comfortable with.

That’s been replicated for many years in higher education because it is really good at keeping people out. It was designed that way. Higher education in our country has a historical practice of exclusivity. We are still fighting for that inclusive space. The hiring process is that critical space where you have to get through the interview to make the finals. Then, when you get to campus they are bringing one African American and one Latina to satisfy the university criteria for interview protocol and process. However, we just hire the same type of people again and again, or are we really being authentic to the process? I’m very comfortable in the hiring process asking these questions to challenge my colleagues in their thinking of whom we are going to bring in to add value.

“

“You have to bring your own chair to the table when you’re not invited.”

JMN: Sometimes we have mixed feeling about the unknowns, so we find comfort with the familiar...

FV: Yes, but that’s the conversation I try to provide other colleagues to give their students advice. Make sure you go in there with the confidence that you are adding value to the scholarship, to the university, and to the program. It is sometimes confidence. It is sometimes scholarship. It is sometimes experiences. It is many things. You have to bring your own chair to the table when you are not invited.

If you wait to be invited you will be on the periphery forever. Everything we do is a risk. You have to take the risk to apply to multiple places and interview and get your name out there and take that job. You have
to take the risk to move. We have to move where the work is sometimes. We can’t just stay and hide in our community. I’m looking for something there because this is my comfort zone. Sometimes it’s difficult when you have kids, family, or your spouse has the job. It gets really complex.

JMN: Absolutely, securing a job in higher education can be a challenge if you are not able to relocate. I was very fortunate to get hired an hour away from where I did my program.

FV: Me too, I stayed in Texas. That’s why I try to provide as much feedback as I can to students about the work in higher education. After an interview, you never get feedback. You’re just told you were not selected at this time. I try to give feedback. Maybe not directly to that candidate, but if I know they are a Jackson Scholar, or I know their institution, I tell their mentor where their candidate was solid and areas where the candidate can better prepare. They need to know they have a lot to offer and to keep offering that. Everyone will find their space.

JMN: I don’t want to take up any more of your time. Anything else you would like to share or add to this conversation.

FV: Yes, UCEA, AERA, and AAHEE spaces were transformational for me when transitioning from a K-12 practitioner to a doctoral student and figuring out what my next steps were. Do I want to go into the professorate? As caring as the doctoral experience was, there was still uncertainty. But it was the other doctoral scholars I met, other Latina/o allies, other African American scholars, other Native American scholars—all these powerful people I met along my journey, truly inspired me. Those networks were extremely powerful and supportive. The mentors, the faculty, the spaces really pushed me to transition from K-12 to the higher education, and I’m glad I did it. I continue to teach and do what I love. More importantly, I continue to serve my community in different ways. I am still serving the K-12 community just through different layers and lenses. I’m looking for something there because this is my comfort zone. Sometimes it’s difficult when you have kids, family, or your spouse has the job. It gets really complex.

JMN: Thank you, Dr. Valle, for sharing your thoughts and ideas.

FV: You are welcome. Talk soon.

CSLEE Values & Leadership Conference
November 14-15, 2018  Houston, Texas

Theme: Walking the Talk: Ethics, Leadership, and the Quest for Inclusive Practice

The Consortium for the Study of Leadership and Ethics in Education (CSLEE), a UCEA program center presents the 23rd Values and Leadership Conference, November 14-15, 2018 at the Four Seasons Downtown Houston in Houston, TX. Scheduled in conjunction with the 32nd annual UCEA convention, this international conference focuses on the role of ethical and moral leadership in action across multiple dimensions of educational contexts.
DAVID L. CLARK NATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH SEMINAR IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION & POLICY

A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Educational Administration & Policy, sponsored by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), Divisions A and L of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), and SAGE Publications, brings emerging educational administration and policy scholars and noted researchers together for two days of presentations, generative discussion, and professional growth. The majority of Clark Scholars go on to become professors at major research institutions around the world. This year’s seminar will be held at the beginning of this year’s AERA meeting in Toronto, Canada, April 5-9, 2019.

Nominations for the David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Educational Administration & Policy are due Friday, November 2, 2018.

Nominees should be outstanding doctoral students in PK-12 educational leadership and administration and/or PK-16 education policy, seeking careers in research. Nominees must have substantially completed their courses and must have formulated a dissertation proposal. Students who have already started or completed their dissertations are unlikely to gain as much from the seminar as students who are in the early stages of formulating their research. Nominations of students from underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged.

Each university may nominate up to two students. Nominations must be accompanied by a student research proposal, and all materials will be submitted online via the UCEA website. The nomination form can be found at https://members.ucea.org/clark/nominations/new. An overview of the Clark Seminar process can be found on the “David Clark Seminar” page of the UCEA website: http://clarkseminar.ucea.org/

To nominate a student, the nomination form must be filled out completely by the nominator via the link above. The information requested includes: (a) nominator’s information (name, institution/affiliation, mailing address, email address, and phone number), (b) nomination statement, (c) student information (name; institution/affiliation; day, evening, and cell phone numbers; mailing address; email address), (d) an abstract of student research, (e) a title, and (f) a blinded statement of proposed research. Nominating institutions must also indicate the level of financial support that will be provided to support their nominee’s travel and participation. Given the cost of hotels and transportation, we recommend an allocation of at least $700 per student. Again, please note that the form must be submitted by the nominator and will require that the nominator gather the necessary information from the nominee.

The student’s statement of proposed research should be no more than two (2) single-spaced pages, not including the references section, and should outline the problem he/she is pursuing or plans to pursue in his/her dissertation research, its intended contribution to theory and practice, specific research questions, and study procedures. The (a) abstract, (b) statement of proposed research, and (c) file name should be devoid of any reference to the nominee’s name and/or institution/affiliation. Student proposals are blind reviewed by three prominent scholars. Invitations will be issued to 42 doctoral students with competition based on the quality of the student’s proposal and his/her perceived capacity to gain from and contribute to the seminar. To be considered complete, both the faculty nomination and the student research proposal must be received by the deadline.

Additional information concerning the seminar is available on the “David Clark Seminar” page of the UCEA website: http://clarkseminar.ucea.org. We expect to extend invitations in December 2018.

If you have any questions, please call (434) 243-1041.

http://clarkseminar.ucea.org       Deadline: Friday, November 2, 2018
Review of the 2018 David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Educational Administration

Margaret Thornton
University of Virginia

New York — This past April, 42 graduate students and 14 mentor faculty members descended upon the New York Hilton Midtown in New York, New York to participate in the 39th annual David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Educational Administration. During the two-day seminar, Clark Scholars heard from an array of panelists about life as a faculty member, presented their research during poster sessions, and participated in small group discussions.

The small group sessions—the core of the Clark Seminar—organized students by dissertation topic and research methodology and paired a group of six students with two to three distinguished faculty members in educational leadership and policy. The faculty mentors, selected by the Clark Seminar Planning Committee, read and commented upon executive summaries of students’ work before arriving in New York and, during the seminar, asked students to lead a conversation about their dissertations within their small groups. Faculty members then offered targeted feedback and invited other students to comment upon each student’s work. Clark Scholars’ research presentations ranged from the movement to opt out of standardized testing to the longitudinal effects of accountability policy on teacher turnover; population change and principal leadership behaviors in rural public schools; and the impact of race in the recruitment, placement, and retention of Black male principals.

To qualify for one of the seminar’s 42 slots, aspiring Clark Scholars submitted a brief summary of their dissertation research along with a letter of recommendation from a faculty member. This year, the seminar received over 80 applications, which were carefully evaluated by a committee of faculty members in educational leadership and policy. Mentor faculty members were selected by the Clark Seminar Planning Committee, which consists of one representative from AERA Division A, one representative from AERA Division L, the UCEA executive director, a UCEA graduate assistant, and the UCEA project and events coordinator.

This Year’s Clark Scholars
Kendrick Alston, North Carolina State University
J. Cameron Anglum, University of Pennsylvania
Sarah Argue, University of Central Arkansas
Minor Baker, Texas State University
Jonnell Baskett, Illinois State University
Lena Batt, University of Wisconsin—Madison
Laura Browning, University of Missouri
Paul Bruno, University of Southern California
Lindsey Burke, George Mason University
Susan Bush-Mecenas, University of Southern California
Ruben Carrillo, University of Texas at San Antonio
Liliana E. Castrellón, University of Utah
Ethan O. Chang, University of California, Santa Cruz
Kathryn Chapman, Arizona State University
Erika Cooper, University of Georgia
James Covielo, University of Texas at El Paso
Jason Cummins, Montana State University
Bryan Duarte, University of Texas at San Antonio
Clare Buckley Flack, Teachers College, Columbia University
Garrick Grace, University of Kentucky
Kenneth E. Graves, Teachers College, Columbia University
Johanna Hanley, University of Georgia
Scott Hurwitz, University of Connecticut
Maraki Kebede, Pennsylvania State University
Ian Christopher Kinkley, Michigan State University
Michael Harris Little, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Rebecca Carol Merrill, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chandler P. Miranda, New York University
Richard Morel, Northwestern University
Angel Miles Nash, University of Virginia
Susan Kemper Patrick, Vanderbilt University
Richard Pelton, Texas State University
Andrew Pendola, Pennsylvania State University
Tamilah Richardson, George Washington University
Melanie Stefanovic, Florida Atlantic University
Christian Toala, St. John’s University
Laura Tobben, University of California, Berkeley
Jeremy Brandon Turner, University of Alabama
Bryan A. VanGronigen, University of Virginia
Alison Wilson, University of Oklahoma
Emily Woods, University of Massachusetts at Boston
Meredith Wronowski, University of Oklahoma

This Year’s Clark Seminar Faculty Mentors
Alex Bowers, Teachers College, Columbia University
Mónica Byrne-Jiménez, Indiana University
Sara Dexter, University of Virginia
Susan Faircloth, University of North Carolina at Wilmington
George Farkas, University of California, Irvine
Rick Ginsberg, University of Kansas
Ellen Goldring, Vanderbilt University
Kimberley Hewitt, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Muhammad Khalifa, University of Minnesota
Colleen Larson, New York University
Hollie Mackey, University of Oklahoma
Betty Malen, University of Maryland
Juan Niño, University of Texas at San Antonio
Noelle Witherspoon Arnold, Ohio State University

The seminar is held each year before the start of the AERA Annual Meeting and is coordinated by AERA Division A, AERA Division L, and UCEA. Named in honor of the late Professor David L. Clark, the seminar seeks to bring together emerging scholars and accomplished faculty members to hone research projects.
and prepare the future of the educational leadership and policy professoriate. For more information about the Clark Seminar and how to apply to become a Clark Scholar, visit 

http://clarkseminar.ucea.org

Faculty members interested in being considered for one of the 12 mentor faculty slots should email Margaret Thornton at met6d@virginia.edu.

Grad Student Column & Blog: Submissions Welcome

Two elements of the UCEA website are focused on issues and information relevant to the graduate students of UCEA. The Graduate Student Column typically features scholarship written by graduate students at UCEA member institutions. Column entries explore a variety of topics and allow the authors to present developing research and to the UCEA graduate student community. The Graduate Student Blog is a more discussion-oriented format encouraging conversation between graduate students via posts and comments. Topics addressed in the blog include discussion and links to educational leadership and educational policy news relevant to graduate students, as well as updates and information about ways graduate students can be more involved in UCEA. Graduate students are invited to send in contributions for both the Graduate Student Column and the Graduate Student Blog. To find out more, please e-mail ucea@virginia.edu.

www.ucea.org/graduate-student-blog/

2018-20 Jackson Scholars

UCEA and the Jackson Scholars Network are proud to announce the 2018-20 cohort.

Francine Baugh, Florida Atlantic University
Sascha Betts, Texas State University
Edwin Nii Bonney, University of Missouri
Sajid Budhwani, University of Denver
Dumar Burgess, Rowan University
Shannon Clark, University of Illinois at Chicago
Briana Coleman, Michigan State University
Samuel Coleman, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Dawn Dems, Arizona State University
James Lamar Foster, University of Washington
Carnelius Gilder, Sam Houston State University
Juail Goode, Rutgers University
Autumn Griffin, University of Maryland
Nia Hulse, St. Johns University
Rosario Hutchings, University of Arizona
Iwinosa Idahor, North Carolina State University
Ashley Jones, Vanderbilt University
Ela Joshi, Vanderbilt University
Anthony Kane, Jr., Duquesne University
Pesha Mabrie, University of Texas at San Antonio

Jeffrie Mallory, Duquesne University
Zoë Rose Mandel, Pennsylvania State University
Ishmael Miller, University of Washington
Nicholas Mitchell, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Adeeb Mozip, Wayne State University
Mariama Nagbe Nagbe, University of Texas at Austin
Eyra Pérez, University of Texas at San Antonio
Steven Purcell, Loyola Marymount University
Nestor Ramirez, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Ron Rhone, Texas Christian University
Stefanie Rome, University of Missouri
Rachael Steward, San Diego State University
Lorraine Taylor, Pennsylvania State University
Josef F. Torres, University of Arizona
Sara Torres, Texas State University
Sofia Vega-Ormeño, Howard University
Juliana Velasco, University of South Florida
Ketina Willis, Sam Houston State University
David Woo, Vanderbilt University
Greg Worthington, University of Texas at Austin
Our Mission Critical: Revolutionizing the Future Through Equitable Educational Leadership, Research, and Practice

The UCEA Graduate Student Summit (GSS) is an annual pre-conference event organized by the UCEA Graduate Student Council. The GSS will commence at 12:00 pm on Wednesday, November 14, 2018 and conclude at 11:30 am on Thursday, November 15, 2018. The cost of registering for the UCEA Convention is a separate $35 fee, and registration for both the UCEA Convention and the GSS is required for presenting during the GSS. http://www.ucea.org/conference/registration

Now in its seventh year, the UCEA GSS has grown each year as it has become recognized by UCEA faculty members and graduate students as a valuable developmental experience for aspiring educational leadership faculty. The purpose of the 2018 UCEA Graduate Student Summit is to provide graduate students a space to engage in authentic dialogue about their scholarly work. This summit will offer opportunities to meet and network with graduate students and faculty, to present your work and receive feedback on your research.

- **Paper sessions:** Share your research and receive constructive feedback.
- **Ignite! sessions:** Share your research and/or ideas for research projects and receive constructive feedback.
- **Roundtable sessions:** Share your research and/or ideas for research projects and receive constructive feedback.
- **Mentor feedback sessions for paper, Ignite!, and roundtable presenters:** Get direct feedback from distinguished faculty on a work that you would like to publish, a proposal, or your dissertation research plan.
- **Networking sessions:** Network with faculty and students from other UCEA institutions interested in similar research topics and talk with UCEA Executive Committee members and Plenum Session Representatives.
- **Social gatherings for graduate students:** Make connections with others sharing similar life experiences in graduate schools across the globe.
- **Developmental workshops for graduate students:** Hear from emerging and established scholars on such topics as creating a research agenda, crafting a CV, applying for jobs, the publishing process, and grappling with and making it through graduate school.

If you have questions at any time, please feel free to email the UCEA Graduate Student Council at uceagradconnex@gmail.com.
This year’s International Summit will be held Friday, November 16, at the Marriott Marquis Houston during the UCEA Annual Convention. Facilitated by Mónica Byrne-Jiménez (Indiana University), the summit is presented in two sections.

180. International Summit I - Migrants & Refugees: Meeting the Educational Needs of Children in and out of Schools  
Friday, Nov. 16 3:10 to 4:30 pm  
This panel of activists working on the U.S.-México border will share their experiences with refugees and asylum seekers. Drawing from these experiences, the panel will also speak to the support that children caught in the immigration quagmire need—and deserve—in schools and the challenges of transitioning to life in a new country.

201. International Summit II - Forging an International Leadership Research Collective  
Friday, Nov. 16 4:40 to 5:50 pm  
This working session will continue previous discussions of developing stronger collaborations among existing research projects and imagine ones that create new areas of inquiry.

Additional International Sessions at the UCEA Convention

035. UCEA/BELMAS Research Collaboration: The International School Leadership Development Network  
Thursday, Nov. 15 9:00 am to 12:00 pm  
Research teams from the International School Leadership Development Network, an international collaboration between UCEA and BELMAS, will meet to discuss current projects and future plans.

079. Equitable Educational Leadership for Women in England, Ireland, and Rwanda  
Thursday, Nov. 15 3:20 to 4:30 pm  
This international community-building symposium will provide new insights into how women in educational leadership across the world manifest equity-oriented leadership to achieve a more socially just society. The session features three research investigations from England, Ireland, and Rwanda.

101. UCEA Center for the International Study of School Leadership: Principals Generating Success in High-Need Schools  
Thursday, Nov. 15 4:40 to 5:50 pm  
National and international scholars in this session will come together to promote a conversation about a worldwide examination of high-need schools in different parts of the world.

103. Inter-American Educational Leadership Networks and Cross-Sector Alliances for Educational Equity  
Thursday, Nov. 15 4:40 to 5:50 pm  
This session will invite a critical dialogue on equity-based educational leadership and management (EDLM) networks and alliances across Latin America.

152. Context Matters: Building Educational Leadership In Chile  
Friday, Nov. 16 12:20 to 1:35 pm  
Chile is a Latin American country with mixed educational results, with student access and retention rates comparable to OECD countries. The segregation of students is the highest of the OECD countries, with little social mix.

242. Reimagining the EdD: How Participatory Action Research Impacts Leadership Practice  
Saturday, Nov. 17 10:40 to 11:50 am  
The purpose of this symposium is to give practitioner voice to an innovative, international EdD. Four students, representing projects in the U.S., Taiwan, and Thailand, will present their research.

256. Leading Holistically for Equity and Excellence: Systems Thinking at the School, District, and State Levels  
Saturday, Nov. 17 12:00 to 1:10 pm  
This international community-building session will gather leading scholars from the U.S., Australia, and Israel to describe systems thinking in educational leadership and policy from their varying points of view.

260. International Stories: Leadership for Student Success Through Relationship Building and Equitable Practice  
Saturday, Nov. 17 1:20 to 2:30 pm  
This international community-building session will focus on recent research and development activities by members of the high-need schools project, examining studies of high-need schools in Brazil, New Zealand, South Africa, and the U.S.

NOTE: All days, times subject to change.  
Please consult the Convention Program at www.ucea.org for updates.
The 32nd Annual UCEA Convention

Our Mission Critical: Revolutionizing the Future Through Equitable Educational Leadership, Research, and Practice

Nov. 14-18, 2018
Marriott Marquis Houston, Houston, TX

The 32nd annual UCEA Convention will be held November 14-18, 2018 at the Marriott Marquis Houston in Houston, TX. The purpose of the 2018 UCEA Convention is to engage participants in discussions about research, policy, practice, and preparation in the field of education with a specific focus on educational leadership. Members of the 2018 Convention Program Committee are Terah Venzant Chambers (Michigan State University), Bradley Carpenter (University of Houston), Terrance L. Green (University of Texas at Austin), and Lolita A. Tabron (University of Denver). Also, for the first time, the Program Committee will include a graduate student, Andrene Castro (University of Texas at Austin). The 32nd Annual UCEA Convention theme, “Our Mission Critical: Revolutionizing the Future Through Equitable Educational Leadership, Research, and Practice,” invited submissions that (a) challenge dominant narratives that subvert equitable leadership and education; (b) revolutionize the preparation of school and district leaders to enact equitable leadership, research, and practice; (c) imagine equitable alliances with students, families, and communities where there is shared expertise, decision-making, and ownership for sustainable change; and foster coalition with policymakers and elected officials to create the future we need. See www.ueca.org

Important dates:
- October 7: Regular Registration ends 11:59 pm EST
- November 1: Late Registration ends 11:59 pm EST
- November 2: On-Site Registration begins
- November 14-15: Graduate Student Summit and Plenum
- November 15-18: Annual Convention
UCEA Convention Sponsors

In the 32 years that UCEA has held its convention, many institutions have served as generous sponsors and exhibitors. In all cases, these cooperative endeavors served to create a more dynamic relationship between UCEA and those institutions and organizations. UCEA acknowledges the substantive contributions that the following sponsors and exhibitors have made to this year’s 32nd Convention. We greatly appreciate their support and continuing endorsement.

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The 32nd Annual UCEA Convention
Houston, TX, Nov. 14-18, 2018

REGISTRATION
http://www.ucea.org/conference/registration

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*In addition to applicable Graduate Student registration rate listed above

If you are a community member, K-12 student, or other designation, please contact UCEA Headquarters regarding registration details.

Graduate Student Summit (Nov. 14 and 15) will be an additional $35 after cost of registration.

If you are a BELMAS member, please email UCEA at uceaconvention@gmail.com for your discount code.

We encourage all potential attendees to register early to avoid rate increases AND ensure that your name badge is ready at registration. New for 2018, Registrant Type will be added to name badge, so be sure to select the correct Registrant Type during registration. For all attendees who register on site (starting November 2, 2018), we cannot guarantee that your name badge will be ready upon arrival due to processing; however, UCEA will get it to you promptly.

It is the policy of UCEA that all persons in attendance at the 2018 UCEA Annual Convention, including participants who plan to attend one or more sessions, are required to register. Registration is not transferable.

**International Scholars**

In keeping with UCEA’s longstanding tradition of an international focus and collaboration with aligned organizations worldwide, we welcome international attendees to the 2018 Annual UCEA Convention. If you require a letter of invitation to travel to the UCEA Convention, please e-mail your request by October 15, 2018, to uceaconvention@gmail.com
2018 UCEA Convention

Nov. 15-18, 2018
Marriott Marquis Houston
1777 Walker Street · Houston, Texas 77010 USA
713-654-1777

http://www.ucea.org/conference/hotel-reservations

Room rates: Single/Double $169
We encourage you to make your reservation early, as space is tight. All reservations must be made by October 22, 2018 in order to receive rates listed above. For the UCEA room rates, please use the online passkey to make your reservations online, or call (713) 654-1777.

Four Seasons Hotel

Room rates: Single/Double $179
Additional rooms are available at the Four Seasons Hotel. For details, see the UCEA Hotel Reservations Page:
http://www.ucea.org/conference/hotel-reservations

Need a roommate? UCEA provides separate forums for Convention and Graduate Student Summit attendees to submit room share requests to the larger UCEA faculty and graduate student communities. It is important that you read the terms of use/disclaimer before proceeding to a Room Share Forum. Please note that by using these forums, you are agreeing to the terms of use/disclaimer. Also, make sure the dates you listed for arrival and departure are present and accurate. The room sharing forum list is currently organized by gender, then arrival and departure dates to make scanning for a potential roommate easier.

For more information on the hotel and Houston, please see
http://www.ucea.org/conference/location

Photo courtesy of the Marriott Marquis Houston website

www.ucea.org
Keynotes, General Sessions, & Banquet

108. General Session I: Texas Superintendents' Panel
Thursday Nov. 15  6:15 to 7:30 pm
The social justice keynote features a panel of four Texas superintendents: Kelly Crook, Del Valle ISD; Kent Paredes Scribner, Fort Worth ISD; Esperanza Zendejas, Brownsville ISD; and H. D. Chambers, Alief ISD

109. Opening Reception in Honor of UCEA Past Presidents
Thursday Nov. 15  7:30 to 9:00 pm
West Event Lawn on the 6th floor of the Marriott Marquis

117. General Session II: Wallace Foundation Town Hall. The Future of Leadership and Leadership for the Future: Meeting the Needs of the Next Generation of Schools and Students
Friday Nov. 16  8:00 to 9:20 am
The future promises increasing diversity in the composition and background of the U.S. student population. To meet the evolving needs of a new generation of students, school leaders must be prepared to address these evolving demographic and geographic trends. How can we anticipate student and school-level change proactively instead of being reactionary and delayed in our response? As a field, how can we ensure we are not stuck in the trap of preparing school leaders for yesterday’s schools?

202. General Session III: Graduate Student Council Keynote: Michelle D. Young. We Are UCEA
Friday Nov. 16  6:00 to 7:00 pm
Dr. Michelle D. Young is UCEA Executive Director and Chair of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of Virginia. Young’s scholarship focuses on the development of school leaders as well as how school leaders and school policies can support equitable and quality experiences for all students and adults who learn and work in schools. She recently edited the 2nd edition of the Handbook of Research on the Education of School Leaders and is currently conducting an analysis of state ESSA plans’ focus on leadership development. Young works with universities, practitioners, and state and national leaders to improve the preparation and practice of school and school system leaders. She has led both state-wide and institutional reviews of educational leadership development programs. Currently, she is chairing the effort to develop the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards which will guide the development and accreditation review of educational leadership preparation programs. She also serves on a number of national policy and academic boards, including the National Policy Board for Educational Administration.

230. General Session IV: UCEA Presidential Address With Mariela Rodríguez: Que por mí no quede: The Impact of our Actions When Mentoring School Leaders
Saturday Nov. 17  9:20 to 10:30 am
We have a huge responsibility as scholars tasked with mentoring school leaders. Our multiple roles as researchers, educators, and activists shape the ways our students grow as leaders. We should create learning opportunities for school leaders that engage them in (re)examining their roles. We must ensure that we have given everything of ourselves to help nurture school leaders willing to cultivate spaces for learning that inspire and empower the children they serve. Such experiences will have a lasting impact on students’ lives. Just like particles of sand that are far-reaching, the mark we make today will still reverberate tomorrow.

302/303. 32nd Annual UCEA Banquet & General Session IV: Hidden Figures Panel
Saturday Nov. 17  5:30 to 10:00 pm  Space Center Houston
Join the UCEA community for an out-of-this-world evening. The Space Center Houston is the perfect venue to conclude the convention given the theme, “Our Mission Critical: Revolutionizing the Future Through Equitable Educational Leadership, Research, and Practice.” The evening’s events will consist of dinner, the unveiling of the UCEA Hidden Figures Panel, and lip sync battles and/or karaoke entertainment. Transportation will be provided from the Marriott Marquis Houston. Tickets and information available at registration.

NOTE: All days/times subject to change. Please consult the Convention Program at www.ucea.org for updates.
2018-19 Calendar

October
8 UCEA Convention late registration begins www.ucea.org/conference/registration
22 Hotel reservations due, Marriott Maquis Houston www.ucea.org/conference/hotel-reservations
29 Deadline for abstract submissions, Women Leading Education Conference www.nottingham.ac.uk/conference/wle
TBA First round of interviews, UCEA Executive Director

November
2 On-site UCEA Convention registration begins
14-15 CSLEE Values & Leadership Conference, Houston, TX https://valuesandleadership.wordpress.com
14-15 UCEA Graduate Student Summit, Houston, TX
14-18 UCEA Convention, Houston, TX www.ucea.org/conference
TBA UCEA International Summit, Houston, TX

December
1 Deadline for submissions, Winter UCEA Review
TBA Finalist selection, UCEA Executive Director

2019
April
1 Deadline for submissions, Winter UCEA Review
5-9 AERA meeting, Toronto, Canada www.aera.net
TBA Finalist selection, UCEA Executive Director

July
8-11 Women Leading Education Conference, Nottingham, UK www.nottingham.ac.uk/conference/wle

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https://members.ucea.org/account_registration/claims

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**Contributing to the UCEA Review**

If you have ideas concerning substantive feature articles, interviews, point/counterpoints, or innovative programs, **UCEA Review** section editors would be happy to hear from you.

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**UCEA Review** deadlines: April 1, August 1, December 1