

New Structure for Leadership Certification & Endorsements Redesign Team

Minutes

Monday, September 29, 2008

Redesign Team Co-Chairs in Attendance

Margaret Trybus, Concordia University

Scott Day, University of Illinois-Springfield

Redesign Team Members in Attendance

Jim Harrington, Dominican University

John Hunt, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville

Carlene Lutz, Illinois Federation of Teachers-American Federation of Teachers

John Murphy, ICPEA and Northern Illinois University

Brian Schwartz, Illinois Principals Association

Dennis Williams, Illinois State Board of Education

Darlene Ruscitti, (DuPage ROE

Introductions

The meeting was started with those present introducing themselves and telling where they were from and why they were interested in this particular topic.

It was noted that many feel they have beaten odds with Levine's report.

Dennis Williams, ISBE, gave an overview of the Type 75 and the parameters associated with it. He noted to the group that the state is moving towards having one license in the state with other endorsements such as a principal endorsement. It was also noted that the state is standards based with assessments tied to standards but there is still course counting. Dennis noted that he thinks it is really important that parameters are not really as much as people think they have to address standards, if degree seeking must meet those standards. It was noted that the state has not seen any new programs coming out.

How do we as a group determine the knowledge and skills principals and building level administrators need to be effective to lead school?

Standards are associated with needs. They are used to develop programs. It was noted that not all programs are equal. Size of class can make a dramatic difference in the program offered. Two courses that are the same may not look anything alike.

When Universities/Colleges are NCATE accredited they have to operate within two sets of standards.

The question of how far the group wanted to go down the standards lane. It has probably been a good influence but is it local or context bound? Most often variables determine needs, where is hiring, where is marketplace?

Contextual needs:

The group members noted that they had seen reform and seen how it goes but would rather not see reform again. They don't think there is anything wrong with standards given local ability to respond. They think more power piece is how they assess candidates, program assessments, course assessments, clinical, closing noting there have been improvements in the program in that area. They are also okay with the knowledge and skills that candidates can do and they can be measured. However, the group noted they were not okay with the dispositions. It may be a good idea to do pre-assessment, in principalship courses, where they are in their own professional life, where they are strong, where they are weak. This would allow the candidates to see big changes even in their own thought process.

The document "When Learning Counts" which is included in the reference materials talks about the 10 states, which includes Illinois. It defines knowledge and skills, problem analysis, oversight and program management. The information also sites six states that focus on children, students and teachers which includes Illinois.

Scott and Margaret talked about context. John Murphy talked about the urban needs noting these needs may be totally different than in other more rural areas of the state. Urban areas may have more layers of leadership where rural area are more of a one shop or do it all type of position. It was noted that the State of Illinois should give a general framework. Many felt that two sets of forms instead of one is problematic.

Is there a significant difference in leading an elementary school versus a high school? Brian Schwartz noted that he did not want to pigeon hole people so that there ends up being a shortage of candidates.

Brian said they may want to cut a finer K-8, 9-12 definitions. What does a principal certificate mean? This seems to be an area that is not currently spelled out; would the person have some type of card?

The question was raised "do we agree as a group we would like to see a principals' endorsement? The group asked Brian if IPA would be okay with that as a first step. Darlene Ruscitti noted she would be agreeable to that and provided an explanation. One thing seen all the time is how principals with the team and why a learning community was started. Margaret noted she agreed if the group agrees they would need to look at supervisory focus. It was noted that principals are needed for building leadership. The group also feels there is a need for an endorsement for those people in the building that will carry out instructions for the principal/programs.

A separate superintendent endorsement is needed. It must have a way set up to deal with all complexities of the position plus having team leader skills. The challenge for the colleges/universities is to show the interactions between positions.

- 1) Recommendations regarding the number of years of teaching experience for entrance into the principal preparation program

The group had a discussion on the number of years that should be required and if these years should be viewed as being completed at the end of the degree program or the number of years required before a person can start the program.

- 2) Recommendations regarding the number of years between issuance of the principal endorsement and becoming a principal (shelf life of the endorsements).

The group discussed this topic at length.

Suggestions will be a set of steps if you read the charge carefully. The group was presented these steps (climbing the ladder from the bottom):

Superintendent

To

Principal – endorsement

To

General Administration – endorsement

The introductory layer of preparation should be viewed as part of the preparation. They don't want to do 10 courses for principal and then come back to school and do 10 more courses to get to the next step. However, this could impact the superintendent endorsements since they would have to go the route of principal endorsement before they would be eligible to get the superintendent endorsement. Get the certification, serve as principal and then move forward to get the Superintendent certification. If districts require an EDD in the Superintendent position it could result in a shortage. Does a superintendent candidate have to have some experience in a building in order to become a superintendent? Business people may not have enough experience for a superintendent endorsement.

Some people noted they were looking at MBA and Business Manager areas. They believe and are working toward principal endorsement that would be separate than the general administrative with the proviso that it would not be required for a superintendent. What are the requirements for a School Business Person, does this designation require school experience?

John Murphy noted he would be in favor of a candidate getting their principal designation and then going back to get the superintendent designation.

A discussion as held on the possibility of candidates coming from outside Illinois. There is an interstate agreement but all people are currently given a provisional certificate while their credentials are reviewed according to Dennis Williams.

Brian noted he would like to survey the IPA membership before the next meeting. Some of the ideas mentioned he felt the membership would not be able to support.

What is the difference between preparation and induction? The preparation and skill knowledge necessary to walk in the door and serve as a principal was discussed. This is the area that mentoring helps cover but it could be associated with a cost.

Principal Preparation

No Cost – Administrators Academy

From general admission to endorsement would tie with partnerships (would need to discuss with that group)

Principal Preparation

Internships – in addition to clinical experiences

May be more experiences in clinical experiences

Curriculum

Use of ISBE principal standards

Supervisory training and experiences

Same ELCC Standards to drive Curriculum

More depth

1-year state mandated mentoring

When you are in the principalship (could

Tie into renewal of certificate – without

Doing internship – current no penalties)

Scott Day has a problem with undercutting and saying that someone that they can do something for 50 hours. There needs to be a general limit or something and they must pay more attention to detail.

Brian asked what a person needs to learn right now for a type 75 certificate.

John Murphy said they would need skill set. Principal standards are in place but what are the general standards? Before the group can consider additional endorsements they must first back up. Theoretical thoughts on requirements would be traits, characteristics, communication skills, curriculum knowledge.

How much of the general administration will be principal based and how much will be other areas? Maybe there are not enough differences to split the general administrative and the principal endorsements. Jim Harrington agreed that from his outlook everything in general administrator applies to principals with more complexity. However some believe this is a huge question.

Context based on standards
Curriculum
Management
Family and Community
Ethics
Larger Context
Struggles at the University level

Back to the three charges –

Some will rigorously oppose the shelf life of a general administrative endorsement certification. The simplest thing may be to look at a test. The shelf life of a certificate on the east coast is limited to five years. Every five years you must renew the certificate. Could we recommend that the endorsement for the principals be renewed maybe every 10 years if they don't renew then they must get additional coursework in order to get their renewal?

In Illinois the initial teaching certificate is five years but it can be renewed indefinitely. They do not go back to standards; they just review their initial certificate. Sometimes statewide the teachers are not able to tenure if they don't continue to improve their knowledge and skills. In some states teachers are not allowed to continue to teach with only a provisional certificate after five years.

Brian noted that it is not clear if additional endorsements; better mentoring or additional internships are needed. Maybe it is an endorsement and maybe it is something different.

The group was not sold that more courses were needed, seems to be more experience is needed. Why does the training have to be in a traditional manner? It seems to be an open box on who that could be defined. It could even be the principals association that opens up a track that offers way to get where we want the principals to be.

It was noted that the general administrator program was understood but there was another set of experiences tied to key knowledge that students would then engage and help with residencies. However, the group noted they have some work on how it would be flushed out.

It was noted that IL-SAELP did much of the general education administrators skill set. Type 75 showed experienced needed but they could not be gained through education administration but through national teacher certification experiences. They could accept things that would be redundant and could do so in a manner that could grant up to 15 hours of credit.

If you go with an internship as part of the general administrator program they must identify who went through internships for principals.

The three items in the charge were discussed briefly before the group broke for lunch. Following lunch the group joined the Internships/Residencies group for discussion.

Charges:

Item 1) endorse as written but take out "...superintendent thought leadership."

Item 2) recommendations regarding the number of years of teaching experience for entrance into the principal preparation program

Currently now admission time one way to move along would be to say you favor so many years. There is data that the participation of students in programs with minimal experience does not have good results.

Should this be the number of years to get the endorsement not the number of years for entrance? It could require four years of teaching not tenure as some teachers change districts and do not get tenure right away after they accept a teaching position.

Brian noted that it is hard to say on number of years experience needed. One of their executive administrators only had two years of experience in the classroom and was a terrific administrator. They use to say two years experience then it was recommended it be raised to four years but that didn't make the cut. There is no right answer but some believe four years is better while others say they were successful and did not have the number of years required. Others have intimate knowledge of social services which is often equally important to the teaching years. Many have trouble with the wording because of the time frame that is required to complete the program. Experience translates in a code way to age so you need to be careful how you word things. Some don't feel it is a good idea to say you can't go take courses when you only have one year of experience.

This may need to be school based experience to get into the general administration program. Some require four years of school experience while others may only require two years. It could be said that in order to achieve the Type75 you must have achieved teacher certification but that did not fly. Need to clarify rules, but not just the principal preparation program.

Item 3) recommendations regarding the number of years between issuance of the principal endorsement and becoming a principal (shelf life of the endorsement)

Need recommendation on shelf life. Currently if you don't renew during the set time frames then you are required to take five hours to renew. If you keep renewing it remains active by paying the fee.

Five years, 10 years, 15 years the group is not sure of the correct number. If you want to maintain all the certificates you have to currently renew every five years. Certificates are either Valid and Exempt or Valid and Active.

The task force has given a recommendation to get some grandfathered in so those with Type 75 would remain eligible. There will be a principal endorsement but the state is waiting to see what they do with the internship/residencies.

Redesign team needs to look at recommendation on number of years – phrasing in alignment and looking at four years.

More groups will be brought to the table which will include groups such as PTA. The groups will need to present what is plausible but where can this group get the answer?

Brian will bring data to the next group meeting on Oct. 27. Darlene will bring curriculum.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Pfoff
Note Taker