**Thoughts Regarding Changes in Illinois Principal Preparation Programs**

***Illinois Council for Principals of Education Administration (ICPEA)***

At the request of various individuals and organizations, the Illinois Council of Professors in Education Administration (ICPEA) has developed a fact sheet below in order to facilitate discussions regarding the newly implemented principal preparation program. ICPEA wants to make it clear that our organization is not wanting to step backwards in the principal training process, but to bring a rational approach to the future development of Illinois school leaders while bringing some points to facilitate discussion. We now have two years’ experience in the implementation process. While the internship part of these requirements has yet to be completed, we now have some factual information based on implementation, actual experiences, and research. ICPEA sincerely appreciates being contacted by stakeholders and others interested in the principal licensure process. We hope the following information proves beneficial in the evaluation process.

**Pros of the Current Principal Preparation Program**

1. ISBE is currently working for positive change and collaboration to develop stakeholder ownership in the Principal Preparation process. This is truly appreciated. Universities see positive actions taking place to improve the strength of Principal Preparation Program completers in order to better serve schools in our state. Some specific indicators of these changes are listed below.
   1. Original JCAR changes in conjunction with the ICPEA included:
      1. Section 30.70 B. ICPEA advocated for change in the original rule, which required that candidates have four years of teaching before entering university programs. In addition, Illinois candidates were required to have seven years of teaching experience while out-of-state candidates only had to have four years teaching experience in order to become a principal. The rule was changed so that student candidates have to have a minimum of two years of teaching experience to enter the program and can become principals after four years teaching experience.
      2. Section 30.80 C6. Out of state task force members were no longer required as part of the principal preparation review panel. ICPEA continues to question the need for the principal preparation review panel.
      3. Section 30.60. ICPEA efforts led to the change whereby adjunct faculty could teach no more than 80% of the required curriculum from the original rule which placed adjunct faculty as being able to teach no more than 20% of the curriculum. This was later moved to 50% prior to the current 80% adjunct rule.
   2. Other recommendations by JCAR:
      1. Out of state schools were required to follow the same criteria as in state applicants. It had always been ICPEA’s beliefs that our organization did not want to stop out-of-state universities doing business in Illinois but we wanted them to be required to follow the same rules as in state programs. The original rules gave out of state programs a distinct advantage in program development and approval. It was never the intent of ICPEA that out-of-state programs and out-of-state candidates would be at a disadvantage in obtaining the principal endorsement. We only requested equal requirements.
      2. Senator Harmon, a member of the JCAR committee, recommended that ISBE move quickly on the teacher leadership endorsement.
      3. ISBE cooperated with this request and submitted legislation regarding the teacher leader program during the next legislative session.
   3. Definition of principal candidate mentor was expanded to include superintendent, assistant superintendent and special education director as long as that person has been a successful principal for two years, works in the site of the internship and holds a role that is relevant to the principalship.
   4. For the internship site—the principal has to provide evidence of two years as a successful principal (before it was 3 years) including student growth data in two of five years and formal evaluations and letters of recommendation. The language of “which may include” was deleted and added “including” in its place.
   5. Change to the site supervisor—the rules were revised to allow the site supervisor to hold a valid general administrator or principal endorsement from Illinois or a comparable endorsement if the internship is in a different state. Then that site supervisor can hold that state’s comparable general administrator or principal endorsement. So, if the internship is in Missouri, the site supervisor can hold a Missouri general administrative certificate or principal endorsement. The site supervisor must also show 2 years of successful experience including student growth data and formal evaluations and letters of recommendation.
   6. Training, assessments and the content exam can be passed before licensure (before it was before the internship for the training and assessment and before the last semester of the internship for the content exam).
   7. The number of mentors assigned to an aspiring candidate was increased from two candidates to five candidates. With the change, mentors can now have no more than 5 candidates assigned to them, although a 6th may be assigned if the Licensure Board grants an exception and the rules give the parameters for that exception.
   8. HB5286 - Allows school support personnel (formerly Type 73) candidates to apply for university principal preparation programs and grants them the use of four years of experience towards licensure.
   9. SB2972 - Allows all General Administrative Type 75 licensed individuals to be part of the University Superintendent Endorsement programs.
2. The quality of the candidates universities are admitting has been strong.  Student candidates appear to be very motivated and willing to endure many hurdles to become principals. The current candidates definitely want and desire to be a principal. They are not in university programs just to get a Master’s degree.
3. After a very slow start, university programs seem to have picked up candidates within the last six months in Teacher Leadership endorsement and/or Principal Preparation Programs. The field seems to be slowly adapting to the changes.
4. The quality of university coursework has always been very high; but in revising the Principal Preparation requirements, leadership curriculum has become even stronger.
5. Universities applaud the emphasis on at risk and underserved populations.  This only enhances and improves the Principal Preparation Program experiences.
6. The principal internship prepares student candidates for the real world. With candidates now having a full year internship, this requirement gives them the opportunity to experience a wider variety of activities in a more in depth manner. The internship was supported by universities at the inception of changes in principal preparation. This process will better prepare candidates for future job opportunities in school leadership.
7. A real positive in this process has been to have university leadership faculty members review their existing programs, refine them and reapply to establish their new programs. Updated programs based on current research, best practice content and delivery were necessary for continuous improvement. The process has also reinforced that high standards, continuity of content, delivery, internship, and assessment are important.
8. While most universities had previously sought input from key stakeholders, the newly developed university-school partnership has strengthened this communication process.

**Cons of the Current Principal Preparation Program**

1. There is too much rigidity and narrow thinking in the rubrics with additional mandated requirements (ranging from 30 to 45 pages in length) by the state, during the internship.  They limit what a candidate HAS to do, notwithstanding his/her personal background and experience.  The rubrics dictate the activities when, in fact, they should be a sounding board for dialogue individualizing an internship for each student and his/her needs.  Also, the fact that certain activities HAVE to be done at certain grade levels with certain populations is absurd.  In addition, the use of three sets of standards during the internship has proven to be too burdensome on university supervisors, site supervisors, and the interns themselves. The amount of tracking and paperwork many times seems redundant.  The required assessments during the internship are too prescriptive and have taken away quality assessments typically completed at the course level before the internship.  Universities have received no evidence that the SREB requirements are research based. How did Illinois get involved with these standards? SREB standards are not new as they have been in circulation for over a decade. Universities would like to see the research that these activities are worthwhile and have produced measurable results in candidate quality. Training principal candidates to be instructional leaders requires experiences framed around curriculum, instruction, and assessment so that principals know how to supervise and evaluate teachers showing evidence of improved student learning. Activities regarding basic supervision and discipline are key components to every principal’s success. However, they need to include a clear understanding of teaching and learning in order to be effective. Working with teachers who have questionable teaching methods and lack evidence that they can show improved student learning, will require internship experiences that are strategically planned by the university supervisor and the on-site mentor so that the principal candidate is well prepared. The current rubrics don’t allow for customization to meet individual student needs during the internship. There still needs to be activities regarding basic supervision and discipline as these are key components to every principal’s success.
2. The requirements to be a mentor (site supervisor) are too stringent.  They need to be amended. Currently only the superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, and director of special education can be a mentor (the law for all requires two years a successful principal). Title should not matter. As we demonstrated in our meeting in Springfield, Illinois districts are replete with titles. The basic rule should be two years as a successful principal. There is no need for superintendent letters and references in the process. The ISBE mandated numbers (5 candidates with only the principal) are not practical nor relevant.  Assistant principals and other district administrators, who bring additional expertise, need to be involved in the internship process. Universities and school districts feel that the state does not need to exert so much control over local school districts. Further, the heavy burden placed on rural areas of this state has discouraged candidates in applying because they are worried they may not have mentors since the time burden on the site supervisor may be more than a small district can absorb.
3. The ISBE annual reports should be limited to perhaps once every five years and an annual verification page attesting to the 46 pages of items that we attest we are doing. That is what ISBE eventually did with school districts (a superintendent and board sign off sheet). Each university basically initialed each item which gave assurances that we were following all the laws, rules and regulations. This paperwork also seems to be a burden to the staff at the Illinois State Board of Education.
4. Districts are questioning why there is an excessive amount of school improvement planning and data management during the internship. While district personnel are appreciative of school improvement planning and understanding data, they feel that there must be a balance that proper leadership, problem solving, and supervisory techniques are key components to a principal's success that will lead to school improvement.
5. Superintendents are concerned about the enrollment numbers in Principal Preparation programs. They have overwhelmingly told university personnel that schools want many candidates to choose from, not just a few.
6. The likelihood of a high school teacher becoming a preschool principal or even an elementary principal is slim--a middle school administrator yes, but not an elementary one. The same is true of an elementary teacher; the likelihood of an elementary teacher becoming a high school principal is also very slim, so instead of allowing students to concentrate on areas that are applicable to them--with a passing knowledge of other levels--now students know only a little about every level--but not enough to truly understand the complexity of the principalship at the school level they expect to eventually serve as a principal. We do not disagree with the need for work in ELL, Special Education, gifted, reading, math, etc.--but at the appropriate level--or two levels--for example elementary school and middle school, or middle school and high school. It is really only the middle school teacher that has the flexibility to go to either elementary or high school principalship.
7. Universities and student candidates have a real concern about the increased cost of the license. The two day Content Area Test (195/196) and the state required Teacher Evaluation Training increases the cost to the student candidate of approximately $1,000. This increased cost is pricing many students out of the program since these costs are not covered by student loans. In the past, school districts picked up the evaluation training once a candidate was hired. We have real questions about the usefulness of students taking the evaluation training and then not getting an administrative position in the next three years--with a refresher course required after five. In addition, universities are struggling with the amount of time needed to complete the Principal Content Area Test (195/196). This is the only state content area test in education that takes two days to complete.
8. Universities are very concerned that only those with an Illinois teaching license can get a Principal endorsement. This is a strong disincentive for any out-of-state teachers/superintendents to attend Illinois schools. This is a particular concern for many universities in the state of Illinois that recruit from all over the nation. ICPEA and other educational leaders had only requested that Illinois candidates have equal access to the Principal endorsement, not to make it difficult or nearly impossible for out of state candidates to enter an Illinois program.
9. The requirement of 2 years student growth within the past five years penalizes teachers who leave teaching for example to raise their young families. They may have had numerous years of experience but if time were taken off, they would not meet the requirement of two years of growth within the last five years.
10. The poor quality of the mandated Teachscape materials needs to be addressed. There are too many inconsistencies, such as using identical terminology to explain a high two and a low three in the Teacher Evaluation process. The sound quality is not good, especially in Module Two. The 360 degree panoramic videos are confusing to the observer. There are many typos that need to be corrected. Universities are required to endure poor quality instruction through Teachscape.
11. It has been brought to ICPEA’s attention that the number of minority candidates and candidates from disenfranchised areas of Illinois has dropped dramatically in the percentages of enrollment. This is on top of the already drastic decline in enrollment. This has been due to not only the cost of the program but the cost of state requirements within the program and the fact that many of these candidates are not able to get into education because of the change in the Basic Skills assessment (TAP). To further exasperate this condition, many of our candidates cannot use schools in high poverty environments for internship because of the schools’ test scores and success rates in the last five years. This will continue to be a growing problem as improving schools in high needs areas grow, and the leadership required to serve as a principal for these schools diminishes. Here are some specific facts to this issue: during the 2008-2009 school year, African-American students’ combined pass rate was 59% compared to 5% during the 2010-2011 school year. It should be pointed out here that during this same time frame, Caucasian students’ combined pass rate was 91% compared to 27% during the 2010-2011 school year. Changes in the teacher preparation programs invariably impact the principal preparation. Sawchuk (2009) in an article entitled “Congressional Black Caucus Pushes for Teacher Equity” explains how the Congressional Black Caucus in addition to other minority advocates are increasingly concerned with the disproportionate number of minority teachers as well as teacher equity for minority students. It should be noted that nationally less than 20% of African-Americans are educators, which is a sharp decline from years past which many feel is primarily due to unnecessary requirements to become an educator. Ruby Payne points out that a teacher needs to know not only content but more importantly how to relate to and reach students (2003). The bottom line is that there are multiple factors that constitute a good educator. The National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (2004) noted the following benefits of minority teachers:
    1. Enrich diverse students’ learning because of shared racial and cultural identities
    2. Serve as cultural brokers by assisting students in navigating their school environment and culture, as well as increasing the involvement of parents

# Other Topics For Discussion

1. There are too many myths out there that need to be clarified by the ISBE on the internship requirements.  The ISBE needs to release a statement that teachers are not required to leave a full-time teaching position in order to complete the internship.
2. If we are really going to look at this carefully, we should review the 186 item 46 page rubric we were all graded on concerning the original Principal Preparation application rubric.  The requirement of an ongoing school district partnership with contracts should be revisited (although universities do not have a problem with this and have come to enjoy the meetings, the fact that the state is dictating this is wrong and there is way too much bureaucratic paperwork in the process).
3. Admissions packets generally have too many required items, from tests to interviews. The admissions portfolio and interview requirement have caused a bottle neck in admitting students. Too many partial applications are not completed, nor students admitted. The state has mandated too much for admissions and it should be reviewed and scaled back to those that are critical to ISBE. Students are doing what is required, but there are many redundancies and matters that should be left to local control knowing universities have admission requirements in addition to those required from ISBE. University partners have expressed that they do not understand why they have to be involved in the admissions process as school districts feel that this is a university responsibility. Simply spoken, there are too many layers of bureaucracy in the process that do not result in the success of the program, and may in fact discourage quality candidates from committing to becoming a principal.
4. ISBE should not micromanage universities regarding professorial requirements to carry out changes in principal preparation. There are excellent professors in programs who cannot be mentors because they were not a principal. Moreover, it is very limiting to require internship supervisors to hold current ILLINOIS principal/general administrative licenses.  This prevents those professors who have been administrators in other states from supervising internships. Professors who have experience in leading schools should be grandfathered in to supervise internships.
5. Universities continue to be concerned about the micromanagement of university programs, staffing, funding, curriculum, etc. Many feel that due to all the new "requirements", the curriculum has become "a mile wide and an inch deep.” The changes have limited student choice causing a narrowing of the curriculum, and the mind set of "one size fits all.”
6. While we have made great steps in allowing school service personnel (formerly Type 73 licensed individuals) candidates to be part of principal preparation programs, this sunsets in 2019. Universities feel that Type 73 individuals should be eligible to be part of principal preparation programs, so consequently the 2019 sunset needs to be eliminated. Research shows school service personnel can be quality principals. There is no research stating that they are less effective than the classroom teacher.
7. A related concern/question deals with the Teacher Leader endorsement. What can a teacher do with this endorsement that they cannot do without it?  Since teacher evaluators no longer have to hold an administrative (general administrative or principal) license, there is much confusion on what each endorsement entitles holders to do and what they are prevented in doing due to the proper training and ISBE requirements. Over time, with the final requirements for the Principal Preparation endorsement basically replacing the Type 75 coupled with the PERA module training (which allows anyone- even individuals outside education- to evaluate by state law), the Teacher Leader endorsement has very little significance (unless a district chooses by job description to make it a significant leadership position).
8. In his book, *The Future is Fluid Form*, Elliott Ord states that the old manner of “command and control” hierarchy has diminished the strength of organizations. The traditional “command and control” structure is not what is best for our students, educational institutions, state board or the universities. As we know, the best organizational authority is found in effective teams and thru democratic decision-making. We are concerned about the significant amount of time that faculty have been forced to spend because of over regulation of wrong priorities.

Again, a transformation must occur for our students to get the best preparation. We must realize that those closest to the field, the university and the principal preparation candidates, are best poised to continuously improve the framework ISBE has set through the legislation process. We need to recognize that universities are leaders in this field, and are truly committed to do what is necessary to prepare the future principals for Illinois. What is missing is trust, collaboration, and increased communication that addresses the needs to transform systems.

Ord reports that multiple levels of authority are very expensive and add hurdles to an organization tasks. The book talks about organizations, Proctor and Gamble, Google, Cisco and others, who have eliminated unnecessary levels of authority and replaced the levels with skilled work teams. For example, ICPEA, IPA, and IASA are skilled work teams.

Ord further states that the old approaches of rigidity do not work anymore. He says, flexibility transforms an organization and says that bureaucratic organization waste talents, skills and brainpower. Compliance to old norms of accountability does not work in the fast paced lives of our students. It seems that some of rules and regulations implemented work to eliminate students rather than include them. Bill Daggett talked about the *CLUB* and how those in power work to keep people out of the *CLUB*. Our ICPEA professors know that our state and nation need pools of hundreds of trained talented educators to lead our schools. Our leadership departments must have the authority to meet and make decisions that best serve our students to reach these goals in an environment of high standards and appropriate rigor.

Ord also says that in fluid organizations, coordination and decision making are done by networks of stakeholders, instead of issues being sent to the bosses. The author continues to state that decisions are made by the key people who have a stake in the outcome of a process, who have expertise in how it should run, who understand what the results should be, and who know from experience when things should get done.

Elliott, Ord. *The Future in Fluid Form*. New York, I Universe, Inc., 2009.

Thank you for your attention to the points raised in this document. The ICPEA look forward to increased opportunities for ongoing dialogue, strategic thinking related to improvement, and the best intentions for all organizations to unite in addressing the needs of principal leadership in the state of Illinois.