

## SUMMARY

### Exceptional and Innovative Programs in Educational Leadership

Prepared for the Administrator Preparation Committee

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#### **Overview:**

This article presents the characteristics of 6 principal preparation programs identified as exceptional or innovative by experts in the field. The authors collected additional data on the programs through phone interviews with program administrators and by reviewing program documents. The following 6 programs are profiled in this article:

(the first 3 were supported by the Danforth Foundation Program for the Preparation of School Principals)

1. University of Washington Danforth Educational Leadership Program
2. The East Tennessee State University administrative endorsement program
3. The California State University, Fresno, principal preparation program
4. University of Louisville IDEAS Program
5. Wichita State University administrator preparation program
6. San Antonio (Texas) Region 20 Educational Service Center alternative (non-university based) program.

#### **Introduction**

(Much of this first section of this article presents information that was contained in the *School Leadership Study* done at Stanford)

The first section of the article outlines the common criticisms administrator preparation programs have received beginning in the late 80's by the National Commission on Excellence in Administration (NCEE). Many of these same criticisms are still being laid on preparation programs today such as, a lack of definition of good educational leadership, a lack of collaboration between school districts and universities, a lack of minorities and women in the field, and a lack of preparation programs relevant to the job demands of school administrators, and so forth. Many of these criticisms were discussed in the Stanford report "School Leadership Study."

In the next section, the authors lay out the efforts by several organizations to define the necessary knowledge base of educational administrators (e.g. NAESP, NASSP, the ISLLC standards, and the NCATE/ISLLC standards for school leaders). This section concludes with a brief description of various delivery methods common to preparation programs such as problem-based learning, cohorts, collaborative partnerships, field experiences, and technology (e.g. online courses).

#### **Exceptional and Innovative Programs**

What makes these programs different from others around the country? They:

- expect more from their students.
- have a more careful screening and selection process.
- have a more coherent and focused program with sequenced courses, scheduling, and stronger collaboration with area districts.
- are cohort bases with 20-25 students.
- have faculty who work together (often with area administrators) to develop a coherent program focus and to integrate courses so that students master the essential competencies.

#### University of Washington Danforth Education Leadership Program

- Heavy emphasis on moral and ethical leadership
- The emphasis begins with selecting students—applicants submit an essay and a set of recommendations
- Cohort structure supports moral and ethical development
- 10 day summer institute is designed to shape the norms and expectations of the cohort group
- Coursework reflects the demands of the coursework rather than the academic calendar
- Students secure at least half-time release to participate in an internship
- Students are paired up with mentors who are carefully screened through letters of recommendation and portfolios

#### East Tennessee State University

- Curricular coherence and program structures that support ethical development
- Applicants screened and selected through an application and interview process that looks at their academic credentials, experience, and leadership potential
- Cohort based and program aligned with the school calendar
- Extensive field experience
- Mentoring and field experiences are not as structured as Univ. of WA. Students are able to work full-time while participating in this program. Internships are not prescreened as to provide a range of strengths and approaches.

Tables 1 and 2 provide a comparison of each program described in this article. Good overview describing the focus, application process, structure/delivery, internship, staffing, and so forth for all 6 programs. (pp. 199-202)

#### California State University, Fresno

- 2-tiered preparation program consistent with California state licensure requirements
- Tier 1—focuses on instructional leadership including field experiences as a master teacher. At completion, students receive a provisional administrative license, and can serve in administrative roles such as assistant principal.
- Tier 2—Enroll in courses related to transformational leadership, complete the NAESP Professional Development Inventory used to develop an individual student growth plan. Coursework is closely related to administrative practice and students submit job performance evaluations to further shape professional growth plans

#### University of Louisville IDEAS Program

- Cohort-based
- Uses NASSP Individual Development Program assessments to identify learning needs and shape the academic program
- Heavily field-based with strong involvement of a sponsor/mentor to develop knowledge and skills related to the ISLLC standards and instructional leadership
- Uses student portfolios to demonstrate competencies

#### Wichita State University program

- Research-based program provides students with ample opportunities to identify research-able problems and in collecting and analyzing data to inform decisions
- Cohort-based, study teams of 6-8
- Students work together and are assessed together as a group

- Developed a performance assessment system to evaluate students' intellectual inquiry, decision-making, and interpersonal skills

#### San Antonio Region 20 Service Center

- Alternative certification program (non-university based)
- Students selected based on an application and interview process that includes a personality profile and assesses students' leadership experience and potential
- Uses NASSP assessment to identify students' needs and to develop a growth plan
- Practical coursework that includes a paid internship
- According to Texas legislation that regulates alternative administrative licensure programs, 90% of students must pass the ISLCC-based licensure assessment—in its first year, 100% of this program's students passed the test.

#### Fordham University VIA Program

- Not included as one of the six innovative programs, but the authors did say that this program is another interesting example
- Revises the master's/professional diploma program
- Partnership with NYC school districts and others in the metropolitan area—these partners identify potential leaders and recommend them to the program
- Sequenced 2 year cohort-based program that reflects NCATE guidelines
- Includes a 2 semester internship
- Classes held in 4 locations near districts where students work, staffed by full-time faculty and adjuncts who are practicing administrators
- A summer National Principals Institute and Saturday Series on critical issues with nationally recognized speakers

#### **Common Characteristics of Exceptional and Innovative Programs**

- Clear vision drives program decisions and guides the development of coherent programs.
- Identifies, screens, and selects students based on leadership potential using a variety of criteria and sources to collect screen applicants.
- Offer a clear, well-defined curriculum based on the knowledge base needed to perform effectively in the administrator's first years as a principal. Curriculum is sequenced and mapped against the school calendar and regular work responsibilities.
- Programs were developed through strong partnerships with local school districts. Districts help identify and screen applicants, provide in-kind support for maintenance of program operations. These programs also received significant support from external sources (e.g. foundations).
- Instructional strategies are selected with students' needs/characteristics and knowledge base in mind. Courses are often team taught with careful assignment of faculty to courses. Uses innovative scheduling.
- Field experience is the primary tool for learning—coursework supports fieldwork. Internships are longer, typically 600 or more hours
- Program structures develop stronger connections between students and between students and faculty members. Almost all are cohort-based.
- Programs are forums that explicitly discuss the values and decision-making processes that underlie leadership.

In summary, meaningful change in administrator preparation programs requires the participation of all stakeholders—faculty, students, districts, state agencies, and higher education institutions.

Exceptional programs require:

- an extensive time commitment by faculty,
- significant investment of resources to support program development,
- on-going collaborative connections to the field,
- a willingness to sacrifice larger revenues that come with larger enrollments,
- and little disruption to students' work schedules.

Jackson, B.L. & Kelley, C. (April, 2002). Exceptional and innovative programs in educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38(2), 192-212.

**For additional information—educational administration quarterly devoted an entire issue to the NCAELP Commission looking at administrator preparation. It can be found at:**

<http://eaq.sagepub.com/content/vol38/issue2/>