Promising Strategies for Improving K-12 Education in Illinois: Improving the Educator Work Force

Should Illinois create a better work force of educators?

Promising Strategies for Improving K-12 Education in Illinois: Improving the Educator Work Force

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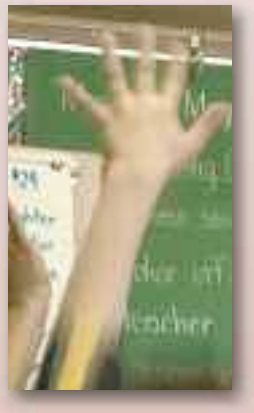

Illinois faces a serious dilemma in education policy. With limited and unevenly distributed financial resources, Illinois schools must help students learn the knowledge and skills articulated in state standards (and beyond) or risk sanctions under *No Child Left Behind*. Increasing student achievement depends on expanding students' opportunities to learn by improving Illinois schools, particularly those in under-resourced urban and rural areas that serve a large proportion of students living in poverty. *The Illinois Report 2008* considered this dilemma largely by focusing on the need for Illinois to equalize and augment education funding. While changes in school financing would be a great help, we take an approach that is especially sensitive to the recent economic downturn in the state and the country as a whole – one that is based on the ideas of enhancing efficiency and implementing cost-effective resource allocation strategies in education.

In particular, we present an analysis and recommendations concerning the development of the educator work force in Illinois. If Illinois is to promote cost-effective and efficient resource allocation in schools, it makes sense to examine current strategies for managing the biggest expenditure: the work force. Educator work force development is also a complex but high-leverage policy strategy. The collective capabilities of teachers, school leaders, and other educational personnel are essential for successfully implementing most programs and policies that can improve student achievement. Moreover, while substantial money can be spent on different work force development initiatives (e.g., increasing teachers' salaries and benefits), other potentially effective actions can be taken at relatively modest cost to enhance practices that are already in place.

In this chapter, we focus on what work force development is and why it matters to school improvement. We then examine educator work force development in Illinois, with particular attention to principal development as a promising area for policy formation, and we offer specific recommendations for improving the efficiency of education reform efforts in Illinois.

The Rationale for Educator Work Force Development

In the 1960s, organizational ecologists linked organizational effectiveness and survival not only to recruiting and retaining "the best and the fittest" employees but also to developing and sustaining a complementary range of capacities among employees that would best meet the organization's needs over time.[1] In the early 1990s, scholars stressed that assembling strategic combinations or "bundles" of resources, especially human resources, and employing them toward achieving organizational objectives will lead to organizational effectiveness.[2] To use an investment metaphor, it is helpful to think of the knowledge, skills and values held by individuals within organizations as a "portfolio" of competencies[3] or "stocks of skills" and "strategically relevant" knowledge and behaviors.[4] With a diverse portfolio, one can expect strong, long-term, and positive returns.

The rationale for concerted and systematic efforts to develop the educator work force is

[1] Zehava Rosenblatt and Zachary Shaeffer. "Brain Drain in Declining Organizations: Toward a Research Agenda," *Journal of Organizational Behavior,* 22 (2001): 409-424.

[2] See for example, Patrick M. Wright, Benjamin B. Dunford, and Scott A. Snell, "Human Resources and the Resource-based View of the Firm," *Journal of Management,* 27 (2001): 701-721.

[3] Odd Nordhaug and Kjell Gronhaug, "Competencies as Resources in Firms," *The International Journal of Human Resource Management,* 5 (1994): 89-106.

[4] Wright, Dunford and Snell "Human Resources," 706.

similarly straightforward. Individual teachers and collective school faculties dictate whether schools meet their organizational objective – student learning.[5] Developing teachers' "skill" and "will" is considered essential to improving instruction and fostering innovation to improve schools.[6] As Michael Fullan put it, "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and complex as that."[7]

But school leaders are also important for promoting quality instruction, school improvement, and student achievement.[8] Both research and professional literature emphasize the important role that principals and central office administrators play in implementing (or not) reforms that often cost states and school districts a substantial amount of money, such as reading initiatives, special education programs, and teacher mentoring programs. These studies also emphasize the important role played by school and district leaders for developing, employing, and managing the teacher work force and in creating workplace conditions for successful teaching and learning to occur.[9]

The importance of both teacher and school leader work force development is central to improving schools and student learning "at scale," and, in particular, improving schools and learning opportunities for low-income and racially isolated students. Good educators recognize that low-income children can succeed with challenging academic work if their teachers provide high quality instruction.[10] Yet despite the documented excellent results in individual classrooms or schools we have not yet found a way to consistently scale up such success.

However in recent years, several lines of educational research and policy making have converged in an argument that significant school improvement *can* be achieved at scale (e.g., in a large school district or statewide) through work force development. Simply put, widespread academic success in low-income schools depends on developing teachers and principals in concert with each other. This research-based "scaling-up" argument proceeds like this:

- First, all children, including those in low-income families, can perform at

If Illinois is to promote cost-effective and efficient resource allocation in schools, it makes sense to examine current strategies for managing the biggest expenditure: the work force.

[5] See, for example, Linda Darling-Hammond, "Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence," *Educational Policy Analysis Archives,* 8 (2000) http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n1/.; Dan Goldhaber and Emily Anthony. *Can Teacher Quality Be Effectively Assessed?* (Seattle, WA: Evans School of Public Affairs and Urban Institute, 2004); Jennifer King Rice, *Teacher Quality: Understanding the Effectiveness of Teacher Attributes* (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2003); William L. Sanders and Sandra P. Horn. "Research Findings from the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) Database: Implications for Educational Evaluation and Research," *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education,* 12(1998): 247-256; Andrew J. Wayne & Peter Youngs. "Teacher Characteristics and Student Achievement Gains: A Review," *Review of Educational Research,* 73 (2003): 89-122.

[6] Fred M. Newmann & Gary G. Wehlage. *Successful School Restructuring* (Madison, WI: Center on the Organization and Restructuring of Schools, 1995).

[7] Michael Fullan. *The New Meaning of Educational Change,* 4th ed., (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2007), 129.

[8] Philip Hallinger and Ronald H. Heck. "Exploring the Principal's Contribution to School Effectiveness: 1980-1995," *School Effectiveness and School Improvement,* 9 (1998): 157-191; Kenneth A. Leithwood and Carolyn Riehl. "What Do We Already Know about Educational Leadership?" in William A. Firestone and Carolyn Riehl (eds.), *A New Agenda for Research on Educational Leadership* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2005), 12-27; Nancy Pitner. "The Study of Administrator Effects and Effectiveness," in Norman Boyan (ed.), *Handbook of Research in Educational Administration* (New York: Longman, 1988), 99-122; Bob Witziers, Roel J. Bosker, and Meta L. Kruger. "Educational Leadership and Student Achievement: The Elusive Search for an Association," *Educational Administration Quarterly,* 39 (2003): 398-425.

[9] M. Bruce King. "School- and District-Level Leadership for Teacher Work Force Development: Enhancing Teacher Learning and Capacity," in Mark A. Smylie and Debra Miretzky (eds.), *Developing the Teacher Work Force: The One Hundred and Third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I* (Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 2004), 303-325.

[10] Fred M. Newmann, Anthony S. Bryk and Jenny K. Nagaoka. *Authentic Intellectual Work and Standardized Tests: Conflict or Coexistence?* (Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2001), 22-26. Also Michael S. Knapp and Associates. *Teaching for Meaning in High-Poverty Classrooms* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1995). Popular media documenting real-life academic successes for low-income students include the movie *Stand and Deliver* and the book *Marva Collins's Way*.

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high academic levels if provided the right instructional environment and high quality and challenging teaching.[11]

- Second, to achieve high quality instruction on a school-wide basis, a few gifted or exceptionally committed teachers are insufficient. There must be a well-qualified pool of teachers prepared and certified to work with a broad range of students.[12]
- Third, schools that succeed with low-income students are not completely idiosyncratic, each with its own unique and nonreplicable path to success. They share a number of common properties or "preferred organizational states of being."[13] These include a clear academically-oriented vision, high expectations for learning, strong relationships with families and the community, and a school-wide emphasis on high-quality instruction, among others.[14]
- Fourth, chief among these common properties is administrative leadership that, along with other important functions, develops and manages teachers and helps them realize their potential by organizing schools as learning communities for adults as well as for children.[15] Schools must be organized and led so that all teachers can continue to develop professionally from the time they enter the work force throughout their careers so they develop the capacity to provide students with high quality and challenging instruction.[16] Notably, even when funding is inadequate, principals can (and do) lead schools to dramatically improved achievement.[17]
- Fifth, effective principals are not just born; they are also made. Although not everyone is cut out to be a principal, strong principal preparation programs can select the most promising candidates and provide intensive learning experiences that result in the exercise of effective leadership and measurable improvement in schools, in instruction, and in student learning.
- Sixth, the comparatively small number of principals – fewer than one for every 30 teachers in Illinois – combined with principals' unique positional opportunity to shape teacher development in schools, means that a key part of the overall plan for educator work force development is manageable. Illinois' largest school district (Chicago) has 428,000 students and 26,000 teachers, but only about 700 principalships. Each

[11] National Commission on Teaching & America's Future. *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*. (New York, NY: NCTAF, 1996); Michael S. Knapp and Associates. *Teaching for Meaning.*

[12] Ana Maria Villegas and Tamara F. Lucas. "Diversifying the Teacher Work Force: A Retrospective and Prospective Analysis," in *Teacher Work Force Development: The One Hundred and Third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I*, eds. Mark A. Smylie and Debra Miretzky, (Chicago, IL: NSSE, 2004), 70-104.

[13] Paul C. Light. *Sustaining Innovation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).

[14] Ronald Edmonds. "Some Schools Work and More Can," *Social Policy, 9* (1979): 28-32; Sebring et al. *Essential Supports.*

[15] King. "School- and District-Level Leadership for Teacher Work Force Development"; Smylie and Hart. "School Leadership for Teacher Learning."

[16] Fred M. Newmann et al. "Instructional Program Coherence: What It Is and Why It Should Guide School Improvement Policy," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 23 (2001): 297-321. Penelope B. Sebring et al. *The Essential Supports for School Improvement* (Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2006); Mark A. Smylie. "Teacher Learning in the Workplace: Implications for School Reform," in *Professional Development in Education: New Paradigms and Practices* eds. Thomas R. Guskey and Michael Huberman (New York: NY: Teachers College Press, 1995), 92-113; Mark A. Smylie, and Ann W. Hart. "School Leadership for Teacher Learning and Change: A Human and Social Capital Development Perspective" in *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration*, 2nd ed., eds. Joseph Murphy and Karen S. Louis, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 421-441.

[17] Leithwood and Riehl. "What Do We Already Know?" Sebring et al. *Essential Supports.*

year, about 10 percent, or 70, of those principalships need to be filled, meaning that the scale of intervention necessary to positively affect all schools over time is comparatively modest.

It is important to recognize that the "scaling up" of effective principal leadership – as a necessary condition for the scaling up of school improvement and increased learning – is not simply a function of effective principal preparation programs, although those programs play an important role in developing the supply of effective school leaders. It is also a function of comprehensive strategic development and management of the principal work force at the district and state levels. At the district level, for example, this includes recruitment, placement, professional development and support, compensation and reward, supervision and evaluation, succession, management of exit, and so on, that constitute a range of practices similar to the successful development and management of a teacher work force. At the state level, as we will discuss, it is a matter of taking seriously the interdependent relationships among certification and licensure policies, districts' roles, higher education, and systemic incentives that make the status quo difficult to change.

In sum, developing the educator work force is important for a number of reasons. It is important for promoting quality instruction and student achievement. It is important for school improvement and the implementation of education reform. Moreover, there are reasons to believe that developing both teacher and principal work forces can be instrumental to scaling up improvement in student learning in a cost-efficient fashion.

Defining Educator Work Force Development

What is meant by *educator work force development?* First, there is no such thing as a single educator work force. Multiple, nested work forces function at different levels of the educational system. Teachers, principals, superintendents, and central administrators, counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers and secretaries operate at the school, district, state, and even regional and national levels. Work forces may also be defined by particular areas of expertise (e.g., early childhood, special education, and high school science, etc.). When we think about developing the educator work force, we are concerned not only with individual educators but with groups or collectives of educators. Each level of the school system has different needs, interests, authorities, and capabilities to develop and manage educator work forces, but efforts to shape the educator work force through policy at the state level are likely to affect efforts in districts and schools.[18]

Moreover, when we talk about work force *development* we think about two basic types of tasks: (1) competence development and management and (2) behavior development and management.[19] The former concerns the acquisition, development, utilization, retention, and displacement of human capital, that is, of work force members' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and commitments. The latter concerns the coordination and control of human capital so that it functions effectively. These two types of tasks can be performed through a wide variety of practices that include initial employee preparation, recruitment, selection, assignment, on-the-job training, evaluation, reward and compensation, and so forth. Indeed, the same practices can serve multiple functions. A key point is that work force development is concerned with much more than the size and quality of supply, initial preparation, and entry of persons into a work force. It has much to do with what happens *after* initial preparation and entry to further develop and manage the human resources that make up the work force.

[18] Linda Darling-Hammond and Gary Sykes. "Wanted: A National Teacher Supply Policy for Education: The Right Way to Meet the 'Highly Qualified Teacher' Challenge?" *Education Policy Analysis Archive,* 11 (2003): http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n33; David Kirp and Cyrus E. Driver. "The Aspirations of Systemic Reform Meet the Realities of Localism," *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 31 (1995): 589-612.

[19] Patrick M. Wright and Scott A. Snell. "Toward an Integrative View of the Strategic Human Resource Management," *Human Resource Management Review,* 1 (1991): 203-225.

Moreover, schools, school districts, and states, must consider educator work force development in terms of ever-changing contexts, including but not limited to populations of students, demands for higher levels of performance and outcomes, and broad social, economic, and employment trends.

A final consideration is that none of this is uniform or static. Work forces in general and educator work forces in particular are diverse in terms of age, experience, gender, race, and ethnicity. And they are dynamic in terms of entry and exit, mobility, and changes in individual and collective capacity and need (personal and professional). Moreover, schools, school districts, and states, must consider educator work force development in terms of ever-changing contexts, including but not limited to populations of students, demands for higher levels of performance and outcomes, and broad social, economic, and employment trends.

In sum, what we mean by educator work force development are those strategic combinations of practices that develop and manage the competence and behavior of dynamic groups of educators at different levels to achieve organizational objectives in ever-changing contexts. Achieving cost-efficient education reform through work force development requires attention to these various practices, educators, and objectives, and their relationship with each other.

The research literature offers a wide range of practices that might be employed to promote educator work force development as we have discussed. Categories of functions include:[20]

- Developing the supply of potential employees
- Credentialing
- Promoting the quality of initial preparation
- Recruiting, selecting, and hiring
- Assigning employees to workplaces and work roles and responsibilities
- Promoting induction and socialization
- Providing opportunities for on-the-job training and professional development
- Creating working conditions conducive to improving development and performance
- Supervising and evaluating performance
- Retaining, terminating, and managing exit
- Motivating, compensating, and promoting performance
- Managing labor relations

While research tells us that each of these functions is important to perform effectively,[21] the specific practices related to these functions are less important than the *coherent, congruent, and strategic use of different combinations of different practices over time*. [22] As a recent working draft of a report released by the Aspen Institute concludes, efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of the educator work force have been "piecemeal" and largely ineffective.[23] To make such efforts more effective, policymakers must attend to both "the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities" and *how* work force development practices are combined and pursued.[24] In short, work force development efforts in Illinois need to be systemic

[20] See for example, Mark A. Smylie, Debra Miretzky and Pamela Konkol. "Rethinking Teacher Work Force Development: A Strategic Human Resource Management Perspective," in *Teacher Work Force Development: The One Hundred and Third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I*, eds. Mark A. Smylie and Debra Miretzky (Chicago, IL: NSSE, 2004), 34-69; Allen Odden and James A. Kelly. *Strategic Management of Human Capital in Public Education* (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Educational Research, 2008); L. Dean Webb and M. Scott Norton. *Human Resources Administration: Personnel Issues and Needs in Education*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2008).

[21] Smylie et al. "Rethinking Teacher Work Force."

[22] Wright and Snell. "Toward an Integrative View."

[23] Judy Wurtzel and Rachel Curtis. *Human Capital Framework for K-12 Urban Education: Organizing for Success* (Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, July 2008), working draft.

[24] Patrick M. Wright and Gary C. McMahan. "Theoretical Perspectives for Strategic Human Resource Management," *Journal of Management,* 18 (1992): 298.

and strategic in order to be effective and cost efficient.[25]

Evidence from Research

Scholars who study a large variety of organizations have found important evidence that systemic and strategic approaches to work force development can increase an organization's success. For example, researchers have found that such approaches are more powerful for increasing a company's productivity than discrete human resource practices and should be done with consideration of a company's environment.[26] When companies invest in systems of work force development and management practices, there tends to be lower employee turnover and increased productivity, even over time.[27] On the other hand, when companies pursue work force development through discrete, disconnected practices, they tend not to see synergies or conflicts among those practices, and that can lead to inefficiency and ineffectiveness.[28] Furthermore, a "one-size-fits-all" approach to work force development, even in the guise of "best practice," is likely to have limited effectiveness because such a strategy ignores the dynamic and unique nature of each work force.[29]

Similar evidence can be found in research on schools and school districts. Districts that have established integrated systems of teacher recruitment and professional development practices that are strategically tied to goals for improving teaching and learning tend to be more successful in their reform efforts.[30] Schools that adopt the most comprehensive and strategic systems of faculty (school-level) development and management practices have been effective in promoting "deep" instructional improvement.[31] Studies of school districts in New York City and San Diego found that linking teacher recruitment, hiring, professional development, monitoring and evaluation, removing ineffective teachers, redesigning teachers' work, and developing new incentive systems together had a positive impact on instruction. At the same time, this changed the district's organization and the administration's orientation to teachers and instructional improvement, and led to increases in student achievement, although these results did not fully scale up.[32] Even in the urban high school,

[25] Smylie et al. "Rethinking Teacher Work Force."

[26] P. F. Buller. "For Successful Strategic Blend OD Practices with Strategic Management," *Organizational Dynamics*, 16 (1988): 42-55; John E. Delery and Harold J. Doty. "Modes of Theorizing in Strategic Human Resource Management: Tests of Universalistic, Contingency, and Configurational Performance Predictions," *Academy of Management Journal*, 39 (1996): 802-35.

[27] Mark A. Huselid. "The Impack of Human Resource Management Practices on Turnover, Productivity, and Corporate Financial Performance," *Academy of Management Journal*, 38 (1995): 635-672; Patrick M. Wright et al. "The Relationship between HR Practices and Firm Performance: Examining Causal Order," *Personnel Psychology, 58,* (2005): 409-446.

[28] Wright and Snell. "Toward an Integrative View."

[29] David P. Lepak and Scott A. Snell. "The Human Resource Architecture: Toward a Theory of Human Capital Allocation and Development," *Academy of Management Review*, 24 (1999): 31-48.

[30] Milbrey W. McLaughlin and Joan Talbert. *Reforming Districts: How Districts Support School Reform* (Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, 2003).

[31] Richard F. Elmore, Penelope L. Peterson, and Sarah J. McCarthy. *Restructuring in the Classroom: Teaching, Learning, and School Organization* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1996).

[32] Richard Elmore with Diane Burney. "Investing in Teacher Learning: Staff Development and Instructional Improvement in Community School District #2 New York City," *NCTAF Archives*, 1997, http://www.nctaf.org/documents/archive_investing-in-teacher-learning.pdf; Richard Elmore with Diane Burney. "Continuous Improvement in Community District #2, New York City" *NCTAF Archives*, 1998; Amy Hightower. *San Diego's Big Boom: District Bureaucracy Supports Culture of Learning* (Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy University of Washington, 2002); Darling-Hammond and Sykes. "Wanted."

the most difficult type of school to reform, comprehensive strategies for recruiting, developing, and transferring out teachers, pursuant to a particular vision, have led to school improvement.[33]

Principles of Effective Work Force Development

From these empirical findings and our own experiences in educational research, we suggest four general principles to guide policymakers as they improve the development of Illinois' educator work force. The first, "vertical fit," refers to the alignment of work force development practices with particular missions, goals, and strategies to achieve particular educational objectives. Vertical fit also refers to the alignment of practices with the demands of different environments, be they student populations, policy environments, or broad labor markets, in the pursuit of high quality instruction and student achievement.

The second principle is "horizontal fit." This refers to the alignment of individual work force development practices into a coherent, mutually reinforcing system. For example, we hope to see teachers socialized into a workplace that has an emphasis on learning because, in part, the principal and other teachers in that school have created that environment, and because teacher evaluation practices in the school depend on a willingness and ability to grow professionally.

The third and fourth companion principles are "flexibility" and "equifinality." As we observed earlier, work forces and the environment in which they sit are ever-changing. To adapt and to maintain fit of strategic systems of work force development practices require flexibility and variability. There should be no "one-size-fits-all" in work force development practice. Instead, we should embrace the notion of "equifinality." In other words, there is more than one route to the same end. These principles underscore the importance of local autonomy at the school and district levels to exercise the flexibility required to achieve and sustain both types of vertical fit and horizontal fit.[34]

Revisiting the Critiques of Current Educator Work Force Development

Based on both the research on work force development and our direct observations, it appears that educator work force development and management is "a hodgepodge of poorly planned, under-resourced, disconnected practices."[35] Schools, school districts, and states tend to think narrowly about little more than recruitment, preparation, and professional development. Even if the quality of such individual work force development practices is monitored, there is often a failure to see how a broader range of practices that already exist can be used more strategically. These "systems of practices" are often anything but systemic. Instead, they are narrowly construed and

[33] Karen S. Louis and Matthew Miles. *Improving the Urban High School: What Works and Why* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1990); The Education Trust, *Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground: How Some High Schools Accelerate Learning for Struggling Students* (Washington, DC: Author, 2005).

[34] These principles are reflected in the most recent editions of educational administration textbooks on human resource management, such as Webb and Norton. *Human Resources Administration*; Ronald W. Rebore. *Human Resources Administration in Education: A Management Approach*, 8th ed. (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2006); John T. Seyfarth. *Human Resource Leadership for Effective Schools*, 5th ed. (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2007); and I. Phillip Young. *The Human Resource Function in Educational Administration, 9th ed.* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007). They are also illustrated in a number of national reports on developing the teacher work force in particular or the educator work force in general. For example, NCTAF, *What Matters Most* and NCTAF, *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children* (Washington, DC, NCTAF, 2003). Also Linda Darling-Hammond. "School Reform at the Crossroads: Confronting the Central Issues of Teaching," *Educational Policy*, 11 (1997): 151-166; and Darling-Hammond and Sykes, "Wanted"; Odden & Kelly, *Strategic Management*; and Wurtzel and Curtis, *Human Capital Framework*.

[35] Smylie et al. "Rethinking Teacher Work Force."

built around a limited range of discrete practices that often do not focus on similar educational objectives, are disconnected across state, district and school levels, and fail to account for the diverse and dynamic educator work forces in different local contexts and across the career span.[36] These systems tend to favor standardized "best practices" that presume uniform development needs, and the relative stability of work forces and the conditions in which they operate. Unfortunately, these efforts are largely insufficient, inefficient, and ineffective.[37]

Such patterns of practice are usually reflected in and reinforced by structural disconnections at the district and state levels. At both levels, work force development functions are traditionally separated from other strategic planning functions.[38] In a school district, for example, it would not be uncommon to find a human resource department to be only loosely connected, if connected at all, to departments or offices responsible for strategic planning, or curricular and instructional improvement. One might also find that a department that deals with one aspect of human resources, such as hiring, has little relationship with another department that deals with another aspect, such as teacher induction and professional development. Such structural disconnects would also likely be found within and perhaps across state education agencies and other state agencies that deal more generally with employment and economic development issues. The difficulty is not only structural; over time, separate departments, agencies and offices tend to develop strong political self-interests for influence and survival. That tends to "institutionalize" the structural fragmentation and impede coordination and collaboration.

Current Efforts in Illinois

Where does Illinois stand in all this? To what extent does educator work force development in the state reflect principles of effective practice? To what extent does it reflect the critique?

The state has made a number of efforts to develop the quality and effectiveness of its teacher and school leader work forces.[39] With regard to teachers, these include the development and adoption of professional teaching and school leadership standards, new accreditation requirements for the state's teacher and school leader preparation programs based on those standards, and revisions to the state teacher certification system based on teaching standards. In order to increase the recruitment of new teachers to the state in general and to high-

The state has made a number of efforts to develop the quality and effectiveness of its teacher and school leader work forces.

[36] Ronald Rebore. *Human Resources Administration*; Lepak and Snell. "The Human Resource Architecture."

[37] See also Eric Hirsch, Julie Koppich, & Michael Knapp. *Revisiting What States are Doing to Improve the Quality of Teaching: An Update on Patterns and Trends* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, 2001). This critique of educator work force development and management is consistent with observations made in the literature on organization and management (Smylie et al., "Rethinking Teacher Work Force"). As far back as the 1970s, the organization and management literature has criticized work force development practices as "fragmented" and "incomplete," and "sometimes built on faulty assumptions about human or organizational growth." (Edgar H. Schein. "Increasing Organizational Effectiveness through Better Human Resources Planning and Development," *Sloan Management Review*, 19 [1977]: 4). The general practice in non-education organizations has been described as constructed around distinct specializations or subfunctions (e.g., hiring, training, performance appraisal, compensation) with few, if any, connections between such subfunctions and an organization's goals and strategy (Wright and Snell, "Toward an Integrative View"). When connections do exist, they are not usually strategic or mutually reinforcing. Moreover, the organization and management literature indicates that a single, "universalistic," "best practice" approach tends to dominate the field of work force development, an approach that is much more conducive to maintaining stability in organizations rather than strategic development and improvement (Delery & Doty, "Modes of Theorizing").

[38] Smylie et al. "Rethinking Teacher Work Force."

[39] Jennifer B. Presley and Eleanor G. Cameron. *Third Illinois Policy Inventory on Teaching and Learning*, (Edwardsville, IL: Illinois Educational Research Council, 2005).

needs areas in particular, Illinois has established grant and scholarship programs, developed and supported alternative routes to certification, and promoted opportunities for teacher education coursework at the community college level. The state has supported district-level beginning teacher mentoring and induction programs and sought to promote ongoing professional development by linking it to the renewal of certification. And with regard to school leader work force development, it has commissioned studies and recently appointed a school leader task force to make specific recommendations to the legislature. We will take a closer look at school leader work force development shortly as a specific case of educator work force development.

Despite initiatives such as these, Illinois' overall efforts to develop the state's educator work force remain underdeveloped and in our view inadequate to achieve the broad objective of meaningful and sustained improvement in schools and in student learning across the state. A few concrete examples serve to illustrate the point.

As shown in Table 1, Illinois compares poorly to other Midwestern states in its support of teacher professional development. It also appears to lag behind many other states across the country.

Other examples can be found with regard to school leader work force development. A recent assessment by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) found "little action" in Illinois to develop its school leader work force.[40] This assessment found that, by the end of 2007, Illinois had made no progress on developing and implementing a system for recruiting and selecting future school leaders or providing training and support for leadership in low-performing schools. It had made "little progress" to promote the redesign of leadership preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction, and student learning; to develop programs with school-based experiences to prepare candidates to lead school improvement; and to focus school leader licensure on improved school and classroom practices. Illinois was judged to have made "some progress" on creating alternative pathways to initial school leader licensure. In terms of total progress in these areas, Illinois lagged substantially behind all 16 states that comprise SREB's membership, including Alabama, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. The work of the Illinois school leader task force may make some difference here should its recommendations be enacted, but as we will see below, its recommendations focus largely on the "front end" of school leader work force development – developing supply, enhancing the quality of initial preparation, and the rigor of certification through improved standards.

Accordingly, these steps that Illinois has taken to date to develop its educator work force do not appear to be based on an overarching, systemic, and coherent plan that incorporates the functions and principles (based in research of the business and education sectors) that we lay out earlier in

[40] Southern Regional Education Board. *Preparing Highly Qualified School Leaders: Illinois Benchmarking Report*, preliminary draft (Atlanta, GA: SREB, 2007); Southern Regional Education Board. *Progress in Building a Learning-centered School Leadership System*, (Atlanta, GA: SREB, 2007).

Table 1
State Support of Teacher Professional Development

	State Financing of PD Programs	State Financing of PD Programs for All Districts	State Has Formal PD Standards	State Requires Time to Be Set Aside for PD	State Requires Districts to Align with Local Goals
Illinois	No	No	No	No	No
Indiana	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Iowa	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Michigan	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Minnesota	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Wisconsin	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Number of all states providing support	37	24	41	16	30

Source: Data from the Education Counts Database, available at htt://www.edweek.org.

this chapter. As a result, the effectiveness of Illinois' current approach for developing this work force will likely be limited, and the approach will likely fail to capture significant efficiencies in educator work force development strategies.

Directions for State Policy and Practice

How then can Illinois extend its work to promote effective and efficient educator work force development? One way to approach this is to identify potential educator work force development policies that are within the purview of the state and that recognize the importance of local school and district roles. Among such policies are those that aim to:

- *Attract talent to Illinois and develop the size of work force supply* through policies that remove barriers, create incentives to teach in shortage areas, and support alternative routes.
- *Ensure quality of supply* through policies that address certification and licensure and renewal, accreditation of preparation programs, and incentives for particularly talented persons to enter preparation and the market.
- *Enhance allocation and placement decisions* through policies that address incentives for individuals to apply to and work in under-resourced, difficult to staff districts, and incentives to districts to recruit and place.
- *Promote "on-the-job" development* through policies that identify effective practices for induction support, professional development, evaluation and supervision, and work redesign; and provide seed funds for development and implementation of local initiatives.
- *Set compensation and incentives for educators*.
- *Retain educators*.
- *Encourage strategic human resource management practices at the local level by promoting the principles we enumerate above*. Such policies include those that, through accreditation of school leader preparation programs, ensure that future leaders are prepared to pursue systemic strategic work force development practices to assemble, develop, and manage school and district educator work forces; through certification and licensure of school leaders, ensure that they have the capacity to do this work; adopt district and school "practice standards" for doing strategic human resource management.[41]

Beyond implementing these individual policies, policymakers must develop linkages between these policies and ensure that they are conceptualized and developed as a system. While each of these types of policies is potentially effective for building educator work force development, it is crucial to remember that effective work force development should be contemplated systemically and strategically. We need quality policies for individual work forces, but considering the ways in which the policies fit together can most effectively and efficiently promote powerful outcomes when taken together.

Principal Work force Development as a High-Leverage Policy Initiative

In this final section, we highlight some development strategies for one particular segment of the overall educator work force – school principals – because it appears that a robust principal development policy can efficiently enhance the skills and knowledge of both principals and teachers. Like policies aimed at developing teachers, principal development policies depend not only on well designed and implemented individual practices, but also the systemic and strategic alignment of such practices.

Several national level criticisms of school leadership and school leader preparation – the 2006 "Levine Report" is the best known of these – have stirred the policy pot. Major philanthropic foundations (e.g., Danforth, Wallace, Broad, and Ford), have

[41] Smylie et al. "Rethinking Teacher Work Force"; Odden & Kelly. *Strategic Management.*

invested millions of dollars in exploring new models of principal preparation and development, and school districts such as Boston, New York, and Chicago are investing millions more specifically to improve the quality of school leadership. In addition to individual state initiatives throughout the nation, the SREB is pursuing a multi-state initiative to promote "learning-centered" school leadership policies throughout the South.

Illinois is now addressing school leader work force development in several ways. A new state website, Working Together to Prepare Illinois School Leaders (www.illinoisschoolleader.org), provides a window into recent policy and practice, and involves the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Principals Association, the Illinois General Assembly, and other agencies active in the effort to improve school leadership at the state level. In addition, the site provides links to other states that are similarly engaged, as well as a link to the SREB.

Focusing on school leadership is an approach that can be particularly effective and yield significant efficiencies because so much teacher learning occurs in schools. As we discussed above, if schools can be more effective learning environments for teachers, the argument goes, then they will learn how to meet the needs of children and youth better. But for schools to become effective professional learning communities, principals must play a significant role, so principal preparation and development becomes not only an important component but possibly an essential component in teacher work force development.[42] Reflecting the research discussed above, principal preparation and development can be most effective and yield the greatest efficiencies when integrated into a system that strategically aligns various policies aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of educators.

This logic is articulated in recent Illinois school leader policy reform documents such as *Blueprint for Change* and the *Illinois School Leader Task Force Report to the General Assembly* (both available on www.illinoisschoolleader.org). Mirroring much of the evidence discussed above, these two documents argue: (a) that work force development inevitably happens within a complex system of individual and organizational components and forces; and (b) that only by attending to that systemic complexity can work force development policy target promising levers for change.

However, effectively implementing a systemic and strategic approach to school leader preparation and development entails significant challenges. Consider three such challenges:

- **Candidate pool:** Promising candidates for school leadership would have to exist and be identifiable – candidates with demonstrated knowledge, skills and dispositions in a wide range of leadership areas from instructional knowledge to analytic problem-solving ability to relationship-building skills to strong communication skills to a high commitment to the work itself.
- **Professional programs:** State certification structures would have to be implemented to ensure that principal preparation programs were designed – from admissions to staffing to courses to clinical experiences to assessment of candidates – to ensure improved learning outcomes in schools led by program graduates.
- **District role:** School districts would have to collaborate with providers of preparation and development programs to ensure that the needs of the district are being addressed by the providers and by the ongoing development of the school leaders.

At first glance, these challenges appear easily surmountable. For example, surely promising candidates exist, and it ought to

[42] Richard F. Elmore. *School Reform from the Inside out: Policy, Practice and Performance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2004); Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers. *Student Achievement through Staff Development* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2002).

be a relatively simple matter to attract them to principal preparation programs in which school districts collaborate with higher education to produce "learning-centered" programs that are sustained with ongoing professional development once the graduates have been placed into school leadership positions. Indeed, this vision reflects the SREB state policy recommendations and the recommendations of the Illinois School Leader Task Force findings.

But upon deeper inspection, overcoming such challenges appears to be more difficult. As a consequence of the embedded, systemic nature of work force variables, all three of the policy domains above – candidate pool, professional programs, and district role – are more complex than they first seem. In a state with more than 30 teachers for every principal, for example, it would seem likely that the pool of qualified candidates would be plentiful. And in fact, the number of candidates who successfully obtain Type 75 administrative certificates each year far exceeds the number of principal vacancies (in 2006, according to ISBE records, by a multiple of 5:1). But it is quality, not quantity, which concerns educators at the district level. Testimony before the Illinois School Leader Task Force demonstrated that, in both large urban areas and rural areas, obtaining a highly qualified and motivated candidate pool is difficult, and many principals, once hired, are able to demonstrate little or no improvement in student performance in their schools. Indeed, as the Task Force Report documents, Illinois has recently lost ground to other states in the NAEP student achievement measures that make cross-state academic comparisons possible.

The characteristics of higher education programs and the students who attend such programs compound these problems of preparing quality school leaders. The number of principals needed each year in the Illinois public school system is surprising low. With only 4,000 elementary and secondary schools, the state employs only one principal for every three medical doctors. Projections are that, statewide, Illinois will need to fill approximately 350 principalships per year over the next several years, with the greatest proportion of these in Chicago, where a 10 percent turnover would produce about 70 vacancies annually, as earlier discussed. However, the need for tuition revenues in higher education, together with teachers' incentive to obtain salary increases by earning a master's degree, creates a perfect storm of over-supply of underprepared candidates, according to both state commissions that have recently studied the problem. These findings are consistent with the national-level criticisms. For example, with fewer than 400 vacant principalships statewide, Illinois colleges and universities graduated 2,153 candidates with Type 75 administrative certificates. In 2007, these institutions increased their number of graduates to 2,402. For 2008, the Illinois certification board approved the addition of a one-year, online program by the American College of Education, adding another 691 Type 75 candidates enrolled this year alone. Together with sharp enrollment increases at other institutions, there were in the 2007-08 year 6,577 students seeking Type 75 certificates enrolled in 32 Illinois colleges and universities, according to material entered into the minutes of the Illinois State Board of Education in Spring 2008. To ask these higher education institutions to reduce enrollments so they could concentrate overstretched resources on more intensive preparation of fewer candidates is asking for them to make institutional changes that they are not prepared to make – certainly not without the state playing a leadership and support role.

In response to such significant challenges, the SREB and the two recent Illinois commissions on school leadership advocate a significant role for states if higher education is going to make the changes necessary to attract and prepare principals

A recent assessment by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) found "little action" in Illinois to develop its school leader work force.

With only 4,000 elementary and secondary schools, the state employs only one principal for every three medical doctors.

capable of leading schools that improve student learning. In 2007, the SREB articulated seven interlocking dimensions of leadership work force development in *Progress in Building a Learning-Centered School Leadership System*.[43] The SREB argued that state policies need to be explicitly strategic about:

- adopting learning-focused leadership standards;
- recruiting and selecting future leaders;
- redesigning leadership preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction, and student achievement;
- developing preparation programs with school-based experiences that prepare participants to lead school improvement;
- basing professional-level licensure on improved school and classroom practices;
- creating alternative pathways to initial licensure; and
- providing training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools.

Notably, the SREB approach, like the approach of the Illinois School Leader Task Force Report, recognizes the systemic nature of work force development, and that this systemic nature must be addressed if the barriers to work force development are to be overcome. Item 4 alone requires states, districts, and higher education programs to work strategically together to achieve student learning outcomes. One

[43] Southern Regional Education Board. *Progress in Building.*

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should note, however, that these recommendations largely focus on policies aimed at recruiting and developing promising principals, and not those that develop principals' skills and knowledge and that hold principals accountable throughout their career. In order to implement an effective and cost-efficient principal preparation and development system, Illinois must enact a range of policies that all fit together and do not simply represent isolated efforts to enhance the principals' leadership capacities. It is accordingly important for state-level policymakers, who are uniquely positioned to design interlocking and coherent policies, to focus on the enactment of principal development policies.

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Conclusion

Illinois has come to a critical moment in how it approaches education reform. The state faces significant pressure to improve schools and markedly raise student achievement with limited available resources, and therefore must look to more effective and cost-efficient approaches than it has adopted in the past. Given the relatively modest costs and potential impact associated with educator work force development policies, policymakers should strongly consider investing in these policies.

In order for such policies to be effective and yield significant efficiencies, policymakers must treat work force development in a strategic and systemic fashion – various work force development policies, such

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Effectively designing and implementing a robust work force development system entails significant challenges for policymakers.

as those governing preparation, credentialing, recruiting, hiring, on-the-job training, supervising, evaluating, compensating, retaining, and terminating, must align with each other and the ultimate objectives of the policies, and must be flexible in the face of changing conditions. As it stands, Illinois does not have in place such an educator work force development system.

However, as illustrated by the particular case of principal preparation, there are particular actions that the state can take to develop this kind of system, such as implementing robust leadership standards, redesigning principal preparation programs, basing licensure on improved classroom and school practices, providing training and support for leadership teams in low-performing schools, and ensuring that these practices are aligned with each other and with educational goals of student learning. In fact, policymakers at the state level are uniquely positioned to engage in this activity because of their ability to comprehensively address work force development through policy.

Effectively designing and implementing a robust work force development system entails significant challenges for policymakers. While we have focused on the development of principals here, it is clear that even the best principals require professional teachers to begin with. Indeed, educator work force development policies crafted by Illinois policymakers would likely prove most effective and efficient if teacher and leadership development policies are aligned with each other, despite the unique challenges that each of these policies faces. But the goal of enacting and developing such policies to ultimately improve schools, even in the face of limited resources, can be accomplished with sufficient political will.

In the end, it is this will that can fulfill one of the most important purposes of the Illinois government – improving the learning opportunities for all of its children.