

# EDUCATING SCHOOL LEADERS

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The Education Schools Project

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# PREFACE

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This is the first in a series of policy reports on the results of a four-year study of America's education schools. This report focuses on the education of school administrators: the principals and superintendents charged with leading our nation's schools and school districts.

This subject was selected for the initial report because the quality of leadership in our schools has seldom mattered more. Today, principals and superintendents have the job not only of managing our schools, but also of leading them through an era of profound social change that has required fundamental rethinking of what schools do and how they do it. This is an assignment few sitting school administrators have been prepared to undertake.

Moreover, if the decade ahead resembles the past two, more than 40 percent of current principals and a far higher proportion of superintendents can be expected to leave their jobs.<sup>1</sup> Our nation faces the challenge of retooling current principals and superintendents while preparing a new generation of school leaders to take their places.

The preparation of teachers is also of pressing concern; the second report in this series will focus on the education of classroom teachers, the people who have the greatest impact on student achievement. The third report will examine the quality of education research and the preparation of the scholars and researchers who conduct it. The final volume will be a study of America's schools of education, where the overwhelming majority of our school leaders, teachers, and scholars are prepared.

The nation's 1,206 schools, colleges, and departments of education are a sprawling enterprise spread among 57 percent of all four-year colleges and universities.<sup>2</sup> They award one out of every 12 bachelor's diplomas; a quarter of all master's degrees; and 16 percent of all doctorates, more than any other branch of the academy.<sup>3</sup>

These are difficult times for schools of education. Over the past decade, criticisms of education schools and demands that they be held accountable have escalated. Policy makers have expanded the scope and magnitude of government regulation, impinging on traditional university prerogatives such as standards for graduates, curricular content, and the composition of the faculty. Intent on

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chipping away at the historic role education schools have played as gatekeepers of the education professions, states have created alternative routes into teaching and school administration. Competition for students has increased, as for-profits, not-for-profits outside the university, and even school systems have developed rival programs.

Increasingly, education schools are being blamed for intractable social problems they did not create and cannot solve. They have been faulted for the quality of the people who choose to become teachers and administrators. They have been blamed for the woes of low-performing schools and school systems. They have been criticized for their inability to close the achievement gap between the most advantaged and most disadvantaged children in America.

No other professional school is held similarly responsible. Schools of agriculture are not faulted for the decline of the family farm; or schools of government, for municipal bankruptcies; or business schools, for failing to salvage the Enrons of the world.

Too often, when education schools are unable to meet unrealistic expectations, they are deemed failures. Critics tend to paint them with a broad brush, obscuring real differences in their purposes, practices, and performance. The

result is a simplistic, cartoon-like vision of education schools—all are the same and all are failing.

If the critics have over-reacted, education schools have under-responded. Rather than acknowledging that they have real problems to confront, education schools have for the most part continued to do business as usual. Dismissing their critics as ideologues and know-nothings, too many have chosen to ignore not only their own shortcomings, but also the extraordinary changes in the nation and the world that should have led education schools to reevaluate the ways in which they prepare educators.

This four-part study will look beyond the usual, untested assertions of education school critics and the defensive posture of the schools. The simple fact is that education schools have strengths that go unrecognized by their detractors and they have weaknesses they are unwilling to acknowledge.

This study began with the belief that an insider, the president of a well-known school of education, could speak candidly to the education school community. There would be disagreement with what he said, but his analysis could not be dismissed as the work of a know-nothing or an ideologue. He asked Alvin Sanoff, an education journalist whose work has focused on higher

education, to join him in the project to counter any impression that the study was an insider's whitewash and to give credibility to any positive findings of the research. Sanoff, a former *U.S. News & World Report* assistant managing editor and senior staffer on the magazine's annual rankings projects, served as project manager.

This study was unlike any other the author had conducted. It quickly became apparent that in today's highly charged environment, there was less interest in "truth telling" than in defending one's position. Repeatedly, members of the education school community asked for a compelling defense of their schools, and those external to the academy requested a stirring condemnation. Insiders worried that any criticism would provide fodder for their opponents and outsiders feared any praise would protect the status quo.

This is neither the defense desired by some, nor the attack sought by others. It is an effort to produce a candid assessment rooted in extensive data collected for this study, supplemented by past research and years of personal experience in the field. The aim was to let the data speak for themselves and to allow the chips to fall where they may.

A number of studies, described in Appendix 1, were conducted in the course of this research. These

included national surveys of: deans, chairs, and directors of education schools (referred to as "Deans Survey"); education school faculty members ("Faculty Survey"); education school alumni ("Alumni Survey"); and school principals ("Principals Survey").

The research included case studies of 28 schools and departments of education. They were chosen to reflect the diversity of the nation's education schools by region, control, religion, race, gender, and Carnegie type (the traditional typology used to categorize institutions of higher education). The participating schools were promised anonymity and people interviewed were promised confidentiality. Only in instances of good practice are the names of schools mentioned.

There were also studies done of the characteristics ("Demographic Study") of education schools, of the programs they offer, and of the degrees they award, as well as an examination of doctoral dissertations. All the research was supplemented by data bases from other organizations.

There is no such thing as a typical education school. Their diversity is extraordinary. They are both free-standing institutions and subunits within larger colleges and universities. They are for-profit and not-for-profit, public and private, sectarian and non-sectarian. They

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are large and they are small, undergraduate, graduate, and combinations of both. Some are departments of education that offer only programs to prepare teachers, others are colleges of education with scores of programs in a cornucopia of subject areas, covering education in the broadest sense of the term—in and out of the classroom and across the lifespan. They differ in their emphasis on teaching and research. Some model themselves after professional schools; others favor the graduate school of arts and sciences model; and many try to blend both.

Throughout this research, deans, professors, and others familiar with the nation’s colleges, schools, and departments of education told the researchers the challenge would be to make sense of the diversity that is lumped together under the banner of “schools of education.”

Education schools include a very small number of specialized and free-standing institutions such as the Bank Street College of Education and Teachers College. There are also a small, but increasing number of for-profit and on-line institutions such as the University of Phoenix and Kaplan’s new education school. None of these were included in the research because they are anomalies. It was also useful to omit Teachers College to eliminate the appearance of bias on the part of the author. This

study focuses on the rest of America’s departments, schools, and colleges of education located in non-profit institutions of higher education.

This study began with the belief that it made no sense to study the nation’s 1,206 education schools as a uniform entity without acknowledging their differences, or to view them separately without recognizing their commonalities. The Carnegie Foundation typology makes it possible both to distinguish among colleges and universities and to group them according to their shared characteristics. A description of education schools by Carnegie classification is found in Appendix 2 and summarized in Table 1.

Readers will notice that throughout the text that follows, I use the pronoun “we” rather than “I.” This is because the study was the work of many—a project team and thousands of other participants. The project had the support of the Annenberg, Ford, and Kauffman Foundations, as discussed in Appendix 3. I am grateful to them all.

This report should not be viewed as a statement by Teachers College, my colleagues on the Teachers College faculty, or the Teachers College board of trustees. The opinions expressed are mine alone.

*Arthur Levine*  
*New York City*

TABLE 1

## Definitions and Characteristics of Six Carnegie Types of Colleges and Universities

Throughout this report, schools of education are differentiated according to the Carnegie type of the college or university to which they belong (See Appendix 2 for a full explanation of the types).

Definitions are as follows:

401 departments of education are located at baccalaureate colleges, which are schools primarily engaged in undergraduate education. These departments tend to be small, graduating just one percent of the country's school administrators annually.

### **Baccalaureate General**

- 133 schools of education
- up to half of all degrees awarded by the college are in the liberal arts

### **Baccalaureate Liberal Arts**

- 268 schools of education
- more than half of degrees awarded are in the liberal arts

562 schools and departments of education, constituting 47 percent of the nation's education schools, are located at masters level institutions. They graduate 57 percent of school administrators earning degrees each year. Ninety-two percent award master's degrees, and 15 percent grant doctoral degrees.

### **Masters I**

- 467 schools of education
- predominantly regional public universities
- award 40+ master's degrees per year across 3+ disciplines
- tend to be much larger in enrollment than the Masters IIs

### **Masters II**

- 95 schools of education
- mostly private, tuition-dependent colleges
- grant at least 20 degrees annually without regard to field

228 schools and departments of education are located at the nation's doctorate-granting universities. Together, they award 42 percent of the degrees granted to school administrators, as well as 97 percent of the doctorates granted in education. The typical doctorate-granting school in our survey produces 47 school administrators and awards 24 doctorates each year.

### **Doctoral Extensive**

- 138 schools of education
- award 50+ doctoral degrees per year in at least 15 disciplines

### **Doctoral Intensive**

- 90 schools of education
- award at least 10 doctorates across three disciplines annually (or at least 20 doctorates overall, regardless of field)



## THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

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**T**he job of school leader has been transformed by extraordinary economic, demographic, technological, and global change. As our country makes the transition from an industrial to a global information-based economy, everything around us is in flux—things as fundamental as what we do for a living, how we shop and communicate, where we live, and what our country’s relationship is with the rest of the world.

In one way or another, every American and all of our social institutions have been shaken by these sweeping changes, and the schools are no exception. Education has been turned into one of the most powerful engines driving our economy. To be competitive in a global marketplace, the United States now requires a more educated population. To be employable in an information society, our children need more advanced skills and knowledge than they required in the past. The states have responded to these realities by raising standards for school promotion and graduation, mandating student testing, and demanding school accountability.

These changes represent a fundamental reversal of existing school policy, shifting the focus from ensuring that all schools educate students in the same way—five major subjects, 12 years of schooling, and 180-day school years—to requiring that all children achieve the same outcomes from their education. This turns the world of schooling upside down: universal standards replace universal processes; learning becomes more important than instruction; and the student takes center stage from the teacher.

Meanwhile, demographics are reshaping both the student body and the corps of administrators and teachers. Schools have the job of educating a population that is experiencing dramatic demographic changes, growing

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increasingly diverse, and becoming more and more segregated by income and race—to meet today’s more rigorous state standards. And they must do so with a shrinking number of experienced administrators and teachers due to retirements and departures from the profession.

In a rapidly changing environment, principals and superintendents no longer serve primarily as supervisors. They are being called on to lead in the redesign of their schools and school systems. In an outcome-based and accountability-driven era, administrators have to lead their schools in the rethinking of goals, priorities, finances, staffing, curriculum, pedagogies, learning resources, assessment methods, technology, and use of time and space. They have to recruit and retain top staff members and educate newcomers and veterans alike to understand and become comfortable with an education system undergoing dramatic and continuing change. They have to ensure the professional development that teachers and administrators need to be effective. They have to prepare parents and students for the new realities and provide them with the support necessary to succeed. They have to engage in continuous evaluation and school improvement, create a sense of community, and build morale in a time of transformation.

Few of today’s 250,000 school leaders are prepared to carry out this agenda.<sup>4</sup> Neither they nor the programs that prepared them should be faulted for this. Put simply, they were appointed to and educated for jobs that do not exist any longer.

This is a report about the preparation and development of school leaders by education schools, where nearly all principals (88 percent) have studied, largely in departments of educational administration/leadership (Principals Survey).<sup>5</sup> It asks how well current programs educate leaders for today’s jobs and today’s schools.

The best evidence for answering this question does not exist. While there is a good deal of research showing that principals make a difference in the success of students, there is no systematic research documenting the impact of school leadership programs on the achievement of children in the schools and school systems that graduates of these programs lead.

This report examines the programs themselves and their capacity to educate principals and superintendents in the skills and knowledge necessary to lead today’s schools and school systems. It offers a nine-point template for judging the quality of school leadership programs.<sup>6</sup>

**1. Purpose:** The program’s purpose is explicit, focusing on the education of practicing school leaders; the goals reflect the needs of today’s leaders, schools, and children; and the definition of success is tied to student learning in the schools administered by the graduates of the program.

**2. Curricular coherence:** The curriculum mirrors program purposes and goals. The curriculum is rigorous, coherent, and organized to teach the skills and knowledge needed by leaders at specific types of schools and at the various stages of their careers.

**3. Curricular balance:** The curriculum integrates the theory and practice of administration, balancing study in university classrooms and work in schools with successful practitioners.

**4. Faculty composition:** The faculty includes academics and practitioners, ideally the same individuals, who are expert in school leadership, up to date in their field, intellectually productive, and firmly rooted in both the academy and the schools. Taken as a whole, the faculty’s size and fields of expertise are aligned with the curriculum and student enrollment.

**5. Admissions:** Admissions criteria are designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful school leaders.

**6. Degrees:** Graduation standards are high and the degrees awarded are appropriate to the profession.

**7. Research:** Research carried out in the program is of high quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and/or policy makers.

**8. Finances:** Resources are adequate to support the program.

**9. Assessment:** The program engages in continuing self-assessment and improvement of its performance.

Throughout this report, terms such as “model,” “strong,” and “inadequate” programs and variations thereof are used. A model or exemplary program is one that substantially meets all nine criteria. A strong program is one that substantially satisfies most of the criteria. An inadequate program is defined as one that fails to achieve most of the criteria or has a fatal flaw such as an incompetent faculty.

The findings of this report were very disappointing. Collectively, educational administration programs are the weakest of all the programs at the nation’s education schools. This

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is distressing not only because of the magnitude of the jobs that principals and superintendents must perform, but also because of the large number of school leaders who will need to be hired in the next decade.

In the course of the study, we managed to locate only a small number of strong programs in the United States. None was considered exemplary. The most promising model that we found was located in England at the National College for School Leadership (NCSL), which operates in a very different fashion than school leadership programs

in the United States.

On the pages that follow we discuss the origin and development of the nation's school leadership programs, offer a profile of the numbers and types of leadership programs in universities today, describe the growing number of non-university-based school leadership programs, examine the most promising model of school leadership education encountered, and offer recommendations about how to strengthen university educational administration programs.

## THE RISE *and* DECLINE of SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

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**F**rom their earliest days in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, university-based educational administration programs have been uncertain about their purposes and goals.

The first college level course in the field was taught somewhere between 1879 and 1881.<sup>7</sup> From 1890 to 1910, courses in administration were transformed into full-blown graduate degree programs in response to the enormous expansion of the public schools. Fueled by the success of the high school, where enrollments nearly quadrupled and teachers almost quintupled during this period, graduate education for school administrators took off.<sup>8</sup> In 1900, no institution in the United States was offering systematic study in the area of educational administration, only course work. Five years later, the first two doctoral degrees were awarded in educational administration.<sup>9</sup> By the end of World War II, 125 colleges and universities had such programs.<sup>10</sup>

But almost from the start, sharp differences—which became fissures—emerged about what shape administrator preparation programs should take. James Earl Russell, dean of Teachers College, favored a practitioner-based program for experienced school administrators who would attend part-time and study a curriculum focusing on the practical subjects they would need to do their jobs.

Labeling this notion superficial, detrimental to teaching, and more appropriate for craftsmen than educators, the dean of Harvard's education school, Henry Holmes, called for a preparation model like those of law and

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medical schools. He advocated a master's program with an academic curriculum that would educate very able, young students without experience who would attend full-time for two years. The program would include a common one-year general core for those planning on careers in all realms of education—teaching, administration, and other specialties.

Dean Russell dismissed the Harvard model as impractical snobbishness that would fail to attract ambitious practitioners. Lambasting the idea of preparing inexperienced students fresh out of college to head schools and school systems, Russell argued that general education would never prepare them for the task. Students needed experience and practical instruction. Besides, two years was too long; students could get doctorates in that time span.<sup>11</sup>

Charles Judd, director of the department of education at the University of Chicago, agreed with Holmes' view that education schools were not rigorous enough and had poor reputations, but he rejected the Harvard remedy. For him, the answer was to develop the science of education research and prepare leaders; his department extricated itself from training teachers, something he encouraged colleagues in arts and sciences to embrace as a sideline.<sup>12</sup>

The education school deans agreed to disagree, thus laying the foundation for what has evolved into polar differences regarding the goals and purposes of educational administration programs. No consensus exists on whom programs should enroll, what they should prepare their students to do, what they should teach, whom they should hire to teach, what degrees they should offer, and how educational administration relates to teaching and research.

### **The Rise**

Despite the fundamental disagreements about the shape of educational administration, the programs thrived for much of the last century. They met the needs of education schools, school administrators, school systems, and states.

For schools of education, educational leadership programs brought cachet. There was far more prestige attached to educating principals and superintendents, usually male, than to preparing low status, primarily female, teachers.

For school systems, the programs offered an efficient means by which to identify new administrators for rapidly growing schools and central offices; alumni could simply ask their former professors to recommend people. Further, those professors provided a ready pool of consultants to the schools, and they could be

counted on to nominate their old students for jobs and promotions.

For would-be administrators, the programs: provided a proven route to entering a higher-status, better-paying profession than teaching; helped in acquiring a peer group; and served as a future placement service. The programs also offered some knowledge about administrative responsibilities.

The states cemented the arrangement. For them, the university programs provided convenience. When licensing for school administrators began in the years following World War I, universities seemed an obvious choice for the job. Once a state defined its requirements, it could hand to academe the tasks of recruiting new talent, designing an appropriate curriculum, teaching the necessary classes, and assuring a basic level of quality control among new superintendents and principals.

The positive result of the partnership was that a previously chaotic and politicized process of preparing and appointing school leaders gave way to a rational, more meritocratic system that imparted knowledge and skills to future school leaders and satisfied quality standards set by the states. The system served the needs of all four partners—education schools, school systems, aspiring administrators, and states.

## The Decline

The partnership began unraveling in the late 1960's under the pressure of social change. When it did, what remained were the fundamental disagreements about the purposes and design of leadership education, which had produced a host of disparate programs.

The first salvo came from the civil rights movement. Under pressure, professors and school administrators reluctantly opened their old boys' network to women and to people of color. Changes in the law, political climate, and hiring procedures meant that school superintendents could no longer ask former professors to send over their latest protégés. Jobs had to be announced and advertised; searches had to be open (or at least more open); and affirmative action was supposed to guide hiring.

The second blow came from the school reform movement, which began in 1983 with the publication of *A Nation at Risk*.<sup>13</sup> The reform movement put a spotlight on school leadership, highlighted its importance for school success, made student achievement the measure of school performance, and demanded accountability from leaders for results. The reform movement's continuing message, announced from the White House to the statehouse and discussed in corporate suites and

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in the press, was that America's schools were failing. This meant school leaders were failing, too.

Despite this verdict, the partners continued to work together, but their ties began to loosen. The states went around education leadership programs and created alternative routes to administrative careers. Would-be administrators found themselves with options other than education schools to prepare for jobs. And school boards hired non-education-school graduates to head their systems, while sometimes creating their own leadership academies.

Even as educational administration programs diminished in importance to their partners, the programs remained dependent on these partners for their cachet, enrollments, revenue, and status as the gatekeepers of the profession.

In this environment, the school leadership field was ripe for scrutiny and attack. A major salvo was launched in 1987 when the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration—composed of educational administration professors, education school deans, urban school superintendents, education association heads, then-Governor Bill Clinton, university presidents, and others—issued a report titled *Leaders for America's Schools*.<sup>14</sup> Its startling conclusion:

Fewer than 200 of the country's 505 graduate programs in educational administration were capable of meeting necessary standards of excellence. The rest, said the commission, should be closed.

In the years that followed, the criticism moved from within the profession to the popular press. Typical was a commentary published in *The New York Times* by a pair of prominent educators—Ted Sanders, former president of the Education Commission of the States, and Vanderbilt University professor James Guthrie.<sup>15</sup> They argued that over the past quarter-century, the preparation of school administrators had fallen into a downward spiral dominated by low-prestige institutions and diploma mills. They said instruction was outmoded and expectations were low. Many of the sub-par training programs, they added, had no entrance requirements other than the applicant's ability to pay tuition, and the doctor of education (Ed.D.) degrees they conferred had lost their salience.

Sixteen years after the commission report, the reputation of school leadership programs had declined sufficiently that critics could credibly suggest scrapping those programs altogether and replacing them with a variety of alternatives, developed and managed not by universities but by schools, districts, and states. That was

the position argued in 2003 by the Broad Foundation and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation in *Better Leaders for America's Schools: A Manifesto*,<sup>16</sup> which laid much of the blame for the “leadership crisis” on useless education school courses and misguided state licensure requirements that were seen as dissuading promising candidates from entering the profession.

Borrowing a metaphor from Harvard professor Richard Elmore, the manifesto portrayed education schools, state departments of education, and local education agencies as a “cartel” that “controls access to school administration, running that system not to the benefit of schools but rather themselves.”<sup>17</sup> The remedy? Break the cartel. “[Dispense] with the traditional reliance on prior experience, education school courses, and other hallmarks of the credentialing system,”<sup>18</sup> urged the authors, and encourage competition for education schools by allowing school districts to determine the training needs of their leaders and to obtain that training from the provider of their choice.

But the most remarkable part of the manifesto lay not in its critique of the existing system—Elmore and other scholars had already documented that system’s weaknesses—but in its list of signatories, who included two former U.S. Secretaries of Education, two current or former governors, four current or former chief state school officers, two current or former heads of major urban school systems, 10 educational leadership professors, the former head of the College Board, the director of the Council of Great City Schools, and a host of K-12 innovators.

In aggregate, those who signed the manifesto tilted to the right politically. However, the list included a number of well-known mainstream education leaders.

The inescapable conclusion is that the current debate over the preparation of school administrators cannot be divided along the usual political fault lines. The issues at the heart of the debate continue to be those that bedeviled deans Holmes, Judd, and Russell: How should school leaders be educated and who should provide that education?

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## A PROFILE *of* SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

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Approximately 500 schools and departments of education offer degree-granting graduate programs for school administrators (Deans Survey). In 2003, they produced over 15,000 master's degrees in educational administration, roughly one-eighth of all master's degrees in education, and 2,300 doctoral degrees, about one-third of all doctorates awarded in education.<sup>19</sup> The majority of those degrees are awarded at universities at which the master's is the highest degree granted. Research universities are responsible for most of the rest, and they award nearly all of the doctorates.<sup>20</sup>

As large as these numbers seem, they actually understate how many school leadership programs exist. Today, 55 percent of the education schools in our survey report having a graduate program to educate

principals, and 32 percent of them have a comparable program for superintendents. (See Table 2.)

While some programs are non-degree granting, the combined total of degree and non-degree programs is more than 600. This is considerably larger than anticipated and previously reported in the literature.

This means that since 1987, when the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration recommended closing three-fifths of the nation's graduate programs in school leadership, the number of programs appears to have actually increased.

The programs can be found in every sector of higher education. They are staples in research universities, being offered at more than four out of five doctoral institutions. They also exist at a majority of the masters I institutions.

**More than half of the education schools in our survey report having a graduate program to educate principals, and nearly one out of three has a comparable program for superintendents.**

TABLE 2

**Percentage of Education Schools with Programs to Educate Principals and Superintendents by Carnegie Type**

<b>Carnegie Type</b>	<b>% with Principals Program</b>	<b>% with Superintendents Program</b>
Baccalaureate General	5%	2%
Baccalaureate Liberal Arts	11%	4%
Doctoral Research Extensive	83%	65%
Doctoral Research Intensive	93%	71%
Masters Granting I	75%	41%
Masters Granting II	42%	12%
<b>Overall Average</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>32%</b>

*Source: Deans Survey*

**Programs mainly educate current and future school administrators, teachers earning a degree primarily for salary enhancement, and future researchers in school leadership.**

What is startling is that one in nine education departments at liberal arts colleges, institutions that commonly limit themselves to baccalaureate education, also has a post-graduate program for principals.

School leadership programs mainly educate three types of students—current and future school administrators, teachers earning a degree primarily for salary enhancement, and future researchers in school leadership. The last group is found almost exclusively at doctoral granting institutions, but even there, according to deans and faculty members, the group makes up well under 10 percent of educational administration students. At a university known for educating academics in its school leadership program, faculty members estimated that only 10 to 15 percent

of the graduates went on to become professors. At a more typical institution, a very senior professor said, “I have had many graduates over the years and I only know one of them who is a professor.”

The programs that are oriented toward practitioners can be described as pre-service for students hoping to obtain jobs in school administration and in-service for students who already have positions and/or want to advance in the profession. A master’s degree is the credential for the job of principal and the doctorate is the degree of choice for superintendent. There are also myriad non-degree professional development programs that are supposed to update and expand administrators’ knowledge of the field, raising their salaries in the process.

## A RACE *to the* BOTTOM

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**T**his study found the overall quality of educational administration programs in the United States to be poor. The majority of programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading universities. Collectively, school leadership programs are not successful on any of the nine quality criteria presented in Part I.

While these observations apply to the field as a whole and to the majority of programs, they do not apply to all. There are some strong ones, such as those at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Peabody College of Vanderbilt University.

But the fact is that the mission of educational leadership programs has been unclear since their earliest days. Moreover, like all branches of the university, school leadership programs do not engage in systematic self-assessment.

Their curricula are disconnected

from the needs of leaders and their schools. Their admission standards are among the lowest in American graduate schools. Their professoriate is ill equipped to educate school leaders. Their programs pay insufficient attention to clinical education and mentorship by successful practitioners. The degrees they award are inappropriate to the needs of today's schools and school leaders. Their research is detached from practice. And their programs receive insufficient resources.

Four phenomena observed in the course of this study are particularly troubling. The first is the rise in the number of institutions offering off-campus educational administration programs. In theory, such programs are desirable, but in practice they are often of lower quality than their campus-based counterparts and their faculties are composed disproportionately of adjunct professors.

**The majority of programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country's leading universities.**

**A growing number of education schools are lowering admission standards, watering down programs, and offering quickie degrees.**

Second, Masters I and weaker research-intensive universities are pushing to award doctoral degrees in educational administration. The goal is to increase institutional stature by joining the doctoral granting university club. The field of educational administration was chosen because, as we were told repeatedly, it is the easiest area in which to win state approval. Too often these new programs have turned out to be little more than graduate credit dispensers. They award the equivalent of green stamps, which can be traded in for raises and promotions, to teachers who have no intention of becoming administrators. These programs have also been responsible for conferring master's degrees on students who demonstrate anything but mastery. They have awarded doctorates that are doctoral in name only. And they have enrolled principals and superintendents in courses of study that are not relevant to their jobs.

Third, competition for students among educational administration programs is driving down program quality. It works this way: To attract a student body less interested in obtaining an education than in accumulating credits, a growing number of education schools are lowering admission standards, watering down programs, and offering quickie degrees. This can only be described

as “a race to the bottom,” a competition among school leadership programs to produce more degrees faster, easier, and more cheaply.

Fourth, states and school districts as well as universities are fueling this race downward. Today, all 50 states and 96 percent of public school districts award salary increases for teachers who earn advanced degrees and credits beyond the master's.<sup>21</sup> The effect of this incentive system is to create an army of unmotivated students seeking to acquire credits in the easiest ways possible. They are more interested in finding speedy and undemanding programs than in pursuing relevant and challenging courses of study.

As for universities, they push school leadership programs downward either by underfunding them or treating them as “cash cows”—diverting revenues they generate to other parts of the campus. A cash cow program is pressured to keep enrollments high and reduce costs in order to bolster these transfer payments. This encourages programs to set low admission standards in order to hit enrollment targets; admit more students than the faculty can reasonably educate; hire lower cost part-time faculty rather than an adequate complement of full-time professors; and mount low cost, high volume, off-campus programs.

In the end, the combination of

school system incentives and university funding practices serves as a barrier to improvement. In fact, it spurs the race to the bottom. This situation is best illustrated by the stories of two competing education schools, one highly respected nationally, the other well regarded regionally. The names of the schools and some insignificant details of their stories have been changed to mask the schools' identities.<sup>22</sup>

### **A Case Study**

The Eminent University Graduate School of Education (EGSE), a nationally ranked institution, is located on the palm tree lined campus of one of the newer and more prestigious research universities in the country. Several years ago, EGSE found that enrollments in its educational administration programs were declining, even as demand for such programs was growing in the region. Competition for students was fierce, and teachers and administrators had a number of in-state programs from which to choose. Moreover, several universities from other states were crossing the border to offer programs. So EGSE decided to take its programs to where the students were, employing what it called the "Willie Sutton Theory of Education." (When asked why he robbed banks, Sutton replied, "Because that's where the money is.")

Working with the university's School of Continuing Education, EGSE set up programs in several heavily populated areas around the state. With enrollments ranging from 30 to 260, these satellites now account for one-third of the education school's student body and 50 percent of the credit hours taught. Most of the off-campus students, drawn to the programs by the prestige of an Eminent University degree, are enrolled for certificates or degrees in educational administration, though other programs are offered as well. In one center, more than 80 students are working on doctorates in educational administration.

The satellite programs are created in collaboration with nearby school systems. The school systems inform the design and delivery of the programs, encourage students to attend them, and provide time and space for information sessions and classes.

In theory, the off-campus programs are equivalent to EGSE's on-campus courses of study. But they differ in some important ways. At the satellites, adjuncts—many of them local school administrators—considerably outnumber EGSE professors. There is no required review of their syllabi, nor is there a clear set of procedures for approving off-campus courses or for making faculty

**The Eminent University decided to take its programs to where the students were, employing what it called the "Willie Sutton Theory of Education."**

**Clearly dissatisfied with the situation, the dean referred to these off-campus programs as “a festering sore.”**

appointments. This has led to a “quality control” problem, EGSE’s dean acknowledged.

Professors, administrators, and traditional graduate students alike said the off-campus programs lack academic rigor, particularly the school leadership doctorate. Admission standards are acknowledged to be low, too. One EGSE administrator put it this way: “We have admitted some people with GRE scores just above what you get for filling out the form.”

Also, the curriculum is compressed, with some courses squeezed into four long weekend sessions rather than following the traditional semester schedule. Requirements have been reduced as well—for instance, a mandatory 90-day internship can be satisfied by the student’s own job. Curriculum content has been watered down, too. As one faculty member explained, “I almost never share journal articles with master’s students. They don’t know how to read them because they don’t take research methods courses. It is not built into the expectations of the state.”

Today, EGSE’s administration program serves only a small number of students on the main campus. For all intents and purposes, operations have been moved to the satellites. Clearly dissatisfied with the situation, the dean referred to these off-campus

programs as “a festering sore.”

EGSE’s most heavily enrolled center is located in the service area of another school of education, which we will call Suburban College of Education (SCE). It is part of Suburban University, a doctorate granting institution in the affluent and quickly growing region of a major metropolitan area a few hours away from Eminent’s main campus. After a speedy rise in enrollment, SCE’s numbers plummeted in the late 1990’s. Today, it is falling significantly short of the enrollment targets set by the university.

The school of education views the decline as a result of its principled refusal to lower standards. According to the dean’s staff, the students who reject Suburban in favor of its competitors do so for base reasons. “How fast am I going to get my ticket punched,” they ask, “and how much is it going to cost me?” Other schools, staff members said, are offering degrees and licenses in “a faster, cheaper fashion.”

Nonetheless, Suburban’s education school has joined the pack. It now contracts with 10 different school systems to offer off-campus educational leadership programs leading to licenses and master’s degrees, and at the behest of one school district, which demonstrated significant demand, SCE has begun to offer a doctoral degree as well.

Already, the off-campus programs have grown so large as to be jokingly called a “mini-university,” and a 50 percent enrollment increase is planned for next year.

The faculty for these programs consists largely of adjuncts from the contracting school systems, which typically provide a principal or administrator from the central office to teach classes. At the time of our visit, seven SCE professors and more than 30 adjuncts taught the 200 off-campus and 45 on-campus students enrolled in the license and master’s programs. The adjuncts generally received poorer evaluations and were viewed as less accessible than the regular professors.

The director of the program, who handled everything from budgeting and adjunct hiring to registration and payment of fees, complained that the university treated the program like a “cash cow.” The program generates large enrollments and many tuition dollars, but does not receive commensurate faculty appointments and so must rely on the local adjunct instructors.

SCE views the market for off-campus programs in education leadership as extremely volatile. The story was told more than once, whether real or apocryphal, of Eminent reducing tuition rates and 10 students leaving an SCE class and walking across the street to take the

equivalent Eminent class. It is a powerful story in which curriculum content, faculty strength, and program quality are not a consideration. The education school has gotten the message. Its 36-credit on-campus master’s program has been pared to 30 hours. Faculty claim that this was done to trim fat from the curriculum, but the university provost acknowledges increasing pressure from students to “speed up programs.”

The stories of the Eminent Graduate School of Education and the Suburban College of Education are not accounts of degree mills. These are two well-respected education schools. Together they highlight some of the problems in educational administration today.

Let’s examine each of the problem areas:

### **An Irrelevant Curriculum**

The typical course of study for the principalship has little to do with the job of being a principal. In fact, it appears to be a nearly random collection of courses.

The Principals Survey asked school heads, who had graduated from or were currently attending a university-based degree or certification program, what courses they had taken.<sup>23</sup> More than 80 percent of them reported the same nine

**The director of the program, who handled everything from budgeting and adjunct hiring to registration and payment of fees, complained that the university treated the program like a “cash cow.”**

**The curriculum seems little more than a grab bag of survey courses. If the class on the principalship were removed, it would be a real challenge to guess the purpose of the program.**

courses—instructional leadership (92 percent), school law (91 percent), educational psychology (91 percent), curriculum development (90 percent), research methods (89 percent), historical and philosophical foundations of education (88 percent), teaching and learning (87 percent), child and adolescent development (85 percent), and the school principalship (84 percent). (See Table 3.)

These courses are, in effect, the core curriculum for the nation's principals, adding up to somewhere between 75 and 90 percent of the credits required for a master's degree. But they seem little more than a grab bag of survey courses offered in most education schools. If one removed the class on the principalship from the list, it would be a real challenge to guess the purpose of the program.

An average of only 63 percent of principals found the courses valuable. The principals put a premium on classes they had taken that were most relevant to their jobs—school law (80 percent), child and adolescent psychology (79 percent), and instructional leadership (78 percent). Their lowest rankings went to courses viewed as abstract and poorly integrated with practice, such as historical and philosophical foundations of education (36 percent) and research methods

(56 percent). (Principals Survey.) (See Table 3.)

The quality of the courses was generally rated lower than their value. On average, just 56 percent of principals rated their classes high in quality.<sup>24</sup> (See Table 3.)

Principals were very critical of education school programs in general. Almost nine out of 10 survey respondents (89 percent) said that schools of education fail to adequately prepare their graduates to cope with classroom realities (Principals Survey).<sup>25</sup> (See Table 4.)

The Alumni Survey shed light on gaps between what is taught in education schools and what school administrators need to do their jobs. Among alumni holding administrative positions, half of the respondents (50 percent) gave their programs only fair to poor ratings for preparing them to deal with in-school politics. More than 40 percent said their programs were fair to poor in preparing them to work in diverse school environments (41 percent) and with students from differing socioeconomic groups (41 percent). More than 30 percent gave their programs fair to poor grades for preparing them to educate multiethnic, multiracial populations (38 percent); to work with external constituents such as parents and with school bureaucracies (35 percent); and to handle the growing movement

TABLE 3

**Courses (Taken by Public School Principals in Preparation for  
or in Relation to their Jobs) Leading to Advanced Education Degrees  
or Certification; Perception of Value to Their Job;  
and Evaluation of Course Quality**

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Percent who took course</b>	<b>Percent rating valuable to job</b>	<b>Percent rating high in quality</b>
Instructional Leadership	92%	78%	71%
School Law	91%	80%	73%
Educational Psychology	91%	66%	63%
Curriculum Development	90%	73%	59%
Research Methods	89%	56%	53%
Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education	88%	36%	33%
Teaching and Learning	87%	73%	63%
Child and Adolescent Psychology	85%	79%	60%
School Principalship	84%	73%	67%
Needs of Exceptional Children	70%	69%	57%
Schools as Organizations	64%	58%	54%
Organizational Behavior	62%	63%	59%
Community/Parent Relations	58%	65%	56%
Managing Change	56%	67%	59%
Financial Reporting and Controls	56%	58%	54%
Human Resource Management	54%	64%	55%
Supporting Teachers for Instructional Improvement	53%	66%	58%
Ethics	53%	55%	55%
Politics of Education	49%	51%	42%
Economics of Education	46%	50%	51%
Conflict Resolution	41%	63%	58%
Negotiation	35%	42%	37%
Strategic Management of Innovation and Technology	34%	55%	47%
<b>Average</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>56%</b>

*Source: Principals Survey*

TABLE 4

**Assessment of Education Schools by Principals**

	<b>Percent agreeing</b>
Schools of education do not adequately prepare their graduates to cope with classroom realities.	89%
Schools of education are not sufficiently involved with the local schools.	83%
Schools of education are out of step with the times.	55%
Political pressure on schools of education is unrelenting.	53%
The school of education curriculum is outdated.	47%
Schools of education are targets of unwarranted media attacks.	45%
The school of education curriculum lacks rigor.	44%
Society expects too much from schools of education.	43%
Education schools do not adequately prepare their graduates academically.	37%

*Source: Principals Survey*

toward testing and accountability (31 percent).

In an interview, one of the most prominent professors in the school leadership field described the curriculum problem this way: “Educational administration programs around the country lack rigor and fail to focus on the core business of the schools—learning and teaching.”

In talking about education schools in general, more than four out of 10 principals (44 percent) agreed that they lack rigor (Table 4). And alumni working in administration, especially those who had not attended research universities or liberal arts colleges,

complained of a “lack of true standards” and “low expectations from professors,” and frequently described their course work as “busy work,” “unchallenging,” “empty paperwork,” and “jumping through hoops.”

Finally, 47 percent of principals and 39 percent of all administration alumni characterized the curriculum of their education schools as outdated, with specific mention of textbooks, examples used in class, curriculum, professors’ knowledge, and classroom practices. Perhaps the most alarming, but also most amusing, story came from an alumnus who told of a recent course that used “videos from the 70’s in order to

help us learn about managing classrooms of children who weren't even born during that era.”

## Low Admission and Graduation Standards

The admissions criteria used at most of the educational leadership programs we visited have nothing to do with a potential student's ability to be successful as a principal. In general, standards of admission are low, lower than those of any other education school program we encountered. Faculty who teach school leadership students are frequently critical of both the students' motivation for enrolling and their academic performance. As a group, these students appear more interested in earning credits and obtaining salary increases than in pursuing rigorous academic studies. An eminent professor at a major research university said that too many educational administration students want “ease of access and ease of program. They don't want to have to do too much work.”

Looking at standardized test scores, educational administration applicants are among the lowest performers in education schools and in academe as a whole. As shown in Table 5, elementary and secondary level teaching applicants outscore them on all three sections of the Graduate Record Examination. While

would-be educational administration students score at the national average on the analytic portion of the GRE, their scores trail the national average by 46 points on the verbal portion of the exam and by 81 points on the quantitative section. Since only the stronger and more selective educational administration programs require the GRE, the data may, in fact, overstate the academic profile of educational administration students.

Our study found that even at the more selective education schools, admissions standards for school leadership programs tended to be lower than the standards for many other education programs. A particularly telling story involved one of the most selective graduate schools of education in the country, which found itself unable to fill a much publicized school leaders program, despite the attractions of major foundation support and large financial aid packages. In order to make use of the dedicated scholarship dollars, the admissions committee was forced to reduce its admissions standards for doctoral students, and even then seats went vacant—it turned out that standards had not been lowered enough.

For all intents and purposes, the majority of educational administration programs admit nearly everyone who applies. “First come,

**Educational administration applicants are among the lowest performers on standardized tests.**

**TABLE 5**

**Graduate Record Examination Scores by Intended Field of Study for College Seniors and Nonenrolled Graduates: July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2003**

	Verbal	Quantitative	Analytical
English Literature	561	550	4.9
Religion	553	581	4.9
Physics	541	747	4.4
American History	534	543	4.8
Library Science	529	532	4.5
Political Science	517	569	4.8
Economics	505	706	4.5
Journalism	491	539	4.6
Biology	489	611	4.3
Secondary Education	485	574	4.5
Sociology	483	536	NA
Nursing	454	519	4.2
Public Administration	452	510	4.3
Elementary Education	444	523	4.3
Educational Administration	429	521	4.2
Social Work	428	464	4.1
<b>National Mean</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>4.2</b>

*Source: Educational Testing Service, "General Test Percentage Distribution of Scores with Intended Broad Graduate Major Field Based on Senior and Nonenrolled College Graduates," p. 9, retrieved from GRE Web site, August 19, 2004, [www.ets.org/pub/gre/generaldistribution.pdf](http://www.ets.org/pub/gre/generaldistribution.pdf)*

first served," the dean of a Western state university told us. In fact, some students had even managed to skip the formal application process. As the dean put it, "Students would show up and we would let them stay."

A dean from the Midwest proudly stated that her leadership program

was becoming more selective. While the overall admit rate was still about 95 percent, she said, the program had recently decided that 20 to 30 percent of students should be admitted conditionally, pending the students' first year performance. In other words, the decision to

acknowledge that many students are underqualified is an indicator of rising quality.

At another of the weaker education schools we visited, part of a border state masters granting university, the dean said admission standards for his relatively new educational administration program were lax and the quality of graduates so low that professors couldn't recommend some for employment.

In the course of our study, we frequently heard comments about the poor academic preparation of educational administration students at schools across the entire Carnegie classification spectrum. At the less selective schools, professors and deans complained especially about students' weak grasp of basic skills, such as writing clearly and communicating effectively. Students themselves reported that many of their peers "lacked necessary qualifications academically" and that the "quality of work by students was substandard."

Even the more competent students tend to produce poor work, said a professor who had taught educational leadership at a regional state university. Students, he explained, are so busy at their day jobs that they have little time to devote to their graduate programs.

At schools with greater prestige, the main grievance had to do with

students' lack of intellectual curiosity and drive. At the 25 schools we visited that had educational leadership programs, we were told repeatedly that, for a lot of students, acquiring credits is enough, as they have no intention of becoming administrators—they simply want to increase their teaching salaries. And they seek administration degrees in particular because school leadership programs are viewed as the easiest and most convenient source of the necessary credit hours. Said a professor at a highly respected Midwestern research university, "[Their] sole goal is getting their ticket stamped."

Alumni serving as administrators confirmed the faculty view. When asked in the survey how they had chosen their university-based program, nearly seven out of 10 alumni (69 percent) said that they had wanted a convenient location. Following behind were the school's positive reputation (62 percent) and courses being offered at convenient times (60 percent). Program quality finished fourth (56 percent) (Alumni Survey).<sup>26</sup> Overall, the responses distinctly favored convenience, not quality.

One student explained, "There are good schools, but you have to find them. My experience tells me that many of my colleagues purposefully choose the *easier* rather than the

**Even the more competent students tend to produce poor work. Students are so busy at their day jobs that they have little time to devote to their graduate programs.**

**Practitioners believe that once accepted to the program they should have to do little work. They feel expectations are too high.**

most challenging route (which is really a shame).” This is not entirely surprising; after all, 73 percent of administration alumni reported having worked full time while attending graduate school.

Faculty members appeared to be both exasperated with and sympathetic to their students’ desire for programs that are, as one professor put it, “convenient and not too demanding.” At a masters granting university, the dean said he discouraged part-time students from taking a full course load: “I recommend that they take only six units a semester, but a lot of them won’t listen to me.” The result, he said, was a group of “zombies,” overworked students who showed up for class exhausted, trying to balance a full-time job and graduate school. A professor at the same school wondered, “Are we asking enough of [students] if they can come in here and take three classes and work full time?” A faculty colleague answered by telling of a graduate student to whom she had given a “C” as a gift: “The student was angry and said, ‘I have a master’s degree from this institution, from your department, and you’re telling me I can’t write? You people better get your act together here.’”

The results are visible in the daily classroom experiences of professors and students at all types of education

schools. At a highly ranked Midwestern research university, a doctoral student who had been a principal said practitioners “believe that once accepted to the program they should have to do little work. They feel expectations are too high.” She told of a student who got his first research paper back with a mediocre grade and complained, “I have never gotten anything less than an ‘A’ in my life.”

A professor in her department told a similar story from a faculty member’s point of view. A student came to her after experiencing what he viewed as too heavy a work load in her class and said, “Don’t you know I have a full-time job?” The professor’s response was, “Yes, I do, but if you don’t have the time you shouldn’t take my course.” This professor was frustrated by the consumer mentality that dominated educational administration, but said, “I don’t know how to get around it.”

The dean of a doctorate granting school in a neighboring state expressed the same frustration. His institution requires a culminating research project for the master’s degree—not a thesis, but “a little piece of research.” Yet his school is losing students to the education school down the road because the latter only requires course work. He is not sure what to do.

A nationally renowned professor

at one of the strongest school leadership programs in the country concluded that many institutions were capitalizing on the students' desire for "ease of access and ease of program." They found that educational administration programs geared to the tastes of the marketplace are the "keys to the treasury," meaning there was a lot of tuition to be garnered for relatively little effort on the part of the institutions and the students.

A professor put it this way: "Unfortunately programs seeking to boost enrollments too often address ease of access by lowering admission standards and making their programs too easy in order to attract students, and then allowing those admitted to survive. It is easier for their institutions to look the other way or ignore the problem since it brings in bags of money to fund the rest of the university." This is the classic cash cow problem about which deans, faculty members, and program administrators in educational administration complained often and bitterly.

A senior university administrator at a major research institution said that on his campus "education courses are our biggest revenue producer because they are a low cost program." He added tellingly that the college of education "has more enrollment than it has operating

budget actually. We get \$4,300 per undergraduate from the state and tuition is close to \$4,000. So we have around \$8,000 to work with and our programs cost a little under \$6,000. You can admit a lot of education majors and make money. Nursing students cost \$12,000 per student. So you have to admit a lot of education majors to have some money left over so you can admit a few nursing students." The education school, which enrolls about 1,000 undergraduates, has to transfer in excess of \$2 million annually to the university.

### **A Weak Faculty**

We visited several universities that boast strong faculties in educational leadership. The University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Peabody College of Vanderbilt University stand out as two of the strongest. Overall, however, we found the faculties in leadership programs to be distressingly weak, and for reasons that may seem paradoxical: On one hand, the field depends too heavily on practitioners serving as part-time faculty, and on the other, it employs too many full-time professors who have minimal, if any, recent experience in the practice of school administration.

The number of part-time faculty in education leadership programs is growing with the proliferation of

**There was a lot of tuition to be garnered for relatively little effort on the part of the institutions and the students.**

**The adjunct professoriate consisted largely of local superintendents and principals. Their dominant mode of instruction was the telling of personal anecdotes about their adventures as administrators.**

off-campus programs like those found at Suburban and Eminent Universities. In Johnny Appleseed fashion, these programs are popping up far and near, usually in-state, but in some cases out-of-state and even out of the country. Indeed, of the 25 schools we visited that have educational leadership programs, 15 offered them at one or more off-site locations; one school offered instruction at 29 sites. The mode was two sites and the median was four. A faculty member at a Midwestern masters granting university described the phenomenon this way: “Fifteen years ago we were strictly a regional university for [educational administration]. Now we go all over the state.”

At the schools we visited, the off-campus programs were commonly run in collaboration with a variety of groups—school systems, individual schools, professional associations, unions, and for-profit companies. While it is a very good thing for universities to be involved with the public schools, these partnerships often result in reduced quality control in the staffing of programs.

During our site visits, we found that colleges and universities of every Carnegie type staffed off-campus programs disproportionately with adjunct professors. For instance, in a major urban center, a doctoral granting university with 500

educational administration students, five instructional sites, and an assortment of contracts with school systems around the state, gets by with just five full-time faculty members supplemented by 22 adjuncts.

Twelve of the 25 visited schools reported having more part-time than full-time faculty members in their educational leadership programs.<sup>27</sup> In one case, a school had more than five part-timers for each full-time professor. Even in some programs in which full-time faculty members outnumbered adjuncts, part-timers still taught a substantial portion of the courses—in one instance, 60 percent.

The adjunct professoriate employed at the schools that were visited consisted largely of local superintendents and principals, who usually held terminal degrees and came from the school systems in which universities offered satellite programs. Their dominant mode of instruction, according to faculty and student reports, was telling war stories—personal anecdotes about their adventures as school administrators.

That they emphasized story telling is not surprising, because adjuncts frequently teach in areas in which they lack scholarly expertise. This was the finding of a recent study by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the

superintendents' professional association. Members serving as adjuncts were polled regarding the subjects they taught and their level of expertise in those subjects. Only a bare majority of respondents (53 percent) affirmed that "I only teach a course I know a lot about."<sup>28</sup>

In part, this is a consequence of high volume off-campus programs, like those at Eminent and Suburban, having difficulty staffing their courses. Leadership department chairs and deans regularly told how difficult it was to get senior faculty members to drive for hours to offer courses at night in far-away cities. Even junior faculty did not go willingly. One dean explained that assigning "deadwood" professors to a number of courses in different parts of his state was a useful way to speed desired retirements.

According to the program directors we interviewed, it is difficult enough to find warm bodies to put in front of classes at distant outposts; finding knowledgeable, effective instructors can often be next to impossible. Moreover, in order to maintain good relations with participating school systems, graduate programs are constantly tempted to hire local administrators as adjuncts, regardless of their quality as teachers.

In our interviews and surveys, students enrolled in school leadership programs, as well as

alumni, often expressed dissatisfaction with adjuncts. It is not that they objected to instruction that emphasized the practical—they were emphatic in stating that their programs needed more faculty members with "relevant experience in what they were teaching." Rather, they would have liked to study under professors who could integrate their recent practical experience with research and theory. Unfortunately, said alumni, many adjuncts were too narrow in perspective, too little informed about current research, too unprepared in the subject area of the class, and too ineffective as instructors.

Full-time faculty members were described in mirror image terms. Their greatest shortcoming is being disconnected from practice. By way of illustration, consider the case of a baccalaureate institution that recently launched a new master's program in leadership. It admits about 20 students a year, and has two full-time professors, and no adjuncts. One of the professors never before taught a course in educational leadership, never did scholarly research in the field, and has not been a school administrator for 20 years. The other has more recent administrative experience but has not previously taught in a leadership program either, or engaged in scholarship. Neither professor has any expertise in

**It is difficult enough to find warm bodies to put in front of classes at distant outposts; finding knowledgeable, effective instructors can often be next to impossible.**

**TABLE 6**

**Percentage of Faculty and Deans Who Have Been Principals and Superintendents by Education School Type**

	FACULTY		DEANS	
	Principal	Superintendent	Principal	Superintendent
Baccalaureate:				
Liberal Arts	0%	0%	13%	2%
Baccalaureate:				
General	13%	0%	25%	10%
Masters I	6%	3%	23%	9%
Masters II	9%	0%	33%	9%
Doctoral Extensive	4%	2%	12%	2%
Doctoral Intensive	3%	1%	22%	7%
<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>8%</b>

*Source: Deans and Faculty Surveys*

key subjects such as school law, financing, or technology.

Relatively few faculty members in education schools have had experience as school administrators. Six percent have been principals and two percent have been superintendents. Even among deans, experience is very limited. One in 12 has served as a superintendent (8 percent), and one in five (22 percent) has worked as a principal (Deans Survey). (See Table 6.)

Moreover, faculty involvement in schools in their region is generally low. During our site visits, educational administration faculty regularly said that, while they thought involvement in the schools was desirable, they lacked the time to

get involved. At institutions that emphasize teaching, such as baccalaureate and masters II colleges, faculty schedules were filled up by heavy course loads, large classes, lengthy commutes to off-campus programs, and lots of college committee work. At research universities, scholarly pursuits were prized over school service. A professor at a major research university recalled her previous position in a regional university educational administration program that was known for its commitment to social justice and that all but required faculty involvement in the local urban public school system. “If you were not doing something with the local [public] schools,” she said, “then you were not

doing your job.” But at the research university, “there is less emphasis on service and junior professors get a strong message to limit service until after they get tenure.”

A professor in the same department said the disconnect did not end with tenure. “It is amazing to me the conflict that exists between research and service to the field. It seems some faculty members are punished for service when they seek tenure.... There is a tension between the life of the professor and the needs of the field. Why can’t we bring the university and the field together in a more

meaningful way?”<sup>29</sup>

More than eight out of 10 principals (83 percent) and half of all administration alumni (52 percent) we surveyed said that education schools and their faculties were not sufficiently involved in the local schools (Principal and Alumni Surveys).<sup>30</sup> Alumni reactions to uninvolved faculty members were exactly what one might expect. They said most professors didn’t have “a grasp of reality outside of the school walls.... [The] quality of instruction was poor. Courses were not practical.” They complained of faculty who had

TABLE 7

**Three Most Important Resources Education Schools Need to Do a Better Job, According to Administration Alumni**

	Percent selecting
Faculty with more experience as practitioners	56%
More relevant curriculum	40%
Upgraded technology	36%
Curriculum that requires more clinical experience	35%
Commitment to high level educator preparation from highest levels of the university	31%
Ability to offer more financial aid	30%
Curriculum that requires stronger research preparation	16%
Admissions standards that are more selective	15%
Faculty more committed to preparing students	14%
Smaller classes	9%
Faculty with more research expertise	8%

Source: Alumni Survey

**Clinical experience tends to be squeezed in while students work full time and generally occurs in the school where the student is employed. For the most part, students described the experience as something to be gotten out of the way.**

no administrative experience or were out of administration for too long, resulting in “outdated curricula from outdated professors.”

When asked to identify the three most important resources education schools need to do a better job, 56 percent of administration alumni recommended appointing faculty members with more experience as practitioners, and 40 percent called for a more relevant curriculum. Just eight percent said faculty members needed more research expertise, and only 16 percent said the curriculum required more classes on how to conduct research. (See Table 7.)

### **Inadequate Clinical Instruction**

We found clinical instruction to be well respected in name only. Clinical experience tends to be squeezed in while students work full time and generally occurs in the school where the student is employed. For the most part, students described the experience as something to be gotten out of the way, not as a learning opportunity.

Twenty-four out of 25 of the visited schools with educational leadership programs required an internship or practicum. In all but two cases, it could be done in the student’s home school or school district. Whether the principal or superintendent there was successful

or unsuccessful was immaterial. The internship requirement varied from 45 to 300 hundred hours, from 90 days to a full academic year, and from two to 15 credits. But the activities were similar, duties assigned by the principal that met state guidelines for principal certification and that were generally carried out with a wink and a nod.

More than one-third of administration alumni (35 percent) said that one of the most important changes education schools could make would be to require more clinical experience.<sup>31</sup> (See Table 7.) Repeatedly, alumni told us there was “too much theory [and] not enough practice.” Their most frequent criticism of course content was that it was “not related to real life.” Classes were described as “mundane,” “esoteric,” “irrelevant,” “impractical,” and “busy work.” Those students who wanted more than a credential or a salary increase tended to call for “more hands-on practice.” Administration alumni said they would have liked school-based practicums; apprenticeships, especially if they were paid; study in the field with mentors; mentoring in general; internship opportunities; and instruction involving case studies. Evidence that students wanted practice tied to theory comes from Alvin Sanoff’s study of principals in two Midwestern school systems.

The unpublished study found that when offered a choice between a traditional educational administration program, and a one- to two-year program that combined coursework with a paid apprenticeship with an experienced principal, 80 percent of the respondents preferred the paid apprenticeship route.

Alumni and students favored active learning pedagogies that knitted together the clinical and academic strands of their education. Especially popular were simulations and case studies, which are employed more frequently in educational leadership than in any other education school subject area, but which are still not as common as they could be. In part, this seems due to faculty members' lack of familiarity with case methods of teaching, which require facilitative skills that are very different from those involved in leading an ordinary discussion or giving a lecture. Further, some professors have had limited experience as school administrators, and it may be intimidating for them to use experience-based curriculum materials when some students are practicing administrators.

As for providing opportunities to work with mentors in school settings, the practice remains the exception rather than the rule. Few leadership programs provide for it, and most

full-time professors are unable to serve as or effectively supervise mentors, given their inexperience in the field and heavy course loads.

The bottom line: school leadership programs offer little in the way of meaningful clinical or field-based education. When offered, it tends to be disconnected from academic instruction.

### **Inappropriate Degrees**

There are too many degrees and certificates in educational administration. They mean too many things, and they risk having no meaning at all. For instance, the doctor of education degree (Ed.D.) is reserved by some institutions for practitioners, but others award it to academics and researchers as well. The Ph.D. tends to be thought of as a degree for scholars, but some institutions award it to practitioners. Some universities award only one of the degrees and some offer both. The rules for awarding Ed.D.'s and Ph.D.'s sometimes differ even among departments within the same university

The research orientation of education schools helps determine which degrees they are most likely to offer. Generally, the stronger the emphasis on research, the more likely the school is to offer the Ph.D. as its sole doctorate or to grant both Ph.D.'s and Ed.D.'s in educational

**There are too many degrees and certificates in educational administration. They mean too many things, and they risk having no meaning at all.**

**TABLE 8**

**Doctoral Degrees in School Leadership Offered by Carnegie Type\***

Carnegie Type	Percent offering:			
	only Ph.D	only Ed.D.	both degrees	no doctorate
Masters I Colleges & Universities	3%	44%	0%	53%
Doctoral Extensive Universities	28%	41%	25%	8%
Doctoral Intensive Universities	12%	63%	7%	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>27%</b>

*\*Masters II colleges and universities are omitted because so few offer doctoral degrees. Source: Degree Study*

administration. The weaker the research mission, the greater the likelihood that the university awards only the Ed.D.<sup>32</sup> A majority of doctoral extensive universities (53 percent) award a Ph.D. or both a Ph.D. and an Ed.D., while a majority of doctoral intensives (63 percent) and a plurality of the masters institutions (44 percent) grant only the Ed.D. Most masters granting schools do not award doctorates in educational leadership (See Table 8).

The quality of many of the institutions offering doctorates in educational administration is woefully inadequate. Western State University (WSU) offers a prime example. WSU’s education school has 16 faculty members in educational administration. Salaries are low and recruiting is difficult, so the

department has had to hire from the local area, bringing on board a number of professors who are poorly prepared as scholars and out of touch with recent developments in the field. For example, several told us that they had never heard of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which is one of the more prominent initiatives in the field of education today.

At WSU, teaching loads are heavy—eight courses a year. Faculty members have little time for research or for working with the local schools. Even so, their lack of scholarly interest and productivity is remarkable. On the topic of research, for instance, one professor told us: “The hardest part is finding places where you can publish where everything doesn’t have to be original

research.” Another member of the department recently turned down an invitation to an international conference, saying, “Why would I go? I only have so much time.”

WSU is currently a masters I university, but it aspires to be a research university. It offers an Ed.D. in educational leadership. Thirty-two students are currently enrolled, two for each faculty member, which is an excellent ratio. But these are faculty members who say that they are unable to keep up with their fields and do not have the time for research or for working with schools.

It is entirely appropriate to ask what in the world this school is doing with a doctoral program, and whatever would lead a state to give this institution the authority to award doctoral degrees? Unfortunately, WSU is hardly an isolated case. We visited several schools that were almost carbon copies of Western, and that either awarded doctorates in educational leadership or aspired to do so soon.

Even at doctoral research extensive universities, this study found reason to be concerned about the quality of the doctorates awarded. As a well-respected education administration professor told us, “We are a profession going through a charade. Only 20 to 25 percent [of the students who enroll in these doctoral programs] ever graduate,

and 90 percent of the theses are not useful.”<sup>33</sup>

The problem is that so many practitioners are working toward a degree that was intended to prepare academic researchers and scholars and that has no relevance to their jobs. This is the case at even the most renowned institutions. As a consequence, professors at research institutions find themselves having to compromise on the quality of the dissertation. A faculty member at a research university in the South said of the dissertations she has supervised: “For the most part, you hold your nose and pass the student.” And at non-research universities—where the proportion of faculty members engaged in productive research is small—the awarding of doctorates is simply a travesty.<sup>34</sup>

### Poor Research

Every few years, a study is published examining the quantity and quality of research in school leadership and the conclusions are invariably the same—the level and extent of scholarship is weak.<sup>35</sup> The shortcomings are reflected in four conversations conducted independently at an education school located at a major Northeastern research university. First, the dean criticized the educational administration program for its “lack of rigorous scholarship.” Second, an internationally known

**A faculty member at a research university in the South said of the dissertations she has supervised: “For the most part, you hold your nose and pass the student.”**

**The body of research in educational administration cannot answer questions as basic as whether school leadership programs have any impact on student achievement in the schools that graduates of these programs lead.**

scholar complained that “educational administration doesn’t do research that matters; it doesn’t have any visible researchers and lacks an intellectual center.” Third, a senior professor of educational administration sadly said, “There is no substantial, meaningful body of theory and research to expose students to.” Finally, the chair of the educational administration program, a former school superintendent, said he avoided the journals in educational administration, preferring the *Harvard Business Review*, *Education Week* (a trade paper), and the *Kappan Magazine* (a non-peer-reviewed publication of Phi Delta Kappa, an international professional association for educators).

These comments echo the findings of studies conducted on the quality of educational leadership research over the past 50 years, as well as the assessments of the field by the academics—both inside and outside educational leadership programs—whom we talked with in the course of this study.<sup>36</sup> The most commonly cited weaknesses: Educational administration scholarship is atheoretical and immature; it neglects to ask important questions; it is overwhelmingly engaged in non-empirical research; and it is disconnected from practice.

The body of research was called

superficial and lacking in rigor and was criticized for confusing scholarly and practical inquiry, flitting from topic to topic, prizing breadth over depth, and being abstruse. The research methodology employed was labeled poor for its over-dependence on qualitative methodologies, concentration on the descriptive, use of questionnaires of dubious reliability and validity, collection of data of questionable value, and inappropriate analysis of data. The professoriate was cited for poorly preparing their students as researchers, and being inexperienced in or incapable of carrying out or supervising quality research themselves. Both the field and its journals were characterized as having low standards.

The body of research in educational administration cannot answer questions as basic as whether school leadership programs have any impact on student achievement in the schools that graduates of these programs lead. There is an absence of research on what value these programs add, what aspects of the curriculum or educational experience make a difference, and what elements are unnecessary or minimally useful in enhancing children’s growth and educational attainment, K-12 teacher development and effectiveness, and overall K-12 school functioning.<sup>37</sup>

TABLE 9

### Faculty Research Productivity by Carnegie Type\*

Carnegie Type	Most productive	More productive	Productive	Less productive	Unproductive
Masters I	4%	22%	31%	17%	13%
Masters II	4%	8%	6%	32%	27%
Doctoral Extensive	18%	37%	20%	6%	4%
Doctoral Intensive	10%	22%	28%	20%	8%

\* The most productive are those professors who have published a book, published a peer-reviewed article, presented a paper at a conference, and obtained extramural funding in the past two years. More productive professors have engaged in three out of four of these activities. Productive professors have engaged in two. Less productive professors have only presented a paper. Nonproductive professors have completed none of these activities. The table rows do not add up to 100 percent because those who engaged in one activity such as receiving a grant or authoring a book or publishing an article are omitted. These were considered more daunting tasks than delivering a paper and inappropriate for the category of "less productive."

Source: Faculty Survey

In a recent study of the research on administrator preparation, Murphy and Vriesenga found that more than 2,000 articles on preparation had been published in the leading school leadership journals from 1975 to 2002. But less than 3 percent were empirical studies. The authors concluded: "While we seem to know about this topic, as evidenced in the abundance of writing and professing in this area, very little of our understanding has been forged on the empirical anvil. While it is appropriate for the field to incorporate multiple ways of knowing about the preparation experience, the very limited attention devoted to empirical studies

remains a serious problem."<sup>38</sup>

Practitioners said over and over that they do not find educational leadership research particularly helpful. They view it as abstract and lacking in coverage of the subjects they want or need to know about. The school administrators interviewed in the course of this study were regularly asked whether they read the articles published in the educational leadership journals. The answer was almost universally "no." The few who answered "yes" were almost all currently enrolled in a graduate program. Practitioners, if they kept up to date in their field by reading, did so through the trade papers and materials from

**Research in educational administration is criticized by the academic community and by education school faculty members and deans to a greater degree than research in any other field examined in the course of this study.**

professional associations including school boards and unions, which they found more valuable.

This is consistent with what an American Educational Research Association task force on research in educational administration found.<sup>39</sup> The task force reported there is “little evidence now that our current model of knowledge production and utilization is working well. The relationship between knowledge generated by academic researchers and the use of that knowledge by practitioners is weak at best.”<sup>40</sup>

The inescapable conclusion is that research in educational administration is not perceived as valuable by practitioners or policy makers. It is criticized by the academic community and by education school faculty members and deans to a greater degree than research in any other field examined in the course of this study.

In terms of research productivity, a scale can be created ranging from the most productive researchers (who have published at least one book, published at least one peer-reviewed article, delivered at least one paper, and obtained external funding in the past two years) to the most unproductive professors (who can claim none of those four accomplishments). In between would be more productive researchers, who have engaged in three out of four of

the activities; productive researchers, who have carried out two; and less productive researchers, who have only presented a paper, which is the most common activity and the one with the lowest threshold for selection.

Table 9 shows how schools of education awarding the doctorate in education—doctoral and masters granting universities—compare in faculty research productivity.<sup>41</sup>

Research extensive universities are in a class by themselves. They are the only institutions at which a majority of professors (55 percent) can be described as more or most productive. At the other end of the spectrum, a majority of professors at masters II institutions, which have very few doctoral programs, fit into the categories of less productive and unproductive (59 percent). That should disqualify them as a class from offering doctorates.

The faculty at masters I and doctoral intensive schools of education fall somewhere in between. At masters I’s, 26 percent of the professors are classified as more or most productive. These institutions are relatively small, according to our survey of institutional demographics, having an average full-time faculty of 29. This means the average masters I has fewer than eight highly productive faculty members in the entire school of education, which is a

CHART 1

**Criteria for Excellence Applied to University-Based School Leadership Programs**

Criteria	Generally meets criterion	Explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Purpose is explicit, focusing on the education of practicing school leaders</li> <li>● Goals reflect needs of today’s leaders, schools, and children</li> <li>● Success tied to student learning</li> </ul>	No	There have been fundamental disagreements about the purpose of the field since its founding. Accordingly, goals and definitions of success are also confused.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curriculum is rigorous, coherent, and organized to teach the skills and knowledge needed by leaders at specific types of schools and at the various stages of their careers</li> </ul>	No	The master’s curriculum seems an almost random collection of the survey courses found in most education schools. The doctoral curriculum is designed more to educate scholars than practitioners. There is little connection between the course of studies and the needs of school leaders or their schools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curriculum integrates the theory and practice of administration</li> </ul>	No	Theory overshadows practice. Education in university classrooms eclipses instruction in schools and mentorship by successful practitioners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Faculty composed of scholars and practitioners expert in school leadership, up to date in their fields, intellectually productive, and rooted in the academy and the schools</li> <li>● Number of professors and fields of expertise aligned with curriculum and student enrollment</li> </ul>	No	The faculty consists largely of academics with little experience in practice and practitioners with little knowledge of theory and research; integration between the two is inadequate. There is overreliance on adjunct faculty, particularly in off-campus programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Admissions criteria designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful school leaders</li> </ul>	No	Admissions standards are low and students are more interested in quick and undemanding programs than in a challenging or relevant education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Graduation standards are high and the degrees awarded are appropriate to the profession</li> </ul>	No	Graduation requirements are generally low. Dissertation standards are lower for practitioners than for students planning on academic careers. The Ed.D. is poorly fitted to the needs of practitioners and unnecessary for their jobs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research is high in quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and/or policy makers</li> </ul>	No	Research is poor in quality and little used by practitioners and policy makers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Resources adequate to support the program</li> </ul>	No	There are consistent complaints of education schools being treated as cash cows. Their funding base is lower than that of many other graduate schools, owing to the income levels of alumni and the amount of extramural funding available.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continuing self-assessment and performance improvement</li> </ul>	No	As in all university academic units, self-assessment is largely absent.

**Offering a doctorate, usually in educational administration, was invariably part of the plan to move up the academic status hierarchy.**

tiny base on which to build strong doctoral programs.

Doctoral intensive education schools are larger, with an average faculty of 58, have a greater proportion of highly productive professors (32 percent), and employ a larger number of professors in that category (19) (Demographic Study). This is a stronger base on which to mount a doctoral program.

But both doctoral intensives and masters I's have roughly equal proportions of highly productive and less productive faculty members. This suggests an education school climate that is not encouraging of scholarship, nor able to sustain a quality doctoral program.

The schools we visited with profiles of this sort generally had degree granting aspirations far higher than they could realistically hope to achieve. They found it extraordinarily difficult to recruit scholars to their faculties. Deans often hoped to recruit just one scholar, who could be a catalyst for transforming their schools. That scholar might serve as a magnet for attracting other scholars, and enable the schools to establish a research center as a potential island of excellence.

Offering a doctorate, usually in educational administration, was invariably part of the plan to move up the academic status hierarchy. But in

no case did this seem a wise direction for the institution, as it would dissipate the education school's resources, distract it from the professional and teaching activities at which it might actually succeed, and result in yet one more inadequate doctoral program.

Given their shortcomings and the condition of doctoral education in school leadership programs, there would seem to be little reason why either doctoral intensive or masters I education schools should offer a doctorate in educational administration. The institutions with the greatest capacity to offer quality doctoral programs in school leadership are research extensive education schools.<sup>42</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Collectively, the field of educational administration is not successful, based on the nine criteria set forth in Part I of the report and in Chart 1. That judgment does not pertain to individual schools or programs. In almost every one of the nine areas in which weaknesses have been documented, we did see programs that were successful in meeting one or more of the criteria.

## AN ARRAY *of* ALTERNATIVES

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**N**either practitioners nor policy makers are waiting for educational administration programs to reform themselves. Increasingly, the programs are being bypassed as states approve alternative routes and waive traditional certification requirements for principals and superintendents.

An education school dean interviewed in the course of this study described the situation in California this way: “Both the state credentialing agency and the governor’s office became convinced that schools of education didn’t prepare administrators well and certainly were not doing enough of it.... So the way to avoid the mess was just to have legislation passed to allow them to be prepared by anybody. They have thrown it out to the marketplace.”

This is happening across the country. The signs that the states have pulled back from their historic alliance with university-based educational administration programs are unmistakable. In 2003, half of the states had no education school requirements for becoming a superintendent, had alternative pathways to certification, or had a policy of exceptions, allowing candidates without education school preparation to become superintendents. More than a third of the states had comparable procedures for principals and more states are talking about moving in this direction.<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, several of the nation’s largest cities—including New York, Los Angeles, Denver, Seattle, Miami, Toledo, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Diego—have taken advantage of this flexibility by hiring non-educators to head their school systems.

At the same time, a growing number of competitors are springing up to lay claim to the historic franchise of education schools in preparing school administrators. States are establishing their own school leadership programs.

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**Some urban school systems are emulating a program that provides several courses of study geared to the different stages in an administrator's career.**

The granddaddy of them all is the California School Leadership Academy (CSLA), which operated from 1985 to 2002 with 12 regional offices around the state.<sup>44</sup> The academy trained more than 15,000 school leaders before falling victim to the state's budget deficit. Among the suite of leadership programs CSLA offered was a two- to three-year seminar-based foundations program for aspiring, new, and experienced administrators. The seminar series, which required students to maintain portfolios documenting their leadership development, focused on how to create powerful learning in schools and emphasized elements such as vision, curriculum, teaching, assessment, communications, relationships, and diversity. Electives on practical issues, such as aligning curriculum to standards and improving low-performing schools, permitted school administrators to gear their studies to what they and their schools needed.

School districts have joined the competition. An initiative that several urban school systems around the country are emulating is a Chicago Public Schools program, which provides several courses of study geared to the different stages in an administrator's career. One example is Leadership Initiative for Transformation (LIFT), sponsored by the city's public school system, the

Chicago Principals and Administrators Association, the Northwestern University business school, and the Center for Schools at the University of Chicago (which closed its education school several years ago).<sup>45</sup> LIFT puts new principals in a mentoring relationship with experienced principals. The traditional "classroom" aspects of the program occur via workshops and residential retreats taught by veteran principals, central office administrators, community leaders, and university and independent consultants. The program's content is practical and aligned with standards. Emphasizing student-centered climates and partnerships with parents and the community, workshops deal with topics such as board policy, school improvement, teacher professional development, resource management, and interpersonal effectiveness.

Some innovative schools, individually and collectively, are also developing programs. For instance, KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) Academies, public charter schools known for their work with at-risk youngsters, decided to train their own principals.<sup>46</sup> The first year of their three-year program is spent in a full-time apprenticeship augmented by six weeks of instruction for eight to 10 hours a day by professors from the Haas School of Business at the

Berkeley campus of the University of California, experts in academic and community development, and KIPP staff members. The second and third years provide on-going training and support as the new KIPP leaders seek to establish their own “instructional models.”

The foundation world is stepping in, too. The Broad Foundation, co-author of the *Better Leaders for America’s Schools* manifesto, turned its critique into action, establishing the Urban Superintendents Academy. Designed to prepare the next generation of major public school system heads, this is a 10-month executive management program for educators and non-educators with substantial administrative experience. According to the Broad Foundation, seven members of the first two cohorts (a total of 34 people completed the program in 2002 and 2003) now serve as superintendents in places as diverse as Benton Harbor, Mich., Albuquerque, N.M., and Charleston, S.C.<sup>47</sup>

Professional associations of all types are prominent among the competitors as well. For instance, the national associations of elementary principals, secondary principals, and superintendents all offer members a veritable banquet of programs for aspiring, new, and established administrators, and they provide various opportunities to help school

leaders assess their professional development needs. Their programs are long and short, in person and on-line.

Independent, non-profit programs are springing up, too. Several years ago, for example, Dennis Littky, a nationally known principal, created the Big Picture Company, which offers a 12- to 20-month principal certification program relying on apprenticeships with successful urban and rural principals in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. The 25 graduates in 2002 developed individualized learning plans and documented, displayed, and evaluated their learning using portfolios, exhibitions, extensive writing, and performance assessment. This was supplemented by cross-school visiting, team meetings, feedback circles, and problem-based learning.<sup>48</sup>

## Assessing the New Providers

Already, a few things stand out about the ways these new providers are educating school administrators. First, they tend to give more emphasis to on-the-job preparation than university-based programs do, and they seem to favor mentoring over book learning. Their formal curricula seem to be more pragmatic, geared to the specific knowledge and

**New providers tend to give more emphasis to on-the-job preparation than university-based programs do, and they seem to favor mentoring over book learning.**

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skills required by school principals and superintendents at different career stages. They appear to be as concerned with supporting practicing administrators as they are with preparing them for the job. And they seem largely to distrust education school faculty.

Most of these programs have chosen to avoid or minimize involvement with education schools and to limit the use of education school professors as program instructors. By contrast, business school professors are a staple in a number of these programs and their involvement is usually highlighted on program Web sites and in promotional literature.

One program developer explained that the only reason his organization has any contact with an education school at all is that his students require university credentials. His organization creates the curriculum, hires the faculty, and assesses the students. The education school simply awards the credits and grants the degrees.

So what we have today are parallel approaches to educating school leaders. On one hand, we have traditional university programs that are classroom-based. They rely primarily on courses of uniform length; utilize a faculty composed largely of education school professors, supplemented by

practitioners; and provide instruction in the field of education. In contrast, the new competitors offer programs that are variable in length; are primarily experiential; occur largely in schools; are taught primarily by practitioners, supplemented by business school professors; and focus on management.

In many respects, the new providers have become the ying to the education school's yang. Neither approach is complete. The programs of the new providers are long on practice and short on theory, and the university-based programs are just the opposite.

The new providers have not been any more systematic about evaluating their performance than have the education programs they seek to replace. The poignant anecdote remains the most often presented "evidence" of success. Testimonials abound, but no systematic research exists to demonstrate that these new programs are any more or less successful than the traditional versions.

Because the alternative programs were not a focus of this project, it is not possible to evaluate them based on the nine standards of quality outlined in Part I. At this point, we know that alternative programs are different than those at universities. But we have no idea whether they are better or worse.

## A PROMISING MODEL

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In the course of this study, we asked experts in school leadership to help us find exemplary programs in the United States that we might have overlooked. They were generous with their counsel, but their suggestions, while instructive, did not bear fruit. Typical was a conversation with a senior leadership professor who enthusiastically described a program he believed to be at the field's cutting edge, notable in particular for a curriculum designed to prepare urban school leaders. When we looked for ourselves, though, we found the program had low admissions requirements, weak academic standards, and students who were interested mainly in obtaining credentials rather than in learning new content or skills. On paper, the program was as creative, coherent, and appealing as any other we encountered, but in reality its standards for admission and graduation were embarrassingly low and its impressive design could not be realized.

Of the 25 schools we visited that have educational leadership programs, three stood out. Unfortunately, one, which had a distinguished history, had recently undergone a turnover in faculty and was in the process of being restructured. The other two were strong, but neither could be classified as a model. What stood out in each was the quality of their professors, students, research, and their resources. However, their curricula were not aligned with the needs of schools and their leaders; theory overshadowed practice in their course of study; and their doctoral programs for practitioners were designed to educate future scholars.

At one of these schools, a senior administrator confided to us that the educational administration program was not as good as its reputation. She was correct. When asked if she could recommend another program, the administrator thought for a while and said she didn't think *any* of the nation's

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programs were exemplary.

Knowing we were disappointed with what we had seen, one of the journalists serving as a site visitor, Anne Lewis, recommended that we look at England’s National College for School Leadership. It proved to be the most promising model we saw, providing examples of good practice that educational administration programs might seek to emulate.

The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) was established by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1998 and opened its doors two years later with the mantra “every child in a well-led school, every leader a learner.” It does not award credits or degrees.<sup>49</sup> Rather, it is a free-standing government agency created to be the equivalent of a national war college for school leadership—to provide a single national focus for school leadership development and research, to be the driving force for world-class leadership in schools, and to stimulate national and international debate on leadership.

All of this has one purpose—to educate effective school leaders, people who generate improvement in student attainment and raise school standards. NCSL promotes 10 operating principles or goals that define both the skills and knowledge leaders need and the role NCSL is expected to play in their

development. School leadership must:

1. be purposeful, inclusive, and values driven;
2. embrace the distinctive and inclusive context of the school;
3. promote an active view of learning;
4. be instructionally focused;
5. reach throughout the school community;
6. build capacity by developing the school as a learning community;
7. be futures-oriented and strategically driven;
8. draw on experiential and innovative methodologies;
9. benefit from a support and policy context that is coherent, systematic, and implementation driven; and
10. receive support from a national college that leads the discourse on leadership for learning.

One can agree or disagree with these principles, but their clarity is undeniable, as is the extent to which NCSL’s curriculum and activities are rooted in them. The college developed a suite of programs organized around a leader’s career progression from aspirant through mentor. NCSL identified what it describes as five loose and overlapping career stages: emergent leaders who are teachers beginning

to take on leadership responsibilities; established leaders or middle-level administrators who may or may not eventually pursue a headship (the equivalent of a principalship); leadership entrants, people either preparing to fill or actually taking their first post as a school head; advanced leaders or heads with at least four years of experience who want to refresh themselves, update skills, or widen their experience; and consultant leaders who are ready to become mentors and coaches.

For example, there is a program for advanced leaders called the “Leadership Programme for Serving Headmasters” (LPSH). It focuses on the job requirements of a head, the head’s personal characteristics, different leadership styles, the context for school improvement, and leadership effectiveness. This core program is augmented by offerings on long-term issues that heads must deal with, such as technology and assessment. (The college is also planning, in partnership with leading business schools, a series of classes on topics such as change management, school renewal, and futures thinking.) Experienced heads have opportunities to join small groups examining personal and interpersonal effectiveness.

On top of this, enrichment or boundary stretching programs open

new vistas for experienced heads. For example, an international visitors program enables heads to gain experience and understanding of leadership around the world. And a “partners in leadership” program pairs heads with senior members of the business community, allowing each to experience a very different kind of organization.

The college’s offerings are an amalgam of national standards for head teachers; the recommendations of academics and practitioners; needs assessments of practitioners in the field; the concerns and agendas of education policy makers and government officials; and research findings on successful professional development and school leadership. The aim is to build a full portfolio of professional development activities to fit the specific needs of each head and the school that person leads.

The pedagogy for these programs is geared to the work of practicing leaders, combining on-the-job and classroom instruction. It relies on active modes of learning, emphasizing problem solving and experiential and field-based learning. Coaching, mentoring, on-the-job learning, continuing assessment, 360-degree feedback, self-assessment, portfolios, cohort groups, peer learning, simulations, and technology-mediated instruction, along with more traditional methods

**The pedagogy for the NCSL programs is geared to the work of practicing leaders, combining on-the-job and classroom instruction.**

**NCSL wants to bind together research and practice, believing that research should drive practice and practice should fuel research.**

of education, are part of the NCSL repertoire as well.

An unusual mix of education practitioners and academics staffs the college. Nearly all staff members directly involved in program design and delivery have experience as school heads or deputy heads; many come from universities as well. Instead of a permanent full-time faculty, NCSL has created “teams of facilitators,” drawn from the ranks of successful senior head teachers. The college trains and directs them by maintaining control over the curriculum they teach.

NCSL engages in rigorous evaluation of every element of its program with continuous improvement the goal and children’s achievement the ultimate yardstick.

The college is committed to what it calls “actionable research,” designed to build a useable knowledge base for school leaders and policy makers. Its research agenda covers immediate problems facing school leaders, emerging issues, and perennial challenges. NCSL conducts and/or contracts out for what would be regarded as traditional academic research in an effort to link its work to the international research community and act as a bridge between scholarship and practice. But the college makes even greater use of trained and supervised teams of

practitioners from the nation’s elementary and secondary schools. The bottom line is that NCSL wants to bind together research and practice, believing that research should drive practice and practice should fuel research.

Its research reports, intended for consumption and immediate application by practitioners, are brief, geared to administrator needs, and available on-line. The college prides itself on doing “real-time research” that is produced diligently but quickly. “We turn this stuff around fast and we are thinking about how we can do it even faster. Ideally, we look at an issue and turn it around within two months’ time,” said an administrator.

Another vehicle for disseminating research is the Leading Practice Seminar Series, which reports on best practices in addressing traditionally intractable issues such as improving low performing schools.

As for the future, NCSL is looking far beyond Nottingham. It views the entire nation and, ultimately, the world, as its campus. It is planning 12 regional centers and a nationwide virtual community of school leaders, including consultation communities that will provide heads the chance to question experts and leading educators, as well as networked-learning communities that bring together six to 12 schools,

universities, local education authorities, and community groups.

The college's financial resources are extraordinary. It is housed in a new state of the art \$45 million conference and residential facility that a Fortune 100 company would envy. In effect, it gives away its programs, charging participant schools and Local Education Authorities (equivalent to our school districts) only a small fraction of the cost. When asked what NCSL needed so it could do a better job, staff members made clear that funding was not an issue.

The newness of the National College for School Leadership means that it has to be viewed more in terms of its aspirations than its accomplishments. It remains as much a collection of vibrant planning documents as a fully realized "college." After five years of operation, discrepancies between the dream and the reality are apparent. According to staff members, juggling the three, sometimes inconsistent roles of NCSL—government agency, independent organization, and voice of the schooling profession—is difficult. The government, as funder, usually gets preference.

Focus is an issue. NCSL needs to offer a smaller number of strategic programs to achieve its goals; today's long menu of possibilities spreads the college too thin. Tying programs

to research and documenting their impact on school leaders and their schools is a challenge. While NCSL has gone far beyond the usual evidence in educational administration, namely anecdotes and satisfaction surveys, data to show that its programs actually increase student achievement are still rudimentary. And although name recognition of NCSL by England's heads tops 90 percent, attracting urban schools to the college's programs and developing diversity in the school heads on its teaching staff have proven harder than anticipated.

Even with these shortcomings, NCSL is the most impressive educational leadership program identified in this study. When measured against the same nine criteria applied to university-based leadership programs in the United States, it satisfies eight. The ninth does not apply, as NCSL does not award degrees.

NCSL excels in six areas: clarity and consistency of purposes and goals; creation of curricula and methods of instruction rooted in the needs of leaders, schools, and children; integration of theory and practice; a professoriate accomplished in both academics and practice; high quality, focus, and dissemination of research; and self-assessment and continuous improvement efforts. (See Chart 2.)

**Even with its shortcomings, NCSL is the most impressive educational leadership program identified in this study.**

CHART 2

**Criteria for Excellence Applied to the National College for School Leadership**

Criteria	Generally satisfies criterion	Explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Purpose is explicit, focusing on the education of practicing school leaders</li> <li>● Goals reflect needs of today’s leaders, schools, and children</li> <li>● Success tied to student learning</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>No program we saw or heard about has more explicit and well-articulated purposes, goals, and criteria for success. They are rooted in the needs of leaders and schools as defined by the leaders themselves, the practitioner community, policy makers, academics, and government officials.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curriculum is rigorous, coherent, and organized to teach the skills and knowledge needed by leaders at specific types of schools and at the various stages of their careers</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>The curriculum mirrors goals and purposes. It is built around the needs of leaders at five different career stages, with efforts to tailor the programs to the personal differences of leaders and the specific needs of their schools.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curriculum integrates the theory and practice of administration</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>In every respect the curriculum is integrated, from pedagogy and locations for instruction to instructors and program content.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Faculty composed of scholars and practitioners expert in school leadership, up to date in their fields, intellectually productive, and rooted in the academy and the schools</li> <li>● Number of professors and fields of expertise aligned with curriculum and student enrollment</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>This is a faculty that combines practitioners and academics in research and teaching. Not infrequently staff members straddle both worlds. When practitioners teach, they are trained by the college, which maintains control over the curriculum they teach. This would certainly not be to the taste of many professors at traditional universities, but it serves to balance academics and practice.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Admissions criteria designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful school leaders</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>NCSL enrolls only sitting or aspiring school leaders and offers programs specifically targeted to career stages.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Graduation standards are high and the degrees awarded are appropriate to the profession</li> </ul>	Not Applicable	<p>NCSL does not award degrees. The college seeks partnerships with universities so that their students can earn degrees and credits for their NCSL work. Early research indicates that heads who attend specific programs foster higher levels of achievement in their students than do heads of comparison schools.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Research of high quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and/or policy makers</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>No educational leadership program does a better job of bridging research and practice; practice drives research and research fuels practice.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Resources adequate to support the program</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>This is the upscale version of education for school leaders. NCSL is very well funded.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continuing self-assessment and performance improvement</li> </ul>	Yes	<p>NCSL is unrivaled in this regard.</p>

The National College for School Leadership differs in many respects from university-based educational administration programs in the United States. The college is not a university, but a government agency. It seeks to educate an entire nation; does not grant degrees; and is blessed with extraordinary resources.

Nonetheless, NCSL offers a panoply of practices for both university- and non-university-based programs in the United States to consider importing. It unabashedly seeks to educate school leaders and is definitive regarding the standard of success for accomplishing this—student achievement in the schools they head. Rather than offering a collection of unrelated courses, NCSL has designed a coherent

curriculum around the stages in a leader's career. This is easier to do in an institution that does not award degrees, but hardly impossible in one that does. The NCSL program balances theory and practice in its programming and staffing, integrates instruction in the classroom with practice in the schoolhouse, includes content on both education and management, and uses active learning pedagogies. Moreover, research is not a world apart from and competitive with teaching. It is integral to teaching, curriculum design, and school practice. And the college engages in systematic self-assessment. At this early stage, NCSL blends research and practice better than any American school of education.

**The NCSL program balances theory and practice in its programming and staffing, integrates instruction in the classroom with practice in the schoolhouse, includes content on both education and management, and uses active learning pedagogies.**



## A TIME *for* ACTION

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The field of educational administration is deeply troubled. Its purposes are muddled and have been since its inception. In a search for greater acceptance within the university, it has turned away from professional education in favor of the arts and sciences model of graduate education, and it has attenuated its ties with practitioners and practice, hoping to win the approval of the scholarly community. The result is a field rooted neither in practice nor research, offering programs that fail to prepare school leaders for their jobs, while producing research that is ignored by policy makers and practitioners and looked down on by academics both inside and outside of education schools. As a field, despite some strong programs around the country, educational administration is weak in its standards, curriculum, staffing, the caliber of its student body, and scholarship. Its degrees are low in quality and inappropriate to the needs of school leaders.

These weaknesses are exacerbated by public school policies that tie teacher and administrator salaries to longevity on the job and the accrual of graduate credits and degrees. Such incentives have helped to create an army of uninterested students, expanded the number of low-quality off-campus educational leadership programs, and spawned degree inflation. These policies have helped foster an environment in which low-quality programs threaten to drive out high-quality programs. It is a race to the bottom in which educational leadership programs are forced to compete against one another to attract students by offering easier and cheaper programs. The image that comes to mind is something out of *The Wizard of Oz*, a wizard or university granting an endless number of scarecrows the equivalent of honorary degrees.

Universities themselves have diminished the quality of their educational

**Educational administration has turned away from professional education in favor of the arts and sciences model of graduate education, and has attenuated its ties with practitioners and practice.**

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administration programs in two ways. Some treat their leadership programs as cash cows, taking much-needed education school revenues and redistributing them to what they view as more promising campus units. Others, while not actively draining resources from their education schools, neglect to supplement their funding, even though education schools tend to be among the least affluent units on campus, enjoying less external funding and benefiting from fewer wealthy alumni than do most other parts of the university. Either way, educational administration programs are forced to reduce costs and increase revenues by raising student enrollments, lowering admission standards, and hiring low-cost part-time faculty.

Britain's National College for School Leadership offers a model of what our educational administration programs might look like. For instance, American programs could abandon their traditional dichotomy of pre-service and in-service instruction—classifications that are too broad and unfocused to meet leaders' needs. They could redesign the course calendar, program length, and content organization, breaking down the boundaries needlessly imposed by the academy's semester system—by which three hours a week of instruction for 15 weeks earns three credits, and 36 credits (more or

less) earns a master's degree. Indeed, 15 of the 25 educational administration programs that we visited during our study were already experimenting with nontraditional program formats, taking advantage of intensive weekend, summer, and in-school instruction.

The typical leadership program might consist of a continuum of variable length offerings geared to the several stages in a leader's career, ranging from aspiration to mastery. These programs, grounded in the best research on leadership in and outside education, would meet both state licensure requirements and the needs of the leader's school. The faculty would be an integrated team of practitioners and academics from across the academy. Instruction, relying principally on active modes of pedagogy, would occur seamlessly in both the university classroom and the schoolhouse, creating the educational equivalent of the teaching hospital. The ultimate measure of program success would be student achievement in the schools led by program graduates. Toward this end, continuous assessment and research would be integral to the program, so that research would drive practice and practice would fuel research.

Such a program would represent a dramatic, but achievable, improvement over the ways in which

school leadership programs currently operate. It would require educational administration programs, the universities that house them, and the states and school districts that hire their graduates to act in concert. Each would need to eliminate the practices in its area that diminish leadership program quality; together they could address the range of conditions that give rise to and support current realities.

Universities, policy makers, and school systems should pursue three strategies for improving the preparation of school administrators: Eliminate the incentives that promote low quality in educational leadership programs; enact high standards and, when necessary, close inadequate programs; and redesign curricula and degree options to make them more relevant to the needs of principals and superintendents.

### **Eliminate Incentives That Promote Low Quality Programs**

Offering quick and easy degrees is actually rational behavior for school leadership programs today. They are merely giving the marketplace what it wants, though not what it needs. They are generating the revenues their universities demand. Current policies by states, school systems, and universities encourage this behavior by providing incentives, often

unwittingly, for educational leadership programs to lower quality. These policies have to be changed.

#### **RECOMMENDATION ONE:**

**School systems, municipalities, and states must find alternatives to salary scales that grant raises merely for accumulating credits and degrees.**

The most desirable alternative would be to tie raises to attaining the specific skills and knowledge that administrators need to do their jobs. This would shift the focus from simply acquiring credits to learning and then demonstrating—on the job and through examinations—that one has the skills that are necessary for leading schools and promoting student achievement.

In the short term, an important ameliorative step would be to cease rewarding educators for earning credits that aren't relevant to their work. Put more positively, offer raises only for classes directly germane to a teacher's or an administrator's job or school needs. Teachers, for example, might be rewarded for taking courses and programs that enlarge or deepen their teaching abilities, but they would only receive salary increases for educational leadership classes if they were to assume an administrative position. This would significantly reduce the number of teachers who enroll in leadership programs even

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though they have no intention of becoming administrators, and the remaining students would be likely to have greater motivation to excel in their studies.

States, school districts, and unions can help by changing their expectations for degrees. Rather than accepting the random assortment of courses that constitute master's study today, they can demand that candidates complete a rigorous preparatory degree (described in our fourth recommendation) that provides necessary skills, knowledge, and clinical supervision. Further, they can discourage the lightweight and irrelevant administrative doctorate by offering salary incentives instead for administrators who complete advanced certificate programs that are actually germane to the needs of the leader, school, and children.

**RECOMMENDATION TWO:  
Universities must champion high standards for education schools and their leadership programs by embracing financial practices that strengthen those programs.**

When university administrators use education schools as cash cows or systematically underfund them, they are in essence acknowledging that the program is weak or unimportant to them and giving their approval for the program to remain marginal and low in quality. They may even

encourage further declines in quality in order to produce revenues for the rest of the campus. This is the “don't ask, don't tell” approach to academic oversight.

This was vividly illustrated at one campus we visited where the provost complained that the education school's only standard of quality was credit hour production. Yet the provost rejected the school dean's request to cut enrollments in order to increase admission standards. In essence, the university demanded that the education school generate additional revenues, then criticized it for low standards, but did nothing—and planned to do nothing—to resolve these inconsistent positions.

The fact of the matter is that many institutions will need to make transfer payments in the opposite direction if they are to adequately fund their education schools and leadership programs. (Stanford University is the rare example of a university in which the flow of dollars actually *does* move in the opposite direction—the central administration supplements education school revenues.) If universities do increase funding, though, they must also raise accountability standards to ensure quality in education schools and their leadership programs.

## Set and Enforce Minimum Standards of Quality

Weak school leadership programs may be the effect of “rational” decision making, but nonetheless they are academically intolerable. It is the responsibility of the academy, not the marketplace, to set and enforce minimum quality standards for its programs.

### RECOMMENDATION THREE:

**All leadership programs should be rigorously evaluated, and weak programs should be strengthened or closed.**

In 1987, the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration concluded that more than 60 percent of the existing school leadership programs were of insufficient quality to remain open. The present study does not argue that a specific number of programs need to be closed. However, most of the programs examined in the course of this study were in fact inadequate. Some of them have the capacity for substantial improvement; many do not.

Every leadership program should be evaluated to determine whether it

is viable. The nine criteria used throughout this report—covering program purpose, curriculum content and balance, admission and graduation standards, faculty, research, resources, and degrees offered—provide a potential template for such evaluation.

In turn, it is the responsibility of leadership programs and education schools, their home universities, and the states to ensure that all leadership programs achieve minimum acceptable standards in each area. If leadership programs and education schools fail to act, then universities must step in. If universities do not carry out this assignment, then the states have the responsibility to do so.

Universities, under the leadership of their presidents and, if necessary, their boards of trustees, have the responsibility for initiating reviews of the leadership programs on their campuses and acting on the results. Ultimately, though, the states have the power to bring about needed changes themselves by requiring the reauthorization of all of the educational leadership programs within their borders.<sup>50</sup>

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## Redesign Educational Leadership Programs

**RECOMMENDATION FOUR:**  
**The current grab bag of courses that constitutes preparation for a career in educational leadership must give way to a relevant and challenging curriculum designed to prepare effective school leaders. A new degree, the Master's in Educational Administration, should be developed.**

Educational administration programs need to equip graduates with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead today's schools, not yesterday's. Toward this end, it is recommended that the program for aspirants to school leadership positions should be the educational equivalent of an M.B.A., the traditional two-year master's of business administration degree. It might be called an M.E.A., master's of educational administration, consisting of both basic courses in management (e.g. finance, human resources, organizational leadership and change, educational technology, leading in turbulent times, entrepreneurship, and negotiation) and education (e.g. school leadership, child development, instructional design, assessment, faculty development, school law and

policy, school budgeting, and politics and governance). The faculty would consist of academics and practitioners of high quality; the curriculum would blend the practical and theoretical, clinical experiences with classroom instruction; and teaching would make extensive use of active learning pedagogies such as mentoring, case studies, and simulations. The M.E.A., rigorously combining the necessary education subject matter and business/leadership education, should become the terminal degree needed by an administrator to rise through the ranks.

Subsequent professional development would come in the form of short-term programs geared to an administrator's career stage, the needs of his or her school or school system, and developments in the field. These programs would be targeted at highly specific issues/needs and would award certificates rather than degrees. For instance, rather than enrolling in a traditional doctoral program, a school administrator hoping to move from a principalship to a superintendency might sign up for a nine-month program combining classroom instruction and an apprenticeship, followed by mentoring once on the job.

**The program for aspirants to school leadership positions should be the educational equivalent of an M.B.A. It might be called an M.E.A., master's of educational administration.**

**RECOMMENDATION FIVE:****The doctor of education degree (Ed.D.) in school leadership should be eliminated.**

Today, it is a watered-down doctorate that diminishes the field of educational administration and provides a back door for weak education schools to gain doctoral granting authority.

An Ed.D. is unnecessary for any job in school administration and creates a meaningless and burdensome obstacle to people who want to enter senior levels of school leadership. It encourages school districts to expect superintendent candidates to have doctorates and affluent public schools to hire principals with “Dr.” in front of their names. Neither position requires the skills and knowledge associated with doctoral study; what is desired is the status of the degree. Credentials have come to overshadow competence.

**RECOMMENDATION SIX:****The doctor of philosophy degree (Ph.D.) in school leadership should be reserved for preparing researchers.**

The current ambiguity in the Ph.D.’s meaning—the degree is being awarded both to practitioners and scholars—should be eliminated by redefining this doctorate as a rigorous research degree reserved exclusively for the very small number

of students planning on careers as scholars of school leadership.

The number of students seeking doctorates in educational administration would then plummet, and the number of educational administration programs offering the doctorate could be and should be substantially reduced. As indicated earlier, education schools at doctoral intensive universities and masters granting colleges and universities I and II lack the faculty resources to offer an adequate doctorate. As a class, only schools of education at doctoral extensive universities (the nation’s most research-oriented universities) have this capacity, which means only these schools should grant an educational administration Ph.D. This would entail roughly a 55 percent reduction in the number of educational administration programs awarding doctorates. However, this would still leave far too many programs (138), by a factor of at least two, for the student population who would want or need preparation as scholars (estimated at less than 350 doctoral recipients annually).<sup>51</sup> (See Table 1.) Further reductions could occur by attrition.

In contrast to practitioner programs, it is likely that strong programs for researchers would drive out weak ones, as students aspiring to enter the professoriate would find their chances improved by attending

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**Education schools and their leaders continue to deny there are problems and resist improvement. More than eight out of 10 education school deans with programs to educate principals and superintendents rated them as good to excellent.**

the most eminent programs staffed by the most renowned faculty. Or reduction could occur by design. States can hasten the process by reviewing and reauthorizing programs in educational administration to eliminate the weakest of the breed. A number of states, including Mississippi, New York, and North Carolina, have already initiated such review processes.

### **Conclusion**

It is doubtful that the findings of this study will surprise education schools or their leadership programs. Both know there are fundamental weaknesses in the field. They have heard impassioned calls for change in the past both from within and outside the leadership profession.

Yet education schools and their leaders continue to deny problems and resist improvement. In this study, more than eight out of 10 education school deans with programs to educate principals (86 percent) and superintendents (83 percent) rated them as good to excellent (Deans Study).

Time is running out. Education schools and their leadership programs are in desperate straits. Because the programs have failed to establish quality controls, states have developed alternative routes for people to enter school leadership careers, and major school systems

have embraced them. Because traditional educational administration programs have not prepared school leaders for their jobs, new providers have sprung up to compete with them. Because they have failed to embrace practice and practitioners, their standing has fallen, and school systems have created their own leadership programs. All of these changes are likely to accelerate.

The process of replacing university-based educational leadership programs is well under way. In fact, the programs have done all they possibly could to encourage it. The question is whether education schools and their leadership programs will attempt the reforms necessary to curb current trends.

The irony is that university-based leadership programs actually have inherent advantages over the alternatives. As part of the academy, they bring connections with key fields ranging from teacher education and child development to business and law. They have relationships of long standing with school systems and their leaders. In addition, such an extraordinary number of school administrators are needed in the years ahead that it is unrealistic to expect alternative programs to fill the gap. Aside from being unproven, they are too few and too small.

Nonetheless, if the academy proves unwilling or unable to clean

its own house, replacing inadequate programs cannot be permitted to occur by slow attrition over many years. Beyond program reviews, states have the ability to fund and/or encourage the opening of additional alternative programs and extensions of alternative routes to careers in school leadership, and to create statewide versions of England's National College for School Leadership. It would, however, be a mistake to substitute one unsuccessful method of preparing school leaders with another. The

efficacy of alternative approaches must be systematically tested. Until this is done, they can be considered no more than the fad du jour in a three-decade-long school reform movement.

The point is this. It would be best if education schools and their educational administration programs took the lead in bringing about improvement. But the clock is ticking, and it would be a grave disservice to our children and schools if the failings of the field remained unaddressed.

**If the academy proves unwilling or unable to clean its own house, replacing inadequate programs cannot be permitted to occur by slow attrition over many years.**



## DATA SOURCES

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A number of studies were conducted in the course of this research. All of the heads (deans, chairs, and directors) of U.S. education schools and departments were surveyed (53 percent responded) regarding their school's demographics and practices, as well as their personal experiences and attitudes regarding their own education school and education schools collectively (Deans Survey).

A representative sample of 5,469 education school faculty members were surveyed (40 percent responded) regarding their work, as well as their experiences and attitudes regarding their own education school and education schools generally (Faculty Survey). A representative sample of 15,468 education school alumni who received degrees from the baccalaureate to the doctorate in 1995 and 2000 were also surveyed (34 percent responded) regarding their careers, their experiences in the schools that had awarded their degrees, and their attitudes toward education schools generally (Alumni Survey).

Finally, 1,800 principals were surveyed (41 percent responded) regarding their own education, the education of the people they have hired, and their attitudes toward education schools generally (Principals Survey).

Unlike the Deans Survey, which included all of the education school heads, the Faculty, Principals, and Alumni Surveys used randomly chosen samples of the population. The faculty and alumni samples were stratified by Carnegie type, region of the country, and institutional size. The Principals Survey was stratified by geographic region and school type. The responses were either representative or, when necessary, weighted to be representative of the relevant population.<sup>52</sup> A technical manual on the surveys conducted by Synovate, with whom we contracted, is available.

The research also included case studies of 28 schools and departments of education. Teams of academics and journalists conducted site visits at each school for the purpose of going beyond the survey data to paint a more in-depth portrait of the education school. They spent several days on each campus, with the length of their stay dictated by the size and complexity of the school. At each school, they studied its history, mission, programs, admissions and graduation requirements, funding, and the characteristics of the student body, staff, and administration. Particular attention was given to programs in teacher education,

educational administration, and research preparation. The choice of schools was designed to reflect the diversity of the nation's education schools by region, control, religion, race, gender, and Carnegie type. The participating schools were promised anonymity and those interviewed were promised confidentiality. Only in instances of exemplary practice is the name of any institution mentioned.

There were also inventories made of the different programs offered and the types of doctoral degrees awarded by education schools, again stratified by Carnegie type. A random sample of doctoral dissertation abstracts and descriptive characteristics for both Ph.D.'s and Ed.D's. were

examined. A demographic profile of education schools was produced by combining the data collected in the Deans Survey with data collected by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (Demographic Study). Databases were used from the College Board, Graduate Record Examination, Educational Testing Service, National Center for Education Statistics, American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, National Council for the Advancement of Teacher Education, ProQuest Digital Dissertations (the University of Michigan dissertation archive), and the annual CIRP Freshman Survey conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA.

## A DESCRIPTION *of the* NATION'S EDUCATION SCHOOLS *by* CARNEGIE TYPE

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The nation's education schools can be sorted into three broad Carnegie classes: those located at baccalaureate degree granting institutions; those found at colleges awarding the master's degree; and those housed at research universities granting the doctorate. Within each of these classes, the Carnegie typology identifies two types of institutions. Here's how it works:

### **Education Schools and Departments in Baccalaureate Granting Colleges**

A third of the nation's "schools of education," more accurately described as education departments at these institutions, are found at baccalaureate degree granting colleges. The 401 departments located at these schools are primarily engaged in undergraduate education, though slightly more than a quarter (28 percent) offer relatively small graduate programs, usually in teaching. The departments collectively graduate only 13 percent of the nation's teachers prepared in undergraduate programs, four percent of the teachers educated in graduate programs, and one percent of the country's school administrators. Their budgets average \$594,000 per year. Education departments at these schools focus more on teaching than research. Course loads are heavy and publication rates and research funding are low.<sup>53</sup>

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classification divides baccalaureate colleges into two distinct types of institutions—liberal arts colleges, institutions awarding at least half their degrees in the liberal arts, and baccalaureate general colleges, more broad-gauged institutions offering less than half their degrees in the liberal arts.<sup>54</sup> Our data show that based on SAT scores, liberal arts colleges, constituting one-third of the education departments at baccalaureate institutions, are more selective in student admissions than baccalaureate general institutions. They are more academically oriented and more rooted in the arts and science tradition, and a greater proportion of their faculty members hold Ph.D.'s. The baccalaureate general colleges are more concerned

with practice and view themselves to a greater extent as professional schools.

### **Education Schools at Masters Granting Universities**

In contrast to baccalaureate colleges, education schools at masters granting universities tend to be larger. There are 562 schools and departments of education, and they constitute 47 percent of the nation's education schools. They graduate 54 percent of teachers prepared as undergraduates, 62 percent of teachers educated at the graduate level, and 57 percent of school administrators earning degrees each year.

The reason for the enormous impact of this sector is not that each school produces so many graduates, but that there are so many schools. The typical master's degree granting school of education produces slightly more than 200 teachers and administrators each year. Nearly all of the education schools and departments at these universities (96 percent) offer undergraduate degrees/programs in education. More than nine out of ten (92 percent) award master's degrees, and 10 percent grant doctoral degrees.

As with the baccalaureate colleges, the Carnegie Foundation divides masters granting universities into two categories. The first is Masters Colleges and Universities I

(MI) and the second is Masters Colleges and Universities II (MII).

The MI's, predominantly regional public universities, award 40 or more master's degrees per year across three or more disciplines, while the MII's, commonly private, tuition dependent colleges, grant a minimum of 20 master's degrees without regard to field.<sup>55</sup> The MI's have on average more than twice as many full-time and part-time undergraduates,<sup>56</sup> more than six times as many full-time graduate students,<sup>57</sup> and more than three times as many part-time graduate students.<sup>58</sup> Their budgets mirror the size differential. While both MI's and MII's are defined as offering a wide range of undergraduate programs and graduate education up through the master's degree, their education schools differ substantially in the scope of their programs.

Neither can be regarded as selective in admissions, as measured by SAT scores. The Masters II colleges are a tiny sector of the education school world, consisting of 95 schools of education that together are just slightly ahead of liberal arts colleges in degree production. In contrast, Masters I schools of education account for 467 education schools and graduate 49 percent of teachers prepared in undergraduate schools, 60 percent of teachers prepared in graduate schools, and

55 percent of school administrators receiving degrees each year. They have a stronger scholarly orientation than the MII's, but are weaker in teaching. The MI is thus in an unenviable position: It is weaker in teaching than the best of the MII and baccalaureate schools, and weaker in research than the research universities.

### **Education Schools at Doctoral Granting Universities**

The final category of education school is located at research universities. There are 228 doctoral granting schools of education, a smaller number than either baccalaureate or masters institutions. But these schools graduate a larger number of teachers, school administrators, and researchers per capita than the other Carnegie types. They produce 33 percent of the teachers prepared at the baccalaureate level, 34 percent of the teachers educated in graduate schools, 42 percent of degrees awarded to school administrators, and 97 percent of all the doctorates granted in education. The typical doctoral institution in our survey produced 263 undergraduate teachers, 69 graduate teachers, 47 school administrators, and 24 holders of doctorates.

Of the three sectors, doctoral

granting schools place the greatest emphasis on graduate education, with graduate student headcounts slightly exceeding undergraduate numbers. They are also more research oriented than any of their peers—their faculty members have the most substantial publication records, receive the most extramural funding, have the highest proportion of doctorates, and are least likely to be concerned with practice. Doctoral granting education schools offer the greatest number of programs in the broadest range of fields and have the largest annual budgets of all education schools.

As with masters and baccalaureate institutions, there are two distinct types of doctoral school. One is what the Carnegie Foundation terms Doctoral/Research Extensive Universities (DRE), which award 50 or more doctoral degrees per year in at least 15 disciplines. The other is termed Doctoral/Research Intensive Universities (DRI), schools that grant annually at least 10 doctoral degrees across three disciplines or at least 20 doctorates overall, regardless of field.<sup>59</sup> Doctoral extensives, which number 138 schools of education, make up 61 percent of this sector.

Both types of school are selective in admissions, though the DRE's are the most selective education schools in the nation as measured by SAT and GRE scores. Both offer

**Doctoral granting education schools offer the greatest number of programs in the broadest range of fields and have the largest annual budgets.**

undergraduate education programs, although not universally. Eighteen percent of the doctoral extensives and five percent of the doctoral intensives offer strictly graduate programs in education.

The master's degree in education is, however, nearly universal at both. It is awarded at 95 percent of the DRE's and 98 percent of the DRI's. They also account for the bulk of education doctorates, with 95 percent of the doctoral extensives and 82 percent of the doctoral intensives awarding the degree.

Doctoral extensive schools of education are in a class by themselves when it comes to research. They have the highest publication rates, the most grant dollars for research, and the highest proportion of graduate students and of faculty with Ph.D.'s.<sup>60</sup> They are the only type of education school that stresses publication in hiring faculty.<sup>61</sup>

## Cautions

In sum, we used the Carnegie Foundation classification to identify six different types of school of education—baccalaureate general colleges, baccalaureate liberal arts colleges, masters granting colleges and universities I, masters granting colleges and universities II, doctoral intensive universities, and doctoral extensive universities. This study employed the typology throughout as a vehicle for capturing the commonality and diversity among the nation's schools of education.

The reader is offered two cautions in this regard. First, the classes should be viewed as composites, meaning no school of education in any of the six categories can be expected to mirror all of the characteristics of the schools in its class. Second, neither the strengths nor the weaknesses discovered in the course of this research regarding a specific class of education school can be ascribed to any particular school within the class.

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This report is the product of hard work by many people. By far the most important is Alvin Sanoff, who spent four years working on this study. My job at Teachers College made it impossible for me to oversee research on a daily basis. Al did that. He was my partner in planning the study. He served as its project manager. He carried out the research design, directed data collection, identified and secured access to potential case study schools, visited schools, assembled and supervised project personnel, oversaw the writing of the case studies, worked with a host of sub-contractors, and much more. He also reviewed this manuscript; suggested edits, sometimes significant ones, to a sensitive author; and was not shy about arguing with me when we disagreed.

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*Arthur Levine*  
New York City



# NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> James L. Dodd and Edward P. Keller, *The K-8 Principal in 1998, A Ten-year study* (Alexandria, Va: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Twelve hundred and six is the number of schools, colleges, and departments of education identified in this study. Slightly higher and lower numbers appear in the literature, which may be a consequence of the openings and closings of teacher education programs as well as differing definitions of what constitutes a program. In this study, the universe of schools, colleges, and departments of education is referred to as “education schools” and “schools of education.”

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2003* (Washington, DC: NCES, 2005). (NCES 2005025). (See also [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d03/list\\_tables.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d03/list_tables.asp).)

<sup>4</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, Washington D.C., 2005 (NCES 2005-025), Tables 80 and 84. (See also [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d03/list\\_tables.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d03/list_tables.asp).) This includes all school and district level administrators, not just the principals and superintendents.

<sup>5</sup> This report uses the terms educational administration, educational leadership, and school leadership interchangeably.

<sup>6</sup> The nine criteria are the elements, which are commonly used in program evaluation in higher education- purpose, students, staffing, curriculum, assessment, and resources. Scholarship is included because it is a staple of graduate education and the means by which fields of study like leadership advance.

<sup>7</sup> Bruce S. Cooper and William L. Boyd, “The Evolution of Training for School Administrators,” in *Leaders for America’s Schools: The Report and Papers of the*

*Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration*; Daniel E Griffiths, Robert T. Stout, and Patrick Forsyth (editors), (Berkeley, Ca: McCutchan, 1988), pp. 251-272, p. 254. Martha M. McCarthy, “The Evolution of Educational Leadership Preparation Programs,” in *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration, Second Edition*; Joseph Murphy and Karen Seashore Louis (editors), (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), pp.119-139, p. 119. There are competing claims about when the first courses were taught and the first books were written. It is not important that they be resolved for this volume, but simply that an approximate time frame be established for the development of the field of educational administration.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur G. Powell, “University Schools of Education in the Twentieth Century,” *Peabody Journal of Education*, v. 54, n. 1, October 1976, pp. 3-20, p.6.

<sup>9</sup> These degrees were granted at Teachers College to Ellwood Cubberly, who went on to become dean of Stanford’s school of education, and George Strayer, who subsequently headed the educational administration program at his alma mater for 33 years. This was surely an example of being fruitful and multiplying.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Murphy, “Preparation for the School Principalship: the United States Story,” *School Leadership and Management*, v. 18, n. 3, 1998, pp. 359-372, p.362.

<sup>11</sup> Powell, pp. 11-15.

<sup>12</sup> Powell, p.14

<sup>13</sup> National Commission on Excellence in Education; *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*; Report to the Nation and Secretary of Education (Washington DC: US Department of Education, April 1983).

<sup>14</sup> National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, “Leaders for America’s Schools: The Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration.” In Griffiths, Stout, and Forsyth, 1988, p.20.

<sup>15</sup> James W. Guthrie and Ted Sanders, “Who Will Lead the Public Schools?” *The New York Times*, January 7, 2001, p. 46. Sanders previously served as acting U.S. Secretary of Education, chief state school officer in three states, and a university president. Guthrie co-wrote perhaps the most important study of education schools in the past half-century G. J. Clifford, & J.W. Guthrie, *Ed School: A brief for professional education*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

<sup>16</sup> Broad Foundation and Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, “Better Leaders for America’s Schools: A Manifesto,” 2003. See [www.edexcellence.net/manifesto/manifesto.html](http://www.edexcellence.net/manifesto/manifesto.html).

<sup>17</sup> Broad Foundation and Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, p. 26.

<sup>18</sup> Broad and Fordham, p.20.

<sup>19</sup> T. B. Hoffer, , L. Selfa, V. Welch, Jr., K. Williams, M. Hess, J. Friedman, S. C. Reyes, K. Webber, and I. Guzman-Barron. 2004. *Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Report 2003*. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center. (See <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/issues/sed-2003.pdf>)

<sup>20</sup> These distinctions among universities are based on the Carnegie typology, which is used throughout this study to differentiate among institutions of higher education and their education schools. This is discussed in the preface and described more fully in Appendix 2.

<sup>21</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, “Table 1.02: Percentage of public school districts with salary schedules and average teacher salary schedules for various levels of earned degree and experience for public school districts with a salary schedule by state,” *School and Staffing Survey, 1999-2000:*

*Overview of the Data for Public, Private, Public Charter and Bureau of Indian Affairs Elementary and Secondary Schools 2002*, (Washington, DC: US Department of Education, 2002) p.10.

<sup>22</sup> In order to protect the identity of interviewees who were promised anonymity, their gender has sometimes been changed in the text.

<sup>23</sup> Eighty-eight percent (650 of 742) of those who responded to the Principal’s Survey had completed or were enrolled in a college or university degree or certification program for principals.

<sup>24</sup> The question gave principals the choice of two answers when asked whether their courses were high quality: yes or no. They invented a third category of in-between by leaving the question blank, with rates varying dramatically from course to course from 15 to 45 percent; typical rates ranged from the mid-teens to the mid-twenties. The same was true of the question asking whether courses were valuable. There was a very close connection between the principals’ perceptions of the quality and the value of classes that they took. Education law was rated the highest quality course (73 percent) and historical and philosophical foundations of education was rated the lowest (33 percent).

<sup>25</sup> In a 2003 survey by Public Agenda, 80 percent of school superintendents and 69 percent of principals agreed with the statement, “The typical leadership program in graduate schools of education is out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s school districts.” Steven Farkas, Jean Johnson, Ann Duffett, with Bet Syat and Jackie Vine, *Rolling Up Their Sleeves: Superintendents and Principals Talk About What’s Needed to Fix Public Schools*, (New York: Public Agenda, 2003) p.31. Principals and alumni were far more positive about the programs in which they had participated than they were about schools of education in general or the effectiveness of the education schools their staff members had attended. This may be simple cognitive dissonance or the NIMBY attitude that prevails

regarding schools: That is, the schools in general are performing poorly, but the local school my children attend is very good. In several instances, principals interviewed described the weaknesses in the skills and knowledge of the people they had hired and criticized the education schools that had “prepared” the staff members. They also spoke positively about their own education school experience. The irony is that in many cases all had attended the same school. Fifty-five percent of the principals responding to our survey rated the principals’ program they had graduated from or were attending very valuable; 38 percent said it was somewhat valuable; and 6 percent said it was not valuable (Principals Survey).

<sup>26</sup> Alumni Survey results were disaggregated and these percentages refer only to educational professionals who identified themselves as administrators.

<sup>27</sup> This includes both on- and off-campus programs. Some site visit schools were reluctant to share information on the exact number of adjunct and full-time faculty members in their off-site programs. They generally said there were more part-timers than full-timers and this was a problem.

<sup>28</sup> Joe Schneider, “The Invisible Faculty within Departments of Educational Administration,” *The AASA Professor*, Spring 2003; v.26, n.1, pp. 3-6.

<sup>29</sup> He went on to say school administrators “can’t go to universities for the help they need. They turn to colleagues in professional associations.” That observation was borne out by a recent study by Alvin Sanoff of principals in two Midwestern urban school systems. They said that professional development within their school systems and informal communication with colleagues are the resources they use most often to keep up with their field. The least used resource: professional development at schools of education.

<sup>30</sup> However, 69 percent of administration alumni rated their own programs’ faculty members from good to excellent in this respect (Alumni Survey). It is noteworthy that alumni rate their own preparation so much more positively than the experiences they have on the job with education schools generally.

<sup>31</sup> It should be remembered that such an addition could extend the length of student programs and require students to take time off from their full-time jobs.

<sup>32</sup> This is based on a March 2004 study of the Web sites of each of the schools in which the dean responded to the Deans Survey. This will be called the Degree Study.

<sup>33</sup> No effort was made to verify this number. It is included in order to maintain the integrity of the quote. The average attrition rate for doctoral students is 40 to 60 percent. Like most fields, educational administration does not systematically collect data on student completion rates. A meta-analysis of doctoral attrition research by Carolyn Bair found three studies of programs at individual research universities with attrition rates of 43, 45, and 61 percent. However, the factors that Bair identified as encouraging attrition are prominent in the field: part-time attendance; full-time jobs; lack of involvement in the activities of the department and program; poor advising; delays related to the job; lack of national reputation of faculty members; and absence of financial support. Caroline Richert Bair, “Doctoral Student Attrition and Persistence: A Meta-Synthesis,” Ph.D. dissertation in department of educational leadership and policy studies, Loyola University, Chicago, January 1999.

<sup>34</sup> Immegart, 1990, p.11; N.J. Boyan; “Follow the Leader: Commentary on Research in Educational Administration,” *Educational Research*, v, 10, n1, February 1981, pp. 6-13, p.7. Murphy and Vriesenga, p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> E. M. Bridges, "Research on the School Administrator: The State of the Art," *Educational Administration Quarterly*, summer 1982; v. 18, n.3; pp. 12-33. D. A. Erickson, "Research on Educational Administration: The State of the Art," *Educational Researcher*, v.8, March 1977; pp. 9-14. G. L. Immegart, "The Study of Educational Administration," in W. G. Hack and R. O. Nystrand (editors), *Educational Administration: the Developing Decades*, (Berkely, Ca: McCutchan, 1977), pp. 298-328. G. L. Immegart, "What Is Truly Missing in Advanced Preparation in Educational Administration?" *Journal of Educational Administration*, 1990, v. 28, n. 3; pp. 5-13. J. Murphy and M. Vriesenga, "Research on Preparation Programs in Educational Administration: An Analysis," UCEA Monograph Series, Columbia, Mo., 2004. C. Miskel, "Research and the Preparation of Educational Administrators," paper presented at the Conference of University Councils for Educational Administration Meeting, Cincinnati, October 1988. The Murphy and Vriesenga monograph discusses this research as well as presenting its own study.

<sup>36</sup> Op cit.

<sup>37</sup> It is important to bear in mind that we do not know the impact of legal or medical curricula on the efficacy of doctors or lawyers either. The difference is that the field of education is expected to be more concerned and knowledgeable about curricula than other professions.

<sup>38</sup> Murphy and Vriesenga, 2004, pp. 28-29.

<sup>39</sup> The American Educational Research Association is the primary association or membership organization for researchers in education, with more than 22,000 members.

<sup>40</sup> Gary Anderson and Franklin Jones, "Knowledge Generation in Educational Administration from the Inside-Out: The Promise and Perils of Site-Based Administrator Research," summary report; American Educational Research Association, Division A News, Winter 2000, p.2. See [www.aera.net/divisions/a/aneews/win00-2d.htm](http://www.aera.net/divisions/a/aneews/win00-2d.htm).

<sup>41</sup> This is a study of the entire education school, not just its faculty in educational leadership.

<sup>42</sup> Please note that the conclusions offered refer to types or classes of education school, not individual schools of education. This does not mean that all research extensive education schools are capable of offering a doctoral degree.

<sup>43</sup> In that year, 11 states had adopted alternative pathways; three more had mechanisms for nontraditional candidates to be approved for administrative jobs; four states had alternative routes for superintendent, but not principal; and one had a route for principals, but not superintendent. Five more states reported that they were in various stages of discussing or acting on alternative routes for administrators, while five other states do not require any certification for superintendent and two more require it for neither superintendent nor principal. Emily Feistritzer, "Certification of Principals and Superintendents in the U.S." (Washington, DC: National Center on Education Information, May, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> [www.wested.org/cs/we/view/pg/12](http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/pg/12)

<sup>45</sup> [www.classacademies.org/new\\_pages/programs/lift/lift\\_home.htm](http://www.classacademies.org/new_pages/programs/lift/lift_home.htm)

<sup>46</sup> [www.kipp.org/SLP/](http://www.kipp.org/SLP/)

<sup>47</sup> [www.broadcenter.org](http://www.broadcenter.org)

<sup>48</sup> [www.bigpicture.org](http://www.bigpicture.org)

<sup>49</sup> Like new providers in the U.S., the National College seeks university affiliations in order for its students to earn credits and degrees for their programs. For more information, see <http://www.ncsl.org.uk/>

<sup>50</sup> States can carry out this assignment independently or with the aid of established accrediting and professional associations. To date, the associations have not proved a potent force in implementing quality standards. Accreditation of leadership programs brings little in the way of rewards and the professional associations have had even less impact. The most promising avenue is the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), which was established in 1988 on the recommendation of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration. Among other activities, the board recommended quality standards for educational administration programs such as having at least five full-time faculty members, student-faculty ratios comparable to other professional graduate schools, and greater differentiation between the Ed.D. and Ph.D. It also developed standards to be used in accrediting leadership programs; the standards were implemented in 1997 by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the largest accreditation association in teacher education and school leadership. Another initiative was creating a consortium of the major school leadership organizations to draft national licensure standards for school administrators. The resulting Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards have been adopted by 40 states, many of which require university leadership programs to align themselves with the standards. The Educational Testing Service has translated the standards into a performance-based licensure assessment tool, which 13 states have adopted. (Joseph Murphy, “Restructuring Educational Leadership: The ISLLC Standards Ten Years Out,” National Policy Board for Educational Administration, September 2003, p. 19.)

It should be noted that many of

these changes have had little impact on educational leadership programs. We were regularly told by administrators that the school leadership program they headed had recently been, or was in the process of being, realigned to meet ISLLC standards. When asked what changed as a consequence, the answers almost always referred to procedural or minimally substantive matters. The letter, not the spirit, of the ISLLC standards were being observed. The NPBEA has the potential to be a much more powerful force in raising the quality of leadership education.

<sup>51</sup> In 2002 and 2003, twenty-three hundred doctorates in educational administration were awarded (<http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/issues/sed-2003.pdf> and <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/issues/sed-2002.pdf>). Fewer than 15 percent of the recipients are interested in academic or research careers. This would translate into 345 students who might be interested in a doctorate designed to prepare them as scholars of educational administration.

<sup>52</sup> The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has created a classification for institutions of higher education that divides the universe of colleges and universities into eight primary classes—doctoral extensive universities, doctoral intensive universities, masters granting universities I, masters granting universities II, baccalaureate general colleges, baccalaureate liberal arts colleges, associate granting colleges, and specialized institutions.

<sup>53</sup> Faculty teach an average of seven classes per year (Demographic Study). In the prior two years, less than one in four (24 percent) had published an article and about one in 10 had authored a book. (Faculty Survey). Faculty receive little external research funding—on average the entire department gets only \$41,000 a year in grant support (Demographic Study).

<sup>54</sup> Alexander C. McCormick, *The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education: 2000 Edition*. (Menlo Park, Ca: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2001), p. 1

<sup>55</sup> McCormick, p. 1

<sup>56</sup> The differences are 538 versus 262 full-time students and 89 versus 35 part-time students (Demographic Study).

<sup>57</sup> MI's enroll an average of 138 full-time graduate students versus 21 at MII's.

<sup>58</sup> MI's have an average of 346 part-time graduate students versus 101 at MII's.

<sup>59</sup> McCormick, p. 1

<sup>60</sup> Eight out of ten DRE (80%) and more than six out of ten DRI professors (63%) have published articles in the past two years. Additionally, 31 percent of doctoral extensive and 22 percent of doctoral intensive faculty have also published books during that period (Faculty Survey). The doctoral intensives' publication record for articles is slightly ahead of that of the MI's and right in between that of the MI's and DRE's for books. On average, DRE's raise slightly more than \$4 million a year for research in education, which is more than two and a half times as much as the DRI's (\$1.469 million). Sixty percent of the DRE faculty received external research funding in the prior two years versus 35 percent of the DRI professors. External funding rates for masters I granting faculty are slightly lower than that for DRI professors (Faculty Survey).

<sup>61</sup> According to faculty, their hiring criteria focus on the quantity and quality of a candidate's publications as the top two criteria. In contrast, doctoral intensive faculty rank ability to teach and being up to date in their field as first and second in importance, with the quality of publications finishing a distant eighth (Faculty Survey).

<sup>62</sup> Joe Aguerrebere has since left the Ford Foundation and now heads the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.



