Strengthening the Bench of Principals:
Evidence and Examples from Universities, Districts and States

National webinar
June 6, 2022
1-2:15 p.m. EDT
Housekeeping

• This webinar is being recorded
• The recording and slides will be posted by Wednesday at wallacefoundation.org
• To ask a question, use the Q & A function
• The chat function has been disabled for this webinar
• For technical help, please e-mail events@thehatchergroup.com
Today’s agenda

• Research presentation
  • Learning Policy Institute – *Developing Effective Principals: What Kind of Learning Matters?*
  • RAND – *Redesigning University Principal Preparation Programs: A Systemic Approach for Change and Sustainability*

• Panel discussion
  • **Peter Zamora**, Council of Chief State School Officers
  • **Dan Domenech**, AASA, the School Superintendents Association
  • **Daniel Reyes-Guerra**, Florida Atlantic University
  • **Rashaunda Tyson**, Hartford Public Schools, CT

• Q & A
Developing Effective Principals

What Kind of Learning Matters?

Marjorie Wechsler and Stephanie Levin

June 6, 2022
Principals matter
## Research questions and methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Primary method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the <strong>features and outcomes</strong> of high-quality principal learning?</td>
<td>Research synthesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do principals have <strong>access</strong> to high-quality learning opportunities?</td>
<td>Survey analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the role of <strong>policy</strong> in shaping principal learning?</td>
<td>Policy scan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comprehensive principal preparation and professional development are positively associated with benefits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of effectiveness</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduation rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE
Content

▷ Instruction
▷ School improvement
▷ School conditions
▷ Staff development
▷ Meeting students’ needs
Strategies

- Applied learning
- Internships
- Coaching and mentoring
- Cohorts and networks
Access to important content in preparation is high, nationally

- Over two-thirds of principals had access to all important content areas
  - Instructional leadership
  - Leading and managing school improvement
  - Shaping teaching and learning conditions
  - Developing people
  - Meeting the needs of learners

Source: National Principal Survey
Access to key content in preparation is increasing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Certified over 10 Years Ago</th>
<th>Certified in the Past 10 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selecting effective curriculum strategies and materials</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using student and school data to inform continuous school improvement</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a school environment that uses discipline for restorative purposes</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting and retaining teachers and other staff</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting the needs of English Learners</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Principal Survey
Too few principals report access to high-leverage learning opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experienced internships with administrative responsibilities and coaching (preparation)</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced peer observation 3 or more times in the previous 3 years (professional development)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in a principal network 3 or more times in the previous 3 years (professional development)</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Principal Survey
Access differs by school poverty level

- **Leading a schoolwide change process to improve student achievement**
  - High-Poverty Schools: 75%
  - Low-Poverty Schools: 89%

- **Creating collegial and collaborative work environments**
  - High-Poverty Schools: 71%
  - Low-Poverty Schools: 87%

- **Creating a school environment that uses discipline for restorative purposes**
  - High-Poverty Schools: 55%
  - Low-Poverty Schools: 69%

- **Redesigning the school’s organization and structure to support deeper learning**
  - High-Poverty Schools: 58%
  - Low-Poverty Schools: 80%

- **Designing professional learning opportunities for teachers and other staff**
  - High-Poverty Schools: 69%
  - Low-Poverty Schools: 84%

Source: National Principal Survey
Policies can support the quality of principal learning and access to it.
Policy changes appear to influence principals’ access to learning about key topics...

(California: before & after reforms)

![Bar chart showing the percentage of All Principals and Recent Completers for different roles and responsibilities.](chart)

Source: California Principal Survey
... and the extent to which principals feel well-prepared

(California: before & after reforms)

Source: California Principal Survey
Stronger program approval requirements in Illinois produced positive changes in preparation programs

New requirements:
- Program-district partnerships
- Rigorous selection
- Alignment with standards
- Yearlong internship
- Competency-based assessments

Led to positive changes:
- Stronger partnerships
- Shift from quantity to quality in recruitment and enrollment
- Revamped curriculum
- Greater attention to diversity
- More meaningful internships
- Focus on continuous improvement
States generally do not legislate high-leverage policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program approval criteria</th>
<th>Principal licensure criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Proactive candidate recruitment &amp; selection*</td>
<td>• Experience and education requirements*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clinically-rich internships*</td>
<td>• Assessment including portfolio review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong IHE-district partnerships*</td>
<td>• License renewal with continuing education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regular state oversight with feedback*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use of school leadership standards</td>
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</table>

* = high leverage

Yet...

- Only two states met criteria for all 5 high-leverage policies
- 11 states did not meet any
- State policies are more likely to focus on principal licensure than higher-leverage program approval

Source: Anderson & Reynolds (2015)
Implications for policy and research

- Develop and better use state licensing and program approval standards
- Invest in a statewide infrastructure
- Encourage greater attention to equity
- Build local pipelines
- Invest in methodologically strong research about principal learning
Developing Effective Principals

What Kind of Learning Matters?

Linda Darling-Hammond, Marjorie E. Wechsler, Stephanie Levin, Melanie Leung-Gagné, and Steve Tozer

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE

Wallace

MAY 2022
THE UNIVERSITY PRINCIPAL PREPARATION INITIATIVE (UPPI)

A SYSTEMIC APPROACH FOR CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Rebecca Herman, Susan M. Gates, and Elaine Lin Wang

June 6, 2022
UPPI leveraged partnerships around program improvement
UPPI launched in 2016

Seven universities and their partners implemented the initiative:

- San Diego State University (SDSU)
- Albany State University (ASU)
- Florida Atlantic University (FAU)
- North Carolina State University (NC State)
- Western Kentucky University (WKU)
- University of Connecticut (UCONN)
- Virginia State University (VSU)
UPPI Study Reports

2018
Year 1 of program redesign

2020
The state role in promoting principal quality

2022
Feasibility, strategies, and interplay between universities, district and states

Briefs for district, state and university leaders
Final report data

Over 630 data collection activities

Biennial Site Visits from 2017 to 2021*
• Interviews
• Focus groups
• Observation of UPPI Leadership Team meetings
• Collection of documents

Regular Check-ins April 2017 to December 2020
• Project director and district leads

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, site visits were conducted virtually Spring 2020-Spring 2021, and with reduced data collection activities Spring and Fall 2020.
Preview of key findings

1. UPPI teams improved the coherence of the programs

2. The universities used partnerships and supports to conceptualize and carry out program changes

3. Partners took the UPPI test-bed strategies beyond the UPPI program
UPPI teams **improved the coherence** of the programs

1. UPPI teams **improved the coherence** of the programs

2. The universities used **partnerships and supports to conceptualize and carry out changes** to the programs

3. Partners took the UPPI test-bed strategies **beyond the UPPI program**
Universities improved program coherence

• Each site used an **overarching framework** to guide curriculum redesign

• Each used a **set course sequence** to support principal candidates’ learning

• Each aligned instructional programs to **national standards and state requirements**

• **Clinical components** were strengthened, personalized and **aligned with evidence-based features** of successful principal preparation programs
Programs engaged with districts to make recruiting more collaborative and targeted

• Greater district involvement in **nominating and selecting applicants**

• **Targeted recruitment** to attract candidates with specific qualifications

• **More performance-based tasks** in the application and selection processes
UPPI programs strengthened the use of cohorts

- Cohorts supported program coherence and **helped candidates succeed** on milestone and anchor assessments and likely in their future roles

- Candidates **developed a peer support network** to sustain them after the program
The universities used **partnerships and supports to conceptualize and carry out changes** to the programs.

UPPI teams **improved the coherence of the programs**.

Partners took the UPPI test-bed strategies **beyond the UPPI program**.
Four collaborative partners played active roles in all stages of the redesign process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Mentor Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managed overall redesign</td>
<td>Led development of district Leader Tracking Systems</td>
<td>Policy guidance and convened programs statewide</td>
<td>Provided technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Led steering groups and most working groups</td>
<td>Served on steering and working groups</td>
<td>Served on steering and some working groups</td>
<td>Served on steering and working groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Program self-assessments and logic model development helped the teams work together, kept the process on track.

- The **Quality Measures (QM) self-assessment** helped programs identify gaps and track progress in addressing them.

- **Common vision, activities and tools** helped each team build and revise their frameworks.

- **Mentor programs** supported UPPI redesign, according to the needs of the university and its stage in the redesign.
There was **no single way to sequence** the redesign work
Key features were crucial to successful implementation

• **Instructors with a deep understanding of and commitment to the program** in place prior to implementation

• **Coordination meetings and training**, and other steps

• **Program coordinators or cohort directors to facilitate implementation**, especially for clinical elements
Continuous improvement was built into the redesign and implementation processes

• Sites recognized that redesign was not a “one-and-done” process

• Intentionally collecting and using multiple forms of data to guide improvement

• Data helped improve course sequencing and reduce redundancies in the curriculum

• Teams took steps to institutionalize the redesign features as well as the partnership and process of continuous improvement:
  • Hard funding for new program positions
  • Shared – not individual – ownership of the curriculum
  • External advisory groups and internal processes
  • Documentation
Leader tracking systems (LTS) helped both districts and universities in five ways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of Leader Tracking Systems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation program continuous improvement</td>
</tr>
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Leader Tracking Systems drew on 10 sources of data including school characteristics, candidate demographics, program quality and graduate placement.
UPPI teams improved the coherence of the programs.

The universities used partnerships and supports to conceptualize and carry out changes to the programs.

Partners took the UPPI test-bed strategies beyond the UPPI program.
Universities expanded upon lessons learned

- Universities scaled up their redesigned programs by offering additional districts partnership opportunities.

- They used the revised curriculum to develop new programs for other stages of the pathway – teacher leaders, recent program graduates or principal supervisors.
Districts strengthened their own principal supports

- **Partner districts revised** district leader standards, principal and AP evaluation and job descriptions to align with UPPI program content

- **Partner districts created new programs or professional development opportunities** for district staff aligned with UPPI program content
States improved policy and disseminated lessons statewide

- UPPI states **continued to improve principal preparation policy** statewide, using seven policy levers, including:
  - PD opportunities for aspiring principals, principals, faculty, clinical coaches, mentor principals
  - New licensure requirements
  - Applying updated standards to professional learning and principal evaluation

- States also **convened other universities and districts** to share lessons
Lessons Learned

1. UPPI teams improved the coherence of the programs

2. The universities used partnerships and supports to conceptualize and carry out program changes

3. Partners took the UPPI test-bed strategies beyond the UPPI program
There are **viable strategies** to address common challenges

**Time to carry out the redesign work**

- Buy out faculty time
- Meet at non-traditional times
- Embed the district work in district strategic plans

**Turnover at all levels**

- Onboarding
- Redundant staffing and cross-training
- Documentation

**New model for faculty sharing courses**

- Ownership through collaborative development
- Professional learning for faculty
- Shift MA courses to adjuncts and PhD to tenure-track faculty
UPPI provides a model for collaboratively redesigning university principal preparation programs, with space for tailoring to context

• By partnering with districts, state agencies, and mentor programs — universities can redesign their preparation programs to **reflect the best available evidence**

• Redesign required **collaborative partnerships**; programs are part of a larger system

• Developing a **clear and ambitious vision** is critical

• **States strengthened policies** supporting principals, and shared lessons broadly

• Teams balanced common objectives and structure with **flexibility**
THANK YOU
Universities, districts and states all matter in preparing and supporting effective principals

• We’ve learned what content and learning approaches are most important, and opportunities for principal learning have improved over the decade
  • But *access to high-quality principal learning remains inconsistent*, varying by state and school poverty level, according to the LPI synthesis

• States and districts can take action to boost access
  • **States**: Update leader standards, program approval, principal licensure, academies, funding internships, attending to equity, spreading effective practices statewide
  • **Districts**: Collaborate on selection and tapping of candidates, mentors and coaches, build principal pipelines, data and networking

• Universities, states and districts that work together *can* redesign their preparation programs to be more coherent and reflect effective practices
  • This approach can be a model for others, RAND found
Thank you!

Learn more:

- ccsso.org
- learningpolicyinstitute.org
- npbea.org
- rand.org
- wallacefoundation.org

To access these resources, click on the cover.

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