

Preparing School Leaders FOR HIGHER STANDARDS

THE "TEACHABILITY" of education leadership is becoming an increasingly urgent concern for states and districts across the country, and improving the preparation of school leaders at a time of tougher academic standards was a dominant topic at the Wallace Funds' Third Annual "Leadership for Learning" Conference in Fairfax, VA in August.

Leaders from 46 districts and 33 states shared early lessons and experiences from a variety of projects aimed at boosting the quality of mentoring for new leaders, improving university-based leadership preparation programs, and establishing richer professional development opportunities for existing leaders including leadership academies sponsored locally or by states.

"We have found that principals who are coming to us do not have the skills needed for an urban setting," said Dr. Rosemary Herpel, executive director of the Cleveland Initiative for Education, a business and philanthropic vehicle which is providing that city's principals a range of professional development opportunities with the help of a Wallace Funds "Ventures in Leadership" grant.

The national push for rigorous academic standards and the historic mandate from Washington that "no child be left behind" have put a higher



Diana Lam, newly named Deputy Chancellor of New York City Schools, talks with school leaders from Providence, RI.

premium than ever on developing instructional expertise in principals and superintendents. Some districts are now striving to become more effective at "growing their own leaders" rather than scouring the country to find qualified principals or superintendents. That means developing better ways to identify promising leaders within their own systems, and providing them with better, more sustained mentoring.

Several conference participants also emphasized the need to establish a climate that demands and supports continuous learning by educational leaders, including superintendents.

Superintendents from 12 districts participating in the Funds' Leadership for Educational Achievement in Districts (LEAD) initiative have attended residential workshops this year at Harvard University's Center for Public Leadership.

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

The "End of the Beginning"

By Mary Lee Fitzgerald,
Director, Education Programs

"...this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."
—Sir Winston Churchill, November 1942

In this special issue of LEADERS Count Report, we offer a sampling of key ideas that emerged from our third annual national conference on education leadership, whose theme was "Leadership for Learning." You'll read about some of the early lessons germinating in our partner districts and states where people are investing their time and careers to help build this new field of leadership to improve student learning.

It's been nearly three years since the Wallace Funds decided to focus on school leadership. We started with a belief: that leadership was a vital yet largely missing element in the reform equation. Teaching remains where the rubber meets the road in learning. But it is *leadership*, or the lack of it, that determines whether or not good ideas or practices in a single classroom spread systemwide so that all children benefit. Unless we find bold new ways to attract, place, train and support the nation's superintendents and



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Ronald A. Heifetz

How To Lead — AND SURVIVE

DRAWING LESSONS FROM the Bible, Freud and even the behavior of gorillas, Ronald A. Heifetz, a renowned expert on leadership from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, says that as social animals, we don't merely want or accept leaders, we crave them—relying on them for our basic sense of direction, protection and order. For school leaders guiding extremely complex systems through a rapidly changing and more demanding environment, leadership of an even higher order is needed, requiring often uncomfortable or unpopular choices that may threaten the leader's own survival.

Heifetz, founding director of the Kennedy School's Center for Public Leadership, is head of a new program, designed with support from the Wallace Funds, to help school superintendents be effective in an increasingly challenging environment. He shared some of his wisdom gained from more than 20 years of study of leadership with participants at the Funds' Third Annual LEADERS Count National Conference.

Gorilla Warfare

We often confuse "leadership" with "authority," Heifetz said. True leadership involves rocking the boat, creating discomfort even among friends and favorites, forcing people to confront painful realities about themselves or their performance. It's difficult, even dangerous, to practice this brand of leadership and still remain in your position of authority.

Speaking in biological terms, Heifetz pointed out that the human craving for authority figures stems from the deepest levels of our genetic makeup and is rooted in our origins as social animals.

To understand this craving, and why we need leaders—not mere authority figures—willing to take dangerous positions to lead schools through challenging times, Heifetz said, consider the gorilla. The gorilla leader is perfectly capable of responding to run-of-the-mill needs—like hunting for food—or familiar threats—like warding off a leopard. That is what Heifetz calls a "technical challenge": the solution is familiar, and is within the leader's existing bag of tricks. Faced, however, with an unfamiliar challenge requiring flexible judgment, such as a human being with a gun, the gorilla leader's authority quickly breaks down, hopelessly unequal to a task that demands leadership beyond just familiar technique. To overcome such new or unfamiliar challenges—the federal mandate on schools that all children must succeed, for example—requires a very different brand of "adaptive" leadership beyond mere authority.

"Authority relationships function beautifully until the environment changes," said Heifetz. Like gorilla clans, businesses, nations and schools that lack adaptive leadership can go extinct in the face of a changing environment. Worse still for the authority figure, societies will likely "kill off" the authority figure who can't uphold his or her end of the contract to preserve the group's sense of direction, security and order. That begins

to explain the high turnover rate of urban superintendents, Heifetz said.

Go Down Moses

Heifetz recounted the Bible story of Moses as a saga of the difficulties and ultimate triumph of adaptive leadership. Moses' "adaptive" challenge was turning a nation of slaves into a free people. It took 40 years, there was no turning back, no easy paths, the truths and lessons were often resisted, and there were golden calves along the way. In the end, they reached the promised land.

In the school context, authority fig-

...We often confuse
"leadership"
with "authority"...

ures are likely to choose the path of least resistance and never confront real change or uncomfortable choices. People want school leaders to reassure them that they "know what they're talking about," and can solve the problems without forcing them to face difficult truths, said Heifetz. School leaders, for example, feel pressure to let parents off the hook for their responsibilities as partners in their children's learning, particularly if the parents are poor or suffer from prejudice. These pressures sometimes lead to work avoidance and rationalizations: "it's the superintendent's fault;" or "it's the state's fault." Or, to phony solutions: forming a committee, or defining a problem narrowly enough to "solve" it easily. To do otherwise is often political suicide, said Heifetz. Yet these phony solutions are the "golden calves" that leaders in schools or elsewhere have to be willing to resist. True leaders move people out of their zone of confidence into a zone of discovery in order to meet adaptive challenges. And they must have the stomach for the conflict and disturbance that this often creates. ❖

Business Expert Tells School Leaders: “GOOD” ISN’T GOOD ENOUGH

JAMES C. COLLINS, whose best-selling books *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* and *Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... And Others Don't* have won an international audience of business admirers, has some messages for education leaders striving to spread high achievement throughout their systems:

Be humble, but ferocious. Get a “charisma bypass.” Keep the faith, but face the facts. And never forget: “good” is the enemy of “great.”

Collins, a former Stanford University professor who also worked for McKinsey & Co. and Hewlett-Packard, achieved acclaim by analyzing how some businesses manage to rise from merely good to long-term greatness. He shared insights from those analyses with more than 400 education leaders gathered last August at the Wallace Funds’ LEADERS Count National Conference.

Greatness is Cumulative...

The shift from good to great may look instantaneous—a soaring stock price in business, or a sudden rise in test scores in a school or district. But the internal shift to true greatness is, in fact, much longer, Collins said. It begins by defining core values, while being willing to change operating practices and strategies, whatever the consequences, if that’s what it takes to achieve the values. Over time, consistency of program, coupled with the discipline to keep going in that direction, is the only route to organizational greatness. Like turning a giant flywheel, Collins said, it takes enormous energy to complete the first rotation. But as you keep turning, the flywheel will turn at an incredible rate, requiring less

exertion with each turn. Because that first turn is so difficult, many organizations give up at the beginning. It takes “disciplined people, disciplined thought, and disciplined action,” Collins said, to get the “flywheel” of sustained greatness up to speed.

First “Who,” Then “What”...

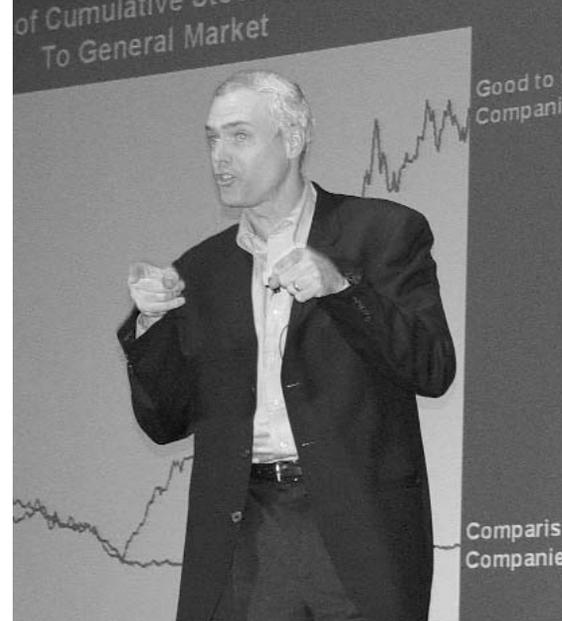
“People are not the most important asset. The *right* people are,” said Collins. For schools interested in reaching greatness, this belief should be integral to the hiring process. For school leaders, it means having the courage and discipline to leave positions vacant rather than hire a wrong person who might inhibit the spread of greatness.

Get a ‘Charisma Bypass’...

It takes a special brand of leadership to make an organization great, said Collins, and charisma is actually a liability, not an asset. Great leaders—President Lincoln was one, he said—are humble, but also possessed of a ferocious single-mindedness in pursuit of their goals. Their governing ambitions are for their organizations rather than themselves. In the case of Lincoln’s leadership during the Civil War, said Collins, “if 600,000 people had to die for the country to live, he would do it.”

Gaze Through Windows, Not At Mirrors...

When asked to explain an organization’s successes, the great leader does not “look in the mirror” and take the credit. Instead, he or she will “point out the window” and credit others, or outside factors, not themselves. But if asked about a failure, great leaders will “look in the mirror,” and blame themselves.



James C. Collins

Embrace the Stockdale Paradox...

Leaders should embrace the “Stockdale Paradox,” so-named by Collins for Admiral James Stockdale who survived eight years as a POW in Vietnam. It means: never confuse the faith that you will prevail with the need to confront the brutal facts of reality. As Stockdale told Collins, the optimists among his fellow prisoners—those who deluded themselves that they would “be home by Christmas”—were often the ones who didn’t survive. For school leaders, applying the Stockdale Paradox means facing up to constraints while remaining certain that they will succeed in their goals.

Greatness in Schools

The lessons about moving from “good” to “great” in business have considerable relevance to schools striving for excellence, but there is a fundamentally different notion of greatness when dealing with kids, Collins said. The measure of greatness is not so much an end product or bottom line, as with business. What matters, he said, is that everyone in the school system, including children, becomes conditioned to making each step the very best they can take. The challenge for education leaders, he said, is to instill in children the ability to recognize greatness within themselves. ❖

Making Leadership A Public Concern

CORY BOOKER, a former Newark, NJ city councilman who recently ran a spirited but unsuccessful campaign for that city's mayoralty, says voters "care passionately about their children's education," even marching on city hall for better schooling. But how do you get those same voters and the news media to care just as deeply about the quality of educational *leadership*? A distinguished panel of veteran education journalists, community leaders and business and

advertising officials debated that difficult challenge at the Wallace Funds' LEADERS Count National Conference.

"It's interesting that the public has given so much attention to the failures of corporate CEOs, but they don't hold school leaders to the same accountability," said Roberts T. Jones, president and CEO of the National Alliance of Business.

Gene I. Maeroff, director of the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media and former education correspon-

dent with *The New York Times*, drew an analogy between school superintendents and baseball managers: "always being fired, then getting rehired elsewhere no matter how badly they perform."

Ultimately, getting the press and public to care about school leadership will require helping them to see the connection between who leads schools and children's learning. "Parents care about their kid's teacher, and rely on them for

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IN TRENTON, NJ:

Everyone A Leader

AS LEADER OF THE TRENTON, NJ Public Schools, one of the Wallace Funds' dozen LEAD districts, superintendent James "Torch" Lytle is making better leadership the focus for district-wide reform, but with a twist: "How do we get everyone, including parents and teachers, to lead? How do we generate inquiry among all employees?"

Before, Lytle told participants at the Funds' national conference in August, "Everything was built around 'satisfying up,' rather than thinking about helping kids. I felt we had perpetuated a way of doing leadership that is defined by pleasing your superior."

The idea, Lytle said, is to redefine leadership itself, and move the district away from a "compliance" mind-set to one in which continuous research and professional development creates a climate of district-wide inquiry, questioning and improvement.

"Taking a questioning stance: this is the role of leaders," he said. Just as important, the goal is to empower everyone, including parents and teachers, to become active question-leaders by arming them with useful information about their schools and their comparative performance.

To create this new culture for inquiry, the district has put together literally dozens of leadership development opportunities for everyone from the board and administrators to teacher-leaders, and even students, drawing on a variety of private and government funding sources. For example,

Trenton is in a partnership program with the Borough of Tower Hamlets in London, coordinated by New American Schools, that will gradually develop into regular exchanges of administrators and other leaders from both communities.

In conjunction with Rider College, the Trenton Area Writing Project provides Trenton teachers with training on incorporating writing across the curriculum and helps teachers design and conduct effective staff development programs. To foster student leadership, the district received a Small Learning Communities Grant from the U.S. Department of Education for student leadership development.

Lauren B. Resnick, director of the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburgh which is developing new models of teaching, learning and leadership in urban districts with support from the Wallace Funds, commented during the conference that instructional leadership is, at its heart, inquiry-based: "The most important feature of a knowledge-based profession is that the people you lead certainly know more about the particular thing you're trying to change than you do. Nevertheless, you can lead them through questioning, sparking debate. But the leader knows more than anyone about the whole. That's what instructional leadership is about." ❖



James Lytle

High Standards Demand

“TRANSFORMATIVE” LEADERSHIP

“Bet on Leadership,” say Gov. Hunt, Under Secretary Eugene Hickok



James B. Hunt, Jr.

A LEGENDARY “education governor” and the current U.S. Under Secretary of Education each told a gathering of more than 400 top education leaders and policy experts last summer that the national push for high standards for all children requires school leaders capable of helping “change America’s idea of what education is all about.”

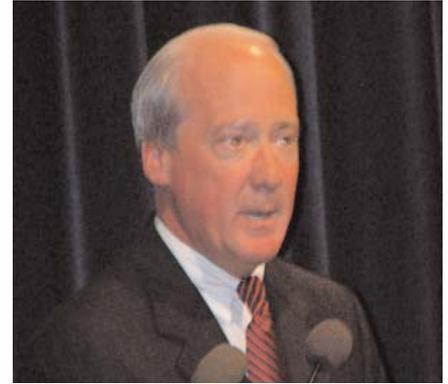
Former North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., one of the foremost pioneers of school renewal during the 1980’s reform era, and Eugene W. Hickok, who spearheaded a sweeping reform agenda as Pennsylvania’s education commissioner and now serves as U.S. Under

Secretary of Education, were keynote speakers at the Wallace Funds’ Third Annual LEADERS Count Conference in August. Both spoke passionately about the need for “transformative” leadership to achieve sustainable reform.

“What we have done for teachers, that same kind of focus, effort, and determination now must go to school leaders,” said Hunt, currently chair of the James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy. Policymakers and others should consider lobbying Congress to add the requirement of a highly effective principal and superintendent to the recently-enacted federal No Child Left Behind Act.

“What we have done for teachers, that same kind of focus, effort and determination, now must go to school leaders.”

— James B. Hunt, Jr.



Eugene W. Hickok

This historic act, Hunt asserted, is “even more important to the future than Homeland Security and the war on terrorism.” The national goal established by this act is a “big, bold, audacious goal—but it is the right goal, and Americans can achieve it.” Educators, administrators and policymakers must make it happen—and school leaders must be at the heart of these efforts, he said.

Hickok, in his remarks, said that No Child Left Behind rests on four basic principles, each with huge implications about what school leaders must be will-

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Making Leadership A Public Concern *continued from page 4*



Cory Booker

information about the schools. They may see the superintendent when he shows up at the Rotary dinner. But the public doesn’t care about the leader unless there’s some problem,” said Ron Wolk, founder of the national education periodical *Education Week*.

Asked to imagine what a public information campaign might look like to galvanize support for better leadership, Peggy Conlon, president and CEO of The Advertising Council, said, “You need to frame the leadership role in terms of direct benefits to parents. The key is

modeling attitudes and behavior for parents and others.”

“The very communities that need public engagement the most also tend to have the very leaders who don’t want the public snooping about,” Conlon added.

Jones expressed hope that the provision in the federal No Child Left Behind Act requiring states and districts to collect and disseminate more revealing data on school and student performance, including by ethnic group, “is exactly the underlying pressure that will mobilize the public.” ❖



Judith Johnson, Superintendent of Peekskill (NY) City School District, with Richard Rothstein, education columnist, *The New York Times*.

The program, directed by the nationally renowned leadership authority Ron Heifetz, (see *Heifetz remarks, p. 2*) was established with Funds' support as a model program to build district leadership skills and provide superintendents with practical tools to help meet the challenges of their complex, politicized environments.

Working with Universities

A major challenge in preparing leaders capable of boosting academic performance involves designing better university-based leadership programs, whose curricula have been frequently criticized for not being grounded enough in practical experience.

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), with Wallace Funds support, has taken an active role in reforming leadership preparation, working with a dozen select universities and state academies in its 16 member states to redesign and evaluate preparation programs so that they focus more squarely on meeting high standards of student achievement. These redesigned programs will feature:

- More emphasis on curriculum and instruction;
- Challenging problem-solving assignments;
- Integrated internship field experiences with expert leaders as coaches;
- Performance assessments aligned with standards; and
- Coherent curriculum based on critical success factors.

Kathy O'Neill of SREB told conference participants that accomplishing these objectives will require overcoming a number of stubborn obstacles within the university culture. Among the early lessons from SREB's efforts:

- Setting standards for leadership preparation programs has not, in and of itself, produced redesign of leadership programs. Meaningful performance measures are also required.
- Curriculum redesign is too seldom discussed by university faculty.
- Internships need to be a central focus of leadership preparation programs, not just "capstone" experiences.
- Effective internships and leadership programs require strong collaboration between universities and districts at the highest levels. Yet the necessary level of conversation and idea-sharing between school superintendents and university presidents rarely takes place. "This has got to get on the president's radar screen," said Gene Bottoms, senior vice president of SREB.

Tracking progress through rigorous data collection is at the heart of SREB's leadership reform efforts, said Bottoms. Early findings by SREB suggest "little or no progress" among member states in tapping new leaders (as opposed to self-selection). But states have made "some progress" in redesigning curriculum standards for leadership preparation programs; creating more practice-based leadership programs in universities: revising state licensure standards based on school and classroom improvement; providing alternative certification for principals; and offering state leadership academies to serve low-performing schools.

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(L-R) Tom Houlihan, Executive Director, Fairfax County Schools; Mary Lee Fitzgerald; former Governor James B. Hunt, Jr.; M. Chris Wallace Funds.



Nkolika Onye, aspiring principal at Classical High School, Providence (RI).

Preparing School Leaders For Higher Standards... *continued from page 6*



Director, CCSSO; Daniel
County (VA) Public
North Carolina
stine DeVita, President,

Nature or Nurture?

Conference participants offered a range of views on an even more basic question that has important implications for the curricula at university preparation programs, as well as districts themselves as they search for high-quality candidates to fill vacant principalships and superintendentcies: are leaders “born,” or “made?” Are the crucial qualities of a good leader innate, or teachable?

“I definitely think leadership can be taught or developed. I would add that everybody has leadership potential,” said Diana Lam, a veteran urban superintendent who was head of the Providence, RI school district before accepting a new position this fall as New York City deputy chancellor for teaching and learning.

Jonathan Schnur, co-founder and chief executive officer of New Leaders for New Schools, was less certain: “Can *real* leadership be taught? I would assert that it cannot unless one comes in with certain core qualities.”

“You need courage, you need humility, an ability to take feedback, and you need critical thinking and problem solving skills,” he continued. “So we need to be very clear about who has potential to be leaders as we induct, recruit and train leaders.” ❖

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

The “End Of The Beginning” *continued from page 1*

principals, we felt, school improvements will remain classroom-by-classroom trench warfare with few lasting victories.

Identifying the problem and calling attention to it was just the first step. We realized that if LEADERS Count was to achieve its ultimate objective of wide-scale school reform that benefited all children, we needed to focus on practical solutions, and hard results. We needed to bring together a diverse community of movers, shakers and creative thinkers from across the country willing to join us in developing usable knowledge about how leaders can successfully drive student achievement.

Nearly three years later, we see signs that this belief that better leadership deserves a central place on the reform map is taking hold. The conversation is moving from rhetoric to real substance. And people are listening. As Ron Heifetz of Harvard’s Center for Public Leadership would say, you have to “ripen an idea.”

That’s why I found much to celebrate last August at the Funds’ LEADERS Count conference. A diverse, committed group of more than 400 leaders and thinkers representing 33 states, 60 organizations, 46 school districts and 12 charitable foundations spent three days discussing the challenges of school leadership and trading practical lessons and experiences on how to reimagine and support the work of superintendents and principals.

Timing has undoubtedly played a part in putting leadership on the reform frontburner. The bold mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act place a higher premium than ever on the necessity of instructional leadership in schools and districts. As Jack Jennings, director of the Center on Education Policy, told us, new and aspiring principals “are reinventing educational leadership. They are shifting from building management to the leadership of learning to high standards for all children. This is a fundamental change; it has never been done before.”

Perhaps no one captured the mood of our conference better than Peter McLaren, who described his feelings about the daily challenges of his job as secondary science department chair of East Greenwich Public Schools in Rhode Island: “I never smiled more, I never cried more, I never worked harder at a job I loved more. No Child Left Behind? Bring it on!”

We’re still a long way from our ultimate goal of connecting leadership to better learning on a universal scale. Still, as Churchill said 60 years ago, perhaps we can allow ourselves to hope that we’re at “the end of the beginning.” ❖



(L-R) Dan Katzir, The Broad Foundation; Paul T. Hill, University of Washington; Anne L. Bryant, NSBA; Adam Urbanski, Rochester Teachers Association; Susan Sclafani, U.S. Dept. of Education; Jonathan Alter, columnist, *Newsweek*.

Making Leadership **WIDESPREAD**

THE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP needed for every child to succeed doesn't begin or end at the schoolhouse door. Participants at the Wallace Funds' Third Annual LEADERS Count conference agreed that break-the-mold leadership and accountability must come from many sources besides principals and superintendents—including school boards, the state, business and community leaders, mayors, legislators, teacher unions, the federal government, and parents and children themselves.

"Great schools sometimes have one great leader. The *lasting* great schools have a leader, but also have levels of leaders," said Dan Katzir, managing director of The Broad Foundation.

Adam Urbanski, president of the Rochester Teachers Association which has been a national exemplar of union-management reform collaboration, remarked that "it is a mistake to pin hopes on leaders—we should pin our hopes on *leadership*, pin hopes on the community, and hold everyone accountable. If we rest our hopes just on leaders, others may think it's not their problem."

Urbanski said that his union's highest priority is "the moral responsibility to do right by the kids; everyone ought to be a leader, and provide the opportunity for teachers to be leaders

without leaving the classroom." In Rochester, he said, teachers evaluate each other and put quality at the forefront. If there is a teacher who is not living up to expectations, he or she will receive professional development, but if that doesn't work, they will be fired.

Susan Sclafani, counselor to the U.S. Secretary of Education, said that the federal No Child Left Behind Act had opened the door to unprecedented flexibility and options for leaders at all levels to meet education goals: "Let's stop thinking about 19th- and 20th-century models and reconceptualize. The law allows that, and so do the (federal) block grants."

Accountability for results has to be widely shared, and the spreading charter school movement has added both new opportunities and complications to that accountability, said Paul T. Hill, Director of the Center for Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington. "Boards need to think of chartering not as the enemy, but as an option," he said, adding that boards can't abdicate accountability by setting up charter schools, then "walking away from them" when they develop problems. ❖

Higher Standards Demand "Transformative" Leadership *continued from page 5*

ing and prepared to do:

- accountability for performance and results, based on usable and fully revealing data;
- flexibility to try creative, entrepreneurial approaches to school improvement;
- options for parents if a school fails to make adequate progress, including the choice to attend another school; and
- scientifically based research on what works.

Education leaders, said Hickok, need to be ready to "go where

the road takes us, not afraid of the consequences but optimistic about the opportunities."

"Get beyond perceptions, and go to data, and facts," he continued. "What's at stake? Everything."

Hunt argued that to meet the new challenges for school renewal that benefits all children, education leaders need to believe that every child can learn, build broad community partnerships, fight for diversity, and be politically savvy.

"The idea," said Hunt, "is to bet on leadership in education, just the way businesses do, just as investors do." ❖

Superintendents and Boards:

NOT YET PERFECT TOGETHER

IMPROVING THE OFTEN ROCKY RELATIONS between school boards and superintendents so that they can work together more effectively to improve student achievement was a frequent topic at the Wallace Funds' Third Annual LEADERS Count National Conference.

Nearly seven out of ten superintendents believe their boards interfere where they shouldn't, and two-thirds think that "too many school boards would rather hire a superintendent they can control," according to a recent national survey by Public Agenda sponsored by the Funds. Conference participants learned of several activities, initiatives and ideas to create more productive, harmonious relationships between boards and school administrators.

...Good board-superintendent relationships should be a result, rather than a primary purpose...

*Anne L. Bryant,
Executive Director,
National School Boards Association*

"Superintendents complain about mismanagement and the hours spent with boards," said James Harvey, Senior Fellow at the Center for Reinventing Public Education in Seattle. "We want states to set ground rules for board behavior." Anne L. Bryant, Executive Director of the National School Boards Association, added that school boards must come up with strategic goals and find a superintendent who is aligned with those goals. Having a strategy means that a good board-superintendent relationship will be a result, rather than a primary purpose.

Richard Goodman, who is directing a project in Raymond, NH to create a model program of collaboration between school administrators, board members, business leaders and parents with support from a Wallace Funds "Ventures in Leadership" grant, said that three states—Massachusetts, Kentucky and Tennessee—have passed laws delegating all personnel matters to superintendents. "This is controversial," he said, "because boards often want to nominate candidates."

Mike Kiefer of the University of Michigan-Flint, said some boards are starting to use a "civil meeting" checklist to self-assess their behavior during meetings.

Goodman and others pointed out that school board members often lack serious preparation for their roles in district governance. At the same time, few superintendents receive any graduate training in working effectively with boards. A recent

Texas A&M study recommends state laws limiting board member terms to six years and mandating training programs.

In 2000, the California School Boards Association adopted Professional Governance Standards which describe commonly agreed-upon principles of effective governance in three areas: the individual trustee, how individual board members and the superintendent must work together, and the specific jobs that the board must carry out. (*For more details visit www.csba.org*)

The New England School Development Council, under Goodman's leadership, has been developing a set of "school board-superintendent leadership team principles" it hopes will be used by school of education faculty to improve the preparation of school leaders, by state associations of school boards and superintendents in leadership workshops, by state boards and commissioners to update certification regulations, and by local boards and superintendents to help them adopt policies aimed at creating smooth-running leadership teams.

In line with the principles being developed by the Council and discussed by Goodman at the conference, there are specific tasks that board-superintendent leadership teams should carry out. Among them:

- Involving the community, parents, students and staff in developing a common mission for the district focused on learning and high achievement;
- Advocating on behalf of students and public education at the local, state and federal levels;
- Providing community leadership on educational issues by creating strong links to other local organizations and agencies;
- Adopting, evaluating and updating policies consistent with the law and the district's mission;
- Maintaining accountability for student learning by adopting the district curriculum and monitoring student progress through a variety of methods including state and national testing. The superintendent recommends the curriculum and measures for monitoring student progress. The board holds the superintendent accountable for student achievement;
- Evaluating and improving its own leadership effectiveness. This includes participating in frequent leadership team retreats and professional development focused on improving board/superintendent governance for high student achievement. ❖

IT TAKES A STATE:

Fifteen States Building Momentum

FOR BETTER SCHOOL LEADERSHIP



(L-R) George Russell, Superintendent, Eugene (OR) School District 4J; Joyce Benjamin, Associate Superintendent, Oregon Dept. of Education; Tom Houlihan, Executive Director, CCSSO.

WITH SUPPORT from the Wallace Funds' State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP), 15 states are taking the lead in reviewing laws, policies and practices to strengthen the ability of superintendents and principals to improve student learning.

SAELP, launched in January 2002 with \$8.9 million in funding over three years, established a national consortium to coordinate the work of the 15 SAELP states and help the

lessons spread to all 50 states. The consortium is led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and also includes the National Governors' Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the Education Commission of the States. The Funds are providing separate support to New York State to develop a comprehensive strategy to reform the ways school leaders are recruited, trained and supported.

Tom Houlihan, executive director of CCSSO, told participants at the Wallace Funds' Third Annual LEADERS Count National Conference in August that SAELP is providing external stimulus for potentially important action to build the state-local connections needed to improve leadership. But he added that to meet the challenges of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, states need to lead a rethinking of strategies and systems in public education: "What do we need to rethink? Charters, choice, pay for performance, professional development, are really secondary issues. We need to rethink the system."

Many of the 15 SAELP states now report early progress:

- **Missouri** introduced and passed three bills aimed at modifying administrator certification rules, fostering administrative mentoring, and improving administrative

effectiveness;

- The **New Jersey** Assembly introduced a bill for certification reciprocity for administrators while Governor James McGreevey hosted the Governor's Education Summit to discuss the role of professional standards in school improvement;
 - The **Illinois** General Assembly passed a bill which requires all school administrators to develop and implement a plan for continuous professional development in order to renew their certificate;
 - The **Vermont** House introduced a proposal to clarify roles of school boards and administrators and to establish a school leadership academy;
 - **Georgia** launched a Leadership Institute for School Improvement in May;
 - **Iowa** is presenting a report on SAELP and education leadership to the State Board this month to make leadership a top policy priority in 2003;
 - Standards for leadership preparation programs in **Delaware** will be up for approval by the State Board;
 - **Connecticut's** Department of Education developed a paper that examined questions about the pool of applicants, factors that encourage or deter educators from seeking administrative positions, and policy initiatives to improve the candidate pool;
 - **Virginia's** State Board has approved a regulation allowing for non-traditional superintendents;
 - Three states, **Indiana, Kentucky, and Virginia**, have created study commissions on leadership through their state legislatures;
 - **Kentucky** Governor Paul Patton, the incoming chair of the National Governors' Association, referred to his state's participation in SAELP in his state-of-the-state address.
- In addition, the SAELP national consortium sponsored a forum in Boston last June to address the project's critical goal of expanding the diversity of educational leaders. Presenters included David Driscoll, Education Commissioner of Massachusetts; Leslie T. Fenwick, Clark Atlanta University; Joseph P. Burke, Superintendent, Springfield, MA; Mildred C. Pierce, Director, The Principals' Center, Harvard Graduate School of Education; and Sharon Robinson, President, Educational Testing Service, Educational Policy Leadership Institute. ❖

For further information on SAELP or to read the SAELP quarterly newsletter, "Leading the Way," visit the CCSSO website at www.ccsso.org

THE 15 SAELP STATES

Connecticut
Delaware
Georgia
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kentucky
Massachusetts
Missouri
Montana
New Jersey
Oregon
Rhode Island
Vermont
Virginia

GRASSROOTS IDEAS:

Ventures Fund Supports

INNOVATIVE PROJECTS IN 42 STATES

FROM AN EFFORT TO IDENTIFY future female superintendents in Kentucky to a Seattle project linking principals with corporate leaders, the Wallace Funds' "Ventures in Leadership" program has provided support for a wide range of grassroots ideas across the country to improve education leadership.

Now in its second and concluding year, "Ventures in Leadership" has provided awards from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to more than 100 schools, districts and other nonprofit organizations in 42 states and the District of Columbia. Awards since Ventures began in April 2001 have totaled nearly \$3.9 million.

From May through July 2002, the Funds awarded 15 new "Ventures in Leadership" grants to organizations in 12 states:

RECRUITING AND TRAINING

Badgett Regional Cooperative for Educational Enhancement, Madisonville, KY: To identify a core group of potential female leaders, prepare them to be superintendents, and create a support network for them.

University of Hawaii Foundation, Honolulu, HI: To form a partnership between the University of Hawaii, the State of Hawaii Department of Education and the Hawaii business community to recruit and train more high quality candidates to become public school principals.

Castleton State College, Castleton, VT: To launch a standards-based certification program for principals allowing them to continue working while earning their degrees.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bridgeport Board of Education, Bridgeport, CT: To develop a cadre of strong instructional leaders for urban schools by engaging principals and assistant principals in reflective discussions, monthly visits, and the identification of master principals.

Center for Collaborative Education, Boston, MA: To create a learning network for 35 new principals working in small, urban schools.

Center for Science Education at the Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI: To develop a series of "Leadership in Science Education" workshops for 60-80 principals and superintendents.

Fordham University, Bronx, NY: To maintain a learning network of New York City superintendents to discuss and test exemplary programs and share expertise on the craft of the superintendency.

Kent Intermediate School District, Grand Rapids, MI: To hold a series of group learning and study group activities

for a cross-section of the district's superintendents and school board members.

Markesan School District, Markesan, WI: To increase the leadership capacity of the district's principal, assistant principals and teachers through collaborative study teams.

The North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, Cullowhee, NC: To provide seminars on improving student performance for school leadership teams, including the principal, assistant principal and two lead teachers from low socio-economic and rural regions.

Santa Barbara County Schools, Central Coast School Leadership Center, Santa Barbara, CA: To strengthen the ability of new and aspiring principals and superintendents to close the achievement gap in under-performing schools through a network of professional coaches focusing on instructional leadership skills.

Teachers21, Newton, MA: To pilot a new school improvement model in a low performing urban district by working with teachers, principals and the superintendent to enhance district-wide cohesion, expand leadership capacity and improve teacher quality and student performance.

University of Pittsburgh, School of Education, Pittsburgh, PA: To convene former urban superintendents to discover how they dealt with critical issues during their tenure and to publish those findings.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Alliance for Education, Seattle, WA: To have 10 high performing Seattle school principals meet with successful corporate leaders to expand mutual understanding about organizational transformation, leadership, and public education. In turn, these principals will provide peer coaching to fellow principals.

River Valley Charter School Foundation, Newburyport, MA: To increase parent involvement and create parent-leaders by engaging them in a series of focused seminars concerning education and leadership development. ❖

The Funds will accept applications electronically through November 30 for the concluding round of grants to be awarded in December. For more information or to apply for a Ventures grant, visit the Wallace Funds website at www.wallacefunds.org.



LEADERS COUNT IS...

A national initiative by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds to strengthen the ability of principals and superintendents to improve student learning, and to build a new field of knowledge that helps improvements spread on a broad scale.

For further information about

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GET CONNECTED

Please visit these websites for further information on school leadership and related topics:

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education: www.aacte.org

American Association of School Administrators: www.aasa.org

American Educational Research Association: www.aera.net

Big Picture Company: www.bigpicture.org

Broad Foundation: www.broadfoundation.org

Center for Public Leadership: www.ksg.harvard.edu/leadership

Center on Education Policy: www.ctredpol.org

Center on Reinventing Public Education: www.crpe.org

Cleveland Initiative for Education: www.ci4edu.org

Council of Chief State School Officers: www.ccsso.org

Council of the Great City Schools: www.cgcs.org

Education Commission of the States: www.ecs.org

Education Writers Association: www.ewa.org

Institute for Learning, Univ. of Pittsburgh: www.instituteforlearning.org

National Association of Elementary School Principals: www.naesp.org

National Association of Secondary School Principals: www.nassp.org

National Association of State Boards of Education: www.nasbe.org

National Conference of State Legislatures: www.ncsl.org

National Governors Association: www.nga.org

Public Agenda: www.publicagenda.org

Southern Regional Education Board: www.sreb.org

State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) Initiative:
www.ccsso.org/edleadership.html

U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov

OFF THE PRESSES

“When School Reform Lasts: Creating the Conditions for Long-Term Change”

Education Development Center, Inc.

Electronic copies are available at www.edc.org or via email, mosaic@edc.org.

Hard copies are available via phone, 617-618-2225.

“Principals in Colorado: An Inventory of Policies and Practices”

National Conference of State Legislatures

Call 303-364-7700 and ask for the marketing department.

The Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds seek to create opportunities for people to enrich themselves through better schools, enhanced community activities, and participation in the arts.