



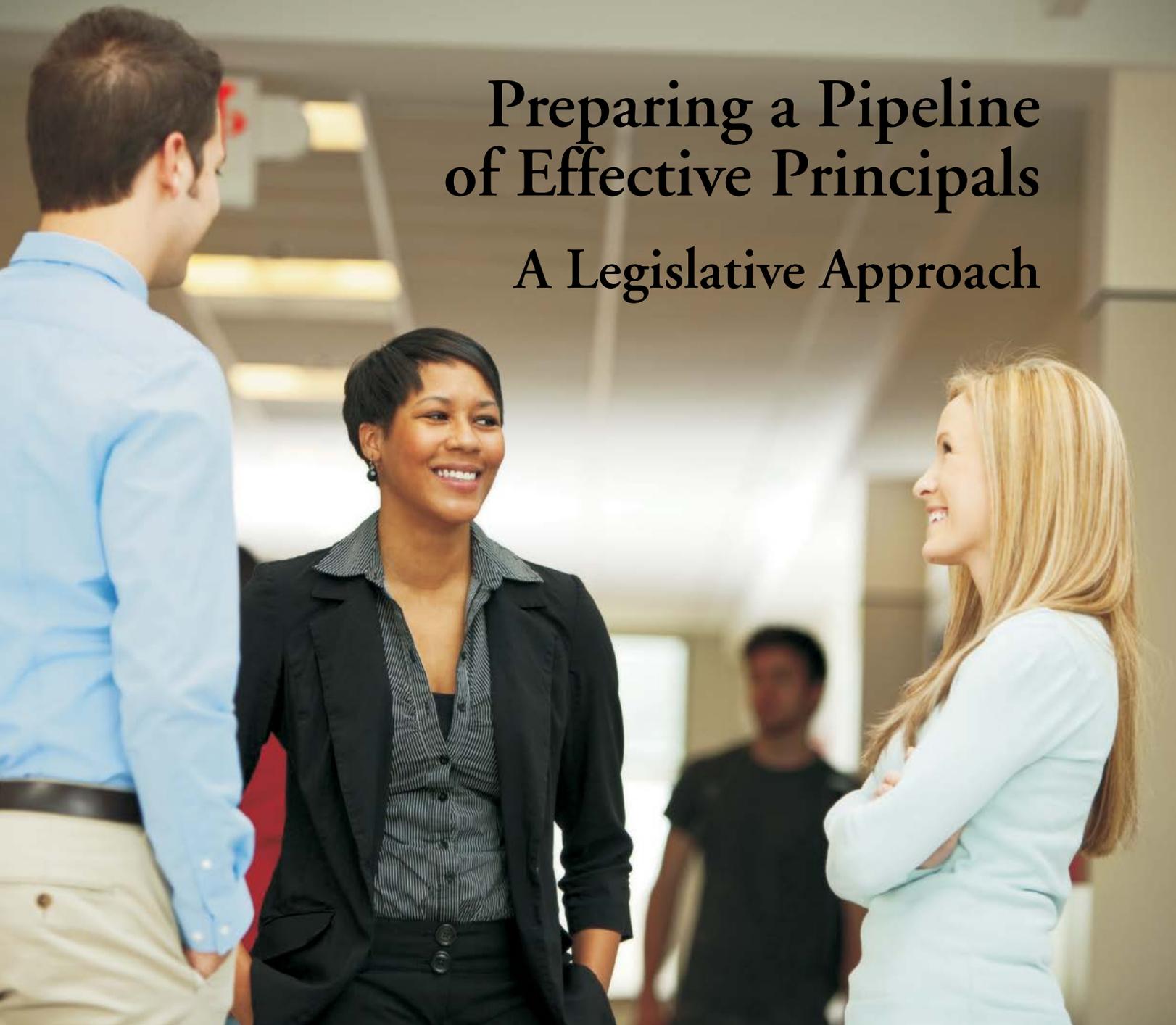
NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
of STATE LEGISLATURES

*The Forum for America's Ideas*



# Preparing a Pipeline of Effective Principals

## A Legislative Approach





# Preparing a Pipeline of Effective Principals A Legislative Approach

*By Sara Shelton*



NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
of STATE LEGISLATURES  
*The Forum for America's Ideas*

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# Approaching Principal Preparation

The first section of this report offers guidance for approaching the issues of preparing a pipeline of effective principals. It provides background information, discusses the state legislative role, provides information about what legislators need to know, and discusses current research. The second section features six policy areas states are using to improve principal preparation: statewide leadership standards; recruitment, selection and retention; principal preparation program design and accreditation; licensure and certification; evaluation; and mentoring and ongoing professional development. The last section features specific actions state legislators can take to improve principal preparation, concluding remarks, notes and web resources.

## Background

### Leadership Matters

Nearly 60 percent of a school's influence on student achievement is attributable to teacher and principal effectiveness, and principals alone account for as much as 25 percent.<sup>1</sup> Research also shows that the effects of leadership are considerably greater in the most struggling schools. Virtually no documented instances occur where troubled schools are turned around if they do not have a talented leader.<sup>2</sup>

High-quality principals recruit, develop and retain talented teachers and remove less effective ones.<sup>3</sup> Teachers routinely cite effective leadership as one of the most important factors in deciding whether they will remain at or leave a school. The combination of effective teaching and capable leadership—not one or the other—will improve student performance. Investments in school leadership can be a cost-effective means of improving student learning at scale because principals are uniquely positioned to ensure that excellent teaching and learning spread beyond single classrooms.<sup>4</sup>

### Preparing and Supporting Effective Principals

Preparing a pipeline of principals who can dramatically improve teaching and learning is essential to achieving state goals for higher student achievement and economic progress.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, many training programs—whether they are university-, state- or district-based—do not adequately prepare principals to meet on-the-job demands. University-based preparation programs, where the vast majority of principals are trained, have long been under intense scrutiny.<sup>7</sup>

A dated yet relevant report from Arthur Levine, then-president of Teachers College at Columbia University, concluded in 2005 that many university-based school leadership programs are engaged in a “race to the bottom,” by attempting to attract students by offering lower standards, ensuring less demanding coursework, and awarding degrees in less time

and with fewer requirements. The report also found that universities treat education leadership programs as “cash cows,” using them to bring in revenue for other campus programs while denying them resources that might facilitate improvement.<sup>8</sup> Through a series of focus groups conducted by Public Agenda, principals reported that they felt leadership programs are out of sync with the realities of being a principal.<sup>9</sup> A 2006 report from the Southern Regional Education Board issued a call to action for

states to accelerate the redesign of university-based principal preparation programs.<sup>10</sup>

The urgency remains. State legislators can lead efforts to ensure principal training programs meet the demands of today's complex and multifaceted school environments. Students and teachers in schools across the country are counting on well-trained leaders who can close the achievement gap and raise the achievement of all students.

### What Do Effective Principals Do?

- Shape a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards;
- Create a climate hospitable to education;
- Cultivate leadership in others so teachers and other adults assume their part in realizing the school vision;
- Improve instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost; and
- Manage people, data and processes to foster school improvement.<sup>5</sup>

## State Legislative Role

State legislators can lead efforts to establish a comprehensive framework to identify, prepare, evaluate and support principals. Lawmakers have a number of policy options to influence the quality of principal preparation and on-the-job support.<sup>11</sup> Through state policy, legislators can:

- Improve quality leadership standards;
- Recruit, select and retain a talented pool of aspiring principals;
- Redesign preparation programs and develop tougher program accreditation;
- Strengthen licensure and certification requirements;
- Evaluate candidate and program effectiveness;
- Provide meaningful mentoring programs and quality ongoing professional development; and
- Allocate funding to the most effective programs.

Recognizing that effective school leadership is a virtual necessity for turning around low-performing schools, state legislators are moving forward with promising policies to cultivate a steady supply of principals who can dramatically increase achievement school-wide.<sup>12</sup> The legislation highlighted in this report illustrates the important role legislators' play in strengthening school leadership by enacting a continuum of policies that identify, prepare, evaluate and support principals throughout their careers.

## What Legislators Need to Know

State policymakers will want to understand challenges specific to their state in order to identify the best policies to cultivate and support a pipeline of effective principals.<sup>13</sup> Legislators may want to seek answers to the following questions from their state departments of education.

- **Principal Pipeline.** Does your state have a shortage of effective school leaders, including teacher leaders, assistant principals and principals, who can lead in today's complex and demanding school environment? Are the shortages more acute in low-performing schools? Is there a strategy in place at the district or state level to identify, prepare, evaluate and support a pool of talented leaders?
- **Statewide Leadership Standards.** Does your state have rigorous, well-defined standards for what school leaders should know and be able to do? If so, do they provide guidance throughout a leader's career, including recruitment and selection, preparation, licensure, mentoring and induction, evaluation and ongoing professional development?
- **Preparation Program Accreditation.** What accreditation standards are required for the approval of leadership preparation programs in your state, including university-based and alternative programs? What state institution or agency is responsible for oversight of preparation programs? Are the standards and procedures for principal preparation program approval researched-based and in line with the demands placed on 21st century school leaders?
- **Preparation Program Redesign.** Are the preparation programs in your state adequately preparing principals to meet the challenges of 21st century schools? Has your state redesigned leadership preparation programs to emphasize curriculum, instruction and student learning? Is there a focus on principals leading the implementation of common core state standards?
- **University-District Partnerships.** Does your state encourage or require university and district partnerships to recruit, select, prepare, evaluate and support aspiring principals to meet district priorities and school improvement needs?
- **Internships and School-based Residencies.** Do the preparation programs in your state offer authentic experiences for learning through robust internships or school-based residencies that integrate coursework and opportunities for meaningful mentoring?
- **Licensure and Certification.** Does your state have a robust licensure system that requires mastery of knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective leader? Is your licensure system linked to evaluation and ongoing professional development to create a continuum of learning? Does your state allow alternative routes to certification?
- **Data Use and Evaluation.** Does your state have a statewide longitudinal data system that tracks principal preparation program enrollment and completion rates, effects of recent program graduates on school and student achievement, and the investment of resources in principal preparation? Do evaluations hold principal preparation programs accountable and also serve as a tool to offer continuous improvement?
- **Professional Development.** Are principals provided with quality, ongoing professional development throughout their careers? Is professional development linked to licensure and evaluation?

## Current Research

Several research studies and reports offer insight into improving the quality and relevance of leadership preparation programs.<sup>14</sup> To attract and retain the right leaders, particularly in the nation's lowest-performing schools, states may want to be aware of the effective approaches shown below to prepare principals for the realities of working in today's complex school systems.

In summary, the research suggests that principal preparation programs should be more selective, more focused on improvement of instruction, more closely tied to the needs of districts, and provide more relevant internships or residency-based experiences. Leader preparation should not end when new principals are hired, but should continue with high-quality mentoring and career-long growth opportunities. Resources for improving preparation should be directed toward programs with proven results.<sup>15</sup>

### *Features of Quality Principal Preparation Programs*

- ✓ **Targeted Recruitment and Selection.** Identify candidates with leadership potential.
- ✓ **Strong Partnerships.** Create authentic partnerships among states, districts and universities to ensure effective recruitment and selection; co-design relevant coursework, field experiences and internships; and provide continuous on-the-job support for new principals.
- ✓ **Challenging, Coherent Curriculum.** Set curriculum that links theory and practice and integrates coursework focused on instructional leadership and the ability to change school culture and improve teacher effectiveness. Curriculum should be aligned to state and professional standards for school leaders. Faculty should be knowledgeable and competent.
- ✓ **Active Instruction.** Require instruction that emphasizes problem-based learning, field-based projects, professional reflection, budget exercises, hiring and effective data use. Such instruction engages university professors and practitioners who are knowledgeable in their subject areas.
- ✓ **Quality Internships and School-based Residency Programs.** Offer well-designed and supervised internships or school-based residencies that provide real opportunities for aspiring principals to experience leadership firsthand.
- ✓ **Social and Professional Support.** Provide cohort structures and formalized mentoring and advising by expert principals.
- ✓ **Candidate and Program Assessment.** Use assessments that are linked to standards and program mission and objectives for program and candidate improvement.

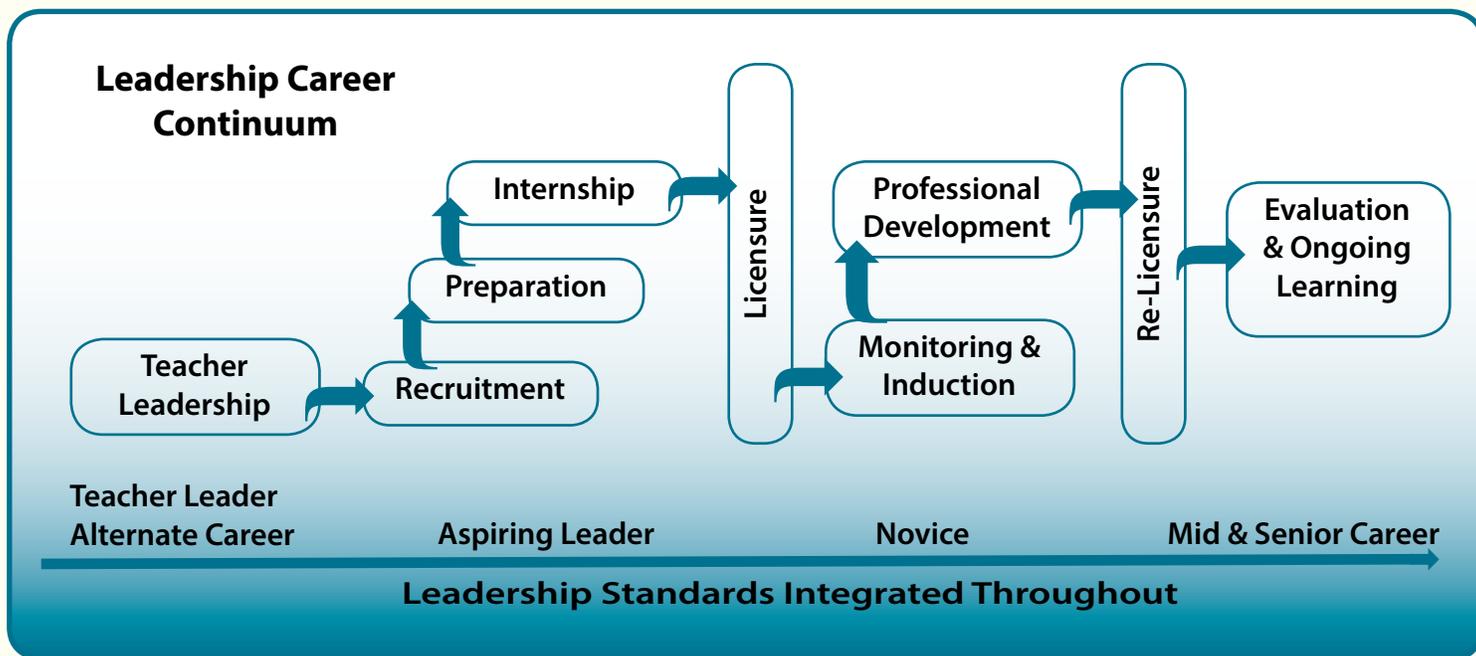
## State Policy Approaches

Legislators can lead efforts to create a pipeline of effective school leaders. Discussed below are some policy approaches states are using to identify, prepare, evaluate and support principals. A piecemeal approach to improving leadership is not likely to yield dramatic results. All elements of a leaders’ career continuum should be inextricably linked. This continuum—which includes recruitment and selection, preparation, licensure, mentoring, evaluation, and ongoing professional development—can be linked to human resource decisions, including compensation, promotion and dismissal. Furthermore, aligning state and district policies to improve school leadership can be a promising approach to achieve the goal of having an effective principal in every school.<sup>16</sup>

### Improve Statewide Leadership Standards

At least 46 states have adopted leadership standards, and many have begun aligning them to all components of a

school leader’s career continuum.<sup>18</sup> Quality statewide standards, which describe clearly the practices of effective principals and how to measure them, form the foundation of a comprehensive leadership development system that guides leaders throughout their careers.<sup>19</sup> Standards also serve to strengthen a preparation program’s focus on instructional leadership and school improvement.<sup>20</sup> A Stanford University report on exemplary preparation programs found that quality programs feature a comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned with state and professional standards, particularly the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, which emphasize instructional leadership.<sup>21</sup> The 2008 revised ISLLC standards organize the functions that help define strong school leadership under six standards that represent the broad, high-priority themes that school leaders must address to promote student success. The six standards call for:<sup>22</sup>



Source: National Association of State Boards of Education, 2011.

- Setting a widely shared vision for learning;
- Developing a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- Requiring enduring, effective management of the organization, operation and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment;
- Collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- Acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner; and
- Understanding, responding to and influencing the political, social, legal and cultural contexts.

Quality standards can influence and drive training and preparation programs by establishing performance expectations and by aiding and facilitating curriculum development, candidate assessment and accountability. Standards also can inform licensing and induction programs and guide development of performance-based evaluations that can formalize expectations for school leaders.<sup>23</sup> Finally, standards can provide feedback to focus mentoring and ongoing professional development.

State policymakers can make certain that preparation programs are guided by leadership standards that reflect the knowledge, skills and responsibilities necessary to lead today's complex school environment, including an emphasis on curriculum, instruction and student achievement, and hold leaders accountable for results.<sup>24</sup>

### State Examples

- **Iowa S.F. 277 (2007)** establishes the administrator quality program to develop statewide leadership standards for school administrators that include knowledge and skills criteria. The standards serve as the basis for accreditation of higher education preparation programs, mentoring and induction programs, evaluation, and professional development.<sup>25</sup>
- **Illinois S.B. 226 (2010)** requires institutions of higher education and not-for-profit entities that offer principal preparation programs to redesign their programs to meet new standards that focus on instruction and student learning and that must be used for mentoring, evaluation and professional development in order to receive state principal preparation approval.<sup>26</sup> In 2007,

**Illinois HJR 66** created a task force to develop a set of recommendations to improve school leadership preparation in the state.<sup>27</sup>

- **Oregon S.B. 290 (2011)** directs the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, to develop and adopt statewide core teaching standards to improve student academic growth and learning. Standards must help school districts determine effectiveness of teachers and administrators and make human resource decisions and improve professional development and classroom and administrative practices. Core teaching standards must be: research-based; developed separately for teachers and administrators; able to be customized for each school district; included and used in all evaluations in the school district; and include multiple measures of student formative and summative proficiency and progress, including performance data of students, schools and school districts.

### Target Recruitment, Selection and Retention

The nation is facing a shortage of principals with high-level leadership skills. A 2009 report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future asserts that more than half the nation's teachers and principals are baby boomers. The report suggests that, during the next several years, schools could lose a third of the nation's most accomplished teachers and principals to retirement. The authors of the report caution that recruitment alone will not solve this problem.<sup>28</sup> Retaining effective leaders is equally important. Research by the universities of Minnesota and Toronto shows that principal turnover averages every three or four years, and such rapid turnover has significant negative effects on student achievement.<sup>29</sup> A new study by the RAND Corporation reveals that more than 20 percent of urban school principals new to a school leave within two years; the school generally experiences a decline in student achievement in subsequent years. The report suggests that principal training programs should focus on developing school leaders as human capital managers who can increase teacher capacity and cohesion, which, the report points out, is most related to student success or failure.<sup>30</sup>

States can partner with districts to strengthen their recruitment and selection criteria, cultivate experienced teachers, and create alternative pathways to attract potential leaders from both within and outside the field of education. In an effort to be more selective in admitting potential leaders to preparation programs, states can strengthen their entry criteria for these programs based on merit and a focus on candidates' leadership ability. This strategy can limit admission to truly aspiring principals. States also can end “pay bumps” for teachers who receive master’s degrees in education leadership but have no intention of becoming school leaders. Additional strategies include supporting policies to offset participant costs, ranging from tuition reimbursements, waivers, and paid internships and residency-based experiences; improving working conditions (e.g., increased authority over people, time and money, and access to timely and useful data); and offering monetary incentives once leaders are on the job. States also can support alternative routes to certification and use data to track the supply and demand for principals, project impending retirements, and track preparation program enrollment and completion rates. Publishing data on program effectiveness can drive program improvement and attract aspiring leaders to the strongest programs.<sup>31</sup>

### State Examples

- **Arkansas S.B. 46 (2003)** creates the Master Principal Program, a voluntary, three-phase (approximately three years) program that provides bonuses to practicing principals who achieve master principal designation. Master principals receive \$9,000 annually for five years, while those serving full-time in “high need” schools receive \$25,000 annually for five years. In addition, **Arkansas H.B. 1996 (2009)** increases the opportunity for school counselors to become school administrators. Counselor eligibility for administrator license includes the following criteria:
  - A current standard teaching license;
  - A minimum of four years of experience as a school counselor;
  - A graduate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education; and
  - Completion of the appropriate program of study for an initial administrator license.
- **Florida S.B. 1226 (2007)** creates the Merit Award Program, a voluntary performance pay program for teachers and school-based administrators. The merit-pay salary supplements, which vary by district, range from 5 percent to 10 percent of the school district’s average employee salary. Teacher and principal evaluations are based on student performance (60 percent) and district-based criteria (40 percent), including the ability to deliver high-quality instruction, maintain collaborative relationships, recruit and retain effective teachers, and manage resources.
- **Georgia H.B. 455 (2009)** compensates educators for their leadership degree only if they serve in a leadership position. In addition, **Florida S.B. 736 (2011)** prohibits a district school board from using advanced degrees to set the salary schedule unless the advanced degree is held in the individual’s area of certification.
- **New Mexico S.B. 85 (2010)** requires the statewide school leadership institute to partner with state agencies, institutions of higher education and professional associations to identify and recruit candidates.
- **Oregon H.B. 3619a (2010)** establishes the career preparation and development task force to, among other things, identify the strengths of, needs for, and gaps in practices and procedures used to recruit and retain teachers and administrators.
- **Washington S.B. 6696 (2010)** expands alternative routes to certification and expands administrator preparation programs to include community and technical colleges or non-higher education providers. All approved program providers must adhere to the same standards and comply with the same requirements as traditional preparation programs. It also requires an annual review of educator workforce data to make projections of certificate needs and to identify how preparation program recruitment and enrollment plans reflect need.

### Strengthen Principal Preparation Program Design and Accreditation

States can leverage policy to develop more robust accreditation standards and program approval criteria to spread effective preparation practices statewide and to hold programs accountable to high standards and effective practice in the field.<sup>32</sup> Program accreditation should be aligned to the state’s leadership standards and ensure that program content reflects current best practices. States can exert their authority to “sunset” programs that do not meet tougher standards, requiring universities and other providers to redesign their programs and reapply for accreditation. A number of states—including Iowa, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mis-

Mississippi and New York—have taken such action to sunset programs.<sup>33</sup> In addition, states can allow alternative programs to prepare principals.

### State Examples

- Colorado S.B. 245 (2011)** clarifies language and requirements concerning educator preparation programs, including the initial process for authorization, reauthorization, accountability, alignment with State Board of Education rules regarding preparation and licensure, reporting and data collection. The Commission on Higher Education must review the current system and policies surrounding programs and make recommendations for a new system to review, evaluate and help programs meet statutory requirements. A comprehensive admission system must include screening of candidates' dispositions for the field in which they are seeking licensure, consideration of their academic preparation, and preadmission advising. Principal and administrator candidates must complete a minimum of 300 hours of supervised field-based experiences. It also requires preparation programs to monitor and improve the effectiveness of the program and its graduates. Finally, it shifts reporting requirements from the Department of Education to the Department of Higher Education.

- Kentucky HJR 14 (2006)** convened a task force to present recommendations on the redesign of the state's system for preparing and supporting principals. Two years later, the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board approved regulations to require that principal preparation programs approved prior to May 31, 2009, submit a redesign program for approval in accordance with new regulations.

- Illinois S.B. 226 (2010)** requires that all institutions of higher education and not-for-profit entities approved to offer principal preparation programs must, among other things, meet the new standards and requirements and any rules adopted by the State Board of Education and prepare candidates to meet approved standards for principal skills, knowledge and responsibilities. These skills and responsibilities include a focus on instruction and student learning that must be used for principal professional development, mentoring and evaluation. In addition, any principal preparation program offered by a not-for-profit entity also must be approved by the board of higher education.



entity also must be approved by the board of higher education.

- New Mexico S.B. 85 (2010)** creates a statewide school leadership institute to provide a comprehensive, cohesive framework for preparing, mentoring and providing professional development for principals and leaders in public schools. It administratively attaches the institute to the higher education department. The institute must offer the following programs:

- Licensure preparation for aspiring principals;
- Mentoring for new principals and other public school leaders;
- Intensive support for principals at schools in need of improvement;
- Professional development for aspiring superintendents; and
- Mentoring for new superintendents.

The institute must partner with state agencies, institutions of higher education and professional associations to identify and recruit candidates. This bill grew from a recommendation from **New Mexico SJM 3 (2006)**, which requested the Office of Education Accountability of the Department of Finance and Administration, the Public Education Department and the Higher Education Department to develop a plan to enhance recruitment, preparation, mentoring, evaluation, professional development and support for school principals and other school leaders.

- North Carolina H.B. 536 (2007)** requires the State Board of Education to adopt new standards for school administrator preparation programs and requires institutions of higher education to redesign their school administrator preparation programs to meet the new standards. New preparation program standards must, among other things, be aligned with revised leadership standards; require institutions of higher education and school districts to govern shared responsibility for recruiting and preparing school leaders, especially with regard to clinical experiences, including the internship and new leaders' success once employed; and require all candidates to complete a year-long internship.

- Washington S.B. 6696 (2010)** requires review and revision of teacher and administrator preparation program approval standards and accepts proposals for new programs that could include community and technical colleges or non-higher education providers. All approved program providers must adhere to the same standards and comply with the same requirements as traditional programs.

## Strengthen Licensure and Certification

A state's authority to license and certify school leaders can be an important policy tool to ensure that schools are led by effective leaders.<sup>34</sup> States, serving as gatekeepers, regulate entry into the principalship and set the qualifications for school leaders. Increasingly, states are revising licensure and certification requirements to focus more explicitly on evidence of knowledge and skill, rather than on classroom experience and credentials. Tiered licensure systems typically require candidates to receive an initial certificate, with limited renewal options, and then obtain professional certification with additional coursework, evaluation and ongoing professional development. Tiered licensure systems create a continuum of learning opportunities to ensure that principals have the knowledge, skills and abilities to improve teaching and learning. States can ensure that requirements for principal certification are specific and encourage on-the-job training for new principals.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, an increasing number of states are revising licensure and certification requirements to create and expand alternative pathways to leadership positions. Such policies can attract accomplished teachers as well as high-performing non-educators such as business people and former military personnel.<sup>36</sup> This strategy can be used to address job shortages in high-need schools by building a pool of leaders who can effectively work in today's high-stakes school environment. This alternative route produces a small number of candidates. It is important to focus efforts on strengthening both traditional and alternative routes to principal certification.<sup>37</sup>

### State Examples

- **Connecticut S.B. 438 (2010)** requires the State Department of Education to review and approve proposals for school administrator alternative routes to certification programs. To be approved, alternative routes to certification programs must be provided by:
  - Public or private higher education institutions;
  - Local and regional boards of education;
  - Regional educational service centers; or
  - State Board of Education approved private, non-profit teacher or administrator training organizations.

Alternative certification programs must require applicants to have at least:

- A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution;
- Forty months of teaching experience in Connecticut or another state, at least 10 of which must be in a public school position requiring certification; and

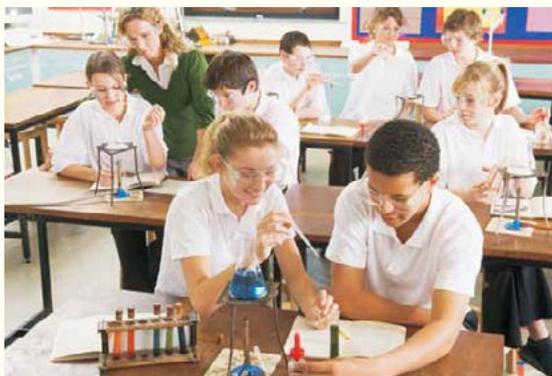
- The recommendation from their immediate supervisor or district administrator, based on performance.

Each participant also must complete a one-year residency in a full-time, 10-month, local or regional school board position requiring an intermediate administrator or supervisor endorsement. The State Board of Education must issue an initial certificate with an administration and supervision endorsement, valid for three years, to anyone who successfully completes the alternative program and passes, or meets the requirements for an exemption from or a waiver of, Connecticut's educator testing requirements.

In addition, those who receive an initial administrator certification after completing the alternative route program must obtain a master's degree within five years of receiving initial certification. Those who fail to do so are not eligible to receive a professional educator certificate.

- **Delaware S.B. 260 (2000)** establishes a system of licensure, certification, evaluation and professional development that seeks to improve the quality of classroom instruction for children in the state. It establishes a professional standards board to propose rules and regulations in the areas of pre-service training, licensure, certification, recruitment, evaluation and professional development. It also creates a three-tiered licensure system to provide an initial license for new educators, a continuing license for experienced educators, and an advanced license for distinguished educators.
- **Illinois S.B. 226 (2010)** discontinues the general administrative endorsement. Instead, it creates a new P-12 principal endorsement that emphasizes the unique preparation necessary to become the instructional leader of a school and allows for expanded alternative certification programs for administrators.
- **New Mexico S.B. 133 (2009)** reduces from seven to six the number of teaching years required and adds the requirement of a post-baccalaureate degree or certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for eligibility for a school administrator license. It also creates a four-year, nonrenewable provisional license for school principals in districts where there is a shortage of qualified candidates.

- **Ohio H.B. 1 (2009)** requires the State Board of Education to align its standards and qualifications for a principal license with the standards for principals adopted by the state board, based on recommendations of the Educator Standards Board.
- **Washington S.B. 6696 (2010)** expands alternative routes to certification and expands administrator preparation programs to include community and technical colleges or non-higher education providers. All approved program providers must adhere to the same standards (which must be reviewed and revised by the Professional Educators Standards Board) and comply with the same requirements as traditional preparation programs.



## Improve Program and Candidate Evaluation

States can ensure that school leaders are continuously assessed and can use performance-based measures to guide evaluations. Evaluations, based on state leadership standards, can provide information about and help improve all aspects of a leader's career continuum. In the last several years, more than half of the states, through a mix of state and federal initiatives, have passed laws to strengthen the evaluation process for principals. Well-designed evaluation systems include:

- Continuous feedback to school leaders and tracking of individual progress toward mastery of knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary to improve student learning and school performance;
- Continuous feedback to licensing institutions on graduates' performance to help improve their preparation programs;
- Career development advancement, including meeting requirements for a professional license;
- Identification of professional development opportunities and support structures customized to the needs of individual leaders and schools; and
- Provision of information for state and federal accountability.<sup>38</sup>

States can use data from principal evaluations to guide program and candidate improvement. Preparation programs that have formal monitoring processes can ensure that they meet quality standards and are responsive to district priori-

ties. Such programs can collect and analyze data about the readiness of individual school leaders, program graduation, retention rates and placement rates. In addition, states can use evaluation data to review and accredit preparation programs and tailor professional development to specific districts and individuals. States can ensure not only that evaluation strategies are crafted and implemented to provide reliable evidence

of the quality of the program and the graduates' mastery of essential leadership competencies, but also determine how the programs affect schools, including graduates' on-the-job performance and measures of student achievement.<sup>39</sup>

### State Examples

- **Colorado H.B. 1065 (2009)** creates the Educator Identifier System and Pilot Program to assign unique identifiers to teachers and principals. Data cannot be used to negatively sanction individual educators or educator preparation or professional development programs. The system is being used to provide information for, among other things, studying educator training programs, professional development programs, and mobility and retention issues and to gather information about the number and percent of teachers and principals rated at each performance level in each local education agency's teacher and principal evaluation system. In addition, **Colorado S.B. 36 (2010)** requires an annual report on the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, including alternative programs, using data obtained through the statewide identifier system. Implementation is subject to funding by the State Department of Education, which now is attempting to implement the law using current resources.
- **Connecticut S.B. 438 (2010)** requires the State Department of Education to expand the public school information system to track and report to local and regional school boards data on performance growth by students, teachers, principals, schools and school districts. Principal data must include credentials, such as master's degrees, preparation programs completed, and certification level and endorsements. The system assigns unique identifiers to teachers and principals to track and gather data. **Connecticut S.B. 237 (2012)** permits the Labor Department to share wage and employment data with institutions of higher education for purposes of program evaluation.

- **Illinois S.B. 1828 (2009)** creates the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act to establish and maintain a longitudinal data system linking early learning, elementary and secondary school student unit records with institutions of higher education. It establishes a system to evaluate teacher and administrator preparation programs using student academic growth as one component of evaluation.
- **New Mexico S.B. 123 (2009)** includes school administrators in the uniform statewide educator accountability reporting system. It requires school administrator candidates to be tracked from pre-entry to post-graduation. It also requires that data on administrator preparation programs be included in the educator accountability reporting system and the annual statewide educator accountability report.
- **Iowa H.F. 2792 (2006)** creates a beginning administrator mentoring and induction program. It requires the State Department of Education, in collaboration with other educational partners, to develop a model beginning administrator mentoring and induction program for all beginning administrators. Each school board must establish beginning mentoring programs and provide for one year of programming. In 2007, **Iowa S.F. 277** created the administrator quality program to provide mentoring and induction, professional development, and evaluation of administrators against the Iowa standards for school administrators.
- **New Mexico S.B. 85 (2010)** requires the statewide School Leadership Institute to provide mentoring to new principals and superintendents, intensive support for principals at schools in need of improvement, and professional development for aspiring superintendents.

## Provide Quality Mentoring and Ongoing Professional Development

Leadership training does not end when principals are licensed and hired. It continues with mentoring for new principals and robust, ongoing professional development that can be linked to licensure to promote career-long growth that is responsive to the evolving needs of schools and districts. At least half the states and many districts have mentoring programs to support new principals during their first few years on-the-job.<sup>40</sup> This marks a major shift from the pervasive “sink or swim” attitude toward struggling principals and serves as further recognition that leader training should be embedded throughout a principal’s career.<sup>41</sup> Professional development linked to rigorous leadership standards, licensure and evaluation should be continuously available to strengthen principals’ capacities to improve curriculum and instruction and create highly effective organizations.<sup>42</sup> The evaluation process can play an important role in targeting professional development needs for individual school leaders by identifying and prescribing appropriate training.

### State Examples

- **Illinois S.B. 860 (2006)** establishes that new principals must complete a mentoring program for the duration of their first year as a principal. Any principal can apply to be a mentor who has demonstrated success as an instructional leader for three or more years. Various providers around the state, such as institutions of higher education and school districts, can be approved to offer the mentoring programs. It also sets forth requirements of the mentoring program and appropriates funding to implement it.
- **Oregon H.B. 3619a (2011)** establishes the Career Preparation and Development Task Force to develop a proposal for a seamless system of professional development for teachers and administrators that begins with career preparation and continues through employment.
- **Pennsylvania H.B. 842 (2007)** requires all beginning principals, vice principals and assistant principals to complete an induction program designed by the State Department of Education. Participants must attend more than 36 hours of induction during any one school year or a total of 180 hours over the course of the program. Participant hours in the induction program are applied toward meeting the certificate holder’s continuing professional development education requirements.
- **Utah H.B. 264 (2009)** requires mentors to have or receive training in order to mentor provisional educators and provides that mentors may receive compensation for their services.
- **Washington H.B. 1244 (2009)** appropriates funding for a principal support program, which includes a mentorship for new principals and principal candidates to help them build the skills identified as critical to the success of their professional growth plans.
- **Wisconsin S.B. 437 (2010)** provides supplemental mentoring for principals in the state’s lowest-performing schools who have an emergency license or permit and requires 60 hours annually of professional development for principals in the state’s lowest-performing schools.

## Take Action

State legislators can lead efforts to identify, prepare, evaluate and support a pipeline of effective principals. Listed below are several actions lawmakers can take to improve the effectiveness of principals statewide.<sup>43</sup>

- ✓ **Create a State Commission or Task Force.** Create a state commission or task force to plan and oversee the redesign of principal preparation and on-the-job support that includes policymakers, practitioners and other stakeholders.
- ✓ **Improve Statewide Leadership Standards.** Revise or adopt rigorous statewide leadership standards that focus on instructional leadership and school improvement and align them with all components of a school leader's career continuum.
- ✓ **System Alignment.** Align all elements of a school leader's career continuum—including recruitment and selection, preparation, licensure, mentoring, evaluation and ongoing professional development—as well as state and district policies to improve and support principals.
- ✓ **Foster Strong University-District Partnerships.** Encourage or require universities and school districts to work together to identify and select top-quality principal candidates and to co-design course content, field experiences, internships and ongoing support, with an emphasis on improving student achievement.
- ✓ **Strengthen Program Approval Process.** Develop new program approval processes based on rigorous standards to increase accountability for school leadership programs and require evaluations of their effectiveness that include data on graduates' effect on student achievement.
- ✓ **Redesign Licensure and Certification.** Restructure state licensure systems into cohesive, performance-based, tiered systems that emphasize student achievement and consider alternative certification.
- ✓ **Provide Mentoring and Ongoing Professional Development.** Ensure that new principals receive meaningful mentoring and ongoing targeted professional development opportunities throughout their careers.
- ✓ **Improve Data Use and Evaluation.** Incorporate a culture of relevant and timely data use to assess program and candidate success and the effectiveness of state efforts to improve school leadership. This data can help state and district leaders make informed decisions about resource allocation.
- ✓ **Reallocate Resources.** Direct resources to programs that are the most successful in preparing effective principals.



## Conclusion

State legislators can play an important and active role in developing a state framework to recruit, prepare, evaluate and support a pipeline of effective principals who can ensure that better teaching and learning are spread beyond single classrooms. Equally important are engaging stakeholders—early in and throughout the process—and attention to implementation. Legislators can request ongoing review processes and reports to make improvements to policy based on research, data and stakeholder input.

## Notes

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## Web Resources

Learn more about effective school leadership and strategies that work at these sites:

National Conference of State Legislatures  
www.ncsl.org

The Wallace Foundation  
www.wallacefoundation.org

Alliance to Reform Education Leadership  
www.bushcenter.com/portal-arel/education-leadership

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

National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research  
www.caldercenter.org

New Leaders  
www.newleaders.org

Rainwater Leadership Alliance  
www.anewapproach.org

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