PERSPECTIVE

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THE MAKING OF THE PRINCIPAL: FIVE LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING

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This Wallace Perspective was produced as part of a commitment by The Wallace Foundation to develop and share information about how school leadership can contribute to improved student learning.

Lee Mitgang is the former director of editorial services at The Wallace Foundation. Jennifer Gill is a New Jersey-based writer and editor. This report draws on a decade of work by the foundation on school leadership. It reflects the contributions of Wallace staff members Lucas Held, Pamela Mendels, Will Miller, Edward Pauly, Jessica Schwartz and Jody Spiro.

This report and other resources on school leadership cited throughout this paper can be downloaded for free from www.wallacefoundation.org.

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THE MAKING OF THE PRINCIPAL: FIVE LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

States and districts facing pressure to have all children meet high standards have been paying overdue attention to improving school leadership as a way to advance instruction and drive needed changes throughout schools.

What will it take to ensure that *all* public schools have leaders equal to the challenges facing them? That question has placed fresh urgency on addressing the chronic weaknesses of principal training programs, criticized for decades as unselective in their admissions, academically weak and poorly connected to school realities. Armed for the first time with compelling, research-validated examples of effective practices, more districts – especially large urban districts with the most acute needs – have been investing in raising the quality of pre-service training and providing more rigorous mentoring and other support to newly hired principals. And more states have been taking steps including tightening accreditation rules and adopting new standards to push universities and other training providers to improve their programs.

Some districts, such as Chicago and Denver, have collaborated with willing universities to design better training for aspiring principals. Others, such as New York City, Boston and Gwinnett County, Ga., have formed their own training academies or are working with non-profit training providers to create programs suited to their needs. It's too soon to say for sure, but early evidence suggests payoffs for schools might include lower principal turnover and higher student performance.

While these signs of heightened attention are encouraging, there is still a long way to go before the majority of the nation's aspiring principals get the training they need to succeed. Experience and new research suggest that heeding the following five lessons could help propel many more districts toward the goal of having strong leadership in every school:

1. A more selective, probing process for choosing candidates for training is the essential first step in creating a more capable and diverse corps of future principals.

2. Aspiring principals need pre-service training that prepares them to lead improved instruction and school change, not just manage buildings.

3. Districts should do more to exercise their power to raise the quality of principal training, so that graduates better meet their needs.

4. States could make better use of their power to influence the quality of leadership training through standard-setting, program accreditation, principal certification and financial support for highly qualified candidates.

5. Especially in their first years on the job, principals need high-quality mentoring and professional development tailored to individual and district needs.

THE MAKING OF THE PRINCIPAL:

FIVE LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING

By Lee Mitgang

For more than a decade, The Wallace Foundation has worked with states and districts to develop and test ways to improve school leadership in order to promote better teaching and learning. Improving the often-weak training of principals has been central to that work. Drawing on new research and lessons from the field, this report updates a 2008 Wallace report, Becoming A Leader: Preparing Principals for Today's Schools. *It takes a fresh look at the continuing progress and lingering challenges of providing every school with leaders who have the necessary preparation to help all children succeed as learners.*

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RECONSIDERED

The education field is finally embracing school leadership as an essential ingredient in reform, worthy of investment in its own right. Facing pressure to have all children meet high standards, states and districts increasingly are recognizing that successful school reform depends on having principals well prepared to change schools and improve instruction, not just manage buildings and budgets.

It is the principal, more than anyone else, who is in a position to ensure that excellent teaching and learning are part of every classroom. In fact, leadership is second only to teaching among school-related factors as an influence on learning, according to a six-year study, the largest of its kind, which analyzed data from 180 schools in nine states. The report by researchers from the Universities of Minnesota and Toronto further noted: "To date we have not found a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership."[1]

Stanford University's Linda Darling-Hammond, a leading education scholar and national reform voice, emphasizes the profound impact good leaders have on teaching quality: "It is the work they do that enables teachers to be effective — as it is not just the traits that teachers bring, but their ability to use what they know in a high-functioning organization, that produces student success. And it is the leader who both recruits and retains high quality staff — indeed, the number one reason for teachers' decisions about whether to stay in a school is the quality of administrative support — and it is the leader who must develop this organization."[2]

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[1] Karen Seashore Louis, Kenneth Leithwood, Kyla L. Wahlstrom, Stephen E. Anderson et al., *Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning,* Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement/University of Minnesota and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, 2010, 9. (Report available at www.wallacefoundation.org.)

[2] The Wallace Foundation, *Education Leadership: A Bridge to School Reform,* 2007, 17. This publication presents highlights of a 2007 national conference hosted by the foundation shortly after the publication of Darling-Hammond's report, *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World,* on improving principal training. Darling-Hammond has served on The Wallace Foundation's board of directors since 2009. (Both reports are available at www.wallacefoundation.org.)

Just one of the many signs of school leadership's ascent as a reform priority after years of relative neglect is the stream of endorsements from U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals for the work under way by The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to develop a first-ever national board-certification program for practicing principals.[3]

"Leadership only succeeds if the leader brings other people along into the same vision, and they are all able to work together and trust one another."

Still, if the value of leadership has gained wider acceptance, it is leadership of a very particular sort – a far cry from traditional autocratic or "hero-leader" models. The latest evidence emphatically concludes that leadership works best when it is shared in the school community.[4] As Jack Jennings, president of the Center on Educational Policy in Washington, D.C., put it: "Leadership only succeeds if the leader brings other people along into the same vision, and they are all able to work together and trust one another. A school that's in deep trouble is going to take years to change, and it has to be a continuous process with continual supports. And that means it can't be one person, but a group of people who are dedicated enough to stay with something for a long period of time."[5]

What then are the core functions of this more instruction-focused, collaborative conception of school leadership? A recently published review by The Wallace Foundation identified these five:

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students;
- Creating a climate hospitable to education;
- Cultivating leadership in others;
- Improving instruction; and
- Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.[6]

TRAINING SCHOOL LEADERS FOR THEIR NEW ROLE – RECENT PROGRESS AND CONTINUED CHALLENGES

The growing acceptance of this conception of school leadership has raised an accompanying challenge: how to ensure that the training and support that novice principals receive is in line with the new leadership model as well as district needs and standards.

Over the last decade, there has been notable progress in revamping principal preparation. Since 2000, virtually all states have adopted new learning-centered leadership standards. Some states are using them to tighten principal certification rules and compel leadership training programs either to improve

[3] The Wallace Foundation is among the private funders of the national certification effort.

[4] Seashore Louis et al., see pp. 19-29 for a discussion of collective leadership's benefits. The report found that such leadership has a measurable positive effect on student's reading and math scores in state-mandated tests.

[5] Interview with Jack Jennings, January 25, 2012.

[6] The Wallace Foundation, *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning,* The Wallace Foundation, January 2012, 2. Also see Bradley S. Portin et al., *Leadership for Learning Improvement in Urban Schools,* Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington, 2009, for an excellent description of shared leadership and working with instructional teams. Both reports can be downloaded at www.wallacefoundation.org.

or shut down. Roughly half the states have, for the first time, mandated mentoring for newly hired principals. Urban districts from New York City and Boston to Chicago, Louisville, Denver and San Diego have entered partnerships with area universities – or have formed their own leadership academies – to create training programs more closely tied to district priorities and student needs. *[See story on Denver's efforts, p. 12]* Private funding has helped spur this movement, including grants from The Wallace Foundation to 24 states and 15 large districts as part of its decade-old education leadership initiative. More recently, the federal government has added impetus through its Race to the Top and school leadership grants.

The last decade has also seen more diversity among leadership training providers. University-based programs are likely to remain predominant. But efforts such as New Leaders,[7] the National Institute for School Leadership, and Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) have emerged as innovative, alternative sources of principal preparation.

Early indications are that there may be payoffs for students in having better-trained principals. The NYC Leadership Academy, for example, launched in 2003 to supply the city's most challenging schools with highly qualified new leaders, was the subject of an independent evaluation looking at student achievement test scores. The study found that elementary and middle schools led by academy-trained principals had demonstrated more accelerated growth in English language arts and math than comparison schools led by other novice principals.[8]

Lessening the damage and expense of unwanted principal turnover has been another motivation for investing in better leadership training. The Minnesota-Toronto research found that the average school experiences changes in principals every three or four years, and this leadership churn can do measurable harm to student achievement.[9] Turnover has dollars-and-cents consequences too, says John Youngquist, director of principal-talent management for the Denver Public Schools, which has teamed with the University of Denver to build a nationally recognized principal training program: "There is a real cost to bringing in new principals every year, and if we can lower the number of principals we're bringing in by increasing their tenure through better support and preparation, then dollars become available that we can reallocate."[10]

Early indications are that there may be payoffs for students in having better-trained principals.

The impact of better leadership training on principal turnover has not yet been rigorously studied. But the experience in two districts offers promising signs. Leaders of the Jefferson County (Ky.) Public Schools have credited a high-quality training program, developed in 2002 with the University of Louisville, with a 70 percent drop in principal turnover between 2005 and 2010. Notably, all but three of the 37 interns the district hired as principals during that period successfully led their schools

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[7] Previously known as New Leaders for New Schools.

[8] An evaluation of the Academy's Aspiring Principals Program (APP) by the Institute for Education and Social Policy at New York University was conducted in 2009 with a follow-up in 2011. (Both reports are available at www.wallacefoundation.org.) According to the 2011 follow-up: "In other words, APP led schools continue to show evidence of closing the performance gap in both ELA and math with initially higher performing schools run by similarly tenured principals after controlling for differences in school and student characteristics and standardizing for citywide performance trends."

[9] Seashore Louis et al., 173.

[10] Interview with John Youngquist, January 31, 2012.

to meet state accountability standards.[11] In Providence, R.I., an exemplary principal training and support system developed by the University of Rhode Island in collaboration with the district has placed graduates in leadership positions in roughly half of the district's 49 schools – and to date, not one has been terminated by the district. "These are not plum jobs," says Ed Miley, the district's director of leadership development and support. "There's lots of potential for failure, and fortunately, as a group, our training graduates haven't failed. They've been asked by the district to stay."[12]

Unfortunately, such efforts remain the exception. All too often, training has failed to keep pace with the evolving role of principals. This is especially true at most of the 500-plus university-based programs where the majority of school leaders are trained. Among the common flaws critics cite: curricula that fail to take into account the needs of districts and diverse student bodies; weak connections between theory and practice; faculty with little or no experience as school leaders; and internships that are poorly designed and insufficiently connected to the rest of the curriculum, and lack opportunities to experience real leadership.[13] *[See Q&A on the status of university-based training programs, p. 16]*

All too often, principal training has failed to keep pace with the evolving role of principals.

The problems typically begin with lax admissions. Many programs admit nearly everyone who decides to apply, often with little input from the districts that may eventually hire them. Such programs frequently select candidates based mainly on paper evidence of their educational background. The process often fails to probe for evidence of a candidate's ability to work well with teachers or in challenging school settings. It reveals little about a candidate's resilience, integrity and belief in all children's ability to learn – qualities central to a school leader's eventual success.[14] And many programs fail to screen out applicants whose primary motive is not to lead a school, but to get the salary bump or promotion that goes with an advanced degree.

An especially provocative 2005 critique by former Colombia University Teachers College President Arthur Levine found that admissions criteria at the majority of university-based leadership programs "…have nothing to do with a potential student's ability to be successful as a principal."[15] All too commonly, Levine wrote, these programs "have turned out to be little more than graduate credit dispensers. They award the equivalent of green stamps, which can be traded in for raises and promotions to teachers who have no intention of becoming administrators."[16]

The good news is that the field today has at its disposal a wealth of research-validated examples that point to more effective ways to select, prepare and support new school leaders. Some of the most *(continued on page 10)*

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[11] Lee Mitgang, "Flipping the Script," *The School Administrator,* a periodical of the American Association of School Administrators, December 2010, 18.

[12] Interview with Ed Miley, February 2, 2012.

[13] *Becoming A Leader: Preparing School Principals for Today's Schools,* The Wallace Foundation, 2008, 4.

[14] Gretchen Rhines Cheney et al., *A New Approach to Principal Preparation: Innovative Programs Share Their Practices and Lessons Learned, Rainwater Leadership Alliance,* 2010, 8. The Rainwater Leadership Alliance was established in 2005 by the Rainwater Charitable Foundation to promote the spread of best practices of nine exemplary district-based, university-based and nonprofit leader preparation programs. Of those, a number participated in The Wallace Foundation's education leadership initiative: the Gwinnett County Public Schools Leaders-Plus Academy, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Virginia's Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education, the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) School Leadership Program, and the NYC Leadership Academy.

[15] Arthur Levine, *Educating School Leaders,* The Education Schools Project, 2005, 31.

[16] Ibid., 24.

All Together Now

With Encouragement From School Districts, Universities and Nonprofits are Sharing Strategies on How to Train Principals.

By Jennifer Gill

What would happen if representatives of competitive principal-training programs gathered in a room and compared notes on issues like how to recruit strong candidates? Chicago is about to find out, thanks to the Chicago Leadership Collaborative, a new $7 million initiative supported by the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and private funders.

The initiative seeks to create a pool of highly qualified school leaders by offering financial support to selected university and nonprofit training providers: They will be on a performance contract that compensates them for each candidate who passes the district's principal eligibility assessment. The effort is also intended to increase to 100 (from the current 32) the number of year-long internships the school system makes available to the programs' aspiring leaders.

These enticing carrots come with a stick: The programs must meet together monthly to share best practices on everything from curriculum content to internship experiences. Almost all principal training programs have room to improve, says Steve Gering, chief of leadership development at CPS, as evidenced by the following:

Currently, only 40 percent of training program participants who complete district internships actually go on to become principals or assistant principals. The rest fail the district's assessment process, aren't selected by a local school council, or decide the job isn't for them. Where some programs are wary about divulging their strategies with the competition, "at the same time, they know that they don't know everything and are willing to learn from each other." Gering says.

> *"They know that they don't know everything and are willing to learn from each other."*

CPS has chosen four programs to take part initially – Loyola University Chicago, New Leaders, Teach for America/Harvard Graduate School of Education, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. The first class of aspiring school leaders is expected to matriculate in fall 2013. Gering hopes that eventually most of Chicago's new principals will come through Collaborative-supported programs.

compelling were documented in a landmark 2007 report by a team of Stanford University researchers led by Darling-Hammond, *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World.* A 2010 report, *Districts Developing Leaders,* published by the Educational Development Center, Inc., added fresh case histories showing the different ways districts can exercise their influence to create training programs that are higher quality and more suited to their needs – often, though not always, in partnership with universities.

The increased recognition of leadership's importance and the growing body of evidence on what works in preparing new leaders together offer hope that inadequate preparation programs will eventually be replaced by ones that better reflect the new conceptions of school leadership and the tough challenges facing districts. But that same research also makes clear how far we are from the ultimate goal: ensuring that every school has a well-prepared principal who can promote excellent teaching and learning.

In the following section, we identify five lessons that could help speed progress toward that end.

Pathways to Better Training: Five Lessons

Lesson 1

A more selective, probing process for choosing candidates for training is the essential first step in creating a more capable and diverse corps of future principals.

Preparing not just *more* aspiring principals, but the *right* ones, has to start when the first decisions are made about who should and should not be admitted to leadership training.

Exemplary programs are far more rigorous than others in their review of candidates' skills, experience and leadership dispositions. And almost invariably, they feature strong partnerships in which districts take a much more active hand in identifying, recruiting and screening prospective training candidates with the potential and desire to lead schools. The Stanford research found that in exemplary programs, such as the University of San Diego's Educational Leadership Development Academy, nearly two-thirds of graduates were initially referred or recommended by districts and/or had some portion of their programs paid for by those districts. That's roughly twice the proportion found in a national sample of program graduates.[17] The Chicago, St. Louis and Springfield, Ill., school districts require prospective leadership candidates to agree to serve as principals in their schools for a set number of years. In exchange, the districts cover the cost of leadership training and full-time internships.[18]

Exemplary programs are far more rigorous than others in their review of candidates' skills, experience and leadership dispositions.

Exemplary training programs tend to use more careful – and often more costly – screening techniques to identify promising

[17] Linda Darling-Hammond, Michelle LaPointe, Debra Meyerson, Margaret Orr, *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs – Final Report,* Stanford University, The Finance Project, 2007, 65.

[18] Margaret Terry Orr, Cheryl King, Michelle LaPointe, *Districts Developing Leaders: Lessons on Consumer Actions and Program Approaches from Eight Urban Districts*, Education Development Center, Inc., 2010, 65.

leadership candidates. They probe whether applicants have the needed experience, leadership skills, aptitudes and dispositions to achieve district goals and improve instruction under trying conditions. A number of school systems, including Gwinnett County, Ga., and Springfield, Mass., are using online, research-based screening tools, such as Gallup's PrincipalInsight. Created in 2004, the Gallup tool enables districts to gather information about a large number of prospective leadership candidates, including: the factors behind a person's drive to be a school leader; the likelihood that a candidate can foster collegiality, a sense of caring and the continued development of others; and how he or she will involve and motivate staff members, students and parents.[19]

Along with raising the quality of aspiring principals and weeding out candidates who aren't genuinely motivated to lead schools, a common reason for districts to get more directly involved in selection is to expand the ethnic and gender diversity of their principal pools. The results can be dramatic: Stanford's researchers found that graduates of exemplary training programs were far more likely to be women (73 percent versus 48 percent) and members of minority groups (37 percent versus 8 percent) than those in a national sample of leadership program graduates.[20]

Lesson 2

Aspiring principals need pre-service training that prepares them to lead improved instruction and school change, not just manage buildings.

Along with being more selective, exemplary training programs are more focused on improvement of instruction and more closely tied to the needs of districts, and provide more relevant internships with hands-on leadership experience.[21] Key features that distinguish these programs are:

- **Curricula tightly focused on improving instruction and changing school culture, so teaching and learning at high standards are everyone's top priority.**

Graduates of exemplary programs aren't satisfied with the status quo. At the heart of curricula at programs, such as San Diego's Educational Leadership Development Academy, Bank Street College in New York City, and the "Principals for Tomorrow" program in Jefferson County, Ky., is the goal of preparing "transformational leaders." Much more than competent building managers, these are professionals who can "…work to improve the school as an organization, develop norms and structures that support high quality teaching and learning, enhance the capacity of the faculty to meet the needs of students, and implement reform strategies that will improve student outcomes," according to the Stanford research.[22]

Such curricula thus go well beyond an understanding of good classroom instruction. They train the aspiring leader to coach teachers, plan appropriate professional development and use data to spot student needs. They prepare new leaders to communicate effectively within and beyond the school, build high expectations and use systems thinking to diagnose problems and arrive at workable solutions. To
(continued on page 11)

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[19] Information about PrincipalInsight provided by Gary Gordon, Ed.D., of Gallup Consulting, Inc.

[20] Darling-Hammond et al., 65.

[21] *Becoming A Leader: Preparing School Principals for Today's Schools,* The Wallace Foundation, 2008, 5-6.

[22] Darling-Hammond et al., 66.

Upward Bound

The Mile High City's Innovative Principal Training Partnership Continues Climbing

By Lee Mitgang

A decade ago, the Denver school district placed a bold bet: that recruiting and training a new breed of principals more focused on classroom instruction than regulatory compliance could jump-start much-needed change in schools and significantly lift student performance.

The result was the Ritchie Program for School Leaders, today widely regarded as one of the nation's premier principal preparation programs as well as a model university-district collaboration. Its goal? To supply Denver schools with leaders "knowledgeable, highly-skilled and relentless in their commitment" to reshaping school culture around collaboration, questioning, high expectations and accountability, says Susan Korach, a professor at the University of Denver's Morgridge College of Education, who created the program with the district in 2002.

The goal: school leaders who are "knowledgeable, highly-skilled and relentless."

A 2008 independent evaluation concluded that the Ritchie program has many hallmarks of strong principal training identified in research:

- rigorous selection (50 candidates applied for 16 slots in 2011-12);
- a coherent, instruction-focused curriculum;
- fully-paid internships;
- a network of peers who support one another well after training ends;
- capable university and district faculty members with extensive real-world experience; and

Two students in Denver's Ritchie principal training program simulate a principal-teacher conference while a classmate takes notes to give them feedback.

- a commitment to research that yields the data to track graduates' on-the-job performance and identify training weaknesses.

By the end of 2012, more than 150 aspiring principals will have graduated from the program: Fully 94 percent occupy district leadership positions; 64 percent are principals or assistant principals. A separate program specializes in preparing leaders for the district's 40 charter schools. Still another program – to train high-potential assistant principals to take the helm – is slated to be replaced by a fully-paid "residency" in which APs and others spend a year working under the guidance of an expert principal.

The jury is out on whether Denver's big bet will pay off long-term in better student performance. And both district and university representatives acknowledge that principal training is far from flawless, so improvement is ongoing. Future efforts, supported in part by The Wallace Foundation, will include introducing a new 28-page, standards-based "tool" that describes desired principal and school behaviors to guide training. The district also expects to widen the candidate pool with aspiring principals from outside the district and to make the selection process for training more consistent and readily understood.

Sources: Interview with Susan Korach, Maureen Sanders and John Youngquist of the Denver Public Schools, January 31, 2012; *Evaluation of the Ritchie Program for School Leaders,* Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Inc. and Third Mile Group, September 30, 2008; and "Keeping the Fire Burning: The Evolution of a University-District Collaboration to Develop Leaders for Second-Order Change," an article by Korach in the *Journal of School Leadership,* Vol. 21, No. 5, September 2011.

foster lifelong habits of teamwork, collegiality and collaborative learning, exemplary programs often group participants in "cohorts" that allow them to grow together, share experiences and support each other even after they are hired as leaders.[23] *[See box on criteria for assessing course content, p. 15]*

Exemplary programs also give new leaders the skills and knowledge to work effectively in areas with particular learning styles and challenges. How to lead in urban settings is an explicit focus of training and internships for aspiring principals in St. Louis, Chicago and Springfield, Mass., for example.[24] The University of Denver's leadership training includes a "Get Smart Schools" program designed for future principals of charter and innovative schools, which make up about a quarter of Denver's 160 schools. Program "fellows" visit some of Colorado's highest-performing charter schools and bring back ideas and practices to inform their own leadership. They also take at least one trip to another major city to visit exemplary charters.

▪ Coursework that requires participants to apply theory to practice

Coursework at exemplary programs requires participants to analyze real-life leadership challenges and respond to them. These programs typically use techniques well suited to adult learners, including the case method, action research, problem-based learning and journal writing.

Faculty members at the University of Illinois at Chicago, for example, rarely teach only theory. Instead, they require participants to gather and examine data from their own schools or residency sites as a way to understand and apply theoretical knowledge about leadership. As one example, trainees take part in a group exercise to analyze test results from an elementary school class. Through role-playing, they learn how to collaborate with teachers with varying skills and attitudes toward change in developing a plan to improve student performance. The group members then discuss how well they managed the task and the roles they simulated.[25]

Many programs offer internships. But they commonly settle for fleeting experiences and passive exercises such as shadowing a principal.

To guide participants' progress and align the training with rigorous standards, a number of exemplary programs also develop "individualized learning plans" for each candidate. The plans lay out general expectations and specific learning goals and activities to address each individual's growth needs in such areas as communications or planning. The individualized plan becomes the touchstone for coaching and assessing progress throughout the training program.[26]

▪ Well-designed, supervised internships offering genuine leadership experience

Many programs offer internships, but the Stanford research found that they commonly settle for fleeting experiences and passive exercises, such as shadowing a principal.[27] Similarly, an examination of

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[23] Ibid., 80.

[24] Orr et al., 70.

[25] Cheney et al., 72.

[26] Ibid., 69-70.

[27] Darling Hammond et al., 5-6; also see *Becoming A Leader: Preparing School Principals for Today's Schools,* The Wallace Foundation, 2008, 6.

internships at 60 training programs by the Southern Regional Education Board concluded that many are marked by a scarcity of "…purposeful 'hands on' experiences that would prepare aspiring principals to lead the essential work of school improvement and higher student achievement prior to being placed at the helm of a school."[28]

By contrast, the NYC Leadership Academy, the Ritchie Program for School Leaders in Denver, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the University of San Diego's Educational Leadership Development Academy are among those that feature fully-paid school residencies, which give participants the opportunity to be part of a school community for an extended period and make and analyze actual leadership decisions. *[See article on p. 12]*

Research underscores the critical importance of having district leaders willing to champion exemplary programs, despite the costs.

The Stanford study notes major barriers to providing high-quality internships: lack of money to pay salaries of participants on leave from teaching or other assignments, and the challenge of providing adequate guidance and mentoring. High costs and a desire to maintain high quality and selectivity have led some districts, such as Springfield, Ill., and Jefferson County, Ky., to limit the number of full-year paid internships they provide.[29]

The research findings underscore the critical importance of having district leaders willing to champion these programs despite the costs, and being able to tap a range of funding sources, such as foundation grants or state funds, to help defray participants' expenses. The Stanford research found that participants in exemplary programs were far more likely to be supported by their districts than those attending other programs: just 38 percent of those attending exemplary programs got no financial support, compared with 70 percent in programs nationwide.

Aspiring principals in Denver's Ritchie Program for School Leaders take part in an exercise to hone their skills in communicating with teachers.

[28] Betty Fry, Gene Bottoms and Kathy O'Neill, *The Principal Internship: How Can We Get It Right?*, Southern Regional Education Board, 2005, 3.

[29] Darling-Hammond et al., 75, 96; interview with Kathy Crum, Springfield's director of teaching and learning, January 23, 2012.

A "Quality Measures" Tool to Assess Pre-Service Training Program Content

In 2008, The Education Development Center, Inc. developed an assessment to enable those who run principal training programs to measure their programming against a set of best practices. More than 50 training programs offered by districts, universities and non-profit providers have so far used the "quality measures" tool to evaluate and improve their course work and internships. The assessment, based on the key attributes of exemplary programs identified in the Stanford research, includes the following content criteria:

1. The program requires course work in:
   - **Vision for learning**
   - **School culture**
   - **Instructional supervision**
   - **Management of resources and operations**
   - **Ethical practice**
   - **Political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts.**
2. All required courses are logically and sequentially organized and specifically aligned to state and professional leadership standards.
3. All required courses incorporate project-based learning methods as the comprehensive approach to instruction that include adequate opportunities for students to practice an array of skills in real school contexts.
4. All required courses explicitly link successful completion of coursework to current performance expectations for school principals.
5. All required courses implement well defined formative and summative assessment measures for use by faculty, the candidate, and peers to evaluate candidate performance.

Source: *Principal Preparation Program Quality Self-Assessment Rubrics: Course Content and Pedagogy* and *Clinical Practice,* 2009, Education Development Center, Inc. The rubric was produced with funding from The Wallace Foundation and is available at www.wallacefoundation.org.

Michelle Young, executive director of the University Council for Educational Administration

WILL UNIVERSITY-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMS CHANGE?

Excerpts from a conversation between writer Lee Mitgang and Michelle Young, executive director of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), a national consortium of 98 education institutions committed to advancing the preparation and practice of education leaders. Young is a professor of education at the University of Virginia.

Lee Mitgang: *How much attention are leadership training reform ideas getting from universities? Is there much change on the ground?*

Michelle Young: Yes and no. The Stanford principles [referring to the criteria for high-quality school leadership training described in *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World*] have picked up a lot of steam. They've been incorporated within professional conferences; they've been aligned into the UCEA's quality membership standards. This is important. However, merely because people do research, which then gets published in a report or journal article, does not necessarily mean we will see a lot of pickup unless there are efforts made to facilitate research utilization: How do you change the way you do selection? How do you incorporate more powerful learning experiences within your program? How do you use the national standards and the research to reframe the curriculum in your program? The answers or connections are not necessarily something people just see. Faculty don't suddenly just know how to work as a team to reinvent their programs in collaboration with district personnel.

LM: *What factors are making change difficult?*

MY: I think finance is one. Just like states are getting hit, so are institutions of higher education. Right now, more so than ever before, we see institutions questioning the viability of leadership programs because they are graduate level and so are quite expensive. In your better programs, most cohorts are between 15 and 20, sometimes a little larger, which means the tuition that they're bringing per faculty member is much smaller. So cost is one issue, particularly when a lot of programs have been trying to increase the level of personal touch they provide candidates through mentoring and coaching and more robust supervision during their internship and practical experiences.

LM: *Districts are being urged to become more active collaborators with universities to improve principal training. Will that strategy succeed if some universities*

are questioning whether they can even afford to keep their programs open?

MY: Where universities have really strong partnerships with districts, some of their costs are contained. For example, the University of Texas in Austin has worked with districts to provide internships for their graduate students that are actually assistant principal positions or teacher-facilitator positions. So the students get into the building as an official leader while they're in the program, getting a sheltered leadership experience, having a coach, having their onsite supervisor and their university faculty all for support in addition to their own cohort. In that case, at least the internship experience, which is often one of the most costly aspects of a program, is taken care of. And the district is gaining and the university is gaining, and the individual is gaining. I think that those types of innovative practices are going to go a long way in the future in providing much stronger leader preparation programs and a different way of thinking through cost.

> *Out of about 500 university principal training programs, "you've got about 200 that are pretty solid. That's kind of a scary thought."*

LM: *What about the old charge that some leadership programs are just "cash cows" for universities?*

MY: That's been a concern for many years. In 1987 the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration recommended that about 250 of the then-500 programs should be closed for that very reason. A couple of years ago, we did an analysis and one of the shocking things we found was that institutions with the most capacity – and by that I mean faculty and various institutional resources – are shrinking and producing fewer degrees. Whereas the more regional institutions that are operating with maybe two or three faculty are developing doctoral programs and master's programs at alarming rates. In many of these places the cohorts are enormous, so I would say that yes, there very likely is a cash-cow issue going on right now.

LM: *If you were going to locate this phenomenon, then, it would be mainly at non-flagship public universities, former teachers colleges, regional liberal arts colleges?*

MY: Right. As a general rule, if you have a university that has a master's program and if their annual admissions are more than 30 for a single site, then you probably have a cash-cow situation. When you go over 30, then your cohort experience deteriorates, and it's much less likely that the program is about developing leaders. It's much more about revenue.

LM: *So looking at the big picture of the 500-plus university leadership programs, what proportion are we talking about?*

MY: I'd say out of that 500 you've got about 200 that are pretty solid. That's kind of a scary thought.

LM: *Can we look for any positive movement in the field?*

MY: This comes back to whether or not individuals who are designing and delivering the program have the information and other resources to help them with a redesign process, and whether or not they have the desire or wherewithal to do it. A lot of programs – hard to say how many – are in positions where they have what it takes to redesign. They are integrating or have integrated the quality standards that the Stanford research is advocating. There are others who may not even know that they exist.

Getting Principal Internships Right

The Southern Regional Education Board identifies the following characteristics of high-quality pre-service principal internships:

- Collaboration between the university and school districts that anchors internship activities in real-world problems principals face, provides for appropriate structure and support of learning experiences, and ensures quality guidance and supervision.
- An explicit set of school-based assignments designed to provide opportunities for the application of knowledge, skills and ways of thinking that are required to effectively perform the core responsibilities of a school leader, as identified in state standards and research.
- A developmental continuum of practice that progresses from observing to participating in and then leading school-based activities related to the core responsibilities of school leaders, with analysis, synthesis and evaluation of real-life problems at each level.
- Field placements that provide opportunities to work with diverse students, teachers, parents and communities.
- Handbooks or other guiding materials that clearly define the expectations, processes and schedule of the internship to participants, faculty supervisors, directing principals and district personnel.
- Ongoing supervision by program faculty who have the expertise and time to provide frequent feedback that lets interns know how they need to improve.
- Directing principals (coaches) who model the desired leadership behaviors and who know how to guide interns through required activities that bring their performance to established standards.
- Rigorous evaluations of interns' performance of core school leader responsibilities, based on clearly defined performance standards and exit criteria and consistent procedures.

Source: *The Principal Internship: How Can We Get It Right?*, Southern Regional Education Board, 2005, 7 (report available at www.wallacefoundation.org).

Lesson 3

Districts should do more to exercise their power to raise the quality of principal training, so that newly hired leaders better meet their needs.

The needs of aspiring principals are naturally a major factor in shaping the curricula and pedagogy in training programs. But for districts intent on improving their schools, the needs of schools and students ought to be paramount – and the content of leadership training should reflect that primacy. This realization turns districts into the main "consumers" of principal training. Training programs have a powerful incentive to change when a district declares it will hire only graduates of those programs that meet its standards and needs.

How can districts most effectively and constructively use their influence? As previously described, they can, for starters, work with training programs to develop more selective admissions criteria. Beyond that, district efforts analyzed by the Education Development Center (EDC) suggest there are three sets of actions – which in practice are often blended – districts can take to influence training content and methods:[30]

- **Being "discerning customers"** – by adopting or creating leadership standards to drive the key choices in selecting, training and hiring new principals

Becoming a more discerning customer centers on setting leadership standards and using them to improve the candidate pool. The key point is that the standards clarify the essential traits of effective leadership. The EDC research found that some districts are adopting state standards or the national Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards[31] – or developing their own. Whatever their source, the standards become the criteria for determining who should be admitted to training at area university programs, who should get district-financed internships, and what program graduates need to know to be hired as a school leader in the district.

Training programs have a powerful incentive to change when a district declares it will hire only graduates of programs that meet its needs.

Boston developed "Ten Dimensions of School Leadership" that became the basis for both admission to its district-run Principal Fellowship Program and the program's content. Fort Wayne, Ind., used its standards to determine eligibility requirements for district-paid internships. Chicago and Jefferson County, Ky., use district leadership competencies to determine which local universities aspiring principals should attend if they want a leg up in getting district-paid internships or scholarships and eventually land a leadership job. The University of Illinois at Chicago subsequently used the Chicago school district's five core leadership competencies, derived from the ISLLC standards and the recommendations of a district task force, to admit and assess its candidates.[32]

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[30] Orr et al., 42-3.

[31] The ISLLC standards, developed in 1996, have been adopted or used as the framework for leadership standards by virtually all states. The standards were revised in 2008 by the Council of Chief State School Officers with Wallace Foundation support.

[32] Orr et al., 43.

EDC's research found that setting standards and applying them to important training and selection decisions is the most common tactic to increase district clout. The early benefits to the districts studied centered on clarifying their expectations for school leaders and increasing the number of new graduates with the qualities the districts wanted. Participating universities gained insights into district needs and principals' roles that helped guide them in upgrading their programs. But the research also found that the standard-setting exercise could take many months, or even years, to complete. And success depended heavily on the willingness of district and university leaders to follow through in changing practices and policies, so they were in step with the standards.[33]

- **Being "collaborators"** – by blending partnerships and various inducements to influence area universities to align their content or methods with district needs

The EDC research found that districts that focus on changing the programs of training providers took one or more of the following steps:

- Develop a formal district-provider partnership to create a training program;
- Give training enrollees at collaborating universities more district support than those at other local providers;
- Award scholarships usable in preferred programs; and
- Contract competitively with area training programs.[34]

In 2002, the Springfield, Ill., school district gave preferred status to Illinois State University after then-superintendent Diane Rutledge and the university created a leader training program based on the district's "six qualities of an ideal principal." Some of the courses take place in the district and are co-taught by university and district staff members.[35]

The Springfield, Ill., school district gave preferred status to a leader training program, based on the district's "six qualities of an ideal principal."

The St. Louis school district used a competitive process to select a partner from among area universities to craft a new training program closely tied to district needs. The University of Missouri-Columbia was ultimately chosen for its willingness to create a curriculum with the district that incorporated state-of-the-art methods developed by the NYC Leadership Academy. The university waived tuition and adopted admissions policies excluding anyone not motivated to become a school leader, while the district covered faculty costs.[36]

EDC's research concluded that the strategy of "being a collaborator" is a powerful way for districts to take a more direct hand in inducing universities to provide high-quality programs. But these arrangements, especially those that feature

[33] Orr et al., 45-46.

[34] Ibid., 50.

[35] Ibid., 52; and interview with Kathy Crum, director of teaching and learning, Springfield, Ill., schools, January 23, 2012.

[36] Ibid., 51.

costly district-funded scholarships and internships, can be hard to sustain in the face of fiscal challenges or changes in district or university leadership.[37]

- **Being "competitors"** – by taking on the job of principal training themselves

Districts aren't pinning all their hopes on universities. Some, including New York City, Boston and Prince George's County, Md., have established their own training programs – sometimes in partnership with nonprofit training providers – or have created free-standing academies with curricula tied directly to their needs. EDC found that this approach gives districts the most control over the design and outcome of principal training. But it is also the costliest route and the one most vulnerable to changes in district leadership or reform goals.[38]

Districts aren't pinning all their hopes on universities. Some have established their own training programs.

Boston established its School Leadership Institute in 2003 with foundation and federal support. The state provided key help by giving the district authority to establish its own leader certification program closely aligned with district priorities. District officials and principals help screen candidates, coursework centers on Boston's leadership standards, and selected program "fellows" engage in a full-year residency and receive credit toward a master's degree in education from the University of Massachusetts-Boston.[39]

To prepare leaders for its most challenging schools, Prince George's County is developing a standards-driven training program with the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL), a for-profit arm of the non-profit National Center on Education and the Economy, a Washington, D.C.-based education policy and development organization. The curriculum is being designed by the district and NISL, and the first group of approximately 25 aspiring leaders is scheduled to enter the program in the summer of 2012.[40] Partnership goals include: increasing the number of candidates ready to lead district schools; moving from a curriculum that stresses management to one that emphasizes instructional improvement; providing more support to new principals, including ongoing mentoring and professional development; and ensuring that the new leaders incorporate the district's goals in their schools.[41]

Perhaps the outstanding example of this model is the NYC Leadership Academy. Since its founding as a nonprofit by the city in 2003, the Academy has grown into a multi-faceted enterprise providing pre-service training to aspiring principals, mentoring for both new and sitting principals, and a range

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[37] Orr et al., 52-53.

[38] Ibid., 55.

[39] Ibid., 48-49.

[40] Data provided by Douglas Anthony, Director, Human Capital Management, Prince George's County Public Schools.

[41] National Institute for School Leadership, Prince George's County Public Schools, *Success by Design: Partnering in PGCPS' Aspiring Leaders Program for Student Success,* A Front-End Analysis, November 21, 2011. The district is one of six named in 2011 to participate in The Wallace Foundation's six-year, $75 million initiative to build and evaluate "principal pipelines" that will feature these essentials: leader standards; high-quality aspiring leader preparation; selective hiring of leaders; and on-the-job support for new leaders. The other districts are Charlotte-Mecklenburg in North Carolina; Denver; Gwinnett County, Ga.; Hillsborough County, Fla., and New York City.

of continuing professional development activities to school leaders citywide. In 2008, the Academy established a fee-for-service national consulting arm that has advised organizations in 23 states on how to lift their quality by adapting the Academy's tools and methodologies.

The cornerstone of its pre-service training is the Aspiring Principals Program. It features an intensive, six-week summer program that uses a problem-based curriculum simulating the challenges of a New York City principalship; a 10-month, school-based residency under the mentorship of an experienced principal; and a summer session that enables graduates to plan for a smooth entry into school leadership positions. Former New York City principals and principal supervisors make up the faculty. The city's Department of Education pays the salaries and benefits of those admitted. To date, the program has produced about 450 graduates, almost all of whom assumed leadership positions in the district within a year of finishing training. By the 2010-11 school year, 17 percent of the city's 1,600 public schools were headed by Academy graduates.[42]

Lesson 4

States could make better use of their power to influence the quality of leadership training through standard-setting, program accreditation, principal certification and financial support for highly qualified candidates.

Districts are the front-line players for improving school leadership, but states can also wield considerable influence over how well principals are trained. As the Stanford research noted, some of the most strategic state efforts use, among other things:

- Standards and accountability to improve programs through licensure and program accreditation;
- Financial support for principal recruitment and quality internships and mentoring; and
- Creation of state leadership academies that provide ongoing professional development.[43]

States have paid more attention to the quality of school leadership over the last decade. As previously noted, most states have adopted standards defining basic leadership competencies that promote learning, and in the 2010 legislative season alone, "…at least 23 states enacted 42 laws to support school leader initiatives," according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.[44]

Nonetheless, only a minority have effectively exercised their authority to improve school leadership statewide. What's often been missing has been a methodical channeling of state authority and funding toward the goal of building a pipeline of well-qualified school leaders in concert with districts, universities and other training providers. As a 2011 report by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) concluded: "The lack of coordination between these different actors within the school leadership system severely inhibits the ability of state leadership standards to take hold regardless of their quality."[45]

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[42] Sources: Academy Web site; grantee reports to The Wallace Foundation by the Academy; and independent evaluations of the Academy's programs conducted in 2009 and 2011 by the Institute for Education and Social Policy at New York University. (Both evaluations are available at www.wallacefoundation.org.)

[43] *Education Leadership: A Bridge to School Reform*, The Wallace Foundation, 2007, excerpts from remarks by Darling-Hammond, 23.

[44] Sara Shelton, *Strong Leaders Strong Schools: 2010 School Leadership Laws,* National Conference of State Legislatures, 2011, 2. (In annual reports issued in partnership with The Wallace Foundation since 2007, the National Conference of State Legislatures has made similar findings. The reports are available at www.wallacefoundation.org.)

[45] Chris Sun, *School Leadership: Improving State Systems for Leader Development,* National Association of State Boards of Education, 2011, 6. This discussion guide was produced with support from The Wallace Foundation and is available at www.wallacefoundation.org.

Still, a number of states have made notable progress in taking more coordinated, less desultory approaches to advancing school leadership:[46]

- Delaware, Iowa and Kentucky got high marks in a 2010 RAND study for their progress in aligning state and district policies affecting principal training with clear school leader standards. Kentucky, for example, requires universities to collaborate with districts in designing their leadership programs and determining selection criteria.[47]

- Georgia, Illinois, Florida, New York, Delaware, Louisiana, Iowa and Tennessee are among states that have required universities to redesign their leadership programs, so they're in sync with standards focused on student learning and instructional improvement – and then reapply for state approval.[48]

- Illinois, Kentucky, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon and Virginia created task forces or legislative working groups to redesign leadership preparation statewide. The work in Illinois led in 2010 to comprehensive reforms, including learning-centered leader standards. New legislation also required that universities and districts collaborate in designing programs and that those programs adopt more rigorous admissions policies, extended residencies for participants, and mentoring and other support to novice principals.[49]

Only a minority of states have effectively exercised their authority to improve school leadership statewide.

- Mississippi, North Carolina and Delaware have provided financial support for principal recruitment, quality internships or mentoring.[50]

- Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana and New Mexico have established state leadership academies that provide training, professional development and/or mentoring for principals.

- Rhode Island is among the few states requiring state approval of internships offered by leader preparation programs.[51]

(continued on page 24)

[46] Many of the states most often cited as exemplary in recent research are among the 24 that participated in The Wallace Foundation's education leadership initiative, which began in 2000. Progress in some, like Delaware, was further spurred by winning federal Race to the Top competitive grants.

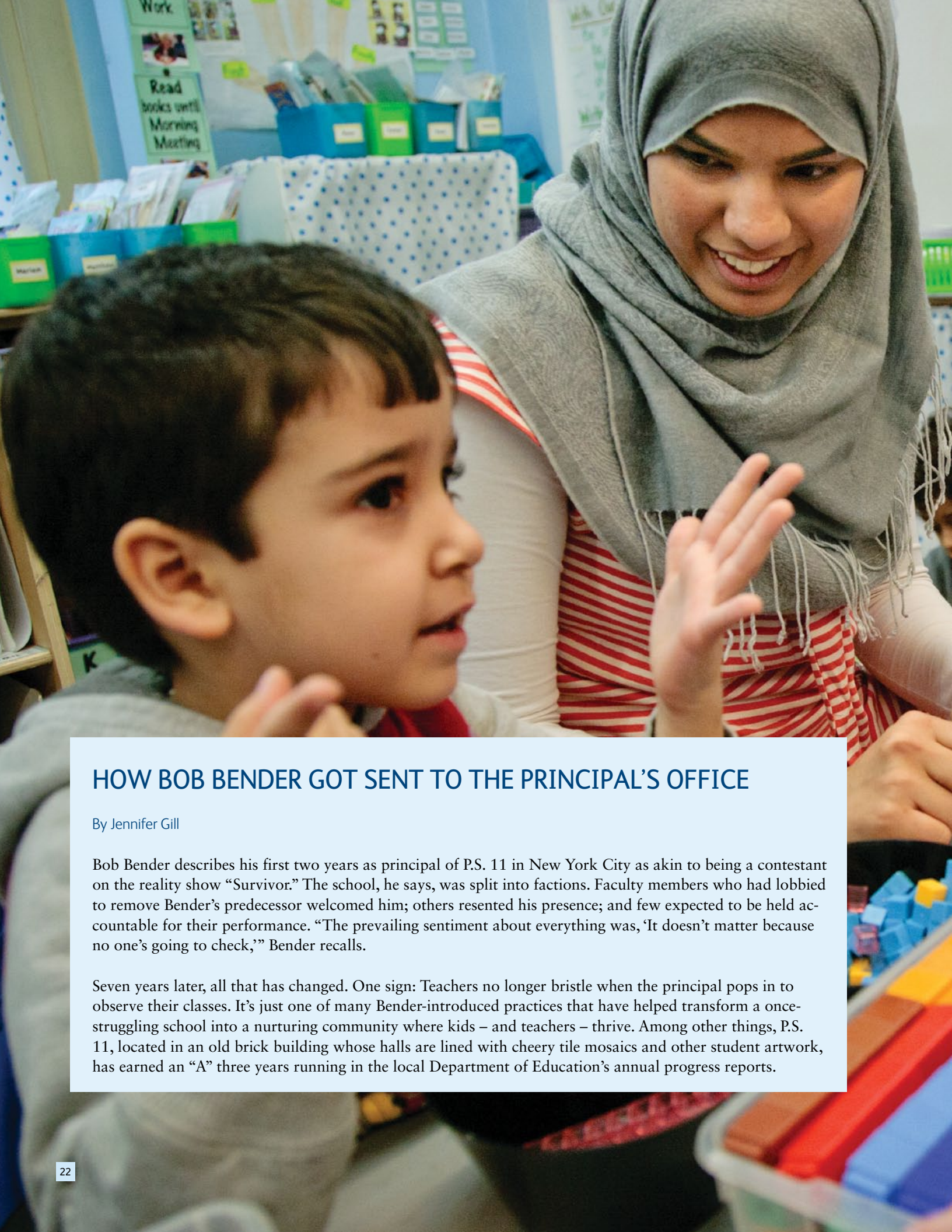
[47] Catherine H. Augustine et al., *Improving School Leadership: The Promise of Cohesive Leadership Systems,* RAND Education, 2009, 48. The report, commissioned by The Wallace Foundation, examined 10 states and 17 districts that participated in Wallace's education leadership initiative to determine their success in developing well-coordinated leadership systems.

[48] *Becoming A Leader: Preparing School Principals for Today's Schools,* The Wallace Foundation, 2008, 3.

[49] Gretchen Rhines Cheney, Jacquelyn Davis, *Gateways to the Principalship: State Power to Improve the Quality of School Leaders,* Center for American Progress, 2011, 22.

[50] *Education Leadership: A Bridge to School Reform,* The Wallace Foundation, 2007, excerpts from remarks by Darling-Hammond about findings from Stanford's *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World,* 23.

[51] Orr et al., 103.



HOW BOB BENDER GOT SENT TO THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

By Jennifer Gill

Bob Bender describes his first two years as principal of P.S. 11 in New York City as akin to being a contestant on the reality show "Survivor." The school, he says, was split into factions. Faculty members who had lobbied to remove Bender's predecessor welcomed him; others resented his presence; and few expected to be held accountable for their performance. "The prevailing sentiment about everything was, 'It doesn't matter because no one's going to check,'" Bender recalls.

Seven years later, all that has changed. One sign: Teachers no longer bristle when the principal pops in to observe their classes. It's just one of many Bender-introduced practices that have helped transform a once-struggling school into a nurturing community where kids – and teachers – thrive. Among other things, P.S. 11, located in an old brick building whose halls are lined with cheery tile mosaics and other student artwork, has earned an "A" three years running in the local Department of Education's annual progress reports.

Principal Bob Bender observes a math lesson by first-grade teacher Farida Ahmad at P.S. 11 in New York City.

"Transparent feedback is the most important thing in this profession," Bender says.

Before arriving at P.S. 11 in 2005, Bender, a former teacher, had never run a school. What made a successful transition possible, he believes, was the training he received from the NYC Leadership Academy, a nonprofit that aims to prepare the next generation of school leaders. Through the academy's Aspiring Principals Program, Bender took courses and spent a year working under the guidance of an expert principal – getting experience and a first-hand view of the ins and outs of running a public school, from improving instruction to navigating organizational politics. Bender joined the principal on classroom visits, attended faculty meetings and led special projects, such as overhauling lunchtime to teach kids manners and respect for the cafeteria workers. Even sitting in his office, which he shared with two assistant principals, proved instructive. "What I learned just from listening to them on the phone or in meetings with parents was invaluable," Bender says.

In an intensive summer session, Bender and his Leadership Academy classmates led a simulated school as co-principals. There, he learned about the art of collaboration, a skill he finds essential to working effectively with teachers, families and others. The experience also thickened his skin, teaching him how to take hard-to-swallow criticism – and how to deliver bad news to a teacher with tact, but no sugar coating. "Transparent feedback is the most important thing in this profession," he says.

Bender hasn't forgotten how he got to the principal's office – he currently has a couple of "aspirings" from the Leadership Academy interning at his school. Nor has he forgotten what he learned. Today, the effects of the training Bender received can be seen in everything from his "let's-look-at-the-data" meetings with P.S. 11's math and literacy coaches, to his classroom pop-ins. "It can be nerve-wracking, but it's not something out of the ordinary," first grade teacher Farida Ahmad said with a smile after one such visit.

Mr. Bender is a sight P.S. 11 children are clearly used to seeing in their classrooms. Indeed, when friends complain about their corporate jobs, Bender can't commiserate. "I tell them I got hugged 42 times today. You can't get much better than that."

Lesson 5

Especially in their first years on the job, principals need high-quality mentoring and professional development tailored to individual and district needs.

Getting pre-service principal training right is essential. But equally important is the training and support school leaders receive after they're hired. The realities of their jobs hit full-force the day they arrive at their schools, along with pressure to prioritize problems and develop plans for fast results. Without expert guidance and encouragement, a novice can quickly feel ground down by the loneliness at the top. As one new elementary school principal in New York City put it: "No matter what preparation anyone has, being the principal is not the same. Nothing prepares you for the job."[52]

Good pre-service training is essential. But equally important is the training and support school leaders receive after they're hired.

Encouragingly, more states and districts have been abandoning a long-held, sink-or-swim mentality towards new principals. Since 2000, more than half of the states have enacted requirements for mentoring novice principals, spurred by growing recognition of the importance of school leadership to reform goals, and by concerns about high turnover and looming principal shortages in high-needs schools.[53]

Nonetheless, much remains to be done to make mentoring more meaningful. As detailed in a 2007 Wallace Foundation report, mentoring is too often in the nature of a "buddy system," delivered by well-meaning but inadequately trained mentors and connected only weakly to district needs.[54] Moreover, professional development to enhance principals' skills in specific areas is frequently based on "whims, fads, opportunism and ideology" rather than standards or sound research, a report by NASBE found. [55]

NASBE singled out Ohio's "Entry-Year Program for Principals" as one of the better state-mandated mentoring programs. It requires all new principals to work with mentors for two years to receive a full professional license. Among other requirements, new principals must develop a portfolio that shows their competency in the state's leadership standards.[56]

The Providence, R.I., school district, the Gwinnett County, Ga., Leader-Plus Academy, and the NYC Leadership Academy are among the standouts in providing high-quality, sustained mentoring and professional development:

- Providence's coaching features many hallmarks of high quality identified by research: continuous training for coaches; well-publicized criteria to receive coaching; confidentiality of coaching sessions; and, a bit unusually, inclusion of teacher-leaders as coaching recipients.[57] Coupled with a state mentoring requirement for new principals, coaching is now firmly embedded in district

[52] *Getting Principal Mentoring Right: Lessons for the Field,* The Wallace Foundation, 2007, 6.

[53] Ibid., 5-6.

[54] Ibid., 7.

[55] Chris Sun, 8.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Grantee report to The Wallace Foundation, fall 2011.

culture and considered a "right" for all new administrators, teacher-leaders and principals who request it, says Miley, Providence's director of leadership support and development.[58]

- Gwinnett County–Georgia's largest school district, serving more than 162,000 students–begins its support for novice leaders with a summer institute that gathers more than 800 new and veteran principals, assistant principals and other school leaders for several days of collaborative learning and professional development with national experts on such topics as closing the achievement gap or changing school culture. All new principals and assistant principals are mentored their first two years by highly trained retired district principals with track records of improving schools.[59]

- The NYC Leadership Academy offers coaching to all first-year New York City principals. Annual Academy surveys find high rates of satisfaction with their support and their growth in leadership skills.[60] Mentors, usually retired principals or principal supervisors who receive intensive, ongoing Academy training, provide an average of 72 hours of one-on-one support for each novice. At the beginning of the school year, new principals conduct a self-assessment using an Academy-developed tool that sets forth key leadership capabilities to be mastered to improve learning and instruction.[61] Based on the assessment, the principal and mentor identify three main coaching goals that become the basis for an "Individualized Growth Plan." Along the way, new principals can draw on the Academy's specialist coaches for help in conducting school-data analysis and budgeting.

CONCLUSION: SPREADING THE PRACTICES, SUSTAINING THE WORK

The time is ripe to make the exemplary practices detailed in this report the rule rather than the exception in districts around the country. As we said at the outset:

- New research has established that high-quality leadership is essential to the success of any school improvement strategy.

- The principal is the single biggest determinant of whether or not teachers want to stay in their schools, which suggests that better leadership may be a highly cost-effective way to improve teaching and learning throughout schools.

- Therefore, the quality of training and support principals receive matters a great deal and deserves serious investment.

- For the first time, the field has compelling evidence that points to a set of actions to address long-standing weaknesses in leadership training.

- There are early indications that investing in better leadership training can pay off in higher student performance and lower principal turnover.

The steps described here are neither a panacea nor a pat formula. To the contrary, if anything is clear from the examples cited, states and districts are taking different pathways to improving leadership preparation. Whatever the approach, nurturing the green shoots of progress in newly created high-

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[58] Interview with Ed Miley, February 2, 2012.

[59] Data concerning Gwinnett County's programs provided by Dr. Glenn Pethel, the district's executive director of leadership development.

[60] In 2010-11, first-year coaching program participants surveyed gave an average satisfaction score of 3.86 (on a scale of one to four), and an average rating of 3.72 on the extent to which coaching increased their capacity for leadership.

[61] The Academy's Leadership Performance Planning Worksheet tool, developed between 2007 and 2009, has been used in 12 states by some 450 coaches.

quality training programs will depend, first, on having standards that codify the changed, learning-centered definition of "good leadership." Those standards must then drive every aspect of the training process, from candidate selection to program content to district hiring. Progress will also require strong district and university champions willing to protect high-quality programs from cuts and "watch the backs" of novice principals as they struggle to challenge the status quo of teaching and learning in their schools, based on what their new training has prepared them to do.

Universities will almost certainly remain the single largest source of training. The urgent question for them, therefore, is: What will it take to have more programs adopt the exemplary practices validated in the research?

The evidence poses an equally urgent challenge for districts: to take a much stronger hand in deciding who should be a candidate for school leadership, to exercise their clout to improve the quality of training, and to hire only graduates of better programs. Where districts are doing so – and where state policies are supportive and the providers of training are willing partners for positive change – the results have often been strongest.

Experience suggests that the biggest obstacles to maintaining high-quality principal training include district and university leadership transitions, insufficient planning and attention to leadership issues – and certainly not least, finding reliable funding for the often-high costs of quality training, including internships or scholarships.

Obstacles to maintaining high-quality principal training include district and university leader transitions, insufficient planning and the search for reliable funding.

In the exemplary programs cited in the Stanford research, the per-participant cost of coursework alone ranged from roughly $20,000 to $42,000, depending on the number of credit hours required to earn a degree or certification. Paid internships added enormously to those totals: For example, in San Diego's leadership program, the cost of coursework was $20,300 per participant, but a full-year paid internship added another $58,600.[62] Who bears these costs? In varying proportions, they are typically covered by universities (faculty, staff, space, materials, etc.); districts (tuition support, space, etc.); foundation grants; state grants and scholarships; federal funds (various programs to support professional development in education); and participants themselves (uncompensated tuition costs, books, transportation, etc.).[63]

Viewed another way, however, the cost of high-quality training and internships seems more manageable, amounting to approximately $10 to $80 in annual per-student spending, depending on program features, the size of the district and other variables.[64] And as stated at the beginning of this report, early evidence suggests possible payoffs from these expenditures in reduced principal turnover and improved student achievement.

Further justification for investing in leader preparation came in a 2011 report analyzing the education systems in five countries where students consistently outperform U.S. students. It found that a distin-

[62] Darling-Hammond et al., 103, 107-9. The report's analysis of costs for the eight exemplary programs in its study was based on 2004-05 data.

[63] Ibid., 112.

[64] *Becoming A Leader: Preparing School Leaders for Today's Schools,* The Wallace Foundation, 2008, 9.

guishing characteristic of those systems is that they "invest in high-quality preparation, mentoring and professional development for teachers and leaders, completely at government expense."[65]

In some districts, costlier items such as high-quality mentoring programs and fully-paid internships or scholarships have been struggling lately. Elsewhere, exemplary training programs have managed so far to stay largely intact:

- The Fairfax County, Va., school district has assumed the full cost of running all three of its high-quality aspiring principal programs established with foundation funding from 2001 to 2007. District leaders attribute their success in sustaining and spreading these programs to a large and qualified pool of applicants who want to be leaders, the success of graduates now holding district leadership positions, ongoing financial support from the district, and consistency of leadership.[66]

- The NYC Leadership Academy is now largely supported through fee-for-service work in New York City and across the county. In 2008, it received a five-year contract from the city's Department of Education to provide local public schools with a range of leadership development programs, including its aspiring principal program. The Academy has also provided coaching and other support to more than half the city's principals. Income from the Academy's national consulting arm is growing as well: More than half of the revenue generated by its national work in 2010-11 came from new clients.[67]

- Providence's district-based training programs and its extensive coaching and professional development programs have weathered four superintendents and five chief academic officers as well as extreme budget problems over the last decade. Funding from The Wallace Foundation covered nearly all costs for the first five years. Remarkably, this impoverished district has fully assumed those costs: about $26,000 per leader candidate for 20 months of pre-service preparation and internship; about $240,000 a year for principal coaching; and varying annual costs for professional development as high as $700,000. Along with accomplishments that include sharp reductions in turnover, the programs have gained many vocal champions among its graduates, some of whom hold top district positions where funding decisions are made. But district leaders say they can't rule out that continued budgetary strains could threaten these programs in the future.[68]

Sustaining and spreading effective leadership training practices will require continued commitment from district leaders and other educators. It will require more universities and districts willing to collaborate in adopting practices that better prepare future school leaders for their changed roles and responsibilities. More states will have to enact stronger policies and incentives to reinforce reform efforts by districts and training providers, and press harder on programs that are falling short. The actions outlined here will take time, money and political will. But maintaining subpar leadership training also carries a cost: principals ill prepared to survive the stresses of their jobs and lacking the qualities and skills to turn around failing schools. The cost will be borne most heavily by schoolchildren.

We should no longer be asking them to pay it.

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[65] Marc S. Tucker, *Surpassing Shanghai: An Agenda for American Education Built on the World's Leading Systems,* Harvard Education Press, 2011, x. The five systems examined were: Shanghai, Finland, Japan, Singapore and Canada. The quotation cited appears in a foreword to the report by Linda Darling-Hammond.

[66] Grantee report to The Wallace Foundation on the sustainability and scale of Fairfax County's principal training and support programs, fall 2011.

[67] Grantee report to The Wallace Foundation on the sustainability and scale of Academy programs, fall 2011.

[68] Grantee report to The Wallace Foundation on the sustainability and scale of Providence's principal training and support programs, fall 2011; interview with Ed Miley, February 2, 2012.

Learn More

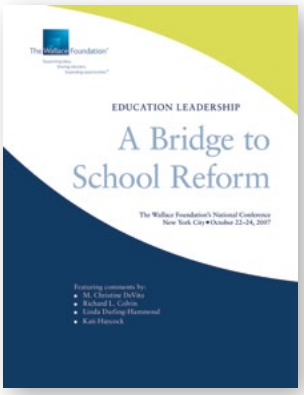
You can find out more about school leadership and related topics by visiting The Wallace Foundation's Web site at www.wallacefoundation.org. Here's a partial listing of free Wallace publications and multimedia resources:

Districts Developing Leaders: Lessons on Consumer Actions and Program Approaches From Eight Urban Districts, Education Development Center, Inc., 2010.

How Leadership Influences Student Learning, University of Minnesota and University of Toronto, 2004.

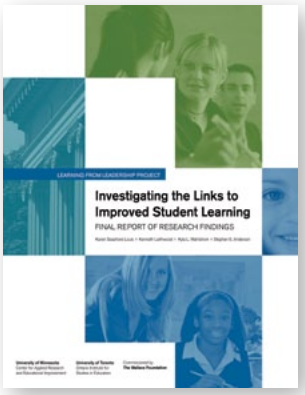
Preparing School Leaders for A Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs (Final Report and Executive Summary), Stanford University and The Finance Project, 2007.

The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning, The Wallace Foundation, 2012.



Education Leadership: A Bridge to School Reform, The Wallace Foundation, 2007.

Getting Principal Mentoring Right: Lessons from the Field, A Wallace Perspective, 2007.



Learning From Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Students Learning, University of Minnesota and University of Toronto, 2010.

Research Findings to Support Effective Educational Policymaking: Evidence and Action Steps for State, District and Local Policymakers, The Wallace Foundation, 2011.

Good Principals Aren't Born — They're Mentored: Are We Investing Enough to Get the School Leaders We Need?, SREB, 2007.

Knowledge in Brief: Connecting Leadership to Learning, The Wallace Foundation, 2010.

Learning-Focused Leadership and Leadership Support: Meaning and Practice in Urban Systems, University of Washington, 2010.

NASBE Discussion Guide: School Leadership: Improving State Systems for Leader Development, National Association of State Boards of Education, 2011.

The New York City Aspiring Principals Program: A School-Level Evaluation, New York University, 2009.

The Principal Story Project, guides, film clips and other materials based on the PBS documentary, 2009.

The Wallace Foundation

Supporting ideas.
Sharing solutions.
Expanding opportunities.

The Wallace Foundation is a national philanthropy that seeks to improve education and enrichment for disadvantaged children. The foundation has an unusual approach: funding projects to test innovative ideas for solving important public problems, conducting research to find out what works and what doesn't and to fill key knowledge gaps – and then communicating the results to help others.

Wallace has five major initiatives under way:

- School leadership: Strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement.
- After school: Helping selected cities make good out-of-school time programs available to many more children.
- Audience development for the arts: Making the arts a part of many more people's lives by working with arts organizations to broaden, deepen and diversify audiences.
- Arts education: Expanding arts learning opportunities for children and teens.
- Summer and expanded learning time: Giving children more hours to devote to learning.

The Wallace Foundation
5 Penn Plaza, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10001
212.251.9700 Telephone
info@wallacefoundation.org

www.wallacefoundation.org