Transforming the School Principalship: A Framework of Promising Practices and Bold Actions

December 2013

Submitted to

Imagine West Virginia

Prepared by

ICF International
300 Summers Street, Suite 600
Charleston, West Virginia 25301
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This report was prepared for Imagine West Virginia under Consultant Agreement Number IWV-ICF-2013-001 administered by ICF International.
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Executive Summary

State leaders and policy makers are at a critical juncture. The results of a state education audit have been published, the West Virginia Board of Education has prepared its response, and working groups and appointed Commissions have submitted their recommendations. The message is clear. West Virginia must improve its operational efficiency and effectiveness and its rank among other states on numerous performance indicators. Teaching and learning must yield stronger student achievement, and school leadership must be strengthened and prepared to lead the state through a series of changes necessary to attain new performance levels.

The decisions and actions taken at this juncture will determine the state’s trajectory for the next several years. One course of action would be to let the status quo prevail and implement small, incremental changes that would institute refinements but not substantively change the administration and performance of schools. A second course would be to redesign the principalship by selecting and implementing customized changes that are compatible with current operations. While the second trajectory can alter the system, the support needed would require a long-term commitment and an unwavering focus on the goals. The third trajectory is steep and labor intensive. Here, the timeframe is compressed, and the changes are disruptive to the system as the state embarks on a bolder course of action.

Key Conclusions and Recommendations

A review of eight state-level education reports yielded more than 30 issues and challenges impacting the principalship in West Virginia. The challenges were reviewed and clustered according to six context conditions impacting the work of school leaders. In addition, principals need training and support to function in a wide range of roles, including six new roles identified from the challenges and related literature.

The challenges, role changes, and contextual factors were used to select and recommend components for a new principalship program that would update the training and roles of school administrators. Recommendations and promising practices were identified for principal training and evaluation, selection, continuing education, and implementation of new roles (see Figure 1).

Recommendations for a redesigned principalship include:

- New professional expanded standards to incorporate the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards and multistate content. (Bolder Course of Action: Develop international standards and industry standards.)
- Establish a state Professional Standards Board to approve training programs, issue certificates and monitor the quality of the program. Standards to guide training programs, continuing education, and evaluation. (Bolder Course of Action: Approve agencies, private companies, universities, and other organizations to provide training and credentialing.)
Create advanced specializations (beyond the administrative license) in areas such as change and school improvement.

Create dual assignments for school administrators—as principal and as School Performance Administrator. Principals would work with other schools in the district according to their area of specialty and would be members of a School Performance Administrator Team.

Offer professional learning community, mentoring, and coaching support to principals. (Bolder Course of Action: Provide paid internships to new principals.)

Conduct and customize continuing education programs according to skills and competencies addressed in expanded standards. (Bolder Course of Action: Reinstate the West Virginia Leadership Institute.)

Promote Shared Leadership as an opportunity to cultivate new leaders. (Bolder Course of Action: Use distributed administration as a method to reduce workload and refocus available time on instructional leadership activities.)

The complexity of the school environment, the nature of the current and emerging challenges, and the multiple roles that principals must fill, all point to the need for a comprehensive principal training program that will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to improve school performance. The redesigned principalship addresses the identified challenges, proposes expanded standards, and suggests new training content and roles for school principals.
Figure 1. Redesigned principalship.
Section I: The Principalship in Action

Today

We open the door quietly and walk inside. The meeting is underway and the voices and faces are strained. Around the table we see the principal, assistant principal, faculty senate chair, and a teacher member of the principal’s advisory committee. The group has been in conference for more than an hour and is now awaiting a phone call from the superintendent to report the actions planned in response to the release of student test data that once again places the school, and now the district, in an underperforming status. The phone rings and the principal pauses momentarily before opening the line. Over the next 20 minutes, members of the group review the status of the school’s improvement plan, provide data on the objectives and benchmarks, describe the follow-up staff development session that will analyze the curriculum standards in more depth, and explain the classroom observations and coaching support that teachers will receive over the next three months. The superintendent asks for a written report on the discussion and recommends several strategies the school can use to inform parents and members of the public about the planned actions.

Thirty minutes later, at another school in the district, we join a similar meeting in progress. This time, the principal is visibly frustrated. One by one, participating staff report to the superintendent that everything listed in the school improvement plan has been implemented, and the principal reviews the weekly observations and classroom walkthroughs that were conducted during the semester and explains that there were no instructional issues or problems that required follow-up intervention.

Meanwhile, 50 miles away in a neighboring district, a similar meeting is underway. Here, the principal and staff are at a loss to know what to do. They report to the superintendent that all the programs and services recommended by the district have been implemented but nothing seems to help.

In the Not Too Distant Future

We return to the schools and join a meeting in progress. At the first school, the tense facial expressions are replaced with a visible level of energy. Participants work from electronic data notebooks and periodically display charts and graphs to illustrate a point under discussion. All participants take notes and merge the information into a common note file containing comments and documents that are added as the meeting progresses. A common task list and schedule are projected onto a large wall screen and an updated version is saved every 10 minutes into participant calendar files. The number of participants in this meeting has increased to include Jane Smith, principal of ABC school and data literacy specialist, and John George, principal of XYZ high school and school improvement specialist. In addition, the school’s teacher leader for the annual improvement plan is in attendance and is conducting the current meeting. When we arrive, Mrs. Price, the teacher leader, is explaining her concern that math teachers in the school continue to show relatively low usage of graphic organizers
and proposes that the decreased student performance on formative assessments may be linked to unmastered concepts such as volume. Jane Smith indicates that the concept of volume is usually better understood using manipulatives than graphics and suggests that Mrs. Price checks unit and lesson plans to make sure that teachers are following the supporting concepts and skills in the math pacing guide. She further notes that two math teachers in another school are consistently achieving high student performance on core math assessments and adds that she could arrange for one or both teachers to conduct a virtual instructional strategy session this week for the math teachers. John George also comments on the issue and explains that faulty instruction can result from incomplete teacher knowledge of the targeted concept. He indicates that he has a graduate intern working at his school and would send her over for a half day tomorrow to coach any of the math teachers who have questions about the progression of concepts and skills required for concept mastery. Mrs. Price concludes the meeting by scheduling a follow-up study on research-based strategies and a review of the planned interventions to ensure they result in greater student mastery and application of the concepts before annual assessments are conducted.

We move to the second school in the district and once again join a work session in progress. The school’s accreditation status and performance ratings have just been announced. When we arrive, the group is intensely focused on the data report, checking to see if their own trend data had accurately predicted the actual student performance results. The data verify that the school, each grade, and each content area met the projected performance targets, but now the group is looking for something else—the inconsistencies in performance that need attention so the next increased performance level can be established. The school principal, who is also a change specialist, reviews the current school improvement plan, looking for areas where additional initiatives would be compatible with efforts already under way and areas where the scale of the work would be compromised or damaged by inserting additional efforts. Jane Smith, who is scheduled to go into a similar meeting at her own school, joins the group by conference call. She congratulates the group on the dedicated efforts of all staff and explains that to successfully move to higher performance targets, the school needs to go through a refinement phase—teachers need to do an instructional time analysis to identify unproductive strategies or activities, classroom instruction needs to be redesigned for greater complexity, and the school’s curriculum committee needs to review the instructional materials and programs currently being used. The curriculum committee should identify those materials or programs that have the highest correlation with the content and skills in the standards and eliminate or reduce the use of those that have limited connection with the essential course concepts.

When we arrive at the third school, the group is completing a call with the district superintendent, this time requesting additional services from the school performance administrative team in reevaluating and redesigning the school’s improvement plan. The group schedules a series of work sessions over a period of six weeks and asks the superintendent to recommend or identify another school in the area with similar demographics and high performance results—one that would let the school benchmark and adopt its effective practices.
Return to Today

What causes a school to undergo a fundamental shift in the way it approaches a complex task? How do a school and its administrator become holonomous—simultaneously independent and interdependent (Costa & Garmston, 2002)? How do a school and its administrator become self-monitoring, self-managing, self-correcting, and self-modifying? How do principals maintain the effort needed for continuous improvement and sustainability? The answers lie in a redesigned principalship that changes the way school administrators are trained, certified, assigned, and conduct their work.
Section II: Analysis of the Current Principalship

School administrators, and specifically the school principal, hold one of the most important positions in the education system, yet is also one of the most challenging (Ferrandino, 2001). Principals are the catalysts and facilitators of change and are the most important indicators of whether any education reform effort will succeed or fail at the school level (Lankes & O’Donnell, 2010). In 2006, the West Virginia Board of Education recognized the importance of school leadership in the creation of the West Virginia Institute for 21st Century Leadership. This initiative was designed to help principals transform schools, develop statewide leadership standards, prepare a leadership development continuum, and identify policy and practices that affect leadership development (West Virginia Department of Education, 2006).

In 2009, the West Virginia Department of Education formed a statewide collaborative to prepare recommendations for principal training, selection, and continuing education. The collaborative recommended that districts develop leadership succession plans and the state offer full-year structured internships for candidates in school administration. Additionally, the collaborative recommended that all graduate institutions with administrative certification programs undergo National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation, all leadership development programs be redesigned around the West Virginia school leadership standards, the existing licensure process increase the overall quality of entry-level leaders, personal professional growth goals be related to the West Virginia standards for school leaders, and the permanent leadership certificate be eliminated, requiring licensure renewal through well-designed professional development (West Virginia Department of Education, 2009). Most recently, the Board called for investing in and strengthening school leadership in response to a statewide education audit (West Virginia Board of Education, 2013). Since many of the collaborative’s recommendations have not been fully implemented, they should be reviewed and reconsidered for possible implementation.

The redesigned principal program presented in this document is the result of a multistep process that begins with analyzing current challenges and ends with identifying changes needed to strengthen the school principalship. For a recommended change to have relevance and meaningful impact, it must address the organization’s current needs and challenges (Ackerman, 1997; Ambrose, 1987; Harsh, 2012; Lusthaus, Adrien, & Perstinger, 1999). To successfully implement a redesigned system, the changed components must empower and enable staff to address challenges, perform with greater proficiency, and improve the functioning and status of the organization (Abrahamson, 2000; Bruch, Gerber, & Maier, 2005; Lewin, 1958; Sirkin, Keenan, & Jackson, 2005). As a result, the framework for a new principalship presented in this proposal includes actions to resolve or manage the challenges currently impacting the principalship in West Virginia.

The identified challenges range in scope from school operations to large-scale context factors that influence all decisions and actions. The discussion begins with an analysis of the nationwide challenges
that impact the principalship, followed by an examination of state-specific issues. The state-level issues are identified in one or more of the following documents and reports:

- West Virginia Education Audit
- West Virginia Board of Education Audit to Action report
- West Virginia Commission on District Governance and Administration Recommendations Report
- Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA)

To be selected as a targeted challenge, issues had to meet two criteria: (1) they must relate directly to principal practice; and (2) they must impact, or have the potential to impact, every school in the state. For each targeted challenge, a discussion is presented using a five-step protocol. The categories of information discussed, shown below, illustrate a type of problem resolution protocol that principals and school teams can use to address any challenge.

- Identify the challenges and issues impacting the principalship
- Examine relevant literature to inform and guide thinking
- Recommend change for a redesigned principalship
- Consider adopting or customizing a promising practice
- Imagine and chart a bolder course of action

This section of the proposal discusses the challenges and issues, along with the relevant literature; Section III discusses the recommended changes, promising practices, and bolder action steps.

Current challenges related to the principalship were categorized (see Tables 1 and 2). The complexity of the work and the volume and frequency of change demands are the challenges most frequently cited or discussed. Other challenges addressed the complexity of the school organization, the difficult task of implementing decisions, and the range of issues involved in emerging challenges. Additional challenges focused on the need to enhance the professional status of the principalship by using expanded professional standards to guide training, evaluation, and principal development and to support principals in using new administrative tools, increasing their competencies, and effectively performing new roles and functions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge Category</th>
<th>Current Challenges Identified in West Virginia Documents and Reports</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volume and Velocity of Change.</td>
<td>Increased complexity of principal roles</td>
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<tr>
<td>The volume and velocity of change impacting the principalship continue to accelerate</td>
<td>School Five-Year Strategic Improvement Plans received citations cited in 42.59 percent of the schools reviewed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complex Organizations. Principals</td>
<td>Use higher education/school district cooperatives that co-develop the</td>
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operate schools that are complex organizations.

Emerging Challenges. Principals work with emerging challenges that require implementing complex change.

Give some authority with accountability; make principals accountable, responsible; give principals control over school staffing, scheduling, and budgets; allow principals to have discretion to spend the school budget; give principals more control of personnel and budgetary matters; give principals freedom and responsibility for purchasing, setting schedules, establishing work rules, and hiring and releasing teachers.

Professional Standards. The principalship should be governed by an overarching set of professional standards.

Improve school building leadership; strengthen principals
Update principal professional standards; set statewide leadership standards; establish clear and rigorous standards for performance
Update principal evaluation; evaluate principals at least annually; revise leader evaluation system
Use a leadership development continuum

Challenge: The volume and velocity of change impacting the principalship continue to accelerate.

Literature Review

The current escalation in the volume and velocity of emerging demands originating from various points in the environment has generated an unprecedented cycle of rapid change. As the complexity of the context increases, the overall complexity, number of change demands, and speed and frequency of new demands increase as well (Dehio, 2007; Dooley, 1997). Responding to continuous change is also difficult as systems are often in disequilibrium, reacting and responding to a variety of pressures imposed by the environment. Land, Hauck, and Baser (2009) posit that individuals and organizations are not only complex, but are adaptive systems that adjust and change in order to sustain themselves. Thus, they require ongoing analysis and adjustment of assistance and support as the individual or organization adapts to the targeted changes. Over time, new demands and performance expectations can alter and increase the degree of change required, resulting in new levels of adaptation and change proficiency. Increased rates of change in all facets of society can create accelerated complementary rates of change required of all organizations. Further, organizational change is not static; it is a complex, dynamic, multifaceted, and recursive process (Gill & Griffith, 2004) that requires organizations to simultaneously construct and implement the capacity for change (Fullan & Miles, 1992).

Actions in Response to the Identified Challenges

To meet the challenge of increased volume and velocity of change, the principal must have knowledge and skill in strategically selecting and responding to various change demands and will need to serve in a new role—change specialist. To address this challenge, a redesigned principalship should include customized professional development based on school need, an administrative professional learning group, and district-led professional development based on exemplars.
Challenge: Principals operate schools that are complex organizations.

Literature Review

Schools have complex operating structures that must be considered when decisions and changes are made. The complexity of the operating structures, along with increasing pressure of accountability for the academic achievement of all students, creates additional layers of work and responsibility. For example, to improve school performance, the principal must develop and implement a common agenda for learning, ensure that all staff embrace and implement the agenda, align and effectively use available resources for learning activities, respond to the needs and priorities of students and staff, build external support for a school-wide learning agenda, and implement strategies for handling resistance or conflict. In addition, the principal must cultivate shared leadership in order to foster collaboration and support for the agenda (Knapp, Copland, & Talbert, 2003; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

Complexity theory offers a useful lens for viewing the process of change and organization development. Organizational change, especially large-scale change in educational settings, is a complex process (Bruch, Gerber, & Maier, 2005; Senge, 1997) and organizations need to be viewed as complex adaptive systems in order to understand how they move through change (Olson & Eoyang, 2001). Complexity theory acknowledges that as complex adaptive systems, organizations are characterized by webs of nonlinear feedback loops and the ability to integrate, adapt, or change in response to internal or external forces (Stacey, 1996). According to Stacey, organizational change occurs in a complex context where there are differing degrees of predictability, agreement, and certainty of outcomes. Stacey notes that to successfully operate in areas of complexity, those involved in implementing change need to maintain a high level of interaction with staff members as change in a complex adaptive system cannot be driven—it must be fostered and supported. Further, the organization can be both the initiator and the subject of change (Century, 1999), and as a result, the process of change and organization development can originate and be modified from multiple points within as well as from outside the system.

Actions in Response to the Identified Challenges

To meet the challenge of operating a complex organization, the principal must have strong collaboration skills, know how to design and implement change initiatives, and possess or have access to expertise on organization development. The principal will need to serve in a new role—school improvement specialist. To address this challenge, a redesigned principalship should include enhanced and advanced certification, shared leadership, and distributed administration arrangements.

Challenge: Principals work with emerging challenges that require implementing complex changes.

Literature Review

Principals must manage the stream of new change demands and lead the staff in a process of understanding and incorporating change into daily operations. When members of an organization
receive new knowledge, they selectively attend to and process the information (Dixon, 1994),
demonstrating wide intra- and inter-individual variability in the amount of change and learning that
occurs (Ram, Stollery, Rabbitt, & Nesselroade, 2005). The degree of selectivity demonstrated by
employees is in part due to a reciprocal process of individual engagement and invitational practices
established in the workplace (Billet, Barker, & Hernon-Tinning, 2002). If employees are afforded
the opportunity to engage in learning activities and the new learning is valued, workplace learning is
increased. Altogether, three factors affect the rate at which an organization learns: the proficiency of
individual employees, the ability of employees to leverage the knowledge accumulated by others, and
the capacity for coordinated activity inside the organization (Reagans, Argote, & Brooks, 2003).

Dixon (1994) found that an organization goes through a five-step cycle when it is engaged in the learning
process. Each of the five steps is essential for optimal learning to occur. First, the organization
encounters a stimulus that creates the need for new learning. Second, staff acquire and interpret new
knowledge. Third, the new knowledge is transmitted throughout the organization. Fourth, staff
collectively interpret and use the new knowledge, and fifth, members of the organization document the
knowledge as part of the organization’s standard operations. When an organization moves through the
learning cycle, it demonstrates specific behaviors and attributes that serve as levers to increase the level
of organizational learning. The levers—leadership, vision, structure, culture, and resources—are also
well documented as attributes of high-performing organizations. Even when learning levers are in place,
several factors can affect the transfer of knowledge and level of learning that occurs.

Using an amalgamation of factors related to individual and organizational learning, Dibbon (1999)
identified four stages of organizational learning. At stage 1, the organization is coping and maintaining
its traditional approaches even though it needs to undergo significant change. Organizations at this
stage exploit and overuse their existing repertoires of knowledge and engage almost entirely in single-
loop learning (March, 1996; Argyris, 1976). They resist innovation, preferring instead to maintain the
status quo. At stage 2, the organization is characterized as emerging. The organization is active, begins
to accept change, and has a core group of people who engage in double-loop or exploratory thinking
(Argyris, 1976; Senge 1992). At stage 3, the organization is referred to as a developing organization, and
it consciously strives to improve its learning. A stage 3 organization has developed an expanded
repertoire of knowledge, although it has few procedures or structures in place to implement the
practices. At stage 4, the organization is known as a learning organization, has fully developed learning
systems, and demonstrates a culture of continuous learning.

Insight into the events and conditions that shape the level of learning and degree of transfer when an
organization is exposed to learning opportunities provides a helpful framework to identify when a
school is poised for continuous learning and development. These conditions give system administrators
the information and tools that can be used to design and implement effective change.
Actions in Response to the Identified Challenges

To address emerging challenges that require implementing complex change, the principal must have knowledge and skill in monitoring effective instruction, analyzing student performance data, and designing learning experiences to meet student needs. The principal will need to serve in a new role—*instruction and learning specialist*. To address this challenge, a redesigned principalship should include inter- and intra-district mentoring and administrative or executive coaching.

**Challenge: The principalship should be governed by an overarching set of professional standards.**

**Literature Review**

The literature on education administration is in agreement regarding the knowledge and skills needed by both principals and superintendents if they are to be effective in their evolving and increasingly complex roles (Education Policy and Leadership Center, 2006). Standards and lists of knowledge and skills for effective school leadership should guide initial training and continuing education for school administrators. In Pennsylvania, the Department of Education developed and designed the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership standards to encompass all school leadership positions—from teacher leaders to superintendents—and to inform professional preparation, professional development, and professional practice (Education Policy and Leadership Center, 2006; Hale & Moorman, 2003). Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies and found a direct correlation between the principal’s leadership behavior and student achievement. The study revealed that an improvement of one standard deviation in the leadership skills of an average principal yields a 10 percentile point increase in student achievement in an average school. Additionally, the study identified 21 leadership behaviors that contribute significantly to student achievement. The knowledge and skills identified in these studies should be incorporated into the professional standards for school principals (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

**Actions in Response to the Identified Challenges**

To meet the challenge of using an overarching set of professional standards, the principal must know how to develop and attain personal and school development goals and achieve continuous growth for self and staff. The principal will need to serve in a new role—*leadership specialist*. To address this challenge, a redesigned principalship should include expanded standards, national principal standards, and a Professional Standards Board.
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<tr>
<th>Challenge Category</th>
<th>Current Challenges Identified in West Virginia Documents and Reports</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Administrative Tools. Principals need new tools to plan and implement ongoing change.</td>
<td>Of 54 schools reviewed, 11 (20.37 percent) did not meet the licensure requirements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Need resources and skills, training, and access to new tools</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Principals to conduct teacher evaluations; need more time for principals to evaluate each teacher</td>
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<td>Create learning environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monitor quality of classroom instruction</td>
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<td>Work on student performance, instructional strategies, instruction</td>
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<td>22.22 percent of the schools reviewed were cited for leadership issues with lesson plans, principal feedback, and instructional day</td>
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<td>Outdated supervisory model—principals have one of the highest supervisory ratios of any profession</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Competencies and New Roles. Principals need advanced competencies and new roles to address emerging challenges.</td>
<td>Give building leaders time to reflect on, talk about, and perfect practice</td>
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<td>Encourage principals and teachers to work together</td>
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<td>Improve and identify teacher and principal effectiveness measures</td>
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<td>Remove barriers to entry into school leadership; remove barriers for talented individuals to become principals</td>
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<td>Develop shared leadership</td>
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<td>Implement a career ladder; create career paths</td>
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<td>Institute tiered certification and multi-tier licensure system and tie salaries to licensure level</td>
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<td>Use differential pay</td>
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<td>Develop training teams and specialty teams</td>
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<td>Districts are experiencing a limited pool of applicants for principal positions</td>
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<td>No provision for the increased role of school and district administrators due to increased accountability and the need to align the work more closely within the school</td>
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<td>Currently principals are not required to have a master’s in education administration</td>
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<td>At least 8 higher education institutions are preparing principals with adjunct staff</td>
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<td>We have not created an effective funneling system in order to create a network of potential leaders that would become school administrators</td>
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<td>Administrator prep programs have weak transitional phases (internships)</td>
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<td>Give more attention to the recruiting and retaining of school administrators (i.e., pay differential based on performance), provide assistant principals for management responsibilities freeing principals to be instructional leaders</td>
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Challenge: Principals need new tools to plan and implement ongoing change.

Literature Review

Principals must continuously respond to and implement change. As a result, school administrators need to understand and effectively manage the change process and to build the capacity of staff to incorporate and implement change. Capacity building is a tool that administrators can use to increase the ability of an organization or group to embrace change and respond proactively to disequilibrium by giving them skills and tools to define problems, formulate solutions (Maiese, 2005) and resolve problems over time (Fullan, 2006; Lusthaus, Adrien, & Perstinger, 1999). Capacity building includes a wide variety of capacities, ranging from broad political capacity to specific capacity skills such as conflict resolution (Maiese, 2005). Four dimensions of capacity are especially useful in designing and implementing capacity building: types, stages, levels, and outcomes.

**Types of capacity.** Educational change generally involves four types of capacity: human, organizational, structural, and material (Century, 1999). These are foundational types of capacity that define and undergird the layers of specific capacity building. According to Century, human capacity has two parts—intellectual proficiency and will. Developing intellectual capacity involves increasing the knowledge, expertise, and understanding of what is needed to implement the targeted change. Will refers to the interest, patience, and persistence required to make the targeted change. Organizational capacity refers to the interaction, collaboration, and communication among members of the organization. Structural capacity refers to the elements of the organization that exist independently of the persons who work within the system and can include such elements as policies, procedures, and practices. Material capacity refers to the fiscal resources, materials, and equipment that the organization uses to meet its needs and implement targeted change. Century (1999) indicates that the four types of capacity are interdependent and that growth in one area is dependent on growth in another. While one capacity type may be the area of focus for a specific capacity-building initiative, Century indicates that “all four capacities need to be aligned and addressed to maximize the ability of the system to achieve its goals” (p. 8).

**Stages of capacity.** Stage theory is often used to understand and manage the process of capacity-building change. Stage theory takes a developmental approach to change and recognizes and honors the notion that learning and implementing new or refined skills and practices is an incremental process (Hord, Rutherford, Huling, & Hall, 2006). Additionally, in most stage theories, the process of change is not linear (Fixsen, Blase, Horner, & Sugai, 2009) since elements of the stage can appear or reappear in subsequent stages, especially when portions of the change process are recursive and embedded in multiple components of the organization. Stages or levels of capacity building parallel many of the stages for implementing change. An analysis of existing change models shows that four stages of change emerge as superordinate stages that can be applied to the process of capacity building: Exploration, Emerging Implementation, Full Implementation, and Sustainability.
The Exploration stage of capacity building involves creating a readiness for change (Fixsen et al., 2009). During this stage, the organization identifies the need for change and learns about the innovation (Hall & Hord, 2005; Fixsen et al., 2009); individuals within the organization are aware that a problem exists and work with others to determine a course of action (Collerette, Schneider, & Legris, 2003; Kegan & Lahey, 1984; Levin, 1951). During the Exploration stage, the organization identifies the need for change; determines the desired capacity; and identifies the knowledge, skills, structures, and processes that must be in place to achieve the desired capacity (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1992; Hall & Hord, 2005).

The Emerging Implementation stage of capacity building involves installing needed resources and initially implementing the new skills or practices (Fixsen et al., 2009). During this stage, personal and management concerns related to the innovation are identified (Hall & Hord, 2005; Kegan & Lahey, 1984). During the Emerging Implementation stage, the organization identifies personnel training needs, outlines specific steps in implementing and using the newly acquired skills, and begins to implement the information and skills as part of the organizational operations.

The Full Implementation stage of capacity building involves integrating new information and skills into a wide range of organizational practices and refining the practices based on evaluation of the changes (Fixsen et al., 2009; Hall & Hord, 2005; Kegan & Lahey, 1984). During this stage, attention is focused on the impact and consequences of implementing the targeted capacity-building innovation (Hall & Hord, 2005). The Sustainability stage of capacity building involves pervasive and consistent use of the refined skills and practices, and the organization demonstrates the capacity and ability to analyze and modify practices for continuous improvement and refinement of the innovation (Fixsen et al., 2009; Hall & Hord, 2005). During the Sustainability stage, members of the organization collaborate on the innovation (Hall & Hord, 2005; Kegan & Lahey, 1984; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1992), refocus efforts to continue the desired practices, and explore alternatives to using the innovation.

**Levels of capacity.** Levels of capacity focus on the personnel and system needs that must be addressed to successfully accomplish the desired level of capacity building (Hall & Hord, 2005, 2010). Regardless of the type or stage of capacity building, organizations need to successfully move through each capacity level to ensure full implementation of the initiative. These levels are based on the stages of concern that Hall and Hord (2005, 2010) identified in the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM). In the CBAM model, the first group of stages deals with the concerns and needs of the individuals in the organization for information and skills related to the change. The first two levels of capacity building are critical in laying the foundation for implementing change as organizations do not change until the individuals within them change (Hall & Hord, 2005, 2010). The second group of CBAM stages deals with the management concerns involved in implementing an innovation and focuses on the structures and processes needed to implement the change.

CBAM’s four levels of capacity building—information, skills, structures, and processes—begin with the recognition that organizations and the persons who work within them need to have information about the initiative to adequately understand the desired state to be attained. Once sufficient knowledge is gained, members of the staff need to acquire and use the skills necessary to implement the initiative. At the third level of capacity building, the information and skills need to be integrated into a structure that
will incorporate the new knowledge and give staff a framework to use the new skills. Finally, the organization will then need to develop and use new or refined processes that will operationalize the information, skills, and structures that undergird the initiative. These levels are repeated as the organization moves through each stage of capacity building. New information and increasingly sophisticated skills, structures, and processes are needed as the organization moves through the various stages of capacity building.

**Actions in Response to the Identified Challenges**

To meet the challenge of implementing ongoing change, the principal must effectively use professional tools, such as impact analysis, forecasting and solution finding, data analysis, and benchmarking, and develop and use specialized professional knowledge. The principal will need to serve in a new role—data literacy specialist. To address this challenge, a redesigned principalship should include district and regional cooperative agreements for specialized technical assistance services, and a new role as School Performance Administrator and be able to function as a member of a School Performance Administrator Team.

**Challenge: Principals need advanced competencies and new roles to address emerging challenges.**

**Literature Review**

Principals need advanced competencies such as capacity building to effectively address emerging challenges. As principals develop and implement interventions that will modify, refine, or change the school, one of three types of capacity-building change can occur: first-order change (Developmental), second-order change (Transitional), or third-order change (Transformational) (Mock & Bartunek, 1987; Ackerman, 1997). It is important to understand the nature of the desired change and the context in which the school organization works in order to select an appropriate capacity-building outcome and change strategy (Ackerman, 1997). Developmental change can be either planned or emergent and is known as first-order or incremental change. In first-order change, the organization focuses on the improvement of a skill or process. Transitional change involves moving the organization from the existing state to a different desired state. Transitional change, known as second-order change, is planned and episodic. Transformational change, also known as third-order change, results in significant differences in the structures and processes within the organization and requires a shift in culture and beliefs among members of the organization.

The first, second, and third orders of change are the result or outcome of the capacity-building technical assistance provided to the organization. In addition to the observable changes that occur, Mock and Bartunek (1987) state that members of the organization undergo a change in schemata—the cognitive framework that individuals use to understand the change events. In first-order change, the organization implements incremental changes that are within the schemata or framework of understanding that members of the organization already share. In second-order change, as the organization modifies its
operations, the employees have an accompanying modification of shared schemata. In third-order change, the organization develops the capacity to change the system as well as the schemata of employees when needs emerge.

Organizations such as schools can engage in capacity-building efforts in all three orders. Since third-order change involves changing both the operational components of the organization and the schemata of the employees, third-order change is generally the desired outcome of capacity-building initiatives. Therefore, technical assistance initiatives are often purposely designed to be systemic and cultivate organizational capacity to diagnose and continually implement necessary change. Occasionally, however, organizations will request or need first- or second-order change. In some cases, needs assessments will show a gap in knowledge or skill across employees or departments, indicating that an individual division or department needs a specific process, or that a task requires specific expertise or training resources, which will allow the organization to move forward on a larger initiative. In these cases, the organization may need and request assistance for a first- or second-order change.

Systemic educational change is a complex, dynamic, multifaceted, and recursive process that impacts all parts of the system (Gill & Griffith, 2004). Further, the process requires constructing and implementing the capacity for change among all stakeholders and components of the system (Fullan & Miles, 1992). The multifaceted nature of change and capacity building requires the use of an evolving and spiraling process that incorporates all parts of the organization and recognizes that any change impacts the history, context, culture, and operation of the system (Gill & Griffith, 2004). Because all components of the system are impacted by change and implementation of capacity-building initiatives, an organization needs to consider all dimensions of capacity building—types, stages, levels, and outcomes. A multiple dimension approach to capacity building provides a framework for incorporating the various dimensions (Harsh, 2010).

**Actions in Response to the Identified Challenges**

To develop and use advanced competencies and new roles to address emerging challenges, the principal must cultivate new professional competencies, function in expanded roles, meet performance expectations, access and use specialized knowledge, and contribute to system improvement as a member of a performance team. The principal will need to serve in a new role—**strategic intervention specialist**. To address this challenge, a redesigned principalship should include district and regional cooperative agreements for specialized technical assistance services, a working role as School Performance Administrator, and a functioning School Performance Administrative Team.
Section III: Framework for a New Principalship Program

The proposed principalship program is designed to develop and use new skills, competencies, and roles in administering and improving the performance of schools in West Virginia and to transform the principalship into a position of School Performance Administrator. The principalship will be transformed by creating and using expanded professional standards to conduct training programs, administer and improve school performance, conduct continuing education, attain and use specializations in daily operations, and effectively respond to complex emerging changes.

Visionary Components for a New Principal Program for West Virginia Schools

The framework for a new principalship has three distinguishing features: coherence, program comprehensiveness, and component modularity.

Coherence

The first distinguishing feature, and perhaps the most important, is that the framework is designed to be coherent. An expanded set of overarching professional standards are used to guide the implementation of each component of the system. Often, criteria and standards for hiring, promotion, evaluation, and professional development are created in isolation across different timeframes and according to varying areas of emphasis, creating confusion and inconsistency in the work. Here, an expanded set of standards guides the development and evaluation of formal coursework, establishes criteria for specializations, and identifies competencies for initial selection and career advancement. While the standards are used to implement all facets of the program, they are not intended to be a permanent, fixed document. Rather, the standards should be organic—growing and changing in response to changes in the profession. The standards should be regularly reviewed and modified to reflect new expectations and professional competencies. When the standards are revised and refined, complementary adjustments must be made to related policies, forms, and documents.

Program Comprehensiveness

The framework is designed to be comprehensive. In the proposed system, the phases of the principalship are viewed as distinct points on a continuum. While it is possible for individuals to enter the profession at various points, the program is designed to maximize career success by building and scaffolding training and work experiences so that knowledge and skill needed at one level are introduced, then developed and mastered at subsequent levels. The program is also designed to progressively build expertise. Formal coursework, continuing education, and advanced specialization training will have interlocking and progressively complex content.
Component Modularity

The framework is designed to be modular. While it is important to implement all four components—preparation and education, selection, continuing education, and role implementation—the program is designed to give policy makers flexibility in selecting and implementing the desired level of program change. For example, in one component, the promising practice may be adopted; in another component, the promising practice may be customized to meet unique state needs; and in another component, the more assertive, bolder action may be adopted.

Expanded Standards

Over the past four years, all states have been engaged in preparing and adopting professional standards for school leaders. The standards are used to implement new principal evaluation procedures and determine the quality and level of administrative work conducted at the school level. As part of the development process, many states are using lists of skills or behaviors that represent a particular leadership approach or instructional program, particularly if the state has invested in a specific program or strategy. While the use of program-specific skills and behaviors will align the adopted program with the school leader actions, the alignment is limited to a narrow band of principal responsibilities. For the principalship program proposed here, the school leader standards will center on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders. The ISLLC standards have been used as a framework for revising principal preparation programs and designing continuing education activities. Educational Testing Service, in collaboration with ISLLC, developed performance-based assessments based on the ISLLC standards and used the assessments to create performance measures for the licensure and professional development of principals and other school leaders. At present, 13 states use the Educational Testing Service assessment system to measure proficiency levels in each standard area. In 2002, the NCATE aligned its accreditation standards for educational leadership training programs with the ISLLC standards, creating a set of Educational Leadership Constituent Council standards used to review and approve administrator preparation programs (Van Meter & McMinn, 2001). The ISLLC standards (see Tables 3-6) provide a national perspective for the expanded standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLLC Standards for School Leaders</th>
<th>High Performing Leaders (FL)</th>
<th>Inspired Leadership Standards (PA)</th>
<th>Standards for School Leaders (WV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.</td>
<td>High Performing Leaders have a personal vision for their school and the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to develop, articulate, and implement a shared vision that is supported by the larger organization and the school community.</td>
<td>The school leader creates an organizational vision focused on student success and communicates the vision to all relevant stakeholders.</td>
<td>The school leader facilitates the development of the strategic plan including a clear vision, mission, and goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Comparison of ISLLC and Select State Standards for Leading Teaching and Learning
High Performing Leaders monitor the success of all students in the learning environment, align the curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes to promote effective student performance, and use a variety of benchmarks, learning expectations, and feedback measures to ensure accountability for all participants engaged in the educational process.

The school leader demonstrates instructional leadership to establish and support a student-centered learning environment.

In addition to the ISLLC standards, it is recommended that the professional standards for the redesigned principalship program incorporate two additional sets of state standards: High Performing Leaders (Florida) and Inspired Leadership Standards (Pennsylvania). The Florida and Pennsylvania standards reflect a larger scope of work and address many of the challenges identified for the redesigned principalship. Additionally, the Florida standards are infused with technology-based expectations that should align with the technology use emphasized in West Virginia policy. The Pennsylvania standards were specifically designed to be used for a continuum of education leaders—from teacher leaders to principals and superintendents. If the standards are adopted, a group of highly proficient West Virginia principals and state education staff should convene a series of work sessions to combine the current set of state leader standards with the ISLLC and Florida and Pennsylvania standards and create an expanded set of standards that would guide all aspects of the new principalship program.

Imagine a Bolder Course in Developing Standards

A bolder course of action. A bolder course of action would be for West Virginia state leaders and policy makers to establish a working group of states, foundations, universities, and researchers to develop a multistate standards crosswalk and collect principal performance data that could be analyzed and used to develop a set of industry standards for school leaders. A set of industry standards could be used by all states to refine and upgrade currently adopted standards, design and implement continuing education, and develop interstate reciprocity agreements for training, certifying, and hiring administrative candidates.

A bolder course of action. An additional course of action would be for West Virginia state leaders and policy makers to establish a coalition with two or more foundations, states, and international researchers or writers to develop a set of international standards for school leaders. The international standards would reflect challenges and responsibilities of school administrators across high-performing
countries and would allow participating agencies to identify superordinate skills and strategies for principal development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLLC Standards for School Leaders</th>
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<th>Standards for School Leaders (WV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth.</td>
<td>High Performing Leaders promote a positive learning culture, provide an effective instructional program, and apply best practices to student learning, especially in the area of reading and other foundational skills.</td>
<td>The school leader creates an organizational culture of teaching and learning in which student learning is paramount.</td>
<td>The school leader builds and sustains a safe and positive climate and cohesive culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Performing Leaders plan and implement the integration of technological and electronic tools in teaching, learning, management, research, and communication responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The school leader measures continuous improvement through implementation and monitoring of the strategic plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.</td>
<td>The school leader advocates for public education and for children in the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.</td>
<td>High Performing Leaders act with integrity, fairness, and honesty in an ethical manner.</td>
<td>The school leader operates fairly and equitably displaying personal and professional integrity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5. Comparison of ISLLC and Select State Standards for Engaging and Working with the Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLLC Standards for School Leaders</th>
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<th>Inspired Leadership Standards (PA)</th>
<th>Standards for School Leaders (WV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members and mobilizing community resources.</td>
<td>High Performing Leaders collaborate with families, business, and community members; respond to diverse community interests and needs; work effectively within the larger organization; and mobilize community resources.</td>
<td>The school leader collaborates, communicates, engages, and empowers others—both inside the organization and in the larger community.</td>
<td>The school leader demonstrates effective and professional interpersonal and collaborative skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Performing Leaders understand, respond to, and influence the personal, political, social, economic, legal, and cultural relationships in the classroom, the school, and the local community.</td>
<td>The school leader creates and supports practices that address students’ physical, social, emotional, and academic needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6. Comparison of ISLLC and Select State Standards for Developing Self and Others and Leading School Operations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLLC Standards for School Leaders</th>
<th>High Performing Leaders (FL)</th>
<th>Inspired Leadership Standards (PA)</th>
<th>Standards for School Leaders (WV)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A school administrator is an educational leader who</td>
<td>High Performing Leaders recruit, select, nurture, and, where appropriate, retain effective personnel, develop mentor and partnership programs, and design and implement comprehensive professional growth plans for all staff—paid and volunteer.</td>
<td>The school leader supports the professional growth of self and others through both practice and inquiry.</td>
<td>The school leader identifies, supports, and participates in professional development and promotes professional growth to retain high-quality staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Performing Leaders plan effectively, use critical thinking and problem solving techniques, and collect and analyze data for continuous school improvement.</td>
<td>The school leader makes informed decisions based on the best information available.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A school administrator is an educational leader who
promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

| operations, facilities, and resources in ways that maximize the use of resources in an instructional organization and promote a safe, efficient, legal, and effective learning environment. | effectively to bring about desired results. | approach in effectively managing the resources and operations of the school. |

**Principal Preparation and Education**

**Promising Practice—Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has approved 23 institutions of higher education to prepare superintendents and 40 to prepare principals. Each administrative area has a set of PDE standards by which individual university programs are judged every seven years. These are based on the ISLLC standards. Aspiring superintendents are required to complete at least 180 hours of authentic simulations and field experiences and at least a 90-hour internship. Principal candidates are required to complete at least 360 hours of authentic simulations and field experiences and at least a 180-hour internship. In addition to completing the appropriate training program, a candidate for a superintendent position must have six years of professional experience in the schools, at least three of which must have been in a supervisory capacity. To become a principal, an individual must have at least five years of professional experience in education. The PDE developed and uses a common set of professional standards to guide the development of teacher leaders, principals, and superintendents.

**Promising Practice—Chicago Leadership Initiative**

As part of the authentic application process, candidates are required to watch a classroom lesson and write a feedback and coaching session for the teacher. They also review student data and develop and present a short-term plan. The program is designed to build knowledge and skill to shape a vision of academic success for all students based on high standards, create a climate conducive to learning, cultivate leadership in others, improve instruction, manage people, analyze data, and use processes for school improvement.

**Promising Practice—Denver, Ritchie Program for School Leaders**

This is a university and district collaboration model. The goal of the program is to supply schools with leaders who are “knowledgeable, highly skilled and relentless” by recruiting and training principals who are more focused on classroom instruction than compliance. The program recruitment and training focus on classroom instruction, and coursework requires participants to analyze real-life challenges and respond to them. The program offers part- and full-year residencies for principal candidates in high-need schools that are on an upward student-achievement trajectory. Existing principals receive new professional development and coaching through the program. A standards-based “tool” that describes desired principal and school behaviors guides the training. During an internship, candidates complete a
standards-based portfolio of work which is required before certification is granted. Full-time paid school residencies are available for participants who are interested in being part of a school community while making and analyzing actual leadership decisions.

Promising Practice—New York City Programs

New York City operates several leadership training programs including The New York City Aspiring Principals Program, a Leadership Academy, a New Leaders Program, the Bank Street Leadership Development, and the Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program. These are preservice training programs that features a six-week summer course using a problem-based curriculum simulating the challenges of the principalship, a 10-month school-based residency under an experienced principal, and a summer session led by former New York City principals and principal supervisors. The program is designed to ensure a smooth entry into school leadership positions. The New York City Leadership Academy training includes a six-week summer session, a ten-month school-based residency in which the candidate works closely with a mentor principal, and a planning summer in which the candidate prepares to move into a school leadership position. The Academy works with mentor principals to determine appropriate resident experiences. The New Leaders program requires successful applicants to resign their current position and take a paid aspiring principal position. The New Leaders applicant pool includes assistant principals, instructional coaches, and central office administrators. After 90 days on the job, principals are assigned to a community of practice and are encouraged to support and visit one another’s schools.

Another program operated by New York City Schools is the Bank Street College of Education Training Program in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). This Leadership Fellows program admitted its first cohort of 15 fellows in January 2012. Fellows must be nominated to the program by their supervising principal and meet standard admission criteria for Bank Street’s graduate programs. Over the course of an 18-month program, fellows can continue to work in their current school but are required to transfer to another school during the summer. Fellows are organized into groups of seven to eight students who have an advisor who observes and meets with them during monthly visits to the school. Additionally, fellows must complete coursework on special education leadership.

City University of New York-Baruch plans to partner with the DOE on a Leadership Inquiry Team.

New York also operates the Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program in response to the imbalance between the number of teachers in the DOE system and the few applicants for leadership vacancies. The DOE opened the program to extend the leadership pipeline to potential leaders. Applicants submit written applications, personal endorsements, and essays; participate in group and individual interviews; analyze and discuss data; and complete an on-demand writing task as part of the selection process. The program requires that candidates be in their fourth or fifth year of teaching, endorsed by network leaders, and reviewed by cluster leaders. Participants stay in their current position and remain under the mentorship of their current principal during the 14-month program but are required to spend six weeks in a full-time summer session and participate in weekly development sessions. The DOE is planning to
partner with Relay Graduate School of Education to develop a teacher leaders program that will expand into a school leaders program. Teach for America will also be a partner in this collaboration.

Under the Aspiring Principals Program, candidates spend a year working under the guidance of an expert principal, getting a firsthand look at running a school. They visit classrooms, attend faculty meetings, and lead special projects. During the summer session, participants lead a simulated school and learn to collaborate with teachers. Following the internship, New York requires completion of performance tasks and a threshold score on those tasks before a candidate is eligible for consideration as a principal.

**Promising Practice—Boston School Leadership Institute**

Successful applicants commit to an intense yearlong learning experience that includes some nights and weekends, academic coursework, research, reports, and field-based projects. Candidates must successfully pass the Communication and Literacy Skills section of the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure. Once accepted, candidates become fellows and employees of the Boston Public Schools and receive a full salary and benefits that are comparable to those of the position they leave in order to participate in the program. Fellows agree to work in the Boston Public Schools for three years. After successfully completing an intensive 12-month experience that integrates theory and practice, candidates may apply for a principal or assistant principal position. Boston uses six Essentials of Whole School Improvement to guide the training program:

- Essential 1: Effective instructional practice and a collaborative school climate lead to improved student learning.
- Essential 2: Student work and data drive instruction and professional development.
- Essential 3: Investments in professional development improve instruction.
- Essential 4: Shared leadership sustains instructional improvement.
- Essential 5: Resources should support instructional improvement and student learning.
- Essential 6: Schools partner with families and community to support student learning.

The Boston program integrates these six essentials with the knowledge and skills required to fill the role of instructional leader. The curriculum is organized into four cornerstone initiatives and one capstone initiative that integrate the essentials, the coursework, and the residency and focus on critical levers for school improvement. Cornerstone and capstone instructors include principals and other school leaders, higher education faculty, and community leaders. The first cornerstone, Analyzing Instruction and Supporting Improvement, involves observing classrooms, student learning processes, instructional strategies of effective teachers, elements of teacher supervision, and learning how to use these processes as levers for instructional improvement. Candidates participate in learning walks both at their residency school and in schools across the city in order to become skilled in analyzing instruction in classrooms and schools and in giving feedback that supports improvement in practice. The second cornerstone is Family and Community Engagement, the third cornerstone is Leadership and Management, and the fourth cornerstone is Scaling Up Instructional Improvement. The capstone,
Leadership and Learning, ties together all of the competencies of effective principals and the four cornerstones of the program. As participants complete the program, they meet individually with BPS district administrators and pursue positions for the next school year.

Candidates start in July by doing a self-assessment and developing an individualized learning plan that guides the first six months of the fellowship and outlines the experiences and activities that a fellow and the mentor will focus on during the residency. Fellows are given assignments designed to address real needs in the schools, work on authentic issues that principals encounter, and keep reflective journals on the experiences. The program includes a yearlong, four-day week residency with one of Boston’s mentor principals and 85 days of coursework and seminars. Fellows participate in coursework for five weeks in the summer, one day per week and one weekend per month, during their residency experience. The classes, held at the Boston Public Schools professional development center, are taught by national experts, district leaders with recognized expertise in one or more topics, and faculty from local universities.

Promising Practice—Kentucky Department of Education

The Kentucky Department of Education worked with in-state universities to design a capstone project that would replace the Praxis exam for credentialing school principals. The Department wants to use specific skills and competencies to determine a candidate’s readiness to serve as a school administrator. The group encountered difficulty finding and designing metrics that would be legally defensible.

Imagine a Bolder Course to Principal Training and Education

A bolder course of action. West Virginia should implement the 2009 recommendation regarding internships. This initiative would fund full-year structured internships for candidates who are in master’s degree school leadership programs that prepare candidates for initial certification in school administration. Interns would then commit to work in the state for a certain period of time after receiving the training.

A bolder course of action. There is substantial agreement in administration literature about the knowledge and skills needed by both principals and superintendents if they are to be effective in their evolving and increasingly complex roles (Education Policy and Leadership Center, 2006). The Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Standards were designed to encompass school leadership positions—from teacher leaders to superintendents—and to inform professional preparation, professional development, and professional practice (Education Policy and Leadership Center, 2006).

A bolder course of action. The Holyoke Public School System and the University of Massachusetts are partners in a leadership development program. This two-year, onsite, NCATE-approved research- and problem-based program will lead to a Massachusetts certificate for 18 aspiring principals. The program involves a three-year professional development experience in which every principal and assistant principal will participate on a monthly basis during the school year. Holyoke principals serve as mentors.
for certification candidates. The U.S. Department of Education’s School Leadership Program provides funds for this initiative.

**A bolder course of action.** The Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA) runs the MESPA Certification Program. Participants are involved in study and practice experiences that include four curriculum blocks and an internship/practicum. The program can be completed in 11 to 18 months, depending on the participant’s schedule and initiative. Affiliated with Northeastern University, this program is one of 11 preparation programs run by nondegree-granting organizations that have been approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

**A bolder course of action.** The American Association of School Administrators partners with Canter & Associates, a division of Sylvan Learning, and with Vanderbilt University, to prepare an online principal preparation program that incorporates new standards. The two-year program will organize participants into small cohorts of 15–20 and take them through a curriculum based largely on the ISLLC standards. The first course of the program deals with effective learning for all students and contains modules on recent research on learning, effective teaching, and the barriers to learner-center teaching. This program will award graduates a master’s degree in education administration and will be accepted for licensure through reciprocity agreements.

**A bolder course of action.** West Virginia state leaders and policy makers may wish to promote the passage of legislation that would permit the privatization of principal training programs. Other countries do not rely on institutions of higher education for the preparation of leaders. In England, the National College for School Leadership, funded by the Department of Education and Employment, oversees school leadership development and research and promotes world class leadership in the schools. West Virginia may wish to approve private businesses, organizations, foundations, and colleges as training institutions for school leadership.

**Principal Selection**

**Promising Practice—New York City Leadership Academy**

The New York City Leadership Academy attracts 300 applications a year and conducts a rigorous, multi-phase screening process that includes group and individual interviews. Eligible applicants must have a master’s degree with a minimum 3.0 GPA and a minimum of three years of work experience as a paid K–12 teacher. Successful candidates resign their current positions and become “aspiring principals” and work in a 12-month paid position.

**Promising Practice—Chicago Leadership Initiative**

Independent partners collaborate with the school system to groom high-performing principals who meet more rigorous eligibility requirements and demonstrate skills essential to running chronically underperforming schools. Four outside providers recruit and screen candidates for full-time residencies.
Promising Practice—New York City

Principal candidates submit their resumes and information online and engage in a series of performance tasks, which are scored. Candidates who meet a minimum score are eligible for the Principal Candidate Pool. To create a strong principal pipeline and hiring pool, the DOE reviewed and revised its Leadership Competencies according to research on effective leadership practices, Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards, and local and state accountability systems. The Leadership Competencies are used in selecting candidates for the principal hiring pool, developing a vision for a career continuum of leadership competencies, and aligning the competencies to the quality review—the observation and evaluation process that uses a rubric to assess how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

Promising Practice—Boston School Leadership Institute

Boston Public Schools use a structured process to recruit and screen potential principal candidates. The district recruits candidates through its Web site, announcements and advertisements in national school leadership journals, local newspapers, and recommendations from other principals. The admissions process consists of a written application (including two essays), a performance assessment for semi-finalists, and an interview for finalists. Applicants must have a bachelor of arts (master of arts preferred) and a minimum of three years of experience in teaching, youth development, social work, counseling, or nonprofit or business management; show evidence of experience as a successful leader; and commit to working in Boston Public Schools for a minimum of three years following the fellowship. Applicants who successfully go through screening are interviewed by a team of principals, teacher-leaders, higher education faculty, and Boston Public Schools central office administrators who look for individuals who are lifelong learners, understand effective instruction, demonstrate critical thinking and complex problem solving, have good listening skills, and are able to work as an effective team member. In addition, applicants must have a personal theory of leadership and show persistence, follow-through, and knowledge of current research and literature related to education leadership.

Imagine a Bolder Course to Principal Selection

**A bolder course of action.** Gwinnett County, Georgia, and Springfield, Massachusetts adopted online research-based screening tools to identify candidates with the right aptitudes and personality traits to achieve district goals. The districts also take an active role in recruiting and financially supporting rising stars.

**A bolder course of action.** Principal training programs need to be more selective. Too many university-based programs accept nearly everyone who applies. Programs should require input from the local school district and review a candidate’s leadership competencies or ability to work well with teachers.
Principal Continuing Education

Promising Practice—The National Center on Education and the Economy and its National Institute for School Leadership

The Center and its Institute help school districts prepare practicing principals to be outstanding instructional leaders in high-performance, standards-based schools. The principal training program develops strategic thinking, shared responsibility for leading the school, implementing standards and instructional systems, and managing for results. Participating school systems select a team of local educators (from 4 to 12 individuals) to learn the National Institute for School Leadership curriculum and then teach it to local principals. The leadership curriculum is taught during summer institutes where the leadership teams work through units on topics such as strategic thinking, standards-based instructional systems, and school design.

Promising Practice—Kentucky Department of Education

As part of its Kentucky Cohesive Leadership System, the Kentucky Department of Education prepared a Continuum for Principal Preparation and Development. The continuum identifies what all the programs will teach in relation to what aspiring principals should know and be able to do to enhance student learning and is used to guide both preparation and career development. The continuum focuses on student achievement and the principal as instructional leader. The elements of the continuum address moral leadership, student learning and democracy (or distributed leadership) and include a series of modules with clinical experiences based on stimulation and field work.

Promising Practice—University of Kentucky, Morehead State University, and Pike County (Kentucky) Schools

The University of Kentucky, Morehead State University, and Pike County (Kentucky) Schools are developing a model for improved leadership to ensure learning for at-risk students in rural school districts. The project works with a cohort of 15 principals and/or individuals certified for the principalship. Participants attend sessions on visionary practices, collaboration, and school-based action research and network with other school leaders. The three-year program includes mentoring by practicing principals and assessing and exposing practicing principal needs and challenges in ensuring improved learning.

Promising Practice—Austin (Texas) Independent School District; University of Texas, Austin; and the Texas Education Agency’s Region XIII Service Center

The three partners assess all district assistant principals and principals on the ISLLC standards. Any school leader who shows a need for improvement on one or more standards receives intensive professional development assistance. The program also provides assistance in developing the ability to speak Spanish and understand the Hispanic culture. First-year principals and/or those new to the state of Texas receive intensive mentoring.
Promising Practice—Chicago Leadership Initiative Rising; Denver Ritchie Program for School Leaders; New York City Leadership Academy

In the Chicago Leadership Initiative Rising program, principals who demonstrate promise but still need support receive coaching and development. The nine-month program is personalized according to where the principals are in their career trajectories and in meeting the professional standards. The Denver Ritchie Program for School Leaders tracks graduates’ on-the-job performance and identifies training weaknesses. The New York City Leadership Academy offers coaching to all first-year New York City principals. Mentors provide an average of 72 hours of individual support to each new principal. At the beginning of the school year, new principals complete a self-assessment on key leadership capabilities to be mastered to improve instruction and use the results to identify three main coaching goals for an individualized growth plan. Principals also have the option of paying for second-year coaching from their building budgets.

Imagine a Bolder Course to Principal Continuing Education

Bolder Course of Action—Leadership Institute

The state should recreate and conduct an annual Leadership Institute. The Institute should provide training and resources on current challenges; develop knowledge, skills, and tools to handle emerging issues; and build principal capacity to implement change initiatives and improve student and school performance. The Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement provides training on meeting elevated expectations for student achievement and school performance. The Georgia Institute is funded by the Wallace and Gates Foundations, state government, and business partners.

Current and Future Principal Roles

The work of the principal requires the application of multiple roles such as visionary, instructional and curriculum leader, assessment expert, disciplinarian, community builder, public relations and communications expert, budget analyst, facilities manager and special programs administrator. In addition, the roles are constantly emerging and changing (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005).

The literature on school administration indicates that principals need to serve in six emerging role areas: instruction and learning, leadership, change, school improvement, data literacy, and strategic intervention. The emerging areas reflect the current emphasis placed on learning, change management, and continuous improvement. The skills and functions of the new roles are consistent with the advanced skills and competencies of the School Performance Administrator proposed as one of the dual functions of the redesigned principalship.
An **Instruction and Learning Specialist** is a professional educator with knowledge and skill in the cognitive processes of learning, research-based instructional strategies, and learning interventions. The Instruction and Learning Specialist would assist and support schools to:

- Establish and implement school-wide learning improvement goals and working agenda
- Conduct professional learning group work on specific instruction and learning topics
- Develop and implement processes for monitoring student progress in reaching learning standards
- Design and use tools to monitor progress in instruction and learning
- Provide instructional coaching and mentoring
- Provide individual assistance in instruction and learning
- Select and implement teaching and learning frameworks
- Collect and analyze evidence of instructional improvement
- Support staff in sustaining instructional gains
- Cultivate professional learning about instructional leadership
- Conduct study groups, workshops, meetings, and professional development in instruction and learning

*(DuFour, R., 2002; Knapp, Copland, Honig, Plecki, & Portin, August 2010; Fink & Resnick, 2001)*

A **Leadership Specialist** is a professional educator with knowledge and skill in using multiple leadership approaches, determining the appropriate leadership style to gain and maintain staff momentum and engagement, and applying effective and efficient operational methods.

As a member of the School Performance Administrative Team, the Leadership Specialist would assist and support schools to:

- Select and modify operational activities to maximize efforts
- Improve the quality and practice of leadership in the school
- Promote collaborative problem solving
- Model and teach leadership practices
- Respond to issues around school operations
- Develop and implement a leadership agenda
- Assist school administrators in learning about their leadership work
- Form a network of school administrators to share practices and strategies
- Respond to administrative, legal, logistical, or management issues
- Diagnose and address problems regarding school leadership practices

*(Fullan, 2007; Wallace Foundation, 2012)*
A **Change Specialist** is a professional educator with knowledge and skill in the change process; experience with and knowledge of change management principles, methodologies, and tools; and knowledge of techniques to maximize employee adoption and use of targeted change.

As a member of the School Performance Administrative Team, the Change Specialist would assist and support schools to:

- Set priorities for change that can be measured and managed realistically.
- Fully implement change initiatives
- Select and use a structured change methodology
- Lead change activities
- Assess the impact of change
- Identify and manage anticipated resistance
- Support and coach project teams
- Monitor change management
- Provide training in change strategies
- Use change management tools

*(Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Harsh, 2012; Olsen & Eoyang, 2001)*

A **School Improvement Specialist** is a professional educator with knowledge and skill in analyzing performance indicators, setting goals, creating improvement plans, and implementing improvement interventions.

As a member of the School Performance Administrative Team, the School Improvement Specialist would assist and support schools to:

- Create a foundation for positive improvement results
- Support teamwork and collaboration
- Identify key processes that impact results
- Develop, implement and monitor the strategic plan
- Align school resources with school improvement priorities
- Develop, implement and monitor the annual improvement plan
- Identify performance measures and indicators that lead to goals
- Facilitate development of a calendar of all school improvement activities

*(Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Fullan, 2007)*

A **Data Literacy Specialist** is a professional educator with knowledge and skill in collecting, maintaining, analyzing and using data to monitor and assess the performance of the school.
As a member of the School Performance Administrative Team, the Data Literacy Specialist would assist and support schools to:

- Use data to continuously evaluate and monitor school performance
- Understand what the data say about how the school is performing
- Engage the entire staff in analyzing student achievement data
- Identify discrepancies between current and desired outcomes
- Collect, analyze, and use data to identify school needs
- Use multiple sources of data to assess performance
- Use data to clarify the problems
- Identify needs based on data analysis
- Use data to make decisions
- Use a variety of tools to organize and analyze data

(National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2011; Bowman, 2013)

A Strategic Intervention Specialist is a professional educator with knowledge and skill in creating a collaborative work environment and using organization development tools to restructure the workplace for effective and efficient work.

As a member of the School Performance Administrative Team, the Strategic Intervention Specialist would assist and support schools to:

- Involve stakeholders in conversations about school-specific issues
- Promote collaborative problem solving and open communication
- Use effective group-process and consensus-building
- Design involvement structures
- Prioritize improvement efforts
- Develop decision-making teams
- Build the collaborative skills of staff
- Lead organization redesign efforts

(Spillane and Sherer, 2004; Mendels, 2012)
Implementing New Principal Roles

Principal Assignment

In the redesigned principalship, school administrators serve the district in a dual function. First, the principal is assigned to administer a specific school according to the individual’s type of certification, experience, and expertise. This assignment is made in concert with code and policy regulations regarding hiring and promotion of staff into administrative positions. The state or district may designate a percentage of time (e.g. 80 percent) that the principal would be assigned to school-level responsibilities. The expectations for this position would be established in state policy and clarified through the annual performance evaluation. The principal would directly supervise all staff assigned to the building and would be the primary officer in charge for daily operations. Principals who completed basic certification training and professional development under the new, expanded state standards would have additional knowledge, skills, and tools to apply to workplace tasks. This knowledge should be evident in the way the principals address and resolve issues and implement the resultant changes. Second, the principal serves as a School Performance Administrator.

School Performance Administrator

In the redesigned principalship, each school administrator has a school leader certificate and specialized credentials in one or more areas of expertise (see Figure 2). The specialized certificate validates that the principal has training and successful experience in one or more areas approved by the designated accrediting agency or professional standards board. If the principal enters the position with a master’s degree, the specialization is attained after three years of study and authentic application of the specialty components. If the principal enters the profession with a doctorate, or enters the school with many years of school administrator experience, the individual will have one or more specializations. The specialization area is documented through extensive portfolio entries, and the annual continuing education activities are selected and completed according to professional development goals established jointly by the principal and the district superintendent. At the time of hiring, or during the annual goal-setting process, the school administrator accepts or agrees to a district appointment as a School Performance Administrator. The bulk of the time assigned under the specialization is used to support principals in other schools in areas related to the specialization. As a School Performance Administrator, the principal provides consultation, collaboration, and coaching, and assists the school principal in developing and implementing interventions to resolve identified issues or challenges.
Figure 2: School Performance Administrator Roles
Why School Performance Administrator?

The title for the redesigned principalship was selected to reflect the context and needs currently impacting the work of the school principal. Over time, the era of accountability has altered the way the public perceives the work of school administrators, and the focus has shifted from managing buildings, people, and programs to efficient and effective monitoring and supervision of teaching and learning and resultant levels of performance. The title *school performance administrator* reflects the current focus and attention on the level of learning and demonstrated knowledge.

The vast majority of the performance indicators used to evaluate and rank school systems are generated at the school level. Indicators such as student achievement data, student dropout rates, student graduation and completion rates, student attendance data, and student discipline all reflect the engagement and responsiveness to the educational experiences that occur at the school level. Therefore, the principal’s role must include becoming active in designing and supporting experiences that will improve and increase the performance at the classroom and school levels. In addition, principals must become active and purposeful in shaping the work that results in increased performance. Second, given the complexity of the issues at the school level, it is unreasonable to expect a single administrator to have knowledge and skill in every possible area that might emerge. The use of collective performance team knowledge to support the school is also in concert with the current emphasis on collaborative and shared leadership. (See Figure 3).
Figure 3: Training and Role Elements of Redesigned Principalship

- **Preservice/Preparation**
  - Enhanced Certification
  - Applicants can enroll in a 5-year MS program; includes an administrative specialization

- **Role and Function**
  - Shared Leadership
  - Train and use teacher leaders.
  - Principal Specialists serve more than one school in specialty area. Work with other schools to develop and implement improvement plans.

- **Preservice/Preparation**
  - Advanced Certification
  - Doctoral level program includes administration certification plus one specialization

- **Role and Function**
  - Distributed Administration
  - Some administrative tasks conducted through RESA using technology-based processes.

- **Inservice/Continuing Education**
  - Professional Standards Board
  - Establishes and monitors training and licensure for School Administration.

- **Inservice/Continuing Education**
  - Specializations
  - Post-masters work. Courses plus competency based internship for each area of specialization.

- **Inservice/Continuing Education**
  - Credentialing
  - Portfolio of professional certification and specializations; evidence from practice.
  - Establish reciprocity with other states.
School Performance Administrative Team

The principal/School Performance Administrator is automatically assigned to the district School Performance Administrative Team and plays an active role in shaping and attaining a desired performance level for the school. In this capacity, the School Performance Administrator receives referrals and requests for services, participates in team meetings, and helps monitor the school's progress under the annual improvement plan. A similar service was provided by the New York City Leadership Academy Network teams. Typically visiting schools once a week, the teams provided major support for novice principals. Network teams varied in their configuration but included curriculum experts, data coaches, and other facilitators. In this proposal, School Performance Administrators would be available as needed and could develop and implement a support plan at a single school or across multiple schools. Superintendents and members of the district staff will closely monitor the composition and effectiveness of the School Performance Administrative Team and select new administrators with desired credentials or collaborate with one or more principals in completing additional graduate training and gaining the specialty endorsements the district needs to have a full complement of available expertise.

The role and function of School Performance Administrators address at least two challenges facing the principalship. One, these positions provide information, knowledge, and skills using continuously updated tools and strategies in an identified area. Two, the School Performance Administrators serve as additional staff members who can be deployed as needed to assist the schools. The School Performance Administrator Team is available to the principal on an ongoing basis and actually reduces the principal’s workload by providing collaborators and expertise for handling complex issues as they arise. At the multidistrict or regional level, administrators can enter into cooperative agreements to share services or temporarily provide needed expertise until credentialed staff are located or cultivated. In addition, having a School Performance Administrator Team promotes and supports the use of shared leadership to strengthen decisions and daily operations along with the development of aspiring leaders. In a bolder course of action, the School Performance Administrator Team can be used as a mechanism for analyzing and redistributing the principal workload, distributing tasks among team members, moving routine functions to the Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), and recapturing time that can be used for school improvement and instructional leadership activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge Category</th>
<th>To meet current challenges:</th>
<th>Promising Practice</th>
<th>Bolder Course of Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volume and Velocity of Change</td>
<td>The principal must have knowledge and skill in strategically selecting and responding to various change demands. <strong>New Role: Change Specialist</strong></td>
<td>Customized professional development based on school need</td>
<td>Administrative professional learning group; district-led professional development based on exemplars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Summary of Elements for a Redesigned Principalship
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complex Organizations</th>
<th>The principal must have strong collaboration skills, know how to design and implement change initiatives, possess or have access to expertise on organization development.</th>
<th>Enhanced certification; master’s level core certification with specialization in organization change</th>
<th>Advanced certification; doctoral level core certification with one specialization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The principal must use resources to effectively conduct daily operations. <strong>New Role: School Improvement Specialist</strong></td>
<td>Shared leadership</td>
<td>Distributed administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Challenges</td>
<td>The principal must have knowledge and skill in monitoring effective instruction, analyzing student performance data, and designing learning experiences to meet student needs. <strong>New Role: Instruction and Learning Specialist</strong></td>
<td>Inter- and intra-district mentoring</td>
<td>Administrative or executive coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Standards</td>
<td>The principal must know how to develop and attain personal and school development goals and achieve continuous growth for self and staff. <strong>New Role: Leadership Specialist</strong></td>
<td>Expanded standards; national principal standards</td>
<td>Professional Standards Board</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>International principal standards; industry standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Administrative Tools</td>
<td>The principal must effectively use professional tools such as impact analysis, forecasting and solution finding, data analysis, benchmarking.</td>
<td>Develop district and regional cooperative agreements for specialized technical assistance services</td>
<td>School Performance Administrator; School Performance Administrator Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The principal must develop and use specialized professional knowledge. <strong>New Role: Data Literacy Specialist</strong></td>
<td>National Board Certification</td>
<td>International certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Competencies and New Roles</td>
<td>The principal must cultivate new professional competencies, function in expanded roles, meet performance expectations, access and use specialized knowledge, and contribute to system improvement as a member of a performance team.</td>
<td>Use higher education/school district cooperatives that co-develop the experiences for administrative certifications</td>
<td>Industry standard performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>New Role: Strategic Intervention Specialist</strong></td>
<td>Administrative specialization</td>
<td>Privatize principal training and certification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section IV: Proposed Recommendations and Policy or Statutory Changes

The following recommendations and proposed policy or statutory modifications are offered to establish readiness for implementing change to the West Virginia principalship.

1. The school principal position is a critical stepping stone to an improved education system. The implementation of policy, provision of quality instruction, and the ultimate level of learning all pass through the leadership and supervision of the principal. Therefore, state leaders and policy makers should establish and implement a common commitment to strengthening the principalship at every instructional level.

2. Current policy and Sections 18 and 18A of the West Virginia Code should be studied to determine inconsistencies in responsibilities and expectations placed on school principals.

3. A study of principal licensure in all 50 states found that (1) licenses do not reflect a learning focus; (2) licensing requirements are unbalanced across states and misaligned with expectations for school leaders; and (3) licenses should form a foundation for school leadership development (Wallace Foundation, 2012). As a result, the state needs to implement a new licensure program that develops the knowledge and skills principals need to guide teaching, learning, and improved performance.

4. State leaders and policy makers will need to examine and agree on the extent of change to be implemented regarding a redesigned principalship, including the level of disturbance to the status quo and the degree of change expected in the professional work conducted.

5. Policy makers will need to establish a comprehensive policy framework to govern the design and implementation of a new principalship program and establish guiding principles for program implementation.

6. Stakeholder and administrative advisory and working groups should be formed, and clear scopes of work and timelines for completing tasks should be prepared.

7. Administrators and policy makers should agree on mechanisms for transitional oversight of the new program. Large-scale and longitudinal data should be analyzed to determine the degree of impact on targeted performance areas.

8. Standards, policies, course requirements, and training content should create a progression of competencies from preservice through inservice training for school and district leaders.
Bibliography


Sources of Information on Promising Practices


Orr, M., King, C., & LaPointe, M. (2010, October). Districts developing leaders: Lessons on consumer actions and program approaches from eight urban districts. Boston, MA: Education Development Center.


