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ABSTRACT

This paper uses the urban setting as a case study of some of the persistent challenges facing school principals. It uses data from Washington State and the University Council for Educational Administration's "Thousand Voices from the Firing Line" project to examine the perceived challenges of leading urban schools from the perspective of those who are in the role--urban school principals. From the analysis of these data, the paper describes several categories of urban leadership challenges and compares those challenges to new capacities for the principalship outlined in the National Commission for the Principalship and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, including increased job pressures and managing resources. The paper concludes by linking urban principals' perceptions with emerging leadership capacities in order to inform professional preparation programs in the United States. (Contains 16 references.) (DFR)

Principal Distinctives in the United States: The Intersection of Principal Preparation and Traditional Roles between Education Reform and Accountability

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Introduction

In many ways, the plight of urban schools reflects one of the central challenges in American education. When the label of "failing schools" is used, the label often lands in an urban setting where the blight of poverty, racial division, inadequate health care, and crime, mix with the challenges of immigrant children struggling in a language they may not know, hopeless cycles of economic hardship, and overcrowded, crumbling schools. I do not intend to overstate or caricaturize the environment of urban schools as entirely negative, clearly there are countless examples of urban schools elevating children in educational opportunity; and by the same token, there are failing, violence-tainted schools in suburbia or rural communities. However, our urban schools remain at center stage when we begin to discuss the challenges of instruction, educational reform, and educational opportunity for all of America's children.

In this paper, I use the urban setting as a case study of some of the persistent challenges facing school principals. Using data from Washington State and the University Council for Educational Administration's "Thousand Voices from the Firing Line" project, I examine the perceived challenges of leading urban schools from those who are in the role–urban school principals. From analysis of these data, I describe several categories of urban leadership challenges and compare those challenges to new capacities for the principalship outlined in the National Commission for the Principalship (1990) and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (1996). The paper concludes by linking urban principals' role perceptions with emerging leadership capacities (Murphy, 1992) in order to inform professional preparation programs in the United States.

This symposium is organized in order to explore between-country comparisons to reveal a layer of analysis not always considered, that of the cultural or historical heritage of school leadership in each of the three countries featured (United States, United Kingdom, and Denmark). To that end, we have each selected aspects of school leadership that we feel are rich examples of changes occurring in the school principals' roles in our respective countries. The symposium recognizes that the rich themes of school reform and changing roles are often the starting place for

comparative studies in education. In that sense, I present this paper as a representation of issues that cut across many Western, information-economy nations. I make no claim that the analysis here is either unique to an American context or, alternatively, that the same manifestations of these leadership challenges exist in London or Copenhagen. This serves, instead, as a place to begin the conversation and the four papers of the symposium together will serve to identify the comparative issues and challenges.

The Essential Challenges of Role Change

If change is so pervasive, what are the further changes that impinge on the role of the principal? Daresh (1998) identifies three major categories of changes: local management of schools, choice, accountability and assessment.

Reform rhetoric and practice (Alexander, 1992) highlights school, or site-based, management as a central category of policy proposals to improve schools. Many politicians and district-level leaders (e.g., superintendents) espouse the value of placing decision-making at the point where the decisions are implemented–namely the school and, therefore, site-based management reflects the effort to move decision-making closer the school.

Additionally, the move to local control is sometimes an outgrowth of efforts to encourage local entrepreneurship and as a means of competing for and attracting students in a choice-driven, market model. The U.K. "grant-maintained" schools (directly funded from the federal government) and the charter schools movement in the U.S. echo these themes of school improvement through choice and market-based competition for resources attached to students.

Higher standards for academic performance and accompanying tests to assure accountability to those standards is the third category that Daresh (1998) identifies. As States rush toward further student testing, proficiency testing of teachers, or propose linking educator pay to student outcomes, the pressure of accountability further defines principal roles as they seek to provide resources, be instructional leaders, and ensure professional development for teachers.

Urban Challenges for School Leaders

The argument advanced in this paper is that the urban context of American schools presents a unique case of educational change, reform, and leadership challenge. In many ways, urban schools serve as a contextual lens on a number of societal and cultural issues that impinge on American schools across a variety of contexts and communities. As a case, urban schools may serve as a nexus of the components of educational reform and the challenges that arise from reform of schools. A few examples are now outlined.

One characteristic of the current educational reform initiatives in many states is the move to establish standards of educational attainment and accountability systems to report on performance against those standards. In Washington State, the current legislated educational reform (in its most basic sense) includes a system of Educational Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), or student outcomes; a test to measure student performance against these learning requirements, the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL); and regular public reporting of school performance, often in the newspaper. The scores reported from the WASL are meant to provide a public audience with information to select "good" schools and to serve as an accountability measure to motivate low performing schools to improve instruction. To no surprise, when the first round of fourth grade WASL results were published there was a compelling correspondence between school performance and the most basic measure of the socioeconomic characteristics of the community–the percentage of students on free and reduced lunch. This correlation between poverty and achievement was recently highlighted in a cover story in The New York Times Magazine (Traub, 1/16/00). The author, when describing how failure of large swathes of fourth and eighth grade students were reported went on to note: "What was not said, however, was the obvious: that the city districts that performed poorly, like those that performed well, scored almost exactly as the socioeconomic status of the children in them would have predicted" (Traub, 2000, p. 52).

In addition to concentrations of poverty and low socioeconomic status, the urban school system tends to be larger comprised of dozens or hundreds of schools rather than smaller

districts more characteristic in suburban or rural settings. In these larger urban school districts, there are often more layers of bureaucracy (as evidenced by the higher percentage of funds allocated to administration, NCES, 2000) and, sometimes, a stronger teacher union presence in order to protect teacher working conditions.

Finally, perhaps owing to the complex challenges of urban schools, America's urban districts are facing serious principal shortages. Both the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals report that the shortages will continue for some years to come both through retirement and increased need (Olson, 1999). For urban schools, a principal shortage has important implications.

> Difficulties in recruiting skilled principals could not come at a worse time, experts point out, because of the importance of principals in creating an effective school. With states and districts raising their expectations for students, more youngsters arriving at school with nonacademic needs, and schools undergoing unprecedented scrutiny, the pivotal players on the scene are often absent, verging on retirement, or embittered about their jobs. (Olson, 1999)

It is for this reason, that it is important to examine the specific challenges voiced by American urban principals and carefully consider what this means for principal preparation in the years to come.

Examining Urban Principals' Perspectives

The findings in this paper are derived from studies of changes in principals' role in Washington State (Williams & Portin, 1996) and a national examination of principals' perceptions compiled by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA, 1999).

Washington State as a Case of Principal Role Change

A study of the perceptions of changes in their role was conducted in Washington State in the mid-1990s. This study was planned and conducted in two stages. In the first stage, focus-group discussions occurred with school principals (Wulff, 1997) who identified several issues and topics that formed broad interests of principals across Washington State. These topics were used to design a questionnaire for school administrators.

The main study involved sending a 55-item questionnaire the membership of the Association of Washington School Principals. A total of 2,431 questionnaires were mailed with a subsequent 34.6% response rate. A somewhat less-than-hoped for-response, the potential of bias in returns, and small populations for certain cells (such as urban high school principals) add a certain degree of ambiguity to the data returned and are kept in mind with this self-report data. Questionnaire coding allowed categorization of these data by school level (elementary, middle, high), and district type (urban, suburban, and rural). The questionnaire results were summarized and appropriate statistical tests were used to determine if significant differences existed among the various categories of respondents. The data were analyzed in two steps. In the first step, descriptive statistics were prepared for the total return including: number of respondents in each of the nine respondent cells (urban elementary, urban middle, and so on), a total summary of the number and percentage of the total for each of the five points on a Likert scale (Strongly Agree–Agree–Undecided–Disagree–Strongly Disagree).

In the second step, one-way analysis of variance was used to see whether there were significant differences between the means by demographic or level for each of the 55 items. If the test statistic was significant, the Scheffé post-hoc multiple comparison test was conducted to indicate which of the three cells of analysis (level or district type) were significantly different from the others. The focus of analysis for this article is on the responses from urban principals in this particular study.

The study of the changing role of principals in Washington State revealed both expected and a few surprising findings. These were perception data and need to be viewed as such, but the themes that arose from this study confirmed other perceptions regarding the complexity and increasing responsibility of the principal's job. These data suggest that principal perceptions revealed some variability between school levels (elementary, middle school, high school) and community type (rural, suburban, urban).

Summarized differences for urban schools respondents

Parameters of decision-making were reported as less clear for urban schools than suburban and rural schools. When asked if "the parameters of my decision-making authority have been clearly established" a higher proportion of urban respondents (83%) were undecided or disagreed with the statement, as opposed to 70 percent of suburban respondents and 68 percent of rural respondents. Both urban and suburban principals indicated that more decision making has been decentralized to the school (urban 92%, suburban 88%, rural 60%)

Fifty-six percent of the urban principals indicated that increased diversity had a positive impact on their school community, a factor indicated by 34 percent of rural principals and 54 percent of suburban principals.

"Responding to parent interest and expectations has required a disproportionate amount of time" was reported as not as significant for urban principals (49%) as suburban principals (65%). This matched responses indicating parents being more actively involved in defining student programs and their child's progress (urban 39%, rural 40%, suburban 52%).

Urban principals reported a greater emphasis on business partnerships (urban 91%, suburban 78%, rural 75%) and seeking external funding sources (urban 71%, suburban 62%, rural 59%).

Across all respondents, 91 percent of the principals indicated they are in districts that are decentralizing decision making to the local school site, 76 percent were in districts that were initiating or encouraging the use of site councils, 79 percent indicated the need to establish school/business partnerships. These additional responsibilities are being assumed in a shifting context. Seventy-six percent reported working in sites with increased student diversity that has had an important impact on the school, 83 per cent increased interactions with parents that have had a significant impact on their work, 91 per cent reported it was important to consider "client satisfaction" when making decisions.

In earlier reports (Williams & Portin, 1996; 1997) we interpreted several themes from these data. These included a "layering" of responsibility, shifts from perceived leadership

activities to managerial ones, ambiguity and complexity in problems encountered and decision making, and declining morale and enthusiasm.

In open-response items, principals often spoke of additional job responsibilities being added on a regular basis without any responsibilities being taken away. These responsibilities can be perceived as being "layered" one on top of the other resulting in more time required in order to fulfil the job requirements. In addition, we found that principals often reported that the layering of responsibility did not always come with corresponding authority. Whereas a school may have the added responsibility of a site council for local decisions that decision making is often constrained by state legislation, district policy, and negotiated agreements with bargaining units.

In leadership preparation, principals are urged to consider the balance between managerial day-to-day tasks and those of a more strategic nature. This is sometime represented as a leadership-management dichotomy (Sergiovanni, 1995). In this study, principals indicated that the balance was shifted toward the managerial aspects of their job. Perhaps owing to the visible and consequential nature of failing to attend to managerial matters, it is not surprising that principals give these matters high priority. The respondents indicated that there simply was not enough time to do both.

These changes and additional responsibilities are often accompanied by considerable ambiguity. Many principals view districts as decentralizing decision making to the local school without clear guidelines about which responsibilities rest with the principal and which remain with the district. This is often seen as a paradox, the decentralization of responsibility while authority is increasingly centralized (e.g. state direction of curriculum content and accountability measures).

Finally, many of the respondents reported that the tension between layered responsibilities, the inability to find enough time to engage in the perceived leadership activities of the school, and the ambiguity of authority and responsibility has led to a greater reported sense of frustration, pessimism, declining morale and enthusiasm.

A Thousand Voices from the Firing Line

In order to broaden the perspectives on the urban principalship beyond a single state, I incorporated interview data from a recent study conducted by member faculty of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA, 1999). These data were gathered to further expand understanding of both principal and superintendents' perceptions of their roles and that challenge they are facing.

The first phase of this study resulted in interview data from 29 superintendents and 25 principals from across the nation. These interviews have been transcribed, analyzed, and reported at UCEA annual conventions (e.g., Prestine, 1997) and in a recently released monograph (Kochan, Jackson, & Duke, 1999). Using a standard interview protocol, principals were asked questions regarding their perception of the job of school administrator, how it has changed, vexing problems and strategies for dealing with those vexing problems.

For this paper, I have used content analysis of the transcripts of the 12 urban school principals. The responses were from at least eight states. Of the 12 principals interviewed, six were male, six female; three were elementary principals, four middle school principals, and five high school principals. Major themes in their perceptions of urban school leadership are identified in the next section.

Looking to the "Firing Line"

Content analysis of the urban principal transcripts in the Thousand Voices Project (UCEA, 1999) reveals four broad themes. The four categories are increased job pressures, coordination of non-instructional needs, mediating hopelessness, and managing of resources. Segments of these 12 principal voices are used to illustrate each of these themes.

Increased job pressures.

As is echoed in other studies, these principals reported their job has changed in both complexity and the number of tasks at hand. "I'm accountable for more activities. The more we created, the more we develop, the more possibilities take on new dimensions" (Elementary Principal L).

It is also a job that is reported to take a great deal of time. "It takes 12 hours a days to be effective" (Elementary Principal E). "This job has changed, now that you're really engaging in this job 365 days a year" (Middle School Principal A).

One of the pressures indicated was a reorientation of the principals' time. In each of the interviews, they were asked to characterize a "good day" and a "bad day." With near unanimity, they described bad days as those that shifted their attention from students and teachers to simply keeping ahead of the managerial matters. As one high school principal replied,

> We are still functioning on three levels: every day management, a crisis level of putting out fires day-to-day, and a whole array of interpersonal dynamic things–human relations that are student oriented. There is little time to really do what you went to school for, what you thought the job was about. I have three assistant principals, but even with the four of us it is an awesome responsibility (High School Principal C).

Coordination of non-instructional needs.

The second category of responses implied attention to student need that might be interpreted as non-instructional. One high school principal noted:

> The job is becoming more and more unrelated to education. Your plate gets more and more on it. Because of conditions in society, I know we have to provide breakfast and lunch, condoms, AIDS awareness–those are things when I grew up that the parents did. (High School Principal C)

Dealing with the social issues that may effect a student's academic progress meant that other services needed to be established and managed. At the middle school level a principal noted,

> We set up student support groups within the building. So we said, you can't really control the environment out there but we do have some controls over what goes on in here. So what we did was we set up student support groups to deal with stuff like death and dying, drug addiction, divorce, various problems that kids identified that's on their mind that's affecting their education.... Second thing you do, you try to reach out to people, to community agencies (Middle School Principal A).

Mediating hopelessness.

These urban principals often mentioned the complex needs of the school's social and economic context. These needs, particularly economic needs, were often ones that were described as engendering a sense of hopelessness.

> I think kids now, particularly kids who are less advantaged to start off with, have more of a sense of hopelessness.... They can't find jobs in their field. So I think there is a change in the dynamic, the paradigm, whatever you want to call it. Our society is not necessarily able to offer that sense of hope. (High School Principal B)

When further asked about the most vexing problems or aspects of the job that they must confront in their current position, the same principal responded, "(The vexing problems) relate again to addressing kids in an educational setting that are dealing with the societal issues that our society is facing. Drugs. Hopelessness. Job market, relates to hopelessness, I guess, in a sense" (High School Principal B)

Social ills, as represented in substance abuse and crime, were also cited as needs, particularly by secondary principals.

> Our job is not a job of education anymore, most of the time I feel like I am fighting crime.... There is more evidence of drug culture. This produces more cars being stolen, more cars being broken into, theft from the building. I had not anticipated having to deal with these problems.... A principal has a multifaceted role–you have to be a principal, parent, a counselor, an arbitrator, a negotiator–you have a lot of different audiences to serve (High School Principal C).

In addition to seeking resources and responding to in-school needs, principals discussed the manner in which the economic and social needs of their community meant that they became a clearinghouse for resources that support parents as well as children.

> We have a parent center... now it's a family center.... Our parents last year said we need more help with dealing with our kids and we need help with education ourselves. One of the parents estimated that probably 50 percent of our parents have never completed high school in this school.... We have a family center that now is fully stocked including a computer if parents want to learn computer skills. We have videos that can be checked out for parents on parenting skills and we have many learning activities. Ziplock bags full of games that they can check out (Elementary Principal E).

The persistent theme is that the urgencies of social, family, and personal need many times contributed to the school decision making around instructional needs.

Managing resources.

> We just don't have enough money and our instructional budget was cut 20 percent last year, was cut 20 percent the year before, and it's really hard to do what you need to do at school to maintain your building, to provide materials for people, to maintain the technology (High School Principal K).

Along with increases in overall managerial responsibility, the challenge of finding resources was a uniform theme. The facilities the principals managed were sometimes noted to be challenging. "This school was built in 1924; it is a beautiful edifice but the infrastructure is deteriorating" (High School Principal C). The material needs and resource gaps required several of the principals to seek funding from other sources. "We've been fortunate and have been able to get a number of outside grants. We've found solutions to our own money problems" (Elementary Principal E).

When one high school principal was asked how he dealt with budget problems he responded, "You pray, and hope. Well, what we've done over the past few years is we've tried to develop relationships with corporate America. We identified a number of outside sponsors who have adopted our program" (High School Principal F).

Role Change and Preparation

"Every educational reform report of the 1980s concludes that the United States cannot have excellent schools without excellent leaders" (National Commission for the Principalship, 1990, p.9).

Although a decade has passed since the National Commission for the Principalship produced their report, Principals for our Changing Schools: Preparation and Certification (1990), subsequent reports (e.g., American Association of School Administrators, 1999) continue to repeat this imperative. The role of competent, innovative, and ethical leaders remains a cornerstone of school effectiveness and improvement.

In this section, I examine two sources to reveal an overlap between the needs perceived by urban principals expressed in the prior section and the performance domains for preparation.

National Commission for the Principalship.

The National Commission for the Principalship (NCP) identified 21 domains of principal expertise. These 21 domains are categorized in four broad areas: functional domains, programmatic domains, interpersonal domains, and contextual domains (1990, pp. 21-25). I will focus on the fourth category, "contextual domains", and argue that it provides the most apparent linkage the challenges of urban leadership.

The authors indicate that "these domains reflect the world of ideas and forces within which the school operates. They explore the intellectual, ethical, cultural, economic, political, and governmental influences upon schools" (NCP, 1990, p. 25). There are four competency sub-domains that fall under this broad category. The first, "philosophical and cultural values" rests largely on a reflexive understanding of the aims and purposes of education in a democracy. As a transmitter of culture influenced by historical understanding and prospectively concerned with global influences. The second, "legal and regulatory applications" accounts for an action base informed by a broad understanding of policy processes and the influence of legislation, collective bargaining, and district policy as preeminent in school direction-setting. Related to the second category, the third, "policy and political influences," assumes that principals not only understand policy processes, but that they participate in them as well. Principals become political leaders, in the sense that they understand and can work with competing interests in an environment of inadequate resources (the essence of educational politics). Finally, principals recognize that their political leadership is predicated on "public and media relationships." Principals take the initiative in shaping an understanding of the organizations purposes and use a variety of outlets to communicate the schools interests and intent.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium.

The six standards for school leaders developed by the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) represent a broad-based articulation of "knowledge, dispositions, and performance" designed to better prepare leaders for our changing society. It is clear that the

framers of the ISLLC standards grounded their work in an understanding of the changing nature of society. In the preface to the standards (CCSS0, 1996), the framers state:

> Looking to the larger society that envelopes schooling, the Consortium identified a handful of powerful dynamics that will likely shape the future of education and, perforce, the types of leadership required for tomorrow's schools. To begin with, our vision of education is influenced by the knowledge that the social fabric of society is changing, often in dramatic ways. On the one hand, the pattern of the fabric is being rewoven. In particular, we are becoming a more diverse society–racially, linguistically, and culturally. On the other hand, the social fabric is unraveling for many children and their families. Poverty is increasing. Indexes of physical, mental, and moral well being are declining. The stock of social capital is decreasing as well. (p. 5)

There are three standards that speak most directly to the changing role needs identified by the urban respondents in this paper. The standards are:

> 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 (Standard 3)
>
> • collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources (Standard 4)
>
> • understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (Standard 6) (CCSSO, 1996, pp. 14-17; 20-21)

Discussion

Developing Resilient Entrepreneurial Leadership

The sheer volume of managerial tasks, often within a context where needs exceed resources available, necessitates that the American urban principal develop a sense of resilient resourcefulness. On one hand, leadership entails working within the current funding structure, advocating for the school's needs, and ensuring that resources are managed in a manner that is responsible. However, as the Washington principals indicated, in urban settings principals need to be ready and able to drum up resources from other sources. Creativity, building partnerships, and dogged endurance seem to characterize both a need and a capacity for principals.

On the one hand, this is part of the frustration that principals express. This type of activity can be incredibly time consuming and may not result in a level of resources to meet the identified needs. As noted in the ISLLC standards, however, this is a venture that occurs in partnership with communities, "mobilizing community resources" in order to assist the school.

In one sense, this is culturally new for public school principals. Managing discretionary resources delegated from districts has changed dramatically in recent years for many schools (again, as indicated in the Washington State survey). It also seems that this type of entrepreneurialism is part-and-parcel of the political rhetoric and policy shifts since the 1980s.

Developing Contextual Understanding and Empathy

Clearly, one of the challenges noted by urban principals in both studies is the complexity of their school community. This often means accommodating a wide variety of language groups, ensuring special education support for students at-risk of school failure, and linking community resources to assist with basic life needs that arise from poverty. What links both the comments of the urban principals and the standards advocated by the ISSLC and NCP is that principals need to connect their understanding and managerial resourcefulness in meeting needs to a strong platform of ethical practice and value-driven leadership. They serve these communities with expertise, but also out of commitment to the opportunities and needs within an urban context.

Developing Political Leadership

Associated with entrepreneurial expertise, principals in urban settings seem to rely more on political leadership skills. By political leadership I imply an ability to make a case for the interests of their schools within a system of competing interests for limited resources. Their ability to understand the operating patterns of their school system and advocate for their school rises to the surface in responses from these urban principals. As has occurred in the U.K., the problems of urban schools can lead to their being publicly accountable for the complex social systems societal problems that affect student achievement. Principals, especially urban principals, will need to develop expertise in communicating the unique characteristics of their school that suffer when schools are ranked and compared against criteria that fail to account for

the unique challenges of their community. As O'Connor, Hales, Davies, & Tomlinson (1999) argue:

> It must be stated clearly and loudly that reliance on school effectiveness research to discover and isolate failing schools is simplistic and dangerous (Goldstein, 1996). The background factors, which were taken into account by school effectiveness researchers in the 1980s, are *not* as extreme as those experienced by the schools in the 1990s. (p. 250)

One of the 16 characteristics of twenty-first century schools identified by the American Association of School Administrators (1999) is "Schools are the crossroads and central convening point of the community" (p. 14). The AASA monograph states,

> Everything that happens in a school affects the community, and everything that happens in the community has implications for the schools. The Council of 21 describes schools as around-the-clock hubs for lifelong learning. Schools will be the connecting point for education and achievement for all who live and work in the community in the next century. They will likely become centers for other services, such as healthcare, housing, social, and other community services and agencies. (p. 14-15)

In addition, the same report highlights the essential need for "Environmentally responsive infrastructure and facilities… A system with secure and adequate fiscal, material, and human resources" (p. 51). Already, the nation's urban schools have ground to make up in terms of the facilities. Older schools, decreased local funding (NCES, 2000), make the challenge of marshalling and assuring appropriate resources to be of paramount interest. These needs are going to require that administrator preparation programs attend to preparation for fiscal management, entrepreneurship, and political acumen in order to meet this pressing need.

Conclusion

American urban schools represent a number of forces that are coming to bear on public education. The forces for reform struggle against the perceptions of educational failure often placing those who lead schools, the principals, in exceptionally challenging positions. In addition, because responsibility for public education rests primarily with the States, the federal role in education is largely a rhetorical one. In an election year, candidates for federal leadership consistently place education at the center of their campaign strategy. This could well be

confusing for principals who end up mediating a variety of forces and interests in their school–the essence of political leadership.

Clearly, American public education is in a time of transition. Transition to a standards and accountability-driven system at the same time that American society is becoming more diverse. Some might also argue that economic stratification is making one-measure-fits-all accountability systems both problematic and unfair, particularly to students in areas of economic deprivation.

Principal roles in meeting these transitional needs are changing, reflected by practitioners and in preparation standards. Change is a constant identified by the urban respondents in these two studies. Performance domains and standards are equally reflecting a need to match principal preparation to the shifting and growing need for school leaders.

This presents a challenge for comparativists. I am confident that the themes in this symposium will ring familiar to scholars and practitioners in other countries. It seems to me that the essential challenge is to continue the discussion about changes and challenges in school leadership with an appreciation for what has come before in each country's unique setting.

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