



## What can we learn from the pandemic about how to create more meaningful and transformative internships?

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Frank Davidson, Ed.D.  
Northern Arizona University

**Abstract:** The global pandemic of 2020-2021 forced schools and universities to constantly adapt to shifting conditions. Individuals completing their internships between March of 2020 and May of 2021 faced the challenge of making adaptations not only as full-time educators and graduate students, but, in many cases, as parents as well. Gaining meaningful experience during the clinical experience of the internship is challenging under any circumstances, but the pandemic added significant new challenges. This article provides evidence of adaptations made by interns, site mentors, and university faculty that may be helpful in creating innovative clinical experiences in the future. The article summarizes the findings from a panel discussion held at the May, 2021 Arizona Professors of Educational Leadership Conference which was facilitated by the author, as well as from semi-structured interviews with stakeholders involved in the internship experience. The article includes a discussion of implications for planning and supervising internships, and offers policy recommendations and suggestions for future research.

**Keywords:** internship, principalship, superintendency, leadership preparation programs

### Introduction

This article involves a summary and analysis of existing practices in planning, completing, and evaluating principal internships, as well as an effort to envision future directions in the internship that could serve to better prepare interns for leadership roles. The article rests, in part, on the premise that, because the global pandemic of 2020-2021 forced changes in every aspect of schooling – including principal internships – these changes introduced insights into innovative ways to create significant learning opportunities for interns. The article includes a review of recent literature related to internships and school leader preparation in general. It summarizes the findings from a panel discussion held at the May, 2021 Arizona

Professors of Educational Leadership Conference which was facilitated by the author, and from semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in the internship experience. The article includes a discussion of implications for planning and supervising internships, and offers policy recommendations and suggestions for future research.

## Literature Review

### Stated Purpose of Internships

The concept of internships reportedly originated in the field of medicine. They were viewed as a way for participants to gain practical experience prior to finishing their studies (Barnett et al., 2009). In educational settings, the principal internship has usually focused less on the role of instructional leadership than it has on management duties including scheduling, school-home communication, substitutes, extracurriculars and other after-school events, and student supervision. In a 2008 review of scholarship on internships, Cunningham and Sherman note that **“Traditionally, the focus has been on school management and maintaining a safe, disciplined environment”** (2008, p. 310). In many settings, despite the need to develop leaders with the capacity to advance instructional leadership and social justice, the move away from a traditional approach has come slowly. Sherman and Crum concluded that many internship experiences offer exposure to the activities disliked most by practicing administrators, commenting that **“whereas bus duty is an important function of a school and it ensures student safety, opportunities for transformation are lacking”** (2009, p. 70).

Barnett and colleagues acknowledged the role of internships in providing **opportunities to “merge theory, research, and practice”** (2009, p. 375). Such connections are valued by interns, as interns have reported that university contributions toward their preparation are essential (Sherman & Crum, 2009), as is the authenticity found in the day-to-day demands of school leadership (Sutcher et al., 2017).

Based on a review of the scholarly literature on internships, the intended outcomes of internships have included exposure to many of the critical tasks performed by school leaders. Such tasks include assessing needs and proposing solutions to improve academic achievement and overall school performance, engaging in actions intended to promote social justice, carrying out the organizational management tasks associated with the principalship, and increasing understanding of the career of school administration (Barnett et al., 2009). Internships serve to fulfill state and accreditation policies, provide real-world administrative experiences, and bridge the theory-practice gap (Crow & Whiteman, 2016; Cunningham & Sherman, 2008; Deschaine & Jankens, 2017; Drake, 2020; Hayes & Irby, 2020; Sherman & Crum, 2009; Sutcher et al., 2017).

## Types of Internships

Barnett, Copland, and Shoho (2009) concluded that three distinct approaches to the internship appeared to be the most common from the 1990s to the early 2000s:

### *Full-Time, Job-Embedded Internships*

Considered the ideal model for the internship, a full-time internship involves release **from the intern's normal duties (typically a teaching position)** and sufficient compensation to enable the intern **to devote one's full attention to learning the job** of a building principal. Though it provides no guarantee that this type of internship will engage interns in the many responsibilities of the principalship, evidence indicates that full-time, job-embedded internships provide the greatest exposure to the types of activities in which principals typically engage (Drake, 2020). Admittedly, these are the most rare types of internships, as they depend upon a funding source to compensate interns with an annual salary sufficient to relieve them of their ordinary duties so that attention can be devoted full-time to internship activities. For example, in the state of North Carolina, full-time Master of School Administration students are eligible for a paid internship year (Fusarelli et al., 2019; Reyes-Guerra & Barnett, 2016).

### *Detached Internships*

The most commonly-used approach to the internship, this approach requires interns to complete and document leadership activities **outside one's normal duties and responsibilities**. The internship is typically completed in the final semester of a graduate or certificate program. The required documentation of activities varies from institution to institution, and can range from dozens to hundreds of hours over the course of a semester or a year. Students typically maintain portfolios and activity logs to document their internship activities, and compile a journal with reflections on their experiences.

### *Course-Embedded Field Experiences*

This is reportedly not a widely-used approach. It essentially involves sorting the activities that would be completed in a typical semester- or year-long internship and assigning them to relevant coursework throughout the leadership-preparation program. For instance, activities related to instructional improvement might be included in coursework on instructional leadership or supervision of instruction, whereas activities involving the application of legal principles would be completed during a course in school law.

## Favorable Trends in Internships

Barnett and colleagues cite three trends concerning internships. These trends involve: a) the emphasis on linking internship standards with the PSEL (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015) and NELP (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2018) standards, b) stronger connections between preparation programs and school districts, and c) technology-driven delivery of preparation programs (2009, p. 381). Their analysis revealed an increasing emphasis on authenticity in instructionally-focused leadership experiences. While

internships in the past may have focused to a greater extent on managerial and organizational responsibilities of principals, these authors observe a changing view of the types of experiences to which interns should be exposed. Similarly, Drake (2020) points to evidence that preparation programs are more effectively exposing interns to school improvement work. Orphanos and Orr (2014) provided evidence that innovative principal preparation can lead to more positive teacher work conditions, which is certainly a desirable trend.

In a guide to internships developed through a U.S. Department of Education grant, Sherman and Crum identified best practices that pointed to promising avenues for the future. One of the most critical involves collaborating not only with site mentors, but also with districts to plan and design internships. One district that has a strong record of collaborating with universities in successful leadership development is **Arizona's Paradise Valley Unified School District** in Arizona (Davidson & Hansen, in press). For thirty years, the district has offered the **AIM Program ("Administrative Internship and Management") to develop aspiring leaders**, typically engaging leaders at the same time that they complete the internships associated with their university's **licensure** program. The program is coordinated by **two of the district's assistant superintendents**. Through the program, aspiring leaders are provided exposure to important district issues, and district leadership has the ability to assess the capabilities of participants. In this **program, as well as one in Arizona's Creighton Elementary School District**, participants are encouraged to shadow and engage with leaders with diverse views and leadership styles in order to gain an appreciation of a range of effective leadership approaches.

A 2016 American Association of School Administrators study revealed that 10% of large school districts in the U.S. have any form of succession planning (Domenech, 2016). A 2021 study (Davidson et al., 2021) found that one-third of respondents from four states offered leadership-development training to aspiring leaders. Although district-led leadership-development programs continue to be fairly uncommon, particularly in the case of small- to medium-sized districts, their development is a favorable trend in preparing future leaders. District-supported leadership development can take many forms: formal or informal mentoring, collaborations with other entities to provide training, shadowing opportunities, action research, project-based learning, or periodic district-sponsored sessions with aspiring leaders. There is evidence that participants see value in gaining exposure to real-world problems and in building relationships with other peers who are interested in leadership (Tingle et al., 2019). In addition to developing leadership capacity within the organization, through **"grow your own" efforts**, districts have the luxury of holding long-term interviews with prospective leaders. Leadership development programs can be coordinated with university internships to provide complementary support and guidance, and they can be designed so as to develop leaders for not only administrative positions, but also for other leadership roles, such as instructional specialists, department chairs, grade level leads, school leadership teams, or advisory councils. Research on one medium-sized district's leadership-development initiative (Searby & Shaddix, 2016) revealed that

participants in the program moved on to these kinds of leadership roles in addition to more formal administrative positions.

Districts must be clear in their communication to aspiring leaders. The existence of a district-sponsored leadership development program signals to those in the rank and file that district leaders envision a likelihood of future openings for which internal candidates will be given serious consideration. If there is a mismatch between the stated purposes of such programs and the actual outcomes, this can affect the credibility of such offerings. It is important to match **a district's leadership development efforts to the district's** actual needs and capacity. A leadership development program that is designed to, as described above, prepare individuals to serve in not only administrative capacities but in a variety of other roles may help to avoid creating unrealistic expectations on the part of participants.

#### Ongoing Shortcomings of Internships

Arthur Levine has aimed significant criticism at leadership preparation courses in **general**. In a 2005 report, he asserted that **"The typical course of study for the principalship has little to do with the job of being a principal. In fact, it appears to be a nearly random collection of courses"** (Levine, 2005, p. 27). Although it can be presumed that most faculty in leadership-preparation programs seek to provide the **"contextual relevancy"** (Cunningham & Sherman, 2008, p. 309) that is so critical to binding theory and practice, the opportunity to connect theory to practice is an area that is highly valued by interns (Sherman & Crum, 2009) and where much progress is needed.

#### *Inadequate Attention to Instructional Leadership*

Specific to the clinical experience sought in internships, Levine characterized the approach to such experiences as one more box to check on the path to licensure, rather than as a meaningful learning experience. Some studies of internships have **concluded that excessive attention is paid to "engaging in menial activities – such as observation, committee work, attendance, lunch and bus duty"** (Barnett et al., 2009, p. 377). In a study of university preparation programs, Hayes and Irby (2020) found that interns had little time to devote to instructional leadership tasks in the traditional semester-long internship at the **certification program's** end. University faculty participating in the study concluded that **"candidates should have not only longer internships but also more meaningful ones focused on instructional leadership activities either embedded throughout the program or offered for a full year at the end of the program to prepare them for building instructional capacity"** (Hayes & Irby, 2020, p. 141).

#### *Inadequate Attention to Social Justice*

Internships that are focused too exclusively on practice without adequate consideration to theory or research risk an overreliance on the status quo. Citing research demonstrating that large percentages of interns report no change in their beliefs as a result of the internship and that the internship had little influence to become change agents, Sherman and Crum **argued that** "Orienting leadership preparation toward practice alone is conservative and so operates on the

assumption that leaders need only be prepared to react to their surroundings on a daily basis” (2009, p. 67). Transformational leadership, by its very nature, requires thinking in novel ways about schooling. The development of such leadership **requires that** “University scholars and instructors must not only challenge future leaders to reject outdated assumptions about schooling but also help them enact, during their internships, their newly espoused beliefs about leading socially just environments that serve the needs of all children” (Sherman & Crum, 2009, p. 68). Drake (2020) found that interns were more likely to benefit from opportunities to reflect on their experiences in coursework and in meetings with peers than in interactions with school-based leaders; consequently, discussions with faculty and peers during the internship could contribute to interns learning from their self-reflections.

This is an area in which districts can exercise much greater influence in addressing systemic inequities. Through measures such as widely publicizing the availability of a leadership development program and providing direct encouragement to individuals, districts can begin to ensure more equitable representation of the community. Corcoran and colleagues provide evidence from New York City’s Leadership Academy (Corcoran et al., 2012) of such an outcome. Historically, the percentages of female principals and principals of color have not been representative of the student population or the community at large, and a leadership development program can be a lever for bringing about much-needed change. There is evidence of grow your own programs that are designed to address both teaching shortages and lack of diversity in the teaching workforce (Gist, 2019; Rogers-Ard et al., 2019), and programs for leaders could benefit from similar approaches that focus on both the need for leaders and the need for leaders that represent the diversity of the community.

#### *Inadequate Attention to the Selection of Site Mentors*

Although mentors play a critical role in the internship experience, insufficient attention is often given to the selection of or support for mentors (Sherman & Crum, 2009). Scholars (Cunningham & Sherman, 2008; Sherman & Crum, 2009) have identified both the benefits of effective mentoring and the negative impacts when, for example, there is a mismatch between the leadership style of interns and mentors or when negative stereotyping related to gender or ethnicity affect the mentor-intern relationship. While there are significant barriers to overcome (particularly the barrier of competing demands), scholars of leadership preparation programs argue that university faculty and site mentors need to find ways to work more collaboratively in planning and coordinating learning experiences for interns (Cunningham & Sherman, 2008; Levine, 2005).

#### Methodology

This paper includes the findings from an in-depth structured focus group including graduate students who had recently completed their university internships, active and retired school administrators, university faculty who supervise interns, and doctoral students in educational leadership. The paper was also informed by one-

on-one interviews with current and former interns, site mentors, and university supervisors.

Like many aspects of schooling during the pandemic, the focus group was held virtually using the Zoom videoconferencing platform. Questions for the focus group were crafted in advance of the focus group and were reviewed in advance by individuals representing the above-named groups who took part in the focus group. After the final revision of the questions and discussion prompts, the questions were emailed to participants in advance of the scheduled time. The focus group was 90 minutes in length, and was recorded and transcribed using the recording and transcription features included in the Zoom platform. Themes were identified through repeated readings and analysis of the transcription.

Following transcription of the audio files, the transcripts were imported into Microsoft Excel employing a methodology described by Ose (2016) to systematically and manually code the content. After an initial review of all transcripts, the transcripts were again reviewed to verify the initially-assigned codes. A process of content analysis was then used to logically organize and interpret the data.

### Findings

Several significant themes surfaced, which are summarized below.

#### Pandemic-Related Challenges

From the spring of 2020 through the 2020-2021 school year, schools experienced a combination of virtual, blended, and face-to-face learning. Unsurprisingly, the unprecedented changes to schooling during this period had a profound impact on the ability to provide meaningful learning experiences for interns that would adequately prepare them for future leadership roles. Challenges identified included the following:

##### *Loss of Face-to-Face Interactions*

For significant periods of time, school personnel were unable to be on campuses, and, in many cases, face-to-face interactions were rare. One former intern described missing the opportunity of

*being able to talk to somebody without a mask and be able to sit in the same room and read body language and just to get to know somebody... the ability to do that is really valuable.*

##### *Intern/Family Member Illnesses*

Faculty participants were able to identify interns who either contracted COVID themselves, or had family members who contracted the virus. Beyond the **implications for one's internship, there are clearly much more serious concerns** tied to a disease that, as of this writing, has resulted in over 600,000 deaths in the U.S.

### *Shelving of Internship Plans*

Uncertainty about the future was but one of the many challenges for educators at every level during this period. Such uncertainty often meant contingency planning that could take into account a variety of approaches to instruction and staffing. Interns described making detailed plans for projects that subsequently had to be shelved because it was no longer possible to carry them out. Said one,

*My big plan that I had for my internship project just didn't work out because we had so many other things going on.*

### *Limited Access to the Principal*

Understandably, principals have faced many demands over the last 18 months. The demands of responding to a crisis as significant as a global pandemic led to dozens of major priorities competing for a principal's time. Finding time to mentor or coach an intern was, in many instances, simply not feasible. Noted one intern,

*Another challenge for me was just having access to my principal. The only way I had to contact her was just calling her or texting her, and there were a lot of things that I needed to talk through with my principal. Just not being allowed to come on campus was really tough, so I would say the access to my principal was probably the biggest challenge that I faced.*

### *Communication Fatigue*

**A number of articles describing "Zoom fatigue"** have surfaced in scholarly publications and the mainstream media over the last year. While the use of Zoom, Google Meets, Microsoft Teams, and Skype enhanced users' ability to communicate during the pandemic, the soaring use of such visual media undoubtedly led to bouts of severe emotional and physical exhaustion for users. Interns who needed to rely on videoconferencing for much of their work during their internships described such fatigue in themselves and in others. One former intern stated,

*I also felt like towards the end of the internship getting a response from folks sometimes came a little more delayed than what I would have liked because everybody was so saturated with just being in survival mode. To have the energy or even the motivation to sometimes get to those extra things at the end of the day, was a little bit more challenging.*

### *Child Care*

Like most parents during the pandemic, interns with young children found themselves not only learning to fulfill their jobs in a virtual medium, but they had to do so while **supervising their children's online learning and** daily needs. Noted one intern,

*Regular life is challenging enough with the mom duties or dad duties. With COVID added and all of those other extras, it was a very heavy lift. As a result, one of the biggest challenges for me was really having the energy and*



*the time to invest in the way that I had kind of hoped to be able to do during the internship.*

## Unique Opportunities During the Pandemic

### *New Opportunities Through Online Access*

The need for meetings to move online dramatically increased the opportunity for observation of or participation in meetings, trainings, and webinars. Many aspects of leadership and governance became much more public and accessible, providing interns the opportunity to learn from both the successes and missteps of leaders grappling with new challenges. One faculty member remarked,

*I would say to my interns, as crazy as this time is, do your best to embrace it, because this is an opportunity to watch and learn and observe others and their leadership roles. And so we really just spent a lot of time in conversation about how we could develop leadership skills through observation. We learn from our failures, but, as a former superintendent, I always learn from other people's failures as well. I'm not judging at all, but to watch and be mindful of kind of what's happening out there with other school districts and how they made this decision, what would I have done.*

An intern spoke about her experiences with online observation as follows:

*Having the internship during this pandemic has also allowed me to view other school board meetings, and because everything was online, I was able to watch school board meetings from my current town. I watched some meetings from all over the state which was really awesome just to kind of see how everything works within different school districts.*

In some cases, the opportunity to participate virtually in meetings had a beneficial effect on parent engagement. A faculty member described the experiences of some interns as follows:

*Several of my interns that had put together their school wide project or community outreach project found that taking their approach and incorporating technology really opened the door and they found that they had more parents that were able to participate than if they did an on-site program.*

One intern benefited from having the opportunity to assist parents who were struggling with providing network access for their children to take part in online learning. Experienced principals know that such relationship-building efforts can produce **goodwill that contributes to a leader's influence and** effectiveness. This **intern's** faculty advisor noted that,

*One of my interns had an assignment of being the tech support guy right through all the remote learning, and he shared with us that he really established these very positive relationships with the parents.*

### *COVID and the Importance of Flexibility and Adaptability*

The global pandemic produced unprecedented disruptions to schools everywhere. Although those disruptions were substantial in scope, touching every aspect of school life, veteran school leaders have learned that many crises, large and small, will be experienced over the course of a career. Both interns and faculty advisors described how interns came to realize the importance of flexibility and adaptability in leaders. One intern described the value of

*working on flexibility, because you know, no one ever expected this to happen, and just kind of getting thrown into it, you have to be flexible and adaptable and that's definitely how I treated my internship. There was the benefit of being able to work on, you know, just flying by the seat of your pants and trying to figure out what are we going to do.*

A faculty member described speaking to interns about the need to adapt to shifting conditions:

*There may not be another pandemic, but there will be other challenges of a substantial scale, to which we have to adapt. Learning that that the landscape does shift and change is important.*

Concerning flexibility, another intern reflected that

*that was a challenge for me, because sometimes flexibility feels like compromise, but I had to, you know, challenge myself, and what that meant and where that line was for me and was there even a line anymore. You know, it's been a great opportunity for growth of mindset and growth of leadership practices that would not necessarily have happened, had I been working under traditional circumstances.*

One intern, who, as of this writing, is now in her first year as a school principal, felt that the demands of the pandemic had contributed to her development:

*I felt like I was probably better prepared because, again, it was just you're getting thrown into the middle of something and you're figuring out how to work things out you're working with staff, you're working with students, working with parents, the community and really just trying to be that instructional leader and the leader overall. I feel like I really had a lot of experience in managing the day-to-day stuff that we have to do within a school. [Before the internship], I didn't feel like I was very prepared in that area.*

On dealing with the struggles, one faculty advisor spoke of the value of resiliency:

*I wasn't suggesting that this was going to be easy, but I would tell them "Life is hard, but we can do hard things."*

#### *Overwhelmed Site Supervisors Were Happy to Share the Load*

One faculty advisor, recalling her years as a building principal, expressed a sentiment likely to resonate with all principals, particularly during the demands of schooling during the pandemic:

*As a principal for years, I used to think, "Gosh can I ever just finish a task without getting interrupted?" And I got used to the feeling that I could never finish anything because somebody always wanted something.*

Both interns and faculty advisors observed that site supervisors appeared to be very willing to delegate authority to interns to complete tasks as significant as leading a team in the development of a return-to-school plan or as seemingly minor as helping parents to resolve technology problems. Speaking of her principal, one intern remarked,

*She really just gave me the freedom to either fail or succeed at what I was working at. She wasn't kind of hovering over my shoulder, and she just trusted me to move forward.*

Another intern observed that,

*The reality of leadership is, no matter how prepared, there is some level of sink or swim when that time comes, right? Which is a little bit I think of what we experienced in this internship. Our supervisors were also saturated just like we were. Everyone was almost hungry for support, hungry for someone to say "Hey, how can I help you?" Hungry for someone to come alongside and help with a project or take over a piece, and that opened up opportunities that maybe wouldn't have existed, otherwise.*

In some respects, interns voiced that, because of the extreme demands of the pandemic, completing an internship during this period may have left them better prepared for a leadership position than if the internship had been completed at another time.

## Discussion

### Future Research Directions

Much of the research on internships in recent years, particularly grant-funded research, has focused on full-time job-embedded internships. While the interest in such internships is understandable, such internships are expected to continue to represent a fraction of the clinical experiences that are completed each year. There continues to be a need for additional research **into interns' experiences in gaining**

exposure to authentic and meaningful instructional leadership skills and practices through the most common type of internship, the end-of-program semester internship completed **outside one's normal duties and responsibilities**.

Research by Drake (2020) was cited earlier in this article. Drake conducted research on interns' **time use through** a data collection strategy that asked participants to respond to brief surveys throughout their internship upon receipt of a text message. This is a promising approach that could yield significant additional insights into **interns' progress** over time and their exposure to meaningful activities.

### Implications for Policy and Practice

What exactly is meant by "**meaningfully transformative internships?**" Both scholarship on the internship and the experiences described in this paper suggest that internships are more meaningful and transformative when they advance the **intern's skills** by engaging interns in doing the types of authentic activities, tasks, and functions that principals are expected to do. They are also more meaningful and truly transformative when interns gain experience in solving problems of teaching and learning collaboratively with others; it is clear that the changes needed in our schools will not be brought about by leaders working in isolation but through teams of engaged, committed, and informed individuals. Lastly, internships are more meaningful and transformative when interns more fully define and gain deeper knowledge of their core values and principles, and when they are pressed to reflect on how and whether those values and principles are made manifest in their work as leaders. Leadership preparation involves creating leaders who are capable of envisioning and bringing about improved outcomes for students, which means that the leadership preparation process itself must be a transformative experience for future leaders.

The lessons learned from the pandemic of 2020-2021 that can inform planning for internships include the following:

- Interns need to be encouraged to take advantage of online opportunities. While observing meetings online cannot replace the experience of participating in person, their availability means that interns can observe and learn from a wide variety of leaders across a state or region. As acknowledged above, online communication became exhausting over the course of the pandemic; however, the fact that so many meetings and trainings moved to an online format greatly increased access for the public. We can expect to continue to see more of the work of leading schools move to an online format. School board meetings, professional development, leadership meetings, and events for parents can all provide important opportunities to learn, particularly when combined with the opportunity to debrief with peers, university faculty, or site mentors.
- Because the move to virtual schooling during the pandemic forced interns to adjust their plans for their internships, they often wound up communicating

more frequently and extensively with university faculty about making adjustments. This time proved to be well-spent, as interns reportedly saw these discussions as valuable. These experiences reinforced the importance of building in time for reflection and for hearing differing perspectives on leadership. The internship experience will be more valuable if interns have several opportunities to reflect with their fellow interns and faculty mentors about all that they are experiencing.

- The challenge of leading schools has always required adaptability and flexibility in leaders, and the pandemic certainly drove home the need for a nimble approach to leadership. **“Pivot” became the operative word** in 2020-2021 for many educators, as they learned to constantly adjust to new learning modalities, new guidance from the CDC or from state or local government, and **intensifying opposition to schools’ measures to reduce the spread of COVID**. The pandemic showed us that we need to reinforce adaptability in interns. As noted above, one faculty member encouraged resiliency **in interns by reminding them that “Life is hard, but we can do hard things.”** Individuals in leadership roles must be prepared to deal with ambiguity, uncertainty, and lack of clarity. Leaders bear the responsibility for bringing clarity and purpose to complex, multidimensional issues. The **internship can test interns’ ability** to cope with ambiguity and uncertainty, and they are fortunate indeed if they have the opportunity to experience vagueness and doubt during their internship, as this can be a time of significant learning.
- Out of necessity, overwhelmed principals were eager to delegate important tasks to interns during the pandemic. While site mentors should always be in a position to decide what kinds of responsibilities are appropriate to delegate to a given intern, the pandemic showed us that principals are willing to delegate important, meaningful, and authentic experiences to interns. University faculty can play an important role in advocating for the appropriate delegation of authentic leadership responsibilities during planning conferences with interns and site mentors.
- Finally, the pandemic reinforced the conclusion that most interns need more time. The majority of interns complete their internships while working full-time in other contract positions. They are at a significant disadvantage compared to their peer interns who are in full-time embedded internships or who are completing their internships while serving in a position such as a dean of students. Interns would be better positioned to benefit from the experience if they were given more time and, consequently, more exposure to leadership responsibilities.

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