Who are we? Collaborative Inquiry and the Description of One State's Principal Preparation Programs[*]

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Abstract

A profile of one state's principal preparation programs is presented in this article. The collaborative inquiry process used to develop a program narrative instrument and to capture data on characteristics of all 17 state-approved programs in the state of Indiana is provided. The statewide preparation program characteristics profiled in this article include: missions and rationales, recruitment and admissions, student enrollment and completion, curriculum and pedagogical approaches, internship qualities, and assessment features. The author discusses implications of the findings across the preparation program landscape as well as the challenges and promises of collaborative research conducted across preparation programs.

1 Sumario en espanol

Se presenta un perfil de programas de preparación de directores de escuelas en un estado estaduinidense en este artículo. Un proceso cooperativo de investigación fue utilizado y los investigadores desarollaron un

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instrumento narrativo para captar las características de todas las 17 programas de preparación de directores de escuela en el estado de Indiana. Las características de los programas de la preparación perfiladas en este artículo incluyen: misiones, contratación y admisiones, matriculación y graduación, enfoques pedagógicos, calidades de puestos de interno, y características de evaluación. El autor discute implicaciones de las conclusiones a través del paisaje de programas de preparación de directores de escuela, incluyendo los desafíos y las promesas de investigación cooperativa realizada a través de programas de preparación.

NOTE: Esta es una traducción por computadora de la página web original. Se suministra como información general y no debe considerarse completa ni exacta.

2 Introduction

This article describes a collaborative inquiry process undertaken to capture information on program characteristics from across all 17 state-approved initial building-level administrative licensure (principal) preparation programs in the state of Indiana. The program characteristics profiled in this article span the following features: missions and rationales, recruitment and admissions, student enrollment and completion, curriculum and pedagogical approaches, internship qualities, and assessment features. In the article, the author also describes how information on programs was captured through a collaborative inquiry process that included the development of a program narrative instrument and collective initial analysis of findings. Implications of the findings across the landscape of preparation programs are put forth, and a discussion of the challenges and promises of conducting collaborative inquiry across preparation programs concludes the article.

3 Calls for Leadership Preparation Program Research and Evaluation

Over the last two decades, university-based principal preparation has come under increased scrutiny by external actors as a result of standards-based reforms, accreditation processes, and growing interest from public officials, private foundations, district administrators, and other stakeholders (Glasman, Cibulka, & Ashby, 2002; LaMagdeleine, Maxcy, Pounder, & Reid, 2009; Murphy, 2006; Sanders & Simpson, 2005; Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Young & Brewer, 2008). There has been a shift in the preparation landscape as states have passed rules allowing various actors to prepare principals as new institutional providers and alternative certification policies have emerged (Harrington & Wills, 2005; Elmore, 2006; LeTendre, Barbour, & Miles, 2005; Smith, 2008). District and foundation supported alternative preparation programs and routes to certification have entered the preparation landscape, making the comparison with university-based programs inevitable (Barbour, 2005; Militello, Gajda, & Bowers, 2009; Teitel, 2006). Concurrently, the number of university-based educational leadership programs has risen, with new institutional actors becoming large producers of pre-service principals (Baker, Orr, & Young, 2007).

Concern for the development of school leaders capable of leading reform and increasing student learning outcomes for all students is evidenced in state-level educational policy concerns and deliberations (Adams & Copeland, 2007; Sanders & Kearney, 2008; Southern Regional Educational Board, 2007), Wallace Foundation funded multi-state initiatives and studies (Frye, O'Neill, & Bottoms, 2006; Seashore Louis, et al., 2010; Wallace Foundation, 2005), as well as University Council For Educational Administration (UCEA) and National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) reflective commentary, ongoing self-critique, and expanding interest in measuring program outcomes (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 1999; Creighton, Harris, & Coleman, 2009; Glasman, Cibulka, & Ashby, 2002; Gonzalez, Glasman, & Glasman, 2002; Hallinger, 2006; Kochan & Locke, 2009; Murphy, J. T., 2006; Orr, 2006; Pounder, 2004; Pounder, Reitzug, & Young, 2002; Young, Murphy, Crow, & Ogawa 2009).

While these discussions and research efforts around evaluation and tracking of program outcomes developed, other actors external to university-based educational leadership programs, who nevertheless have substantial interest in the success of leadership preparation efforts, have sustained robust critiques of university-based leadership preparation programs and provided external pressure for reform (Frye, O'Neill, & Bottoms,

2006; Hess & Kelly, 2005). These critical voices portray the state of affairs in educational administrator preparation as mediocre and inconsistent, and at worst, as "a race to the bottom" (Levine, 2005). While some within educational leadership have highlighted a history of innovative programs and approaches (Hull, 2003; Jackson & Kelley, 2005; LaPointe & Davis, 2006), others within the field also argue that little has changed despite these calls and little may change without significant external pressure and internal recognition of significant shortcomings in the way we prepare our future educational leaders (Elmore, 2005; Thompson, 1999; Usdan, 2002). One significant way to engage the multiple permutations of these debates is through research on preparation programs, yet several educational leadership professors have pointed to a lack of systemic program evaluation work that systematically builds on previous research (Glasman, Cibulka, & Ashby, 2002; Halinger, 2006).

4 Developing a Sustained and Systematic Self-study Tradition

Despite such external pressures and concerns, sustained efforts aimed at gathering information on characteristics of principal preparation programs have often suffered from insufficient resources, infrastructure, and commitment, as well as competition across programs (Kochan & Locke, 2009; Orr & Pounder, 2006; Preis, Grogan, Sherman, & Beatty, 2007). Additionally, program inquiry has tended to focus on teacher education programs, aligning with the dominant focus of college of educations' accreditation reviews (Monk, 2008).

For many years efforts to investigate characteristics of principal preparation programs had been program specific case studies as universities devoted few internal university resources toward evaluating the efficacy of principal preparation programs (Murphy, 1992; Orr & Barber, 2009). As a result, more prevalent are case studies of programs (Heck & Hallinger, 2005) that often focus on program delivery mechanisms such as cohorts (Barnett & Muse, 2003), as well as research on specific university-district partnerships (Browne-Ferrigno, 2004). Program outcome measures have largely been captured through surveys of graduates that are program specific and tend to focus on student satisfaction and employment outcomes (Cambron-McCabe, 1999; Kochan, Jackson, & Duke, 2005; Kochan & Locke, 2009). Too often, information from much of this activity tended not to be distributed widely and not even circulate amongst members of a faculty (Murphy & Vriesenga, 2004; Orr & Barber, 2009).

Many within the educational leadership professoriate are responding to these challenges and other shifts in the preparation landscape with renewed interest in improving educational leadership preparation programs. This is reflected in extended commentaries and program evaluation efforts undertaken at the national and state level through NCPEA and its state-level affiliates, as well as UCEA (Creighton, Harris, & Coleman, 2009; Murphy, 2006; Orr & Pounder, 2006; Rorrer, Orr, Opfer, Scribner, Baker, & Perlich, 2010). More recent efforts have begun to make tentative links between programs and leadership behaviors and school outcomes (Darling Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Seashore Louis et al., 2010). In an effort to systematize and nationalize the collection of data on educational leadership preparation programs, the UCEA/LTEL SIG Taskforce to Evaluate Educational Leadership Preparation Program Effectiveness in cooperation with the University of Utah, has recently developed capacity to support the dissemination of the Taskforce graduate outcomes survey and a program narrative survey (based partially on the survey developed for this study), which should continue to better develop a profile of the field (Orr & Barber, 2009; Rorrer, Orr, Opfer, Scribner, Baker, & Perlich, 2010).

4.1 Collaborative Approaches to Educational Leadership Preparation Research

Historically collaborative work on preparation program characteristics or outcomes has sporadically occurred across programs in order to meet specific program needs (Clark & Clark, 1997) or professionalization efforts (Hull, 2003; Murphy, 2002). However, it is not surprising to note that collaborative inquiry that seeks to comprehensively describe and "map" the state of educational leadership preparation in individual states have been limited (LaMadgeleine, et al., 2009). Efforts have been undertaken in Utah (Pounder & Hafner, 2006), Missouri (McCarther, Friend, & Watson, 2010), Illinois (Illinois Board of Higher Education, 2006), and New Jersey (Doolittle, Goduto, Monahan, Leake, & Murphy, 2006) to collaboratively capture characteristics

and/or outcomes from programs throughout the state. While individual research efforts may yield valuable information on preparation programs, landscape and outcomes studies that require cross-program data collection on program characteristics, pedagogical processes, and selected outcomes necessarily require collaborative efforts. Sustained and potentially efficacious translation and formative implementation of research at a regional or state level scale beyond an individual program requires more collaborative and politically sophisticated approaches (Orr & Barber, 2009; Young & Brewer, 2008).

University-based faculty have conceptualized more collaborative approaches that variously seek to capture program characteristics and pedagogical processes, and subsequently trace the effects program characteristics and pedagogical processes may have on leadership behavior, and indirectly, various student outcomes (Ballenger, Alford, McCune, & McCune, 2009; Gonzalez, Glasman, & Glasman, 2002; Orr & Pounder, 2006, Newman, 2008). The UCEA/AERA Taskforce on Evaluating Leadership Preparation Programs Taskforce has been leading efforts to support collaborative program evaluation within the profession over the last several years. State-level program characteristic mapping efforts, such as the ones undertaken by this author and colleagues seek to first build relationships amongst program representatives and key state-level personnel in order to collaboratively document the delivery of program features (McCarther, Friend, & Watson, 2010). While the collaborative program evaluation work may be "politically challenging, [it] enables programs to benchmark their program delivery attributes and graduate outcomes, and provides much needed information on the impact of programs on graduates and the schools they serve" (Orr & Pounder, 2006, p. 7). Statewide program characteristic profiles allow program representatives, state officials and other stakeholders to benefit from research that can later evaluate the successive impact and relationship between leadership learning, career advancement, leadership practices, school improvement practices, changes in teaching and school organization, and changes in school outcomes.

5 Methods

In order to introduce the methods, a brief description of the context for the study is provided as a bridge to discuss the design of the program narrative inquiry instrument. Subsequently, collaborative data collection and analysis procedures are included in this section.

5.1 Organizing for Collaborative Data Collection and Analysis

From 2005-2006, a University of Indiana based team received funding from the Indiana Department of Education's Center for School Improvement and Performance to conduct a 14-month study of all 17 state approved building level (principal) leadership preparation programs, which resulted in a report published in 2007 (Black, Bathon, & Poindexter, 2007). Four years prior to the initiation of the study, the State of Indiana invested in educational leadership development through the adoption of ISSLC-based Building-Level Administrator Standards that guided a multilevel licensing process and a required program accreditation review for each of the then 11 accredited programs (which grew to 17 by 2005). The Indiana Department of Education had already established a multi-tiered licensure process that included a new administrator mentoring program, ongoing professional development for established administrators through the Indiana Professional Leadership Academy, as well as support for pre-service administrator development through the Indiana Promise Consortium, a group of select university preparation programs charged with innovating principal preparation (Balch, 2002). Indiana was also one of 15 states funded through the Wallace Foundation's State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP) initiative that aimed to retrain current leadership, recruit effective new candidates, and improve the practicing conditions of principals and superintendents in one urban school district (Orr, King, & LaPointe, 2010).

The Indiana Building-Level Leadership Preparation Study was initiated with four objectives in mind: a. to comprehensively describe the state of educational leadership preparation in the State of Indiana. b. to report on national level efforts and methods utilized to evaluate and improve educational leadership preparation. c. To provide data that to inform policy decisions made at the state level as to how programs are approved/accredited to offer licensure and master's degree programs in Indiana d. To provide data to colleges

and universities providing licensure and master's degree programs in Indiana that would inform their program development and operational procedures. Study funding provided support for one principal investigator, one graduate assistant, two consultants, and some small consulting fees and remuneration for professors from multiple institutions in Indiana to participate in data analysis. The study and the results reported in this article only covered licensure-only and masters plus licensure programs that lead to individuals' obtaining their initial Indiana building-level administrator license (Black, Bathon, & Poindexter, 2007).

Initial support for the study came to the State of Indiana through the Wallace Foundation, which has a strong interest in improving leadership preparation and funding research that highlights effective preparation program approaches. In this context, there was a push on the part of select parties within the state to not only conduct a descriptive "mapping" study, but to evaluate individual preparation programs. Through multiple conversations the research team communicated some of the technical and political difficulties involved in pursuing an evaluation of program efficacy. Beyond the limitations of a lack of clearly valid and reliable measures of program efficacy, focusing primarily on evaluation, the research team believed, would have been problematic in terms of the type of relationship building and trust that was needed not only to conduct the study and collect the data, but to engender future collaborative work. Actors within the state were divided as to the regulatory role of the state. Whereas some desired a more active role, others expressed that market forces, as reflected in enrollment numbers, would be the best arbiter of program efficacy. Additionally, many argued that the state's involvement would become more bureaucratic than meaningful and substantive, representing additional cost in attending to compliance demands. The research team negotiated the multiple interests of both state and program level stakeholders by explicitly highlighting the mapping design of the study. Ultimately, funders at the state level settled for a study primarily investigating the "state of the state" of educational leadership preparation.

5.2 Study Design and Instrumentation

While the guiding framework was established, other design and instrumentation decisions had yet to be made. In the fall and winter of 2005-2006, the study team and an Indiana Department of Education official held two meetings with individuals representing a total of 14 of the 17 accredited Indiana principal program representatives in order to get input into a design of survey questions. A full day work session with the project consultants helped to organize the topical coverage and structure of the program narrative. Program chairs and other program representatives then were provided a month to review a draft of the program narrative inquiry instrument and provide feedback, which was later incorporated and reviewed by the external consultants and incorporated into the final narrative instrument.

The program narrative was the central research instrument used to capture program-level descriptive information from all (n=17) accredited principal preparation institutions in the state of Indiana. The contents of the narrative inquiry instrument were generated through a review of literature on principal preparation programs, as well as in collaboration with both national consultants and peer representatives from other programs in Indiana. General content and structure of the instrument drew from the narrative developed by Pounder & Hafner (2006) in their study of programs in Utah.

The 13 distinct program features or topical areas that covered in the program inquiry narrative instrument included: Rationale, Leadership Standards, Program Structural Elements, Candidate Admission, Candidate Assessment, Program Curriculum and Curriculum Sequence, Teaching Methods and Pedagogical Approaches, Program Evaluation and Continuing Assessment, Program Field Experiences, Program Recruitment Strategies, Program Faculty, Program Strengths and Limitations and Distinctive Program Elements. The program narrative inquiry asked respondents from each preparation program to explain their program's activities with regard to each of the specific topics through narrative responses. Within each of these topical areas, sub-questions guided the responses from each of the preparation programs. Some questions were designed to be quite narrow, while many others were open-ended.

To generate depth and validity across program responses, specific information was additionally requested with respect to each topical area and evidentiary documents were requested to supplement the responses, when applicable and not overly onerous. This effort to capture complementary evidence was an attempt to

ensure greater reliability in program responses and to provide the researchers additional evidence. Examples of evidence requested included: mission statements, program syllabi, faculty vita, and internship handbooks. While the instrument reflected a survey with forced choices in some questions, the instrument was designed to collect narrative responses from programs. We also asked program respondents to attach specifically designated evidence.

5.3 Data Collection

Given the cooperative input on the design of the program narrative instrument, the majority of the program representatives were well aware of the study by the time we requested information. Importantly, when we sent out the survey to both program chairs and College of Education Deans, Dr. Sue Ellen Reed, Indiana Superintendent of Instruction, sent an accompanying letter asking program representatives to respond within two months. This high-level support was important in securing a high response rate. For the small amount of programs that did not initially respond, we followed up with phone calls and e-mails. As a result of significant investment of time, program narratives were submitted by each of the 17 approved programs we were able to collect over 1500 pages of documents. Additionally, recognizing the limitations of self-reported data, the researchers engaged in document analysis of program accreditation submissions to the state, analysis of program webpages, as well as conducted member checking through follow-up e-mails and numerous conversations with representatives of the different building-level leadership programs.

The researchers frequently asked questions that the preparation programs simply did not know the answers to. Information on students had not been tracked over time and information on faculty had not been aggregated. Other information was not readily available either such as the courses offered in the past couple years, syllabi for all courses, assessment information, and full faculty vitae, to name a few. For the most part, leaders within the preparation programs were willing to exert the necessary effort to meet these self-reflection requests, but some questions were answered with N/As or simply no response was provided. Responses varied in depth and quality, as the approach is, to a large degree, dependent on the time and effort program representatives put into their responses. Thus, preparation programs had to engage in the process of gathering their own information to complete the survey. While all 17 programs responded, certain categories of characteristics had little information.

5.4 Collaborative Analysis of Data

After the program narrative information was received, an invitation to participate in analysis was extended to all leadership preparation programs. Eight program representatives accepted the opportunity. The research team invited program representatives to participate in analysis for multiple reasons. We had concerns related to our position and bias as employees of one of the 17 institutions. We also had a desire for the study to catalyze future collaboration and use of information across programs. In order to make this happen, we stripped program-identifying information from the data captured through the program narrative and shared with the participating analysts, which took an extensive amount of time. Nevertheless, we believe that this step did contribute to the willingness on the part of leadership preparation programs to submit information for analysis, as well as tempered preconceived biases any of our collaborating analysts might have brought to the table.

Through the use of grant funds, we covered costs of housing and transportation to Indianapolis as well as compensation in the form of a small consulting fee to each of the eight analysts. The representatives came from large and small preparation institutions, as well as public and private preparation institutions. During the two-day discussion and training session participating analysts each received a full set of responses and affiliated evidence on one or two of the thirteen narrative sections. The participants were provided guiding questions for analysis that were reviewed and refined collectively as a group. Then, the analysts participated in a practice analysis session involving one or two topical sections of the narrative in order to establish norms and guidelines for analysis. This process offered professors from different institutions an opportunity to come together and provide perspectives and insight into the data, and express common concerns about

the field. It also allowed them to garner individual benefits in terms of payment and service opportunities that could be submitted in annual reports. This careful structuring of benefits to program representatives was an important catalyst for more robust engagement from programs and their representatives.

The participants' analysis took about a month and primarily described trends in particular program features across all programs in the state of Indiana. The analysts clustered categories and themes within each program feature domain. This was a substantial endeavor, as the participant analysis was edited for consistency of voice as well as subjected to consistency checks with all other evidence obtained. In conducting ongoing cross-case analysis, we took care to identify and analyze not only the data pertaining to specific program areas or features but also to encounter larger thematic consistencies across the multiple building-level leadership preparation program features and characteristics. Therefore, analysis included constant comparison across program feature areas in order to more broadly cluster patterns, establish variations, and identify potentially systemic patterns across all seventeen programs in the state (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). The multiple levels of analysis generated higher reliability in the data and validity in reporting, as well as promoted greater legitimacy with various study stakeholders.

In the final report findings are presented across all program characteristics captured in the program in-quiry narrative instrument (Black, Bathon, & Poindexter, 2007). This article reports across the following domains: missions and rationales, recruitment and admissions, student enrollment and completion, curricu-lum and pedagogical approaches, internship qualities, and assessment features. Findings not included from the report include information on faculty, which is reported elsewhere (Black & Bathon, under review). Information on leadership standards was not included in this article because responses were fairly uniform across all programs. The information captured under program structural elements and the program strengths and limitations categories was largely captured in other domains.

The discussion of findings begins with a description of program graduate production trend data captured through a second set of analyses. State officials assisted us by cross referencing two separate state datasets on new building-level licensures and employment data, which enabled us to analyze trends of recent program completers who received building administrator licenses. Multiple dimensions of licensure and placement outcomes for all preparation program graduates from 2001-2005 are reported elsewhere (Bathon & Black, 2011; Black & Bathon, 2010; Black, Bathon, & Poindexter, 2007).

6 Findings

6.1 Graduation Trends

There was a gradual, yet significant increase in the total number of initial licensures granted, as the number of building-level administrative licenses granted rose from 368 in 2001 to 435 in 2005 (an 18.2% increase). Paralleling the growth in licensed individuals is the growth in the number of preparation programs. In Indiana in 2001 there were 10 preparation programs, while by 2005 17 were accredited. Yet, the total number of employed school administrators remained relatively constant.

Indiana Wesleyan University, a small private college in north central Indiana, began their leadership preparation program in 2000 and thus had zero graduates in 2001. However, by 2005 they were the largest producer in the state with 97 of the 435 licenses. While one private school was producing large numbers of potential principals, regional public universities were also large producers. Ball State University and Indiana State University produced 318 and 224 initial licensures between 2001 and 2005, respectively. Other longer standing programs witnessed stable or slightly declining enrollments, while a handful of relatively new, small private providers had very few licensed graduates.

6.2 Divergent Program Missions and Rationales

Although programs consistently aligned curriculum to the Indiana leadership standards, program missions and rationales were divergent. A handful of smaller programs reported that they did not have a specific mission statement and submitted a school of education mission statement. The program-level mission state-ments varied from a focus on effective leadership, to Christian and faith based orientations, and inquiry

and multicultural emphases. Variations in program mission narratives are presented below in Table 1 and categorized as broadly traditional (focusing on practical and instrumental purposes of training and reflecting effectiveness discourses); faith-based (centering purpose to faith-based and Christian perspectives or value orientations); or inquiry, care, and multiculturalism (often using language of social justice).

Selected Indiana Building-Level Leadership Missions

Traditional Program Missions	Faith-Based Program Missions	Inquiry, Care, and Multicultural-ism
To prepare professional educators who have the knowledge, skills, dispositions essential for becoming reflective professionals, master educators, and educational leaders.	To become lifetime advocates for Catholic education as leaders who serve the Church's most valuable asset: her children.	To transform educational institutions into nurturing and effective organizations through the creation and application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed through the collaborative preparation of educational leaders.
To prepare administrators for professional service and leadership.	To prepare school leaders who understand a Christian perspective of life and their profession, and who will model how the Christian faith can be an integral part of the role of a teacher in both public and private schools.	To develop high quality, caring professionals who stimulate continuous renewal of schools within a multicultural society.
To prepare highly qualified school leaders who serve children by providing exemplary leadership.	To promote academic knowledge, technological skills, pedagogical proficiency, life-long learning, Christian ethical and moral values, enhancement of each candidate's intellectual, spiritual and social development, and community service through positive leadership.	To be the premier program in the preparation of working professionals for administrative leadership in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education.

Table 1

Two programs referred to becoming the premier educational leadership preparation institution in the state, reflecting the competitive nature of school leader preparation. A few programs referred to caring or nurturing leadership training for a multicultural society. Another interesting finding is the large number of programs that did not specifically refer to preparing educational leaders as their primary mission. Many programs referred to preparing program professionals and some programs even referred to their mission of preparing teachers. This likely reflects the central position teacher preparation occupies in college of education. However, the program missions' lack of specific focus on preparing educational "leaders" or "administrators" and use of more general language around educational practice was striking as many might assume that it is the central organizing principal of building-level leadership programs. Finally, one statewide trend that all programs seemed to agree upon is the use of the terminology of "educational leadership" instead of the terminology of "educational administration," reflecting shifts in the language of the field reflected in the ISLLC and Indiana Building-Level Administrator standards.

6.3 Recruitment and Admissions

Programs attempted to recruit potential students in three primary ways: word of mouth, brochures, and websites. Slightly less than 30% of Indiana building-level administrator programs (n=5) reported formal linkages with one or more school corporations that lead to the establishment of important recruitment networks. One program distributed brochures to teachers in schools throughout the state. Websites varied significantly in quality of information and ease of use for potential students.

Across all 17 accredited programs candidates had to submit an undergraduate transcript with a 2.8 GPA mean as a minimum requirement. Virtually all programs (93%) solicited letters of recommendation. More than half (63%) required a goal statement from candidates, while an equal percentage (63%) of students were interviewed as part of the admissions process. While the GRE has historically been used as a central element of admissions decisions, less that half of the programs (43%) listed the GRE as an admission requirement. For those programs requiring the GRE, the statewide average minimum score was 837.5. Once students met minimum criteria, the programs did not appear to have selective admissions. Only three programs reported an admissions rate below 90 percent and five programs stated that they had a 100 percent admissions rate. The statewide average program acceptance rate was 93% of applicants.

6.4 Student Enrollment and Completion

Most building-level preparation programs (76%) offered both licensure and licensure accompanied with a Master's degree. The number of credit hours required in licensure-only programs of study ranged from 24-37, while the number of credit hours programs required for masters degrees ranged from 36-42 hours. The shortest identified time to program completion was 14 months for one program while the longest time reported for program completion stretched to 60 months for another program.

The majority of programs arranged students in cohorts. Not only were more women enrolling in building-level leadership programs than men, but also of the persons who enrolled, more women completed the program. By the time students finished their programs, a clear majority of women were earning their initial building administrator license (55% women to 45% men). The statewide percentage of minority enrollees was around 8 percent. Collectively, programs did indicate that the minority candidate program completion rate was lower than the majority (white) completion rate.

6.5 Program Curriculum

Partially as a result of programs' attempts to align building-level administrator preparation to the Indiana standards, six to eight core classes and a handful of unique supplemental courses were featured across the majority of programs in the state. These courses included educational leadership, school law, the principalship, curriculum, school-community relations, and the internship or practicum. Fewer than half of the programs in the state of Indiana offered electives of any sort, and most programs had a predetermined course sequence program candidates were required to follow, which is consistent with cohort models. In slightly more than half of programs the course instructor developed the course syllabi without a predetermined syllabus template. An additional five programs encouraged course instructors to construct their own syllabus within the guidelines of a predetermined course template. Review of syllabi indicated that instructional leadership was the topical area most commonly addressed across distinct courses in a significant minority of classes, while issues of diversity and cultural competence were generally not addressed except in school-community relations courses.

6.6 Pedagogical Approaches

Methods of instruction did not appear to vary widely across programs in Indiana, although there was a significant variation in use of technology and distance learning both within and amongst programs. Instructors most frequently utilized problem-based learning, case studies, and extended class discussion, as over half of the programs reported consistent use of these methods. The use of field-based approaches was not

often tied to a single course, as in many programs field-based activities ran throughout the program. While the majority of courses were still offered on university campuses, programs reported trends toward offering instruction off-site, as programs reported efforts to work with school districts and regional service centers. Half of the programs in Indiana and all of the larger programs offered some instruction in their building-level administrator programs in k-12 school or community settings, or via online delivery systems.

6.7 Internship Qualities

All programs (17) reported an internship or practicum as the primary field based experience. Two programs did not have a specific course for the primary field based experience, but rather embedded field-based experiences throughout the program. Six out of the seventeen programs indicated that a formalized relationship existed with nearby school districts that served to grant candidates field based administrative experience. Most often, course credit was given for a primary field-based experience scheduled near the end of a candidate's program, and most candidates arranged for their placement at a school or schools. As a result, the majority of the programs reported that most candidates were able to complete the field-based experience in their home schools while still working full time as teachers.

At the time of the study, Indiana stood out for the low number of hours required: 11 out of 14 program respondents required 150 hours or less for their internship. Only three programs reported a contact hour requirement of 300 hours, while one reported 60 hours. There was a nearly even divide between the number of programs offering the internship as a three credit hour, one semester class and those offering the internship as more than a one semester, three credit class, typically a six credit course. The research team found that the evaluation of the internship differed greatly by program. Some programs had heavier documentation requirements with fully developed internship handbooks, significant use of journals or portfolios, and supervisors who were required to submit written logs or complete observation surveys on interns. Other programs reported that professors relied more heavily on oral communication with the student and the supervisor in the form of interviews and anecdotal evidence.

6.8 Assessment Features

The majority of programs structured their assessment of student progress as a three-stage process. The first assessment of a student occurred at the gateway process for admission, while the second stage tended to happen as a midpoint assessment tied to entrance or exit from the practicum. The final assessment point occurred at the termination of the building administrator program when students turned in a portfolio, demonstrated a minimum grade point average, and were expected to take and pass the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA). For the 10 programs that did report the SLLA as an assessment tool used by their program, there was an extremely high passage rate over the last two years, with the lowest program-level student passage rate for any one-year period being 96%.

The majority of programs utilized class grades/assignments and portfolios as their primary means for candidate assessment at the program level. In most programs students were required to maintain a minimum grade point average on all coursework. The vast majority of programs utilized some form of a portfolio model. However, as reported by one program: "We call our portfolio a Standards Journal. We do have a rubric for the standards journal, although in practice the journal is more often an occasion for a conversation between the faculty member and the student, concerning how the student is progressing relative to the standards." Mid-point student interviews were also another frequently reported assessment procedure used by programs. In some cases, this mid-point oral assessment was used as a gateway to the internship.

Programs consistently reported that they were evaluated and made program modifications in response to state and NCATE program reviews. Nevertheless, how programs used the state's Unit Assessment System (UAS)[2] and National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) evaluation and assessment processes forformative, ongoing self-evaluation appeared inconsistent. Programs that indicated that

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[2]The UAS process is a Indiana Department of Education document submission and review process scheduled one year before the NCATE program review. It is designed to be formative, but also to assure that programs and colleges of education have systematic data collection protocols.

the UAS process was a program evaluation and improvement tool stated that their primary use of the UAS process was at the school of education level, and not at the departmental or building-level administrator program level. Six programs identified either an oversight committee or an oversight coordinator who reviews program data on an annual basis. The other program assessment and evaluation tools used by less than half of the programs were program exit and alumni surveys. In addition, annual reviews by higher institutional authorities, a student advisory council, employer surveys, student surveys, outside program evaluation committees, and faculty retreats were reported as assessment mechanisms in Indiana. By 2006, forty-one percent of programs in Indiana actively survey their graduates upon completion.

Programs may track program data for external evaluation and assessment purposes, yet program representatives commented in their narrative responses that this information was not frequently or effectively shared with program faculty. Program representatives generally reported that data such as SLLA passage rate, enrollment, retention, and completion data, and student employment and contact information data were rarely systematically shared with program faculty. Whereas only half of the programs reported tracking graduates, programs did report interest in establishing tracking methods that would assess the graduate/completers' impact on student learning and school reform.

7 Implications from the Program Characteristic Findings

It was clear that the program mission statements guided curricular decisions and represented the diversity of private, faith-based, and public universities. Nevertheless, we did not find a huge difference across programs as issues of finance, law, instructional leadership that reflect standards-based approaches seemed to predominate. Further efforts to craft out a niche, and to align program activities to the mission might be warranted, particularly in a crowded principal preparation landscape.

In terms of recruitment, many programs did attempted to work with districts. However, exceptional program indicators around collective selection of students (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Orr, King, & LaPointe, 2010) was not evidenced in the program responses. The incredibly high admissions rate also suggests more selective admission processes that align with more exceptional programs might be warranted (Darling Hammond, et al., 2007). Clearly, the use of the GRE has also diminished and using it as a requirement seems to put some programs at a competitive disadvantage.

Student enrollment trends suggested that programs that aggressively marked, use distance technology, and teach in schools settings that are convenient to students tended gain enrollment. One area in which research has consistently supported principal program features and practices, surrounds efficacy of cohort-based delivery approaches (Barnett & Muse, 2003). The programs in Indiana have seemed to embrace this research. Additionally, they have very high completion rates amongst students in cohort, albeit they are slightly lower for the small amount of students of color. Specific efforts designed to attract and retain students of color seems to be warranted (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, J., 2009).

Program curriculum narrative responses demonstrated an extremely common use of course sequences with minimal amounts of electives, which is consistent with some cohort delivery models. Consistent with the ISLLC standards and commentary and research in the field (Darling-Hammond, et. al., 2007), instructional leadership seemed to be the most central curricular element. Nationally more programs have also featured the development of instructional leadership capacity as an essential program orientation (LaPointe & Davis, 2006). Interestingly, issues of diversity and cultural competency seemed to be concentrated in one class-the community relations class. With the exception of two programs, little was mentioned around students with disabilities and English Language Learners. In terms of pedagogical practices, many programs had experienced school leaders that would connect the curriculum to practice through case studies and field embedded experiences.

The range in internship hours and structures was a surprise. Consistent with critiques of the field, most students completed their internships at their home schools while working ful time. Given the large amount of resources necessary to effectively plan and deliver a multi-site internship, this might be an area in which the state invests in students attending school full time, as it does in states like Mississippi and North Carolina (Darling-Hammond, et. al., 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Regardless, the state of Indiana's

recent move to the ELLC standards for the internship, which require a 300 hour internship, is a move toward a more coherent and robust leadership development system.

While the SLLA may provide a measure of minimal "do no harm" competencies (Adams & Copeland, 2007), given that almost all students who applied to a program were admitted, and 96% of students statewide passed the SLLA, programs and state officials should engage in a dialogue about systematic selection and assessment systems. Does there need to be more gateway assessments and how might they be structured? This could then provide entrée to utilizing and even designing more research that seeks to link the characteristics of programs to leadership behaviors and indirectly, school reform. (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Leithwood, Jantzi, Coffin, & Wilson, 1996; Murphy, 2006; Orr & Pounder, 2006).

8 Implications for Collaborative Inquiry on Principal Preparation Programs

8.1 Creating Conditions For Participation

One of the more substantial challenges involved recruiting faculty members from each of the accredited programs to respond to initial surveys, participate in interviews, or participate in ongoing analysis and formative use of data. Beyond meeting accreditation requirements, most of the preparation program leaders were not engaged in national-level conversations on program self-evaluation. While many of the preparation programs were familiar with the external criticisms of the field, particularly the Levine (2005) report, few of the preparation program representatives were initially familiar with the field's internal response to this growing pressure (Orr &Pounder, 2006). Yet many expressed confidence that despite potential challenges, inquiry across programs was a timely and important endeavor.

Planning for time to explicitly discuss common interests was an important first step in this study's design. The program narrative instrument was sent out for review to program representatives and feedback was incorporated into the narrative. The researchers encouraged collaborative analysis and shared preliminary findings with program representatives for a little under a year before a report was released. Thus, the programs were well aware not only of the information likely to be contained in the report, but also the personality and tenor of the research team.

Identifying and negotiating distinct program self interest is also an important consideration for future research. As the number of new programs in the state rose and one in particular quickly enrolled large numbers of students, several established (pre-2000 era) program representatives were motivated to come together to document the newly shifted landscape in the face of perceived or real threats to losing their market share of potential enrollees. In the one new preparation programs that gained so many students over the period of 5 years, the traditional leadership structures of a tenured program chair and several supporting full time faculty was replaced with a preparation program structure that included only one or two fulltime employees serving as program directors that guided the development of modules delivered almost exclusively by adjunct instructors. Interestingly, during the study the representatives of this program did provide information, although they did not respond to opportunities for collective analysis, discussion, and presentation of data. Ultimately, during three meetings with an average of 9 out of the 17 program representatives present, several program representatives expressed desire to limit the growth of programs they perceived to lack rigor and to increase state level regulations all programs in order to limit adjunct heavy programs that had grown so rapidly. Multiple program representatives saw this model as a threat to their professional identity, and a more rigorous mode of study represented in their preparation programs. This sense of shared interest was further solidified when enrollment numbers were presented and shared that demonstrated that as the one program grew dramatically, other programs had slightly declining enrollment (Black & Bathon, 2010).

How to accommodate the perceived threats and distinct orientations between programs was a politically tricky position to be in while conducting necessarily collaborative research. These types of tensions were also evidenced in the Missouri Professors of Educational Administration group deliberations, where discussion over the appropriateness of high use of adjuncts caused friction amongst different program representatives (McCarther, Friend, & Watson, 2010). Creating a space to openly share concerns and withhold judgment

as to program quality was an important leadership action for the research team to undertake and having a respected and well-known colleague on the team assisted this endeavor. For this initial inquiry, disidentifying data during the analysis process and reporting program characteristic data across programs rather than as program specific characteristics turned out to be valuable strategic decisions.

8.2 State and Funding Agencies' Roles

Leaders in funding agencies and state department of education offices are crucial to helping preparation programs inquire into their own practices. These leaders can convene meetings, establish commitment from new preparation programs, identify internal leaders, form research agendas, and encourage responses from preparation programs to self-evaluative findings. In Indiana, the state department of education played a vital role in encouraging participation. The research team found it useful to send out the official request to the programs on state letterhead with the explicit support of the state officials. The collaboration with state officials with some measure of regulatory power, along with phone calls, e-mails, and personal relationships enticed all programs to submit their program narrative and supplementary documents.

An ongoing challenge relates to time and funding. Statewide, self-evaluative research does have a cost, and sustaining the work requires faculty buy-outs, administrative support and aid to support graduate students. Without some support from either funding agencies or state entities it is unlikely that researchers will engage in the arduous task of statewide preparation program research as the academic benefits of such research are still relatively low compared to other types of scholarly activities (LaMontaigne, et al., 2009; Orr & Pounder, 2006).

8.3 Sustaining Inquiry into Preparation Programs

An issue brought forward by program representatives was the lack of funding for preparation program inquiry and the feeling amongst all faculty members that they were stretched in many different directions. This has been an issue for quite some time, although external funding and national networks have become more common. Calls have been clear in articulating the need for cross-program evaluation supports and internal program resources dedicated to using program data to inform planning and to sustain the political legitimacy of the field (Orr & Barber, 2009; Young & Peterson, 2002).

Program-level leadership that committed to preparation program inquiry was exceedingly important. Additionally, intrastate leadership was needed to continue the conversation across programs. The research team had a current university professor who had extensive contacts across school districts, the state department of education, as well as personally knew several program representatives well through her superintendent placement consulting work, which proved to be an extremely valuable asset for overcoming initial concerns and logical resistance to the additional work of collection and sharing of program-level information.

Changes in statewide leadership at university programs and the state departments of education, and the drying out of external funding have proven to be substantial issues. When the primary researchers on this study left the state, the momentum toward collaborative inquiry was not sustained at the program level. What became clear is that formal associations that garner support of state departments of education are one way to maintain momentum. Yet to address sustainability, collaborations must be creative in providing reasons for continued collaboration. Statewide journals or conferences for the publication of state-specific program evaluation work, for instance, could be a good way to foster collaboration and provide value to academically oriented faculty while at the same time providing a service to the state that could provide information to school districts and the state departments of education. Collectively designed longitudinal studies that focusing on transfer of program knowledge into student learning and practice could have outlets in these conferences and journals and involve state licensure personnel and other stakeholders (Baker & Cooper, 2005, Barnett, 2005; Newman, 2008). Collaborative blogs or wikis on state specific educational leadership issues may be another outlet for creative collaboration. Program preparation collaborations may assist in the sustainability of efforts in ways that meet individuals' professional obligation for service and research that can now be published in UCEA and NCPEA sponsored journals that are receptive to leadership preparation program studies.

9 Conclusion

The effort in Indiana suggests that if representatives from distinct preparation programs have the opportunity to view their efforts as primarily collaborative rather than competitive, preparation programs are much more apt to learn from each other strengths. For example, there was much conversation about the internship qualities and ways in which field experiences were embedded through coursework. While the aspect of competition never fully goes away, the majority of preparation programs can remain collaborating because they understand that schools and children are better off when preparation programs across the state are pulling on the rope in the same general direction (McCarther, Friend, & Watson, 2010).

While additional and methodologically distinct investigations are necessary, particularly studies that track completer learning, behavior, and school reform efficacy and impact on multiple student outcomes (Orr & Barber, 2009; Seashore Louis et al., 2010), this type of study represents a first step that is likely to encourage more understanding on the part of the state actors and action on the preparation program representatives themselves. Proactively defending educational leadership preparation from outside attack, strategically responding to fluid market pressures, and engaging in self-improvement is an ambitious affair, but there may be no better first step than examining our own practices.

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