

Educating School Leaders

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The Education Schools Project

- ▶ **Unprecedented 4-year study of 1,206 education schools**
 - **National Surveys – Deans, Faculty, Alumni, Principals, Superintendents, Parents**
 - **Site visits for case studies of 28 programs**
 - **Funded by Annenberg, Ford, & Kauffman Foundations**
- ▶ **Policy reports:**
 - 1. *Educating School Leaders* (March 2005)**
 - 2. *Educating Teachers* (Fall 2005)**
 - 3. *Educating Researchers and Scholars* (Spring 2006)**

Wanted: Better Leaders to Guide School Improvement

The need for outstanding leaders has never been greater:

- School leadership is the most crucial catalyst for school improvement
- Era of social, economic, & technological change
- Large proportion of principals, superintendents are expected to leave their jobs
- New leadership skills and knowledge required

The Leadership Programs We Have

- ▶ Prepared 88 percent of today's 250,000 school leaders
- ▶ Programs offering course credits and/or degrees = 500+
- ▶ Master's degrees awarded in school leadership = 15,000+ (2003)
- ▶ Number of doctoral degrees awarded = 2,300+

The Leadership Programs We Have

- ▶ Educate Three Kinds of Students:
 - ◆ current and future school administrators
 - ◆ teachers earning a degree primarily for salary enhancement
 - ◆ future researchers in school leadership

A Tale of Two Campuses

Eminent Graduate School of Education

- ◆ Creation of New Satellite Campuses
- ◆ Collaborate with Nearby School Systems

Suburban College of Education

- ◆ To Combat Declining Enrollments, SCE:
 - Contracts with 10 Different School Systems
 - Offers Doctoral Degrees
 - Hires Adjunct Faculty
 - Reduces Tuition Rates
 - Speed Up Programs – Trims master's program from 36 to 30 credit hours

Previous Critiques

- ▶ National Commission Report *Leaders For America's Schools (1987)*
 - ◆ Called for closing down 40 percent of programs

- ▶ Broad/Fordham Manifesto *Better Leaders for America's Schools (2003)*
 - ◆ Poor quality programs
 - ◆ Certification deters talented leaders
 - ◆ Explore alternatives to bring new talent into the field

Alternatives Aren't Enough: Why We Need Reform

- ▶ In 2002, half of states had no ed school requirements for becoming a superintendent
- ▶ A third had no ed school requirements for becoming principals
- ▶ Major cities hired non-educators to lead their schools:
 - ◆ New York, Los Angeles, Denver, Kansas City, Seattle, Miami, Toledo, Chicago, Philadelphia and San Diego
- ▶ Little evidence of success
- ▶ Education school programs continue to prepare most school leaders
- ▶ Alternatives may help, but we must improve our graduate programs too.

Nine-Point Template for Judging Quality

- ◆ Purpose
- ◆ Curricular Coherence
- ◆ Curricular Balance
- ◆ Faculty Composition
- ◆ Admissions
- ◆ Degrees
- ◆ Research
- ◆ Finances
- ◆ Assessment

What We Found: A RACE TO THE BOTTOM

- Programs compete for students by:
 - ◆ Lowering Admissions Standards
 - ◆ Watering Down Course Work
 - ◆ Offering Faster and Less Demanding Degrees
- Programs are “credit dispensers”:
 - ◆ Confer Masters Degrees on Students Who Demonstrate Anything But Mastery
 - ◆ Award Doctorates in Name Only
 - ◆ Enroll Principals and Superintendents in Study that Is Irrelevant to their Jobs

A RACE TO THE BOTTOM

- ◆ **An Incoherent Curriculum**
- ◆ **Low Admission and Graduation Standards**
- ◆ **A Weak Faculty**
- ◆ **Inadequate Clinical Instruction**
- ◆ **Inappropriate Degrees**
- ◆ **Poor Research**

Key Findings #1: An Incoherent Curriculum

Percent of Administrators Who:

- ▶ Rate classes high in quality **56 percent**
- ▶ Prepared to cope with classroom realities
11 percent
- ▶ Were prepared to deal with in-school politics
50 percent
- ▶ Say curriculum was outdated **39 percent**

Key Finding #2: Low Admission and Graduation Standards

Graduate Record Examination Scores by Intended Field of Study for College Seniors and Non-enrolled Graduates: 2000 - 2003			
	verbal	quantitative	analytical
Elementary Education	444	523	4.3
Secondary Education	485	574	4.5
Educational Administration	429	521	4.2
American History	534	543	4.8
Biology	489	611	4.3
Economics	505	706	4.5
English Literature	561	550	4.9
Journalism	491	539	4.6
Library Science	529	532	4.5
Nursing	454	519	4.2
Physical Therapy	432	560	3.8
Physics	541	747	4.4
Political Science	517	569	4.8
Public Administration	452	510	4.3
Religion	553	581	4.9
Social Work	428	464	4.1
Sociology	483	536	NA
NATIONAL MEAN	475	602	4.2

Source: Educational Testing Service, "General Test Percentage Distribution of Scores with Intended Broad Graduate Major Field Based on Senior and Non-enrolled College Graduates," p. 9, retrieved from GRE Web site, August 19, 2004, www.ets.org/pub/gre/generaldistribution.pdf

Key Finding #3: A Weak Faculty

- ▶ Increasing reliance on adjuncts
- ▶ Only 53 percent said that “I only teach a course I know a lot about.” (AASA)
- ▶ Among full time faculty, just 6 percent have been principals
- ▶ Only 2 percent have been superintendent
- ▶ Only 1 in 12 Deans has been a superintendent, and one in five has worked as a principal

Key Finding #4: Inadequate Clinical Instruction

What Resources Would Improve Ed Schools Most?

- Commitment to high level educator preparation from highest levels of the university **31%**
- Admissions standards that are more selective **15**
- Upgraded technology **36**
- Faculty with more research expertise **8**

Key Finding #4: Inadequate Clinical Instruction

- Faculty with more experience as practitioners 56
- Ability to offer more financial aid 30
- More relevant curriculum 40
- Faculty more committed to preparing students 14
- Curriculum that requires more clinical experience 35
- Curriculum that requires stronger research preparation 16
- Smaller classes 9

Key Finding #5: Inappropriate Degrees

- ▶ Sometimes researchers are awarded the Doctor of Education degree (Ed.D.).
- ▶ Sometimes practitioners receive the Ph.D.
- ▶ The rules for awarding one degree or the other may differ within a single university.
- ▶ 20-25 percent doctoral students earn a degree
- ▶ 90 percent of these are not useful.

Key Finding #6: Poor Research

- ▶ Common complaints about educational administration scholarship:
 - a-theoretical and immature
 - neglects to ask important questions
 - nearly always non-empirical
 - disconnected from practice

- ▶ Fewer than 3 percent of the 2,000 articles on preparation published in leading journals from 1975-2002 were empirically based.

A Promising Model

- ▶ National College for School Leadership (NCSL)
 - established by Tony Blair in 1998
 - no credits or degrees
 - a free-standing government agency – like a national war college for school leadership
 - provides a single national focus for school leadership development and research

A Promising Model

- ▶ The whole package:
 - ◆ **active recruitment of promising students**
 - ◆ **rigorous graduation standards**
 - ◆ **coherent curriculum**
 - ◆ **addresses 5 overlapping career stages**
 - ◆ **combines on-the-job and classroom instruction**
 - ◆ **faculty includes both practitioners and academics**
 - ◆ **rigorous and ongoing evaluation**
 - ◆ **“real-time research”**
 - ◆ **adequate funding and support**

Recommendations

Change the Incentives

1. Stop rewarding teachers for accumulating credits and degrees.
2. Kill the cash cows, and provide leadership programs with the resources they need.

Recommendations

Set and Enforce Minimum Standards of Quality

3. Assess leadership programs regularly, and strengthen or close the ones that don't measure up.

Recommendations

Redesign Programs

4. Do away with the grab-bag curriculum –
Replace it with a Masters in Educational Administration
5. Eliminate the Ed.D.
6. Reserve the Ph.D. for researchers.