

-A WALLACE-READER'S DIGEST FUNDS PROJECT-

STATE ACTION for EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PROJECT

State Policy & Practice Compendium

Council of Chief State School Officers
Education Commission of the States
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Governors Association

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the crisis in school leadership has hit students, parents, teachers and the public dramatically. The media carries stories about the increased rate of departures from positions as principals and superintendents; lack of candidates for leadership positions; increased appointments of candidates not fully qualified; individual case stories of dissatisfaction with the nature of the workload; demands and responsibilities not commensurate with salaries; and the frustration of leaders knowing what services their students need but lacking the capacity to deliver. The quantitative reports provide a sense of the scope of the problem in the supply of qualified and willing applicants. Stories from individual schools capture the reality of demands for improved student achievement related to principal burn-out and discontinuity of leadership.

This crisis in education leadership clearly has the dimension of a mismatch between demand for qualified applicants and supply. The crisis, however, is deeper than the quantitative supply/demand match. It is rooted in the gap between America's expectation to provide the highest levels of student achievement ever in our history against the need to "re-culture" education leadership so the central focus of the work is on the improvement of teaching and learning in every American school.

School leaders in our nation are responsible for 100,000 schools, more than 50 million students, and resources exceeding \$340 billion annually. In addition to responding to rapid changes in the economy and other fields, school leaders today have responsibility for facilities and technology, employment practices, community and media relationships, and the safety of their students. First and foremost, however, is their mission of leading instruction. The major challenge in the crisis of school leadership

today is developing the knowledge, problem-solving capacity, creativity, energy, and enthusiastic commitment of our current and future leaders for the prime responsibility of leadership for teaching and learning.

The State Action for Education Leadership Project: An Overview

As part of its new focus on leadership in the twenty-first century the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds are making the largest commitment ever to an initiative aimed at "fostering a national movement to attract, prepare, and keep high-quality school leaders." As part of this new initiative, called *LEADERS Count*, the Funds has launched a project with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to help states take action on school leadership.

CCSSO established a National Consortium consisting of the five state-based organizations whose members have primary responsibility for state education policy: the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Education Commission of the States, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors Association. Project direction, research, and support is provided through CCSSO's State Leadership Center, where the project is located. The National Consortium steering committee oversees the project.

Initial work of the *State Action for Education Leadership Project* focuses on identifying those policies and practices most likely to attract, prepare, and support effective leadership at the superintendent and principal levels. This strategic focus on leadership is essential to deal with several needs. The initial work is designed to identify and frame the following state actions:

- Developing a focus on leadership that centers on *teaching and learning* as the central activity of each school;
- Changing the *organizational context*, and *authority for practice* of education leaders in order to develop and promote effective leadership;
- Broadening and deepening *the pool of qualified leadership candidates*;
- Increasing *opportunities for women and minority education leaders*;
- Developing the leadership capacity to manage the unique problems of districts with *high concentrations of low performing students* effectively.

To meet these challenges, multiple strategies must be used at the state, local and school levels. While the project's current research efforts will ultimately provide materials to be used in guiding policy reform at each of these levels, *the initial focus is on state level policy actions.*

The Essential State Role

Because principals operate at the school level and superintendents at the district level, the crisis of school leadership tends first to be seen as a school and district issue. Important issues such as hiring of leaders, setting compensation levels, and developing contract provisions are local issues through most of the country. Underpinning these local actions, however, is the framework and foundation of education policy which is the responsibility of each state. The states have fundamental authority for the provision of education, expectations and requirements for students, terms and conditions for teachers and school leaders to practice, financing and accountability for results, and setting standards for the performance of students, faculty, and school leaders. It is a state responsibility to ensure that each school has the leaders required for effective 21st century student performance. Just as states are establishing the priorities for the content to be learned and the level of student standards and performance, they have the responsibility to establish expectations and requirements for professional leadership practice.

During the past decade, many states have focused attention on the quality of our teaching force and the concerns about assuring a well-qualified supply to meet impending teacher shortages caused by retirements and an increase in student enrollment. The teacher supply and demand crisis has generated state actions for special recruitment of candidates, creativity in efforts to prepare new teachers, signing bonuses, increased professional development activities and programs of induction and mentorship, and expanded attention to giving high priority to the practice of teaching. A parallel effort for school leadership is imperative.

The SAELP State Policy & Practice Compendium

Several states have already started the process of developing legislative and administrative policies that attract, support, and sustain education leaders more effectively. The SAELP State Policy & Practice Compendium is designed to assist states in this effort by providing the following:

- An overview of the current status of state laws and administrative policies dealing with education leadership;
- An easy-to-use guide that provides specific samples of existing state legislative and administrative policies in the complex area of education leadership strategy and policy development;
- Six strategy areas that are crucial to *comprehensive* policies designed to attract, prepare, and support education leaders in every state;
- Research on nationwide activities designed to improve education leadership;
- A current guide for researchers and practitioners interested in the issue of education leadership.

The compendium is intended to provide guidance to the following key audiences:

- State Officials Applying for Design or Implementation Grants for SAELP
- Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds’ Board and Officers
- SAELP National Consortium Steering Committee & the organizations they represent
- Other Policy & Research Organizations conducting initiatives in Education Leadership

The SAELP compendium is not a comprehensive overview of existing state legislative and administrative policies in leadership for all fifty states. Rather, it provides policy guidance through current *examples* of state legislative and administrative policies in each of SAELP’s six key strategic policy areas. The examples included in the SAELP compendium were selected to provide examples of different policy approaches states are taking *based on the face value of existing state legislative and administrative policies*. Most of the policies that have been included in this research are too new to have yielded consistent and reliable evidence on implementation. This report does not include qualitative assessments of the implementation of such policies. *The examples included in this compendium are not prescriptive.*

Suggestions for Use

This compendium is designed to be used in the following ways:

- Provide examples of State strategies to improve school leadership;
- Inform state level administrative and legislative policy development by providing a general overview of existing policy, and offering current examples of leadership policy;
- Serve as an up-to-date guidance tool for researchers and practitioners who are interested

in the issue of education leadership;

- Provide a basic, easy-to-use guide that can help to educate the general public on the complex issue of education leadership and policy development;
- Facilitate discussion, communication, and collaboration across state lines, across organizations, and among all potential stake-holders in the education community;
- Advance discussion by the public and policy makers on the subject of education leadership, not only by providing a general overview of the current policy landscape, but also by suggesting where further research to needs to be done and where specific further evidence needs to be gathered;
- Assist practitioners at every level (teachers, parents, business, community-level organizations) develop a more concrete understanding of ways to impact leadership in their own communities.

Six Key Research Areas

Guided by the National Consortium steering committee, CCSSO's State Leadership Center staff has spent months researching the question of how state policies can more effectively attract, sustain, and support education leaders. Working with principals, superintendents, policy experts, teachers, and the project's own National Consortium panel experts, CCSSO's State Leadership Center examined major trends in practice, conducted a review of literature and research on the subject of education leadership, and gathered relevant lessons that have been learned from other fields where leadership has long been a

concern, such as business and public health. After careful review of themes and trends that are traceable through existing research, the National Consortium identified six key areas that any comprehensive leadership improvement effort must include.

These six key areas serve as the basic framework that is used to organize the materials gathered under SAELP, they are:

- *State Priorities for & Approaches to School Leadership*
- *The Candidate Pool*
- *Education & Professional Learning*
- *Licensure, Certification, & Program Accreditation*
- *Conditions of Professional Practice*
- *Authority for Practice & Governance Structures*

I. State Priorities for Strengthening Leadership & Ways of Doing Business -

Current Role of the States: States have the fundamental authority for determining the qualifications and preparation of school leaders and the terms and conditions under which they practice. States also provide important support for education leaders by recognizing and backing innovations that positively impact the broader context in which principals and superintendents act. Such innovations are not necessarily reflected directly in existing state legislative and/or administrative policies, but they can still have an enormous impact on the daily practices of education leaders. For example, states help shape the context for practice of school leaders by: supporting and encouraging new definitions of education leadership that leverage the public's perception of education leaders; supporting and developing new "ways of doing business" at the state level that positively impact how leaders practice at local and district levels; providing consistency between new reform proposals and existing policies and practices

throughout the state, and; assuring harmony among State, District, Local, Federal and Higher Education policies and practices.

State strategies for strengthening leadership must start with explicit policy investments in a priority for action. States also have the opportunity to offer special subsidies or incentives for practice. The first and foremost strategy for state action to improve education leadership is the level of priority state policy makers give to improving practice. Are the issues of leadership commanding extensive policy and legislative attention? Can practitioners expect that their work will be more effective and rewarding in the future because the state is acting positively? States must assure that their responsibilities for quality control of the profession are working to improve, not impede, good practice. State actions must go well beyond the necessary minimums of quality control. States can play a key role in supporting innovations that are designed to impact the broader context of practice for school leaders in positive ways. For example, states can establish new definitions of education leadership that shape leadership for learning. Most states are in the process of re-defining the role of principals and superintendents by setting statewide standards and assessments for school leaders. Beyond any formal definitions for licensure, states can also have an enormous impact on school leaders' practice by setting expectations for excellence in performance; recognizing outstanding achievement; and trusting their discretion to make sound judgments in their work.

As another example, states can contribute to the effectiveness of school leaders by carefully phasing in new reform initiatives with current operations. Practices expected of principals and superintendents should relate to practices of teachers and students.

Improving the practice of school leaders must involve the recommendations and deliberations of leaders themselves, working with state policy makers. New ways of practicing leadership must be "owned" by the leaders. The key persons responsible for policy implementation must be included in meaningful ways at each stage in the reform process, including the reform of leadership.

The Policy and Practice Compendium addresses these important issues and suggests ways that states can work to improve the general context for practice of education leaders.

II. The Candidate Pool -

Current Role of the State: States are generally responsible for developing and supporting policies designed to expand the candidate pool and improve the overall quality of education leadership in schools by attracting highly motivated and effective individuals into leadership positions. States can encourage individuals to pursue leadership roles in education in the following ways: authorizing stronger recruitment incentives; designing and implementing expanded training opportunities; and assuring effective procedures for local districts to employ leaders.

Superintendents and principals have a key role in turning around low-performing schools, improving results in all schools, and sustaining improvement in schools that display exemplary performance. Both common sense and research support this observation. Since the early 1980's, research on effective schools has found repeatedly that effective principals and superintendents are key to promoting and supporting student learning. And yet across the nation we find concerns about the quality of leadership in our schools and a crippling shortage of qualified school leaders.

State policies designed to attract a talented and diverse cadre of individuals into leadership roles can help stem the effects of shortages. States can also improve the overall quality of education leadership in schools dramatically through policies that focus on attracting highly motivated individuals into leadership positions. The SAELP compendium addresses this issue with brief examples of current state policies that have been developed specifically to recruit new education leaders. The compendium also includes examples of several states' procedures for hiring principals and superintendents.

III. Education & Professional Learning -

Current Role of the State: States set policies for content, quantity, and quality of pre-service education and on-going professional development programs for principals and superintendents through requirements for licensure of practitioners and approval or accreditation of professional training programs. States create, authorize, and fund pre-service education program and continuous professional development programs for school leaders that help equip principals and superintendents with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective leadership. They also establish the requirements for institutions and organizations which offer the programs and the designation of authorities who determine whether candidates or participants successfully complete programs.

One of the most important state strategies for the quality of leaders is setting the requirements for individual licensure and preparation programs. The state must ensure that preparation programs are aligned to help candidates meet licensure requirements. While it is essential that states attract new principals and superintendents into leadership positions, it is equally important that *current* education leaders have effective training to help them meet the many new challenges and complexities of practice. New candidates for school leadership and current practitioners both need preparation for these challenges:

- Education leaders are being held more accountable for advancing *all students* to high academic standards;
- In addition to being good *managers*, principals and superintendents today are expected to balance administrative duties with leadership of improving *teaching* and *learning* in schools;
- In addition to re-defining their own roles as education leaders, principals and superintendents are also expected to develop and promote a *vision* of enhanced

- performance, and heightened opportunity for all teachers and children, in every school;
- Today's education leaders are also expected to *communicate* this new vision and strategy for change - both *within schools*, and *in the broader community*; and
 - Technology presents many new opportunities for educators, but it also poses challenges to education leaders responsible for ensuring that teachers and students have access to (and are using) new technologies in ways that are both practical and effective.

It is essential that *current and incoming* education leaders have the opportunity for continuous training, networking with peers, and exposure to model strategies for meeting the numerous demands placed upon them.. The SAELP research compendium provides examples of ways states can offer principals and superintendents such opportunities, both in pre-service training to future principals, and ongoing professional and leadership training for current education leaders.

IV. Licensure, Certification & Program Accreditation -

Current Role of the State: State policy governs both the licensing of principals and superintendents, and the re-licensure, if required to continue practice. In most states, the accreditation of higher education programs with authority for training current and future school leaders is also controlled at the state level. States also design and operate the licensing and re-certification processes for practitioners, and the related accreditation process for higher education leadership programs. State actions on these functions are particularly important for determining the necessary experience and qualifications of leaders; the essential focus on leadership for teaching and learning; and the range of paths to authorize individuals to practice in a state and transfer credentials among states.

State licensure, certification, and accreditation requirements are the most important levers the state has to set the expectations for leadership practice. If school leadership is to focus on leadership for teaching and

learning, licensure must require this focus *and* frame the preparation necessary to do it. More than 30 states have adopted new licensure standards and requirements, developed through the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) project, which provide for a focus on leadership for teaching and learning. Several states are moving strategically to reshape doctoral programs (and other training programs for principals and superintendents) to provide relevant, high quality training that can help candidates become effective school leaders.

Licensure and certification policies affect the extent to which experienced principals and superintendents can do each of the following: focus on teaching and learning, in addition to administrative duties; move across district lines in their careers; move across state lines in their careers. Such policies also govern the difficulty of entry into the profession - for new candidates from among the teaching ranks, for education leaders moving up on the career ladder, and for proven leaders from other fields who are interested in switching to education. Classroom teachers are currently the key source of future principals. To cope with the shortage of new candidates for leadership positions some states are trying to attract candidates from alternate professions. State level policy governs both the extent to which individuals from other professions are eligible to practice as principals and superintendents as well as the training that is required before such persons may receive a license and/or a certificate for practice.

Several states are also reconsidering the characteristics of principal and superintendent training programs related to the roles of school leaders. In most states higher education programs train future school leaders. Many states are working to alter this pattern by more rigorous, diverse, and better grounded training in the everyday environment of teaching and learning in elementary and secondary schools. Other states are considering alternative paths to licensure with preparation in the fields of business and management. States can affect both the quality and quantity of such programs by controlling accreditation status and funding. The SAELP research compendium offers a variety of examples of state policies governing licensure, certification and accreditation practices.

V. Conditions of Professional Practice -

***Current Role of the State:** State policy in many states sets the terms and conditions of professional practice for school leaders. States may create, authorize, and finance local and state contracting and bargaining policies, salary and pensions programs, performance review procedures and criteria, and incentives or sanctions for exemplary or unsatisfactory performance of school leaders.*

Several changes in the context of leadership practice are increasing attention to the exercise of state authority to change terms and conditions of practice. These changes in context include shortages of candidates; increased school district accountability with rewards and sanctions related to school leader performance; and the desire to have school leaders perform more like competitive business leaders. Examples of particular issues include the following.

- One of the key barriers to attracting and keeping school leader candidates is the fact that salaries are inadequate when considered in light of the responsibilities that come with the job. Principals and superintendents work long hours in stressful jobs. There is often little incentive for senior level teachers earning nearly as much in ten months as principals would in 12 months to take on the added stresses and risks associated with the leadership role.
- School leaders are too seldom rewarded for exemplary performance. Most states and districts do not have rewards, bonuses, or incentive programs recognizing outstanding school leaders.
- Contracting and bargaining practices in the hiring and recruitment of principals and superintendents may have serious negative effects on the stability of such positions, and the willingness and opportunity for leaders to work for significant change.
- Pension portability is an issue needing careful review. Most states do not have pension “portability” or reciprocity, making it difficult for experienced educators to move from one state to another. Such policies may discourage many individuals from continuing in

leadership roles.

Performance reviews are important, but they can also seriously impact the desirability of being school leaders. Performance reviews should encourage improvement, innovation, and initiatives to enhance teaching practices and learning in every classroom. The indicators of performance must be crafted to encourage best performance as well as to assure that poor performance leads to sanctions. The SAELP compendium provides examples of several different approaches on state policies for terms and conditions of employment.

VI. Authority for Practice & Governance Structures -

Current Role of the State: State policy is generally responsible for assigning principals and superintendents the legal authority under which they practice. States may establish legal authority for structural and governance practices that profoundly effect desirability (or undesirability) of school leaders' work. Various patterns of legal and organization relationships between Boards and Superintendents; Boards and Principals; Superintendents and Principals make big differences in the approach to the work. The overall balance of powers among state, district, and school level officials also has significant impact. States can improve the overall effectiveness of education leaders by analyzing and being certain these relationships of authority and structure provide environments conducive to creative instructional leadership and improved student learning.

Although many principals and superintendents are being held increasingly accountable for improving achievement of all students, as well as the quality of all schools, the authority they are assigned to accomplish these goals is often not commensurate with the assigned tasks. For example, principals often do not have authority to control factors that relate directly to student performance and overall school quality, such as hiring decisions, selecting instructional materials, or scheduling. Analyzing these relationships to determine whether they are, in fact, supportive of effective leadership practice or impede

such practice is very important.

Many new structural patterns for school governance are being tested now. States must ensure that their initiatives intended to improve the performance of all children, particularly children in low performing, high poverty schools, are aligned with the state authorities for the practice of leadership in those schools. Policies intended to increase state and community level participation in such districts may also have the unintended consequence of discouraging talented leaders from working there.

The SAELP compendium includes examples of state policies which change structure and governance related to leadership.

Compendium Design

CCSSO's compendium is divided into five (5) parts. They are the following:

Part I: Examples of Current Statutory & Regulatory Approaches to Educational

Leadership Across the States: Through examples taken from a variety of states, Part I of the SAELP compendium is designed to provide an overview of existing state policies and discussion of key issues in each of the six key strategy areas outlined and discussed above. Section I ("State Priority for and Approach to School Leadership") presents a brief analysis of how rigorously a state is addressing leadership issues, including how the issues are addressed and what new approaches are being made to promote effective leadership. Sections II through VI provide examples, taken from across the states, of each of the project's key strategies. The examples in Part I are taken from existing state legislative and/or administrative policies.

Part II: Examples of Education Leadership Policies Within Specific States: Like Part I, Part II also contains examples of existing state legislative and administrative policies in each of the six strategy areas that CCSSO has developed. Part II, however, provides a few examples of comprehensive policy reform efforts within a single state. The purpose of this section is to offer several different examples of what comprehensive policies could look like in an individual state, once the basic components of a statewide policy reform initiative are pulled together.

Part III: Field Research Report: In addition to research on *existing* state policies in these areas, the National Consortium considers it essential to understand the kinds of policies that *ought* to be in place. If implemented, such policies would help principals and superintendents become more effective education leaders, at a minimum, by offering more effective recruitment, pre-service preparation, and continuous professional development opportunities. An essential part of SAELP's research strategy involves including the perspective and opinions of current education leaders. As part of this process, the State Leadership Center hosted two full-day Field Research sessions. At each of these meetings, outstanding principals, superintendents, and board members from around the country were gathered to discuss and make recommendations about the kinds of policies that *they think* would attract, support, and sustain effective leadership at the district and school levels.

CCSSO's Field Research meetings were designed to accomplish each of the following:

- Provide a forum for education leaders throughout the country to present and discuss leadership issues and concerns;
- Develop an understanding of the key issues and challenges for education leadership, from the perspective of current principals, superintendents, and board members;
- Inform current research efforts and the SAELP Policy and Practice Compendium through practitioner opinion and examples of policies that, if in place, would attract, sustain, and support effective leadership at school and district levels.

Part IV: Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds Regional Conferences & Projects and Reports from National Consortium Organizations Related to State Policy Development for Education Leadership: Part IV of CCSSO's compendium provides an overview of current efforts in Education Leadership that are being supported and conducted by each of the organizations affiliated with CCSSO under the SAELP initiative. For example, this section includes an overview of the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds' current work through the LEADERS COUNT project. This section also includes reports that are related to state policy development for education leadership from each of the project's National Consortium organizations.

Part V: Bibliography of Articles & Research on Leadership: Part V includes additional examples of recent studies and reports relevant to education leadership. This bibliography is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all recent research in the area of education leadership. Rather, this section highlights key studies and reports that have been gathered in the process of developing this compendium.

Research Methodology

Oversight and input for the research effort was provided by National Consortium partner organizations. A thorough review of existing literature on education leadership was conducted before the materials in this compendium were collected. The material contained in this compendium has been gathered using the following research methods:

- *Survey through National Consortium Partners* - National Consortium partner organizations submitted a survey to their constituencies requesting information regarding legislative or administrative leadership reform initiatives over the last five years;

- *State Legislative Code Research* - CCSSO staff conducted a thorough analysis of state legislative codes for select states;
- *State Administrative Code Research* - CCSSO staff conducted a thorough analysis of state administrative codes for select states;
- *Field Research Meetings* - CCSSO staff hosted Field Research meetings, which yielded some of the state specific materials included in this document. (In addition to the state specific materials made available to CCSSO staff through Field Research, *Part III* of the compendium includes a detailed Field Research Report).
- *Survey of Current Literature* - CCSSO staff conducted a thorough literature review before assembling the materials included in this compendium, with the National Consortium partners providing consistent guidance and input.

Because this project is focused on statewide, comprehensive policies in education leadership, where possible we have tried to highlight state policies that clearly fit into larger, statewide, comprehensive reform packages. The state-specific materials gathered in this compendium have been included for research and information purposes. Materials were included based on their face value as policy, as they appear in state legislative and/or administrative codes. The SAELP compendium does not distinguish between policy and implementation. Most of the policies that have been included in this research are too new to have yielded consistent and reliable evidence on implementation. This document does not include qualitative assessments of such policies. Their inclusion is not meant to be limiting with respect to any future program under the *State Action for Education Leadership Project*.

The State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) developed this research compendium with generous support from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds.

