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LEADERSHIP

PREPARING AND SUPPORTING SCHOOL LEADERS: The Importance of Assessment and Evaluation

Institute for Educational Leadership

MATTERS

ABOUT THIS BRIEF

In the fall of 2004, the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) convened members of the School Leadership Learning Community (SLLC) and invited guests for three invitational, issue-focused meetings. The meetings were supported by the Laboratory for Student Success (LSS), the mid-Atlantic regional educational laboratory at Temple University, through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES). Each of the meetings was conducted as a modified Select Seminar (*www.casdany. neric.org/history3.htm*) and explored an issue specific to preparing and supporting school leaders.

The SLLC, a professional development and support network among the grantees in the U.S. Department of Education's School Leadership Program, is managed and supported by IEL. Barbara McCloud, Senior Leadership Associate with IEL, provided the primary project direction and coordination for the network. The network brings together, keeps together, and informs members across the country working to promote effective school leadership and increased student achievement for all students. All SLLC member programs are school leadership programs that are active partnerships among school districts, colleges and universities, and/or professional associations.

The IEL version of a Select Seminar rested on two principles: the participants were the experts and each voice was of equal importance. The discussions were held in an environment conducive to open and honest dialogue and participants were encouraged to "dig deeper" into the issues being discussed. The conversations captured busy professionals' knowledge and insights about preparing school leaders and identified promising practices being implemented across the country. A list of the diverse participants, which included SLLC members as well as invited guests with expertise in the issue area being discussed, is located at the end of the publication.

This brief, *Preparing and Supporting School Leaders: The Importance of Assessment and Evaluation,* offers field-based insights—not silver bullets, not research findings, and not final solutions—collected from Select Seminar participants as well as participants in a companion meeting on program assessment and evaluation held several months later. All participants were familiar with leadership program design and implementation and with the complex issues involved in assessing and evaluating both program and product effectiveness. Among the participants were members of the SLLC, individuals running preparation programs under a variety of organizational arrangements—university based, school-district based, or based in collaboratives among local districts, state professional education associations, and/or community-based organizations. Other participants included national evaluation experts (including many who serve as SLLC program evaluators) and researchers, as well as representatives from new provider organizations in the leadership preparation arena and from several of the philanthropic organizations currently funding leadership initiatives.

This leadership brief distills authentic conversations, anchored by participants' insights gleaned from experience in the field. Conversations focused on assessment and evaluation questions, promising practices, and policy and program challenges. Eight themes pervaded the discussions and are offered as guidance to those running school leadership programs across the country. Selected best practices are presented throughout the text and contact information is also supplied for those who desire additional information. ■

PREPARING AND SUPPORTING SCHOOL LEADERS: The Importance of Assessment and Evaluation

It is widely recognized that leadership matters in terms of educational outcomes, and clarion calls for "leadership for student learning" persist (IEL 2002; Fullen 1993; Edmonds 1990; Leithwood, 2003). Increasingly, such calls are anchored in research about what school leaders need to know and to be able to do (Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom 2004; Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson 2005). As a result, preparing school leaders and providing them with ongoing professional development and support are major items on the education agenda.

Leadership preparation programs are abundant. Human and financial resources are being expended at the local, state, and national levels to build the capacity of school leaders so that their knowledge, skills, attributes, and practices yield improved outcomes for all students. At the same time, a great deal of attention is being focused on how to assess and evaluate these programs.

The bottom-line goal of all leadership preparation and professional development programs is to prepare and support leaders who have the capacity to improve student learning. Those conducting such programs must develop assessment and evaluation processes to ensure that the program's design, content, and training strategies make a difference by preparing leaders who have the capacity to ensure improved student outcomes.

Some researchers, like Margaret Terry Orr at Bank Street College of Education, suggest that "little is known about which leadership preparation approaches and practices are most effective" (Orr 2003). On the other hand, numerous evaluation models exist and are being used by leadership programs across the country, including the work of Thomas Guskey, Michael Patton, and Douglas Reeves, to name but a few. Many organizations—including New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS), The Southern Region Education Board (SREB), and the University Council for Education Administration (UCEA), as well as a number of individuals—are addressing the issue of school leadership program assessment and evaluation. The Wallace and Broad Foundations, philanthropic organizations with major portfolios focused on school leadership, also are grappling with this issue. While all the answers concerning assessment and evaluation of leadership preparation and support programs are not yet available, it is important to note that increasingly hard questions are being posed and considered.

Members of the SLLC, invited guests, and evaluation experts came together in two separate meetings to examine the assessment and evaluation of school leadership preparation and support programs. Diverse voices and perspectives were offered as seminar participants shared information, raised questions, offered practice and policy considerations, and suggested promising practices as well as challenges. They discussed the key concept of "theory of change"; talked about frameworks for evaluation; reflected on research related to leadership program evaluation or the lack thereof; and, equally important, candidly described their respective efforts to evaluate and assess the leadership programs they conduct and/or with which they are affiliated. Eight themes pervaded the discussions.

THEME 1
Start with an Explicit Theory of Change.

Effective leadership preparation programs are based on theories of change that clearly state the kind and level of change desired and the program strategies and components that will be used to achieve the change. Participants cited the importance of starting with a theory of change and, from an evaluation point of view, "getting behind the assumptions, testing the assumptions, …being a critical friend to the theory, and bringing evidence to bear systematically on the theories of change...." Participants explored theories of change that informed their work and strategies used to prepare principals and help them achieve programmatic goals. There was broad consensus about what participants hoped to achieve: prepared leaders who are able to change schools and school systems so as to improve student outcomes. However, there was far less clarity about exactly what was needed to create such transformational leaders.

Although the goal of most programs is to create long-term change, not every program has the inputs in place to do so, nor the time and resources necessary to conduct a longitudinal impact study. Participants acknowledged the importance of longitudinal data, but several noted the constraints —programs are funded for three-year time periods, which is not enough time for participants to move into new leadership roles, and evaluation budgets are often limited and do not permit funding for longitudinal work. It was suggested that program developers consider longitudinal work and its attendant evaluation costs up front as they prepare funding proposals for their programs.

Participants also drew a distinction between research and program evaluation, defining research efforts as summative evaluation designed to prove

that "something worked." In contrast, they defined program evaluation as usually formative and intended primarily to provide feedback for planners to use in improving the program. Both formative and summative evaluations were cited as promising strategies for capturing the dynamic, evolving aspects of program implementation. In both research and evaluation, however, prior to implementation, leadership programs need to state clearly what they intend to achieve, the steps they will take to deliver results, and the measures they will use to determine whether they were successful. In addition, they need to fully understand the elements of their ideal outcomes if they are to pose the right evaluation questions and to have the best chance of proving effectiveness.

As participants looked for commonalities and differences in their change theories, they realized that they were talking about change occurring in multiple areas—in preparation programs, within leadership practice, and in schools and systems. In order to develop a useful theory of change, programs need to disentangle the results in these various, overlapping areas. For example, are evaluations intended to show program success? That is, are evaluations expected to show that certain numbers of leaders were prepared and placed in leadership roles? Are evaluations designed to measure growth in specific leadership skills; and, if so, which areas and how is the growth measured? Are evaluations looking for evidence of transformed schools? Or are they looking for evidence of increased student achievement?

In terms of theories of change and the ultimate goal of increased student achievement, several participants raised the point that preparation program providers need to be candid about the correlation between the two, as well as the time, resources, new knowledge, and new strategies needed. One evaluator noted the importance of deliberately using theory of change models to look at proximal outcomes as opposed to the more distal ones—"...leadership practices, school organizational change, changes in teaching and learning, program coherence across the school, [and] focus on the vision of teaching and learning… are the important antecedents to hopefully making a big change in students' outcomes of performance."

A clear statement of intended results and the right choice of measures and indicators begin with carefully delineated definitions—of leadership, effective leaders, student success, and successful schools, among others. A theory of change needs to define the skills and abilities that comprise leadership and to state clearly how those skills are expected to benefit schools and students.

Participants agreed that they need to be more intentional about the kind and level of change they want to create and measure. Having a framework in hand will not necessarily lessen the complexity of implementation, but it will help practitioners remain mindful of important distinctions and help them design and refine programs that are powerful and comprehensive enough to meet anticipated outcomes.

Even with this kind of clarity, significant questions remain. When does it make sense to evaluate specific components of programs or to look more broadly? At what points during implementation should evaluation occur? What measures and indicators should be used? Noting that leadership is part art and part science, participants asked what kind of questions and measures are best designed to get at the intangible aspects of effective leaders—the "essence" of leadership?

- Barry Kibel (Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation), John Grove (now with CDC), and Taylor Haas (Public Health Institute) coordinated the development of a generic framework for evaluating leadership programs, called EvaluLEAD, that was tested with 17 national or international models. The model looks at three variables: level of analysis (changes in individuals, organizations, or systems), kind of change (episodic, developmental, or transformative), and method of inquiry (evidential or evocative). A nine-cell matrix (level of analysis versus kind of change) is used to pinpoint or delineate the changes of interest. Within each cell, strategies for use of evidential or evocative inquiry are explored.

  Episodic changes are those that occur within fixed periods of time and result in specific outputs—a skill or organizational function, for example. Developmental changes are outcomes—usually competencies acquired—that emerge as people, organizations, or systems move at different rates and in different contexts toward mastery. Transformative changes are impacts associated

with fundamental shifts in perspective or function that happen when critical thresholds of readiness are reached.

Once program designers, evaluators, or program implementers decide on the levels and kinds of change they want, they determine which of two kinds of inquiry—evidential or evocative—will be employed to find out whether the program will be, has been, or is being successful. They may use a mix of both modes of inquiry. Evidential inquiry centers on objective facts. Evocative inquiry builds from the personal experiences and impressions of program participants and is intended to "capture the joy, the spirit, the thing that's missing from too many evaluations and therefore disguises what is going on at deeper levels." Information about this evaluation model is available from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation web site at *http://www.wkkf.org/Programming/ResourceOverview.aspx?CID=281&ID=3740.*
(Barry Kibel, Pacific Institute for Research and Learning, *kibel@pire.org*)

THEME 2
Focus Simultaneously on Program Results and Design

The simultaneous planning of assessment and evaluation processes and program design is likely to promote stronger links between training content, leadership skills, and desired results. Participants acknowledged a tendency to focus more on program inputs than outputs. Backward mapping or backward planning—that is, starting with intended results, not with program design—was suggested as a way to ensure that programs focus on factors they have the capacity to measure and change. Having program designers and evaluators work closely together before implementation challenges both sets of professionals to ask the most important questions up front and helps guarantee that specific methods are in place to show results.

Some participants raised the point that it is important for program developers to think broadly about how, when, and the extent to which evaluation interfaces with the preparation process. While engaging the evaluator up front is important, participants noted that program developers also need to consider whether the evaluation interface occurs at the design phase only, during the implementation phase, at the redirection or adjustment phase of the program, or during all of the above. The amount of financial resources available for evaluation was mentioned as another important factor for consideration.

Other participants, however, were concerned that setting evaluation goals before implementation might lock programs into rigid designs, which might reduce the ability to react nimbly to changing circumstances or to new knowledge. Variables that might affect outcomes are not always evident during the planning phase. Other factors may be difficult to hold constant throughout the course of the program, leading to false conclusions. These participants emphasized the importance of flexibility and paying attention to unintended outcomes.

Participants agreed that it is never possible to control every variable in a real-world setting. By combining both formative and summative evaluation methods, however, it is possible to preserve the dynamic quality of program evaluation while keeping an eye on a handful of larger, endpoint questions. Planners should know and be clear about what they intend to achieve and use periodic assessments to measure progress at benchmark points along the way. When new variables and/or unintended outcomes are discovered, they should be incorporated into the design, and program staff should make necessary changes in implementation as well as in assessment.

THEME 3
Build on Existing Knowledge and Available Research

Anchoring evaluation design in research-based standards ensures that the work builds on existing knowledge and research and that it meets both academic and political demands for accountability. Participants agreed that a good deal is known about leadership development, but not enough has been done to distill and disseminate a core body of knowledge. As a result, preparation programs spend time

re-learning old knowledge—and sometimes making it more complicated. Participants also noted the limited state of high-quality leadership research and the need for additional venues, including academic journals, that stimulate scholarship and debate.

In an effort to promote rigor and accountability, most school leadership preparation programs are tied to state and/or local standards. The importance of preparing leaders to promote learning standards for students was duly noted: "We've set them, now we must commit to helping every child reach them. What resources and what changes in leaders' behaviors and beliefs are necessary to get us there?" Professional certification standards for leaders were also lauded as helping to professionalize the selection of school leaders.

Instead of lending focus to program design and evaluation, some participants wondered how to be mindful of standards and the sanctions they can bring to bear while preparing leaders for the quality of schools children want and need. Others noted that attempting to adhere to multiple standards has mired their programs in a tangle of criteria, competencies, and indicators. On the other hand, some participants noted the utility of their efforts to creatively combine different standards, such as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC), with state standards.

The New Leaders for New Schools leadership program has developed a single set of research-based standards and is successfully using them as interim measures toward a single outcome: improved student achievement. Participants discussed whether a similar set of standards might provide an anchor for the reform of other leadership programs.

In particular, participants discussed whether or not it would be helpful for foundations and other funding sources to use standards in framing requests for proposals for leadership preparation programs. Drawing on what is already known about leadership preparation in a systematic fashion might help shape their own expectations about what to look for in new models—and ensure that scarce resources are not used to reinvent the wheel.

Some participants questioned the value of relying on any one prescriptive framework when other reasonable criteria and models exist. Others suggested a design that would ask planners to address key conceptual points in an overall framework while allowing leadership programs broad flexibility in how they did so. While acknowledging the lack of empirical evidence about leadership development, not all participants viewed moving toward singular quantitative measures of student achievement as the best or only way to build new knowledge.

- New Leaders for New Schools is an independent, not-for-profit organization working in five cities to help transform urban school systems. Candidates who demonstrate proficiency in nine selection criteria participate in a fifteen-month training program with two full years of follow-up support. The initiative's theory of change is based on research-based standards for effective school leadership in six key areas: school culture and climate; adult trust and collaboration; student and staff efficacy; effective teaching and learning; focus on data and outcomes; parent involvement; and school/family partnerships. The training model assumes that leaders who are proficient in these areas should be able to improve each measure of school quality and demonstrably increase student achievement. A multi-year research design to test these assumptions is about to be launched. It will look directly at measures of school quality and student achievement. Initially, test score data will be used, but eventually broader measures of student success, such as writing samples, may be used. (Todd Kern, New Leaders for New Schools, *tkern@nlns.org*)

THEME 4
Work To Fill Knowledge Gaps and Disseminate Best Practices.

Leadership program developers and implementers need to acknowledge what they know and don't know about effective leadership development, then work both to fill in the gaps and to disseminate best practice information. To better measure the impact of their programs, seminar participants agreed that they need sharper definitions of the core concepts and attributes of leadership that drive their programs.

They need to know more about various leadership roles—entrepreneurs, technicians, managers, coaches, instructional leaders, and others. Program developers and implementers also need a deeper understanding of how prospective leaders think about their current skill set and how they deal with practice challenges and problems. Given that most programs seek to train leaders who are able to fundamentally change schools and improve the quality of education and academic outcomes, what skills and abilities and attributes do such transformational leaders have and how are they best supported and measured?

One participant urged fellow colleagues not to forget what they already know: "I would really hope that, in our rush to satisfy the intense pressure to do scientifically based evaluation research, we don't forget what we already know…[that] the direct influence of principals on student achievement is tiny and mainly unmeasurable…until we get more sophisticated designs."

Distinctions also need to be made between what experts do in high-performing schools—situations presumed to be successful—and how best to train leaders to succeed in a variety of challenging settings. Persons involved in program design, implementation, and evaluation need to consider the possibility that leadership styles currently assumed to be most effective may not be successful in every case; context matters and leadership for various situations must be considered.

It was agreed that program developers should look beyond education's borders for answers. Training models, philosophies, and practices from numerous disciplines may have implications for and applicability to education leadership and may promote the kind of intellectual vitality, passion, and ability to engage others that is the hallmark of strong leaders. Several participants noted that social science, psychology, finance, law, and business all offer valuable frames of reference that could enrich the designs of school leadership programs.

Some participants, in fact, called for a new model of leadership, suggesting a broader definition based on core leadership notions that exist across sectors. This view holds that the skills leaders need to succeed in educational settings are not so different from what leaders in business, the military, and government require. Preparation programs need to broaden their partnerships to include representatives from these sectors and to incorporate their perspectives in developing new leadership definitions and programs, as well as new models for program assessment and evaluation.

Participants also grappled with how to better connect theory and practice in preparation programs. University-based programs are often designed around discrete, theoretical courses. How can preparation programs be structured so that everything learned in class reflects the issues, opportunities, and challenges found in students' school communities and speaks to the core skills and abilities that they will need as leaders?

Extended residencies and internships can provide the kind of rich experience that makes theory usable. Not all programs can afford to incorporate these experiential components, however, and the research is still out on what works best. For example, is a 700-hour internship model fundamentally better than shorter internship models? Programs must find additional ways to help students transfer what they learn in preparation programs to actual problem solving in schools.

Who should be selected and how do selection issues affect program evaluations? The need for new principals varies across states. Not everyone who applies to certification programs may be suited for a leadership position, nor does everyone who applies even intend to pursue a leadership position once certified. Programs need to find ways to focus resources on candidates who can benefit the most from such training and who will use the skills they acquire in educational settings. Selectivity for selectivity's sake, however, is not the answer. Carefully designed and comprehensive selection and recruitment processes are important and essential.

Evaluation models also need to take selection criteria into account. How do programs that only accept well-qualified candidates demonstrate their real impact? Arguably, it is possible that highly exceptional candidates would have become effective leaders anyway without specialized training. Control group evaluation designs could easily show such a difference. Finding an adequate comparison group of strong candidates who have not participated in a given program, however, is probably possible only in very large districts.

Mentoring is another way to help new leaders develop the capacity to apply what they've learned, transfer it to others, and build organizational capacity. However, programs need a better understanding of how to select, train, and match mentors with mentees. Programs need to bring mentors up to speed if they have been away from the profession for any time, and unsuitable mentor candidates should be screened out without hesitation. Programs also need to schedule regular debriefing sessions to stay abreast of what mentors are seeing, saying, learning, and teaching.

Retired principals are often more available to serve as mentors than sitting principals. Those who are retired, however, may need training to ensure they are knowledgeable of current thinking on leadership contexts and professional development needs. Non-educators may also prove to be effective mentors. What criteria should programs use to select mentors and to identify their skill level? How can programs use this knowledge to make the best matches?

Finally, participants noted that the field of leadership development is not widely preparing new leaders who can initiate conversations about race and class, gender, and language in schools and communities. A focus on diversity and equity should be embedded in all aspects of training and preparation, including selection and placement, to ensure that—according to some participants—a conscious effort is made to put people of color into schools of color. Other participants noted, however, that while placing persons of color in schools with large populations of children of color is important, it is equally important—and for some, even more important—to ensure that the best trained and most qualified teachers and school leaders are placed with those children who have been least well served traditionally and who are the least prepared academically. As program developers design, implement, and assess leadership programs, ethical practice, moral leadership, and issues related to cultural competence should also be incorporated as core behaviors and attributes of school leaders.

- The Principal Leadership Institute at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Education prepares fifty people a year to lead urban schools in the Bay Area. Its professional credential program uses problem-based case studies with data, teacher profiles, and other specifics so that candidates work with materials and issues that mirror what really happens in schools. An important focus of the program is to help potential leaders better understand the institutional settings in which they are working and how race, gender, and class affect student success. Students develop the ability to structure honest conversations in their school communities. At the same time they learn how to use data to identify and address specific equity issues.
(Lynda Tredway, University of California at Berkeley, *ltredway@uclink4.berkeley*)

THEME 5
Context Matters: New Leaders Go To Old Systems

Paying attention to context was highlighted as an important issue related to leader preparation programs and to their evaluation. Many participants indicated that new leaders often enter or return to unreceptive systems. Programs need to know more about how to measure and mitigate the systemic barriers to best practices so that newly trained leaders can sustain and utilize what they have learned when they reenter a resistant setting.

One participant posed several context-related questions: "What happens to the organization itself, the school district for example, when you try to prepare a different breed of leader…? What ought we to be doing with the organization to help it get ready to take advantage of a new kind of leader?" A program evaluator raised the same point, specifically citing a district with which she works, and inserted the evaluation aspect: "There is at least a two-pronged issue…. It is an evaluation of the program itself…but it is also an evaluation of the district in context…. The district is both the victim and the perpetrator of practices that perpetuate issues of inequity in terms of race, class, and gender…. The study of implementation, then, helps us understand that the district has its own lack of capacity to encourage this kind of leadership development, but also has people

and systems in place that, either intentionally or unwittingly, perpetuate systems of inequality…."

One strategy suggested is to train teams of new leaders within schools and districts, rather than individuals. Cohort training can provide a natural support group and lay the foundation for school- and system-level change. Another suggestion offered is to deliberately engage and get buy-in for the preparation program and its participants from the key district leaders (i.e., superintendents and school board members). Taking a slightly different approach, another participant raised the same issue of "new" leader returning to the "old" system by challenging the group to "…really look at it as a way to think about the next level with respect to leadership development."

THEME 6
Inform, Engage, and Collaborate with Key Policymakers

Noting the need for more time, money, and technical support to conduct both program evaluation and longitudinal research, participants called for closer connections between preparation programs and agencies at the state and national levels. The policies established by state and federal departments and the resources they control profoundly affect what happens locally.

Programs and agencies seldom sit down to talk about what they can do together. Participants should make concerted efforts to put education, in general, and leadership issues, in particular, on the agendas of legislatures and general assemblies, local government, and other available policy entry points. Programs need to identify key players and nurture the kind of collaboration that can create "breakthrough ideas." States, in turn, should provide incentives for university and local district collaboration.

- It pays to foster working relationships with state education officials. In Michigan's 571 school districts, almost 65 percent of sitting principals are slated for retirement over the next five years. Federal dollars helped the Kalamazoo Regional Education Service Agency develop a program to train ninety new leaders. The staff issued an open invitation to the Michigan Department of Education to come see what they were doing: "You don't have to say when you're coming; any day will be fine with us." A week after the visit from the department, the program was invited to make a presentation at the state capital—the result: additional state support to train 160 new principals. (J. Mark Rainey, Kalamazoo (MI) Regional Education Service Organization, *jrainey@kresanet.org*)

More attention is needed to ascertain how state policy and state standards influence training programs and the students they attract. University-based programs frequently enroll students who have no real interest in becoming principals. Some participants suggested lobbying for more demanding eligibility and completion requirements—for example, limiting participation to teachers with a specified number of years in the classroom or to individuals who meet other specifics. Such a policy might make certification programs less desirable to people looking for a relatively easy master's degree and would help direct training resources toward those individuals most likely to benefit.

Considerable debate ensued concerning whether or not school policies should more closely align salaries with actual practice. This would mean that teachers could not financially benefit from certification unless they were hired as an administrator. While possibly limiting enrollment overall, this change would not necessarily encourage the best candidates to apply. It might, however, discourage personal and professional growth—and contributions of many kinds—throughout school systems.

THEME 7
Listen to Practitioners

During the seminar, participants suggested a number of ways for improving the assessment and evaluation of leadership programs. Acknowledging the lack of scholarly research on effective school leadership, it was suggested that a journal of leadership development

be created, in print or on-line, to help build the field's knowledge base. Other participants were interested in a "go-to" assessment resource, such as an individual with evaluation expertise who could give quick-turn-around advice and honest feedback. In a low-cost, relatively informal, "critical friends" model, for example, four or five programs could consider making a commitment to meet regularly—in person, by phone, or on-line—to share know-how and to help each other work through program and evaluation issues. Participants also suggested that programs need opportunities to meet and to provide their voices in terms of efforts to address program assessment and evaluation.

THEME 8
Take Program Assessment and Evaluation Seriously

Participants agreed that school leadership preparation and support needs to be taken more seriously as a disciplinary field and supported adequately. Conversations suggested that in many ways programs were conducting individual experiments on different assumptions about leadership. When asked what would help them improve their capacity to measure and assess their program's effectiveness, many participants called for more opportunities to share resources.

Programs need better access to tools that others have used successfully to develop and measure skills, connect theory to practice, and show how changes in leadership impact staff, students, and schools. Since parent engagement is a major factor in school success, instruments to evaluate how principals promote the home–school connection are much needed. So too are methods for capturing transformative change—the subtle but critical shifts in the way leaders think, feel, and act. One participant raised the question, "How do you document those internal transformations that people make along the journey to becoming more effective leaders, and how do you give validity to those kinds of transformations—the perspective shifts, the attitudinal shifts…?" Case studies, action research, observations, surveys, assessments, and inventories as well as journaling, reflecting, debriefing techniques, and intensive retreats to facilitate "collaborative sense-making" are but a few of the strategies that participants are already using and could share more widely. These and other evaluation questions and strategies are important; continued, focused attention on them remains key. ■

Summary

As the seminars concluded, participants clearly agreed upon the value of the SLLC goals: making connections among people engaged in leadership development program work, exchanging pertinent information, and learning with and from each other. They appreciated the focused attention on the critical issue of program evaluation and assessment—how can we know that our outcomes are being met—and the encouragement received for open and candid dialogue where each person's expertise and experience was valued.

Participants left with new ideas, new strategies, and new questions. They reminded each other that leadership program assessment and evaluation—notwithstanding all of its complexities—must address the real leadership question: "Have our theories of change, our technologies, and our strategies yielded more effective leaders who have new skills, knowledge, and behaviors and who can create conditions which ultimately lead to improved student achievement? After all, 'this is all about the children we are serving and about serving all of the children.'" ■

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

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SCHOOL LEADERSHIP RESOURCES
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WEB SITES

e-Lead (http://www.e-Lead.org) is in important resource designed to increase the dissemination of effective principal preparation programs. It was developed by the Laboratory for Student Success at Temple University and the Institute for Educational Leadership, the Select Seminar sponsoring organization.

This Web-based resource is organized around six research-based principles for the professional development of school leaders. It includes a searchable database of existing, standards-based preparation programs. A leadership library offers annotated information about a number of leadership development issues and links to the latest information and resources. e-Lead's blog, LeaderShipShape, is designed to provide school and district leaders with the most current and relevant information on news, research, controversies, events, and opportunities in the field. ■

ABOUT IEL

Since 1964, IEL has been at the heart of an impartial, dynamic, nationwide network of people and organizations from many walks of life who share a passionate conviction that excellent education is critical to nurturing healthy individuals, families, and communities. Our mission is to help build the capacity of people and organizations in education and related fields to work together across policies, programs, and sectors to achieve better futures for all children and youth. To that end, we work to:

- Build the capacity to lead
- Share promising practices
- Translate our own and others' research into suggestions for improvement
- Share results in print and in person.

IEL believes that all children and youth have a birthright: the opportunity and the support to grow, learn, and become contributing members of our democratic society. Through our work, we enable stakeholders to learn from one another and to collaborate closely—across boundaries of race and culture, discipline, economic interest, political stance, unit of government, or any other area of difference—to achieve better results for every youngster from pre-K through high school and on into postsecondary education. IEL sparks, then helps to build and nurture, networks that pursue dialogue and take action on educational problems.

We provide services in three program areas:

- Developing and Supporting Leaders
- Strengthening School-Family-Community Connections
- Connecting and Improving Policies and Systems that Serve Children and Youth.

Please visit our Web site at *www.iel.org* to learn more about IEL and its work.

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