Case Study Series: Principal Preparation at Delta State University — A Bold Strategy to Improve Practice

School Leadership Study
Developing Successful Principals

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Commissioned by
The Wallace Foundation

Principals play a vital role in setting the direction for successful schools, but existing knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified candidates is sparse. What are the essential elements of good leadership? How are successful leadership development programs designed? What program structures provide the best learning environments? What governing and financial policies are needed to sustain good programming? "School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals" is a major research effort that seeks to answer these questions. Commissioned by The Wallace Foundation and undertaken by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute in conjunction with The Finance Project, the study examines eight highly developed pre- and inservice program models that address key issues in developing strong leaders. Once effective processes have been identified they can be replicated, ensuring that more and more schools become vibrant learning communities under the direction of outstanding leaders.

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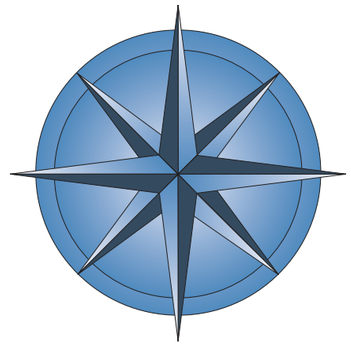

OVERVIEW

One hundred miles south of Memphis, TN, and 100 miles north of Vicksburg, MS, Delta State University (DSU) sits at the epicenter of one of the poorest regions in the United States. Historically a white teachers' college, Delta State has become increasingly aware of its responsibility to leverage change in the Mississippi Delta Region and the ability of its graduates to make a difference in the lives of children in area schools.

A small public university located in Cleveland, MS, Delta State may seem an unlikely candidate for recognition as one of the country's exemplary principal preparation programs. Other schools' programs offered important components such as internships, cohort structures, close partnerships with local school districts, and integrated curricula. However, few that we examined put these pieces together as comprehensively or as consistently well as the Educational Leadership Program at Delta State University. Delta State provides a full-time internship experience, financial support so teachers can leave the classroom to spend a year preparing to be a principal, and a passion for developing school leaders capable of transforming the poor, mostly rural, schools in the region. The program benefits from deep support from both local districts and the state of Mississippi, which provides unprecedented financial support through the Mississippi Sabbatical Leave Program. This program pays teachers' salaries for one year while they complete their administrative credential. Local districts recruit candidates, provide mentors, open their schools to interns, and enthusiastically hire program graduates. The Educational Leadership Program is tailored to develop the skills needed to reform schools in a region with few economic opportunities for many of its citizens.

Conditions in the Delta Region

The Delta Region is known as the cradle of blues music, and many of its residents have good reason to sing the blues. The Delta is more disadvantaged than the rest of Mississippi, and statewide statistics are alarming. According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Mississippi ranks last in the nation in the well-being of children. One quarter of its children live in poverty, and nearly one third live in a household where no adult is employed fulltime (Casey, 2000). In 2003, over half

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of Mississippi's fourth graders scored below the basic reading level on the state assessment, and over half of eighth graders scored below the basic level in math. In addition, the state assessment reveals a persistent achievement gap between minority and white students (Kersen, 2002).

Another achievement gap exists between the Delta and the rest of Mississippi. Of the ten lowest performing schools in Mississippi, seven are in the Delta region (see Table 1) (Sharpe, 2001). Low levels of achievement are a barrier for adults in the region as well. U.S. Census data from 2000 show that 75% of the residents of Mississippi aged twenty-five and older have a high school diploma and only 17% have a college degree (see Table 2) (U.S. Census, 2000).

Table 1: Lowest Performing Districts in Mississippi

School District	Score (1=lowest, 5=highest)
Oktibbeha	1.0
Coahama*	1.1
Noxubee	1.3
Clay County	1.4
North Panola*	1.5
Drew*	1.5
Holmes*	1.5
Tunica*	1.6
W. Tallahatchie*	1.6
W. Bolivar*	1.7

Source: State of Mississippi, Department of Education, Office of Accountability Reporting, Mississippi Report Card '95
*Delta school district

Table 2: Economic Indicators

	Delta	MS	U.S.
High school graduate	n/a	72.9%	80.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	n/a	16.9%	24.4%
Median household income*	$23,425	$29,611	$38,276
Unemployment rate	10.2%	5.7%	n/a
Population below poverty level**	24.9%	17.6%	12.7%

Source: US Census Data, 2000

*1997 median household income for the Delta
**1999 data

The 18 counties of Mississippi's Delta region are characterized by a sluggish economy, high unemployment, and persistent barriers from the legacy of segregation. Roughly half a million people live in the region. The population is 49.9% African American and 48.3% white. In contrast, the state as a whole is 61.4% white (see Table 3).

Table 3: Demographics

	Delta	MS	U.S.
White	48.3%	61.4%	75.1%
African American	49.9%	36.3%	12.3%
Native American/Pacific Islander	<1%	0.4%	10.0%
Asian	<1%	0.7%	3.6%
Persons reporting some other race	<1%	0.5%	5.5%
Persons reporting two or more races	<1%	0.7%	2.4%
Latino	<1%	1.4%	12.5%
Home language not English	<1%	<1%	17.9%

Source: US Census Data, 2000

More than 50 years after Brown vs. Board of Education, de facto segregation is common in the Delta: Public schools are typically 90% (or higher) African American, and many white students attend private academies (Sharpe, 2001). Table 4 lists the percentages of African American and white students in the Delta region schools and communities.

Table 4: De Facto Segregation in the Delta Region

	District population		School population	
Delta School Districts	White	Black	White	Black
West Bolivar	23.9%	75.6%	5.1%	94.1%
North Bolivar	18.7%	80.5%	1.9%	98.6%
Coahoma County	30.0%	69.2%	2.7%	96.0%
Holmes County	21.9%	77.9%	0 .1%	99.9%
Humphreys	31.8%	68.1%	3.3%	96.6%
Leflore	34.8%	64.9%	4.7%	95.2%
Quitman County	40.5%	58.5%	4.2%	95.7%
Sunflower	32.3%	67.1%	2.6%	97.5%
Clarksdale Separate	37.6%	62.1%	21.2%	78.2%
Cleveland County	49.7%	49.3%	27.5%	71.6%
Indianola	34.7%	64.6%	6.5%	93.3%
East Tallahatchie	51.0%	48.8%	33.3%	66.7%
West Tallahatchie	27.9%	71.4%	6.3%	99.7%
Tunica	24.4%	75.4%	1.4%	98.6%
Greenville Public	36.0%	63.4%	7.5%	92.3%
Western Line	67.0%	32.1%	44.1%	54.9%
Yazoo County	59.7%	40.0%	30.6%	69.3%
Yazoo City Municipal	35.2%	64.4%	13.8%	86.1%
South Delta	36.3%	63.4%	6.2%	93.8%
Drew	41.3%	58.4%	16.7%	83.3%
Shaw	32.7%	67.3%	5.1%	94.8%
Benoit	31.5%	68.5%	1.5%	96.6%
Mound Bayou	0.8%	99.2%	0.2%	99.8%

Source: State of Mississippi, Department of Education, Office of Accountability Reporting, Mississippi Report Card '95.
Note: Numbers may not add up to 100%, reflecting other races.

While most people in the Delta are poor, poverty is worse for children and adults of color. In 1999, the average annual income in the Delta Region was $17,625. Across the region, nearly one quarter of the general population — and one third of all children — live below the poverty level. In some Delta counties up to 40% of all children live in poverty. In 2000, the unemployment rate in the Delta averaged 10%. In one Delta county, the overall unemployment rate was twice that, and the rate for African Americans was nearly 30% (Kersen, 2002).

Part of the solution

Well aware of the dismal economic and educational conditions in Mississippi and the Delta region, a group of educators in the region decided that a bold strategy was needed to improve opportunities for school children. E. E. Caston (former Delta State University School of Education Dean) had deep concerns that the administrative credentialing program then in place did not produce the kind of practice-ready, change-oriented school leaders needed to transform regional public schools into places that would provide powerful teaching that would, in turn, ensure learning for all children. Caston believed that at the heart of every successful school was an effective instructional leader. Unfortunately, such leaders were in short supply in the Delta Region.

In the early 1990s, Caston began working with a consortium of local school district leaders to define the challenge of training administrators equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to reform schools. According to Caston:

> We went to [the DSU] administration and said, 'We are part of the problem when it comes to K-12 leadership.' We found ourselves lamenting that the training program for administrators created an insurmountable stretch from the classroom here [at DSU] to the work environment there [in Delta schools]. It left too much for [the candidate alone] to build that bridge, close the gap, and make the connection from training to actual job performance.
>
> We came to realize that we didn't want what we had—a traditional program [that was] predominantly part-time, where. . .people [were] stretching course content over a period of years so that the impact of any given course was lost over that period of time.

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Under Caston's direction and with support from the DSU administration, the School of Education faculty engaged in a deep and thorough process that completely redesigned the administrator credential program. To facilitate this effort, the school brought in national education experts such as Joe Murphy and Paul Hershey, reviewed the literature on principal preparation, and visited programs in other parts of the country. The faculty pledged to focus on designing a high-quality program and to address any obstacles that might surface once the design was ready for implementation.

Early in the program's development, the faculty concluded that a traditional, part-time program spread over several years was not the most effective way to prepare principals. Developers also understood the importance of providing prospective administrators with practice in real-world settings. As a result, DSU faculty decided that the program would require full-time enrollment and an intensive, site-based internship. However, full-time study (particularly for educators) can be

prohibitively expensive. It became clear that resolving this issue would require the support of the state.

During the 1990s, when the program was being redesigned, State Superintendent of Education Tom Burnham (himself a Delta State alumnus), followed the development of the program with interest. Burnham worked with the State Department of Education to create a supportive political environment for the program.

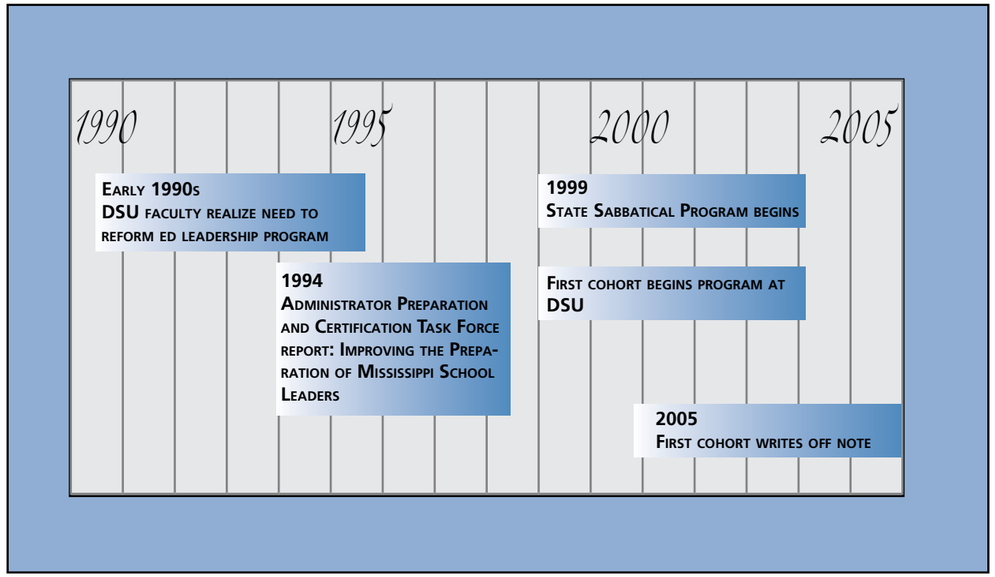
Meanwhile, Dean Caston successfully lobbied the Delta region's representative in the Mississippi State Legislature, Charlie Capps, for the financial resources necessary to implement the full-time internship program. Capps eagerly supported the proposal as a way to prepare administrators for not only the Delta region but the entire state. As chair of the appropriations committee, he subsequently sponsored legislation that would allow a carefully selected group of teachers from across the state one year of fully paid release time to pursue an administrative credential. The Mississippi State Sabbatical Program was implemented in 1999, just as Delta State was ready to work with its first cohort of candidates.

Since 1999, Delta State University has prepared, on average, 15 aspiring principals each year. Candidates begin the 14-month program in June, and spend the summer months taking courses at the university. The program is capped by a second summer session designed to wrap up and frame the internship experiences and to provide continuity between outgtoing and incoming cohorts.

During the school year, candidates are immersed in full-time internships that expose them to the day-to-day roles and responsibilities of school administrators. For example, interns participate in teacher evaluations, student discipline, parent conferences, student activities planning and supervision, budget management, and facilities operations. Importantly, the internships are integrated with coursework through weekly seminars. Instead of teaching academic content in separate courses, critical theories and concepts of administration are presented in an interdisciplinary fashion and framed around the issues, events, and problems experienced during the internship. To illustrate, a candidate's experience handling a student discipline problem might be used to stimulate an in-class examination of the principles of school law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), conflict resolution, problem solving, time management, and school-community communications.

Upon completion of the program, candidates receive a M.Ed. in educational leadership, and after passing the School Leaders Licensure Assessment exam (SLLA), receive certification as a public school administrator in Mississippi. In order to repay their districts and the state, graduates are required to return to work in their districts for five years after completing the program. Candidates who are not nominated by their districts, and therefore are not eligible to participate in the state sabbatical program, receive assistance from the university through a federal grant program. In return, those candidates must work as administrators in Mississippi for three years. Most program graduates return to their school districts and are placed as assistant principals.
In Spring 2005, the program held its first reunion/celebration when the first cohort completed its five-year service requirement. The timeline for DSU's program reform activities is illustrated in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1: Reform Timeline



During its first five years in operation, the program appeared to be addressing administrator shortages in the region and gained a reputation for producing high-quality, practice-ready administrators. According to Dr. Sue Jolly, program coordinator from 2000-2005, graduates of the program are:

> Leaders [who are]in charge of a place that is pleasant to [visit] and who have a vision of both what they want to accomplish this year, and what they want their school to be like years down the road. They are people who are very hard working to the point of exhaustion, and, in many cases, [are] radically changing the atmosphere [of their schools].

NEED AND SUPPORT FOR REDESIGNED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Prior to its redesign, the educational leadership program at Delta State, like many others across the country, was framed around a set of traditional academic courses in school management. These courses were taught in combination with a loosely structured, part-time field experience, with little effort made to connect theory with practice or to immerse candidates in problem-based and authentic learning environments. As Dr. Jolly described it:

> There was little connection between what we were teaching (which was theory-based), best practice, and what actually happened. And so that was the real impetus [for change]: How can we connect theory with practice and how can we make what we do meaningful?

Complicating matters was the fact that program admission standards were not very rigorous or comprehensive and were based almost entirely on a candidate's academic record. As a result, the quality of candidates and their level of commitment to school leadership were uneven. According to former dean Caston:

> Some students were attempting to use ed leadership as an escape from teaching classrooms, and that attempt was motivated by their low performance. So we had numerous concerns about the state of the ed leadership tradition, i.e., that academic admission to graduate school was not sufficiently screened, and that we had people in leadership positions who were not exemplary in their current teaching positions.

The passage of the Mississippi Sabbatical Leave Program by the state legislature was crucial to the new program. It also proved to be a unique and exemplary example of state support for principal preparation. Without such support, the depth and rigor of the internship would have been significantly compromised. And, given the centrality of the full-time internship, all other facets of the program would have been similarly compromised. Engendering broad-based political support at the state level required the deep commitment and focused persistence by Dean Caston. He described the process this way:

> The state superintendent picked up on our initiative, and he wanted to carry that state-wide. His enthusiasm spilled over to the state board, so we had its support. It fell for us beautifully, as all the key leaders in the state [also bought in to the concept]. They thought that we should have the opportunity to improve the quality of educational leadership in the state.

At the heart of the new program was an outcome-based instructional philosophy that emphasized the development of highly skilled, self-reflective, and self-actualized administrative candidates who could take the reins of leadership in complex and diverse school environments immediately upon graduation (e.g., "practice-ready" administrators and "consumers of research"). To accomplish this, the program was developmentally sequenced, beginning with activities designed to reorient candidates from thinking like classroom teachers to thinking like school leaders. The development of administrative dispositions was done through targeted efforts to help candidates understand the organizational complexities of schools; the disparate activities of schools as parts of an integrated and coordinated system; and the role of the school within the larger political and policy contexts of the school district, community, and state. According to Dr. Jolly, "They see that a decision affects the whole school rather than one room. They see that decisions can be complex as opposed to cut and dried." Other learning activities were designed to promote higher order critical thinking and problem solving, as well as the application of empirical research to school improvement efforts.

The State of Mississippi's Efforts to Support Educational Leadership

While Delta State was reforming its educational leadership program, Mississippi was reforming its policies to better support educational leadership. In 1994, Mississippi's superintendent of education convened an Administrator Preparation and Certification Task Force to develop strategies for providing the state with leaders for its schools. The task force's report, Improving the Preparation of Mississippi School Leaders, outlined 11 recommendations that charted the course for new policies that continue to shape the professional development experiences of principals throughout the state today. (See Exhibit 2.) The proposed reform components included a more rigorous process to identify and recruit a high-quality principal applicant pool; tuition remission and stipends for full-time study; collaboration between districts, colleges, and the state education agency; and a rigorous set of assessments for both candidates and programs. Although three of the recommendations were not implemented (#1, #2, and #7), most of them were. State education leaders believe that their success in implementing many of these recommendations has had a lasting, positive effect on the development of school leaders in Mississippi.

Exhibit 2: Administrator Preparation and Certification Task Force Recommendations

1. Creation of pool of potential administrators. In order to identify the best potential administrators, a statewide pool of potential candidates should be created each year through a rigorous recruitment, application, and selection process. It is the recommendation of the task force that the pool reflect the racial and gender diversity evident in the public school population in Mississippi.

2. Size of pool. The size of the pool (supply) should be determined according to the anticipated needs (demand) for administrators in the state.

3. Type of administrator preparation programs. The university/college program that prepares administrators should be a two-year, full-time program at the graduate level, including a full-year internship.

4. Funding for candidates. Funding to allow full-time study for candidates in the pool of potential administrators attending an approved program should be provided by the state in two forms: full tuition and a stipend of $15,000 per year.

5. Collaboration. There should be collaboration in development and delivery of the program among universities and colleges, local school districts, business and industry, the State Department of Education, and appropriate professional and community organizations.

6. Curriculum. The core curriculum of the program should encompass a problem-centered set of classroom and field learning experiences integrating the following four domains: functional, programmatic, contextual, and personal/interpersonal.

7. Faculty. At each program site, there should be a critical mass of at least five faculty members devoted full time to the education and training of school administrators.

8. Student assessments. There should be an integrated set of assessments that serve as a student exit requirement from the program. The assessment, called the Mississippi Assessment Battery, should consist of: (1) a state test measuring the knowledge base reflected in the four domains; (2) a skills proficiency measurement; and (3) a portfolio to evaluate the internship, the individualized learning plan, and the execution of skills in real-life situations.

9. Program assessment. Program quality should be assessed through application of the standards and criteria embedded in the recommendations of the task force. A national panel of experts in the area of school administration should be convened to make the initial assessment of redesigned programs.

10. Administrator licensure. Licensure should be contingent upon the completion of an approved administrator preparation program, the successful completion of the Mississippi Assessment Battery, and the fulfilling of other requirements deemed appropriate by the licensing agency.

11. Funding for preparation programs. Funding should be provided to preparation programs for the professional development of the faculty who will design and deliver the new educational leadership programs outlined in this report. In addition, funding should be provided for public universities in cases where bringing programs into compliance with the new standards would create an undue hardship.

Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program

The task force's report, in concert with the lobbying efforts of DSU and state education officials, contributed to the creation of the Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program by the state legislature in 1998. The sabbatical program serves as the state's major recruitment initiative for prospective school administrators. School districts may grant qualified teachers a year's leave of absence to participate in an approved full-time administrator preparation program. As noted above, participants receive their regular salary and benefits in exchange for a 5-year commitment to serve as administrators in their sponsoring school districts.

The legislature approved educational administration programs at six universities in Mississippi* for participation in the sabbatical leave program. These include Delta State University, Jackson State University, and University of Mississippi, the University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi College, and Mississippi State University. The legislation includes sunset provisions that require a 5-year program renewal cycle. Although the sabbatical leave program enjoys strong support, legislators—citing potential funding shortfalls—have been reluctant to remove the renewal requirement. Each year since 1998, the state has committed funding for up to 20 teachers to participate in the program. In 2003-04 there were 12 participants (statewide) at a cost of $390,000. The year before, 15 teachers participated at a cost of $500,000.

Sabbatical leave funds are appropriated to the State Department of Education, which then reimburses school districts that have participating teachers (who remain on the district payroll during their full-time internship placement). Districts are reimbursed by the state department for the salary equivalent of a teacher with 5 years of experience. If a participating teacher's actual salary is higher than this amount, the district pays the difference. Income from supplemental service, such as coaching, is not covered by either the state or participating districts. Because many educators earn significant income from such endeavors, some candidates bear sizeable personal costs to participate in the program, despite state and district contributions. Program graduates must remain employed by the district for 5 years or repay their sabbatical costs.

One of the goals of the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, Licensure, and Development—a group that emerged from the former task force—was to align the approval process for the preparation program (under the control of the state superintendent) and the actual operation of the programs (under the control of the Institutions of Higher Learning Agency for public universities and boards of trustees for private universities). The task force devoted to administrator preparation and certification developed research-based criteria and external review panels to make approval recommendations for preparation programs. The Commission's report and resulting audits are perceived to have had a positive impact on the rigor and quality of preparation programs in

the state. In contrast to graduates from programs in other states, Mississippi graduates who responded to our survey had generally high esteem for the state's preparation programs.

Certification requirements for principals

As a result of a recommendation made by the 1994 task force, Mississippi developed a three-tiered administrator licensure process. The three licenses are the: Non-Practicing License, Entry-Level License, and Career License. To obtain an entry-level license, a candidate must have a master's, specialist, or doctoral degree in education administration or leadership and pass the Educational Testing Service's SLLA exam. The candidate is then first issued a non-practicing administrator license, which is valid for 5 years, until he or she finds employment as an administrator. At that time an entry-level license is issued; this one is also valid for 5 years. Upon completion of 95 School Executive Management Institute (SEMI) professional development credits, the administrator is issued a standard career license, which is renewable every 5 years (see Table 5).

Table 5: Licensure Requirements in Mississippi

	Tier 1 Non-Practicing License	Tier 2 Entry-Level License	Tier 3 Career License
Requirements	MA degree, pass SLLA	Tier 1 + job as admin	Tier 2 + 95 SEMI credits
Duration	5 years	5 years	Renewable after 5 years

Alternative licensing. Mississippi also has a rarely used alternate principal licensure program called the Mississippi Alternate Path to Quality School Leadership (MAPQSL). Interested business, industry, or organizational leaders with an MBA, MPA, or MPP degree, at least 5 years of supervisory experience, and a recommendation from a school district, can participate in a 3-week summer training activity. This program is also available to K-12 teachers holding a master's degree in education and having at least 5 years of teaching experience. Candidates secure commitment of an administrative position with a school district and apply for a 5-year entry-level administrator license, which can only be used to qualify for assistant principal or assistant coordinator positions and is non-renewable. Licensure requirements include a passing score on the Praxis I and II (Principles of Learning and Teaching) exams. Candidates then participate in nine practicum sessions during the school year following the summer program. The first year of the entry-level license is considered an internship and includes supervision and mentorship as a portion of the MAPQSL program. The candidate may then use the remaining 4 years of the entry-level license to complete the requirements for conversion to a standard career license.

If a school district wishes to employ a certified teacher who is enrolled in an administrative preparation program as a principal or assistant principal, the district can apply to the state for a one-year special administrator fellowship license.

In-service professional development

In addition to setting more rigorous standards for credentialing administrators, the state took the lead in reforming ongoing professional development for principals in Mississippi. The Mississippi State Department of Education provides all in-service training to entry-level administrators in a 2-year series of training sessions required to convert the entry-level license to a career license. In 1984, through an initial appropriation of $850,000, the State Department of Education created the School Executive Management Institute (SEMI) to provide in-service training to practicing administrators. Programs are offered regionally and locally by State Department of Education staff, current and former administrators, and university professors. Funding for the program has fluctuated over the years, and the department adjusts the number of courses and the scale and scope of the programming accordingly. Recent allocations have averaged $500,000 a year. Participants can receive either SEMI or graduate credit for the same course, but not both. Professional development requirements. Every new administrator in Mississippi must complete the state's Orientation to School Leadership training before taking SEMI courses. Administrators must complete 95 course credits (approximately 19 days) of training every 5 years. Courses must be recognized and approved by SEMI. While the State Department of Education provides a great deal of this training, additional providers include colleges and universities, professional associations, other state agencies, and school district consortia. Administrators may complete a specialist or doctoral degree in educational administration or leadership in lieu of SEMI credits. The state has principal performance standards and an evaluation system to assess participating administrators. Interviews, observations, questionnaires, and document reviews are used to complete the assessment.

In 1999, the Mississippi legislature created a pilot mentoring program for first-year principals. Under the pilot, SEMI provided two days of training for new principals and their mentors, who were then required to have 90 hours of direct contact during the school day throughout the following year. Mentors could receive additional compensation. Although the programs were state mandated, districts designed their own. Initially, five districts were chosen for 2-year cycles following a competitive application process. The program was discontinued in 2004 and replaced by an online professional development module.

Additional professional development. Additional training funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has supported the State Department of Education's Technology Academy for School Leaders (TASL) since 2001. Offered regionally throughout the state, TASL focuses on helping principals use data in their school reform efforts and integrate technology into instruction. Participants in the 5-day workshops earn 50 SEMI credits toward licensure renewal.

Standards-based accountability model. Much of the work on education policy in Mississippi has focused on developing a standards-based accountability model. The current state superintendent helped implement North Carolina's accountability model and is working to replicate its design in Mississippi. The state's current accountability model allows districts that reach benchmark achievement levels (designated by a priority 4 or 5 on the state's 5-level district ranking system) to be exempted from certain mandates, including some regarding leadership requirements. For example, principals in these high-performing districts are not required to maintain the same level of SEMI credits. Proposals by Governor Haley Barbour include pay-for-performance initiatives for all staff, including administrators, at schools that reach a set level of educational achievement gains. Unfortunately, budget constraints have limited the state's ability to fully implement these plans.

THE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AT DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

As noted earlier and detailed in this section, Delta State University developed and implemented an innovative leadership development program. Rather than offering the traditional graduate coursework, DSU expects candidates to apply their nascent understanding of leadership theory and practice in school-settings. The Educational Leadership Program at Delta State University may be the most unusual principal preparation program in the nation.

Conceptual Foundations of the Delta State Administrator Preparation Program

The content and activities of the newly designed program were framed around three primary theoretical pillars (nicknamed "the Delta triangle" by one cohort member):

1) teaching and learning,
2) organizational effectiveness, and
3) parents and community.

The first pillar of the program is preparing school leaders who can promote and develop powerful and equitable teaching and learning in their schools. To accomplish these goals, the program immerses candidates in a variety of seminar and internship activities that draw upon empirically supported principles of effective teaching, student learning theory, and the methods of developmental clinical supervision described by Carl Glickman (2004). According to Dr. Jolly, supporting teaching and learning is the raison d'être of administrator training and development at DSU.

The second pillar, organizational effectiveness, includes activities designed to help candidates learn how to diagnose organizational performance metrics, gather and analyze relevant data about the school, and plan and implement program intervention strategies designed to make deep and lasting impacts on student learning. When asked to describe the criteria they would use to determine the effectiveness of a school, several cohort members eagerly offered their perspectives. One stated:

> You can get the personality of a school, the aura of a school, just by stepping into the hallway: the attitude of secretaries, the attitude of the children in the hallway, how they sound, what's going on. Are the teachers on the kids? Are they fighting the kids or are they on the kids? That all sets the stage for what's going on in the classroom and inside that building. As far as what learning is going on, I think the environment of that school tells you what's going on.

Another said:

> I think displaying student work is very important. It shows that the leader [principal] values what the students do in class and cares what the teachers are teaching. Another thing is noise level. I hear a lot of people saying, "Well, the building is so quiet. The building is so quiet." Quiet is not always necessarily good. You want to have some constructive noise. You want to hear students' laughter and the "ahas."

A central purpose of the education administration program at DSU is to build each aspiring principal's leadership capacity. Candidates are exposed to a wide range of literature about school and organizational leadership (both theories and practices). The "Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership" posited by Kouzes and Posner in their book The Leadership Challenge (2002) are the focal metaphors through which the leadership curriculum is framed and implemented. The development of craft knowledge in leadership at DSU also includes the metaphorical notion that leadership in schools is like being the head of a family. The leader as "head of family" guides, encourages, supports, resolves conflicts, buffers family members from extraneous or harmful influences, and envisions a better future. In addition, the program builds on the premise that good leaders are ethical, calculated risk takers; goal-oriented yet flexible; and skilled time managers.

Importantly, the program encourages candidates to regularly reflect on their coursework and internship experiences, and to draw from their reflections in shaping and reshaping their core values and beliefs about educa-

A core philosophy of the DSU program is that schools should be open systems that both serve the local community and draw upon community resources that can enhance student development. Finding and supporting meaningful avenues for parent involvement in the academic affairs of the school and implementing effective communications strategies are important elements of the program.

tion and school leadership. This process of self-reflection provides the foundation from which enlightened leadership emerges and grows. According to one cohort member:

> Everything is so intertwined. I remember [the first day] I came to Delta State. I went back to the dorm and said [to myself], "I have made a mistake [here]." [The program] made me, as I learned, step out of my way of thinking. I had to look outside the box of education. On that initial day, it was overwhelming. Fortunately, I did have role models who had preceded me, and the cohort just before us was still here on campus. They eased that transition. Dr. Jolly and Dr. Wilson and Dr. Johnson all kept saying, "Don't worry, it's all going to make sense," and they were right. It does … but it's going to challenge your way of thinking.

Another member had this to share:

> My wife says I'm different now. I talk about professional reading—when I buy the Clarion-Ledger, which is the Jackson paper, I don't flip to the sports page. I look to see what the legislature is doing as far as funding. I look at the state metro section to see what's going on with education. When I get on the Internet, I don't go to ESPN.com. I go to my email to see if I've gotten anything from *Educational Weekly.*

The third pillar—building and sustaining positive and productive relationships with parents and the community—is embedded within the activity structures of the internship and supported through the integrated curriculum. Interns are required to attend parent-school events and activities and are asked to assist in a variety of activities involving parents and/or community members. Such activities can include PTSA meetings, booster club meetings, student discipline meetings, parent-teacher conferences, conflict resolution meetings, and inter-agency collaborations with the school. A core philosophy of the DSU program is that schools should be open systems that both serve the local community and draw upon community resources that can enhance student development. Finding and supporting meaningful avenues for parent involvement in the academic affairs of the school and implementing effective communications strategies are important elements of the program.

As has been the case with dozens of administrator preparation programs around the country over the past decade, the DSU program is theoretically anchored in the standards for administrative practice developed by the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC). In addition, DSU is piloting new administrator standards for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Connections to ISLLC and NCATE standards have become more explicit in recent years and now provide the template for ongoing program assessment and improvement efforts.

Program Structure: Distinguishing Characteristics

While the Educational Leadership Program at Delta State is a university-based program, it is thoroughly untraditional. Rather than relying on typical graduate courses and supporting field experiences, Delta State has flipped the paradigm so that the internship is the core of the program. Candidates complete graduate coursework, indeed complete an M.Ed. in education, but the coursework is also unique. They complete the credits through a mix of weekly seminars, portfolios documenting their internship work in schools, and by doing applied research based on situations or challenges encountered in the schools where they intern. The university considers most courses to be ongoing throughout the 14-month program, until program faculty certify that candidates have documented mastery of required skills and course requirements. In short, Delta State has created a dynamic leadership development process in a university setting.

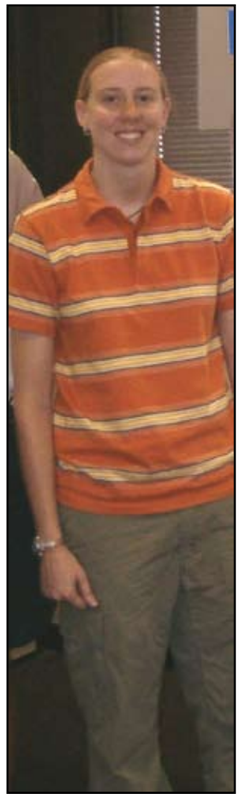
While the Educational Leadership Program at Delta State is a university-based program, it is thoroughly untraditional. Rather than relying on typical graduate courses and supporting field experiences, Delta State has flipped the paradigm so that the internship is the core of the program.

Recruitment and selection process. The leadership development process begins early with recruiting teachers to apply for the program. Because it is DSU's goal to be an applied program that addresses the school leadership needs of its region, the university works closely with local school districts to recruit and select candidates. Most applicants are nominated by their districts, and many local districts have a formal recruitment and application process designed to field strong candidates. Some state districts do not participate in the state's sabbatical leave program, and teachers from those districts can submit an application on their own. In either case, applicants must have a minimum of 3 years of experience as a teacher; submit a letter of application, undergraduate transcripts, GRE scores; and participate in a lengthy interview process. According to Dr. Jolly, the key elements of the admissions process are:

> The candidate fills out the application packet, which requires GRE scores, a transcript, a philosophy of education, a philosophy of leadership, and a structured résumé. After applicants send those back, we apply a scale to the GREs, writing samples, and the GPA, awarding points from that scale to each component. Finally, we schedule interviews with [eligible candidates] throughout the spring.

Applicants who pass an initial screening are invited to be interviewed by a panel consisting of program faculty, graduates, and administrators from local districts. Several candidates and graduates felt the application process was the most difficult part of the program. Each year, the panel conducted rigorous interviews in an effort to find 15 dedicated and energetic candidates who were passionate about improving education in the Delta Region. While Delta State faculty members make the final decision on which applicants are accepted, the recommendations of the panel of interviewers are carefully considered.

Districts and applicants soon learned that this was a rigorous program that only accepted highly qualified and serious candidates. In the first years of the program,



75% of applicants were denied admission as a result of the revised screening process. Since then, the number of applicants has dropped dramatically and the quality of applications has increased, in part because of the active recruiting done by local districts, program faculty and staff, and program graduates. The current acceptance rate is about 50%. Successful applicants are offered the chance to enroll in the masters program, receive a tuition waiver, and participate in the state sabbatical program where it is available.

Program requirements. Candidates must complete 48 graduate semester credits, including three core courses (9 credits) required by every masters program in the College of Education: Research Methods and Statistics; Foundations of Education; and Psychology of Learning. The other 39 credits are taken within the Division of Curriculum, Instruction, Leadership, and Research. These credits are woven throughout the school-based experiences and university coursework The Educational Leadership Program at Delta State leads to a M.Ed. in Educational Leadership (Educational Administration and Supervision) and initial certification as an administrator in the state of Mississippi.

Program description. An important aspect of the program's design is the integrated, cross-disciplinary curriculum that builds upon (and complements) the knowledge, skills, and dispositions learned in each phase of the program. The coursework blends important theories and concepts in educational administration with problem-based instructional activities geared to prepare candidates for the day-to-day roles, responsibilities, and activities of school leaders. For example, a class discussion in the Organization and School Issues course might examine a real situation from a candidate's internship and apply readings from school law, curriculum design, and organizational chance theory.

Cohorts. At DSU, each year's candidates are grouped into a tightly knit cohort (typically 12 to 17 candidates), which has proven to be a useful strategy in facilitating the development of administrative skills, dispositions, and values. Under the energetic leadership of Dr. Jolly, cohort members have developed a culture of inquiry, interpersonal trust, and mutual support. Members freely discuss their victories, defeats, joys, and frustrations and collectively grapple with the real-world dilemmas experienced in the internship. Dr. Jolly presides over such discussions using a supportive and facilitative approach—always guiding, coaching, and linking theory to practice. It was clear from observations of cohort meetings that the members care deeply about each other and Dr. Jolly.

Cohort meetings are highly interactive and provide a forum where candidates share internship experiences, discuss various perspectives and perceptions about school leadership, listen to guest speakers, and receive feedback from the program director. The cohort structure also develops team-building and group problem-solving skills as well as an enduring and supportive network of colleagues. The cohort exemplifies what is meant by a learning community and models the professional, collaborative teams these aspiring principals will create in the schools they eventually lead. According to one candidate:

> I've learned a lot from being a member of a cohort group that . . . I wouldn't have in another program. I feel I've gotten benefits from that and will continue to throughout my professional career. I believe I could rely on the people in this group if I ever needed them in any kind of situation.

First Summer Session. Candidates begin the 14-month program in June, and spend the summer months taking courses at the university. During the 8-week summer session, they take a total of 12 credits. The summer work is divided into two sessions. In each session, candidates take one core course (Research Methods and Statistics or Psychology of Learning) and one seminar in the Educational Leadership program. DSU coursework also provides candidates with a variety of relevant readings on instructional leadership and a forum through which ideas and experiences can be shared and discussed.

Internships. During the school year, candidates complete three 12-week internships as administrators in elementary, middle, and high schools and one 2-week internship in a central office. In each location, the interns are mentored by a full-time, certified administrator, who often has previously completed the DSU program. In most cases, the mentor is the principal of the school to which the candidate is assigned for the internship. Prior to the beginning of each academic year, Dr. Jolly works closely with the superintendents of the candidates' school districts to assign candidates to schools led by experienced and successful principals who can provide strong mentoring. Once placements have been determined, Dr. Jolly meets with mentors to orient them to the goals and purposes of the program and to the roles and responsibilities of mentorship. These discussions also provide common agreements about the scope of internship experiences and duties—including candidate assessment protocols--and to establish a line of communication between the mentors and Dr. Jolly.

During the internships, candidates are required to observe lessons, conference with teachers, and facilitate professional development activities geared to improving instructional practice. Although formal teacher evaluations are left to the principal to complete, interns are provided with full access to observe the process. As interns, candidates are also expected to counsel and discipline students, meet with parents and teachers, monitor student attendance, plan and implement school events and activities, supervise extra-curricular activities, assist in the development of various educational programs and budgets, monitor custodial and maintenance staff, analyze student academic progress and testing data, and learn how to operate information technology systems for the school. With the exception of highly confidential personnel matters, interns are exposed to every aspect of school operations and management.

Once we got into our internship, everything started to make sense. We saw why we spent so long on change and the reason why we were introduced to different leadership styles, and all of that came into play once we actually got into the internship.

During a group cohort interview one candidate had this to say about the internship:

> I think one thing that we can all agree on is that our internship has been the most beneficial part of the program for us. It's hands-on, being involved, doing it on our own, and I think that that is something we can take back and provide an example for teachers to do that in their classroom.

Another cohort member stated:

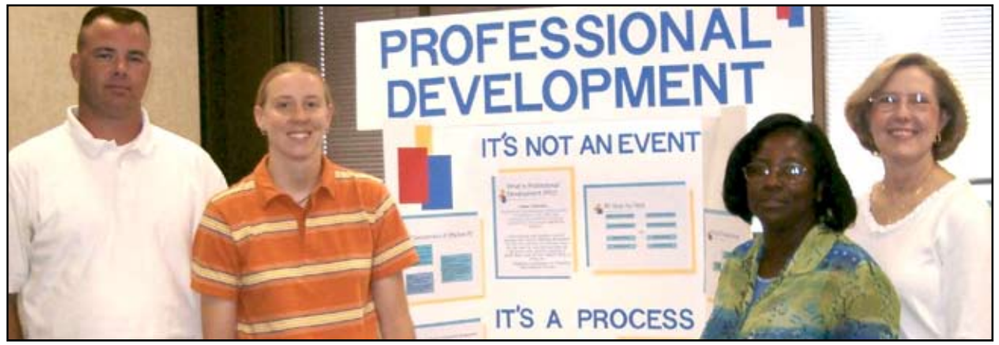
> We didn't learn by sitting in a classroom, reading a textbook, and listening to a lecture every day. That's not how we learned everything. Although all the theories and the ideas were thrown at us over two months over the summer and most of us thought, "What is this? How are we going to use this? How are we going to see this? All this information?" Once we got into our internship, everything started to make sense. We saw why we spent so long on change and the reason why we were introduced to different leadership styles, and all of that came into play once we actually got into the internship. So what we learned was not a result of reading out of a textbook or sitting in a class taking notes, it's because of the interaction that we've had here, the interaction that we've had with our professor, and what we've been able to discuss since we've been out into our internship.

For most candidates, the internship was truly a transformational learning experience. By the end of the school year, candidates had a deep and visceral understanding of what it means to be a leader. They had acquired the ability to see the organizational properties of schools as complex and highly interdependent social systems, and they had developed a more robust knowledge of how the principal can leverage diverse school and community resources in pursuit of powerful teaching that results in learning for all children. Candidates also learned how to frame problems through different perspectives, manage conflict, and navigate successfully through politically charged school and community environments. Finally, they became more self-reflective and self-aware in terms of personal strengths and areas needing further development. By the end of the program, most candidates reported significantly improved confidence in their ability to assume a leadership position.

In addition to the personal growth dynamic, multiple internship assignments exposed candidates to different school types and school communities. For most candidates, the variety of internship experiences helped them to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the problems and issues faced by children in the Delta region as well as a deeper knowledge of the educational reform strategies at work throughout the region. It also helped them to understand how schools and district offices can work positively and productively together to advance student learning.

A common theme throughout the program, especially prevalent during the internship seminars, was the change management process. Interns were exposed to a variety of settings and types of people involved in the change process and learned how to diagnose both the learning needs of children and organizational needs of a school. As a required component of the internship, they also learned how to plan for change, cultivate broad-based support, and organize the human and material resources of the school in the implementation of change activities.

In one case, a candidate was placed at a school that was in the process of implementing the America's Choice school reform program. As part of her internship duties, the candidate was directly involved in helping teachers transition from the old reading program to the America's Choice model. This required a substantial



amount of coaching, planning, and curriculum redesign—tasks that correlated well with in-class readings and cohort discussions on the topic of change leadership.

Seminars. The internships are integrated with program theories through ongoing seminars. During their internships, cohort members return to campus once a week for a graduate seminar. Between internships, candidates spend one to two weeks on campus in all-day seminars. The seminars allow candidates to de-brief their cohort about their own school-based experiences, expand the learning begun in summer coursework, integrate the internship with academic learning, and hear from guest lecturers with relevant, real-world experiences. For example, the introduction to school anti-drug policy involved reading district policies, talking to administrators, and a discussion with a local police chief.

Second Summer Session. The program is capped by a second 12-credit summer session. Candidates earn 12 credits in the summer, including a core course on the Foundations of Education and another Ed. Leadership seminar. The summer session is designed to wrap up and frame the year and to provide continuity between cohorts. The graduating cohort leads activities, conducts mock interviews, and generally provides guidance for the incoming cohort.

Field Trips. University and school-based experiences are complemented by field trips to visit exemplary school districts and to observe the State Education Committee. The cohort visits the Mississippi State Legislature, the State Board of Education, and exemplary school districts located both within and outside Mississippi. The program also includes at least one trip to attend a national meeting (e.g., American Association of School Administrators).

Assessment. Candidate progress is assessed through written assignments, portfolios and presentations, and individual and group work. Throughout the program, candidates are expected to keep a log of relevant readings and create an annotated bibliography. As part of the ongoing learning in the weekly seminars, small groups take turns presenting new topics to the cohort. Candidates are required to write several "Clinical Correlations" for each internship site. The correlations follow a set format to detail a situation at the school site. Each situation must be applied to a framework that makes candidates examine the three curriculum anchors

Local superintendents noted that principals trained at DSU are responsible for school improvement, often dramatic improvements on the state assessment, in a very short time. The leadership development program at Delta State is focused on transforming good teachers into strong instructional leaders.

of the leadership program (i.e., teaching and learning, organizational effectiveness, and parents and community). Candidates describe school/context, the ISLLC standard related to the situation, the relevant or current education issue, and the curriculum anchor and then provide a narrative description of the scenario. They also offer alternative or possible actions, the outcomes or consequences of the action actually taken, the policy/legal implications of the decision, reflections on the scenario, and significant points learned from that experience. Candidates submit the correlations to their professor, and they are often discussed during the weekly seminar.

Candidates' performance in internships is assessed through a variety of measures by both faculty and supervising principals. One key component of DSU's internship program is the requirement that candidates design and implement a major school-wide change project at each of the three schools where they are placed during the course of the school year. Each project requires a set of clear and achievable goals framed around a carefully diagnosed need, an action plan, a statement of expected outcomes, and a process to monitor and evaluate the change effort. An essential requirement of the project is that it must add something of enduring value to the school where the candidate is placed. (For example, a candidate could receive credit for creating a newsletter or a website for a school that did not have one, but not for editing an existing publication.) These projects are documented in portfolios and graded by DSU faculty. Candidates are also evaluated by their school-site internship supervisor, using a form that is similar to the forms used to evaluate teachers.

Program Costs and Financing

As detailed in the program description, DSU's innovative master's program (serving approximately 12-15 candidates each year) consists of a full-time internship rotation during the school year, sandwiched by two summers of coursework. Financing of this principal preparation program is also innovative in that it relies heavily on state and federal funding sources. A summary of the key resources used in this program is contained in the appendix. Using national average resource values, we estimate the total annual cost of Delta State's program, including administration, coursework, internships, and other activities, to be approximately $1.1 million, or $87,000 per participant (Table 6).

Table 6. Costs by Program Component

Program Component	Annual Cost ($)	Annual Cost Per Participant ($)
Administration & Infrastructure	281,000	23,416
Internship	688,000	57,333
Coursework	111,000	4,625
Other	20,000	1,666
TOTAL	1,100,000	87,000

Internship. By far the most costly part of the DSU program is the internship component. During the school year, participants complete one 2-week and three 12-week internships, and. Most DSU program participants receive a salary for this year, paid through the Mississippi School Administrator Sabbatical Program. As noted earlier, the state reimburses districts for the salaries of participants in this program at a rate equivalent to that of a teacher with 5 years of experience. In addition, many districts pay the interns the difference between the state-set amount and their actual salary. This is not required, however, and some interns absorb a substantial pay cut. In the study year, the university subsidized with federal grant funds those program participants whose salaries were not paid by the state.

At noted above, the $688,000 in intern salaries estimated for the candidates in the DSU program is the single largest expense for this program, averaging $57,333 per participant and accounting for nearly two thirds of all costs (Table 7). The state paid $450,000 in intern salaries; of the remainder, we estimate that $137,000 were paid by districts and $41,000 were absorbed by participants (Table 8).

Table 7. Costs by Budget Category

Budget Category	Annual Cost ($)	% of Total Cost
Personnel Costs	1,030,000	95.4%
Administration	256,000	23.7%
Intern salaries	688,000	63.7%
Faculty	91,000	8.4%
Facilities, Materials, and Equipment	30,000	2.7%
Travel and Transportation	20,000	1.9%

Coursework. Each summer, two cohorts of aspiring principals—one beginning the program and one completing the program—take 12 credits of coursework over an 8-week term. Most of these courses are taught by clinical faculty. The approximate cost for the coursework component of the program is $111,000, primarily for faculty salaries (Table 8). Unlike in many university-based programs, however, these costs are not offset by tuition payments from the candidates. Each student receives a tuition waiver from the university for the full cost of the program.

The university uses funds from a federal grant to cover the costs of coursework as well as the program's administration and infrastructure. A $1 million award from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education program, referred to as the Delta Education Initiative (DEI), is shared among four Delta State programs, with the Educational Leadership Program receiving approximately $250,000. Because the DEI funds are somewhat flexible, they can be used for salaries for faculty and program support staff, tuition reimbursement, computers, and travel.

Program participants also incur costs related to coursework, including those for books and other supplies. Because of Delta State's rural location, participants may pay out-of-pocket for housing at Delta State in the summer and may also incur substantial transportation expenses. Further, they may forego a number of earnings opportunities, including supplemental income earned through coaching athletics or sponsoring extracurricular activities, teaching summer school, or other summer employment. Participants were surveyed and asked to outline their out-of-pocket expenses; their responses were used to assess these costs.

Table 8. Distribution of Cost Burden

	Total Cost	University	State	Federal Gov. (DEI)	Districts	Participants
Administration & Infrastructure	281,000 (100.0%)	202,000 (71.9%)		79,000 (28.1%)		
Internship	688,000 (100.0%)		450,000 (65.4%)	60,000 (8.7%)	137,000 (19.9%)	41,000 (6.0%)
Coursework	111,000 (100.0%)			91,000 (82.0%)		20,000 (18.0%)
Other	20,000 (100.0%)			20,000 (100.0%)		
Total	1,100,000 (100.0%)	202,000 (18.4%)	450,000 (40.9%)	250,000 (22.7%)	137,000 (12.5%)	61,000 (5.5%)

Administration and infrastructure. The program also requires resources for its basic administration and infrastructure. As with other components of the program, these costs are primarily in the form of personnel resources. The program is designed and budgeted to be staffed by a program coordinator, two faculty-level positions (although the two faculty-level positions were vacant during the study year), and clerical staff. Time is also contributed by the School of Education dean. These administrative personnel costs are estimated at $256,000. Together with costs for office space, equipment, supplies and overhead expenses paid to the university, we estimate the program's administration and infrastructure costs at approximately $23,000 per participant.

Other costs. Other program costs involve those associated with travel and related expenses. For example, each program cohort attends one national professional conference, travels to the state capitol to meet with legislators, and may visit other school districts within the state. The costs are a relatively small component of the program.

Distribution of costs. As described above, Delta State's program takes advantage of federal and state funding streams, as well as more traditional sources of university program revenue. Federal and state funding make up nearly two thirds of overall program funding, and federal funding is used to cover a wide range of expenses (Table 8). Although the university has been able to count on these sources for a substantial part of financing for the program thus far, their availability is dependent on state and federal decisionmakers. As a result, these sources could become less stable over time. The university and school districts fund about 30% of total program costs, primarily for administrative costs and intern salaries above the state-paid amount, respectively. We estimate that candidates contribute about 5% of the total costs of the program in out-of-pocket costs for educational expenses and foregone earnings beyond what they are paid for the internship.

Six Defining Features

The Educational Leadership Program at DSU contains many features that are consistent with important theories and practices in the field of administrator preparation and that are found with increasing frequency among programs across the country (Davis, et al., 2005). However, the DSU program is distinguished by the depth, consistency, and thoughtfulness with which it prepares practice-ready school leaders. It does this through:

1. The implementation of a rigorous and highly selective admissions process.
2. The development of core values and skills framed around leadership for powerful teaching and learning.
3. The cultivation of self-reflection and ethical behaviors.
4. The application of problem-based and authentic learning experiences aligned with relevant theoretical foundations.
5. The development of leaders oriented toward organizational change and renewal.
6. The cultivation of strong partnerships with regional school districts.

Recruitment and selection. With the reorganized administrator credentialing program, DSU began a selective admissions process. Because the program is designed to assist high-needs districts in the Delta region, the program relies heavily on local districts to identify, recruit, and support candidates. Once aspiring principals pass their district's selection process, they must formally apply to Delta State. The application has some traditional components (GRE scores, personal statement) but also includes an intense panel interview with faculty, practitioners, and program graduates. As noted earlier, many graduates felt the admissions process was a particularly difficult part of the program. The program staff feels that it has created a process that can identify educators with the experience, attitudes, and passion needed to help children and improve schools.

Developing instructional leadership. The Educational Leadership Program at Delta State maintains a tight focus on improving teaching and learning. The program anchors (the so-called "Delta Triangle") stress the importance of the principal as an instructional coach, and the field work is framed by the three program anchors. In fact, the first pillar of the program is "teaching and learning." Candidates are asked repeatedly to reflect on their internship experiences through this lens, both in group discussions and in individual writings. Graduates of the program talk about how spending time in classrooms, working with teachers and students, is their priority. Local superintendents noted that principals trained at DSU are responsible for school improvement, often dramatic improvements on the state assessment, in a very short time. The leadership development program at Delta State is focused on transforming good teachers into strong instructional leaders.

Cultivation of self-reflection. Various aspects of this leadership development program are structured to cultivate the ability for self-reflection. Graduates are asked to continuously analyze their fieldwork, both within the context of their course reading and with regard to their own professional ethics. Candidates are constantly discussing and writing about their own professional standards, ethics, and beliefs about education. This was particularly evident through the "Clinical Correlations" that candidates write, in which they frame a

situation at their school within the program anchors. These Clinical Correlations are often the basis for group reflection, a process that allows program faculty to probe candidates for their knowledge of leadership theory, their understanding of teaching and learning practices, and their moral and ethical orientation to the career of school leadership.

Developing transformational leaders. Delta State reorganized its Educational Leadership Program so it could help struggling schools in its economically disadvantage region transform themselves into organizations that can provide children with a strong start in life. Given this mission, DSU graduates need a deep understanding of how to transform struggling schools, how to implement the change theory behind school improvement, how to build a team focused on improving student outcomes, and how to leverage change through organizational structures and developing the capacity of faculty and staff. Accordingly, the second theoretical pillar of the program is "organizational effectiveness." Candidates work in small groups to develop team-building skills through group exercises and projects. Much of the first summer session appears devoted to role-playing exercises that allow candidates to develop their understanding of group dynamics and the change process. Throughout the year, by interning in four different settings, candidates apply their understanding of organizational theory in multiple schools and observe how different school teams function. Several DSU graduates talked about the importance of developing the capacity of staff to implement reforms, as well as the need to listen and build on the ideas of the teachers in their schools. Principals trained at Delta State appear to have a strong understanding of both schools as dynamic organizations and ways to shape the change process to improve student outcomes.

Strong partnerships with districts.
A key element of the program's success has been the deep and ongoing involvement with, and commitment by, local school districts. From the very beginning of the redesign efforts in the mid 1990s, school district superintendents and principals have been involved in program planning and implementation activities. As reported earlier, many of DSU's graduates have gone on to assume leadership roles in surrounding school districts, thus creating an expanding, skilled, and durable network of practitioners who share a common interest in the program's continued success.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Outcomes of the DSU program are documented through surveys of program graduates; a survey of teachers in a small sample of schools; interviews with program faculty, staff, graduates, the 2004-05 cohort, colleagues, and supervisors in local districts; and observations of program activities and visits to schools led by program graduates. These data sources all indicate that Delta State University's Educational Leadership Program provides high-quality, in-depth support and training for aspiring administrators that is grounded in theory and that provides deep exposure to hands-on, real-world learning activities. The experience transforms teachers into principals, radically altering their professional self-concepts. In addition, observational and survey evidence of program graduates suggests that it also transforms their leadership practice.

Survey Findings

Corroborating the evidence gathered at the school sites, the survey results revealed several important differences between the responses of the graduates from the Delta State administrative credential program and those from other Mississippi programs and from a national sample of school administrators. The survey findings consist of both frequency analyses and statistical tests to determine if group responses on the survey items were significantly different. In most of the cases reported below, the differences between DSU and non-DSU respondents reflect significance at the .05 level of confidence or higher. Such findings suggest that several important characteristics of the Delta State program are truly unique and distinct from those found in the comparison groups. Survey responses by DSU graduates reflected the perceptions of the program expressed by DSU candidates and recent graduates who were interviewed during site visits in November 2004 and April 2005. The following analysis is organized primarily around several important themes that became apparent both through our review of research and our DSU program site visits. However, we have also included important survey findings that relate to several student demographic, career, and dispositional characteristics.

Demographics

DSU survey respondents were significantly more likely to be female (73%) than other Mississippi principals (30%) and the national sample (48%). Likewise, DSU survey respondents were more likely to be of African American heritage

Program outcomes narrative continues on p. 32

Principal Profile: "Maddie Burton"
DSU Grad, Clinical Faculty, and Intermediate School Principal*

[Mrs.Burton] learned strategies for preparing and implementing change in schools, working collaboratively with others, building a team that feeds off the collective strengths of team members, and communicating in "focused, purposeful, and logical ways.

Turtle Creek Intermediate School serves fourth and fifth grade students in a rapidly expanding school district located in Hernando County, MS, just south of Memphis, TN. With the rapid expansion and the shifting demographics in the region, Principal Maddie Burton must juggle more than her share of duties. While a typical day for any principal includes advising teachers, visiting classrooms, facilitating meetings with parents, and responding to the district office, Mrs. Burton has many days that also include substitute teaching, coordinating the intermediate school's move to another facility, and overseeing expulsion hearings.

Career in education. Mrs. Burton has had a long career in the Hernando County Schools. She first came to Turtle Creek School as a fourth-grade student. Later, she worked there as a secretary and substitute teacher while she finished her bachelor's degree. These experiences fueled a strong commitment to the Hernando County Schools and led her to become a teacher and librarian. After over a dozen years working at several schools in Hernando County, she transitioned to administration. In 1999, she enrolled in the second cohort of Delta State's newly restructured educational administration program. Shortly after graduation from DSU, she was hired as a vice principal at a Hernando County high school, where she worked until her appointment as principal of Turtle Creek Intermediate School in Fall 2004.

School leadership. After two decades in education, Mrs. Burton noted that the principalship was the hardest job she'd ever had and that it had opened her eyes to the breadth and scope of school management. She regularly works 60 to 70 hours per week, arrives on campus between 5:30 and 6 am and, during her brief tenure as principal, has already spent several Saturdays on campus catching up on paperwork and emails. For the first time in her career, she has come to fully appreciate the old saying that "the buck stops here." She went on to say that for the first time she can see the whole school and has learned to consider multiple perspectives and needs when making important decisions. Despite taking on the mantle of leadership, Mrs. Burton still loves to teach and will always "be a teacher at heart." In fact, while working out the details of a long-term substitute teacher assignment in the fall, Mrs. Burton taught a class for a week — an activity that went a long way toward establishing her credibility as an instructional leader with the teachers at her school. For that reason, she felt it was the best thing she'd done this year.

**The names of the school and school staff have been changed*

Spending time in the classrooms, whether coaching or teaching, has provided Mrs. Burton with a deep understanding of student needs and faculty abilities at Turtle Creek Intermediate School. This understanding has enhanced her ability to lead the school, particularly as the school is in its first year of implementing the America's Choice reform model. When she assumed the principalship last summer, the district had already committed its schools to a major reform effort framed around the "America's Choice" program. Although the goals and content of the reform model align well with Mrs. Burton's personal philosophy of education, she discovered that not all teachers had accepted the program with equal vigor and commitment. This may be explained by the fact that nearly half of the teachers surveyed felt that programs come and go in this school and that no one follows-up on new initiatives. Resistance to change by some staff members was exacerbated by the fact that Mrs. Burton's "management style is different than the former principal," who rarely directed the staff or initiated school-wide programs, and never said no when staff asked for something. According to Mrs. Burton, the DSU program provided her with the skills necessary to put the America's Choice program into action. In particular, the full-time paid internship gave her the experience necessary to assume leadership of a school in transition.

Administrative internship. At DSU, the internship is structured around a set of administrative skills and competencies. These are closely monitored by DSU faculty, supervised by on-site principal mentors, and integrated closely with the academic activities of the credential program. Mrs. Burton noted that a component of the internship called the "Change Management Project" had a major influence on her leadership development. Through this project, she learned strategies for preparing and implementing change in schools, working collaboratively with others, building a team that feeds off the collective strengths of team members, and communicating in "focused, purposeful, and logical ways." She was able to draw on those experiences during her first year at Turtle Creek, and during the implementation of the America's Choice program.

A school in transition. America's Choice is a school reform model based on a "workshop" method of teaching and learning in which students work in small groups or individually. Reading materials are drawn from children's literature, rather than from workbooks and readers. Learning is self-paced, with teachers coaching students through the lessons. The implementation process at Turtle Creek Intermediate included both visits to schools in Georgia already implement-

Nearly 90% of the teachers surveyed responded that in the past year there had been more focus by teachers on improving and expanding their instructional strategies. Over half of teachers reported school improvement efforts having a strong impact on the effectiveness of their own teaching.

ing America's Choice and professional development provided by the model developer. Despite initial resistance to the new program, Principal Burton has seen an important shift in teaching practices across the faculty from "teacher-centered to student-centered learning activities." Nearly 90% of the teachers surveyed responded that in the past year there had been more focus by teachers on improving and expanding their instructional strategies. Over half of teachers reported school improvement efforts having a strong impact on the effectiveness of their own teaching. Accordingly, a tour of the campus showed that students in both fourth and fifth grades appeared to be engaged in student-directed learning, with work that appeared tailored to their individual needs. For example, each student had a packet of reading materials. As they worked through their individual assignments, consulting with the teacher to assess their progress, they would add additional materials to their packets as they mastered content and skills.

Mrs. Burton was clearly encouraged by the America's Choice program and was eager to show off her school and answer questions about classroom activities. During our campus tour, Mrs. Burton introduced us to several parent volunteers. Indeed, parent input and involvement in the classroom and school governance is a required component of the America's Choice program. Over time, the roles and responsibilities of parent representatives on the school's leadership team will increase. Currently, however, the school leadership team is the primary mechanism used to teach parents about the programs and staff at Turtle Creek.

Impact of DSU. In addition to providing a full-time administrative internship, DSU's leadership program provides a support system for new administrators. The cohort structure of the program "created a huge network" of colleagues in several school districts across the state. Candidates from Hernando County, in particular, commute two hours to campus for the seminars. They traditionally drive to DSU together in a van, using the time to discuss their experiences as educators, to analyze their work in the program, and to build personal bonds. The cohort provided a "feeling of family" and "camaraderie" framed around common values about education and administration. In the years since their graduation from the program, members of Mrs. Burton's cohort have provided an ongoing support system. These are people she trusts and respects, can contact at any time without fear of being judged harshly, and knows will bring diverse perspectives and experiences about potential solutions to the common problems of school leadership.

Another aspect of the DSU program that made an important contribution to Mrs. Burton's leadership development was the requirement to complete Clinical Correlations, which were regularly woven into the curriculum. Clinical correlations are problem-based case studies that expose candidates to various features of clinical practice. Typically, they expose candidates to the kinds of complex administrative problems and dilemmas commonly faced by school leaders. At the same time, they enhance candidates' administrative knowledge and skills through the review of pertinent literature and the development and implementation of authentic administrative practices and products. Mrs. Burton cited the clinical correlations pertaining to media relations and dealing with angry parents as especially insightful and helpful.

Mrs. Burton also indicated her satisfaction with efforts to link change efforts with relevant empirical research and data about student performance. For example, she has helped teachers analyze student performance on district and statewide standardized tests and then use the results to improve teaching practices.

Teachers appear quite satisfied with Mrs. Burton's efforts. Three quarters of teachers surveyed rated the principal as effective or very effective in working with staff to solve school problems. A notable 85% rated the principal as effective or very effective in encouraging staff to use student evaluation results in planning curriculum and instruction (nearly 50% rated her as very effective). More than two thirds of teachers reported that in the previous year there was an increased use of performance assessments and exhibitions of student learning, and nearly 80% said that in the previous year there was more use of student performance data for instructional improvement. Mrs. Burton took pride in her efforts to implement a special education inclusion program that integrated special-needs students into regular classrooms. This change effort included redesignating the position of Teacher Assistant to Student Assistant, thereby creating a more stable support system for the special-needs students placed in regular classrooms. In view of these changes, it is interesting to note that more than half of teachers agreed that they received the support they needed to work with special-needs students.

Although Mrs. Burton appeared well prepared by her DSU training, she noted two significant gaps in her professional development: She lacked familiarity with the concepts of distributed leadership and developmental supervision. Regarding her role in teacher evaluation Mrs. Burton stated, "I haven't done a good job" of evaluating teachers, managing evaluation paperwork, or in conducting pre-observation conferences with teachers.

Vision to lead. Mrs. Burton credits the DSU program for helping her to reflect deeply about her beliefs and experiences and to frame and reframe her professional values around her reflections. She clearly articulated her vision for Turtle Creek Intermediate as a school in which "children take learning into their own hands." Mrs. Burton's vision strives to create a school in which learning is an intrinsically appealing activity for children. Accordingly, her most passionate goals as an educator are to "make the kids love to learn" and to "keep pushing for better student learning."

than those from the two comparison groups (60% v. 18% v. 5%). According to interviews with program staff, Delta State strives to create cohorts that are fairly evenly divided by race and gender, and the cohort we observed reflected that. Despite this discrepancy between the make-up of each year's cohort and that of the survey respondents, over 70% of DSU graduates responded to the survey. As a result, we are confident that the data reflect the experiences of program graduates.

Program Attributes

Our analysis revealed several exemplary program attributes. These included the rigorous selection process, financial support for candidates, an intensive internship experience, integrated curriculum, and mentoring and cohort relationships. These attributes help define the program and shed an interesting light on the impact of the program on its graduates.

Selection into the program. In our review of programs around the country, we found considerable variation in the rigor of pre-admission screening practices. At one end of the spectrum, we found programs with candidates who self-selected into graduate study and programs with ill-defined standards for acceptable GPA and GRE scores (these characteristics often went hand-in-hand). At the other end of the spectrum were programs in which candidates were admitted after a rigorous nomination and selection process that included clear standards for GPA and GRE scores. The subjects interviewed during our site visits consistently remarked that they were chosen to participate in the DSU program through a rigorous nomination process that usually involved the formal approval of their site principal, district superintendent, and the DSU program director. The survey results revealed that 51% of all DSU graduates had gone through such a nomination process compared with only 6% of the graduates from other Mississippi programs and 10% of those from the national sample (see Table 9). This finding suggests that candidates admitted into the DSU program arrive with important personality attributes, markers of leadership potential, and academic proficiency that may not be present in candidates from programs with less rigorous admission standards.

Table 9. Program Recruitment and Support

	DSU Graduates n=44	Mississippi Principals n=34	National Comparison n=632
Recruitment of candidates			
Percentage of respondents recruited into their credentialing program	72%	37.2%	32%
Financial support for candidates			
Percentage of respondents who paid for none of their credentialing program	45%	3%	7%
Percentage of respondents who paid for some of their credentialing program	50%	25%	24%
Percentage of respondents who paid for all of their credentialing program	4%	74%	69%

Program cost. The survey data revealed a striking contrast between the experiences of DSU grads and those from other programs in terms of program cost (see Table 9). Only 4% of DSU grads reported that they paid all costs relating to their credential program. In contrast, 74% of the other Mississippi program grads and 69% of the national sample grads received no outside funding support for their credential program. Again, these data parallel our findings from the site interviews.

Differences in the costs incurred by candidates among the various credential-issuing programs in Mississippi can be explained largely by the non-universal adoption of the state sabbatical funding program for administrator preparation. The program has only gained traction among districts participating in the Delta Area Association for the Improvement of Schools--a consortium of 34 districts that have partnered with DSU to train educators who are working to improve the educational opportunities for children in the Delta. As noted earlier, the sabbatical plan provides participating school districts with funds that are used to help cover the annual salary costs of employees enrolled in the DSU program. In return for this support, each graduate must commit to serving in a Mississippi school district for 5 years following graduation from DSU. According to many of the subjects interviewed during our site visits, the funding scheme was an important incentive. Without it, few candidates who enrolled at DSU could have afforded to participate in a program that required a full-time internship.

Site-based internship. While our review of the literature found that most principal preparation programs required participation in an internship activity, the scope and quality of internships vary dramatically among programs (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Meyerson, 2005). In some cases, the internship is little more than a set of administrative activities or projects performed at the end of a teaching day and under the loose supervision of a site administrator. In contrast, the internship at Delta State, consists of closely supervised full-time exposure to the full range of tasks and duties performed by administrators at the elementary, middle, and high school levels (including a short exposure to district office operations).

All of the DSU survey respondents reported that they had a closely supervised internship experience. This finding stands in stark contrast to survey respondents from other Mississippi programs, where only 25% reported having such an experience, and from our national sample, where 64% experienced a supervised internship. A comparison between the internship components for DSU and non-DSU candidates is provided in Table 10.

Virtually all program candidates and graduates interviewed during our site visits described the high-quality scope and structure of their internship experience, and 96% of the DSU survey respondents reported having a full-time, supervised internship. In contrast, only 27% of other Mississippi program graduates and 26% of our national sample graduates reported having a full-time internship experience. It is also noteworthy that 100% of the DSU survey respondents reported that their internships were held in schools other than the one in which they had been employed as a teacher. In comparison, only one-quarter of comparison principals interned in a different school.

Table 10. Description of Internship

	DSU Graduates	Mississippi Principals	National Comparison
I had a supervised internship experience working directly with a principal on administrative tasks.	100%	25%	64%
	n=44	n=32	n=623
Of those who completed an internship, percent whose internship was full-time.	96%	27%	26%
	n=46	n=15	n=454
Of those who completed an internship, percent who had a mentor.	100%	100%	84%
	n=45	n=15	n=453
Of those who had a mentor, percent whose mentor worked with him/her regularly.	100%	100%	84%
	n=45	n=12	n=405
My internship/field experience was NOT in the same school where I teach.	100%	27%	26%
	n=45	n=15	n=444
To complete my internship: (mean response, scale: 1- Not at All; 3- Somewhat; 5- To a Great Extent)			
I worked in one or more schools serving students with a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds.	4.73	3.43***	3.45***
I was closely supervised and assisted by knowledgeable school leaders.	4.77	3.69***	3.63***
My internship achievements were regularly evaluated by program faculty.	4.82	3.48***	3.19***
My internship experience was an excellent learning experience for becoming a principal.	4.98	4.29***	3.91***

T- Tests of group means. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

The coordination of internship and partnering activities with school districts is a sophisticated and time-consuming enterprise at DSU. Its success thus far can be attributed to several factors, but especially to the energy and dedication of program director Dr. Jolly, the DSU Dean of Education Lynn House, and former dean E.E. Caston.

Mentoring relationship. Our review of the literature revealed that a growing number of programs across the nation provide candidates with a practitioner-mentor to help them develop administrative skills and dispositions. Mentors are typically current or former principals or district office administrators who have been principals at one time in their careers. In many cases, the mentor actually worked at the school where the candidate is employed or where the internship activity is conducted. In other cases, mentors are retired administrators or administrators who worked in other schools or districts.

Subjects interviewed during our site visits to Delta State were uniform in their descriptions of the mentoring relationship. At DSU, mentors were always site principals who worked at the school where the internship took place. Although the quality of the mentoring relationship varied, each interviewee noted that he/she had regular and close contact with the mentor throughout the internship. Our survey yielded similar results. One hundred percent of the DSU survey respondents felt that their mentors were regularly available and willing to help when needed. Interestingly, this was also true for the other Mississippi program graduates. However, only 84% of our national sample graduates reported that their mentors were regularly available.

What differentiates mentoring relationships in the DSU program from those of most other programs is the full-time nature of the internship. DSU mentors are principals who work at internship school sites where they have daily contact with candidates. Moreover, since DSU candidates are fully immersed in the minute-by-minute rhythms of administrative life, they often have immediate knowledge of results from their mentors, and/or their mentors work side-by-side with them and provide real-time coaching. The DSU mentoring model stands well apart from the norm.

Cohort relationships. The survey data shed little light on the nature or effect of the cohort structure practiced by DSU. In fact, there were no significant differences between the three comparison groups in terms of their affiliation with a professional network. This would seem to contradict the literature in this area, which generally supports the idea that a cohort system engenders longer lasting professional relationships and more numerous networks. It also contradicts the verbal testimony from several DSU grads in the field. Of course, it may be that the cohort model has become the norm rather than the exception among principal preparation programs, possibly explaining the lack of differentiation between DSU respondents and those from the comparison groups.

DSU candidates are fully immersed in the minute-by-minute rhythms of administrative life, they often have immediate knowledge of results from their mentors, and/or their mentors work side-by-side with them and provide real-time coaching. The DSU mentoring model stands well apart from the norm.

Selected student characteristics. During our site visits, the level of satisfaction among candidates and graduates of the DSU program was uniformly high. Virtually each subject of our interviews commented favorably about the quality of the DSU program and about his/her level of readiness to take on a school leadership position. In fact, 96% of the DSU survey respondents reported high satisfaction with the program, as opposed to only 47% of other Mississippi program graduates and 43% of national sample graduates. The high quality of the DSU program is reflected by the number of graduates who not only pursued the principalship, but who actually became principals immediately following graduation. We found that 57% of DSU program graduates were employed as principals, compared to 47% of graduates from other Mississippi programs. This may be due in part to the fact that at DSU, the candidates' districts nominate them for the leadership development program, have recognized the district's need for well-prepared school leaders, and have invested time and resources in the career of the DSU graduate.

Attributes of program graduates. Graduates of Delta State not only report that their credentialing program provided the types of experiences recommended in research literature, but also exhibit the sort of principal practices that foster a successful school environment. (See Table 11.) In particular, DSU graduates report spending a lot of time facilitating student learning and they are more likely to foster teacher professional development for instructional improvement. They also spend a great deal of time evaluating and providing instructional feedback to teachers. DSU graduates also report greater consensus among their staffs about their school's goals.

On the other hand, DSU graduates are less likely than comparison principals to report spending a lot of time managing school facilities, resources, and procedures, attending district level meetings or carrying out district-level tasks. When coupled with responses on other survey items, it appears that DSU graduates spend a larger proportion of time on instructional leadership and providing opportunities for teacher professional development than do other principals.

Table 11: Principal Practices

How often do you engage in the following activities? (1=never; 3=monthly; 5=daily)		
		Mean
Facilitate student learning (e.g., eliminate barriers to student learning; establish high expectations for students)	DSU	3.83
	Miss. comp	3.22***
	Nat'l comp	3.26***
Maintain the physical security of students, faculty, and other staff	DSU	4.00
	Miss. comp	3.81***
	Nat'l comp	3.66***
Manage the school facilities, resources, and procedures (e.g., maintenance, budget, schedule)	DSU	3.61
	Miss. comp	3.89***
	Nat'l comp	3.70
Attend district level meetings and carry out district-level responsibilities	DSU	2.35
	Miss. comp	2.56
	Nat'l comp	2.76
Foster teacher professional development for instructional knowledge and skills	DSU	2.86
	Miss. comp	2.39
	Nat'l comp	2.67*
Evaluate and provide instructional feedback to teachers	DSU	3.57
	Miss. comp	3.11*
	Nat'l comp	2.90
Work with outside agencies and individuals for school assistance and partnership	DSU	2.39
	Miss. comp	2.14***
	Nat'l comp	2.37
Develop and enforce school rules with students and staff	DSU	3.83
	Miss. comp	3.55*
	Nat'l comp	3.59***

T- Tests of group means. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Ongoing Professional Development. Finally, the survey data revealed that DSU graduates are highly likely to participate in ongoing professional development. A comparison of the responses by DSU and non-DSU sample groups is provided in Tables 12 and 13. In particular, DSU graduates are significantly more likely to attend professional workshops and conferences that non-DSU graduates. They report that they are motivated by personal interest (88%) or district policy (50%). These findings could imply that DSU graduates are more highly motivated than non-DSU graduates to continue their professional development. It may also suggest that the overall high quality of the DSU program, coupled with strong feelings of student satisfaction, stimulates intrinsic appreciation for the field of educational administration. On the other hand, it may simply indicate that Delta State is recruiting and accepting highly motivated individuals. Since all Mississippi administrators are subject to the same set of statutory professional growth requirements, differences in state policy cannot explain the disparity between the "within state" respondents.

Table 12. Types of Professional Development

In the past 12 months, what types of professional development have you participated in?			
University course(s) related to your role as principal			
	DSU Graduates (n=24)	Mississippi comparison (n=31)	National Comparison (n=520)
Not At All	63%	84%	60%
Once or Twice	17	3	27
Three Times or More	21	13	13
Visits to other schools designed to improve your own work as principal			
	DSU Graduates (n=24)	Mississippi comparison (n=32)	National Comparison (n=512)
Not At All	21%	28%	32%
Once or Twice	46	44	52
Three Times or More	33	28	16
Individual or collaborative research on a topic of interest to you professionally			
	DSU Graduates (n=23)	Mississippi comparison (n=30)	National Comparison (n=515)
Not At All	17%	17%	29%
Once or Twice	46	44	40
Three Times or More	38	40	32
Mentoring or coaching by an experienced principal, as part of a formal arrangement that is supported by the school or district			
	DSU Graduates (n=23)	Mississippi comparison (n=32)	National Comparison (n=519)
Not At All	70%	72%	74%
Once or Twice	13	6	14
Three Times or More	17	22	12
Participating in a principal network (e.g., a group of principals organized by your district, an outside agency, or on-line)			
	DSU Graduates (n=24)	Mississippi comparison (n=30)	National Comparison (n=514)
Not At All	29%	17%	17%
Once or Twice	25	27	29
Three Times or More	46	57	54
Workshops, conferences, or training in which you were a presenter			
	DSU Graduates (n=23)	Mississippi comparison (n=31)	National Comparison (n=517)
Not At All	52%	58%	56%
Once or Twice	26	32	31
Three Times or More	21	10	13

Table 12, cont'd

Other workshops or conferences in which you were not a presenter			
	DSU Graduates (n=22)	Mississippi comparison (n=32)	National Comparison (n=518)
Not At All	-	3%	5%
Once or Twice	23%	44	40
Three Times or More	77	53	55

Table 13. Ongoing Professional Development

In the past 12 months, what motivated you to participate in in-service professional development activities?			
	DSU Graduates (n=47)	Mississippi comparison (n=32)	National Comparison (n=661)
State recertification requirements	13%	44%	21%
District policy	27	34	28
Personal interest in topic covered	47	78	65
Advancement on district pay scale	2	3	2
Promotion to another position	-	3	3
Other	15	16	14
In the past 12 months, how often have you participated in professional development activities WITH TEACHERS from THIS school?			
	DSU Graduates (n=23)	Mississippi comparison (n=32)	National Comparison (n=516)
Never	-	-	9%
Once or twice	9%	3%	10
Three to five times	26	44	38
Seven times or more	65	53	50

CONCLUSIONS: INNOVATION IN THE DELTA

Candidates learn differently in cohorts than they do as individuals, as cohorts build an environment where ideas can be tested in a shared and non-judgmental setting. At DSU, the cohort experience has shaped the candidate's understanding about how adults learn and has influenced perceptions about instructional leadership in the K-12 system.

The success of the Delta State University Educational Leadership Program is corroborated by the interview, observation, and survey data. The program implements components recognized as effective in the research literature, and program graduates appear to exhibit practices associated with effective school leadership. In addition, the program—with state assistance—provides financial support to help candidates take time from the classroom to devote themselves to a full-time leadership development experience.

Internship. At Delta State, the internship is well designed, comprehensive, and the core of the educational leadership program. The interns are exposed to a variety of experiences and are fully immersed in their clinical experience. Internship activities are aligned with both ISLLC and Mississippi state standards. Program instructors are effective in helping candidates collectively debrief internship experiences in the classroom; using a guided process, members of the cohort examine and critique their internship experiences on a weekly basis. In addition to in-class discussion, the candidates are required to complete written "clinical correlations" to link internship activities with program goals. The instructor regularly shares clinical correlations with the cohort, allowing candidates to bring their collective knowledge to bear on specific situations encountered by an individual intern.

Internship as transformative process. Some candidates said that when they went into their first internship assignment they were not sure how they would handle the role of administrator. After being assigned to different schools, they reported having a much better idea of how they, as administrators, should interact with teachers, what the various roles and responsibilities of school administrators are, and how administrators are viewed within the context of the whole school program. Moreover, the experience of multiple internship placements positively influenced their self-concepts as leaders, their professional orientation to leadership, and their feelings of competency and efficacy. Virtually each candidate emerged from the program deeply and profoundly changed.

Mentoring. The interns are mentored by the principal at each school site. Many of the mentors are graduates of the Delta State Educational Leadership Program. While most of the mentors are competent, both program staff and participants admit that they may not always demonstrate the very best practices. Instead, candidates see the real world of school administration; this in itself provides an important learning experience. Candidates come back to their weekly seminars and discuss alternative approaches to any given situation. They are comfortable

expressing disagreement with their mentor principals and analyzing how they might do things differently. Candidates fully understand that there are different leadership styles and various acceptable ways for principals and teachers to address the needs of children. As a result of the internship experience, they learn that as instructional leaders, they need to treat teachers as professionals, who in turn need the flexibility to use methods that work for them.

Cohort. In their best form and function, cohorts promote collaboration, networking, and shared resources. Candidates learn differently in cohorts than they do as individuals, as cohorts build an environment where ideas can be tested in a shared and non-judgmental setting. At DSU, the cohort experience has shaped the candidate's understanding about how adults learn and has influenced perceptions about instructional leadership in the K-12 system.

Under the traditional model of school leadership, the principalship is a solitary role, as there is only one principal in a school. However, new theories encourage distributive leadership, both to build the leadership capacity of faculty members and to help reduce the ever-increasing demands on principals. In part because of the cohort experience, Delta State candidates and graduates appear to have an expanded view of leadership in schools. They understand that leadership is not just vested in the office of the principal, but instead believe that everyone in the school has a leadership role. This philosophy is encouraged and fostered by the program

Instead of offering a menu of distinctly different courses on topics such as instructional leadership, personnel, budget development, or school law, the program integrates topics around problems of practice. Moreover, the integrated curriculum provides candidates with learning experiences that powerfully links theories and practice.

and is embraced by most of the faculty, candidates, and graduates. Under the cohort model, the preparation experience demonstrates the importance of collaborating and sharing knowledge. The Delta State program instills a belief that principals are team leaders—that they are not really alone, but are part of a staff and need to build the capacity of the staff to face challenges together. Going through this program as part of a cohort gives aspiring principals a sense that "we're in this together, we're building a team among ourselves." The former program director, Dr. Jolly, competently modeled how to lead a team. At DSU the cohort experience appears to be a powerful method for developing the new and evolving role of the principal.

Integration of courses and administrative concepts. The Delta State program approaches coursework in a very non-traditional manner. Instead of offering a menu of distinctly different courses on topics such as instructional leadership, personnel, budget development, or school law, the program integrates topics around problems of practice. Moreover, the integrated curriculum provides candidates with learning experiences that powerfully links theories and practice. On-campus seminars and meetings draw on actual internship experiences and problems, or current issues in the field, to examine how the critical theories and concepts about school leadership might be applied to resolve or manage the problems. Candidates receive targeted readings and materials to inform their discussions and complete in-class projects such as the clinical correlations. As a result, a particular problem experienced by a candidate during the internship might draw upon school law, public-community relations, conflict resolution, and special education program design. Several of the candidates also noted that their different internship placements gave them a chance to see examples of the various leadership models described in the literature.

Alignment with state policy. In addition to demonstrating research-based strategies, the Delta State University Educational Leadership Program is clearly aligned with state policy and fiscal mechanisms. Without that policy and fiscal link, it is not clear whether the program could be implemented as it is currently. Moreover, without the financial support, it is not clear that candidates would choose to attend this credentialing program. Several candidates stated that if program costs throughout the state were equal, they would probably go to more traditional graduate programs closer to home, rather than getting the "on-the-job training" offered at Delta State.

Program Leadership. Beyond strong program components, the success of the DSU program is in no small measure a result of the thoughtful and determined leadership of people like former Dean E.E. Caston, State Schools Superintendent Tom Burnham, current Dean Lynn House, and former program coordinator Dr. Jolly. Their inspired and tireless efforts to forge partnerships and alliances with local school districts, to seek out expert advice and best practices in the field, and to cultivate the commitment of DSU faculty members are largely responsible for the ongoing success of the program. As the Delta State case effectively illustrates, strong and proactive leadership matters. Our investigation reaffirmed what most scholars and practitioners in educational administration have implicitly understood for several years: that strong and consistent leadership is critical to sustain meaningful and long-lasting reform. A bold initiative needs a champion of change; such was the case with Delta State. From the inception of Dean Caston's dream of program reform to the present day, many key people (e.g., DSU administrators and faculty; district superintendents; and state legislators) have championed the reform effort and helped to maintain its momentum.

Strong and consistent leadership is critical to sustain meaningful and long-lasting reform. A bold initiative needs a champion of change; such was the case with Delta State.

The tireless efforts of Dr. Jolly deserve special mention. During the 2004-05 academic year, the educational leadership program at DSU was short two full-time tenure-line professors. During our visit, these vacant positions were being advertised nationally. Despite the significantly reduced level of faculty support, Dr. Jolly essentially carried the program on her shoulders. Her commitment of time and energy was nearly heroic in scope. She administered the program, taught courses, maintained DSU-school district relationships, and supervised each of the 15 candidates in internship activities. In addition to these duties, she directed the teacher education program. We were very impressed with her unflagging spirit, her positive attitude, and her strong rapport with current candidates and program graduates.

Program in Transition

At the time of our visit, the implementation of the program rested heavily on the shoulders of the program coordinator, Dr. Jolly, who was instructor, mentor, and program administrator. She was able to use the cohort as a pedagogical vehicle to model and teach team-leadership. Since our visit, Dr. Jolly has left Delta State; nevertheless, the transition appeared to be seamless, due both to Dr. Jolly's work to mentor newly hired faculty and to the current dean's leadership and vision for the program.

Dean Lynn House has proven a strong champion for the program. She consistently supported the program's leaders while allowing them the leeway to implement the program according to their best professional judgment to meet the needs of each cohort. During the transition, Dean House appeared to assert stronger leadership to help the program maintain its high standards. Dean House noted that this was not the program's first transitional period: She herself is the second dean to oversee the program, and Dr. Jolly was actually the second program coordinator. Dean House said that she often tells her faculty that "a program can't be a function of a person or a personality. If a person dies in the night, we need to be able to sustain the good parts of the program." This recognition of the need

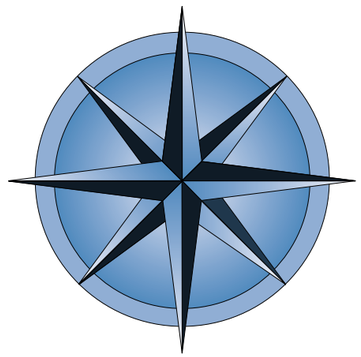
to institutionalize the leadership process demonstrated the university's commitment to the program and also showed the depth of leadership at Delta State. Despite significant staffing changes, after six months under new leadership, Delta State appeared poised to sustain its innovative Educational Leadership Program.

Room for Improvement

While the Delta State University Education Leadership Program is clearly exemplary, there is still room for improvement. Although the program is doing a good job of transforming teachers into educational leaders, it needs to tighten up and formalize some of the procedures, protocols, criteria, and formal assessments. Not all program elements have been institutionalized. Rather, many effective practices were attributed to the dedication and central role of the program coordinator, Dr. Jolly. In addition, the program would benefit from a stronger system to evaluate both the candidates' progress in meeting program goals and the quality of the program itself. The program staff also needs to create a formal process to select and train mentor principals and to solicit their assessment of candidates. While the mentors appear to provide adequate support to interns, there does not appear to be a systematic process to select mentors. Instead, the program often relies on convenience and existing relationships in recruiting mentors.

Developing a Foundation of Knowledge, Skills, and Disposition

In closing, Maddie Burton's experience, as detailed in the principal profile, shows us that learning about leadership via internships, problem-based case studies, cohort groups, and integrated coursework is still an inadequate substitute for actually being a principal. Nevertheless, such activities, which DSU implements better than most, appear to provide a reasonable foundation of knowledge, skills, and dispositions about school leadership that has undoubtedly enhanced Mrs. Burton's performance as a first-year principal and increased her chances of having a long and successful school leadership career. It is our belief that the essential skills and experiences needed to lead schools successfully have been acquired by Mrs. Burton through her participation in the Delta State administrator preparation program. Feedback from other DSU candidates and graduates suggests that Mrs. Burton's experience is the norm rather than the exception.



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Interviews:

Interview with Charlie Alexander, Assistant Superintendent, DeSoto County Public Schools, November 8, 2004.

Interview with Kyle Brigance, clinical faculty, assistant principal, program graduate, November 8, 2004.

Interview with Vickie Bullock, clinical faculty, principal, program graduate, November 8, 2004.

Interview with Arthur Cartlidge, Superintendent, Greenville City Public Schools, November 8, 2004.

Interview with E.E. Caston, Emeritus Dean, November 8, 2004.

Interview with Lynn House, Dean of the College of Education, November 8, 2004.

Interview with Sue Jolly, Coordinator of the Educational Leadership Program, November 8 and 9, 2004.

Interview with Jim Nicholson, Director of the Delta Area Association for the Improvement of Schools, November 8, 2004.

Interview with Brad Teague, Adjunct Professor of Education, Department of Educational Leadership, November 8, 2004.

Interview with Lynn Varner, Assistant Professor of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, November 8, 2004.

Focus group with candidates. November 10, 2004.

Observations of program activities. November 10, 2004.

Phone interviews with program graduates, February-April 2005.

Observations and interviews at schools lead by program graduates. November 8-9, 2005; April 7-8, 2005.

Appendix A: Methodology

To provide an in-depth and comprehensive portrait of effective approaches to the preparation and development of principals, as well as the policies and financing systems underlying effective programs, this study involved three distinct components. First, we examined, through in-depth case-studies, the characteristics of a carefully selected range of exemplary programs, including the costs of these programs. Second, we built into our case studies an analysis of institutional and policy contexts, in particular the influences of states and districts, as well as private foundations, which play an increasingly prominent role in financing principal preparation and development programs. Third, we sought to develop a broader perspective by situating our case studies in a national context to determine how the preparedness, reported practices, and demographics of graduates of our selected programs compare with those of a national sample. Furthermore, we examined policies influencing leadership development across eight strategically located states from which principals were over-sampled. Each of these components required different methods and sources of data, which we summarize below and describe in more detail in Appendices A and B of the final report, Preparing Leaders for a Changing World.

Program Sample Selection

Our site selection of pre- and in-service programs to study in-depth was based on a multi-stage process in which information about programs was acquired and potential programs were vetted against multiple criteria. The first stage in this process included an effort to identify potentially strong programs through a preliminary literature review, solicitation of recommendations from a list of more than fifty expert consultants via email and telephone interviews, and a survey to participants in the 2004 Wallace Foundation grantee conference and to participants in an E-lead meeting that same year. We also administered web-based surveys to members of several national associations soliciting recommendations and information about programs.[1] These efforts produced a list of 120 principal training programs that appeared in the literature or recommendations from more than one source.

We subsequently compiled our sources of data and narrowed the preliminary list to 13 pre-service and 16 in-service programs based on the frequency and reliability of mentions in various data sources, giving extra weight to evidence about outcomes in the research literature and recommendations from trusted experts in the field. For this narrowed pool, we contacted program officials to probe in more depth their structure, design, and evidence of effectiveness, and we collected written program materials and self-evaluations. We eliminated programs that had only scant reputational evidence and no additional evidence of their effectiveness. Because they lacked a sufficient track record to draw inferences about outcomes, we eliminated programs that had fewer than three years of graduates.

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[1] These included members of the NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals), PEN (Public Education Network), ECS (Education Commission of the States), and IEL (Institute for Educational Leadership).

We based the final selection on a desire to create, in aggregate, a sample of cases that represented variation along key dimensions. The dimensions we chose to vary in our sample are (1) the type of program offered (pre-service, in-service, or both) and (2) the type of institution sponsoring or coordinating the program (district, university, or third-party). Programs fall on a continuum along these two axes. Some programs have a highly developed pre-service component, with some support and induction for in-service principals while other programs focus on in-service to improve the leadership of principals already serving schools. Along the sponsoring institution dimension, some programs are created and led by school districts, with assistance from local universities while other programs are rooted in university graduate programs, but reach out to districts for field experience. Independent third-party organizations also focus on a type of program (primarily pre-service) and develop collaborations with districts and academic institutions to meet programmatic needs. This typology provided a rationale for sample selection that insured variation along important program dimensions, allowing us to make reasoned comparisons among highly regarded programs. As an additional consideration, because we were interested in the effect of state policy, we sought representative variation across states, and chose programs in part based on preliminary knowledge of the state policy contexts.

In order to understand program contexts and outcomes, we selected a sample of both pre- and in-service programs with several cohorts of graduates who work in nearby districts. Because we wanted to be able to follow up with graduates who had a track record as principals within a geographic area, we ultimately decided to omit third-party sponsored programs. Many of these, like the innovative New Leaders for New Schools, were too small or too new to have more than a handful of graduates who had become principals in any single location. In addition, since there was less consensus among the experts we consulted about high-quality in-service programs, as well as less evidence in the literature, we elected to narrow the sample of in-service programs to a handful of reputable programs embedded in districts and tied, to varying extents, to pre-service programs we would also study.

Based on these criteria, our final sample included the following programs, related to each other as shown on the chart. Those with two-way arrows were tightly connected by both district relationships to the university in planning pre-service programs and a flow of university graduates into the districts' in-service programs. The one-way arrow from University of Connecticut to Hartford Schools designates a flow of some candidates from the pre-service program into the district, whose in-service program we studied, but no other special district relationship with the program. Jefferson County's program has both pre- and in-service components.

We make no claim that our focal pre- and in-service programs are the most effective programs in the country. Rather, they are among those that survived our multiple screens, and they were chosen to provide variation along several conceptually-driven dimensions, representing in the aggregate a variety of approaches with respect to program design, policy context, and the nature of the collaboration between universities and school districts. Each is a strong exemplar of a type of program model and should therefore be regarded as an exemplar of a particular category. For this reason, we refer to programs in our sample as "exemplary" throughout the report.

The Programs as Exemplars of Different Approaches and Contexts

The programs we selected range from more traditional university-based programs serving candidates who later practice in a range of districts (Delta State University and the University of Connecticut), to a long-standing university pre-service program brought into closer partnership with a district and tied to an induction and in-service program (Bank Street College with Region 1 in New York City), to programs for preparing principals launched by districts in collaboration with universities (Jefferson County with the University of Louisville and San Diego City Schools with the University of San Diego), and connected to the districts' substantial programs of in-service development. (See Table A.1.)

Figure A.1: Programs Selected

Pre-service		In-service
University of San Diego (CA)	<—>	San Diego Unified School District (CA)
Bank Street College (NY)	<—>	New York City Public Schools – Region 1 (NY)
University of Connecticut (CT)	—>	Hartford Public Schools (CT)
Delta State University (MS)		
		Jefferson County (KY)

Conduct of the Case Studies

The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders of each program, including program founders, administrators, and faculty; district office personnel, principals, university officials, program participants, and graduates. We conducted focus groups with current participants. For each program, members of the research team participated in program workshops and courses when possible. For each program, researchers also conducted on-site observations of 3-5 program graduates / participants who were active principals. As part of the school observations, we both interviewed and surveyed teachers who worked with these principals. The teacher survey asked about principals' practices and school climate and conditions. These teacher assessments of principals' behavior included measures of the core leadership practices described earlier, as well as assessments of the learning culture and approaches to instructional improvement. The teacher survey also captured assessments of teachers' motivation, job satisfaction, and student effort.

In most sites, the fieldwork was completed by two researchers who visited the program twice, for a total of roughly 100 hours of face-to-face contact time with research subjects. In two cases (San Diego and New York), some of the research team was local. In these cases, the research did not have to be compacted into two site visits but took place over several months. Visits began in November of 2004 and were completed by fall 2005. In addition, researchers spent dozens of hours in telephone interviews to prepare for and follow up after the visits. In some cases, it took several sessions to interview a key respondent (often one part in person and the rest by phone), to accommodate the respondent's schedule and address questions that arose.

Data Collection Instruments

The research team prepared detailed interview, focus group, and observation protocols to guide all the field-work. (See final report, Appendix B, for instrumentation.) Protocols covered similar topics, but were tailored for each respondent category. Within the detailed protocols, we highlighted questions that took priority if time was limited.

Interview protocols. Interview questions were generated from the research questions in an iterative process involving all of the members of the research team. Following the structure of the research questions, the interview and focus groups protocols were divided into several categories, including: background information, program theory, program design and features, program and participant assessment, principal practice, school improvement work and school changes, and context (policy and partnerships). Program coordinators were asked questions in each of the categories. Participants and graduates were asked fewer questions, focusing on their experiences in the program and their current practices and outcomes of participating.

Observation protocols. The research team developed two separate observation protocols to guide observation of program activities and to guide visits to schools led by program completers. These protocols prompted researchers to detail the school setting, diversity in the school (both student and staff), the learning environment, the instructional practices, and the content of instruction. Observations protocols also included questions to guide discussions with instructors and learners.

Table A.2: Categories of Questions Included in Each Protocol

Category	Respondent				
	Program Staff	Program Faculty	Program Grads/ Principals	Program Participants	District Officials
Program Background	X	X			
Program Theory/ Goals	X	X	X	X	X
Program Design/ Features	X	X	X	X	X
Program/Participant Assessment	X	X		X	X
Principal Practice			X		X
Context (Policy, Partnerships)	X	X			X

Surveys. As part of the case studies, and to triangulate the interview data, we administered surveys to all of the graduates of the pre-service programs, participants of the in-service programs, and to teachers in schools lead by focus principals. Principals' surveys captured program participants' assessments of (1) various features of their programs, (2) what they learned from participation in the program and their sense of preparedness, (3) their attitudes about and practices in the principalship, and (4) student and organizational contexts in the schools where they now work. An in-service component of the survey asked about principals' participation in professional development activities and their views of the utility of these opportunities. Teacher survey asked about their principals' attitudes and practices, and the student and organizational contexts in their schools. Survey items were drawn heavily from the federal Schools and Staffing survey (NCES, 2006), Leithwood and Jantzi's (1999, 2000) studies of effective school leadership practices, and the ISSLC standards.

We surveyed 2000-2004 graduates and participants from the preparation programs in our case-study sample, along with other principals in a national comparison sample drawn from the membership lists of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). We drew a national sample with over-sampling in the eight focus states. This method allowed us to compare responses from program graduates to a national comparison group, and to compare each program sample to principals from within their states.

Cost analyses. Finally, case studies also included detailed assessments of the cost of various program components and the financing strategies used to support the program using a protocol developed by the Finance Project. The protocol documents the real costs in time and personpower – including uncompensated time donated by participants and staff, in-kind donations from institutional partnership, etc – as well as the budgeted funding, for mounting and sustaining each program. A team from the Finance Project conducted interviews and analyzed program documents to secure this information. They also analyzed revenue sources, using documents and interviews to examine the extent to which the program was paid for out of the regular institutional budget, through tuition payments by participants, or with outside funding from the state, the federal government, or foundations.

Data Analysis. Each site visit team produced a case study of the program they visited, systematically combining the multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data from interviews, observations, documents, and surveys. Where pre-service and in-service programs operated in a common site, the data from the two programs were analyzed together, to describe the interactions among programs and their influences on both the candidates and the districts involved. Data analysis followed an iterative process that included moving back and forth between quantitative to qualitative data, comparing coding schemes across cases, and refining the final coding scheme to reflect both common themes and unique characteristics of each case. Cross-case analysis focused on uncovering principles and practices common across the distinctive programs and on developing a typology of differences illustrated by the distinct exemplars. The cases were also analyzed by state to explore the relationship between state policy and the nature of the exemplary leadership development program in those states.

As shown in Table A.3, among our 1086 respondents to the principal survey, 661 were part of the national comparison sample, and 445 were individuals who had experienced the exemplary programs. Some of our analyses looked at only those pre-service graduates who were currently principals (124 in total). Other graduates had gone into assistant principalships first, as is the norm in many districts.

Table A.3: Survey Respondents by Program and Current Principal Status

	Total respondents	Current principal (2005)
Total	1086	849
Total Comparison sample	661	571
NAESP sample	345	294
NASSP sample	316	277
Total Program Sample	425	278
Total pre-service preparation programs+	249	124
Bank Street	28	5
Delta State	47	24
University of San Diego / San Diego	65	32
Jefferson County	49	46
UCAPP	60	17
Total in-service programs	244	222
Hartford	20	14
Jefferson County	77	72
Region 1	45	39
San Diego	105	97
Total continuum sample	103	79
Jefferson County	49	46
Region 1	7	7**
San Diego	42	21
Others (with continuum like experiences)	5	5

+ The preparation programs differed significantly in partner district post-program placement strategies. Region 1 intentionally placed Bank Street program graduates into assistant principal positions before advancing them to a principalship, while San Diego advanced most of the ELDA graduates directly to the principalship after graduation.

In these comparisons we looked at how respondents' views of their learning experiences, their feelings of preparedness for the principalship, their self-reported practices, and their perceptions of school and district conditions. Our research is necessarily limited by its cross-sectional nature and its reliance on self-reports. (Although we triangulate program principals' reports of their practices with observations and teachers' reports of their practices for a small subsample.) We can only examine relationships between past experiences and current views and practices from a retrospective perspective. We assume that any bias that this creates is similar across samples.

Appendix B: Key Resources Used in Delta State University Principal Preparation Program

Major Program Components	Types Of Resources Used	Amount Of Resources Used
Overall Administration & Infrastructure	Personnel	1.0 Program Director 2.0 Faculty-level program support .25 Clerical .10 Dean
	Office space, equipment, and supplies	3 offices 1 cubicle (partial) Dean's office (partial)
Coursework	Faculty for eight courses	1.33 FTE Faculty
	Books and supplies	24 sets
	Student dorm lodging	384 nights
Internship	Candidate salary	12 teacher salaries
	Candidate travel	54,000 miles
Travel	School districts	14 person-trips (regional)
	State Ed Committee	14 person-trips (regional)
	National Conference	14 person-trips (national)

Author Biographies

Michelle LaPointe
Michelle LaPointe is Research Director of the Stanford School Leadership Study. Dr. LaPointe has spent a decade analyzing educational policies and evaluating programs to support youth. She was previously an analyst at the U.S. Department of Education (ED), where she coordinated national evaluations of school choice initiatives, comprehensive school reform, and bilingual education. While at ED, she co-authored the 2004 Report to Congress on the Implementation and Impact of the Comprehensive School Reform Program, and contributed to the 2001 Title I report High Standards for All Students.

Stephen Davis
Stephen Davis has been an associate professor of education at Stanford University since 2002. He is the author of several articles on school leadership and decision making and recently co-authored the book, The Intuitive Dimensions of Administrative Decision Making (2003, Scarecrow Press). Dr. Davis is a former school district superintendent, personnel director, and high school principal.

Carol Cohen
Carol Cohen is the Deputy Director of The Finance Project. Ms. Cohen has over 20 years experience in public finance and policy and holds a master's in Public Policy from the University of California, Berkeley. Ms. Cohen leads the Education Reform Practice Group and other policy research, development, and technical assistance efforts that benefit children, families, and communities. Prior to joining The Finance Project in 1995, she held positions at the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Congressional Budget Office, General Accounting Office, and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

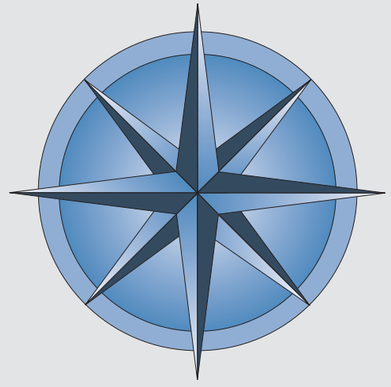
Stanford Educational Leadership Institute
The School Leadership Study is being conducted through the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (SELI) — a joint partnership of the Stanford University Graduate School of Business and School of Education. SELI's mission is to improve student achievement by providing education leaders with the means to create effective change in their districts and schools, integrating cutting-edge knowledge from the education and business fields. Financial support for SELI is made possible by a grant from the Goldman Sachs Foundation. For more information, visit: http://seli.stanford.edu.

The Finance Project
The Finance Project is a non-profit policy research, technical assistance and information organization. Its mission is to support decision-making that produces and sustains good results for children, families and communities. The Finance Project develops and disseminates information, knowledge, tools and technical assistance for improved policies, programs and financing strategies. Its work falls into four major areas: financing issues and strategies, community supports and services, managing
for results, and information for decision making. For more information, visit:
http://www.financeproject.org.

The Wallace Foundation
The Wallace Foundation seeks to support and share effective ideas and practices that expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people.
Its three current objectives are:

- Strengthen education leadership to improve student achievement
- Enhance out-of-school learning opportunities
- Expand participation in arts and culture

For more information and research on these and other related topics, please visit the Wallace Foundation Knowledge Center at http://www.wallacefoundation.org.

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