

**Enhancing Leadership to Improve
the Quality of Teaching and Learning**

*Presented at the
2009 School Leadership Program
Project Directors'
Meeting*

Richard Laine
Director of Education
The Wallace Foundation

February 25, 2009

Introduction.....Thanks

- Wallace – ten years on leadership; almost \$300m; fund research, states/districts and spread
- RL – director of education, IBRT, ISBE, school board member

Today's purpose

- Highlight the importance of leadership – both leaders and the conditions that they work in - Validate what you all know and are working on...
- Share lessons from the field, new research findings and tools that may push your thinking and/or assist you in your current efforts
- Talk scale and sustainability
- Have a conversation

Opening comments -

Start by acknowledging the great work that is being undertaken; stress the importance of this work to the larger reform agenda and that others need to learn from the work underway.

Leadership: a bridge from school reform to getting results

- Universal access to education is no longer enough, since achievement gaps persist
- Universal success is our national goal
- With limited resources, we have to focus on key areas of biggest impact
- Research and state-district efforts are showing that leadership is one of those key areas

- (Quickly present challenges to U.S. public education)
- New world with higher expectations for all children
- Most significant economic down in our lifetime...largest influx of federal education dollars
- Leadership is a good investment. Yet, even without a massive influx of funding, we can tackle these challenges by taking a systemic approach

Leadership is key to improving teaching & learning...

Research has caught up to what educators have long known:

“Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.”

- *How Leadership Influences Student Learning, 2005*



The Wallace Foundation
Supporting the
Work of Schools
Through Research
and Practice

Page 3

- (Quickly review research, focusing on Leithwood and stressing the existence of a consensus around the importance of school leadership)
- Research has caught up with common sense....
- Leithwood – 5 year, 9 states, 48 districts and nearly 150 schools focused on key aspects of leadership at each level of the system that matter most....Largest research project on leadership in US...to be completed later this year...

...Especially in difficult situations

“...there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader.”

-How Leadership Influences Student Learning, 2005



The Wallace Foundation
Supporting schools.
Sharing solutions.
Expanding opportunity.

Page 4

- Leadership is key to closing the achievement gap.
- Research shows that effective leadership has the greatest impact where it is needed most – in struggling schools.
- This is a powerful conclusion with a sobering corollary: If good leadership is required to turn around troubled schools, then failure to improve leadership risks perpetuating the status quo, and never closing the achievement gap.
- Surveys of teachers cite effective principals as one of the top incentives to get good teachers to low achieving schools and keep them there.....**So investing in effective leaders is a smart strategy to closing the achievement gap**

Leadership is crucial to making school reform succeed

“There seems little doubt that both district and school leadership provides a critical bridge between most educational reform initiatives, and having those reforms make a genuine difference for all students.”

- *How Leadership Influences Student Learning, 2005*



The Wallace Foundation
Supporting ideas.
Sharing solutions.
Awarding opportunities.

Page 5

[Discuss the quote]

If we want school reform to succeed, we must also strengthen leadership. This would enable the other major reforms –teacher quality, accountability, small schools, etc -- be better orchestrated into a cohesive approach to achieve the desired results for all children over their entire public education career..

You need to find the bridges between the work you are leading and other major reforms in your district/state ...leadership is the multiplier that produces greater impact....

The role of the principal is changing – an increasing focus on instruction

- Team leader, not soloists
- Prepared to be instructional leaders through:
 - Setting directions
 - Developing people
 - Redesigning the organization
- Better supported by a system of high-quality preparation, ongoing training and the necessary conditions

- Many people (including legislators!) hold a more-or-less traditional view of who principals are and what kind of work they do....does the name Joe Clark mean anything to you....
- In the past, principals were seen as solitary superheroes – as charismatic leaders who rely on innate talent and guide schools by sheer force of personality. Or conversely (as frequently depicted in the media) – as bumblers.
- But today's leader can be neither hero nor bumbler to meet the needs of all students.
- Research tells us the most important roles that successful principals play:
 - Setting directions. Creating a vision, setting high expectations, and monitoring performance.
 - Developing people. Providing learning opportunities, modeling good practice, and supporting individuals.
 - Redesigning the organization. Strengthening school culture and changing practice to achieve effective teaching and learning.
- This “conductor” version of the principal's job that is more focused on these goals – is also more likely to bring the results that we want: namely, a school-wide focus on better teaching and learning.
- But remember, the rhetoric changes faster than reality...we still have a long way to go to bring about the necessary leadership (instructional) in all the schools that desperately need it.

New leadership standards increase focus on learning

- New ISLLC standards offer policymakers clear guidance about the role and objectives of education leadership
- Standards evolving from knowledge/skills/disposition to greater emphasis on behaviors and performance



The Wallace Foundation
Learning, Leadership, Learning Standards
Learning Standards

Page 7

- New standards are capturing this new definition of the principalship.
- CCSSO facilitated the development of the new standards that were built on the highly successful 1996 *ISLLC Standards for School Leaders* by updating them to reflect new research and changing roles for education leaders.
- 1996 version focused on knowledge/skills/disposition – the new version shifts more toward behavior/performance
- We also recognize that standards must be part of a comprehensive education leadership policy to improve schooling.
- Standards are only aspirations unless connected a means to assess and to the larger system in order to drive change.

Leverage points to enhance leaders' ability to improve teaching & learning

Standards	Key leverage points	Produce...	Resulting in...
Leadership standards (ISLLC) create a policy framework for effective systems of leadership tied to improving teaching and learning	Principal preparation programs	Leaders who are ready to assume the principalship by virtue of their skills and real world practice	Large numbers of high performing schools led by better trained and supported leaders
	Certification (entry) induction (transitional support)	A pipeline of certified and qualified candidates. Accelerated development of new leaders through mentoring	
	Principal evaluation	Identification of leaders' strengths and weaknesses relative to performance standards	
	Ongoing professional development	Continuous improvement of leader performance designed to address needs identified in evaluation	
	Working conditions – systems that enable better trained leaders to improve teaching and learning	Alignment of accountability requirements, incentives and leaders' authority over people, money and time empower them to act on their training and experience	

Source: Educational Leadership Policy Standards – ISLLC 2008

Let me put the standards in context of the key leverage points they should influence in order to bring about the larger reforms you are striving for ...

Explain chart....

Research suggests training programs must change, too

Effective training programs:

- Include purposeful recruitment and selection
- Based on professional leadership standards
- More closely tied to the needs of districts
- Use coursework focused on instructional leadership, organizational improvement & change management
- Utilize robust, paid internships
- Use cohort model



- *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World, 2007*

The Wallace Foundation
Supporting the
Next Generation
of Leaders

Page 9

As many reports state and what we all know, most of the current prep programs are not up to the task of preparing our future principals for the schools they must successfully lead to close the achievement gap.

Far too many principals believe that their training did not prepare them for the realities of the job.

The good news is that we now know what works.

Research – 2007 study led by Linda Darling-Hammond and her teams – identified the characteristics of effective leader preparation and professional development programs:

1. Purposeful recruitment and selection – who starts impacts who graduates
2. Use of professional and state standards
3. Collaborative partnerships
4. Integrated coursework focused on instructional leadership, organizational improvement, and change management
5. Productive pedagogy including cases, action research, performance assessments
6. Robust internship
7. Cohort as a long-term support

But this kind of leadership preparation is not cheap

The payoff: improved training programs provide better value

Typical administrator preparation programs:

- 20-30% of graduates become principals within a few years
- Fewer than half ever become administrators

Exemplary programs:

- 60% of the 2002-04 graduates of exemplary programs were principals by 2005 in Stanford study
- 81% of the 2004-07 NYC Leadership Academy graduates were principals by 2008

- *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World, 2007; New York City Leadership Academy, 2007*

But the extra cost is worth it....

While the costs were higher – payoffs were higher ...cite stats

Effective programs - Another 20% were assistant principals

Less effective programs - fewer than half ever enter any administrative position

Pre-service training is not enough – “good” mentoring is needed

- Carefully selected and well-trained principal mentors
- Lasts for at least a year, ideally two or more
- Supported by state and local funding that ensures mentors receive high-quality training and appropriate stipends
- Focused primarily on fostering effective instructional leaders

- *Getting Principal Mentoring Right: Lessons from the Field, 2007*



Page 11

- Good preparation is never enough...new principals need on-going development
- About half of the states have adopted mentoring requirements for school leaders during their first years on the job – a striking turnabout considering how rare acceptance of, or funding for, such mentoring was prior to 2000.
- Nonetheless, the quality of mentoring programs ranges from excellent programs that are ongoing, use well-trained mentors, and focus on instructional leadership – and then there are those that are little more than buddy systems.
- In a report by Wallace on mentoring, four lessons stand out on what good mentoring programs look like...
 1. Who the mentor is and how they are trained matters
 2. Duration is important
 3. You get what you pay for...
 4. Mentoring should help principals improve his/her impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Training is key but not sufficient...

So while early efforts focused on putting better trained leaders in the same old system...

...If that's where we stopped, we would bet on the system

Therefore, we must focus not *only* on training, but also on the conditions within which leaders work

The Wallace Foundation
Page 12

Wallace mantra....Put a good leader in a bad system and you have to bet on the system over time.

Our partner states and districts are working on addressing the conditions and incentives within which these better trained leaders are being placed...some examples include:

- roles and responsibilities more focused on improving instruction and learning;
 - access to and use of data;
 - Greater authority over the allocation of resources (people, time and money) to align with need and
 - incentives focused on improving teaching and learning, building capacity and getting our best leaders and teachers where they are needed most.
- Explain conditions....
- Much of the USDOE funded programs focus on preparation and training – need to pay attention to the conditions within which your better trained leaders will work in...so that you get the ultimate results you are striving for...

Some key ways to support better trained school leaders...

- Effective assessment of leaders' performance
- Increase principals' time as instructional leader
- Timely access to more useful data necessary to diagnose issues of instructional and learning quality and to measure progress
- Align principals authority with their responsibilities

•Provide examples of states and districts from our network...

•DE

•KY

•NYC

•I am only going to talk more about the first two bullets.

The benefits of good leadership assessments

- Define effective leadership
- Reinforce the importance of effective leadership with the right incentives
- Identify opportunities for needed professional development
- Help improve key behaviors/performance of all leaders

•According to Vanderbilt researchers, the tools we have today for assessing leaders are not up to the task.

•Current assessments represent an old conception of leadership – that leaders provide stability and oversee routine processes. What’s needed are assessments that reflect the new role of the education leader – changing practices and processes to help all students,

•Reliable assessments help education leaders and decisionmakers.

➤A word about potential risks: that we don’t over rely on them to tell the whole story -- that we are cognizant that we don’t create too high a barrier that deters talented people from entering the profession – that they see assessment as opportunity to improve practice.

New Tool: VAL-ED

(Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education)

- Focuses leader performance on improving teaching quality & student achievement – reliable & accurate measurement of behaviors that matter most
- Uniquely links what leaders must accomplish with how they operate
- The only “360 degree” assessment, involving the principal, supervisor and every teacher in the school
- Produces report to guide professional development and growth



Page 15

- The conceptual framework behind development of this tool is grounded in the research literature.
- Makes finer grained distinctions than do the ISLLC standards.
- VAL-Ed does not include assessment of other aspects of leadership such as values and knowledge which, while important, *are not indicated as part of learning-centered leadership behaviors....* VAL-Ed privileges instructional leadership
- Psychometrically valid and reliable
- Can be used for both formative and summative purposes
- Needs to be part of a larger system...to evaluate other aspects of the job and tied to pd in order to improve performance.
- Available now through Discovery

VAL-ED Leadership Behavior Framework

Key Processes						
Core Components	Planning	Implementing	Supporting	Advocating	Communicating	Monitoring
High Standards for Student Learning						
Rigorous Curriculum (content)						
Quality Instruction (pedagogy)						
Culture of Learning & Professional Behavior						
Connections to External Communities						
Performance Accountability						

•The conceptual framework that drives the instrument focuses on two key dimensions of leadership behaviors:

- Six core components (*what* principals are doing to improve academic and social learning for all students – LIST COMPONENTS); and
- Six key processes (*how* they create those core components – LIST PROCESSES).

•The VAL-Ed framework posits that school leadership assessment should include measures of the intersection of these dimensions.

New Tool: Time/Task Analysis Tool for Principals

- Measures the principal's instructional time
- Measures the perception of the principal's role
- Helps principals set and achieve goals to increase time spent on instructional leadership

- The School Administration Manager or SAM project is a strategy designed to change the role of the principal from the **manager** to the **instructional** leader, resulting in an increase in time spent on improving teaching and learning.
- Educators acknowledge, and research confirms, that administrative duties greatly reduce the time and focus that principals can devote to instruction; however, principals have so far been unable to find a way to eliminate time as a barrier. The SAM initiative shows promise in penetrating this “time barrier.”
- Louisville pilot: time-use studies during the pilot period showed that once principals were given guidance on how to shift their priorities away from tasks – taken up by SAMs – the new SAM position did, in fact, result in a dramatic shift in the amount of time principals spent on instruction.
- Promising early results of the initial study prompted Wallace to support the development and diffusion of SAMs: work is underway to replicate SAM projects in 215 schools in eight states.

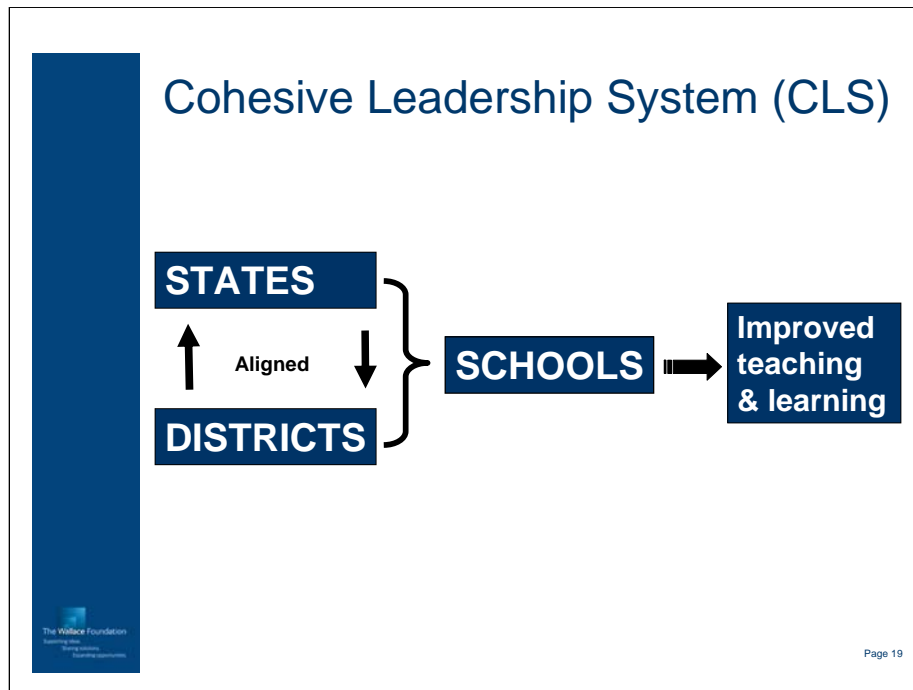
Bringing about the change...

- Thinking cohesively
- Examples of success
- Considering scale and sustainability

Summarize what we have talked about....

- Leadership is important
- Key levers

• I want to end with a way to think about bringing about the changes, examples of where it is happening and how to think about scaling and sustaining our impact



This idea of working on the standards, training of leaders and the related conditions within which they are work is the underlying premise to our working hypothesis

But we add the additional feature of working at the state and district levels to bring about aligned changes in leader standards, training and conditions necessary to create effective leadership at schools across districts and districts across states

This systemic thinking is what we have termed a “Cohesive Leadership System”... The publication on our working hypothesis available at the back of the room..

Too often the lack of alignment between states and districts is a major impediment

The CLS is a systemic approach to using leadership to improve student learning...And when roughly 50% of all superintendents and principals surveyed by public agenda say they have to work around the system to get things done...this systemic approach is long over due.

Give example of our CLS work...

Opportunities for state/district changes

- Adopt leader standards that focus on effective behaviors
- Mandate or encourage use of standards-based leader evaluations (align incentives to standards)
- Build a timely and actionable data system
- Provide high-quality, ongoing professional development –
 - change accreditation
 - support high-quality mentoring
 - align continuing p.d. to improve instructional leadership
 - create leadership academy
- Make the principal's job doable
 - Give principals time & authority to improve instruction, evaluate them on what matters, develop them, reward success and help them build a leadership team

•State chiefs and district leaders can take a wide range of actions to address these issues.

•Provide site examples....

Scale and sustainability: opportunities and obstacles

- Define the innovation to scale and sustain
- Invest in innovations that have evidence of success
- Assess readiness to change
- Identify/manage champions and opposition
- Build constituency for urgency to change
- Develop incentives to adopt/adapt innovation
- Develop specific strategies to scale/sustain impact... good ideas alone do not lead to change
- Develop plans with clear progress measures
- Continuously improve each step

•So let me end with one last slide before I open it up to questions.

•You are all working on important leadership projects across this country...let me end with a discussion of scale and sustainability that may get you to think about how to have greater impact in more places over a longer period of time....

•Discuss slide...



The Wallace Foundation™
Supporting ideas.
Sharing solutions.
Expanding opportunities.™

The Wallace Foundation
5 Penn Plaza, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10001

212-251-9700 Telephone
Info@wallacefoundation.org
www.wallacefoundation.org

The Wallace Foundation seeks to support and share effective ideas and practices that will strengthen education leadership, arts participation and out-of-school learning.

For a digital library of publications on education leadership, visit the online Knowledge Center at www.wallacefoundation.org

- Reactions/comments/questions?
- Reinforce Wallace website as resource and the coming research reports
- THE END.