



EMPIRE STATE SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

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John L. D'Agati
Deputy Commissioner, Office of Higher Education
New York State Education Department
Albany, NY 12234

Kenneth Turner
Director, Principal Preparation Project
USNY - Regents Research Fund
Albany, NY 12234

Re: *ESSAA's Review of the Findings of the Principal Project Advisory Team*

Dear Messrs. D'Agati and Turner:

Thank you for your letter of June 20, 2017. Per your invitation, the Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association ("ESSAA") respectfully submits the attached feedback concerning the findings developed by the Principal Preparation Project Advisory Team. We genuinely appreciate this opportunity and your strong leadership.

Please let us know if there is anything further we can do to enhance this important project.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Starvaggi,
Executive Director



EMPIRE STATE SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION

Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association's Review of the Findings of the Principal Project Advisory Team

Thank you kindly for allowing our administrative group the opportunity to provide input and recommendations on the findings of the Principal Preparation Project Advisory Team. The ESSAA executive team has reviewed the findings closely and offer the following suggestions to strengthen this work going forward.

It is apparent that a considerable amount of time, thought and effort was put forth in the development of the recommendations. Marc Baiocco and Shireen Fasciglione represented ESSAA on the Advisory Team and we are honored to provide additional input feedback in this response. ESSAA will without hesitation participate in any future work.

Our feedback is organized in the same format as that of the findings.

The **Preamble** explains the structure of the paper. Throughout the paper there are citations, links to literature and data referenced. We suggest citing in the Preamble the two leading influences on student success during the school day (approx. teacher 25% and principal 5%) and the corresponding importance of further improving the preparation of aspiring and current principals.

To that end, we recommend citations to relevant literature as follows:

Researchers found that school principals matter to student achievement, accounting for almost five percent of the overall variation in pupil scores (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). While this predominantly indirect effect is relatively small, it is statistically significant and meaningful (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school, accounting for about a quarter of total school effects (Leithwood et al., 2004).

The **Context** is clear and insightful, with underpinnings to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Insights gathered appear to provide a rationale for beliefs and recommendation.

The **Insights** section provides a collection and analysis of data generated. The nine insights are linked with rationale, perhaps based on quantitative and qualitative data. However, the data does not appear to be explicitly stated and/or linked to vetted literature. The statements appear to at times be generalizations. Therefore, we suggest adding additional information to specify that these insights are not necessarily research based, but were gathered by practitioners in the field etc.

Another suggestion is to strengthen the claims in this section with more robust connections and detail surrounding the position being taken. For example, in Paragraph 2 of this section, the findings should state where the claim is coming from and what is meant by “enacted competencies.” In Paragraph 6, a citation to relevant literature would further highlight the need for high quality mentoring.

The **Belief Statements** section is strong. It clearly encapsulates practitioners’ values and ESSAA echoes its sentiments. However, we suggest changing the term “distribute leadership” to “distributed leadership” in paragraph D. We believe this terminology is in line with the literature. We further recommend citing to Spillane, J. (2009), *Managing to lead: Reframing school leadership and management*. Phi Delta Kappan 91(3), 70-73 and Leithwood et al., 2006, p.12, which states that “school leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed”

The **Recommendations** are sound and will undoubtedly move New York education forward. ESSAA supports these efforts and we are willing to be partners in this important work and its implementation.

However, it is important to note that, because the Advisory Team sessions used a consensus-based approach, there were some areas which were not developed fully and will need more input from the field before final recommendations are implemented. Two examples of this are noted later in this document.

We suggest making some minor adjustments/clarification to strengthen five out of the eleven recommendations, as follows:

Paragraph III, Internships. We agree that candidates for leadership certification should be required to complete full-time, rigorous internships that require them to demonstrate their capacity for leadership. However, we believe that in practice, having full-time internships will not be practicable if the internships are unpaid. We believe that, if there is funding, full-time internships would a positive and viable way to increase participation in school leadership programs and to build and increase the capacity for successful leadership.

Paragraph VI, “Micro-Credentials.” This is one area where nuances were discussed during the meetings but, because of the consensus format, were not developed adequately. We feel that, in order to avoid unintended consequences, more input from the field would be needed before these recommendations are implemented. We would not want to see a mechanism created that requires potential administrators to go through unnecessary steps and pay avoidable micro-credential fees to attain certification.

Paragraph VII, CTLE. We believe that the statement that “in order to re-register once every five years principals must demonstrate they have acquired the knowledge, skill, . . .” is misleading. The CTLE requirements are a step in the right direction and will increase knowledge, skills, and dispositions. However, this accrual of these skills is an ongoing learning process and should be stated as a starting point to professional development, not a finite learning and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

Paragraph VIII, Funding Opportunities and Non-Pecuniary Incentives. This and the other diversity initiatives would represent a useful step in addressing the increasing diversity of our school systems and the still-troubling gaps in performance between advantaged and disadvantaged populations of students.

We suggest that this section should address how these incentives will be funded and should further provide an example of what this type of professional learning and support may look like. Finally, there should be a specific plan for publicizing the experience of preparation programs and school districts that have had significant success in addressing these needs.

Paragraph X, Deploying Non-Public Sources of Funds. We recommend that the reference to hiring managers in his section should be deleted and the phrase in the first sentence should be changed to “improve the ability of districts to identify, recruit,” The reference to hiring managers is misleading and may change the focus from recruitment, placement and development to the identity of who the “hiring managers” will be.

Paragraph XI, Pilots. We suggest adding, at the end of the paragraph, that this would be done “in an effort to make a sound decision in the re-creation of the school building leader certification and subsequent recommendations.”

Once again, we thank you for your time and for the opportunity to share our opinions to strengthen and support this important work. We value the opportunity to partner with you in the enhancement of education in our State. If there are any suggestions that we shared that are unclear, or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact ESSAA.