

Stock taking of states reveals relatively little focus on principal development and responsibilities split among divisions of state education agencies.

by **Bobbi Newman and Robert Hull**

NASBE Study Group Surveys State Leadership Development Policy

State board members, working in partnership with the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) at the University of Pennsylvania, this year conducted an in-depth study of states' school leadership development policies and practices. Later this fall, the study group will release a report for NASBE members on the current landscape of leadership development in the United States and consequent policy considerations for state boards of education.

The group embarked on an ambitious work plan to inform their thinking about school leadership development policies. Its work has focused on four areas:

- current leadership development research from the United States and England;
- existing leadership development frameworks;
- a State Level Policy Development Framework for state board members; and
- study of US states and territories' school leadership development policies.

A pivotal part of the study group's work is a comprehensive study of US states and territories' school leadership development policies. To make informed policy decisions and see how practice is taking shape across the country, state board members should take stock of policy initiatives in other states. These data will be a useful resource as they evaluate and revise leadership development policy in their respective states.

CPRE interviewed state board members and state education agencies about their school leadership development policies and practices, focusing on school leader identification, recruitment, preparation, licensure, accreditation, support and retention, evaluation, and data

monitoring. A comprehensive analysis is being conducted, with findings to be published in the final report.

These interviews have yielded initial findings on 1) state-level oversight of the school leadership development process, 2) state perceptions of principal shortages, 3) recruitment, 4) use of standards to guide accreditation and licensure of school leaders, and 5) evaluation and support of school leaders. First, the study reveals that state education agencies typically house parts of the leadership development oversight process in different divisions. In most states, no one division is responsible for the whole process. Someone calling to ask about leadership accreditation, for example, may be referred to a director in the higher education division but to another person for answers about principal licensure and evaluation.

Second, many state education officials believe that their state has a shortage of quality leaders but not a shortage of licensed principals. Some states did report shortages in rural areas. Third, identification and recruitment of school leaders in nearly all states are left up to individual districts.

Fourth, the initial findings reveal that, of the states that use leadership standards to guide accreditation and licensure, several use the current Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards as the foundation for their leadership preparation program and licensure system. A majority do not have licensure requirements for teacher leaders, but they do have licensure requirements for assistant principals.

Last, nearly all states reported an enormous focus on teacher evaluation and support, but they also said there has been a lack of focus on principal development, especially in terms of evaluation and support.

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Data from this study are being analyzed to determine ways that states can create systems and structures for leadership development as well as to facilitate identification, preparation, licensure, and support of individual leaders.

To guide state boards of education as they consider state-level policy actions around leadership development, study group members in concert with CPRE developed a State Level Policy Development Framework, a conceptual way of thinking about the policy development process. The framework can help state board members identify levers and processes their boards will need to consider. The study group will present its final report, along with the policy development framework, at NASBE's annual conference in October 2015. ■

Related Resources

Brenda J. Turnbull, Derek L. Riley, Jaclyn R. MacFarlane, *Districts Taking Charge of the Principal Pipeline, vol. 3. Districts Taking Charge of the Principal Pipeline* (Washington, DC: The Wallace Foundation, January 2015), www.wallacefoundation.org/view-latest-news/PressRelease/Pages/New-Report-Finds-Six-School-Districts-More-Intentional-in-Developing-Strong-Principals.aspx.
George W. Bush Institute, *Operating in*

the Dark: Alliance to Reform Education Leadership's Principal Policy State Survey (Dallas, February 2013), <http://www.bushcenter.org/alliance-reform-education-leadership/arel-state-policy-project>.

Richard F. Elmore, *Improving School Leadership: Volume 2, Case Studies on System Leadership*, Beatriz Pont, Deborah Nusche, David Hopkins, eds. (Paris: Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, 2008), <http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/44375122.pdf>.

Jonathan Supovitz, *Building a Lattice for School Leadership: The Top-to-Bottom Rethinking of Leadership Development in England and What It Might Mean for American Education* (Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 2014), <http://www.cpre.org/latticeforschoolleadership>.

Linda Vogel and Spencer C. Weiler, "Aligning Preparation and Practice: An Assessment of Coherence in State Principal Preparation and Licensure" (*NASSP Bulletin*, 2014), DOI: 0192636514561024.

The Wallace Foundation, *Districts Matter: Cultivating the Principals Urban Schools Need* (New York, February 2013), <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/district-policy-and-practice/documents/districts-matter-cultivating-the-principals-urban-schools-need.pdf>.

About the Study Group

Each year the NASBE Board of Directors selects topics of importance for in-depth research, study, review, and reporting by member-led study groups. NASBE Director of College, Career, and Civic Readiness Robert Hull and West Virginia state board member Dr. William White led the study group, "Successful Leaders for Successful Schools: The Changing Role of Education Leaders." For six months in 2015, state board members studied states' school leadership development policies and practices. The group included state board members from Maryland, Virginia, Maine, Kansas, Illinois, Nebraska, West Virginia, the District of Columbia, Wyoming, and Guam.

Working closely with CPRE co-director Jonathan Supovitz and researcher Bobbi Newman, study group members analyzed current research, examined leadership development in the United States and England, and met with policy-oriented partner organizations such as CCSSO, NGA, NCSL, NAESP, NASSP, and NSBA to hear their perspectives on state-level policy actions around school leadership. Members also participated in webinars with leading experts and heard presentations from three school districts about their processes and policies. These central learning opportunities helped the group identify key issues, policy impact points, and recommendations for state board members to consider. Study group members acknowledged that even where state boards do not have policy authority in this area, they have the "power of the question" and the power to convene.