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Share Resources to Support Professional
Growth of Educational Leadership Needed in
Kansas Schools and the Nation*

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Foreword

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Foreword

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It is with great pleasure that I write the Foreword for this edition of *Educational Considerations*. When Dr. Thompson requested that I contribute to the journal with the Foreword, I was flooded with memories of scouring through issue upon issue of *Educational Considerations* as I was working on my doctorate in Educational Administration at Kansas State University several years ago. *Educational Considerations* has a rich and long history of being a practitioner's journal and this issue continues with that tradition.

The lead article, "Theory into Practice: A Cry From the Field for Innovative Leadership Development", by Dr. Debbie Mercer and Dr. Scott Myers, sets the stage for the story of the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute (KELI). Dr. Mercer, Dean of the College of Education at Kansas State University, and Dr. Scott Myers, Director of Teacher Licensure and Accreditation at the Kansas State Department of Education, eloquently describe the journey that has resulted in the KELI. As they write in their piece, casual conversations among the Kansas State Department of Education, United School Administrators, the Kansas School Superintendents Association, the Kansas Association of School Boards, the Kansas Leadership Center and Kansas State University's College of Education led to the formation of an institute devoted to mentoring superintendents and school leaders. It's important to keep in mind that each of the organizations mentioned above had their own mentoring programs in place. Some of the programs were successful and others just beginning to grow. What's remarkable about the birth of KELI is that each organization saw the benefit of working together to create a better model. Each organization was willing to contribute their expertise to create the first educational leadership institute in Kansas.

In her article titled, "Case Study in the Power of Collaboration: Planning Process for the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute", Dr. Mary Devin, along with contributors Dr. Debbie Mercer, Mr. Mike Mathes, Dr. Tom Trigg, and Dr. Sharon Zoellner, shares how a spirit of collaboration over several years led to the opening of KELI's doors two years ago. The quote "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much" by Helen Keller describes precisely the type of teamwork by many people to accomplish what some skeptics said was impossible. How appropriate that this article was written by Dr. Devin, an award-winning superintendent, and the founding director of KELI. It is because of Dr. Devin's vast experience as a leader and her true dedication to education that KELI was established and has been successful. Also instrumental in establishing KELI was Dr. David Thompson, Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership at KSU. Dr. Thompson had, for many years, seen the necessity for bringing the various partners together to build a leadership institute for all of Kansas. He was not only the inspiration for KELI but he also worked with KSU to provide the initial funding and housing on the beautiful campus in Manhattan. Dr. Thompson's persistence and true collaborative nature made a dream possible and begins a legacy that will be with Kansas education for many, many years. Thank you Dr. Devin and Dr. Thompson!

Additional articles in this edition of *Educational Considerations* provide a historical perspective of KELI from what is nearly a play-by-play account of the inception, to the opening, to the first two years of KELI by Dr. Donna Augustine-Shaw in her piece titled, "Illuminating the Path: Evidence of Initial Success and Implications for the Future." This article is a must-read for anyone interested in establishing a statewide leadership institute. With author and guest editor Dr. Elizabeth Funk, Dr. Augustine-Shaw continues the story of KELI with perceptions of first year superintendents and their mentors.

It has truly been my honor to contribute to this issue of *Educational Considerations*. The Kansas Educational Leadership Institute is one that will benefit countless teachers, leaders and students for many generations. On behalf of the Kansas State Department of Education, congratulations on the success and future of KELI.

Diane M. DeBacker, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education