



Educational Considerations

Volume 43
Number 4 *Exploring University Partnerships for
Building Leadership Capacity in Education*

Article 13

9-1-2016

Educational Considerations, vol. 43(4) Full Issue

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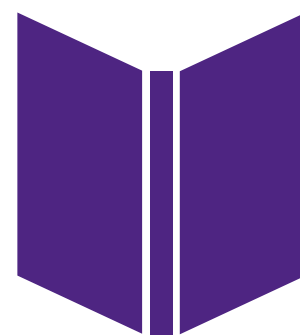
RedCorn, Alex (2016) "Educational Considerations, vol. 43(4) Full Issue," *Educational Considerations*: Vol. 43: No. 4. <https://doi.org/10.4148/0146-9282.1012>

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for Building Leadership Capacity in Education

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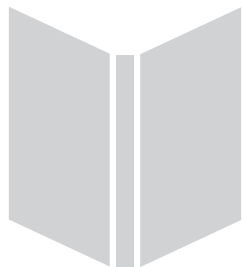
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<https://newprairiepress.org/edconsiderations/vol43/iss4/13>
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Special Issue:

Exploring University Partnerships for Building Leadership Capacity in Education

Guest Editor: Alex RedCorn

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Educational Considerations is published and funded by the College of Education at Kansas State University. *Educational Considerations* invites subscribers for only \$13 annually.

Please see the subscription form in this issue or access it online at www.coe.k-state.edu/edconsiderations.

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Educational Considerations is a peer-reviewed journal published by the College of Education, Kansas State University. *Educational Considerations* and Kansas State University do not accept responsibility for the views expressed in articles, reviews, and other contributions appearing in this publication. In keeping with the professional educational concept that responsible free expression can promote learning and encourage awareness of truth, contributors are invited to submit research-based manuscripts related to educational leadership and policy.

Educational Considerations is published at least two times yearly. Editorial offices are located at the College of Education, Bluemont Hall, 1114 Mid-Campus Drive North, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506-5301. Correspondence regarding manuscripts should be directed to the Executive Editor at fecrampton@gmail.com. No remuneration is offered for accepted articles or other materials submitted.

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Design and Layout by Mary L. Hammel, Kansas State University



The Kansas Commissioner of Education describes the leadership that education will need, based on what we have learned about leadership from research and in response to what he heard from the voices of stakeholders in his state.

Introduction to the Special Issue: Leadership in Kansas for the 21st Century

Randy Watson

Dr. Randy Watson, Kansas Commissioner of Education, has had experience across the state of Kansas as a district superintendent, high school principal, and social studies instructor. Dr. Watson was named the 2015 Kansas Superintendent of the Year, a Kansas State University Alumni Fellow in 2002, and received the Excellence in Educational Leadership award from the University Council for Educational Leadership in 2004. Dr. Watson holds a doctorate in school law, curriculum development, and instructional leadership from Kansas State University.

The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short, but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark. – Michelangelo

Introduction

Kansas is currently experiencing a leadership challenge. This is evident both in the number of leaders new to their positions in K-12 school districts and in the methods our state must implement to effectively train those leaders for Kansas' education to prosper into the 21st century. This article describes the current leadership landscape in Kansas and provides a modest framework for training to move Kansas forward in the ongoing development of educational leadership.

Challenges of Leadership in Kansas

In 2015-16, 52 superintendent positions in Kansas changed hands. Some of these changes were created by superintendents moving to different leadership positions within the state. Others ascended new to the superintendency. Fifteen of those new superintendents had been teachers only two years previously. Currently for 2016-17, 60 superintendent positions in Kansas will have different leadership than in the previous year, and that number could grow slightly higher. Future projections indicate that another 60 superintendent positions may change for the 2017-18 school year. If this occurs, it will result in a turnover of approximately 65% of the total superintendent positions in Kansas in just three years. This ratio holds true across all sizes of Kansas school districts. Of the state's top 25 largest school districts, 16 have replaced their superintendent during the past three years (Kansas State Department of Education, 2016; United School Administrators of Kansas, 2016).

This turnover also will have a deep effect on the principal positions in Kansas, as many of those superintendent positions will be filled from the principal ranks. This turnover in superintendent and principal leadership will have an immediate and profound impact on the leadership within our

state. It will challenge our training structures of leadership and will cause our current state and local leaders to consider new avenues for leadership development. Some of those avenues will have to be bold and innovative to meet the demands of what will be necessary to run our educational system over the next decade.

An Overview of Educational Change in Kansas

"We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too." – John F. Kennedy (1962)

Leaders must always reflect on the political and social times in which they are immersed. Perhaps there never has been a greater situational leader than Winston Churchill. Serving as prime minister of the United Kingdom in the 1940s, he was greatly instrumental in helping Britain win World War II. During that critical period, Churchill led with courage and inspiration. During England's darkest hours of the war Churchill stated: "I have no fear of the future. Let us go forward into its mysteries, let us tear aside the veils which hide it from our eyes and let us move onward with confidence and courage" (as cited in Rohn, 2016, pp. 326-327).

Just as Churchill faced times that were different from those experienced by previous leaders, Kansas is experiencing change at a rapid rate, too. In 2016, Kansas finds itself embracing a new federal law that replaces the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The new law, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), gives a lot of authority back to the state and local leadership to develop plans to assist all students in becoming successful. This massive federal shift in policy not only places more burden back on state and local leadership, it gives the opportunity to lead in new and creative ways. The new law involves a completely different way of thinking and leading change in education. No longer will K-12 education progress be defined by a simple "Adequate Yearly Progress" chart on state assessments. The new accountability system will require states and local entities to develop and implement new courses of action geared to ensuring that all students are successful.

In November 2014, the Kansas State Board of Education hired a new Commissioner of Education whose role would be influenced by an anticipated change in federal education policies. Among the first tasks was for the new commissioner to directly engage Kansans in discovering what they wanted from their schools and to identify the type of educational system Kansas educators needed to focus on in the future. The ensuing "listening tours" gave Kansans a voice in creating the new system of education that will be implemented during the next decade. That tour initially consisted of 20 different Kansas communities spread geographically from Kansas City to Colby and from Coffeyville to Sublette. In order to gain a greater voice from business leaders, an additional seven-city tour from Lawrence to Pittsburg and Dodge City to Manhattan was completed.

During those 27 city tours, along with an online forum for those who could not attend a session, citizens provided input on what they believed was needed in an effective education system. Kansans stated that for students to be successful in postsecondary pursuits, schools must focus on helping students develop strong social-emotional skills, in addition to academic proficiency. Kansans also said that school structures must be changed, and in some cases, changed dramatically, to ensure they provide the flexibility needed for all students to be successful after high school.

The State Board of Education took this data and over the course of several retreats and board sessions, designed a new, bold vision for Kansas' education. The new vision, "Kansas will lead the world in the success of each student," represents the input of more than 2,000 Kansans.

The State Board of Education presented the challenge to all leaders in Kansas, and in doing so, created a new leadership training need. In moving toward this new vision, one that will require significant change in Kansas school systems, a number of questions surfaced. How does Kansas inspire, assist, and produce a new generation of leaders – teachers, principals and superintendents – to lead the next generation of schools and students? How will Kansas help change the existing veteran leadership – teachers, principals and superintendents – from one of compliance in the No Child Left Behind era, to a visionary style of leadership required by the board's new vision and the Every Student Succeeds Act? How will we accomplish this leadership challenge when the problems facing our state, from economic to educational, are becoming perhaps the greatest demands in our lifetime?

This new landscape of Kansas education requires a new approach to the leadership development of not only aspiring leaders, but of veteran leaders. One that departs from previous methods of discussing leadership theory in isolation to combining theory with actual practice. One that departs from thinking of leadership development as an event or even a degree, to one that spans a degree development program and follows the individual into the position of a teacher, principal, or superintendent. As John Maxwell stated, "Leadership deals with people and their dynamics, which are continually changing. They are never static. The challenge of leadership is to create change and facilitate growth" (2010, p. 4).

The Synergy of Working Together

The challenges of this new era in education will stretch all existing formats of learning and training. Universities, service centers, professional and leadership organizations, and the Kansas State Department of Education will need to collaborate on a much deeper level.

These new structures of learning should provide a seamless coordination of learning opportunities from the initial teaching degree options, to a master's, doctorate, and postdoctoral study. This new leadership development will range from formal to informal settings of learning and should involve coordination across the state to address the various stages of leadership development. It will become imperative for all teachers, principals, and superintendents

to have multiple avenues and opportunities to participate in such leadership development and that those opportunities continue over the course of many years.

Core Principles of New Leadership Development

As current leaders ponder the changes necessary for leadership development in Kansas now and in the future, there are certain principles of leadership that are a necessity for development.

Too often leaders fail to understand the difference between core principles and managing leadership change. Core principles are timeless. They guide leaders like a true north star. They do not change. Perhaps Jim Collins, in his book, *Good to Great*, captured this essence when he said:

Yes, the world is changing and will continue to do so. But that does not mean we should stop the search for timeless principles. Think of it in this way: The practices of engineering continually evolve and change; the laws of physics remain relatively fixed. I like to think of our work for the search for timeless principles – the enduring physics of great organizations – that will remain true and relevant no matter how the world changes around us. Yes, the specific application (engineering) will change, but certain immutable laws (physics) of organized human performance will endure (2011, p. 15).

Stephen Covey also wrote:

By centering our leadership on correct principles, we create a solid foundation for development. Unlike ideas based on people or things which are subject to frequent and immediate change, correct principles do not change. They don't depend on the behavior of others or the current fad for their validity. They are not here one day and gone the next. Even in the midst of people or circumstances that seem to ignore the principles, we can be secure in the knowledge that principles are bigger than people or circumstances, and that thousands of years of history have seen them triumph, time and time again (2013, p. 15).

The following five core principles of leadership development are not intended to be exhaustive. They are meant to begin a discussion on the core tenants of a new leadership model. However, by keeping core principles to a limited set, they create a powerful driving force that will lead to complex behavior. This in turn enables change and movement forward for Kansas' leadership development.

Core Principle 1: Leadership development should be grounded in understanding culture, timing, and environments.

In Kansas, we are currently living in an era of strongly opinionated political discourse on state revenues allocated to education combined with the public's increased pressure for more accountability. Any leadership development in Kansas will need to be centered on understanding the state

and local social, political and education landscapes. Too often, leaders apply theories of leadership and change in a vacuum of understanding the political realities of a given situation. Contrast two of America's greatest leaders, Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. They were at their peak of leadership approximately 100 years from each other. Consider that Lincoln was attempting to keep a country together during a massive civil war. During that time, Lincoln, despite much opposition to his position, issued the Emancipation Proclamation, establishing the abolition of slavery. One hundred years later, King stood in front of the Lincoln Memorial delivering a call to the nation to adopt new civil rights legislation.

During Lincoln's time, he understood that the war and slavery were intertwined and could not be separated. His bold stance moved the country forward, and in many ways, also held it together. King understood that by peaceful protest, he could move the nation forward to equality for all. Both men deeply understood the times of which they lived and then applied leadership principles that were effective in changing our nation dramatically.

Today in Kansas, leaders will have to understand the economics, politics, and the era they have been asked to lead Kansas' school districts and schools. In developing leadership in Kansas, leaders will have to understand state and local culture. For example, in any community, leaders want to know, what are the values important in this community? What are the traditions? Who makes up the workforce? What has been accomplished in the past? All of these aspects of leadership are important before leaders can apply change at the state or local level. With so many changes in principal and superintendent positions, this core principle will be very important to understand for all Kansas leaders.

Core Principle 2: Leadership development should be grounded in understanding how to develop vision, inspiration, and purpose.

A great vision can propel any organization forward with purpose and clarity. Much has been written about the importance of vision to the leadership of any organization. Hans Finzel stated, "Great leaders challenge people to attempt things they would never try on their own" (2016, p. 17). A leader begins by having a "compelling 'dream' or destination – and determin[es] how we'll get there from an unwanted or underestimated departure point. This destination also resonates with or revives people's sense of their own best identity" (Hargreaves, Boyle, & Harris, 2014, p. 10).

In March 1968, Robert Kennedy spoke at the University of Kansas while campaigning for the presidency. In that speech, Kennedy reminded us to believe in a better future when he said:

George Bernard Shaw once wrote, 'Some people see things as they are and say why? I dream things that never were and say, why not?' So I come here to Kansas to ask for your help. In the difficult five months ahead, before the convention in Chicago, I ask for your help and for your assistance. If you believe that the United States can do better. If you believe that

we should change our course of action. If you believe that the United States stands for something here internally as well as elsewhere around the globe, I ask for your help and your assistance and your hand over the period of the next five months.

The State Board of Education, in both developing and implementing its vision for Kansas' education, has applied the leadership principles of creating that vision based on the desires and aspirations of Kansans. The "needs assessment" conducted during eight months of gathering information gave the State Board of Education the information needed to provide Kansas a bold and compelling vision for the future. This vision will require us to rethink our leadership at every level – from what teachers should do with instruction in classrooms to the restructuring of the learning environment for students. The new vision challenges all Kansans to think differently about how best to assist all Kansas students to become successful after completing formal schooling.

Leadership training in Kansas will need to focus on assisting leaders at all levels – teachers, principals, and superintendents – to understand how to use the State Board of Education's vision, and then develop strong visions in their own schools and communities to meet this challenge.

Core Principle 3: Leadership development should be grounded in theory and research with practical application of theory in the field.

Too often, master's and doctoral programs discuss theories of leadership and change without the practical application to see it in action. Programs of the future will have to incorporate much more practical application to leadership theories, thus deepening the understanding of research and its practical application to leadership in communities, districts, and schools.

Jim Collins spoke to the concept of learning from others, taking research and watching it applied, then learning from it. Collins stated:

Entrenched myth: Successful leaders in a turbulent world are bold, risk-seeking visionaries. Contrary finding: The best leaders we studied did not have a visionary ability to predict the future. They observed what worked, figured out why it worked, and built upon proven foundations. They were not more risk taking, more bold, more visionary and more creative than the comparisons. They were more disciplined, more empirical, and more paranoid (2011, p. 9).

In formal programming, such as degree-based programs, theory will be studied in the classroom and then applied in both a classroom and clinical setting – immersing the student in a practical based environment of learning. Ongoing training will be needed after any degree program. All too often, ongoing leadership training after degree completion is limited to learning activities or programs without the deep scholarly research needed to evaluate such programs or activities. Postdegree leadership development programs in Kansas will need to focus on both the knowledge of current

research and theory, along with the program application of that research.

Core Principle 4: Leadership development should be grounded in ongoing coaching and reflective practice.

A well-trained coach is essential for the ongoing development of leaders in Kansas. All successful leaders have mentors and coaches who help motivate, inspire, and challenge their thinking. In order to provide lasting change and deepen learning, ongoing coaching, training, and personalized support is necessary. Effective leadership development must include a strong mentoring component that provides ongoing training and an opportunity for personal reflection to foster the mentee's continued growth.

Core Principle 5: Leadership development should be grounded in the belief that leadership is not positional.

In February of this year, the United States Department of Education, in conjunction with the Council of Chief School State Officers, the National Education Association, and American Federation of Teachers, convened a national summit of all 50 states on teacher leadership and teacher voice. Kansas was fortunate to have a strong delegation at the summit. A common theme to come from the conference was that from a leadership role, the voice of the teacher has largely been ignored.

Leadership should come from teachers, principals, and superintendents in a collaborative, trustworthy, and engaging environment. This principle was derived in part from the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC). Unfortunately in most schools and school districts, this type of shared leadership is not found. Given the complex challenges all educational leaders in Kansas will face over the next decade, it is imperative that we invest in leadership development at all levels of the education system.

The Complete Cycle of Leadership Development

Leadership is about learning theories of leadership, practicing that theory of leadership in real-world environments, and then receiving coaching and reflecting on the application of that theory. This three-stage process in leadership development is critical to the ongoing development of the leader.

The fact is, most people never ascend to the leadership levels they are capable of obtaining because of the absence of a leadership development process. This process can be embedded in formal programs, such as master's or doctoral programs, and can be deepened and further developed through leadership institutes like the Kansas Leadership Center (KLC) and the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute (KELI). While it may be possible to grow as a leader without any assistance from others, that is more likely the exception than the rule.

A great leader never stops learning and leaders must repeat this cycle of development over and over throughout the span of their careers.

Conclusion

To achieve the level of change that the State Board of Education's new vision for Kansas education calls for will require the development of strong, visionary leaders at all levels of the education system. To that end, it will be imperative to implement a leadership development process for current and future education leaders. Change can be difficult, but with strong leadership, it is obtainable. The authors of Uplifting Leadership stated it well:

Individuals who have led others through profound change do not do so without fear of failure, danger or what the future might hold in store. Every leader experiences a moment of self-doubt where he or she faces the real prospect of defeat. What defines uplifting leadership is how these individuals deal with their own and their followers' fear - and do so in a way that creates uplift (Hargreaves et al., 2014, pp. 25-26).

When we foster leadership development, Kansans can and will lead the world in the success of each student.



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The Dean of the Kansas State University College of Education recognizes the challenges that school principals and teacher leaders face and accepts responsibility for providing a different kind of preparation program to ensure graduates are ready for those roles.

Who is the Building Leader?: Commentary on Educational Leadership Preparation Programs for the Future

Debbie K. Mercer

Dr. Debbie K. Mercer is Professor and Dean of the College of Education at Kansas State University. Her educational career includes teaching in kindergarten through college classrooms. Innovative approaches to educator and leadership preparation are hallmarks of the college, dedicated to preparing knowledgeable, ethical, caring decision makers for a global society.

It is critical that educator preparation programs reflect the current and future needs of schools. The job of a school leader is more complex and more demanding than ever before. As institutions of higher education contemplate the question in the title, defining the roles and responsibilities of the school building leader is critical. Understanding these issues in the context of current classrooms adds value to the discussion.

Kansas public schools have changed drastically in the last 25 years. The *Kansas Report Card 2014-2015*, published annually by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), details the demographics of Kansas public school students. Currently, 65.4% of the students in Kansas public schools are white; this is on the decline. Concurrently, the state has experienced an increase in Hispanic students (18.9%), and English Language Learners have grown to 8.7% in Kansas. Additionally, unique challenges face schools and communities related to steady increases in poverty rates to the current rate of 50%. Indications are that these areas will continue to see increased numbers of students.

In Kansas, 286 school districts employ approximately 1,300 principals. These individuals work directly with educators to positively impact the learning of the most diverse group of student learners in our history. What is the current role of a school building leader and how can higher education preparation programs best prepare them for those responsibilities? Those questions guide this discussion.

First, we must recognize that the role of a principal varies greatly. Large and small schools both produce unique strengths and challenges. Likewise, rural and urban, majority English Language Learners, Title classification, and mobility rates due to military connectedness or migrant work all impact the role of the building leader. Even within buildings, we see diverse leadership structures. For example, some buildings have assistant principals who handle certain activities or issues, while other buildings require the principal to take on a district-wide responsibility such as transportation director, special education director, or athletic director. These

duties all compete with the daily leadership responsibilities within a school building.

Kansas Licensure Requirements

Possession of a building leadership school specialist license is required to hold a building leadership position. In Kansas, an accredited four-year institution of higher education (IHE) must submit a program review for each area in which they would like to recommend a candidate for licensure to KSDE. These program reviews include, among other requirements, key assessments and data from required assignments that document attainment of the standards adopted by KSDE, which are adapted from the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). In sum, there are thirteen institutions of higher education that have approved building leadership programs in Kansas.

Traditionally, IHE preparation programs of study have included distinct courses in areas such as leadership, school finance, school law, special education, and technology. These courses are aligned with the Kansas professional school leadership content standards, and all programs require some type of clinical field experience in schools. While a

combination of classroom learning and application in the field is required, I believe there is a better way to prepare leaders for their complex set of responsibilities than the isolated course approach.

Once the initial school leadership license has been attained, a new school leader is required to participate in a mentoring program before moving to the professional level license. Mentoring guidelines are established by KSDE to provide a more uniform experience throughout the state.

The Building Principal: A Complex and Demanding Job

Figure 1 shows a sample job description for an elementary principal. You can see that the generalities of the position show the intense responsibilities of the individual charged with administering the building and ensuring student learning.

While a position description provides a broad overview of the responsibilities projected for an individual, the reality comes when dealing with the challenges of each day. The following scenario (found in Figure 2) is the reflection of a P-12 principal in a rural 1A school. These activities are what he considers in a typical day.

Figure 1 | **Sample Job Description**

Position Title: Elementary School Principal

Basic Function: Administers the school under the supervision of the assistant superintendent. Provides leadership to faculty and students; manages and directs all activities.

Performance Responsibilities:

1. Demonstrates leadership through beliefs, skills, and personal characteristics
2. Ensures that teachers plan and provide effective instruction
3. Monitors, assesses, and supervises the approved district curriculum
4. Develops an effective staff development program
5. Promotes a positive school climate by encouraging capabilities of all individuals
6. Uses a variety of data to improve the school's instructional program
7. Coordinates development of a written statement of the school's beliefs and goals
8. Determines whether the individual educational needs of pupils are being met
9. Evaluates the performance of the certified and classified staff members
10. Interprets, implements, and maintains school board policies and state school laws
11. Develops a program of public relations to further community support
12. Administers the school's budgeted allocations
13. Directs activities involving pupil and parent contacts concerning registrations, credits and transfers, suspensions, expulsions, pupil progress, placement, guidance and counseling matters, and other matters of a personal nature
14. Possesses a thorough understanding of child growth and development
15. Engages in a program of continuing professional development
16. Orients newly assigned staff members and ensures their familiarization with school policies and procedures, teaching materials, and school facilities
17. Creates a strong sense of togetherness through human relations technique
18. Possesses skill in conflict resolution, decision making, and consensus building
19. Performs other related duties as requested

Requirements: Valid certificate and five years of teaching experience.
Salary commensurate with experience.

Source: Thompson, D. C., Crampton, F. E., & Wood, R. C., 2012, p. 199.

Figure 2 | **Daily Responsibilities of a Building Leader**

1. Confirm transportation for morning, mid-day, and afternoon. Deal with any conflicts regarding regular routes and/or activity trips (I am also the "Transportation Director").
2. Deal with any potential teacher evaluation-related items. It seems this is happening all year long between observations, pre/post-conferences, PD plans, etc.
3. Prepare for any upcoming BOE or Committee meetings. Distribute information to the public via email, Twitter, website, etc.
4. Deal with any student behavior. Fill out necessary paperwork, inform parents, inform staff, make placements.
5. Deal with any staff problems or behavior. At least one staff member per day needs something. It may be action on my part, advice, support, or simply just listening, but there is never a day that at least one person doesn't need something.
6. Attend to any business-related transactions. I approve all Purchase Requisitions and work directly with the BOE clerk. This also includes working with the HS secretary on activity account transactions.
7. Help resolve any conflicts or planning for specific events, staff absences, activities, or otherwise. There is always some form of "scheduling/planning" that has to be attended to every day.
8. Attend any required meetings for KSDE, KELI, I-Can, WKLL, KASB, USA, or otherwise. I have to make it to the required meetings, but then still need to keep my own personal professional learning a priority.
9. Attend any JH/HS activities if I can when I don't have conflicts. We are on a rotation for away activities and I take my share. However, I provide support for set-up and hosting for as many home events as possible throughout the year. Provide support/supervision to all coaches and ADs as well.
10. Possibly get into some classrooms and/or hallways to maintain a physical presence. As the year wears on each Spring, this becomes less and less unfortunately, due to the aforementioned.
11. Supervise Maintenance Department. Advise and/or approve any purchases, projects, planning, or otherwise. This includes working with the various contractors that we have to as a result of our limited staff.
12. This time of year is IEP season; I have at least 3 per week.
13. Answer a varying and diverse amount of phone calls, emails, and text messages ranging in topic, variety, and from whom.

Source: P-12 principal from a rural, 1A school, personal communication.

You can see the variety of typical duties. Yet, regardless of the specific district assignment, all building-level positions require the same KSDE license. The building leadership preparation program must provide breadth and depth of both knowledge and skills.

Building Leader as Key Instructional Leader

The knowledge and skills to be an effective school leader require depth and breadth. Issues related to curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment are critical components of an instructional leader. Also important are the skills of managing the school building, including communication, use of social media, working with parents, and community engagement. We know these interaction and communication skills are critical to be an effective school leader.

Much has been written about the principal as the instructional leader in the building (Lunenburg, 2010; Marzano, 2005; Mendels, 2013; Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008). There is no doubt that this is a crucial role for a building leader, regardless of district demographics. Programs must address instructional leadership roles and responsibilities for all learners. A critical part of this role involves evaluating teacher effectiveness as defined by student learning gains. As part of the continuous improvement cycle, timely feedback and opportunities to enhance teaching skills is the responsibility of the leadership team in the building.

Building Leader as Key Culture Establisher

The principal sets the tone in the building. But how is tone defined? The climate, the culture, the happiness in the hallways? Perhaps, yes. School climate includes the culture of learning, and building the context for this to occur is critical (DeWitt & Slade, 2014). I think it is safe to say that we all want such an environment, yet it takes focused effort to create such a learning context.

As schools in Kansas become increasingly diverse, the roles related to nurturing the building culture become more important. Schools with strong character education and anti-bullying programming focus on treating all students and staff with respect. Further, focusing on building leadership capacity throughout the school building enhances a culture not only of acceptance, but also of ownership toward learning.

Building Leader as Key Change Agent

School leaders are responsible for leading change within their educational system. Moving from what worked in the past, to what is needed in the future can be daunting. Fullan notes, "effective school leaders are key to large-scale, sustainable education reform" (2002, 16). What a responsibility!

The building leader must be part of a team of professionals, each bringing their own strengths. The principal is responsible for empowering educator teams to research new curriculum, implement new programming, and seek professional development that promotes the vision of the district leadership. Strong and impactful teams create strong and impactful schools.

Educational Preparation Programs for the Future

While no one enters an IHE preparation program strong in all areas, the program must build skills in all areas. Graduate school must prepare the building leader for practice. In our discussion about defining a school building leader, it is evident that the roles and responsibilities vary greatly. With the job emphasizing instruction and learning, culture building, and leading change as common themes, the question then becomes: what do educational leadership preparation programs need to consider for the future?

With the understanding that no one person can address all building needs, a focus on teams is needed. Teams of professionals focusing on different needs can accomplish more than any one individual. So ideally, groups of emerging leaders from a particular school or district coming together as a cohort to work through a program together, provides opportunities to reflect deeply on their particular needs, challenges, and strengths. This is exactly what Kansas State University's partnership academy model represents.

Strong collaboration between the institution of higher education and the district wanting to build capacity is critical. The students entering these cohort-based programs may have aspirations to become building leaders or may choose to lead from their classrooms. It is the leadership capacity of the entire building – professional staff and students – that leads to a culture focused on respect and learning. Strong district and university partnerships prepare effective school

leaders. K-State's academy partnerships require belief in the importance of leadership and commitment to the collaborative process.

With district and university partners working together to develop the curriculum, we ensure that connections are made between theory and practice. Further, the curriculum is relevant to the learning context within that particular partnership area. District partners have the opportunity to present real challenges for academy students to address. University faculty see real-world scenarios first hand. Learning is a benefit to all involved– university faculty, aspiring leaders, and practicing school leaders.

Not all districts in Kansas have the capacity to send teams as a district cohort. There are simply not the numbers of educators available to fill a district cohort model. However, an academy model of delivery can still exist. With dedicated faculty building on key concepts, while putting responsibility on students to connect their learning to their particular context and connecting to the school partner, the weaving of theory to practice occurs. Building networks through discussion and reflection are important components to any model preparing school leaders for the future. At the same time, students should be challenged as their critical thinking skills are enhanced to consider common issues in their coursework, based on real data.

There is no doubt that school leadership preparation programs must reflect the learning environments in which children learn. Further, we know that the student demographics are changing in every school in America. Educator leader preparation programs must reflect student needs, while preparing leaders to accept the challenging and complex responsibilities of the future. Students are relying on this as they focus on learning.

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The Kansas State University Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership reviews the strong history of his department's university and public school partnerships and the impact he has seen those partnerships have on leadership preparation programs.

Revisiting Public School/University Partnerships for Formal Leadership Development: A Brief 30-Year Retrospective

David C. Thompson

Dr. David C. Thompson is Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership at Kansas State University. His 43-year career includes experience as a teacher, principal, superintendent, and the professoriate. Dr. Thompson holds an Ed.D from Oklahoma State University and postdoctoral credit from Harvard. He has been at Kansas State University since 1987, where he holds the title of Elvon G. Skeen Endowed Chair in Education.

Introduction

Almost exactly 30 years ago, Kansas State University foresaw the power of partnerships with public schools in preparing new generations of formal school leaders. A themed issue of *Educational Considerations* (Fall 1988)¹ celebrated that recognition, showcasing how the university had partnered with selected large Kansas school districts for development of leadership capacity. It was not only the university that recognized such power – then Commissioner Lee Droegemuller noted in the inside front cover of the special issue of *Educational Considerations* that real change in schools through partnerships requires “specific, mutually agreed-upon goals and objectives [wherein] each partner knows what the other has to offer and has a realistic view of what might be accomplished; ...employability, curriculum and skill development, and management and leadership; [and] leverage of both financial and human resources.”

These insights proved exactly on target for Kansas State University and partner school districts over the next three decades. Partnerships for leadership development – known as leadership academies,² in this case – took root, prospered, evolved, and multiplied to the point at which today K-State is simultaneously partnering with no fewer than seven school districts statewide in mid-2016, all having the purpose of developing formal school leadership capacity and leadership succession plans. These academies have also broadened to include other leadership recognition, most notably distributed leadership for systemic strength and optimization of human capital resources. This outcome was possible only because all partners were committed to unusual risk and were insightful in rearranging tradition to accommodate new models of inquiry, new models of institutional support, and new models of thinking about authority, power, and hierarchies in the educational world. The story of this success is retraced here in brief.

Transitions from Traditions

The centuries-old model of higher education, wherein students come to the ivory tower to learn at the feet of the masters, went out the window in K-State's case nearly 30 years ago. The context of the original birth and subsequent rebirth and expansion of new models of leadership academies (circa 2000) was grounded in dissatisfaction on the part of the university because it came to realize that its faculty held deep knowledge but often lacked either currency of field experience, or in some cases, no experience at all. At the same time the university was struggling with its disconnect from dynamic practice, Kansas school districts in general were forging their own alternatives to that same disconnect by championing and relying on noncredit in-service models of professional development, with the full support of the state department of education. While anyone wanting a professional license in order to serve as a school leader still needed to pursue a traditional university course of tightly prescribed study, practicing school leaders had no compelling reason to return to a university setting except to earn additional degrees. Simultaneously, schools and their leadership ranks were losing the benefit of deep theory-based knowledge of university faculty. While it might appear that schools actually created and desired this rift by promoting alternatives to credit-based learning, it was actually the case that each group – university faculty at K-State and top leadership in Kansas school districts – were each lamenting the divide and were actively seeking a bridge to rejoin these critical forces.

First Wave

The joining happened in two distinct phases, with evolution, growth, and maturation over the following decades. Initially in 1987, K-State and one large nearby school system agreed to provide selected in-service building-level administrative leaders (assistant and head principals) with additional professional development for academic credit. Agreement was reached that the university would work with appointed senior school district leaders to coplan and coteach a series of courses for credit that would be counted toward terminal degrees if participants desired. The university's gain was obvious: it gained entry into a real live school district, gained recognition and credibility in the field of practice, added new degree aspirants, and gained teaching resources in the form of school district personnel who were appointed to adjunct faculty rank at the university. The school district's gain was equally obvious: it gained targeted internal staff development at the highest academic level and provided an opportunity for the district to handpick participants for a two-year extended observation period wherein the district's initial motivation had been to create a senior leadership backfill and succession plan in light of ever-increasing retirements in that district. It also effectually provided the district with the opportunity to tailor elements of coursework in ways that addressed the district's unique urbanized needs. The partnership was so well received that it continued for three more two-year cohorts, ending only because the district succeeded in creating an internal candidate pool that risked growing too large if it continued at its historic rate.

Second Wave

In 1998, the second and most impactful and enduring stage began. In similar fashion to how the first cohort formed, superintendents from other large school districts in the area also were lamenting in their regular monthly meetings with each other about lack of depth in applicant pools as entry-level principalship vacancies occurred. Already having good relationships with K-State, these superintendents agreed to approach the university to open conversations about a preservice model of shared principal license preparation. The invitation was welcomed with open arms, and collaborative talks between three school districts and the university began. Of deep but unsurprising importance was that the four partner organizations were so committed to the concept of joint planning and delivery that it was agreed from the outset that the districts and the university would coplan every element and codeliver every part of a leadership academy aimed at creating a leadership candidate pool by identifying, recruiting, and selecting participants from among current classroom teachers in their respective districts. The districts proposed that the university be responsible primarily for providing a theory-into-practice knowledge base and being responsible for coleading and coteaching all license courses; at the same time the three districts would be responsible primarily for coleading and coteaching *and* adequately resourcing the academy through financial commitments to release time for participants, resource experts from the districts' own staffs who would provide strategic instruction based on their own employment specialties, and valuable perquisites such as refreshments and travel to selected learning opportunities in the state capital and beyond.

The result was a new style of partnership that would last and expand for decades. The first new-style leadership academy of this second wave began in 2000 and was named the Professional Administrative Leadership Academy (PALA). Enrolling eight students from each of three partner districts, PALA was built around the intellectual and collegial partnership just described and was based on national leadership standards promulgated at that time by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) and on the Kansas State Department of Education's own parallel leadership licensure standards. Participants were carefully chosen by each district, all of which were certain to select participants based on their potential for eventual appointment to a formal administrative position within their school district. All planning and all instruction took place at various central locations, with the university campus used only when gathering academy participants for events like national speakers and library instruction. Participants were paired with mentors, who themselves were exemplary sitting leaders within the three districts.

A Remarkable Commitment

The transition from university-driven traditions was remarkable because time-honored ways of doing things stopped in dramatic fashion. From the very outset, under the leadership academy vision the university gave up its absolute control of preservice leadership license preparation programs, which notably included no longer claiming to hold all knowledge and all program control. The new way moved school leadership preparation off campus to a vibrant field setting, with full embrace of the unique view that high levels of expertise were housed within both the districts and the university – with both elements needed for a superior preparation program. The new way involved financial commitments likely never before seen, as the university provided faculty for planning and for instruction and also provided direct substantial payment to districts to help defray mentor costs – importantly, these costs were entirely new because the university continued to operate its traditional campus program for students not chosen for an academy, while the academy itself was a closed audience. The new way involved fundamental change within districts as well, as they committed to providing release time for participants, instructional contributions by senior leadership, and many expenses such as travel, conference registrations, refreshments, and more.

Movement to the new model at the university level could have been difficult, but it was not. Kansas State University's College of Education has long been known for modeling promising ventures, and aligning human and fiscal resources with the new model required only that the case be laid with proper care. The model's investment was significant. It required enlisting the enthusiastic support of an entire academic department's faculty whose teaching load changed as a result of the new vision. It required salaries and travel in support of off-campus programming. It required refocusing the vision of leadership preparation to include theory-into-practice in ways that went far beyond lip service to the concept. It required understanding of complex university structures involving academic credit processes, graduate school regulations, and the support of college and university administrators. The college's reputation for innovation made these elements doable within a traditional university macrostructure, along with faculty understanding and support.

The Outcome

Success of the leadership academy model is evidenced in extensive data on academy reiterations, program completers and employment placements.³ The original three districts that launched the second wave have so benefited for their own reasons from the academy model that each has had multiple iterations across the past 15 years. One school district has partnered on seven academies for a total of 108 participants. Another has been a district partner on four academies for a total of 43 teacher participants. The third original partner is currently in its third academy for a total of 36 participants. As news spread, additional districts asked for tailored academies to address their leadership needs. As a result, and despite

the reality that Kansas has very few large school districts where deep needs for leadership succession may be thought most prevalent, three additional districts have committed to multiple iterations of academies, totaling eight iterations involving another 115 prospective leaders. In total, 318 teacher leaders chosen by their school districts have been or are in the process of being prepared for service at some level since 2000. Accounting for multidistrict partnerships, another way to perceive the impact is to realize that these data were generated across 19 distinct and unique academy cohorts.

A remarkable aspect of these data, however, rests in one additional concept that has greatly altered the nature of the leadership academy partnership. That concept is that K-State's partner school districts have wisely understood that leadership occurs at all levels and that neglecting the development of leadership capacity at the classroom level is inefficient and unwise. Throughout the history of the K-State leadership academy concept have been the understanding and desire to develop selected faculty and staff who may – or may not – aspire to taking on a traditional administrative leadership role. Consequently, a large number of recent academies have been based in a title more accurately described as *teacher leadership academies*. In this case, participants receive all the learning typically reserved for administrative leadership aspirants, but the program of studies may be modified or shortened to allow for selected topics to be pursued in greater depth depending on district interests. Experience has shown, however, that the eyes-wide-open learning that transpires generally leads participants to complete a full course of studies leading to formal leadership licensure, so much so that to date across 23 academies a large majority of participants ultimately have become employed at a higher level of responsibility within their respective districts than was true when they began their studies. In sum, the academy model works because districts have succeeded in developing deeper leadership candidate pools as proved by their repeated requests for continued academy partnerships.

The Future

The academy model shows no signs of abating. Several districts are awaiting a start date, and the model has been replicated in other states. K-State is even launching a leadership academy partnership in a bordering state. The challenge is no longer the model or evidence of its success. The challenge is in meeting demand for service, and in sustaining the high cost given severe state pressures to reduce university and school district budgets. There is no doubt the model is expensive. Kansas State University today invests nearly \$200,000 annually in its currently operating seven leadership academies – these dollars are in addition to normal faculty salaries and benefits and are in addition to the costs of operating other traditional programs including campus-based master's and doctoral programs. K-State smartly manages recurring external dollars to support this additional cost – if that source of funding were to cease, it would gravely jeopardize the viability of the academy model because it would place these extended costs back onto base resources that are being slashed by the state in order to pay

for tax cut policies. The defense against such risk is obvious: would either the partner school districts or the university be willing to regress to the old ivory tower model? In a word, a resounding NO. Alternatives would have to be found – there is simply no going back, as the academy model has been established as a top priority for the College of Education at Kansas State University and is part of the university's long-range vision entitled *K-State 2025*.



Endnotes

¹ See generally *Educational Considerations*, 15(3), Fall 1988.

² An important distinction is made here: the earliest versions (1987–1998) of leadership academies, as they were called, were post-master's degree professional development for practicing school leaders. Subsequent leadership academies have been partnerships for preservice prospective school leaders, providing master's degrees to the selected participants.

³ For more data on past leadership academies, see later in this issue, Figures 3, 4, and 5 in Mary Devin's, "Transforming the Preparation of Leaders into a True Partnership Model."



A former school superintendent who is now a university professor uses her experience in these partnership roles to describe how Kansas State University's collaboratively designed master's academy leadership preparation models merging theory and practice came about over fifteen years ago, and how it has evolved since then.

Transforming the Preparation of Leaders into a True Partnership Model

Mary Devin

Dr. Mary Devin is Professor of Educational Leadership at Kansas State University and has been directly involved with master's partnerships since the program began. She served as a school superintendent partner in the first two years of the model and as the university partner liaison for the last fourteen years.

The Context

In the early 2000s, as public education moved into the accountability era spawned by passage of No Child Left Behind in 2001, landmark research produced convincing evidence of the importance of leadership (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, K., 2004). These researchers found that among school-related factors, the influence of leadership on student success is second only to classroom instruction, and further, that leadership makes the most difference in schools with the greatest need. Even more attention-getting was that virtually no documented instances were found of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader. While other factors and positions were necessary in the process, leadership was found to be the catalyst.

Teachers were also recognizing the importance of leadership. In 2006, 36% of respondents to the Kansas Teachers Working Conditions Survey selected leadership as the single factor most influencing the decision about staying in their school and 97% ranked support from school leadership as important or extremely important in influencing personal decisions about future plans (Miller, Devin, and Shoop, 2007). Prior to these affirming statements from research, practitioners in school districts were experiencing the need for quality leadership firsthand. Expectations of school leader position holders were changing, and district leaders responsible for hiring principals were finding that current preparation programs were not producing candidates ready to be successful in this new leadership setting.

A Story of Change Begins

Insightful chief district leaders in three neighboring Midwest school districts united with courageous faculty members from a nearby university to address leadership concerns in their area. They were superintendents from each of the three districts with their most immediate leadership teammates and the dean and senior faculty members from the department of educational administration at the nearby

state university. In true partnership spirit, the participants came together as an ad hoc planning committee to find a common commitment, to collect resources available across all sources, and to put together a more effective design for preparation of school leaders. They quickly found they shared a vision of a more effective merger between theory and practice and that they were ready to commit their respective organizations to planning and implementing a new program consistent with that shared vision. Everyone agreed a new approach to curriculum was needed, but it must be one anchored firmly in research and designed to reflect a growing body of knowledge behind best practice in schools of today and the future.

Finding a Research Base for a New Approach to Preparing Leaders

This was just as the century changed and professional organizations and coalitions had gathered to produce guidelines related to successful leadership. After much deliberation over current professional activities and conversations, these planners chose two research-based components to form the structural framework for their new preparation program:

- *ISLLC Standards (1996)*. The Council of Chief State School Officials (CSSO) and the National Policy Board of Educational Administration (NPBEA) jointly sponsored a coalition of professional organizations and representatives from prominent leadership preparation programs known as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). In 1996 ISLLC published six research-based leadership standards endorsed by the profession. These six standards were the best match for the shared vision the district and university partners had identified.

Their choice proved to be a fortuitous one. State departments of education across the country soon adopted those same ISLLC standards as the basis for leadership licensure. The ISLLC standards continue to undergird the partnership model today, even as they were revised by ISLLC in 2008 and the Performance Indicators were added to bring clarity to the research base that same year.

- *NPBEA Leadership Competencies (1993)*. At the same time the academy initiators were planning their work, researchers were seeking answers to questions about what leadership looked like on the job – what leaders did to accomplish the work of these standards. The partnership planners adopted the current body of knowledge from work in this area by the NPBEA to support the six standards in the new academy curriculum. This was another wise choice; the NPBEA research led to what is now known as the 21 Leadership Responsibilities (Waters et al., 2003).

Planners for this new approach to preparing leaders made many significant decisions before any class members were selected or the date of a first class session was set. In significant departure from typical practice, members

of the new two-year closed cohort were selected by the home district through an open application process based on consideration of demonstrated leadership potential. Each of the three districts filled eight student spaces; the only university requirement of participants was successful admission to graduate school.

Face-to-face class session dates (compatible with district schedules rather than the university calendar) were scheduled with mentor interactions on field experiences supplementing them. Tuition was the responsibility of individual academy students, but books and published materials were provided for all by the districts. The university contributed towards costs in the form of compensation for district staff assisting with the academy. The details of district selection of students, material provision, and university cost sharing would vary over the coming years, but all continue to be distinguishing characteristics of the partnership model.

The New Program of Study

Continuing the partnership framework, decisions related to curriculum and instructional delivery were made collaboratively. An integrated, spiraling curriculum replaced discrete course delivery, but was designed to remain continuously open to new research and to changes in context of practice. District leaders brought forward specific challenges facing their districts and university faculty aligned that context with research-based leadership standards (ISLLC and the 21 Responsibilities) and university preparation program standards (national and state accreditation). Delivery of instruction was also a partnership activity. As best practice and research-based knowledge was presented by university staff, district leaders reinforced the concepts by exposing students to real-world applications in the district, much like mastery in a magnet school within the context of the interest theme. Academy students practiced new skills through meaningful involvement in current school improvement work in their buildings, keeping strong connections between theory and practice foremost in implementation of the new model.

Systems thinking, networking, and greater understanding of the district operations were goals for student growth in the first academy. To facilitate learning and to bridge the distance between theory and current district practice and priorities, each student was assigned a mentor (a building leader in the district). Interactions among aspiring leaders and practitioners produced even more opportunities than expected as college of education staff, district leaders, mentors, and more experienced teachers learned from each other while working with the academy participants. A culture of learning for all emerged, exceeding all partners' expectations. These student goals and learning for all outcomes remain visibly important elements in current academies.

Impact of the Academy

After months of planning, the first university/district partner master's academy got underway in February 2000.¹ Details of how this was accomplished are available in firsthand accounts of the story (Devin, 2004, Miller et al., 2007). Two years later,

twenty students across the three participating districts had acquired building leader licensure and were viable candidates for leadership openings in their respective districts as a result of completing the first master's degree district-university partnership academy. Planners rated the academy experience an overwhelming success. The superintendent of the district where all eight selected participants completed the academy summarized expected and unexpected benefits in a communication to her board of education shortly after the academy was completed:

Benefits of the Academy Partnership Leadership Preparation Model

- The district has a cadre of leaders with broader skills and commitment to call on for future school improvement efforts.
- District leaders participating on the planning committee grew professionally as they interacted with university staff and were stimulated by the responses of the academy participants.
- Many of the special projects completed by the participants were directly connected to school improvement efforts at the building level and produced positive results for students.
- Academy participants shared their experiences often with other district teachers and administrators, extending the professional growth beyond the eight directly involved.
- Mentors cited their own growth as they worked with the academy students in problem-solving situations.

- University staff introduced additional resources that are useful to the professional growth of practicing administrators in the district.
- The close working relations between the university and the district rose to yet another level. The direct involvement with our staff and programs has created even greater awareness of and respect for the quality present in the district.
- There are now even more opportunities for future collaboration with the university, for the benefit of staff and students.
- The district/university project was featured in the recent process of national accreditation for the teacher preparation program at the university, taking the positive exposure for the district even beyond Kansas. (Miller et al., 2007, p.99)

Later research on the first academy partnership design for preparing new leaders documented important findings in interviews with the participants themselves at the end of the academy. Quotes from academy completers in Figure 1 indicated the new preparation model more than accomplished the goals of those who partnered on its design. Reflective comments from completers in subsequent academies express similar opinions on the same themes.

Shift of Focus to Teacher Leadership Brings More Academy Partners

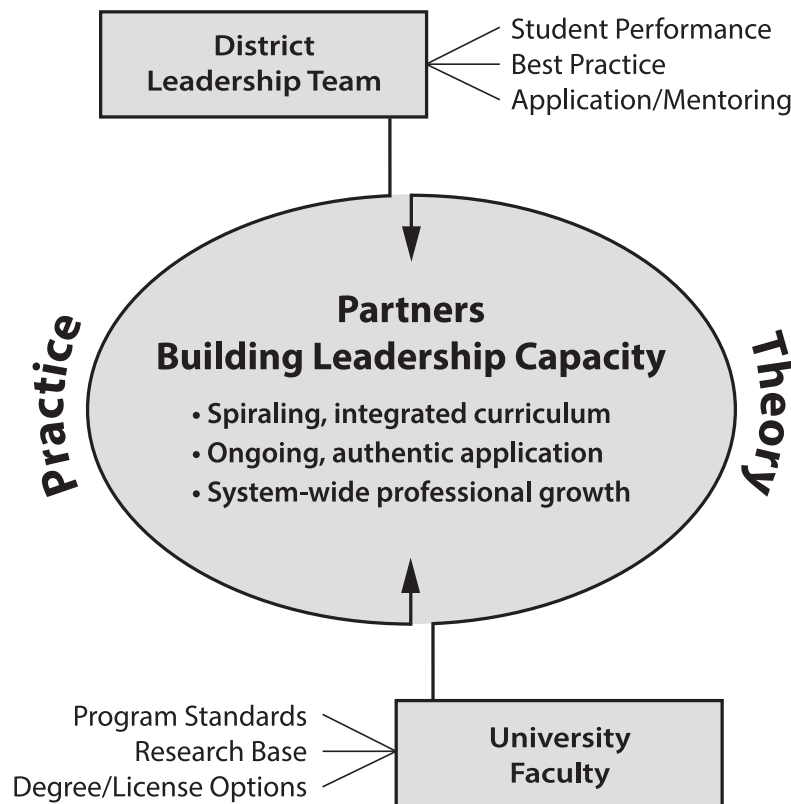
Shortly after the conclusion of the first master's degree partnership academy, two of the three original district partners experienced changes in the top leadership position

Figure 1 | **Program Graduates Reflection on Impact of Academy Experience**

The Partnership Model...	Program Graduate Reflection	Source
changed the way people think about themselves.	"I had never given much consideration to becoming a building principal. Now I think I am glad to have an opportunity to get a principal license even if I never use it. I will be a much better teacher because of this experience."	(Gustafson, 2005, p. 108)
changed classroom practices.	"I clearly remember the very first reflective assignment – what a chore! Now, reflective thought is a daily part of my life, and a part I have included in the assignment of my students. The reflecting was something I will take with me into the future – asking my own students to reflect has impacted how I teach."	(Miller & Devin, 2005, pp. 2–3)
provided authentic experiences.	"In my first year of school administration, I do not think I have been exposed to anything that we didn't discuss at one time or another in (the academy). I can't imagine where I would be with our school improvement efforts and staff development planning had it not been for the knowledge we received in (the academy)."	(Miller, et.al., 2007, p. 85)
developed systems thinking.	"My participation in (the academy) was a genuine life-changing experience. I look at the entire educational field differently than I did before, because for two whole years, I got to view education from the lenses of some of the best administrators in education today. I was so fortunate."	(Gustafson, 2005, p. 131)

Figure 2 | Partnership Model for Teacher Leadership

PBLC: Partners Building Leadership Capacity



and attention to the academy partnership model was set aside for a time. In the third of the original partner districts, conversations turned to 1) student feedback indicating significant benefits from the academy even if the graduate remained in the classroom, and 2) the risks of preparing too many good teachers for more administrative openings than the district would need. This discussion led to a second university partnership academy with two changes. First, all participants came from a single district; second and more importantly, the focus shifted from principal preparation to expanding teacher leadership capacity. Academy content remained much the same with more emphasis on teachers as leaders working on school improvement from classroom positions or, as an individual option, as a foundation for the building level administrative license. This shift in focus is the foundation for the many university/district partnership academies that have followed to this date. Figure 2 is a visual demonstration of the partnership master's model for teacher leadership.

From the onset, the university partners agreed that team leadership is an essential component of the shared vision and they were pleased to enter into a second partnership with the district. Instead of a 36-hour master's encompassing all requirements for a building principal license, the academy program of study was reduced to a 30-hour master's in

educational leadership with the individual option of adding six additional hours outside the academy to complete building license requirements. The new format created district interest in a series of academy cohorts in order to give greater numbers of teachers the opportunity to be involved. It was also a way of showing value placed on teachers as learners and a way of supporting those interested in pursuing advanced degree work. The focus on building leadership skills was especially useful as nonadministrative positions such as coaches, coordinators, team leaders, etc., became more common across districts. At the university, the University/District Teacher Leadership Master's Degree academy would become the primary delivery model for the master's program and the building leader preparation program of study over the next fifteen years. See Figure 3 for the history of university/district partnership academies since the model's introduction in 2000.

The redirection to a focus on teacher leadership did not diminish the importance of thoughtful planning for each academy on how to embed theory in the context of local practice, but the shift did alter the conversation between the university and district partners as new academies formed, either with first-time partners, or when beginning a new group as part of a series with a familiar partner. Projecting leadership needs became even more holistic in nature,

Figure 3 | **University/District Partnership Master's Degree Model – History (May 2016)**

Academy Name	District Partner(s)	Dates of Academy	# Enrolled
Professional Administrative Leadership Academy (PALA)	Geary County (8) Manhattan-Ogden (8) Salina (8)	March 2000 – February 2002	24
Leadership Academy	Geary County	September 2003 – May 2005	20
Garden City/Manhattan-Ogden Teacher Leadership Academy (GC/MO TLA)	Garden City (12) Manhattan-Ogden (12)	Spring 2005 – Fall 2006	24
Professional Education Leadership Academy (PELA)	Geary County	January 2006 – December 2007	17
Dodge City Education Leadership Academy (DCELA)	Dodge City	January 2007 – December 2008	21
Professional Education Leadership Academy 2 (PELA 2)	Geary County	June 2008 – May 2010	15
Salina Teacher Leadership Academy (STLA)	Salina	Fall 2008 – Summer 2010	8
Professional Education Leadership Academy 3 (PELA 3)	Geary County	September 2010 – June 2012	15
Dodge City Education Leadership Academy 2 (DCELA 2)	Dodge City	January 2011 – December 2012	22
Salina Teacher Leadership Academy 2 (STLA 2)	Salina	Fall 2011 – Summer 2013	6
Topeka Public Schools Teacher Leadership Academy (TPSTLA)	Topeka	January 2013 – December 2014	10
Professional Education Leadership Academy 4 (PELA 4)	Geary County	January 2012 – December 2013	14
Topeka Public Schools Teacher Leadership Academy 2 (TPSTLA 2)	Topeka	January 2014 – December 2015	9
Professional Education Leadership Academy 5 (PELA 5)*	Geary County	Fall 2015 – Summer 2017	19
Salina Teacher Leadership Academy 3 (STLA 3)*	Salina	Fall 2015 – Summer 2017	21
USD 383 Teacher Leadership Academy 3 (TLA 3)*	Manhattan-Ogden	Fall 2015 – Summer 2017	16
Dodge City/Garden City Teacher Leadership Academy (DC/GC TLA) **	Dodge City (12) Garden City (12)	Fall 2016 – Summer 2018	24
Topeka/Wamego Teacher Leadership Academy **	Topeka (17) Wamego (4)	Fall 2016 – Summer 2018	21
Osage Nation Educational Leadership Academy (ONELA)**	Osage Nation (Oklahoma)	Fall 2016 – Summer 2018	12
Teacher Leadership LEAD 512***	Shawnee Mission	Spring 2017 – Fall 2018	TBD

* In progress. (Fall 2015 – Summer 2017)

** Begins Fall 2016

*** Begins Spring 2017

Figure 4 | **District Partners by Academy Date/Enrollment (May 2016)**

District	Academy Start Date	Enrollment
District Partner 1: Geary County	March 2000	8*
	September 2003	20
	January 2006	17
	June 2008	15
	September 2010	15
	January 2013	14
	September 15	19
		Total = 108
District Partner 2: Salina	March 2000	8*
	September 2008	8
	September 2011	6
	August 2015	21
		Total = 43
District Partner 3: Manhattan-Ogden	March 2000	8*
	Spring 2005	12*
	September 2015	16
		Total = 36
District Partner 4: Dodge City	January 2007	21
	January 2011	22
	September 2016	12*
		Total = 55
District Partner 5: Topeka	January 2012	10
	January 2014	9
	September 2016	17*
		Total = 36
District Partner 6: Garden City	January 2005	12*
	September 2016	12*
		Total = 24
District Partner 7: Wamego	September 2016	4*
		Total = 4
Partner 8 (Tribal Government): Osage Nation	September 2016	12
		Total = 12
	Total academy participants to date = 318	
	Total academy groups to date = 19	
(District Partner 9)	(In planning for January 2017 Start)	(TBD)

* Joint partnership with another district

especially as emerging research reinforced the importance of building leadership teams and districts broadened the manner in which they relied on teacher leadership as an essential component of successful school improvement. The planning group morphed into the Planning Committee and was acknowledged to be an ongoing part of the process throughout the full two years of the academy.

Interest in partnerships grew quickly as word spread among education leaders regarding the positive outcomes of early academies. Figure 4 illustrates this growth, as they list academies by district partners, showing how the number of individual district partners participating with the university in leadership master's academies will have tripled in the first 16 years of its implementation.

Within academies, field experiences became more diverse in order to meet the needs of the teachers coming into the program from various assignments across the districts. While face-to-face time continues to be an important element in the academy model, the challenge of geographic distance is often an item on each planning committee's agenda. A typical academy meets face-to-face on the district site eight times each semester with technology facilitating communications in-between. However, the partners have found various creative ways to package face-to-face time over the years. Longer weekend sessions reduce travel time and developing technology resources such as PolyCom and Zoom can create a degree of physical togetherness without so much travel.

Academy Materials

Materials selected today are very different from those used in the first academy, but choosing them collaboratively remains a major part of the planning process. The first academy relied on a series of titles from the mid-90s based on the 21 competencies identified by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) to describe what principals should know and be able to do. The 21 themes were grouped into Functional, Interpersonal, Programmatic, and Contextual domains. When McREL research introduced the 21 Leadership Responsibilities of building leaders, materials shifted to those related to the newer research (Waters et al., 2003, 2007). Another influence on materials has been the growing body of knowledge from many sources on what works in schools and how to build leadership capacity at all levels. Approximately twenty titles are selected by the respective planning committees for each academy currently, looking at the most recent materials available that best match issues, interests, and professional development in the partner district.

While authors and titles vary across academies (even in the same district), they remain contemporary research-based publications on topics related to building leadership capacity at all levels; such topics include using data to inform decisions, understanding and leading the change process, and leadership in special education, technology, curriculum, and team building. Other consistent elements in the integrated, spiraling curriculum are influencing a culture supporting school improvement, safety and equity issues, and ethics that underlie educational decisions. Authors

frequently appearing on materials lists include Lambert on teacher leadership, Fullan and Wagner on change, Kidder on ethics, and others such as Douglas Reeves, Victoria Bernhardt, Charlotte Danielson, Kent Peterson, Terry Deal, Ken O'Connor, and Shirley Hord. Additionally, emerging emphasis on the formation of professional learning communities, which reinforces the need for teacher leadership, also has become an integral part of the several academy's professional growth plan. Primary resources used for developing and sustaining a professional learning community culture include the National Association of Elementary Principals and the works of Robert DuFour and others.

Mentored Field Experiences

From the first academy through the present ones, each academy participant is assigned a one-on-one district mentor to work with over the two-year program. The mentor assists the student in finding suitable applications, increasing responsibility over time. As topics are explored in class, students are expected to find opportunities to put what they have learned into practice at an appropriate level. When topics reappear in the integrated, spiraling curriculum, the level of involvement in practice increases for the student. The purpose of the mentor relationship remains the same, but planners have learned that good mentor programs require a program of support and skill building. District partners are responsible for assigning mentors, but the university partner can provide assistance with developing mentoring skills. Mentor support includes establishing a network of mentors where they can learn mentoring skills and share ideas, successes, and challenges with each other.

Staffing and Linking the Partners

An important staffing element separating the partnership model from previous preparation approaches was the blending of both university and district personnel as first-line staff during the two years the cohort works together. The first partnership academy was staffed by the three experienced district leaders (each of whom had served as a university adjunct instructor), who were individually teamed with a designated university faculty member with expertise on content. These three superintendents were the connecting links between the university and the staff. As planners, each accepted an active role in designing and delivering topics in the proposed curriculum. In addition, practitioners and outside experts were called on to enhance topics as they were studied in class settings.

Staffing changes among and within the partners themselves played a significant part in the evolution of the partnership academy model. The last remaining superintendent from the three original partners transitioned to a full-time university faculty position and joined forces with another faculty member who had recently made a similar transition from the principalship to the university. This educator was also well-versed in the new model, having served as a mentor in the first master's academy prior to moving to the university. These two, now university colleagues, assumed leadership for expanding the partnership model to more districts. Successor

leaders in the first three districts became familiar with the model and its past successes and interest grew in working together again. Roles or faces of all leaders had changed since initiation of the partnership model, but its reputation for accomplishing the goal of merging theory and practice was growing rapidly. In a very short time the number of academies increased dramatically, taking shape as a series of academies with original district partners and new first-time partnerships with others.

Staffing needs continued to be affected as the model matured. Thorough planning before the first class session reduced the need for impactful decisions to be made during the academy. With this preplanning in place, the direct participation of chief decision makers (superintendents) was no longer essential after commitment was made to enter the partnership. A new district liaison role took shape replacing the one held by the original superintendents. With the strong team from the university, a district liaison was needed to coordinate between the academy activities and the district, to facilitate communication, and to assist in making whatever connections were important between the academy staff, students, mentors, and others. The liaison position holder shifted to an Assistant Superintendent or a central office director. The selection of the liaison remained collaborative and the university assumed responsibility for compensating these positions as adjunct instructors.

Over time the increasing number of partner districts and the challenges of geographic distance led to other staffing alterations. At the university, the two faculty members leading academy expansion recognized the need to work separately and build leadership capacity in others in order to accommodate twice the number of district partnerships. The district liaison became a coteacher with equal responsibility for planning and delivering the curriculum within the guidelines established by the district/university planning committee. Position holders began to include principals and in some cases districts chose to split the assignment between two district leaders. Selection remains collaborative and the university continues to provide compensation for the position in whatever format best serves the partnership at that time.

Academy Planning Committee

The presence of an academy planning committee composed of both district and university members is another unique feature of the university/district partnership. The purpose of the committee is to provide guidance throughout the two academy years; it does not shut down after initial planning and the first class session. As the model matured, transitions influenced the Planning Committee makeup, not its importance. Today in addition to the university representative(s), the district members typically include the superintendent or a top assistant, central office directors involved with staff development and school improvement, representative principals, and sometimes representatives from past academies.

When a district expresses interest in forming an original partnership or another in a series in the same district, university and district leaders form a Planning Committee to

collaboratively plan and implement a preparation program for future leaders. All decisions are made collaboratively. The Planning Committee remains in place throughout the two years of the academy and periodic meetings are scheduled to share information on student progress and to make sure support systems are working satisfactorily. The involvement of the Planning Committee is what has made it possible to effectively merge theory and practice. Its goal is to extend academy benefits across the district, beyond personal growth of students in the program. The Planning Committee is where relationships are built between the university and the district.

Impact on District and University Cultures

In the sixteen-plus years since the first university/district partnership began, some generalizations about this approach to preparing leaders have become evident. The number of district partners choosing to have a series of academies indicate the model has become an ongoing component of professional development opportunities offered to staff; teachers anticipate the beginning of the next academy cycle. The nature of the academy structure itself benefits districts beyond the professional growth of the participants in the class. As teachers learn in the academy classroom, they become actively involved in real school improvement efforts

in their building or district. Participants across all academies consistently speak to the benefit of being able to apply immediately what they are learning, and to seeing the positive impact of what they have learned on their performance, whether they remain in the classroom or move to another assignment in the future. School improvement efforts benefit from the skills academy students bring to their assignments. For those academy completers who have gone on to building leader positions, feedback indicates support for the strength of preparation for leadership responsibilities provided by the academy model.

The opportunity to select academy students through an application process gives the district significant influence on who will pursue personal leadership development, an especially important factor when increasing diversity of staff is a district goal. The influence of supervisors has been identified as a major factor in the decision teachers make to pursue a career in administration (Zacharakis, Devin, & Miller, 2006), and in making decisions for future leadership positions, district leaders can consider their extended observations of student growth in leadership over their time in the academy. Beyond professional growth for academy students, mentors report their service to be an especially valuable professional growth for them, as well.

Figure 5 | One District's Report of the Effectiveness of Academies by Providing Leadership for Future Positions

Description of Academy Graduate's Current Position In or Out of the District	Number of Graduates in Current Position (Across all six academies completed in the district between 2002–2014)	Percent of Academy Graduates
Number of academy graduates serving as principal or assistant principal in the district	21	24
Number of academy graduates serving in a central office position in the district	6	7
Number of academy graduates serving in a building level nonclassroom assignment in the district (coach, coordinator, etc.)	16	18
Number of academy graduates remaining in a classroom teaching assignment in the district (with teacher leader responsibilities on building and district committees as needed) *10 of these individuals graduated from the most recently finished cohort and have had only one academic year to pursue administrative positions	23	26
Number of academy graduates departed from the district	23	26
Total graduates during time period	89	*

Note: This district partner was one of the three original university partners and since beginning the first academy, and has partnered on a total of six completed academy cohorts. In Fall 2016, 18 more teachers enrolled in a seventh partnership academy scheduled to be complete in Summer 2017.

*due to rounding, figure does not equal 100%

District satisfaction is evidenced by the fact that in every district where a partnership academy has been completed, two or more additional academies have now been completed. Several districts have sponsored three or four academy cohorts. One large district has completed six master's academies and is presently midway through a seventh cohort group since the model was first used in 2000. Focusing on this one longtime district partner, one way to assess the impact of this investment in professional growth is to follow teachers who have completed an academy, and Figure 5 charts graduates from these six academies in this one district. For this district with high mobility due to its location, it is important to note that only 26% of academy completers left the district, meaning that 74% of completers stayed. This speaks to the value of the academies as a retention tool for good teachers.

Academies affect the culture of both the district and the university partner. In the district, academy participants change the conversations in faculty lounges, in team discussions, and in leadership team planning. Across the district, there is a growing appreciation for and understanding of the complexity of decisions and actions, even when those decisions are not viewed favorably. A greater sense of system is blended with personal interests as issues emerge and problems are solved.

University staff benefit equally from this connection between theory and practice. The opportunity to be involved at a closer proximity to practice provides important insight for university staff. Networking with district personnel and district programs has led to additional unexpected opportunities for collaboration beyond academies between the university and districts. The reputation as a partner/collaborator is a growing asset to the college and to the larger university. The university has frequently recognized district partners by acknowledging their leadership by presenting them with formal recognition such as the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) Excellence in Educational Leadership Awards.

Future of the Academy Partnership Model

Efforts continue to make an academy partnership as effective as possible. Keeping curriculum topics current, attracting potential leaders in the application process, selecting the most up-to-date materials to support the topics, making sure field experiences are authentic, and listening to feedback from district leaders and students themselves continue to be routine parts of academy operations.

Keeping the academy connected to the district is important to the success of the mission of this leadership preparation program. Seated principals must see the academy as an important capacity-building opportunity for teachers. Identifying the best academy students depends on district leaders and principals encouraging potential leaders to apply for the academy. This influence is the most significant factor in building leadership capacity for the future. Teacher leaders often lack self-confidence and fail to see their own strengths or potential. Principals who have had faculty members in academies report a positive influence on building culture

itself as new skills and conversations are introduced in building team and school improvement activities.

One area tagged for improvement in academy operations is skill development and support for mentors of academy students. District partners with the most successful outcomes have an organizational plan for mentors during the academy period. University staff assist with skill-building materials and activities and the district liaison acts as a facilitator for mentor networking.

Even absent efforts to recruit new partners, requests for expanding the number of partnerships continues to grow. The capacity of the department to match the level of interest will challenge leaders in the coming years. Prospects for finding coalitions of smaller districts not large enough to support an academy within their own district are untapped, but certainly feasible. Capacity in current academy staff must continue to grow and may need to be applied in changing fashion. New ways to organize in district support systems are likely to emerge. Technology improvements will open new options that preserve the face-to-face benefits while reducing barriers. Blocks of time will be reshaped to better fit needs of new partners. Extended blocks (several days) during summer, for example, can replace current shorter, more frequent schedules now typical.

Interest in the academy model has spread beyond the parent university. Another state university requested assistance from academy leaders to establish university/district partnerships out of their own leadership preparation program. The two-person university team that had taken the teacher leadership model to scale in their department provided direct consulting services to support this effort by a university colleague. Unfortunately, the effort produced only a single academy partnership experience, perhaps at least partly because of unrelated leadership changes in both the university and the district involved.

As a result of professional information shared through university networks, a similar request was received from a university peer outside the state. The former superintendent turned university academy liaison worked with interested staff from North Dakota State University. Based on this support and their own good ideas and hard work, the academy partnership model in that area has been successful in its first application and is presently expanding for additional partnerships.²

Concluding Comments

Some things have changed since the first university/district academy model was initiated. Perhaps the most significant event: the focus moved from principal preparation to teacher leadership. Research and best practice continue to support the absolute necessity of team leadership in education and in other settings. In schools, this means leadership skills are as important for teachers as they are for formal position holders. Today's academy model gives participants the option of completing the required state license for building leader positions, while also filling leadership needs at the classroom level.

Details of the roles of those working within the academy system have been altered slightly, but the emphasis on a collaborative merger of theory and practice remains as strong as in the original experience. In order for this to happen, both the university and the district must be committed to a partnership relationship, building together what neither could accomplish on its own.



Endnotes

¹ An important distinction is made here: This "second wave" is the current model at KSU and is the primary model discussed throughout this themed issue. The earliest versions (1987 - 1998) of leadership academies, as they were called, were post-master's degree professional development for practicing school leaders. Subsequent leadership academies of this "second wave" have been partnerships for preservice prospective school leaders, providing master's degrees to the selected participants. For more on this distinction, see previous commentary in this issue, David Thompson's "Revisiting Public School/University Partnerships for Formal Leadership Development: A Brief 30-Year Retrospective."

² See later in this issue Tom Hall and Ann Clapper's "North Dakota's Experience with the Academy Model: A Successful Replication."

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A superintendent of schools shares perspectives from district leadership about the benefits of partnering with the university to prepare teacher and principal leaders.

Leadership Academies: A District Office Perspective

Rick Doll

Dr. Rick Doll is the former superintendent of schools in the Lawrence, Kansas school district. A 39-year veteran educator, Doll has served as superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, and teacher in various Kansas school districts. He earned a Master's of Science and Doctorate of Education from Kansas State University, and was honored as the 2014 Kansas Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Doll recently accepted a position at Kansas State University as an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership, and as the Director of the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute.

Introduction

In 2004, public schools across the country found themselves in the middle of an educational shift to standards-based accreditation. Expectations had changed. Schools were being held accountable for the success of all students. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 established the expectation that all schools must successfully educate all students. This federal legislation changed school accreditation to a model based on high-stakes testing.

At the same time, school budgets tightened. School districts dealt with budget cuts on an annual basis as the political environment changed. When revenues for professional development diminished, leaders had to focus funds on identified needs connected to the new accreditation model.

In this time of great change, research confirmed an important and positive relationship between the role of the administrator and student achievement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004), and the need to build capacity in leaders as part of an effective school improvement process. Leading school improvement efforts became as important as the role of administrators as managers. Preparation programs for administrators needed to be designed to produce candidates who could succeed in this new environment. Those who prepared new administrators and those who supervised novice principals needed to work together to redesign preparation programs and develop support systems for practitioners.

As these significant changes in accreditation and expectations occurred, concerns grew that with a large number of administrators retiring in the near future, the pool of applicants for school-level administration would not meet these new leadership challenges. Superintendents in the state also questioned the manner of preparation of school principals. Specifically, superintendents began to question whether the traditional university program of students taking a series of isolated courses was the best way to prepare principals for this changing environment (Devin, 2004).

A group of Kansas superintendents initiated conversations with Kansas State University about a different way to educate the next generation of school administrators. These conversations resulted in the creation of a master's level partnership academy model to train and credential emerging educational leaders. Under the partnership academy model, the school districts and the university would develop jointly an integrated, spiraling curriculum to replace the isolated courses that made up a traditional master's program. Participants would be jointly recommended for the program and academy projects would be directly tied to initiatives in school districts. The curriculum would align with state and national standards, and school district and university personnel would jointly teach the academy curriculum. Portfolios, projects, feedback from mentors, and year-end interviews would be used to assess students. The overall success of the partnership academy model would be evaluated by determining: the number of qualified candidates for leadership positions, the professional growth of district administrators serving on the planning committee, the benefits of the academy projects for the school districts, and the overall benefits of school district and university partnerships (Miller, Devin, & Shoop, 2007).

Fast-forward to 2016, when multiple leadership academies have been conducted in various school districts across the state for the past 15 years. This article investigates district-level administrators' perceptions regarding the value of the partnership academies. Ultimately, this article used input from seven district administrators who provided feedback regarding the value of the district and university partnership, specific benefits to the district, the differences between participants who envision themselves as future school administrators or as future teacher leaders, retention of graduates, and suggestions for improvement.

Value of Partnership

District administrators reported that their partnership academies achieved one of their original goals: establishing a pipeline for in-house leadership positions. Districts have encouraged educators to participate in these academies and later hired them as administrators or promoted them to other teacher leader positions. Teachers advanced their leadership skills and stayed local; this has been particularly important in some of the geographically isolated areas of the state. Administrators reported a high comfort level with encouraging quality educators to enroll in the academy, which has translated into a pool of quality applicants. This "grow your own" model works. All superintendents interviewed expressed confidence that leadership candidates gained the skills needed to help their schools succeed.

Administrators viewed the partnership academies as a built-in, authentic, and comprehensive professional development opportunity. With projects tied directly to school district initiatives, collaborative planning and problem-solving has advanced those initiatives in direct and positive ways. The academies have tied curriculum to standards AND to school district needs, while also combining theory and practice with robust content and projects. One administrator shared that

the academies take quality educators and help them think differently – from a leadership perspective.

School budgets have continued to be tight in the state, so it is critical to get the most value from professional development opportunities. Administrators report that the academies help move teachers to develop leadership skills and learn content necessary to earn building-level licensure. Superintendents described the academies as places of communal problem-solving – a planning model whereby district challenges become part of the curriculum and projects for the academy participants. Participants learn content while they solve current problems.

One administrator described the academies as being built around people. When school district and university personnel jointly plan the curriculum and projects, they tie directly to identified needs. Tailored to district needs, the academies are relevant to current district operations. With topics routinely linked to theory and current happenings in the school district, the academies directly benefit educators by making them stronger leaders, which ultimately, increases student achievement.

Benefits of the Partnership Academies

In addition to creating a pipeline for leadership through a practical and relevant curriculum, the partnership academies also have benefited the district in several intangible ways. One original planner of the model expressed how they did not anticipate the development of current school administrators as mentors for academy participants. District administrators reported that mentors not only provided valuable coaching for mentees, but also grew their own leadership capacity and became ambassadors for the district when planning for future academies. One Kansas superintendent reported that as the district hired academy graduates, they became mentors for the next generation of academy students, thus perpetuating the learning and mentoring cycle.

As mentees challenged their mentors with questions, district administrators noticed that these mentors had to "up their game." The mentors engaged in individual professional development around coaching topics, and as they examined their own practice, their reflection made them better leaders. Acting as a mentor validated the job that they are doing in their role as principal. Mentors also learned from the ideas that were generated in the academies and were challenged to respond to new ideas around leadership.

The district administrators interviewed also reported positive feelings around watching newer educators grow in their leadership capacity. With the district directly involved in the promotion, selection, planning, and delivery of academy content, district administrators observed the growth of their future leaders. Additionally, they could be assured that the leadership candidates were gaining the skills needed to meet the changing challenges of their school districts. When administrative openings have occurred or when districts have needed teacher leaders, superintendents take comfort in knowing people who could fill these positions. Several superintendents acknowledged that this model is radically different from the traditional manner of educating principals,

and they stated that prior to these partnership academies they may not have known who among their teachers was pursuing licensure to become a principal.

Administrators also mentioned that the academies allowed them the benefit of breaking down barriers between administrators and teachers. In this model, district leaders interact with teachers through the academies, clarifying issues and developing a rapport with them. The academies have served as an informal method for administrators to talk with teachers about school district issues and keep participants informed about national and state issues. District administrators have welcomed the opportunity to engage these future leaders in a more informal class setting. They also report that the school-based projects gave the teacher leaders opportunities to report their findings to the district administration and to the board of education. Also, in many instances the school district has provided meals for the academy participants, and superintendents reported that these meals served as excellent opportunities to interact with the future leaders in a relaxed atmosphere.

One superintendent who works in a more isolated part of the state reported that the need for an academy grew out of their geographic isolation, and there were concerns that “windshield time” for teachers had negatively affected decisions to pursue master’s programs. By delivering academy classes on site, the instructors travel so the students do not have to. Also, as the model has evolved, the introduction of more online learning opportunities has greatly mitigated the challenge of geographic isolation.

District leaders also cited development of a common language for administrators as another academy benefit. One Kansas superintendent reported finding the academy helpful in developing a common language to use throughout the district, since the participants would most likely be future administrators in the district. He stated that simply getting everyone in the organization to use common terms helped to focus the work of the district.

Flexibility of the program was also noted as a significant characteristic of the academy. There was flexibility in the planning process, and as important topics materialized at the district, state, or federal levels, the academy adapted. The district leaders interviewed contrasted this with the course content of a traditional licensure program in which professors have established curriculum regardless of current events. They cited this flexibility as a benefit of the academy, along with the ability to maintain some control of the content through collaborative, ongoing planning.

District administrators also expressed comfort with the good mix of online instruction and face-to-face interaction. Since original academies were designed prior to the advent of online instruction, the professors traveled to the school districts. This practice continues, but some online instruction has replaced a portion of the face-to-face meetings. District administrators have valued keeping this face-to-face instruction and reported satisfaction with the current mix. This shift mirrors what is happening in public education as schools implement blended learning models.

Teacher Leaders versus Administrative Preparation

The original mission of the partnership academies was to develop pipelines for administrative positions, and this mission has been accomplished. However, the creators of the partnership academy model may not have envisioned a secondary benefit – the development of teacher leaders outside of the administrative track.

As the expectations have changed from individual teachers taking responsibility for their individual students to a system in which all teachers take responsibility for all students, districts needed more teacher leaders. District administrators reported that the academies have helped develop these teacher leadership skills, whether teachers have become administrators or have continued teaching and taken on other leadership roles. For example, several superintendents reported that Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have become the norm in their schools, and there has been a need for teacher leaders to facilitate this effort. The leadership of PLCs can be challenging because peers must work together to solve problems and make decisions. Administrators reported that the academy has prepared leaders for this model of school improvement, as academy graduates understand not only the theory behind school improvement, they also understand the practical issues in their school, making them better able to lead.

School districts have also been moving to include more teacher input into the goal-setting and goal-implementation process. The increased number of initiatives has created a need in the districts for more teacher leaders who have been trained in the leadership process. Superintendents reported that graduates of the academies have been more ready to lead these efforts and principals have had a leadership pool ready to take on new responsibilities. They have learned not only effective leadership skills but have gained a better understanding of “big picture” issues, such as accreditation and the change process. For some teachers, this new leadership capacity has helped fill a personal need, and superintendents reported that some teachers want to advance their careers, but also want to stay in the classroom. Ultimately, becoming a teacher leader is a valued choice.

The development of teacher leaders has also helped to break down barriers between administrators and teachers. One superintendent stated that academy participants are people that he knows, respects, and encourages to become leaders. Another superintendent reported that the academy takes quality educators and helps them think differently—from a leadership perspective, whether they desire to be future administrators or not.

In regards to the commitment levels of these teacher leaders, it is important to note that those interviewed did not distinguish any difference between those participants who envisioned themselves as future administrators and those who saw themselves as teacher leaders. One district office administrator observed that once teachers feel that teacher leadership is valued, they own their decision to remain teachers and commit to providing leadership for their school. Additionally, some teachers have started to see themselves as

administrators while participating in the academy, even if they had not planned that outcome.

Retention of Graduates

Administrators unanimously agreed that the partnership academies help retain employees. Even in one district where the administrator described high turnover, it was clear that the academy greatly increased retention. They noticed that most graduates of the academy stayed in their current district, and many became administrators. Another district reported that their institution has retained many academy graduates as teacher leaders, and has promoted some to administrative positions.

Regardless, both teacher leaders and new administrators have been more likely to stay in their home districts. Those interviewed reported that teacher leaders stay because they feel valued and have become more connected to district projects completed or initiated through the academy. One superintendent reported that teachers feel good when they contribute to the overall health of a school, as they own their challenges and commit to problem-solving. Overall, becoming part of a team increases a teacher's commitment to the school and ultimately aids retention.

Areas of Improvement

All administrators interviewed expressed strong support for the partnership academy model and they pointed to a strong, collaborative relationship with the university. The academies have enabled districts to overcome barriers identified when working with other universities, and administrators reported the university's flexibility in the design of the program as critical to its success. All of those interviewed cited the leadership of KSU faculty as a strength of the program, and many specifically credited Mary Devin, Ph.D., for providing flexibility in the design of the program and continuity, particularly in the early years of the master's level partnership academies.

Administrators suggested improving the program by providing more training for the mentors. The role of the mentors has evolved and become a key component in the partnership academy model. The relationship between the mentor and mentee is very important as academy leaders strive towards the mission of tying theory to practice and in some cases, the mentors have not received training. The increased effectiveness of the mentors will be key to the continued success of the academies. Administrators also suggested that mentors be given time to meet and experience professional development around the mentoring role. One superintendent pointed out that another program at Kansas State University – the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute, whose mission is to provide mentoring for new administrators – could be utilized for this needed professional development.

One superintendent suggested that more connections with college professors could be helpful, as this would enable the academies to better balance the theory and practice of leadership. There was another suggestion that the university and school district communicate the accomplishments of the

academies to other universities and school districts. With its success, the partnership academy model should replace other traditional university programs.¹

Conclusion

The need to provide a pipeline of qualified applicants for building-level principal positions led to the creation of Kansas State University's master's partnership academy model. School districts wanted to be more involved in the education of these future administrators, partially because of the changes resulting from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and university professionals had an interest in developing a program that would meet the needs of this new high-accountability environment and remain relevant in the education of the next generation of school administrators. According to administrators interviewed, the collaborative efforts of school districts and Kansas State University paid off with a system of highly functioning partnership academies.

In addition to solving the practical need to establish a pool of local candidates for future administrative positions, the mission of the partnership academy model expanded to provide professional and collaborative training that blended theory with practice. University professors have planned the program with district leaders and they have collaboratively taught standards through project-based learning built around authentic challenges in the schools. In the era before online education, districts cited a need to reduce "windshield time" for participants and it became highly beneficial to create a site-based, off-campus academy.

According to the district administrators, the academy model has accomplished its original mission to establish a pool of applicants. Districts and university personnel have jointly planned a program that ties to standards and relevant school issues. The continuation of academies in the original partner districts also speaks to the quality of the partnership model.

District administrators also pointed to the emergence of other positive results, perhaps as important as the accomplishment of the original intent of the academies. These results revolve around the emergence of teacher leaders, the development of mentors, and breaking down barriers between administrators and teachers.

The emergence of the teacher leader, educators who do not want to become administrators but do want to lead, may be the most positive unintended result of the academies. Administrators clearly stated that these teacher leaders have filled a void created as school districts shift to a system in which all educators must take responsibility for all students. Professional Learning Communities drive school change and the committee structure of the PLC model requires skilled educators to lead and continue to teach. Ultimately, the academies provide a pool of teacher leaders to help lead their respective school improvement processes.

While unplanned, the contribution to professional growth of administrative mentors in the academies became another important development. Administrators noticed that the mentoring part of the program greatly benefitted the not only students, but also the mentors. Students gained knowledge of how theory fits into the practical, day-to-day running of

a school and mentors gained valuable insight into the latest leadership theory. Although it was an unplanned outcome, administrators are reporting that the mentors gained as much as the mentees.

Finally, administrators reported that the academies break down barriers between administrators and teachers. With this partnership model, local administrators plan the curriculum, select participants, teach content, plan projects, and evaluate the students and the program. As administrators interact with the participants in the academy, they build leadership capacity, dispel rumors, communicate district goals, and generally explain district issues. District administrators who are directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the academies enthusiastically support the model.



Endnote

¹ Later in this issue, two articles discuss replicability of the partnership academy: Tom Hall and Ann Clapper's "North Dakota's experience with the academy model: A successful replication," and Alex RedCorn's "Stitching a new pattern in educational leadership: Reinterpreting a university partnership academy model for native nations."

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Partnership academy graduates focus on student perspectives in the academies through the use of surveys and through personal narratives of their own experiences.

Inspiring Confidence and Professional Growth in Leadership: Student Perspectives on University-District Partnership Master's Academies

Pilar Mejía, Samrie Devin, and Heather Calvert

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Ms. Heather Calvert is an Educational Leadership student at Kansas State University, and an Assistant Principal at Meadows Elementary School in Topeka, Kansas. After graduating from Kansas State with a bachelor's in 2006, she has served as a classroom teacher, a literacy coach, and a building leader. She earned a Masters' in Curriculum and Instruction from Peru State College in 2011 prior to joining the KSU-Topeka Leadership Academy. Currently she is working her doctorate in Educational Leadership.

Change really isn't as hard as we thought if we capture people's interest and give them enjoyable, worthwhile experiences.
– Michael Fullan (2013, p. 77)

Introduction

School leadership matters when discussing teacher effectiveness and student performance, and preparation programs need to graduate principals with the skills necessary to lead schools for tomorrow. The traditional approach to preparing educational leaders is no longer getting the job done. It is going to take everyone working together to better prepare those who will lead the schools we need (Miller, T., Devin, M., Shoop, 2005). Working together is exactly what Kansas State University (KSU) is doing by partnering with public school leaders to design a preparation program for leaders based on an effective blend of theory and practice. This collaborative relationship, in the form of university-district partnership master's degree academies, have prepared over 300 educators in the last 15 years for various leadership responsibilities at the building level, whether serving from the classroom or in an administrative position. As students who completed such a KSU-district partnership academy as part of our professional development, we can speak to the experience of being a student in the academy and we can comment on connections between our learning experiences and the leadership roles we have assumed in the years after the academy.

After reflecting on our own experiences and reaching out to other former academy students, we found that the partnership master's academies inspire high levels of confidence and professional growth in students, and at the same time helped the students think systemically as members of a larger organization.

General Academy Benefits

Partnership academies give students hands-on learning experiences that engage them in the day-to-day realities of a school from a leadership perspective. Students in the

academy study current research, partner in a mentorship, engage in assignments and field experiences based on Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008), and reflect on their learning in order to grow as leaders. Through these experiences, students are given the opportunity to immediately make connections between theory and practice and to apply them in authentic situations. Students are empowered to own and make choices in their learning and truly receive a personalized learning experience. They connect theory to practice within their own work settings, design individualized projects, reflect on learning with their mentors, and share evidence of thinking and learning during class. These experiences not only strengthen the leadership skills of the students but also of the learning organizations.

The partnerships between KSU and public schools allow aspiring leaders to have realistic experiences. This preparation model prepares students by encouraging them to take knowledge gained and put it into practice, building the capacity needed to lead the schools Kansas students deserve to be successful.

Academy Model Outline

When school districts partner with Kansas State University to create a master's leadership academy, they make a commitment to increase the leadership capacity of the staff members selected to participate as students in the academy. The model itself can look different based on individual districts' needs. However, there are characteristics common to most academy partnerships.

Structurally, the partnership academy model is designed as a master's cohort in which the same group of students move through the two-year program together. Cohort groups allow the selected participants to take courses together as a group in a pre-established sequence. The university provides one or two instructors and the district provides a district liaison who all support the cohort throughout the two years. Guest instructors may add expertise on selected topics. All of these instructors work together to facilitate learning, adjusting materials to meet the specific needs of the cohort and of the school district partner.

In each academy, partners collaboratively select course materials and design the assignments and requirements for student activities. In addition to a strong research focus within the six ISLLC standards, each academy member is tasked with completing multiple observations, projects, and a final portfolio, all of which demonstrate growth in each of the ISLLC standards and learning about how they are applied in district operations. This content prepares students for the Praxis School Level Leadership Licensure exam, should academy members decide to take it to acquire a principal's license, and aligns the academy learning experiences with national standards.

Ultimately, the master's partnership academy format gave us the opportunity to experience a learning environment that was rich in theory, but also allowed us to gain real-world local experience while progressing with a cohort of our peers.

Student Views on the Partnership Academy Model: Survey Findings

As cocontributors to this themed issue of Educational Considerations, we would like to use this platform to highlight the student perspective of this model. However, before sharing our personal experiences as students, we wanted to present a broader view of the student perspective by collecting information from as many past academy participants as possible through the administration of a survey. We chose four districts that had partnered on three or more academies and located email contacts for former academy students still working in those districts. While some individuals had relocated and a few had retired, the majority of academy completers had remained in the same district.

Survey

A 13-question survey was designed consisting of both Likert-type questions and open-response questions. The survey was created using Google and was emailed to all participants along with a brief explanation; participants had 10 days to respond to the survey. Thirty-eight participants from the four district partners responded. Although the response rate was lower than we had hoped, we will share what we discovered.

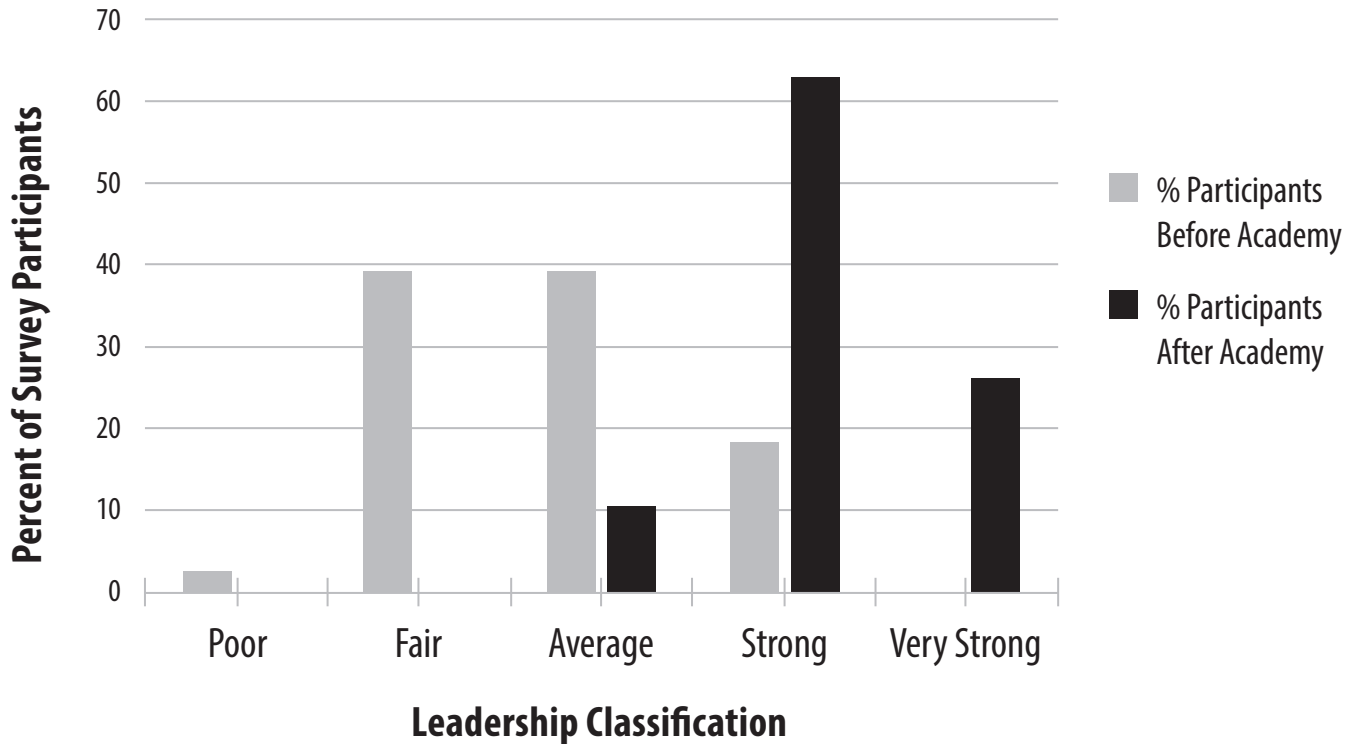
Processing the response data

To analyze the data, we used a version of in vivo coding. Saldaña (2013) states that in vivo is one of several first-cycle coding methods "that prioritize and honor the participant's voice" (p. 91). In vivo coding fractures the data into segments that represent individual codes and then each one is "taken directly from what the participant himself says and is placed in quotation marks" (Brenner, 2006, p. 363). The reason for using this coding method is to keep the data rooted in the participants' own language as well as using their own words (Creswell, 2007; Saldaña, 2013), in an attempt to keep the language authentic. Once we received the results of the survey, we coded in search of commonalities across the answers and identified several categories within the responses. We graphed those categories to illustrate how the majority of the participants had responded. Responses that did not require open response analysis were graphed separately.

Findings

After collecting the surveys and analyzing the responses, we found that the participants reported significant increases in their leadership self-efficacy in multiple ways, along with common recognition of key academy learning experiences reported as influential to their leadership development. Additionally, there were multiple data pieces that indicated enhanced student ability to think at an organization level, and other findings that indicated a close balance between the number of academy graduates choosing building level licensure and those staying in the classroom. Most significantly, participants reported feeling mostly confident in taking on leadership responsibilities after they graduated from their academies, and they strongly believe that the academy improved their professional performance.

Figure1 | Self-Reported Change in Leadership Self-Efficacy Before and After Academy



Improved Self-Efficacy: Regarding self-efficacy, former academy students indicated that they believe their leadership capacities significantly improved from the beginning of their experience in an academy compared to when it ended (See Figure 1). At the beginning of the academy 18.4% of the participants reported having strong or very strong leadership skills, compared to 89.5% by the time the academy ended. This overall change (71.1%) indicates students who completed the academy felt a strong sense of growth in their leadership capacities, and that they left with a strong foundation of leadership self-efficacy.

Big-Impact Learning Experiences: Additionally, in vivo coding analysis of survey responses indicated that participants were significantly impacted by key academy learning experiences in a variety of common ways, as illustrated in Figure 2. The category cited most frequently across responses was in reference to how the academy was successful in developing leaders who are more adept in understanding, applying, and following the learning/transformational process in their organization (27%). Also commonly referenced were the advantages of professional networking opportunities within the academy (23%), shared statements about improving systemic thinking (11%), the effectiveness of instructors (11%), the quality of instructional materials (12%), and the overall value of gaining authentic experience (10%) throughout the learning process. Collectively, former students felt these to be clear areas of strength in the academy model.

Organizational and Systemic Thinking: From an organizational standpoint, the participants were definitely concerned about their professional growth, but they also demonstrated care for the growth of their organizations. The design of the university-district partnership master's academy is fluid and cohesive, allowing students to see tangible connections between topics, structures, organizations, and other elements that function as joint entities. As such, it imparts an understanding that "reduces the isolation often mentioned by new educational leaders as a reason to leave the profession entirely ...and the networking that results from the class sessions, the field experiences, and the mentoring provides participants with a rich support system from which to work" (Miller, Devin, & Shoop, 2007, p. 70). Participants begin to understand the big picture and to know the importance of networking and collaborating with others to meet organizational goals.

When asked about how the academy prepared them for subsequent leadership roles, many participants indicated that the academy experience helped prepare them to think systemically (42%) as well as better understand and value collaborating with other professionals (27%), as shown in Figure 3. Also of note is that 11% of survey respondents indicated the academy prepared them to become reflective practitioners in their subsequent leadership roles.

Additionally, the following statements from survey participants show that participants learned to think on a systems level, and move the organization forward:

Figure 2 | **Academy Learning Experiences Perceived to be Significant in Developing Leadership**

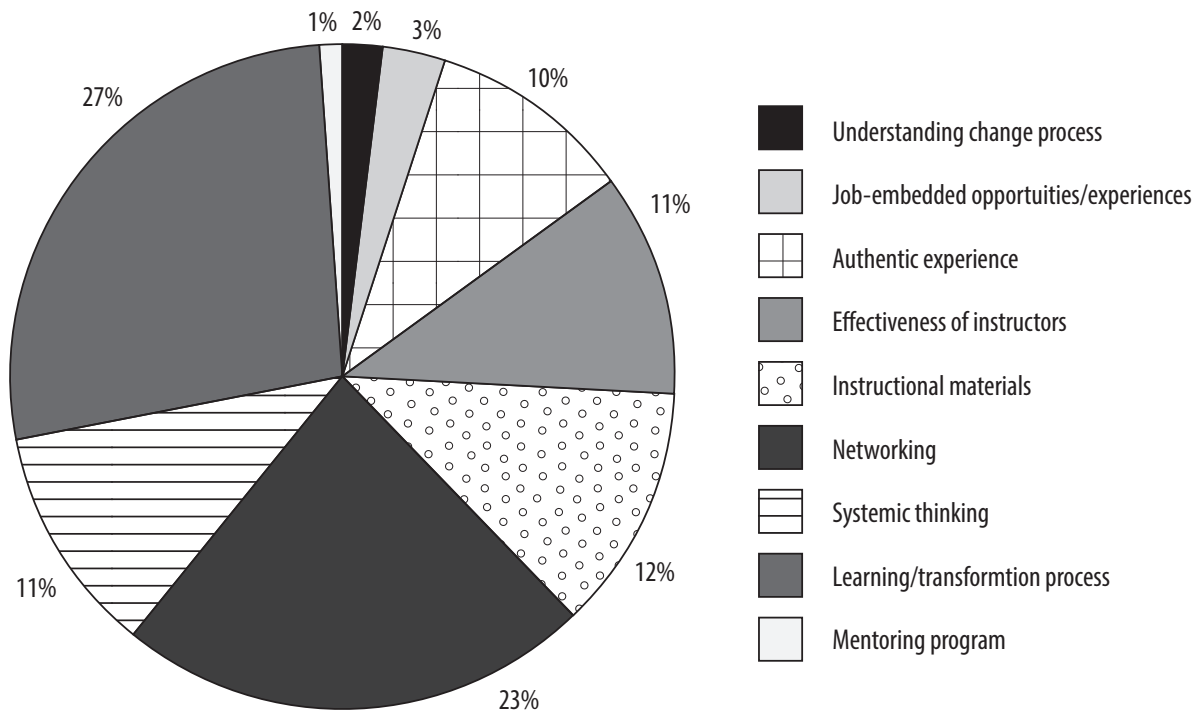
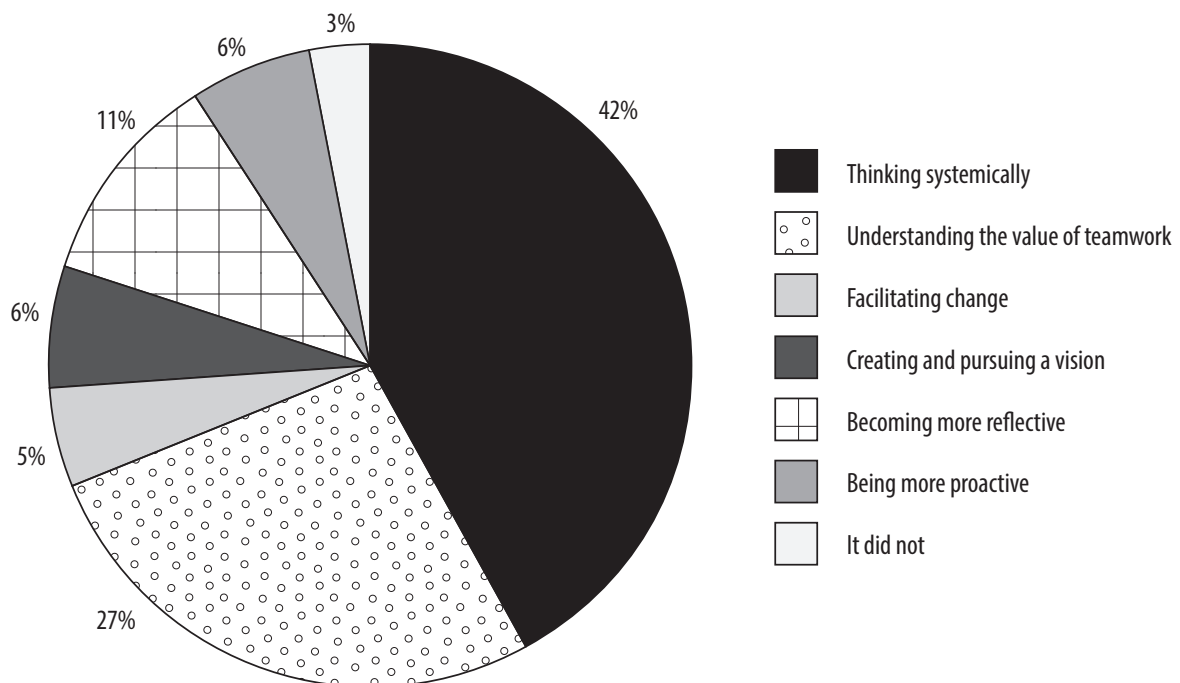


Figure 3 | **How Academy Prepared Participants for Subsequent Leadership Roles**



- "I am able to see the system from the balcony and how changes impact all stakeholders. I am able to reach out to others who have strengths where I may have weaknesses. I am able to see the value of planning, reflection, and evaluation of our system and change."
- "[I] learn[ed] how to shape the culture of my school to improve student learning."
- "I am able to look at the 'big picture' more clearly when involved in developing curriculum, training professionals and working with colleagues."
- "[I learned] the importance of developing meaningful and honest relationships to work through hard situations and tough changes with unity and optimism."
- "I also learned that I shouldn't try and go at it alone."
- "[I was] provided the opportunity/reason/excuse/requirement to step out of comfort zones and tackle projects and issues out of our four classroom walls."
- "[I was] provided opportunities to collaborate with those who were already in leadership roles and learn from their experiences."

These comments speak to the professional capital and systemic thinking attained during the partnership academy that allows students to catapult not only themselves, but also the organizations to which they belong.

Building-Level Licensure vs. Returning to the Classroom: Regarding building-level licensure and the development of leaders who stay in the classroom, the respondents indicated that a significant number moved on to pursue building-level licensure and left the classroom for other assignments, but many academy graduates elected to stay in the classroom. Specifically, of the 38 survey respondents, 58% subsequently enrolled in two more university classes (the option offered as an extension to the academy requirements) and successfully passed the Praxis to obtain building licensure. The other 42% did not complete licensure requirements (at the time of the survey), choosing instead to lead in meaningful and important ways from classroom positions.

For teachers committed to working directly with students in the classroom, school administration does not always sound appealing, and this can result in hesitation to join a leadership academy. However, the academies offer students a pathway to administration, and also offer emerging leaders the opportunity to enhance their skills while staying in the classroom. This is an important finding, considering it illustrates how the academies build leadership capacity across the organization, and not just at one level of the hierarchy.

Comfortable Leaders: Survey responses showed that participants felt significantly more comfortable taking on new leadership roles when the academy ended. As indicated earlier, the academy experience made them think like leaders outside of their classrooms and even outside of their schools, giving them a broader understanding of how a

Figure 4 | Participants' Comfort Level Taking On New Leadership Roles Post-Academy

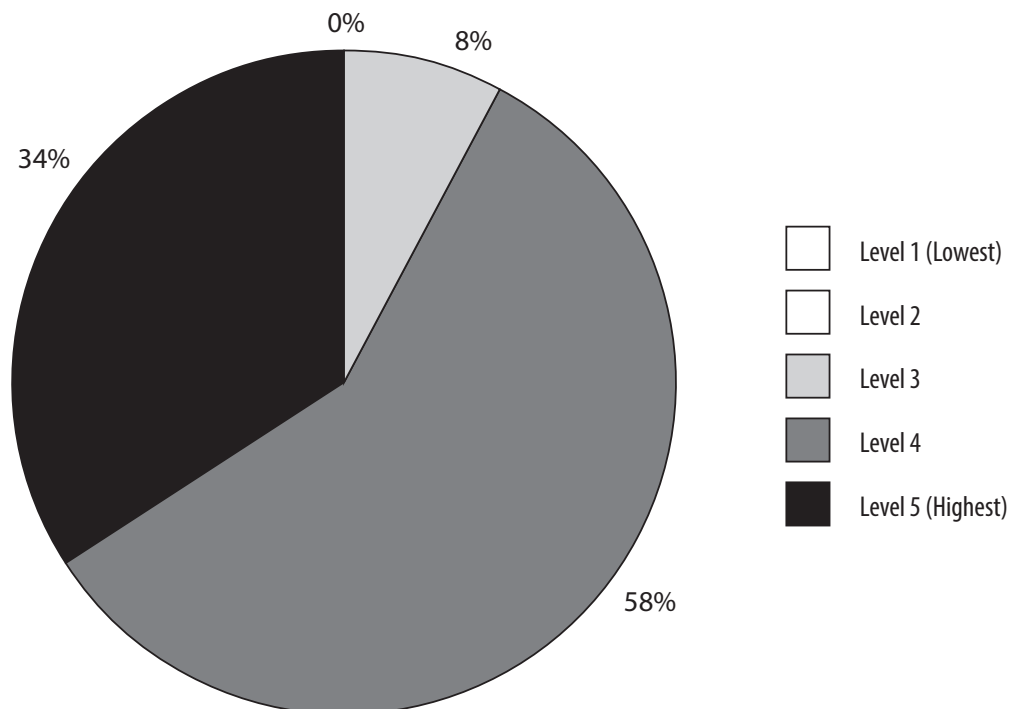


Figure 5 | **Participants' Comfort Level Taking On New Leadership Roles Outside of School Post-Academy**

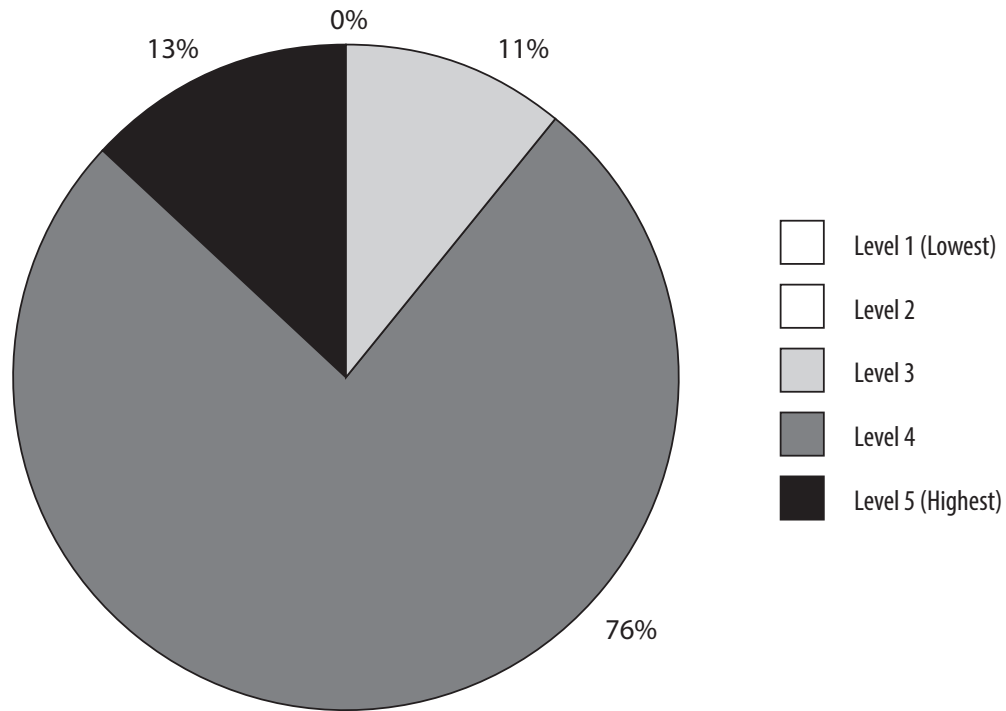
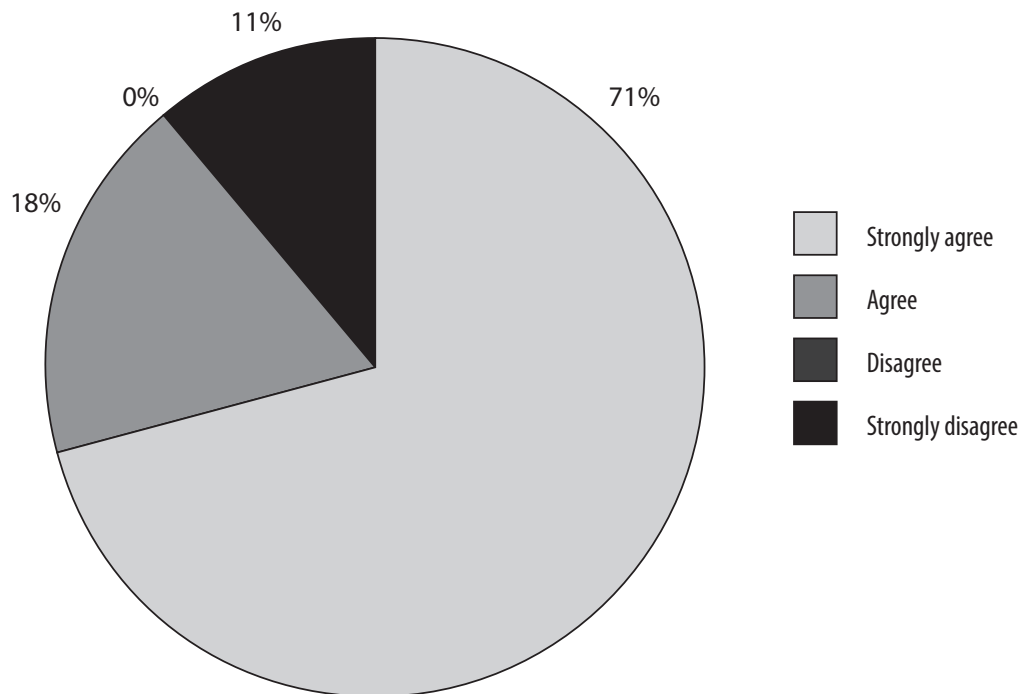


Figure 6 | **Student's Perception of Academy Influence on Improved Professional Performance**



system works. One participant reported feeling confident in making decisions because of a broader knowledge of how the entire school system is effected by events and decisions. Throughout the survey responses, and as illustrated in Figure 4, this newfound confidence was confirmed. On a scale of 1-5, 92% of respondents indicated they were comfortable taking on new leadership responsibilities at a level 4 or 5, with 5 being the highest. Additionally, 89% indicated that they were comfortable taking on new leadership responsibilities outside of their school at a 4 or 5 level, as illustrated in Figure 5. Overall, it is clear that the emerging leaders who graduate from these academies are comfortable with the notion that they can take on new leadership responsibilities upon graduation.

Improved Professional Performance: One of the more significant findings was that 89% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that participation in the partnership master's academy had improved their professional performance, as seen in Figure 6. Components of the academy that were frequently mentioned for contributing to the participants' professional performance included system networking, quality and continuity of the professors, instructional materials, collegiality of classmates, personalized and applicable projects, and deep understanding of the ISLLC standards.

In conjunction with all data compiled from this survey, it appears that academy graduates clearly believe that their professional leadership capacities had been enhanced by the academy, as they indicate a strong self-efficacy, a strong organizational vision, and a newfound confidence and professionalism as they embark on new tasks.

Now with the greater picture for reference, we share our personal stories.

Student Views on the Partnership Academy Model: Personal Stories

As former students in the partnership academy model, we have experienced what it feels like to be an emerging leader in this nontraditional learning environment. To help illustrate what the academy looks and feels like from this very important vantage point, we will now share our personal reflections based on our firsthand experiences in the academies.

Personal Academy Reflection One

It was the Fall of 2011 when I had started contemplating what I might do next to further my education and my job opportunities. Three years prior, I had graduated with a Master's degree from the University of Kansas, which had opened doors for me, but I knew that was not the end. My love for learning and growing would not allow me to stall. My heart was telling me that I needed to start considering what my next steps would be. Thinking with a certain "end" in mind, I had a pretty clear vision of where I wanted to get, but I was unclear on what steps to take to make it there.

It was a regular morning at work when a clear path started materializing in my mind after the Deputy Superintendent of my school district paid me an unexpected and unannounced visit. "Have you heard of the Leadership Academy?" he asked. I was not familiar with it and was intrigued. Leadership. That word resounded with me. "Tell me more," I asserted skeptically. He shared all the information he had about it and led me to the place where I could become fully informed. "Just apply," were some of his last words and, after thanking him for taking the time out of his day to come to my office, he was on his way. And my wheels were turning!

Not long after that very special visit I found myself filling up application forms, gathering transcripts, and asking for letters of recommendation to start what could become a second master's degree for me. I, along with another nine Topeka Public Schools educators, got in and a new journey began in the Spring of 2012. For two years, I embarked in what turned out to be the richest, most authentic, important and relevant educational experience I had ever had. While in the Topeka Public Schools Leadership Academy (TPSLA), I gained true understanding of what leadership means. I held a common misconception about leadership prior, which was linked to title or power. Soon after starting the program, that changed and I learned about distributed leadership and how anyone can lead, in a multitude of capacities, when given the opportunity. This became the basis of my transformation during the TPSLA. I was growing in ways that I yearned for during my time in the classroom and as an instructional coach. By the time the experience ended, I had morphed into a change agent and a transformational leader who clearly believed that the best results in any undertaking are always best when conceived and achieved as a team. But this did not happen overnight nor by accident. All of it was possible due to the design of the TPSLA and to the quality of the instructors.

Having one professor to lead the bulk experience with the assistance of other quality ones, allowed for the two years to be cohesive and interconnected throughout. This also allowed me to gradually evolve into a systemic thinker who was ready to take on much more responsibility and help all students now that I had the tools I needed to do so.

During the TPSLA, I realized that one way to put my knowledge into action was by pursuing my building license, after which I became an Assistant Principal. But that was not all the TPSLA had to offer me, directly and indirectly. My thinking was reshaped, my mind was more open and more clear about education, and my goals grew with my learning.

With the encouragement of my professors, the TPSLA put me in the path that I am on today, finishing my doctoral program at Kansas State University. Getting a doctorate had been an evasive goal of mine for quite a while and the TPSLA definitely gave me the confidence, mindset, courage, and tools to pursue it.

Personal Academy Reflection Two

I wasn't sure I ever wanted to be anywhere but the classroom. I believed the classroom was definitely the most important place to be. Although I was considered to be an effective teacher and I had earned a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction, I had so much more to learn to develop my craft in the classroom. I was fortunate to be teaching in a district that valued continuous development for teachers and to be a part of a staff that placed a high regard on collaboration and learning from each other. My principal was supportive and created a culture where everyone was committed to the success of all of our students. I was definitely in a good place.

It all started to change for me the day my principal shared with the staff about a leadership academy that was forming to develop teachers as leaders. The academy would be a partnership with KSU and district administration, and the participants would earn a degree in administration. The academy intrigued me and strengthened my desire to continue to grow professionally. After visiting with my principal I decided to apply and was accepted into the very first master's level partnership academy in 2001.

My academy experience was 15 years ago. Since the academy, I have been a principal in three elementary schools in one district, and one in another district. I am currently beginning a leadership position at the district level. If it wasn't for the academy I don't know if I would have had the opportunities afforded to me today. The academy exposed me to leading educators like Michael Fullan, Thomas Sergiovanni, Linda Lambert, and Richard DuFour, just to name a few. To this day I still continue to read and reflect and put into action the theory and research of these educators along with others. The academy taught me how to take a collection of ideas and understandings illustrating different leadership styles and personally reflect and assess on how a school can be transformed by one's leadership.

As a principal, I have also been a mentor for several teachers who were participants in an academy over the past 15 years. It was exciting to see how the academy continually evolved and adjusted to meet the rapid changes in today's educational world. The education world is always being presented with new challenges that put new demands on our education system. The academies were always cognizant of this and provided the latest research and addressed the current issues that were needed to make a system change. Not only did the mentees learn and grow, but I also continued to do so in the mentor role by being exposed to the current research and effective practices taught through the academy.

I still believe the classroom is the most important place to be. Even though I am no longer in the classroom, the academy definitely showed me how my decisions as a building leader and now as a district leader can have a broader direct positive impact on students in the classroom.

Conclusion

The leadership academy connects theory with authentic experiences to prepare future leaders for the enormous job of leading schools in the 21st century. Fullan and Hargreaves (2012) stated that "people are motivated by good ideas tied to action; they are energized even more by pursuing action with others; they are spurred on still further by learning from their mistakes; and they are ultimately propelled by actions that make an impact" (p. 7). In other words, students who participate in this experience feel empowered to put theory into action in meaningful, authentic, and immediate ways in a collaborative setting to bring about the change that the individual school setting needs.

The goal of the partnership master's academy, according to its creators, is "to offer a program based on an effective blend of theory and practice; a program designed by collaborative partnerships; and a program that produces an integrated, spiraling curriculum" (Miller, Devin, Shoop, 2007, p. xiii). According to the results of our survey and from our own experiences, we can attest that this goal has been met throughout the years. From our student perspective, it is without a doubt advisable that the partnership model be replicated in other settings to provide schools with the kind of leaders they need to better serve every student in every school today and tomorrow.



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District liaisons who have personally adjusted to their changing roles over several academies describe their experiences in this important position, which is a key role in the effort to successfully merge theory and practice.

District Liaison Involvement in Partnership Academies

Debra M. Gustafson and Nancy Kiltz

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Rationale for Partnership Academy Involvement

The greatest legacy a leader can leave is having developed other leaders...if you want to leave a legacy, invest in people, and encourage those you develop to pass on everything they learn from you to others who will do the same. People are what matter in this world – not money or fame or buildings or organizations or institutions. Only people. (Maxwell, 2015, para. 4)

Maxwell's words were the core of a philosophy shared with us early in our careers as educational building leaders. In talking to other leaders, we quickly learned we would only be as effective of a leader as the strength of those we surrounded ourselves with on a daily basis. While observing school leaders, we noted the most effective leaders shared their power and knowledge freely with others. In addition, we soon understood that taking the time to develop leadership potential in others would assist greatly in our efforts to shape and share the vision for the buildings we served. These beliefs propelled us to get involved in the very first master's level Professional Administrative Leadership Academy developed between Kansas State University (KSU) in collaboration with Geary County Schools, Salina Schools and Manhattan Schools in Kansas.¹ The opportunity to be directly involved in developing future building leaders was something we knew would help us grow in our own positions and also ensure that the work we had devoted our lives and careers to would continue on in our absence.

The ability to foster the type of thinking that promotes and creates positive learning environments in building educators and staff is imperative for student learning. The concept that schools must promote student growth and learning is the catalyst from which all efforts of school leaders should be based. However, not all potential school leaders understand the basis from which they should lead. The ability to influence this philosophy in future leaders was paramount in our decisions to take on leadership roles in developing future school administrators. Political

commentator Walter Lippmann said, “the final test of a leader is that he leaves behind in others the conviction and will to carry on. Ultimately, if your people can’t do it without you, you haven’t been successful in raising up other leaders” (Maxwell, 2015, para. 1). Through the leadership academy model, the dispositions and practices of effective leaders can be directly passed on to future leaders. The basic structure of the leadership academy model is developed to allow practicing leaders to have direct influence over educators interested in leadership. An elementary principal in one of the academy hosting districts commented:

Through working as a mentor with future potential school leaders, I can ensure the philosophies and attributes I have come to embrace through years of school experiences will be passed down through generational leadership. I take this ability to influence, model and impact very seriously (personal communication).

It should be noted that this school leader is also a graduate of the early leadership academy efforts and realized the advantage she enjoyed by being taught by practicing school leaders.

Initial Experience

The year was 1998 and all three Kansas school districts mentioned previously were experiencing both a lack of qualified applicants for their school leadership positions and a gap of skillsets in the applicants they were able to attract. In Salina, a voluntary workshop had been conducted to teach USD 305 teachers about team building, time management, how to run a meeting, and other building leadership expectations. Some of the participants in that group were also working on their master’s in administration through Kansas State University, and had inquired if their attendance at the workshops could potentially count toward some of their required coursework. Professors from KSU visited the workshop and thought a potential partnership between USD 305 Salina and Kansas State University could be established. By Spring of 1999, the planning sessions had begun, and USD 475 Geary County Schools with USD 383 Manhattan Schools joined the collaborative effort with USD 305 Salina Schools and Kansas State University to build a partnership academy that would fulfill the requirements of a master’s program in educational leadership, as well as potentially fulfill the leadership needs of the districts involved.

Through much discussion and collaboration, the initial partnership academy was created and titled Professional Administrative Leadership Academy. Because the curriculum was established to fulfill a master’s degree in educational leadership, it was also designed around the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Policy Standards. The program was intended to have a full link between the university and the participating school districts, and it was determined there would be a liaison in each of the districts to monitor and maintain the fidelity of that connection. This liaison position has been the critical link between the school districts and the university. The actual role of the district

liaison varies across the different academies and is dependent upon the involvement the liaison has had with previous academy efforts. The authors of this article have enjoyed extensive experience in the partnership academy model since its initial implementation in their respective districts. Therefore, their role as district liaison is more developed and inclusionary than may be the case in districts without as much academy experience. In addition, the liaisons’ involvement with the university also influences the extent to which the liaison is involved in decision making and delivery of content. We share our current experiences and roles as an example or model of what a fully invested and developed liaison role can be after involvement in the process over time. Modifications to meet individual district needs have been allowed and adjustments have been encouraged along the way to enhance the program. Our experiences give insight into what long-term partnership relationships can look like.

Initially, each district recommends to the university one of its own administrators to serve as the liaison for the partnership academy. The liaison chosen is someone who shows an interest in building leadership capacity in the district, has knowledge of the district and its mission or vision, and has the ability to participate in the planning, development, and facilitation of the academy. The liaison is employed by the university as an adjunct faculty member and assigned to the two-year leadership academy. The philosophy of growing your own leaders and leaving a legacy of like-minded individuals interested in leading schools prompted some to step forward with interest in being a district liaison. It is this same belief and philosophy that has kept these three school districts and additional school districts across the state interested and participating in this effort.

Role and Purpose of District Liaison

The liaison works with the Kansas State University Department of Educational Leadership to build a marketing plan for the program. Once this is developed, a brochure is created and each liaison is then responsible for working with district leaders to roll out the proposal to other district and building leadership members and then certified staff groups. Liaisons then work with their superintendents to create an application process for those interested in applying for the academy. By design, the application process is intended to be rigorous enough to attract only those genuinely interested in leadership. Brochures and applications are then made available to applicants, and building principals are asked to write supporting letters of reference for the candidates they are promoting for the academy. At this point, it becomes part of the liaison’s responsibility to work directly with building principals to help them identify the type of individuals who have a propensity to take on this type of opportunity. Once the potential candidates are identified, building leaders are then asked to go to these individuals personally and communicate with them in regards to applying for the academy. While the opportunity is open to all certified staff, there is a specific effort to attract current quality teacher leaders into this opportunity. Completed applications and other required documents are then sent directly to the

superintendent's office and reviewed by the superintendent, the liaison, possibly a board of education member and other appointed district administrators. Finally, selections are made and invitations are submitted to applicants for participation in this leadership opportunity.

One of the strengths of the program is the ability to promote and recruit current teacher leaders into the process. In a traditional educational leadership program, schools are seldom involved in encouraging specific people to consider engaging in these higher learning opportunities. In the academy model, the selection of individuals who have already demonstrated leadership qualities by their ability to share and serve as role models regarding the vision and mission of the district allows these potential leaders to have an advantage over other candidates who may not have had the same experiences. Over the years as district liaisons directly connected to the academy model, we have had the opportunity to influence the enrollment of numerous individuals toward building leadership. The fact that liaisons are invested in their respective districts allows them to have direct knowledge of potential candidates and identify where the positive matches may exist. Additionally, the influence of supervisors has been identified as a major factor in the decision teachers make to pursue a career in administration (Zacharakis, Devin, & Miller, 2006). In working with these individuals on a daily basis, they can observe those who have developed a style of leadership that will be advantageous for school improvement efforts.

Liaisons ultimately can recruit and continue to support individuals interested in participating in the academy model in their respective districts. For example, over twelve teachers from one school alone have participated in the academy model throughout the years. This has given that school a tremendous leadership pool from which to pull when new instructional and curriculum initiatives are presented. In addition, in this same district, nine of the most current eleven building leadership position vacancies have been filled with academy graduates.

Designing Curriculum to Merge Theory and Practice

While the leadership academy district liaisons participate directly in the recruitment and selection of candidates, their primary role has always been to assure there is an authentic and true partnership between the individual districts and the university to work hand in hand to create a dynamic learning experience for all candidates. Therefore, the liaison is instrumental in the design of the curriculum and instructional content within the academy. The liaison, along with the superintendent and other district administrators, connects the curriculum of the master's program at KSU with the district initiatives and leadership needs to design a collaboratively developed and integrated spiraling two-year curriculum resulting in a high-quality degree, as well as benefiting the district with new teacher leaders. The spiraling curriculum is intended to foster habits of reflective practice combined with authentic experiences. The spiraling effect comes from the fact the content is not be taught in isolated coursework, rather, the identified content will be spread out and revisited

throughout the two-year experience. The liaison plays a vital role in matching the content of each class session with building and district initiatives or current practices so that hands-on, realistic learning can occur. This matching is also critical in the selection of authentic projects and mentor assignments. The goal is to provide a curriculum that is rich in knowledge and theory combined with guided practice, including both individual and guided reflections. The strength of the academy lies in the ability to effectively merge theory and practice.

Content delivery in the leadership academy classroom is also a shared experience between KSU professors and the liaisons. While most of the initial content is delivered by KSU professors, liaisons are taking on more of an instructional role and are a critical component in the application and connection of the content to what is happening in the buildings. Ongoing discussions between the university professors and the district liaisons are vital in establishing an authentic curriculum based on merging theory, best researched practices, and current required expectations. Through the frequent use of guest speakers and current school administrative panels from varying positions in the district, as well as direct work with assigned mentors on assignments, candidates are able to work on authentic projects that will benefit their current schools and positions. In many cases, the liaisons deliver the content as well as the application, depending on expertise in the content area and comfort level in presenting.

The division of work between the district and the university has worked very well throughout the academy models. The university continues to provide the necessary transcript and certification responsibilities such as enrollment, online systems, grades, development of curriculum, required legal paperwork, direct professor instruction and other management issues. The school districts provide work directly through the liaison by scheduling classes, ordering materials, grouping students, facility management, inviting speakers and presenters, and scheduling required activities and field-based experiences. The liaison also makes the connections between the academy and other individuals within the district.

The partnership academy model curriculum includes both required activities and field-based experiences, and district liaisons are a vital facilitator of both of these authentic learning strategies. The liaison makes the connections between leadership academy members and others in the district, which is essential for a successful academy experience. Principals of schools are directly involved because they will have assignments such as mentors, having academy members interview them, observe in their buildings, attend meetings in their buildings, and assist in designing authentic projects. Principals will also serve on panels to discuss issues and questions the academy candidates will propose to them. Administrative department heads must also understand the leadership academy model because they are called upon to serve as guest presenters and participants on learning panels where they are questioned about their

duties and involvement in new projects. Additionally, district administrators are involved in the academies through class presentations, helping academy participants refine their ideas for projects, and being available for student interviews and questions. Academy liaisons are instrumental in assisting students in scheduling required activities such as State Board of Education meeting attendance, observing negotiations, attending other district and building level meetings, and more. Upon academy completion, district administrators often join local school boards in celebrating the graduation of the leadership academy candidates.

Field-based experience for academy participants is the component that makes the academy stand above all other avenues of gaining a Master's in Educational Leadership. Woven throughout the two-year academy are a multitude of ways the participants get hands-on, real-life experiences in school leadership. These field experiences provide the candidate the opportunity to apply the theory learned in class to practice in authentic settings. The district supports these activities through securing substitutes, providing guidance, and clearing the way for participants to sit in on activities that are typically done in a more "closed" setting. In these field experiences, the participants have opportunities to work in cooperation with other leaders. These field experiences will ultimately include the opportunity to shadow other building leaders on the job and reflect upon their experience much, as one would do in an internship.

During the planning sessions prior to the start of the academy, the district liaison connects activities and initiatives throughout the district within the curriculum content. Suggestions are also made as to possible presenters, panel members, etc., that might speak at an academy session to give meaning to some of the topics students are learning about in their readings or in class sessions. The liaisons are constantly thinking and considering what the academy participants may need to make their learning experience as rich as possible. As new initiatives are rolled out in districts, the liaisons do what they can to gain academy member participation in the effort. The overall goal is to create as authentic of an experience as possible for the candidates. Once again, readers may question why busy individuals would take on this role when they already have a full-time position in the district. These choices are made because of the belief that school districts will be well served to have an active role in preparing their own leadership candidates, and furthermore, the belief that district leaders have a moral responsibility to ensure the quality leadership currently enjoyed in a district is maintained for future students.

While the district academy liaison may or may not be one of the professors of the academy, they serve an important role in bridging the master's program with what happening in their district. This requires that the liaison communicates effectively and frequently with district leadership to ensure that the vision of the district is being passed on to academy participants. The liaison helps build the agenda for each academy session and assists in providing supporting class materials. This is another authentic experience, as the liaison

is able to provide very timely material to the candidates that may have been provided recently to district building leadership.

The liaison also serves as the district spokesperson on any committees or task forces related to the academies. This consistency is extremely important for each academy's success. The heart of the academy lies in the partnership between the college and the individual school districts. The partnership is most visible in the required activities and field experiences. The goal is to stretch the comfort zone of the participants and give them new experiences in education that they might not otherwise have had. In the first year of the academies, participants are required to write their philosophy of education, reflections of their initial authentic required activities, and a reflection of their growth. These are then rewritten and compared at the end of the second year and become part of the final member's portfolio. Liaisons are available to candidates throughout their writing process to provide ideas and feedback.

Current building principals or district leaders serve as role models and formal mentors for the leadership academy participants. In addition to the mentorship, these individuals are asked to share their experiences with the entire group. This is often done through panel discussions so that different perspectives can be shared. The participants are always amazed at how different each building is, especially the differences between elementary and secondary schools.

The assignments and projects throughout the two-year academy program give authenticity to the program itself. Participants learn content, study the research, and then see their new learning in action. This structure is a benefit to both the district and to the teachers of the program. The participants gain a deeper knowledge of the content, thus allowing higher-level questions and deeper discussions in class. The district benefits in that this group of teachers has gained a better understanding of how things work and why leaders do the things they do, as well as being able to give the district new perspectives.

Ultimately, participants capture their personal journeys through the completion of a final academy portfolio, structured primarily with the ISLLC Standards. Although students decide individually how to present their growth in this portfolio, every portfolio must include artifacts and reflections documenting their growth and competencies related to each ISLLC leadership standard.

Mentorship

As mentioned previously, each participant is provided a mentor for the entirety of the program. The academy model district liaison is responsible for overseeing that mentors are trained properly and assigned to participants. The role of the mentor is to guide, instruct, support, and nurture the academy participants. In some districts, the liaison provides regular mentor meetings to keep them abreast of the activities and assignments in the academy classes. Districts with the strongest mentor-to-mentee relationships can be found where there is specific structure and accountability provided to the relationship by the district liaisons. It is critical

that mentors are not selected for convenience, but rather that they be individuals who are currently practicing some of the best leadership in the district. It should be an honor to be asked to mentor a leadership academy participant, not an expectation. Mentors should not only be quality leaders themselves, but also individuals who know and understand how to develop leadership capacity in others and who are skilled in collaboration.

The mentors who are administrative leaders within the district provide an important bridge between the participants' learning and real life in the school setting. In some situations, mentors are provided with the same books and reading materials as the candidates so they are able to discuss content with the students. They provide opportunities for the academy participants to experience leadership through various activities. They help guide the academy participants as they design projects or complete assignments. They also attend some of the academy sessions as presenters or panel members to share the principals' perspective of various avenues of leadership.

Benefits

From the perspective of the building principal, the ability to have graduates of the professional leadership academies in their building provides tremendous quality in teacher leadership efforts. These individuals have learned how to effectively work in groups to review data, ask the right questions, make decisions ethically and a variety of other leadership traits. They come out of the leadership academies considering themselves as leaders among teachers and ready to fulfill a need in the buildings they serve. As one current elementary principal stated,

I came out of the professional educational leadership experience ready to take on additional leadership duties in addition to my teaching assignments. I learned how to effectively help others in their decision making and the ability to coach others to be more efficient (personal communication).

Building principals know their best teacher leaders have a knowledge mixture of both theory and practice that they are able to combine for the benefit of teachers and students. Having leadership academy graduates in the buildings helps ensure the staff benefits from that knowledge. Regardless of what role an academy graduate takes in the future, they will be better at that role than they would been without their participation in the academy. Those who remain classroom teachers will be stronger teachers and those who continue in teacher leadership roles will be stronger leaders. It is a win-win situation for all involved.

As building principals, one of the greatest benefits we have noticed with staff members who are academy graduates is their ability to problem-solve. They arrive at challenges with the "balcony view" of the whole district rather than the narrow view of just their classroom and are able to see themselves in solutions that benefit all instead of only their position. They are more reflective in their thinking and are able to view all angles of a situation. Additionally, in a district with significant

teacher turnover, the academy graduates are more prepared to train the next generation of teachers through their new skills of inquiry, situational awareness, and ethical decision making. One building principal elaborated:

... having an individual in your building be part of the [academy] allows them to work with a school and staff they are already familiar with. Since they have built relationships with the staff they are more comfortable in sharing the information for a task they have been given. It helps the student build their confidence in their skills so they will be able to move forward when they have their own building. Those relationships in their home building have helped them experience how some staff will not buy into changes at the beginning of a change. This is good practice for how they can deal with helping that staff member understand how beneficial change is for the students (personal communication).

It is the safety net of the academy experience that allows participants to branch out and experience these growing pains. They have been able to observe practitioners with a focus on student achievement and have learned from the failures and successes from their mentors.

The overall implementation of numerous partnership academies has benefited the participating districts tremendously. In their book, *Closing the Leadership Gap*, Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007) have outlined the district benefits of academies as the selection of the participants, influence over curriculum, increase in number of qualified candidates for leadership positions, and professional growth of the participants. From our observations, we would add and emphasize that the further development of relationships between the districts and the university often expands itself into other viable partnership programs and opportunities, the enhanced ability of professors and practitioners to frequently communicate on best practices and initiatives, and the critical connection to research and practice. The opportunity to collaborate with the local university is beneficial to all. The interview process itself allowed district personnel to get to know each person who applied to the academy, and particularly the ones who were accepted.

Watching the transformation of teachers into leaders is truly like watching a butterfly evolve from its cocoon. Knowing that we, and the districts as a whole, have played such a huge part in growing leaders continues to be an exhilarating experience. New leaders who understand the district's philosophy and share in the vision of the future can help others in the district understand it. Their newfound knowledge will assist them in Professional Learning Communities and other committees across the district because they will have the "balcony view" of the district. Given the demands and accountability measures put on school districts, it renders them nearly defenseless to effectively find the time and resources to grow their own pool of qualified, quality leaders. The opportunity to partner with the university to remedy this gap has been of tremendous assistance to both entities. Both the school districts and universities can carry on their legacy of providing quality

leadership for students while enhancing their programming and enrollment respectfully.

The benefits to individual school districts from the collaboration nature of the leadership academies has been so significant that many have opted to continue them in a variety of schedules. This collaborative relationship allows school districts access to the most current research on best practices. The opportunity to impact the future is the measure of a true legacy, and is very exciting. In their book, Miller, Devin, and Shoop also stated that “principals should be judged as successful not on the basis of programs put in place, but on the basis of how many new leaders are emerging” (2007, p. 20). An Associate Superintendent shared,

... [the academy] has been a real asset to [our district] over the past years. Having a leadership training program for teachers within our own district has provided us with a quality program where our teachers can learn about leadership in a contextual setting. We have had many occasions in which we drew from that trained pool of teacher leaders for everything from curriculum work groups to the principalship of a building. [Academy] participants are quick to make adjustments to their new role because of their background in [the academy]. We are enormously fortunate to be able to benefit from this program (personal communication).

The benefits of having a pool of qualified and effective leaders from which to choose when positions are vacated significantly outweighs the time and effort it takes for this partnership. Everyone wants to leave a legacy in their chosen field. The opportunity to directly impact the future is a true legacy. The legacy that involves the development of individuals to lead the future is significantly powerful. While doing something positive for their respective districts, academy liaisons are able to create their own legacies in the districts they serve. The entire experience is reflected by Ralph Nader, who said, “The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers” (Leadership, 1976, para. 41). While this philosophy is generally attributed to business, for the future of effective schooling, it is imperative for educators to consider the same opportunities.



Endnote

¹ An important distinction is made here: This refers to the most current model at KSU, which is the primary model discussed throughout this themed issue. The earliest versions (1987–1998) of leadership academies, as they were called, were post-master’s degree professional development for practicing school leaders. Subsequent leadership academies of this “second wave” have been partnerships for preservice prospective school leaders, providing master’s degrees to the selected participants. For more on this distinction, see previous commentary in this issue, David Thompson’s, “Revisiting Public School/

University Partnerships for Formal Leadership Development: A Brief 30-Year Retrospective.” To see a complete list of subsequent academies, see Figures 3 and 4 in Mary Devin’s, “Transforming the Preparation of Leaders into a True Partnership Model,” also in this issue.”

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University faculty involved in both traditional and academy programs reflect on their experiences with the changing delivery format.

Changing from Traditional Practice to a New Model for Preparing Future Leaders

Mary Devin, Donna Augustine-Shaw, and Robert F. Hachiya

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In dramatic departure from the traditional format of programs preparing building level leaders, in the last sixteen years the Educational Leadership Department in the College of Education at Kansas State University (KSU) has worked with eight different partners in designing and delivering site-based customized 30-hour master's degree programs in educational leadership to 19 individual cohorts. New programs scheduled to begin within the next two semesters will increase the number of individual cohorts to 21 and the number of different partners to 9.¹

Since the first master's academies in 2000, the academy focus has moved from preparing candidates for principal positions to the broader vision of teacher leadership, recognizing that today's leadership relies on a team, not an individual.² Leadership skills are needed by those in both teacher and principal positions. Such a change to developing leadership capacity at the teacher level gave rise to requests for an ongoing series of teacher leadership academies within the same districts. Most often, academies are partnerships between the Educational Leadership Department and a single school district, but four have involved two (and in one case three) districts working together with the university to add synergy across districts to enhance learning about leadership.

Along with the shift to teacher leadership, academy participants are given the option of independently adding two traditional department courses to complete credit requirements for a state-issued building-level leaders' license. Honoring standards for accreditation of its preparation program and responsibility for student access to state licensure for leadership positions, the university grants successful completers a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership with the option of completing these two additional courses to meet requirements for a principal's license.

The District and the University as Partners

The most significant difference between the traditional preparation programs and the partnership academy model is the new role for the school district – partnering with the university to prepare teachers to be leaders in that district. A true partnership begins by seeking new benefits from mutual interests and exploring potential commitments from those involved, not one entity working for “buy in” from the other. In the academy partnership, the role of the university also changed. Partner planning involves the university explaining how they could make one of its programs available to district students, staff, or community, and such arrangements brought benefits for both the university and the community. In the academy model, parties gain even greater benefit from building on each other’s ideas when creating something new for both partners. As experience has informed practice over the years, planning for a district/university academy has become an increasingly careful and purposeful process in order to maintain the character of the partnerships. The essence of planning is matching university leadership program requirements with the specific context of the district where the leadership will be put to use. Such emphasis on context makes each KSU/district academy unique, since districts face varying leadership challenges, even when the new academy is yet one more in a series of similar partnerships over time between the same university and the same district.

Planning the University/District Master’s Academy Partnership

Whether planning a first-time KSU partnership academy or adding a new cohort to a series in the same district over time, planning begins with a description of the intent of the partnership and the degree to which the partnership

can be designed to address the specific, current needs and interests of the prospective district partner. Current and future priorities for leadership skills become the general theme of an academy. Theme examples have included improving student performance, adjusting to changing demographics and population shifts, changes in community culture, closing the achievement gap, etc. For educators, it is not unlike planning for a magnet school by embedding the applicable program standards and knowledge content into the designated context. Establishing the focus for leadership development skills means program completers will be ready to address the leadership challenges in the district where they are already located.

With the theme in place, planning continues by looking at the contributions each party will be able to bring to the partnership. The university pledges to entwine the district theme with national leadership standards to give students a quality preparation program that will prepare them as educational leaders and give them licensing options for informal and formal building leader positions. The Educational Leadership department agrees to provide designated faculty to work with the district and guide the academy process for the entire two years. Both the district and the university commit to working as partners in constructing and delivering a curriculum with supporting activities addressing the identified district theme and to providing support for students who will be engaged in the learning (See Figure 1).

The Partner Role in Selecting Participants

Another significant difference in a partnership academy is the identification of participants. In traditional programs, individuals select leadership programs of varying nature on their own and proceed with little if any collaboration with or connection to a specific current or future assignment. The district often has no knowledge of which staff members are actively involved in graduate degree programs and is unlikely able to influence the quality or content of the preparation experiences. Selecting students for advanced graduate programming is a major departure from the traditional individual movement to master’s degree status for both the district and the university. Another difference is that those selected become a closed cohort that meets as a unit for the duration of the master’s program.

In the planning process for an academy, the purpose of the teacher leadership academy is endorsed by both partners: to develop the leadership skills of teachers selected by the district to participate, whether these individuals choose to pursue administrative credentials, positions at the building level outside the classroom, or to remain in the classroom. The partner district selects staff members to participate from those who have already demonstrated potential as leaders in their current positions. The district has substantial influence on the preparation experiences and can closely observe individual progress as leadership skills develop. The university and district partners agree on an application procedure and a selection process timeline. District needs guide the projected size of the cohort within a range of 12 to 24 students, although exceptions at both ends have been accepted.

Figure 1 | **District/University Partner Contributions to a Teacher Leadership Academy**

District Contributions	University Contributions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify local needs and select academy focus Partner with the university in planning and delivering curriculum and activities and in assessing academy progress Determine participation criteria, open applications, and select participants Provide support, such as books, supplies, meeting space, or others of district choice Assign and support mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align academy focus with national leadership standards Partner with the district in planning and delivering curriculum and activities and in assessing academy progress Make sure participants meet Graduate School admission requirements with license options Provide faculty to guide enrollment process and facilitate the two-year program Support mentor training

Figure 2 | **Planning Timeline for District/University Partnership Academy**

What	When	Who
Academy preplanning		University and district leaders meet to discuss district needs, possible themes, recruitment strategies, application preferences, meeting locations, scheduling, etc.
Announcement of new academy		District announces new academy to staff and shares announcements with university contacts
Applications out		District distributes applications and provides copy to university contacts
Applications due		District reviews applications and prepares list of proposed participants subject to screening regarding university graduate school requirements
Announcement of new class		District announces list after university staff screening
Materials ordered		University provides ordering information to district for items selected by planning committee
Planning Committee meeting (to be scheduled as needed or to be shared through technology)		Agenda: Confirm student list, finalize materials list, confirm topics and delivery resources
First class session		University staff, district staff determine by planning committee discussion

See Figure 2 for a typical timeline for planning a district/university partnership academy.

Although current technology offers good options for announcing the new opportunity to staff and inviting applications, the university designs a brochure or flyer to be distributed within the district. Information included is planned and agreed upon collaboratively, but the university makes sure all necessary notifications and university required branding is in place. Districts typically use the master copy to distribute widely both hard copies and e-files. It might be worthwhile to note that actual dates of academy class periods are included on the distributed information so that the expected attendance at class sessions is clear early in

the process. Applications are generally online to facilitate communication, making transmission from district to university staff easy.

Specific eligibility requirements for applicants are coestablished by the partners. The district may wish to impose certain requirements related to the theme or to other interests. For example, the district might choose to give preference to teachers with three or more years of district experience or to those with designated service records as teacher leaders at the building or on district teacher committees. At times, nontraditional students such as school nurses, district office staff, early childhood providers, and others, apply and are accepted. In our experience, these students have been successful academy members and have gone on to increasing responsibilities as leaders in their fields. Districts have various incentives and strategies for attracting applicants, especially those they believe bring the greatest future leadership potential. The most effective incentive is that tap on the shoulder from a respected supervisor saying, "You should do this. You are a potential leader."

For the most part, the university requires only that a participant be selected by the district and can be accepted for admission to the university graduate school. Given that the applicants are teachers licensed by the State Department of Education, such a limitation has not created an obstacle for any student. Once the district has selected the applicants they wish to sponsor in the cohort, the university reviews the applications and transcripts for graduate school admission. It is not unusual for a selected student to enter with some accumulated credits or even a previously earned master's in another area (i.e., special education, counseling, curriculum and instruction). University policy is followed related to transferring credits into a degree program.

The Partner Role in Building the Curriculum

The role of the district partner continues as a collaboratively customized curriculum is outlined to address the theme selected for the upcoming leadership preparation program. Those involved in preplanning of the academy (or others added as decided by the partners) now become the Academy Planning Committee, charged throughout the two years with maintaining the balance between the theory and practice components of the partnership and supporting the successful professional growth of the participants. The first task is to confirm topics to be studied and to consider options for materials to address them. Points of performance assessment will be planned so academy instructors can periodically share evidence of student professional skills growth with the planners. Academy Planning Committee members are an essential connection between academy activities and leadership efforts in the district. The Planning Committee is the link between the academy and current district priorities, a critical feature in the rapidly-changing world in which schools operate.

From the first academy planning that began in 1999, the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards (CCSSO, 2008) have been the backbone of leadership development content, merging the leadership

theory with the authenticity of the challenges today's leaders face in their schools. Other structural standards underlying curriculum development include the College of Education Conceptual Framework (2016), the Kansas State Board of Education leadership standards (2016) that underlie licensing at the various levels, and the 21 responsibilities of leaders (Waters & Cameron, 2007) from McREL research. The academy curriculum is built on that structure to parallel real life, where leaders daily call on skills and knowledge from all areas to manage routines and address eventful challenges.

Planning includes considering how topics encountered can be applied in practice at an appropriate level, how application experiences can be merged with further class study, then reapplied in field experiences at increasing depths throughout the two years. This is another significant departure from the traditional program where the delivery pattern consists of discrete courses with content set aside at the completion of a semester and application delayed until a limited practicum at program end.

While not required, it has been the practice for district partners to provide students with all the books used in the academy over the entire two years. This incentive for enrollment helps alleviate the financial burden of an advanced degree on the student and adds efficiency to the acquisition process. Books, selected in hard copy, paperback, or electronic form, become the property of the students, building a professional library of resources for future use. Those delivering instruction can expect students to have access to all materials throughout the two years, which is an advantage in an integrated, spiraling curriculum environment.

Instead of traditional college course textbooks, a more eclectic collection of professional publications is selected to deliver the integrated, spiraling curriculum in the partnership academies. Classroom study and field experiences are designed to pull from research and practice the latest and most authentic information related to leadership for the academy theme and application in today's schools. Approximately 20 book titles are collaboratively selected by the district/university planning committee. Authors include noted contemporary practitioners as well as recognized researchers in the profession. While individual titles vary across academies (even in the same district over time), foundation topics are continued or are purposefully redirected to best address current district and professional context. Materials are selected based on compatibility with district initiatives and cultures, and with professional development activities. Authors' works frequently selected for academy materials lists include Deal, Fullan, Marzano, Lambert, Hord, Danielson, and others.

Immediate and Ongoing Merger of Theory and Practice

Further separation of the university/district partnership from the traditional preparation is the immediate merger of theory and practice. An active partnership between a university and the district, combined with an integrated, spiraling curriculum design, makes it possible for aspiring leaders to put to use immediately in their own professional context what they are learning in the classroom. This

immediate, authentic application of new skills is equally important to the learning mission of the academy. The Academy Planning Committee prepares guidelines for ongoing field experiences that allow students to put theory into practice in the context of their own district. Planners identify certain field experiences most important to development of the leadership skills needed in the district. These required leadership activities range from observations meant to broaden understanding of the reach of district programming, to required participation on various task forces, committees, or service units, to strengthen the foundation on which professional growth can continue.

One of the contributions required of a district partner is to assign each academy participant a mentor who is a current leadership position holder (usually the principal of the academy student). Mentors guide the growth in performance as the integrated, spiraling curriculum is extended to increasing levels of application of leadership skills. Academy project assignments require applying theory learned in the learner's work environment where the student and the district benefit from the application of both knowledge and human capital to address district priorities. Planners establish guidelines and expectations for mentor assignments and mentor training.

Each academy is planned with purpose and care following the general outline reviewed in this article. Many decisions must be made by the planning committee composed of both district and university representatives before the first class session begins. The details of planning illustrate dramatically the structural differences between the partnership academy model and the traditional preparation program.

The University/District Academy Partnership: A Closer Look

The core staffing model for the partnership academy consists of a member of the university department faculty and a representative of the partner school district (the District Academy Liaison) who is qualified to serve in the role of university adjunct. While separately both positions are common in university staffing patterns, in a partnership academy the pair functions as a coteaching team. The two remain with the cohort group throughout the entire two-year period and are responsible for implementing the curriculum and observing the university program requirements.

The university faculty member is appointed by the department chair as part of the department work load and the district liaison is employed by the department to serve in the capacity of an adjunct faculty member during the length of the academy. Selection of the position holder is based on recommendations from the partner district. It is through the unique collaboration on curriculum decisions and delivery of instruction that the goals and interests of both partners are met while a clear focus on quality leadership preparation for students is maintained.

Working with the District Liaison

The relationship between the university faculty member and the district liaison constitutes a critical difference between a traditional program and the partnership academy model.³ Both serve on the Academy Planning Committee and are responsible for communications with their respective colleagues at the university and within the district. The district liaison keeps the district leaders and stakeholders in the district informed of the academy's progress, while garnering input to assure that the district's goals are continually in focus. From the beginning the district liaison and university faculty members establish clear communication about the priorities of the district in building leadership capacity. In districts that have partnered with the university on multiple teacher leadership academies, the district liaison plays an important role in the process for recruitment and selection of future teacher leaders in the district.

The university faculty member and the district liaison determine details of delivery of curriculum, following the outlines established by the district Academy Planning Committee. A sequential instructional outline is developed to guide delivery of the integrated, spiraling curriculum content and to reinforce alignment with state and national leadership standards. They distribute instructional duties among themselves to best address topics established for the academy study and may bring in presenters to enhance topics of study, or they may arrange for a content expert to assist as a "guest instructor" to add depth to certain topics. They interweave district experts to illustrate how knowledge concepts are applied in the real work in the district.

Details are finalized for assigning the list of required activities for students to participate in over the two-year program to increase and expose them to leadership activities in the district. Examples of required activities worked into the academy calendar include attending a state or local board meeting, an administrative team or district curriculum meeting, a community leadership forum such as a legislative or city council meeting, an affiliated agency such as truancy or student hearing boards, or a construction or facility meeting. Logistical items (location of class session, calendar dates, and other specifics related to district operations) are coordinated by the liaison to ensure efficiency in the classroom experience. The faculty member is generally responsible for the university's online course management software and coordinates pertinent communication with students about enrollment and other university information.

The district liaison uses the district connection to provide support in helping students navigate special project assignments tailored to the student's interest and a specific goal of the school or district. The liaison ensures proper communication is maintained with district personnel as projects are proposed and carried out. In many cases, these projects serve as program improvement pilots and often are implemented later at full scale in the district. Because they emerge out of current continuous improvement plans, students find academy assignments of great value to learning, and useful efforts to accomplish current professional goals

in the district. These connections are not likely to be as consistently strong in the traditional preparation model.

Districts often present a special end-of-program recognition ceremony to celebrate the accomplishments and hard work of academy students, bringing together students and academy staff with representatives of the board of education, superintendent, and university department chair to support and acknowledge the positive learning outcomes of the university/district academy partnership. Opportunities to celebrate offer a much deserved honor and celebration of hard work and noteworthy contributions achieved over the course of the two-year program.

Differences in Academy and Traditional Course Instruction

Differentiating instructional methods, merging theory and practice, and reflective inquiry are often predicated as requirements of effective instructional goals in educational leadership programs. Because the relationship with the same students and in the same district environment continues over an extended period of time, the opportunities for instructors to plan for connecting concepts across content areas and to engage in interrelated conversations, infuse collaboration, and practice deep inquiry are greater than in the traditional program. Students are observed to change behaviors in their work assignments during the academy study. As they build confidence and increase familiarity of leadership examples from reading and peer discussion, they ask more questions in their site-based teacher leadership roles, and report increased involvement in leadership opportunities not previously explored.⁴ Academy instructors can be flexible to respond to topics of interest that emerge from active learning. During the final semester of the academy, students deliver a presentation of their projects, highlighting the purpose, involved stakeholders, benefit, and results, along with potential follow-up activities.

Collaborative Mentor Support

In the partnership academy, mentors are active participants in the professional growth of future leaders. A mentor is assigned by the district to each student to assist individuals throughout the academy period in developing an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a school leader and to discuss important topics or assignments with the student. The district liaison supports, meets with, and provides training and guidance to mentors. Mentors, usually principals in the district, report that as they interact with academy students they themselves consider different angles and perspectives in effective decision-making. The alignment between topics explored in theory and actualized in the individual school setting is powerful. One example is the topic of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), a structured model of collaboration used in schools. Academy students report working with mentors to impact the effectiveness of school PLCs as a result of increased knowledge and confidence, sharing new ideas with fellow teachers to increase productivity and focused use of time in PLCs. Students report they feel "empowered" to make a difference as a result of

their learning. The mentor continues assistance to students as they integrate course content, such as needs assessments and survey design, in carrying forth special projects.

Building Professional Networks

Academy students value the opportunity to interact with district teachers from different levels and content areas, even in their own buildings, as they construct a better understanding of life beyond the four walls of their classroom. It is surprising how little teachers know about the larger programs in the district and what makes them work. Students repeatedly share this as a highlight of academy class sessions and that they “look forward to coming to class.” The purposeful collaboration incorporated in face-to-face classroom instruction is one of the most valued components of the academy model voiced by students. Academies fill a need for making connections between members of the district and as a result, districts comment on positive changes in district culture resulting from a series of academy cohorts. This is not likely to emerge as a benefit from the patterns of a traditional program.

Alignment with Leadership Standards

The scope of interrelationships between topics in the academy model is broad and occurs naturally. Students see patterns of leadership in practice. The ability for academy instructors to integrate and spiral back to leadership topics, refer to state and national standards important to leadership preparation, and weave impactful and emerging resources and research in the area of educational leadership, is possible through the fluid and dynamic nature of the model design occurring over the two-year cohort program. The various resource materials in the academy, which focus on core leadership values such as the ISLLC standards and the McREL 21 leadership responsibilities, emphasize the consistency of leadership constructs and create a connectedness less likely to be as evident from a study of the traditional discrete course textbooks.

A Continual Lens on Student Progress

Although traditional course instructors have valid practices for assessing student progress, distinct assessment patterns emerge in the academy model. Assessing academy student progress can be a much more holistic ongoing process, involving constant reflection by instructors and students alike. Regular feedback from students is obtained and considered by the district liaison and university faculty member with a critical eye on improvement, meeting the needs of students, the district goals and expectations, and the university standards for excellence. Connections can be made between demonstration of academic knowledge and skillful application. The academy model can focus on assisting each student in overall growth, understanding, and development of leadership skills. Instructors can provide ongoing formative assessment and advisement while checking for student understanding over a two-year time frame through practice and feedback on assignments, projects, and assessments.

Students in the academy model self-reflect on personal growth throughout the two-year program on the ISLLC (2008) standards for leadership. This is recorded at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the two-year program in areas of student knowledge, performance, and dispositions, and allows students the ability to self-assess along their journey, reflecting on growth and understanding related to the governing leadership standards. To exemplify this program strength, a review of self-assessment data from four teacher leadership academies showcased changes in the way students viewed themselves in their knowledge, beliefs, and performances as leaders. Upon completion of the two-year academy, students consistently reported higher levels of self-efficacy related to their confidence, capability, and competence in leadership roles in the school setting with 97% of the student self-assessment ratings being at a proficient level or above across all six leadership standards (Augustine-Shaw & Devin, 2014).

Another similar self-assessment conducted by students in the academy model is the Rubric of Emerging Teacher Leadership, in Linda Lambert's *Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement* (2003). A similar method is employed for students to self-reflect at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the academy. Students can visualize their growth and consider individual leadership development aligned with Lambert's four quadrants for building leadership capacity at the school and district level. These self-assessment tools are often difficult to incorporate in the traditional course structure where students enter classes at different points and instructors do not have a clear time to introduce and have students complete these reflective practices.

In the academy partnership the mentor considers the overall growth of the student and completes a field supervisor evaluation for the ongoing field experience over the two years. In the traditional course sequence, a practicum is taken as a separate course, usually toward the end of the program. In the academy, field experiences are interwoven throughout the program with continual opportunities to discuss decision-making, current issues, student projects, and consideration of pertinent reading as mentors often receive and read the same books as students in the class, offering additional reflection and interaction on the topic.

The culminating master's exam for either the traditional or academy model at the university is a portfolio with extensive entries, artifacts, and written narratives to highlight the learning of the student. While in each environment students may be expected to begin to work on the portfolio as early as the first semester, the support for making this happen is not consistent in the traditional program because courses are taken from multiple instructors. Too often the portfolio becomes an end-of-program assignment requiring the student to look back over time. In the academy, students have the advantage of being exposed to required elements of the portfolio through purposeful introduction, submitting samples and receiving feedback as they learn about the skills that will lead to portfolio contributions. Students receive feedback on the artifacts and a selected portion of the written narrative section to guide their continued work on

the portfolio at the midpoint of the academy program. The continual application and collaboration, problem solving and critical thinking, allows for a rich portfolio product that exemplifies the strengths of the academy instructional model; an integrated spiral curriculum weaving new knowledge, immersion in leadership experiences, and an interrelationship of the standards applied to leadership behaviors.

University faculty often note that portfolios from students in the traditional track, although of high quality, do not possess the same level of integrated and comprehensive understanding of leadership domains and merging of theory to practice. That is a reflection on the system and the nature of the preparation program, not of the students in the traditional program.

Impact on Licensure and Accreditation

Many states require a standardized licensure test designed specifically for building-level leaders. Kansas is one of those states with a required examination for candidates seeking the building-level initial license. This exam measures entry-level and standards-relevant knowledge important for competent professional practice. In brief, students in the Kansas State University preparation program taking the license exam met or exceeded the cut score in overwhelmingly successful rates. Recent accreditation reports filed by the department indicate a clear picture of exemplary learning outcomes of students in the university preparation program with 100% of students meeting a proficient level across five of the six leadership standards and a high pass rate on the measure for the remaining standard from the state licensure exam.

Additional Professor Reflections Comparing Academy and Traditional Courses

An important note to be considered regarding any comparison made by university instructors between traditional program delivery and the academy model is the level of experience the instructor has with each. Currently, the majority of professors teaching in the academies served lengthy tenures as K-12 administrators before beginning their teaching at Kansas State University. Their experience has included teaching in both traditional and academy models from the start of their service at Kansas State, and there can be clear differences noted between the models from both instructional and student outcome standpoints.

Advising and Assisting Students

Students who are chosen for academy participation enjoy not only the benefits of a guided admission process, but also benefit from the close monitoring and advisement relationship that exists throughout the academy experience. One of the greatest advantages for academy participants is navigating through the routines required each semester. Because the sequence of classes is predetermined, enrollment for each semester is simplified for academy members. Not only do they benefit from hands-on directions, by comparison to traditional student peers, they do not need to be concerned with class availability or course sequencing. The process of generating their prescribed program of studies, a formal document required by the Graduate

School, is more streamlined for academy students. Although programs of study differ among all students due to their own circumstances, such as previous degrees and licensure goals, the process is simplified for both the advisor and cohort members in part because of the continual contact in class meetings.

Additionally, all students nearing graduation must meet deadlines that are required by the University, Graduate School, and College of Education. Unfortunately for the busy traditional student, these requirements are easy to overlook or miss. Because of the nature of a cohort, there is continual support from one another to make certain everyone meets their obligations. Graduation participation becomes much more of a group bonding experience than an individual accomplishment.

Notable Differences Between Academy Classes and Traditional Classes

The development of a cohesive student relationship is not only an important outcome of the academy model, but serves as a foundation for the curricular and instructional decisions made for the duration of the academy. One of the major outcome goals for students in educational leadership is to gain an awareness of the importance of systems thinking and to gain the ability to visualize the larger picture of leadership and their own role in their school, district, and community. It is easier for academy students to attain this knowledge and appreciation, because the curriculum is designed to be seamless, with the leadership standards blended class-by-class, semester-by-semester. There is more opportunity for group goals because classes can easily cross semester. By design and with intention, the conclusion of a leadership academy in many ways creates a whole far greater than the sum of its parts.

By comparison, their traditional student peers take their classes as singletons, with each class standing alone, and in an essentially random order based on when they began their program and class availability. Nonacademy traditional students are exposed to systems thinking, but the students do not have the built-in advantages created by the leadership academy.

The demographic differences between students in an academy compared to traditional model students are also noteworthy. Students in academies are employed in the same school district, while students in the traditional model classes come from a variety of districts, as well as different states. Students in traditional classes can become a de facto cohort if they take several classes together, but unlike those in an academy, there is no guarantee that all such students are on the same time frame in the program of studies. Students in the academy are all at the same place as they work toward their degree. Another demographic feature, which may be worth study, is the fact academy cohort members are chosen by their school districts, whereas traditional students have themselves made the choice to seek their degree. Are there differences in outcomes between students chosen by school districts for the program and those who self-select to seek their degree?

These and other factors account for differences instructors face teaching in the academy versus traditional classes. In a traditional class it would be far less common to coteach, but it is an essential component of the academy model. Depending on the setup of the academy, the instructor roles could include a lead professor, a colead, a visiting instructor or professor, and a district partner instructor, with all involved approved members of the Kansas State University Graduate Faculty. At a minimum, academies would include a lead professor and district partner, with other instructors periodically joining to teach in an area of expertise. The students recognize who the lead instructor is, yet also know they are equally responsible to each instructor.

Teaching topics are generally divided and shared based on interest, experience, and knowledge of the topic or textbook materials. While there is some common planning to facilitate each class session, the instructors are generally responsible for their own lessons, assignments, discussions, and grading.

The selection of instructional materials is at the sole discretion of the instructor teaching outside of an academy. School districts partner with academy instructors to select course textbooks and materials, and in many cases design those materials to fit the specific needs of their school district. This also influences instructional decisions when combined with the intentional design of the cohort membership.

Lesson planning often includes a decision to “jigsaw” assignments from texts and materials in the academy, whereas that happens with much less frequency in traditional classes. This practice is done not only to allow the coverage of more material, but out of necessity to make use of available time. The required materials and textbooks for academy students is oftentimes more extensive than for students in traditional classes, and while they are expected to read books in their entirety, a common academy practice would be to divide chapters to facilitate group presentation and discussion. A clear advantage for academy students is the ability to have group projects that can be structured and focused on a shared problem or issue.

This allows for increased opportunity to merge theory and practice in comparison to traditional classes. An issue or problem that exists in the participant school district may be shared by all cohort members, and can be a major focus examined across semesters and classes. This allows for deeper understanding of the relationship between theory and practice that can sometimes be missing for traditional model students.

Example Taken from Academy and Traditional Classes

One feature for students in traditional classes is that the duration of a semester devoted entirely to one subject, such as ethical leadership, allows both the instructor and students to focus more in-depth and cover more related content. In the academy classes, only highlights from entire classes are presented, with the intent that each lesson, activity, or reading will fit into the larger picture of the entire academy curriculum. However, the academy presents a clear advantage by allowing the students to blend their learning across other subjects.

An example related to ethics helps to illustrate how students in the academy benefit from such an approach. Standard 5 of the ISLLC Standards states “Ethical Principles and Professional Norms: An educational leader promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner” (2008, p. 15). One of the student outcomes from the Ethical Dimensions of Leadership class is for students to become better decision makers in all aspects of leadership. Students achieve this through practice and the use of resolution principles applied to ethical dilemma paradigms, and increase their skills through a process Rushworth Kidder (2003) describes as ethical fitness. Early in the academy, students are presented identical material related to ethical dilemmas that students in traditional classes receive. The difference for academy students is that there is greater opportunity to apply their resolution principles to a variety of situations, including the shared problems and issues they face together. This allows for not only a greater and deeper understanding of their own ethical fitness journey, but allows them to apply ethical decision-making practices throughout the remainder of the academy curriculum. Ethical resolution principles are then stressed when students later create research questions, analyze data, make decisions related to school culture, and nearly every other aspect of the academy curriculum.

This type of repetition and application simply cannot be done to the same degree for students outside of the academy experience, in part because there is no consistency as to when classes are taken in the course sequence for those students. That problem exists for other classes as well, and is a major reason the students in the academy often have a greater understanding of the larger, overall systems approach goal that we strive to have for all students.

Conclusion

As leadership in schools becomes ever more challenging, requiring multiple participants, and as the need grows for leaders to bring an increasingly greater array of skills, one university transformed school leadership preparation from the traditional model to a model based on building authentic partnerships with school districts. The result is a two-year master's program designed to produce the leadership needed in the district where the teachers are already blooming as potential leaders. While the partnership model now accounts for over 90% of the master's program enrollment at the university, both models fill a need in terms of making the program outcome available to all students. This article presents a contrast between the two delivery models, from the perspective of three university professors who have delivered instruction in both. Figure 3 presents a summary of the comparisons noted.



Figure 3 | **Contrasting Traditional Master's Program and Partnership Masters Academy**

Characteristic	Typical Traditional University Master's in Educational Leadership Program	District/University Partnership Academy Model
Instructor Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual, university staff instructor with content expertise Multiple instructors across program courses Guest instructors may be invited Scope of instruction: In depth content area Limited connection to other courses content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team teaching with representation from both theory and practice Consistent instructor presence Guest instructors may be invited District experts share application of concepts in actual work setting Connect content topics in integrated context
Student Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students come from multiple districts Class membership changes each course Students self-select course enrollment after admission to department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students share common work environment Closed cohort for two years Employer selects class members based on performance in the district and enter at designated time after department admission
Program of Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrete content knowledge aligned with leadership standards No firm connection between classroom learning and field experiences Typical college content textbooks Discrete course offerings from various instructors encountered as students enroll and courses are offered Gaps in enrollment or course offerings may interrupt flow on individual student basis Students learn about other districts Option for building leader's license 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated content knowledge aligned with leadership standards Developmental application in authentic setting with strong feedback loop Contemporary materials aligned with district priorities Integrated spiraling curriculum in sequential delivery. Ongoing interaction with District Planning Committee keeps continuous learning curriculum current over time Set beginning and ending program dates Students learn more about their own district programs and services Option for building leader license
Student Support Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University advisement Student networks emerge across districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University and district advisement Multiple networks emerge within district One-on-one district mentor support
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of course work assigned by instructor May include separate hours in a practicum supervised by a field practitioner Assessment decisions by instructor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holistic view of student assessment over the two years Ongoing collaborative assessment of coursework and immediate application of performance over two years
Other Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students make contacts in other districts that may lead to future employment options Coursework based on campus or online Coursework generalized Class schedule coordinated with university calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students clarify district procedures and showcase skills to district decision makers that may lead to future advancement options Coursework delivered within district with strong face-to-face component Coursework has tight connection to district goals and priorities Class schedule coordinated with district calendar Students gain broader understanding of complexity of district decisions District has two years to observe growth in prospective future position candidates

Endnotes

¹ To see a complete list of past and present academies and partners see Figures 3 and 4 in Mary Devin's "Transforming the Preparation of Leaders into a True Partnership Model," previously in this issue.

² An important distinction is made here: The earliest versions (1987- 1998) of leadership academies, as they were called, were post-master's degree professional development for practicing school leaders. Subsequent leadership academies of this "second wave", which is what is referenced here and the primary focus of this themed issue, have been partnerships for preservice prospective school leaders, providing master's degrees to the selected participants. For more on this distinction, see previous commentary in this issue, David Thompson's "Revisiting Public School/University Partnerships for Formal Leadership Development: A Brief 30-Year Retrospective."

³ For more on the district liaison perspective, see previously in this issue Debra Gustafson and Nancy Kiltz's "District Liaison Involvement in Partnership Academies."

⁴ For more on the student perspective and leadership growth in the partnership academy model, see previously in this issue Pilar Mejía, Samrie Devin, and Heather Calvert's "Inspiring Confidence and Professional Growth in Leadership: Students Perspectives on University-District Partnership Master's Academies."

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Professors share how the district/university partnership model thriving at Kansas State University was successfully replicated with four school districts in another state and was adapted to match their own department goals.

North Dakota's Experience with the Academy Model: A Successful Replication

Tom Hall and Ann Clapper

Dr. Tom Hall, Associate Professor at North Dakota State University, earned his doctorate at the University of South Dakota and has been a faculty member in the Educational Leadership Program at North Dakota State since 2005. He has substantial experience with the partnership academy model, and has played a lead role in designing and facilitating leadership academies with four school districts in North Dakota.

Dr. Ann T. Clapper, Associate Professor at North Dakota State University, earned her doctorate from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa and has been a faculty member in the Educational Leadership Program since 2008. She has extensive experience with the partnership academy model, and has successfully designed and facilitated academies in collaboration with four school districts in North Dakota.

Leadership is a key factor in improving schools and ensuring academic success for all students. At the building level, the leadership role has traditionally been assigned to the principal, but principals cannot be expected to be the sole leaders in their buildings. Although teachers may not aspire to be principals, the complexities of today's schools demand that they lead as well. York-Barr and Duke (2004) defined teacher leadership as "the process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement" (pp. 287-288). Other research on this concept of shared or collective leadership has also linked these practices to increased student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood & Mascal 2008).

A survey conducted by MetLife (2013) revealed that 84% of teachers said they were either "not very" or "not at all" interested in becoming a principal; however, nearly 25% were interested in a blended role that combined teaching with a leadership position of some sort. Therefore, given the importance of teacher leadership to student success, and sufficient interest by teachers to serve in blended leadership roles, preparation programs specifically designed for developing teacher leaders are needed.

In 2012, the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) released a position paper promoting the development of teacher leadership programs in collaboration with educational administration/leadership professors. The paper noted "[we] believe that leadership matters and thus we submit there is a sense of urgency for professors to collaboratively develop teacher leadership programs embedded within educational administration programs" (p. 1). The authors indicated that site-based internships might augment "simulated exercises in college classrooms" and observed that "university faculty could benefit from access to schools to limit the silo-effect between higher education and PK-12 education" (p. 5).

The K-State Leadership Academy model was born in direct recognition that neither universities nor school districts could independently satisfy the need for highly trained leaders at all levels. Universities had the advantage of deep theory and reflection, while schools and other educational organizations held the advantage of real-world practice and faced the immediacy of high stakes outcomes and other pressures (College of Education, n.d., p. 3).

While the premise of these blended university program options proposed by NCPEA is an admirable first step, it simply may not be enough in the long term to achieve the results needed.

Past studies have questioned the effectiveness of traditional principal training programs, noting that those programs did not adequately prepare aspiring principals for the world they faced upon entry into a leadership role in a school (Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003). Research gathered by the Southern Regional Education Board (2006) indicated that the majority of university principal preparation programs fall short of “implementing the conditions necessary to create high quality programs centered on preparing principals who can lead improvement in student achievement” (p. 8). Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007) recommended that school district administrators and university faculty work together much more closely in preparing aspiring leaders. And, as suggested by the NCPEA paper cited earlier, school district administrators need a seat at the planning table if today’s university educational leadership programs are to be relevant and meaningful to a new generation of teacher leaders.

The research seems clear. Today’s teachers are interested in becoming leaders in their districts and they want programs that offer them practical skill development so that they can keep pace in the quickly changing world of the 21st century classroom. To do this, colleges and universities preparing future leaders must come down from the “ivory tower” and find ways to work much more closely with their administrator colleagues in the districts. Just as we ask teachers to change the way they teach to better match the learning styles of today’s student, so must we change the way we approach teacher and principal leadership preparation programs to better meet the needs of the field.

Selecting a Model

When the decision was made to follow the current research and design a new master’s degree program specifically for preparing teacher leaders, the Educational Leadership faculty at North Dakota State University (NDSU) knew that borrowing a page from the old playbook on how to prepare principals wasn’t the answer.

Our search for a leadership preparation program that reflected the features we needed led us to Kansas State University. The K-State leadership academy partnership efforts first began in 1987 and have continued to grow in scope and impact since.¹ Central to the K-State academy is the importance of partnerships between universities and school districts and the unique strengths that each partner brings to the table.

Our initial discussions with the central academy faculty member in the K-State Department of Educational Leadership were by phone and email, but eventually we traveled to Kansas to observe two different leadership academies in action. These site visits were extremely beneficial, especially with regard to seeing what the concept of a coherent, spiraling curriculum looks like in practice and hearing about the benefits of a cohort model from the students.

While the partnership academy model reflected the same research based elements that we planned to use to guide our new pilot program, their model has a different focus. Although teacher leadership has become a theme among K-State academies, their model was created out of principal preparation efforts and as such continues to be guided by the ISLLC, or Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). But the focus of the NDSU pilot project put a greater focus on teacher leadership from the beginning, so a different set of standards was needed to guide our new program.

Adopting New Standards

The Teacher Leader Model Standards (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011) were selected to guide NDSU’s Teacher Leader Academy pilot project. Work on these standards began in 2008 when a group of key leaders from around the country came together to discuss the importance of teacher leadership in assuring student and school success, and the end result of that initiative was the set of model standards.

The format of the Teacher Leader Model Standards is similar to the ISLLC Standards, which was of benefit to us given our familiarity with the use of the ISLLC standards in our principal preparation program. The teacher leader standards have seven broad “domains” that describe the scope of a particular element of teacher leadership with “functions” under each domain that provide more specificity of what that domain looks like in practice.

The teacher leader model standards can be used to guide the preparation of experienced teachers to assume leadership roles such as resource providers, instructional specialists, curriculum specialists, classroom supporters, learning facilitators, mentors, school team leaders, and data coaches (Harrison & Killion, 2007).

Piloting the Model

We didn't have to look far to find a partner to pilot the academy with us. The West Fargo Public School District, located just a few miles from the NDSU campus, is well-known for its willingness to take the lead on implementing innovative practices. The district is led by a visionary superintendent with ties to Kansas State University and a deep understanding of the K-State partnership model which facilitated our initial conversations with the district about serving as a pilot site for our initiative.

Once the West Fargo school district committed to the pilot project, a series of meetings with the superintendent and assistant superintendents were held. The results of those meetings included finalizing a set of "nonnegotiables," expectations, and responsibilities that were agreed to by both parties. Those agreements included commitments such as:

- Applicants for the academy must meet North Dakota State University Graduate School admission criteria as well as the admission criteria established by the Educational Leadership Program.
- The district would provide a district liaison who would be associated with the academy through the duration of the pilot project and work collaboratively with the university liaison.
- The design and delivery of courses would be a shared responsibility between the university and the district.
- The academy would provide opportunities for candidates to acquire teacher leader skills using authentic activities relevant to district initiatives.
- Candidates would be involved in multiple field based experiences.

Once these broad agreements were in place, we moved to a planning process that was more specific to the actual work of the academy. The planning team consisted of the two assistant superintendents (serving as codistrict liaisons) and two NDSU Educational Leadership faculty members (serving as co-university liaisons).

We started by aligning the Domains and Functions of the Teacher Leader Model Standards with the school district's initiatives and priorities and the university courses that the candidates would be required to take in the program. Then we identified potential assignments or field-based activities that were relevant to the work of the district that would help the students acquire the knowledge, skills, and abilities described in the Teacher Leader Model Standards.

In addition to increasing students' knowledge, skills, and abilities relative to the Teacher Leader Model Standards, the planning team also identified ancillary goals that we wanted our students in the academy to acquire. These goals included having students demonstrate the ability to work effectively with their colleagues in the academy, contribute to a healthy school culture, support district goals and initiatives, willingly assume leadership roles in their building or the district, and to speak and write effectively.

At the same time, the planning team designed an informational brochure and held district-wide meetings with interested teachers to provide general information

The spiral curriculum approach is better than taking one class at a time and then moving on.

(West Fargo Academy Student Comment)

about North Dakota State University's new 30-credit Teacher Leader Master's degree (a cohort model, six graduate credits each semester for five consecutive semesters) and the unique features of the degree (delivered at the district site in partnership with district leaders, authentic learning activities linked to district initiatives, and a spiraling curriculum with an emphasis on action research). District leaders designed the application materials using the K-State application materials as a guide and the planning team reviewed the applicants. Fourteen teachers from all levels (elementary, middle, and high school) applied and all 14 were admitted to the pilot program.

The West Fargo Teacher Leader Academy started in the summer of 2014 and the students completed their degrees in December 2015. During that time, the planning team continued to meet and discuss what was working and what needed to be changed, but by the end of the pilot we all agreed that the spiraling curriculum concept and the action research process that we had foreshadowed for teachers when we promoted the model should be standard practice in every academy moving forward. The specifics on how the research "course" was taught in the academy follows.

Spiraling Curriculum and Action Research

We introduced research practices in general, and action research in particular, during the first semester of the academy. We spent time in class discussing the challenges the students were facing in their classrooms and reminded them that these kinds of challenges are the genesis of an action research project. We also analyzed and critiqued various research studies so that the academy students had an understanding of how research methodologies differ.

We then explained that unlike a typical university course (which might run for a 16-week semester), their "research course" would continue on through the duration of the academy (five semesters). After creating the foundation of knowledge and understanding of action research in the summer, the students were instructed that they would spend fall semester writing up their action research proposal in the form of a three-chapter research proposal paper. Then, during spring semester they would gather their data, write up their results in the summer, and complete their final activity (academic paper as well as a poster presentation to the West Fargo Board of Education) in the fall before graduating in December of 2015.

Students were told that the culminating activity for their action research project would be a poster presentation prior to the district's school board meeting in December 2015 and that the poster presentation would be modeled after the actual process that university faculty go through when they prepare for and present a poster at an academic conference.

To help the students visualize and practice the poster presentation process, we had the students create a poster based on their action research proposal, and in December 2014 we held a mock academic conference in the hallway of the district's central office building where our academy class sessions were held. After the practice session, the students worked together to finalize the checklist they wanted to use to guide the development and assessment of their formal poster presentation to the school board.

This assignment also included learning about and practicing informative speaking skills. To help guide the students in developing their talking points for their practice poster presentation session, a faculty member in NDSU's Communication Department worked with the academy students on creating and refining their poster presentation skills.

Replicating the Model Across North Dakota

Given North Dakota's small population base (739,482), word about NDSU's Teacher Leader Academy pilot project with the West Fargo district spread quickly to the rest of the state. We also promoted the model by copresenting at statewide conferences with the West Fargo district liaisons and a West Fargo academy student. At those presentations, we limited our presentation time in order to allow our district partners to share their stories, as it was their observations and insights that the audiences really wanted to hear.

As a result of the successful pilot, interest in the model is high. Currently, we have Teacher Leader Academies operating in one urban and two rural North Dakota school districts. We are in discussions with several other large districts in our state and the West Fargo District will be starting their second academy in the Fall of 2017.

In the case of the Oakes academy (a small rural school district in southeast North Dakota), the district is using the academy for teacher recruitment and retention by paying a portion of their teachers' NDSU Graduate School tuition in return for their commitment to continuing to teach in the district for a specified number of years after they have completed their master's degree. Teacher recruitment and retention is a growing challenge in North Dakota's small, rural schools so we hope that other small, rural school districts will use the Oakes approach so that the academy model is not limited to just the large schools in our state.

While the demand for the model is a good problem to have, we are limited by our faculty capacity, therefore, we are working closely with our Department Chair and the Dean of our College to determine how to staff each academy with a university liaison. One plan is to hire retired school leaders as adjuncts and train them in the model. To ensure that core elements of the model are preserved, we are in the process of writing a series of university and district liaison handbooks that will provide guidance and standardize certain elements of the model, while still leaving room in the model for incorporating the specific initiatives and responding to the needs of each district.

We are also in discussions with another university in our state that is interested in partnering with us on delivering the academy model. A Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted and we are anticipating that it will be finalized in the near future. Having a university partner will extend the reach of the academy and our hope is that the handbooks that we are creating, and the training of our university partner on the model, will ensure that the core concepts and practices of the academy model are preserved no matter where the university liaison comes from.

Figure 1 | Crosswalk Between North Dakota State University's Strategic Vision and Teacher Leader Academy Model

Focus Area	Objective	Strategy: Teacher Leader Academy
Student Success and Learning	<p>Increase Graduate School Enrollment</p> <p>Reduce time to degree and attrition rates for graduate programs</p> <p>Provide adequate access to the space, technology, library resources, and other infrastructure that supports graduate student work</p>	<p>70 students have enrolled in academies since the start of the pilot (Summer 2014)</p> <p>Candidates in the academy complete their Master's degree in five semesters as a cohort; little or no attrition given that candidates are recommended by their district and the academy is relevant to the work of the district</p> <p>Candidates in an academy do not need space, technology, and other infrastructure on campus to support their work, as the coursework is delivered at the district site.</p>
Outreach and Engagement	<p>Increase the educational reach of North Dakota</p> <p>Improve communication with the citizens of North Dakota</p>	<p>The academy is a new program that serves the citizens of North Dakota by providing educational opportunities to place-bound citizens through distance education.</p> <p>The academy model has increased interaction with underserved, small school communities</p>

Aligning the Academy Model with NDSU's Strategic Vision

The publication of NDSU's Strategic Vision in 2015 provided us with the opportunity to move the academy model from an innovative pilot project to an integral part of helping the university achieve its objectives. Figure 1 was created to illustrate how the work of the academy supports the specific objectives in the university's Strategic Vision.

Planning for the Future

The implementation of NDSU's Teacher Leader Academy model also initiated statewide conversations about the preparation and ongoing professional growth of educational leaders. From this several meetings have been held to consider how we might create a more coherent statewide system. The centerpiece of those discussions focused on a document created by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) that recommended that states establish a leadership career continuum that starts with teacher leadership. While North Dakota does not have a state board of education, an ad hoc group of state leaders and university faculty have been studying this guide and paying close attention to the following graphic (Figure 2) as they consider how they might work together in order to create a more coherent system of leadership preparation and growth with teacher leadership as the foundation for that system.

Reflecting on the Past

Reflecting on the pilot of the academy model with the West Fargo district allowed us to identify key takeaways that have helped us improve our practice and guide the writing of our university and district liaison handbooks. Here are some of the

lessons that we have learned and insights that we have gained since starting down the Teacher Leader Academy model path:

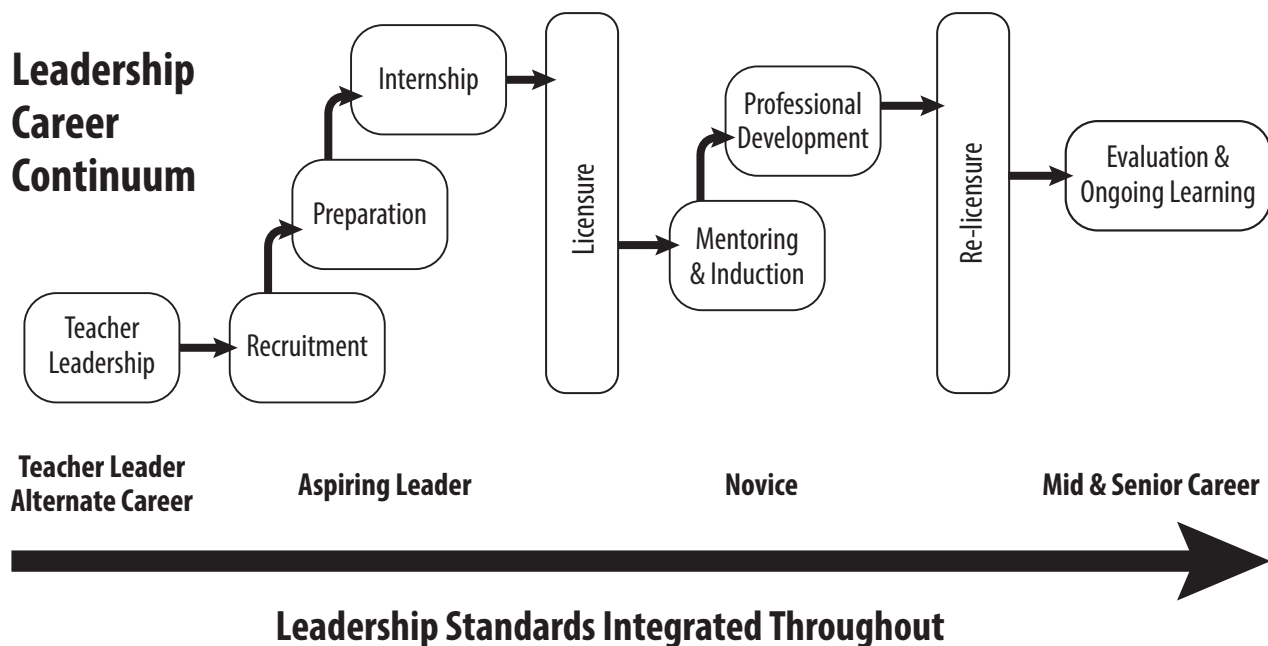
- Every district is different and so every academy is different.
- District liaisons are critical to the success of an academy.
- The district must commit to planning time prior to and during the academy.
- District recognition and support of the academy is key.
- The academy has created an enormous amount of goodwill for NDSU across the state.

Conclusion

As discussed earlier in this article, research over the past several years has indicated that the way colleges and universities have been preparing future educational leaders needs to be reconsidered. To be relevant in today's ever-changing education environment we, college and university Educational Leadership program faculty, need to work much more collaboratively with local school district principals and superintendents. Doing this will better ensure that the knowledge and skills gained by our aspiring school leaders will be useful, meaningful, and relevant to the districts and ultimately the students they serve.

Approximately four years ago, North Dakota State University's Educational Leadership Program was tasked by the institution's president to reflect on its past and consider its future direction. During this gap analysis process of considering who we were and who we aspired to be, the K-State partnership academy model came to our attention and the proverbial light went on. The academy model was a

Figure 2 | Leadership Career Continuum



Source: National Association of State Boards of Education, 2011

process we needed to learn more about, and eventually it was decided that it was the right direction for our program.

As no two school district leadership academies are exactly alike, neither are our two (K-State & NDSU) academy models. After all, we are two different states with different challenges, needs, and stakeholders. The primary focus of the North Dakota State University Teacher Leader Academy model is developing teacher leaders rather than principal preparation. As such, we use the Teacher Leader Model Standards to guide the academy process. Our primary signature assignment is an action research project and paper that each student completes prior to graduation. In addition, every student takes part in a poster session where they present their action research to the local board of education.

These differences aside, generally speaking the two academy models are very similar in terms of process and structure. To illustrate, students enter the academy as a cohort from one specific school district, they move through the academy at the same pace and graduate (earned master's degree) together after successfully completing a predetermined number of semesters and courses (delivered at a district site vs. on campus), academic coursework is closely aligned to school district goals and initiatives, class sessions are jointly planned and cotaught by university faculty and local school district administrators. It is this final point that is at the heart of developing a successful Teacher Leader Academy, as it is the contention of the authors that without the support, cooperation, and most importantly, collaboration of the local school district's top administrative team, a successful academy experience would be difficult to achieve.

We would like to end our discussion here by stating how indebted we are to Dr. Mary Devin and her colleagues at Kansas State University for taking us under their collective wing and showing us the value of the master's partnership academy model, and teaching us how we could use this innovative educational approach to enhance the delivery and practice of the Educational Leadership Program at North Dakota State University.



Endnote

¹ For more information on the history of the KSU partnership academies, see previously in this issue David Thompson's "Revisiting Public School/University Partnerships for Formal Leadership Development: A Brief 30-Year Retrospective", and Figures 3 and 4 in Mary Devin's "Transforming the Preparation of Leaders into a True Partnership Model."

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The KSU Special Coordinator for Indigenous Partnerships discusses recent partnership academy replication efforts with the Osage Nation, and how the model can be reinterpreted for Indian Country.

Stitching a New Pattern in Educational Leadership: Reinterpreting a University Partnership Academy Model for Native Nations

Alex RedCorn

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Introduction

With this themed issue of *Educational Considerations* focused on using university-district partnership academies to prepare leaders for educational settings, it is important to consider the value of this model in socially diverse environments and especially the potential for native nations to use this approach for training emerging educational leaders. Specifically, when Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007) discussed the need for this partnership model to better merge theory and practice in educational leadership training programs, they opened up a flexible space for education institutions to weave culturally responsive learning experiences into their professional capacity-building model. In doing so, this allows for the incorporation of important place-based learning experiences that rely on energy and relationships found within Indigenous communities (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). With this in mind, as Indigenous communities explore ways to build their capacities in pursuit of enhanced educational sovereignty and self-determination (Smith, 1999), I posit that this university-district partnership model can be used in Indigenous communities to better prepare educational leaders for the entangled settler-colonial environments in which they practice.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the entangled position of being an Indigenous educator, and how Miller, Devin, and Shoop's (2007) partnership academy model can adapt to this position and fill a complex capacity-building need in Indian Country. Since Kansas State University and the Osage Nation have recently developed a new partnership academy to begin in the Fall of 2016, I will use this specific example to help illustrate the perspective of native nations in our education systems, and explore how this model is being adapted for the Osage community. In the broader conversation, this article is intended to help further the argument that there is a need to broadly rethink educational leadership training programs, especially in the diverse Indigenous communities found across Indian Country.

A Background on Kansas State University's Partnership Academies

Kansas State University's College of Education has a long history of partnering with school districts for professional leadership development programming.¹ Around the turn of the century, these partnerships began to take on the form of two-year, site-based academies in which students, working within a cohort of peers, earn a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership upon completion of the program. These efforts were aimed not only at providing robust professional development opportunities for the partnering districts, but they also were aimed at trying to bridge the gap between theory and real-world practice in leadership training, as discussed by Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007). To accomplish this, they created a university-district partnership model that deprioritizes campus-based, discrete course offerings, and instead focuses on engaging students in a fully-integrated and spiraling curriculum which provides ongoing local mentorship and field experiences in conjunction with coursework emphasizing modern research and theory in the field of educational leadership.

As discussed throughout this themed issue, this partnership model has many valuable qualities in contrast to traditional educational leadership training programs, and many school districts have chosen to partner with KSU as they try to build their institutional leadership capacities.² The model has also been successfully replicated by North Dakota State University, which adapted it to fit the needs in their community.³ This article continues this conversation regarding replicability, focusing on how the model is being adapted for the up-and-coming Osage Nation Educational Leadership Academy.

Educational Leadership from a Native Nation's Perspective: A Colonial Entanglement

Indian Education is a highly bureaucratic arena that requires educators to navigate overlapping political sovereignties, complex sociocultural boundaries, and jurisdictional gray areas. This puts educational leaders in these communities in a complicated position and they must possess a highly unique skill set in order to reach their students, as well as have the ability to stitch together programs that combine elements from a multiplicity of sociocultural and political institutions.

This section begins with a short background of Indian education from the general perspective of native nations and then moves on to describe the specific position of these governments and their respective education departments (tribal education departments - TEDs).⁴ I then use the Osage Nation's educational systems to illustrate how this complex position looks in practical terms, a position which Osage anthropologist Jean Dennison might term a "settler-colonial entanglement."

Foundational Understandings of the Indian Education Landscape

Often, the topic of Indian education in mainstream circles is narrowly perceived to be a group of federally run "Indian Schools" managed by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), which are essentially the modern remnants of the

infamous "kill the Indian, save the man" programs (Churchill, 2004; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Spring, 2012). In reality, Indian education is much more than that, especially considering only 6% of Indian students in the U.S. are enrolled in BIE schools, while 92% of Indian students are attending general public schools both on and off Indian land (TEDNA, 2011). For those who are unfamiliar with the porous and checkered nature of reservation boundaries, land ownership, and the history of allotments, it may come as a surprise to find out that there are an estimated 739 public schools on Indian land. These schools, along with many more schools found off Indian land in urban, suburban, and other rural areas, are often managed by state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs), and not necessarily the local tribes (TEDNA 2011). This is the reality of the Indian education landscape, which is further complicated by the fact that native nations possess an inherent sovereign right over the education of their youth – an authority that extends to its members regardless of what school they are attending or where it is located (TEDNA 2006). Ultimately, most American Indian students are being taught in general public schools, and this creates a clear entanglement of educational rights, responsibilities, and efforts from a variety of sociocultural and political positions – especially for Tribal Education Departments.

The Position of Native Nations and their Education Leaders

Tribal Education Departments (TEDs), sometimes referred to as Tribal Education Agencies (TEAs), are defined as "the departments in tribes responsible for supporting the education of tribal members, created by sovereign governments of federally recognized Indian tribes" (Mackety, Bachler, Barley, & Cicchinelli, 2009). Currently, of the 567 federally recognized native nations across the United States (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2016), over 200 of them have some form of TED, which are most often found in the executive branch of their government and tasked with carrying out their nation's educational goals (TEDNA 2011). In these communities, TEDs often serve as primary vehicles through which native nations execute their education agendas, especially when these sovereign nations are not operating the K-12 schools and/or colleges that enroll their members.

Since each native nation establishes TEDs according to their respective legal procedures and education agendas, the structural makeup and funding streams of each TED can vary widely along with the roles they play in their respective education landscapes. As a result, they do not mirror the institutional uniformity found across typical LEAs and SEAs. Overall, aside from reports issued by the Tribal Education Departments National Assembly in conjunction with the Native American Rights Fund, there is minimal literature specifically on TEDs, with the exception of one study by Mackety et al. (2009), which took a closer look at TEDs in the Central Region States and found that they were involved in a variety of services and programs, such as:

- early childhood programs
- standards and curricula development
- assessments

- graduation support
- attendance support
- dropout prevention
- scholarships
- parent involvement
- teacher training
- accrediting BIA-funded schools
- vocational training
- higher education
- operating schools, colleges, museums, libraries, or cultural centers
- administering and evaluating federal contract and grant programs
- maintaining and analyzing educational statistics on tribal members
- serving as liaisons between tribes, governments, schools, and families
- enforcing tribal education laws
- offering culture and language instruction
- substance abuse prevention
- parenting skills workshops
- family intervention counseling (Mackety et al., 2009).

It is important to understand that this is a general list of what you may find in TEDs across the Central Region States, and that some may be tasked with only a few of these services or programs, while others may have the capacity to take on more. Essentially, one should not expect to find all of these programs in most TEDs.

Again, approximately 92% of American Indian students attend general public schools (TEDNA, 2011), so even though “operating schools” is listed as a potential service, many TEDs do not operate K-12 schools. While many native nations manage early childhood programs, the majority of students eventually attend local public schools. When these American Indian students attend state-run K-12 and postsecondary institutions, their tribal governments often shift to a supporting role in their education and have less influence over their day-to-day learning environments. This position is what puts TEDs clearly in an intersectional zone of overlapping sovereignties: as they exercise their sovereign right to educate their members, their geographic and jurisdictional realities inherently link them to a variety of outside institutions. As a result, Indigenous education leaders must be prepared to navigate and negotiate the bureaucracies and educational systems not only of their own institutions, but also of multiple LEAs and SEAs, along with the variety of offices and programs found in the executive branch of the federal government that are linked to modern and historic legislation and treaties.

In addition to traversing these bureaucratic and political boundaries, Indigenous educators must also be able work in distinct cultural spaces. On one hand, they are mired in U.S. legal and bureaucratic processes that are radically more complex than those encountered by non-Indigenous educators, while on another, they work within Indigenous educational paradigms that are founded on ways of knowing that were once completely detached from Euro-American philosophies. Although the latter are often framed as such,

these cultural spaces are not stuck in the past – they are ever-evolving and alive in the present. Additionally, these Indigenous spaces possess their own internal diversity; each tribe has distinct qualities that unite its members as a people, but these qualities can find their own adaptations and interpretations across each community, which creates an internal space for dialogue, discussion, and disagreements. These are spaces that are at times ironically foreign to even some cultural insiders, and though the sociocultural norms are distinctly different from what is found in the settler-colonial majority, they are not entirely detached from these mainstream ways of knowing. These distinct cultural spaces take on both formal and informal varieties, from traditional ceremonies to social media, and knowing how to navigate these spaces is a very important skill that educational leaders in Indian Country should possess. If educational leaders in these communities have no experience in these spaces, then they run the risk of unintentionally continuing the “kill the Indian, save the man” policies of the past (Churchill, 2004). This topic is discussed in more detail later on, but for now, it must be acknowledged that there is a need for educational leaders to have experience in, or at least knowledge of, traditional Indigenous ways, so they can be more prepared to weave Indigenous skills and values into the educational programming in their communities and continue to carry those ways into the future.

Ultimately, educational leaders trained in many university programs are often being prepared for service in a building, district, or other mainstream institution that operates in their respective state. These state-focused programs do not prepare Indigenous education leaders for the more complex cultural and institutional environments found in American Indian systems. As a result, Indigenous education leaders are most often operating from a radically different position than their peers, but are still inherently linked to the same state-run systems, among many others. This reality can have a marginalizing effect on these leaders in training; so recognizing the stark differences in the experiences of and demands on Indigenous educators underlines the need to consider alternative leadership preparation that can prepare educational leaders for a variety of educational settings. I turn here to the Osage Nation to provide a concrete example of: 1) the nuanced realities of Indigenous education from the perspective of native nations; and 2) the types of educational environments Indigenous leaders need to be prepared to manage as they weave together new programs that reflect their position.

Osage Nation Education: An Example

To help illustrate what this entangled position can look like, below I have included a short list of some of the current educational programming in the Osage Nation. To be clear, the Osage Nation has an Education Department, but all of their educational efforts are not housed solely in that department; there is also an Osage Nation Language Department, Cultural Center, and Museum along with other traditional ceremonies and institutions outside of the government that play strong roles in education but lack the

“education” moniker that we associate with the field.⁵ A more thorough list of programs can be found in the Osage Nation Resource Directory (Osage Nation, 2016), but a snapshot of several Osage education programs helps illustrate the unique position of native nations in education:⁶

The Wah.Zha.Zhi (Osage) Early Learning Academy (WELA) and Head Start: A collection of early learning centers found across the Osage community for children ages six weeks to five years that incorporates Osage skills, knowledge, and language into daily learning experiences and curricula. This program is open to Osages, other natives, and nonnatives. The federal Head Start program and WELA were originally housed as a joint program, directed by federal guidelines, but have recently separated into two different programs.

The Osage Nation School Support Program: A program that works in partnership with the local public schools, in which the Osage Nation hires Tribal Education Advocates who act as liaisons to support Osage students in the local public schools. This program is found in 13 rural districts across the greater Osage community.

Osage Nation Concurrent Enrollment Program: A program constructed in partnership with Tulsa Community College and area high schools that offers high school students and community members an opportunity to enroll in college courses for credit. Courses are delivered in Osage Nation facilities, and local high schools rearrange their course schedules on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to allow some of their students to attend. Enrollment is open to both Osage and non-Osage students.

Johnson O'Malley Program (JOM): A federal program which provides supplementary financial assistance to help meet the unique needs of Osage and non-Osage American Indian students attending local public schools in the Osage community. This program serves pre-K-12 students in 12 local school districts.

Osage Nation Tutoring Program and the Nationwide Academic Tutoring Program: These are two tutoring programs administered by the Osage Nation Education Department designed to help Osage students who are struggling in K-12 schools. The Nationwide tutoring program is a service for Osage students across the country, while the other is specifically for students in the jurisdictional boundaries of the Osage Nation. Recently, the program that specifically serves local students has been merged with the Osage Nation School Support Program listed above. For these tutoring services, the Osage Nation contracts teachers in the local K-12 systems to work with Osage students.

Osage Nation Career Training and Higher Education Scholarship Programs: These two programs are designed to help provide financial assistance to Osage students in postsecondary educational environments who are pursuing degrees and certifications.

Osage Nation Cultural Center: This center hosts not only Osage cultural and social events, it is also an educational venue that offers a variety of community courses on how to make traditional Osage clothing. All courses are open to the public. Additionally, the Cultural Center manages an Osage library, maintains an heirloom seed garden, and hosts guest lectures from cultural and academic leaders.

The Osage Language Department: This department is led by some of the few remaining Osages who can understand and speak the language better than most; they are tasked with preserving the Osage language from extinction through a variety of programs. These Osage language speakers host community courses at various levels of difficulty, and reach Osage citizens through course offerings at a variety of locations across the community, including online. For students in K-12 schools, leaders in this department participated in a statewide movement in Oklahoma to certify Indigenous languages as a “world language.” They now partner with several local school districts and provide those schools with full-time language teachers who teach Osage Language 1 and 2 at the high school level.

Wah.Zha.Zhi Immersion Project: This program is currently an early childhood immersion school intended to help save the Osage language from extinction. The goal is to eventually build this project into a birth-through-12th-grade school system that is rich in Osage skills, knowledges, and language.

As one can see, these Osage educational programs are a unique collection of efforts that range from pre-K to higher education. Together, these initiatives require skills and knowledge in Osage cultures, early childhood development, K-12 education programming, higher education, adult education, and more. These are simply the bureaucratic and jurisdictional realities that define education from the perspective of the Osage Nation, and these programs clearly illustrate unique versions of educational programming.

Ultimately, training education leaders specifically for this culturally rich and programmatically diverse environment would require a unique approach, one that would need to include Osage input and consistently look at leadership outside of K-12 building-level and district-level contexts. Therefore, these leaders should have the skills not only to carry Osage ways into the future, but also be able to recognize and understand the settler-colonial entanglements in the community.

The Position of Osage Education: A Colonial Entanglement

There are several frameworks and academic discussions applicable to Indigenous educators. Akkerman and Bakker (2011) discuss the roles of boundary crossing and being boundary brokers, while Jones and Jenkins (2008) discuss the nuances of educational partnerships across the indigene-colonizer hyphen. In the context of political sovereignty, Bruyneel (2007) also discusses the need to position U.S.-Indigenous relations in a third space of sovereignty, which could be applicable when describing the position of Indigenous educators. However, since this discussion has focused on the context of Osage education, I feel it is

necessary to align this conversation with an Osage framework; Dennison's ribbon work metaphor (2012; 2013) helps structure and visualize the concept of settler-colonial and Indigenous entanglements. This metaphor, which was created in the context of political anthropology and originally used to conceptualize the creation of a new Osage constitution in 2004-06, has direct relevance to this conversation about educational leadership training.

Osage ribbon work is found throughout our local communities, especially in traditional environments, and each pattern possesses a unique collection of colors and geometric shapes that sets it apart from others. These patterns are seen everywhere during Osage ceremonies – on clothes, blankets, bags, towels, etc., – and they serve as an image that is strongly connected to Osage identity. Community members can take classes hosted by the Cultural Center on how to create their own ribbon work patterns, and if they lack the skills to make their own, Osages will often pay a high price to have patterns custom-made for their traditional clothing. Beyond clothing, these patterns are also found in modern graphic design, on websites, official government documents and letterheads, and even murals, paintings, and sculptures throughout the community; thus they signify more than a clothing design, marking a specific Indigenous national identity across genres and material, in both real and virtual spaces. Even though other Indigenous communities also use ribbon work, Osage-specific shapes and patterns possess a unique quality, and serve as symbols of a collective Osage identity. As an important part of the Osage community, the ubiquity of Osage ribbon designs makes Dennison's metaphor even more relevant. She writes:

For their part the Osage and all American Indian nations have long understood the colonial process as at once devastating and full of potential. Osage ribbon work, born out of eighteenth-century trade with the French, is perhaps the ideal metaphor of colonial entanglement. Using the raw material and tools obtained from the French, Osage artists began by tearing the rayon taffeta into strips and then cutting, folding, and sowing [sic] it back together to form something both beautiful and uniquely Osage. In picking up the pieces, both those shattered by and created through the colonial process, and weaving them into their own original patterns, Osage artists formed the tangled pieces of colonialism into their own statements of Osage sovereignty. Osage ribbon work reminds us that it is possible to create new and powerful forms out of an ongoing colonial process. (Dennison, 2012, p. 7)

This metaphor not only describes the entangled reality of the Osage political landscape, it also serves as a strong pedagogical tool in understanding the sociocultural and political layers of Osage education. Osages must take the educational systems forced upon them through generations of settler-colonial hegemony and then incorporate local culture by "cutting, folding, and sowing" programs together that form "their own statements of Osage sovereignty."

Dennison (2013) later elaborates on this metaphor by framing Osage efforts in the context of *Stitching Osage Governance into the Future*, something that Osage education leaders must do if they hope to reach their members. She emphasizes that "the Osage Nation must look to all of its resources, including those threads left from and created out of the ongoing colonial processes, to try to shape something that will not just serve the current needs of the Osage people, but enable a stronger future" (p. 125). This is the sociocultural and political reality of Osage education and educational leaders must be able to navigate this landscape in order to reach their citizens and move Osage ways into the future.

As indicated in the programs listed above, many Osage education efforts occupy intersectional boundary zones that require leaders to create new patterns, weaving together Osage cultural institutions, early childhood and K-12 learning environments, higher education opportunities, adult learning environments, and more. For example, in order to reach their students in K-12 schools, Osage educators must negotiate partnerships with local districts, and then hire language teachers and Tribal Education Advocates to work in those systems. They also have to ask some of the few remaining speakers to produce educational systems from the ground up, even if those speakers have minimal experience or training in doing so. In that same process, language leaders lobbied at the state level for their courses to be accepted for "world language" credit in schools, and the power to certify their own language teachers. In higher education efforts, the Osage Nation currently does not have the capacity to operate a college or university that could be infused with local skills and knowledge to help fill local needs, which means they need to repurpose existing higher education programs for their citizens. To do so, they provide scholarship funds to send their members to outside institutions in hopes that they will receive professional training that can benefit the individuals and the community.

Using Dennison's metaphor as a framework, these are just a few examples of how the Osage Nation creates new ribbon work patterns in education and pieces together their own unique statements of sovereignty. There are many more developments and programs that could make this list, but clearly, these programs occupy unique and entangled spaces in the field of education and Osage leaders are continually trying to stitch new patterns. As Dennison (2012) puts it, "Osage ribbon work reminds us that it is possible to create new and powerful forms out of an ongoing colonial process" (p. 7), which is exactly what Osage leaders are doing. Using what they have available – the federal, state, and local education systems that have been placed upon them – they continue to explore how to use education to move Osage culture and language into the future and improve the success and happiness levels of their people, while also expanding the professional capacities of the Osage Nation.

Ultimately, this unique environment demands a unique approach to professional capacity building. Educational leaders in this environment need to be exposed to much more than typical P-12 contexts, which is what drives many educational leadership training models. These emerging

leaders need a healthy dose of Indigenous contextualization, some frequent exposure to leadership philosophies in their own local contexts, and they simply need to be given the opportunity to engage in unique conversations that are typically absent in the traditional P-12 lens: conversations about Osage-specific philosophies and worldviews, along with larger Indigenous-focused educational initiatives and models occurring throughout Indian Country. Additionally, they need to be given focused learning experiences that enhance their critical consciousness and encourage them to develop the ability to recognize the realities of the space in which they reside – an entangled environment characterized by settler-colonial hegemony and Indigenous revitalization. This is the reason this partnership academy model provides an appropriate alternative to traditional educational leadership training.

Merging Theory and Practice through Partnership Creates an Opening for Indigenous Perspectives, and Fills a Need

Writing on the topic of Indigenous leadership, Pewewardy (2015a) writes:

I advocate the need for a critical awakening of Indigenous peoples with an emphasis on the fact that this awakening can occur only through a systematic study of our own rich tribal heritage. I believe the first step in becoming self-determined is examining the “sovereign self” (p. 71).

As Pewewardy emphasizes, there is a strong need for Indigenous leaders to reengage in our own cultures. To go a step further, I believe this principle needs to be woven and stitched into professional educator training and Indigenous capacity-building efforts, and that the partnership academy model as described by Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007) allows for this to happen. To be clear, this is not the first conversation aimed at improving Indigenous educator preparation, as many others have expressed similar concerns or built similar partnerships (White, Bedonie, de Groat, Lockard, & Honani, 2007; Jacobs et al., 2001; Belgarde, Mitchell, & Arquerro, 2003; Reyhner & Jacobs, 2002). However, this article outlines the first efforts to adapt the Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007) master’s academy partnership model for Indian Country, which is meant to build on the foundations laid by others.

To further elaborate on Pewewardy’s statement above, in Indigenous communities there are often clear separations between professional leaders of institutions (elected officials, certified teachers, building or district administrators, etc.) and cultural leaders (elders, language speakers, ceremonial leaders, etc.). Thus, when looking for educational leaders, it can be difficult to find individuals who are experienced in both. This is an issue that Indigenous leaders must cope with as they try to hire people who can utilize education systems to preserve cultural knowledge and weave new patterns together that will carry their sovereign nations into the future.

Unfortunately, because of the long and ongoing history of settler-colonialism in the U.S., it is fairly easy to find card-carrying American Indians who know little about their own

histories or traditional ways; educators are no exception. One can grow up in a family detached from traditional knowledge, attend a university to obtain a degree, and even return to the community to work, all the while carrying a government-issued enrollment card. Membership and identity in an Indigenous community are complex topics (Barker, 2011; TallBear, 2013; Horse, 2007; Sturm, 2002; Dennison, 2012) especially considering the assimilationist efforts of the past (Churchill, 2004; Reyhner & Eder, 2004; Spring, 2012). While solving these thorny problems is beyond the scope of this article, one thing is clear: it would be difficult for a leader to create educational programs that attempt to move traditional skills, knowledges, or worldviews into the future, if they are not themselves familiar with them. At the same time, it also would be difficult for a cultural leader who lacks training in education systems and institutional leadership to navigate educational bureaucracies. These complex realities reveal the need for Indigenous education leaders who can both recognize these complexities and navigate them in a culturally appropriate manner – we need the next generation of leaders who are being educated in today’s degree programs to be knowledgeable not only about their own Indigenous ways, but also knowledgeable about institutional leadership in education. This partnership academy model provides potential answers to this pressing need.

Educators who are detached from the traditional spaces within their Indigenous communities run the risk of unintentionally continuing the settler-colonial “kill the Indian, save the man” policies set in motion long ago (Churchill, 2004), even when they are operating with the best of intentions. This ignorant and sometimes undetected parasitic nuance can potentially have a traumatic effect on the longevity of Indigenous skills and worldviews when it resides in educational leadership circles, which essentially enhances the risk of reducing Indigenous children’s sense of identity to a pan-Indian caricature hitched to the whims of pop culture, mascots, and media (Pewewardy, 2000, 2002; Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman, & Stone, 2008). As a result, there is also a need for modern leaders to further develop their critical consciousness (Pewewardy, 2015b) and consistently engage in decolonizing and Indigenous thinking if they hope to foster a higher degree of self-determination as discussed by Smith (1999).

Essentially, if we do not explore ways to incorporate key Indigenous philosophies, skills, and perspectives into formal educator training processes, programs aimed at moving Indigenous people towards a higher degree of self-determination will be much more difficult to execute. Therefore, institutions of higher education need to weave these components into training programs, which this partnership model facilitates.

As discussed by Miller, Devin, and Shoop (2007), and in other articles throughout this themed issue, merging theory and practice in educational leadership training is a foundational piece of this partnership academy model. With this in mind, if one looks at this leadership training model from a capacity-building perspective for native nations, there is an opening that allows for much needed Indigenous knowledge and contextualization to be incorporated into

the program. This opening allows for the creation of a unique program that could potentially better prepare emerging Indigenous leaders for work in their local communities and in their entangled settler-colonial and Indigenous realities.

The Opening: Five Reinterpretations that Weave in Local Context and Indigenous Ways of Knowing

There are five key components in this partnership academy model that create this opening. Specifically, these are the areas I identify as spaces where local cultures and philosophy can be inserted into educational leadership training to help alleviate some of the key professional development needs described above. The aim, which is a primary goal in the Osage Nation partnership academy, is that these pieces will act in harmony with the mainstream educational leadership training curricula. If Osage knowledges and KSU's Educational Leadership program are woven together carefully, the resulting curriculum will provide a more robust and culturally appropriate professional development program specifically aimed at helping the Osage Nation achieve their goals.

I view these interweavings as "reinterpretations" because the core structure of the partnership model essentially does not change. Most notably, the use of the term "district" is simply changed to "Indigenous," "local," or "tribal," but otherwise, the following five reinterpretations do not require intense modification to the model or approach to partnering with districts.

The Local Liaison: Just as each school district has a local liaison, the local liaison when partnering with a native nation serves a very similar role. Ultimately, they serve as an academy leader on the planning committee and have strong influence on many academy decisions. They are involved in curricular construction and delivery and they also help recruit academy students, local mentors, and guest presenters. Additionally, local liaisons help identify appropriate field experiences for the students. As will be discussed below, these are all ripe opportunities for local cultural influence.

Ultimately, this individual has the ability to frequently insert local Indigenous knowledge and introduce local educational contexts throughout the model. This position should not be seen as an isolated opportunity for incorporating local learning experiences; instead, when the partnership between the educational institution and the local liaison works effectively, local knowledges can be incorporated into multiple aspects of the curriculum.

Ideally, this liaison would have leadership experience in both cultural and institutional arenas. However, in order to serve as a university adjunct, this individual should primarily be an experienced and credentialed educational leader in local institutions (school district leadership, TED Director, etc.). While they do not have to be an established cultural leader in the community, they should have some experiential knowledge of the culture of the partner nation. As mentioned earlier, this combination of mainstream educational expertise and Indigenous knowledge can be very difficult to find; however, it would be highly beneficial to the academy if this person were familiar with both roles. At minimum, this individual should have strong experience in educational

leadership in local institutions balanced with a foundational understanding of the local Indigenous landscape to the point that they could identify knowledgeable cultural mentors, guest presenters, and also identify and help facilitate relevant field experiences. Ultimately, this person has the ability to weave in cultural knowledge and local contexts throughout the entire academy model.

The Planning Team, Coconstructing Curriculum, and Collaborative Material Selection: There must be an established planning team between the university and the partnering nation; this practice allows for local Indigenous leaders and Indigenous scholars to have input on curricular suggestions.

For instance, assignments on the topic of "Historical and Philosophical Analysis of Education" would typically involve readings about the general development of American schools over time, and the philosophical pieces that drive each era. This is completely acceptable and these components can still be part of an Indigenous educational leadership curriculum. However, the academy planning committee could also collaboratively choose readings on the history of Indian boarding schools and the partner nation's particular educational history, along with Indigenous and decolonizing philosophies. These are focused learning opportunities that likely are not a top priority in most master's level educational leadership training programs.

Additionally, this creates a space for unique assignments to be emphasized. For example, the planning team could ask that students analyze the educational qualities of traditional ceremonies or interview elders on a variety of relevant topics. These types of assignments can go a long way in moving core cultural tenets into the future, and they also help provide emerging educational leaders with a more robust Indigenous skill set for the job.

As for the general makeup of the planning committee and the need to incorporate Indigenous and decolonizing philosophies into the curriculum, it should be noted that it may be difficult to immediately find people well-versed in educational leadership theory and Indigenous and decolonizing philosophy – even if they are card-carrying Natives who are also veteran education leaders. In this case, if the planning committee notices that they lack expertise in this arena, they can search for experts in other departments at the university, or for local academics in the community who may be willing to serve or consult in that role. This is an important component that can empower emerging Indigenous leaders in ways well beyond simply gaining a better understanding of their own local cultures, and it should be strongly considered when constructing the planning committee. This is also important because Indigenous educators-in-training need to build stronger links to the well-established and rapidly-growing field of Indigenous and decolonizing work in academia – a field that is not typically emphasized in educator training programs, but is voluminous and obviously relevant. There are many academic journals and publications within this international field, along with large networks of people and professional organizations, such as the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) and the Native American

and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA), which are extremely valuable to Indigenous educators. Therefore, finding someone who can introduce this field of work to these graduate students is very important because these emerging educational leaders should be equipped with the language and philosophies of Indigenous and decolonizing work in academia, in order to more appropriately serve their communities.

The Use of Local Mentors and Guest Presenters: Since there is a built-in mentorship piece in this partnership model, there is a chance for leaders-in-training to have ongoing dialogue with veteran leaders in the community. This is significant, because the planning team can not only recruit local leaders who are experienced in institutional contexts, such as school district and government leaders, but they can also recruit Indigenous leaders who are well-versed in the local cultures and traditional ways, such as elders and ceremonial leaders. This allows for these emerging leaders to have ongoing dialogue with both cultural and institutional leaders, which will better prepare them for leadership across multiple settings.

Additionally, with this model there are also openings for local guest speakers to present to the students, and these are clear opportunities for these same institutional and cultural leaders to be incorporated into some of the classroom dialogue and conversations. This is surely something that would be rare in traditional educator training environments, but could add some valuable learning experiences for emerging education leaders, as well as create an opening for new mentor-mentee relationships to develop among community leaders.

Field Experiences: As part of the effort to better merge theory and practice, a required set of field experiences are developed by the planning committee to help expand the real-world learning experiences of the leaders in training. This is yet another opportunity to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and local contexts into the academy. For example, the planning committee can ask that students attend cultural events (when appropriate), which essentially serve as formal education settings where traditional ways are passed down, and observe the leadership in those settings. They could also require students to sit in on council meetings and education committees found in the legislative branches of their respective sovereign governments, or shadow leaders in the executive offices. Again, these culturally specific learning opportunities are typically not emphasized or even offered in traditional educator training programs, yet these field experiences would present emerging education leaders across Indian Country with experiences that directly prepare them for the challenges of living and working in Indigenous educational contexts.

Local Recruitment: As mentioned by other contributors throughout this themed issue, the ability of local leaders to personally recruit emerging leaders from within their institution is a unique and subtle benefit for partnering districts and native nations. With cultural vitality in mind, local leaders can actively seek out community members who not only show the signs of being emerging leaders in education,

but are also already active in traditional and cultural settings. Local leaders can personally contact these individuals and recruit them to join the academy. Additionally, a preference for culturally active community members can be incorporated into the application process, and applicants can be asked to answer questions about their experiences and philosophies related to cultural vitality as they apply for the program. This strategy eventually allows for active cultural members to bring this knowledge into the academy as students, and they can then be encouraged to add that dialogue to classroom conversations and presentations, so that other students from nontraditional families can be exposed to supplemental traditional knowledge, and eventually feel more comfortable in those conversations.

Together, these five reinterpretations of the existing partnership academy model help fill a need in educational capacity building for Indigenous settings. They help progress Indigenous leadership training to a more place-based (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001) and culturally appropriate setting by exposing these emerging leaders to Indigenous ways of knowing that are typically absent in traditional training programs. Ultimately, this approach creates an opportunity to better prepare these students for educational leadership in their settings.

Conclusion: Stitching a New Pattern

With the entangled reality of Indigenous education, how to move forward while under continued settler-colonial influence is not always clear. Dennison's ribbon work metaphor is a powerful tool for describing the process, but the color permutations and potential shapes and patterns that could be created are still seemingly infinite. However, there is one quality that ribbon work always possesses – balance – and that is something I hope to accomplish with this reinterpretation of the partnership academy model.

Ultimately, I have highlighted only a portion of the program, the five reinterpretations listed above. Through these examples, I have tried to argue that this model provides an opening for strong Indigenous cultural components that need to be incorporated into professional capacity-building efforts in Indigenous communities. However, there is still the reality that the program also relies on mainstream educational leadership curricula and materials which can seem unattached to Indigenous philosophies or traditional cultural knowledge, but these skills are also obviously pertinent. As Dennison implies through her metaphor, not all settler-colonial structures are inherently oppressive – there are pieces that can be reworked or reinterpreted to create new statements of sovereignty that are still uniquely Osage. While Indigenous concerns about settler educational histories and processes will still need to be addressed, this is all part of our entangled 21st-century reality. Indigenous leaders must engage not only with their own cultures and learn to embody those ways in their leadership values, they must also learn how to identify the settler-colonial structures that can be modified to fit the needs of the Osage community so they can more effectively move Osage ways into the future. To accomplish this, Indigenous leaders in education must also be able to navigate

and negotiate the institutional bureaucracies that govern education, even if North American educational practices have historically proven to be an oppressive hegemonic system that has oftentimes been placed on top of Indigenous communities to control and contain them.

Vine Deloria (2001) once wrote about how Indigenous professionals can sometimes “leave their Indian heritage behind and adopt the vocabulary and concepts of non-Indian educators and bureaucrats, following along like so many sheep” (p. 153). This is a concern, and it needs to be considered as institutions embark on training programs such as the one I describe here; but it is here that Dennison’s ribbon work metaphor once again helps provide a framework for consideration.

As mentioned earlier, Osage ribbon work can take on a variety of forms due to the seemingly infinite permutations of colors and shapes that could be incorporated into the design. However, no matter what colors and designs are ultimately used by the artist, Osage ribbon work is most often symmetrical, communicating a sense of balance across the pattern as the shapes mirror one another across the midpoint, which serves as a barrier for the colors of each shape to alternate or change. There are so many details that set each pattern apart, yet the sense of balance and symmetry remain. This is what is needed in educational training for Indigenous settings – creative programs that properly balance and reinforce Indigeneity, while at the same time preparing leaders for service in a professional and bureaucratic settler-colonial reality.

This is what I hope to accomplish as I attempt to collaboratively adapt this partnership academy model for Indigenous communities – starting with the Osage Nation, and explore ways to better prepare Indigenous educators for their entangled realities. Ultimately, I hope to assist in a collective effort to stitch a new pattern within the field of Osage education by building and executing a partnership academy. Within this effort, I hope to help expose these emerging leaders to a balanced set of learning experiences that helps prepare them for both institutional and cultural leadership, an important combination of skills needed across Indian Country. In their daily efforts, Osage and other Indigenous leaders are already stitching new patterns as they execute their existing educational programming, but if this new pattern allows them to think of new color profiles, new geometric combinations, and new ways to cut, fold, and stitch, then that will be a positive sign of enhanced capacity for educational leadership within the community. Most importantly, that outcome could help move the Osage Nation closer to an improved era of cultural revitalization, healing, and self-determination as we move into the future.



Endnotes

¹ For more information on the details of how Kansas State University leadership academy partnerships evolved from postdegree professional development programs (1987-1998) to the current master’s degree academies (2000-present) discussed throughout this themed issue, see earlier in this issue David Thompson’s “Revisiting Public School/University Partnerships for Formal Leadership Development: A Brief 30-Year Retrospective.”

² For a complete list of partnering districts, see previously in this issue Mary Devin’s “Transforming the Preparation of Leaders into a True Partnership Model.”

³ For more on North Dakota State University’s efforts, see previously in this issue Tom Hall and Ann Clapper’s “North Dakota’s Experience with the Academy Model: A Successful Replication.”

⁴ As an academic writing about Indigenous peoples, especially when referring to governing institutions, I use terms such as “tribe” or “tribal” knowing they can be fraught with baggage, as demonstrated by Indigenous intellectuals like Albert Hale (former president of the Navajo Nation) who stated a preference for “nations” (Hale, 2006, p. 88-89). I continue to employ these terms because they are still frequently used in common parlance and bureaucratic titles in the field (i.e., “federally recognized tribes,” “Tribal Education Department National Assembly,” “tribal education departments/agencies”). When possible, I prioritize terms such as “Indigenous,” “Osage,” and “native nations,” while simultaneously recognizing the continued need for terms like “tribal” on a limited basis in order to align this work with current language and institutions in the field.

⁵ To this point I have focused on “TEDs,” but a strict definition of what a TED is may lead to confusion in this case. My intent is to illustrate the general position of native nations with the Osage Nation as an example, rather than strictly defining specific Osage Nation Education Department actions. Additionally, the purpose is not to exhaustively outline the entirety of Osage education, but provide examples of what education can look like from the position of these sovereign governments.

⁶ Some of the programs listed have been slightly modified since the publication of the Osage Nation Resource Directory. Therefore, the programs listed here are more current, and therefore will not perfectly match what is found in the published resource directory.

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Commentary

The guest editor of this issue of Educational Considerations shares observations about the leadership qualities of the contributors to this themed issue.

Walking the Walk: The Presence of Core Educational Leadership Standards in the Development and Implementation of Partnership Academies

Alex RedCorn

Alex RedCorn is currently an Educational Leadership doctoral student at Kansas State University, where he also serves as the Special Coordinator for Indigenous Partnerships in the College of Education. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Middle/Secondary Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Kansas, and has 9 years of teaching experience at both high school and undergraduate levels. Recently, he developed a partnership academy with the Osage Nation that is set to begin in the Fall of 2016.

As repeatedly mentioned throughout this themed issue of *Educational Considerations*, the Kansas State University partnership academy model was built on the foundational principle of improving educational leadership training by creating a learning environment that better merges theory and practice (Miller, Devin, and Shoop, 2007). After reading through the insights and commentaries of the various stakeholder perspectives contained in this special issue, I have chosen to use this guest editorial platform to highlight something that became highly apparent as I read through each article – these leaders not only are talking the talk, they also are walking the walk. Specifically, in the development and implementation of leadership academies, the authors are heavily employing the very educational leadership qualities and standards that they are teaching in the academies.

Many of the authors mentioned that the curricula of these academies rest on national leadership standards and research such as the six leadership standards created by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (CCSSO, 2008, as adopted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration)¹, McREL's 21 leadership responsibilities (Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2003), and in the case of the North Dakota State University versions, the Teacher Leader Model Standards (Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011). My observations, which I describe below, are that there are clear correlations between the leadership values found in these resources, and the actions and dispositions of the educational leaders who are engaging in this partnership academy model.

To be clear, my commentary here is not intended to be an exhaustive review of every leadership quality in the above standards and research; I simply chose to highlight a few that are strongly represented throughout this issue:

Student and District Partner Needs Drive Decision

Making: First and foremost, student needs should always be a priority when making decisions across the field of education, and the educational leadership standards and

research mentioned above are no exception. Clearly, leaders contributing to this special issue have set aside their personal and institutional conveniences for the sake of students and their needs, and the results have been positive.

In the case of leadership academies, university professors commit to inconvenient travel and scheduling that caters first to the needs of students and partnering institutions. This simple shift has opened up not only access to practicing educators in isolated areas, but throughout this special issue of *Educational Considerations* it has also been observed that positive results in student achievement are accruing. Specifically, faculty have seen improvements in leadership self-efficacy (Augustine-Shaw and Devin, 2014), along with high retention and graduation rates. The ease of access of the leadership academy program combined with the personal encouragement of supervisors has prompted many qualified students to choose an educational leadership degree, many of whom likely would not have done so without the academy opportunity – these are obvious positives for the university, and it occurs almost entirely because of increased attention and adjustment according to student and partner needs.

On the district and/or tribal partner side, these academies require strong commitments from practicing administrators, such as volunteering for additional evening work hours, taking on additional mentorship duties, and engaging in a program that adds significantly to their work load. But in the end, they know that improved leadership in their institutions can improve student performance. Ultimately, all of these stakeholders are signing up for inconvenience, but they are agreeing to do so to better meet their respective student and partner needs.

Being a Change Agent and an Optimizer: As discussed throughout this issue, the leadership academy model requires a substantial shift from traditional educational leadership programming. In order to accomplish this, these authors had to demonstrate the ability to be a *change agent* and an *optimizer*, both proven leadership qualities taught in these academies from the McREL 21 leadership responsibilities. This model would be impossible to construct and deliver if leaders were not in place who are *willing to and actively challenge the status quo*, while also *inspir[ing] and lead[ing] new and challenging innovations*. Individuals who develop and execute these partnership academies must have these leadership qualities. Additionally, they also must have the dispositions and skill sets necessary to create a *vision* for change, *collaborate with stakeholders*, and navigate certain *political, social, economic, legal, and cultural structures* in order to make it happen.²

Stakeholder Communication and Collaboration:

Creating a Healthy Ecosystem: The educational leadership policy standards clearly suggest that strong collaboration and communication with stakeholders improves institutional culture, and the authors in this special issue of *Educational Considerations* have demonstrated a keen interest in this message. Both ISLLC Standard Four and Domain VI of the Teacher Leader Model Standards heavily stress the need to collaborate and communicate with internal and

external stakeholders, along with related leadership responsibilities among the McREL 21 such as *culture, resources, communication, relationships, visibility, and intellectual stimulation* (Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2003). In building these partnership academies, however, these authors not only have embraced these concepts and built several stakeholder partnerships, but rather *they also have successfully combined these elements to create cross-institutional leadership ecosystems that thrive on collaboration, communication, learning, and ongoing leadership development*. This, I posit, is much more important than viewing these academies as simply individual partnership programs that are meant to train and credential cohorts of individuals.

To better see this in action, it is important to do what the academy leaders ask of their students, and to engage in systems thinking and take a look at the partnerships from the “balcony view.”

From a university standpoint in this ecosystem, universities are immediately given avenues to improve their communication lines with their patron institutions and administrators, while simultaneously maintaining access to real-world administrative practice that keeps them grounded. This, in turn, informs their continued instruction and research with all endeavors in an ongoing and cyclical manner. At the same time, the partnering institutions and the local liaisons gain expanded access to the most up-to-date theory and research, which they can then transmit to leadership offices across their institutions. This theory-practice marriage has been well stated as an explicit goal of these academies, but it possesses a symbiotic relational quality that is important to recognize.

What is also important is that this symbiotic relationship acts as a catalyst for the creation of something even bigger – a leadership ecosystem infused with theory and practice, and further enhanced by strong personal relationships and communication lines. From an organizational standpoint, communication opens up both vertically and horizontally across institutions. From the top down, central office administrators not only get a structured and in depth avenue to transmit information throughout the school system, they are also given opportunities to become more visible and to develop system-wide relationships over an extended period of time. Then, as emerging leaders graduate and take on new leadership responsibilities at the building or classroom levels, vastly improved communication lines are able to take fuller advantage of already established personal relationships, lines that do not necessarily disappear once the academy is over. As a result, the final product of the academy is not simply a cohort of credentialed and capable leaders, it is a complex network of leadership knowledge, practice, and communication that includes university leaders, central office administrators, building level administrators, classroom teachers, and other leaders distributed across this ecosystem. This is a powerful network and highly beneficial for all.

Not to be overlooked, and as discussed by many of these authors, this thriving network also has a very positive effect on the culture and climate of each unique institution, many times in unforeseen ways. Ultimately, the academies take

on the quality of being a leadership Professional Learning Community (PLC) for the partnering institutions.

With these institutional networks in mind, it is important to recognize that these ultimately rest on a foundation of stakeholder collaboration and communication, a common theme in national leadership standards. The authors featured here not only teach these standards, they have demonstrated a commitment to them as core values. As a result, they have built something much more than just a strong professional development mechanism – they have created a thriving ecosystem of collaboration and communication among the partners. Even further, as more universities implement this model, as robustly demonstrated by North Dakota State University, the stronger the larger leadership ecosystem becomes.

Conclusion

The evidence across many years indicates that these educational leaders are doing more than simply teaching the leadership values found in national standards and research – they are truly embodying and modeling them to their students in these academies. These leaders have prioritized student needs in the context of the challenges facing schools today and have adjusted the traditional system to fit those needs. They have acted as change agents, not only thinking outside the box but creating new boxes, and in doing so have mobilized the prerequisite resources to fit their vision of merging theory and practice. They are seeing positive results and, quite simply, they are walking the walk with their partners.



Endnotes

¹ It is acknowledged that these are now in transition to the 2015 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, but since this is commentary on what has occurred mostly prior to the present transition, the 2008 version will serve as the primary reference point for this piece.

² Italicized terms are references to Standards 1, 4, and 6 as found in the (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium 2008).

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Issues – 1973-2016

Spring 1973	Inaugural issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Spring 1981	Special issue devoted to the future of rural schools.
Fall 1973	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Fall 1981	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Spring 1974	Special issue on DIOSDATIMAAOEA: Detailed Identification of Specifically Defined Activities to Increase Management Accountability and Organizational Effectiveness Approach. Guest edited by Eddy J. VanMeter, Kansas State University.	Winter 1982	Special issue devoted to educational public relations.
Fall 1974	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Spring 1982	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Winter 1974	Special issue on community education.	Winter 1983	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Spring 1975	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Spring 1983	Special issue devoted to instructional technology.
Fall 1975	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Fall 1983	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Winter 1976	Special issue on educational facility and capital improvement planning.	Winter/ Spring 1984	Theme issue devoted to current issues in school finance and school law. Guest edited by William Sparkman, Texas Tech University.
Spring 1976	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Fall 1984	Theme issue devoted to multicultural education. Guest edited by James B. Boyer and Larry B. Harris, Kansas State University.
Fall 1976	Special issue on career, adult, and lifelong education.	Winter 1985	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
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Spring 1977	Special issue on community education.	Winter 1986	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Fall 1977	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Spring 1986	Theme issue devoted to rural adults and postsecondary education. Guest edited by Jacqueline Spears, Sue Maes, and Gwen Bailey, Kansas State University.
Winter 1978	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Fall 1986	Special issue devoted to implementing computer-based educational programs.
Spring 1978	Special issue on mainstreaming and the exceptional child.	Winter 1987	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Fall 1978	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Spring/Fall 1987	An eclectic issue devoted to lifelong learning.
Winter 1979	Special issue on collective bargaining in education.	Winter 1988	Theme issue devoted to multicultural, nonsexist, nonracist education. Guest edited by Anne Butler, Kansas State University.
Spring 1979	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Spring 1988	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Fall 1979	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Fall 1988	An eclectic issue devoted to partnerships in public schools.
Winter 1980	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Winter 1989	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Spring 1980	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.	Spring 1989	Theme issue devoted to leadership development programs. Guest edited by Anita Pankake, Kansas State University.
Fall 1980	Special issue devoted to education and older Americans.	Fall 1989	Theme issue devoted to rural special education. Guest edited by Linda P. Thurston, Kansas State University, and Kathleen Barrett-Jones, South Bend, Indiana.
Winter 1981	Special issue devoted to leadership and staff development.		

Spring 1990	Theme issue devoted to public school funding. Guest edited by David C. Thompson, Codirector of the UCEA Center for Education Finance at Kansas State University.	Fall 2002	Theme issue on critical issues in higher education finance and policy. Guest edited by Marilyn A. Hirth, Purdue University.
Fall 1990	Theme issue devoted to academic success of African-American students. Guest edited by Robbie Steward, University of Kansas.	Spring 2003	Theme issue on meaningful accountability and educational reform. Guest edited by Cynthia J. Reed, Auburn University, and Van Dempsey, West Virginia University.
Spring 1991	Theme issue devoted to school improvement. Guest edited by Thomas Wicks and Gerald Bailey, Kansas State University.	Fall 2003	Theme issue on issues impacting higher education at the beginning of the 21st century. Guest edited by Mary P. McKeown-Moak, MGT Consulting Group, Austin, Texas.
Fall 1991	Theme issue devoted to school choice. Guest edited by Julie Underwood, University of Wisconsin-Madison.	Spring 2004	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Spring 1992	An eclectic issue devoted to philosophers on the foundations of education.	Fall 2004	Theme issue on issues relating to adequacy in school finance. Guest edited by Deborah A. Verstegen, University of Virginia.
Fall 1992	Eclectic issue of manuscripts devoted to administration.	Spring 2005	Theme issue on reform of educational leadership preparation programs. Guest edited by Michelle D. Young, University of Missouri; Meredith Mountford, Florida Atlantic University; and Gary M. Crow, The University of Utah.
Spring 1993	Eclectic issue of manuscripts devoted to administration.	Fall 2005	Theme issue on reform of educational leadership preparation programs. Guest edited by Teresa Northern Miller, Kansas State University.
Fall 1993	Theme issue devoted to special education funding. Guest edited by Patricia Anthony, University of Massachusetts-Amherst.	Spring 2006	Theme issue on reform of educational leadership preparation programs. Guest edited by Teresa Northern Miller, Kansas State University.
Spring 1994	Theme issue devoted to analysis of funding education. Guest edited by Craig Wood, Co-director of the UCEA Center for Education Finance at the University of Florida.	Fall 2006	Theme issue on the value of exceptional ethnic minority voices. Guest edited by Festus E. Obiakor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.
Fall 1994	Theme issue devoted to analysis of the federal role in education funding. Guest edited by Deborah Verstegen, University of Virginia.	Spring 2007	Theme issue on educators with disabilities. Guest edited by Clayton E. Keller, Metro Educational Cooperative Service Unit, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Barbara L. Brock, Creighton University.
Spring 1995	Theme issue devoted to topics affecting women as educational leaders. Guest edited by Trudy Campbell, Kansas State University.	Fall 2007	Theme issue on multicultural adult education in Kansas. Guest edited by Jeff Zacharakis, Assistant Professor of Adult Education at Kansas State University; Gabriela Díaz de Sabatés, Director of the PILOTS Program at Kansas State University; and Dianne Glass, State Director of Adult Education.
Fall 1995	General issue on education-related topics.	Spring 2008	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Spring 1996	Theme issue devoted to topics of technology innovation. Guest edited by Gerald D. Bailey and Tweed Ross, Kansas State University.	Fall 2008	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education topics.
Fall 1996	General issue on education-related topics.	Spring 2009	Theme issue on educational leadership voices from the field.
Spring 1997	Theme issue devoted to foundations and philosophy of education.	Fall 2009	Special issue focusing on leadership theory and beyond in various settings and contexts. Guest edited by Irma O'Dell, Senior Associate Director and Associate Professor, and Mary Hale Tolar, Director, School of Leadership Studies at Kansas State University.
Fall 1997	First issue of a companion theme set on the "state of the states" reports on public school funding. Guest edited by R. Craig Wood, University of Florida, and David C. Thompson, Kansas State University.	Spring 2010	Theme issue on the administrative structure of online education. Guest edited by Tweed W. Ross, Kansas State University.
Spring 1998	Second issue of a companion theme set on the "state of the states" reports on public school funding. Guest edited by R. Craig Wood, University of Florida, and David C. Thompson, Kansas State University.	Fall 2010	Theme issue on educational leadership challenges in the 21st century. Guest edited by Randall S. Vesely, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership in the Department of Professional Studies at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne.
Fall 1998	General issue on education-related topics.	Spring 2011	Theme issue on the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Standard 4 – Diversity. Guest edited by Jeff Zacharakis, Associate Professor of Adult Education in the Department of Educational Leadership at Kansas State University, and Joelyn K. Foy, doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Kansas State University.
Spring 1999	Theme issue devoted to ESL and culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Guest edited by Kevin Murry and Socorro Herrera, Kansas State University.	Fall 2011	Special Issue on Class Size and Student Achievement. Guest authored by James L. Phelps, former Special Assistant to Governor William Milliken of Michigan and Deputy Superintendent of the Michigan Department of Education.
Fall 1999	Theme issue devoted to technology. Guest edited by Tweed W. Ross, Kansas State University.		
Spring 2000	General issue on education-related topics.		
Fall 2000	Theme issue on 21st century topics in school funding. Guest edited by Faith E. Crampton, Senior Research Associate, NEA, Washington, D.C.		
Spring 2001	General issue on education topics.		
Fall 2001	General issue on education topics.		
Spring 2002	General issue on education topics.		

Spring 2012	Special issue of selected papers from the inaugural National Education Finance Conference held in 2011. These articles represent a range of fiscal issues critical to the education of all children in the United States.
Fall 2012	In-depth discussions of two critical issues for educational leaders and policymakers: Cost-effective factors that have the potential to improve student achievement and effective preparation programs for education leaders.
Spring 2013	First issue of selected papers from the 2012 National Education Finance Conference.
Summer 2013	Second issue of selected papers from the 2012 National Education Finance Conference.
Fall 2013	Special issue focusing on the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute. Guest edited by Elizabeth Funk, EdD.
Spring 2014	Selected papers from the 2013 National Education Finance Conference.
Fall 2014	Special issue focusing on the KSU Professional Development School Model. Guest edited by M. Gail Shroyer, Sally J. Yahnke, Debbie K. Mercer, and David S. Allen, Kansas State University.
Spring 2015	General issue of submitted manuscripts on education leadership, finance, and policy topics.
Fall 2015	Special issue focusing on Approaches to Social Justice and Civic Leadership Education. Guest edited by Brandon W. Kliewer and Jeff Zacharakis, Kansas State University.
Spring 2016	Selected papers from the 2015 National Education Finance Conference.
Summer 2016	Special issue on preparing and developing educational leaders in international contexts. Guest edited by Haijun Kang and Donna Augustine-Shaw, Kansas State University.
Fall 2016	Special issue on exploring university partnerships for building leadership capacity in education. Guest edited by Alex RedCorn, Kansas State University.

ERRATUM

For the following article: Deborah A. Verstegen, "Policy Perspectives on State Elementary and Secondary Public Education Finance Systems in the United States" v43 n3 (Spring 2016) pp25-32. The author disagrees with the editing and advises that the published manuscript differs from the original submission; please contact the author directly if interested in the original submitted manuscript. The author may be contacted at dav3e@unr.edu.



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