



Tennessee Transformational Leadership Advisory Council Report

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Executive Summary

In October 2015, Tennessee's Commissioner of Education, Dr. Candice McQueen, announced the creation of the Transformational Leadership Advisory Council. The advisory council was formed to recognize that as Tennessee students have been outpacing students across the nation in academic growth since 2013, the importance of developing school leaders is a critical lever for continuing the positive, upward trajectory of student achievement. The advisory council has served as the first state-guided leadership group in the nation to provide a cohesive and comprehensive organizational platform for the promotion of multiple leadership initiatives.

The target audience for this report is varied and vast with the expectation that individuals and groups like school and district leaders, leader preparation providers, foundation and business leaders, policy makers, and organizations that are passionate about developing transformational leaders will find it useful as a roadmap to inform future programs and strategies.

The advisory council was charged with the following three functions:

- 1) Identify the common, foundational components of impactful leader programs to inform policy changes and develop a set of recommendations for use by leadership stakeholders in Tennessee
- 2) Support the development, expansion, and evaluation of regional providers that focus on innovative leader preparation models in Tennessee, including three existing transformational leadership development programs:
 - *Ayers Institute for Teacher Learning & Innovation*, Lipscomb University
 - *The Governor's Academy for School Leadership (GASL)*, Tennessee Governor's Office, Tennessee Department of Education, and Vanderbilt University
 - *Leadership Academy*, Center for Educational Leadership at The University of Tennessee
- 3) Support the design and/or refinement, implementation, and evaluation of pipeline programs in regional partnerships that incorporate the common components of transformational leadership pipeline programs and recommendations identified by the advisory council

The advisory council created a definition of transformational leadership, eight common components of transformational leadership pipeline programs and a set of recommendations with aligned actions steps with specific emphasis in four areas:

- Use of **authentic assessments** for the rigorous selection of identified high-potential leadership candidates
- **Cohort-based learning** over time aligned with state content, pedagogy, and leadership standards with ongoing coaching and mentoring systems
- Authentic and comprehensive **partnerships** (including superintendents and school

boards) that feature a mutually agreed vision and goals, two-way communication, and sustainable resources

- Development of **strategies and tools** that improve, support, and advance the capacity building of districts and their partners to develop and sustain effective leader pipeline programs

Specific actions that serve as next steps aligned with these recommendations include the development of a **statewide toolkit** that contains early detection questions and performance-based assessments with current teachers to identify high-potential leadership candidates, the establishment of **selection criteria and training** for coaches and mentors, the development of a structured and comprehensive **partnership agreement template**, and the creation of the **Tennessee Transformational Leadership Alliance (TTLA)** that has three goals:

- Promote and align state and district practices with the eight common components of transformational leadership pipeline programs
- Implement a shared cost partnership model to develop new, or refine existing, transformational pipeline programs in all eight CORE regions
- Create a TTLA model leadership pipeline program designation for those programs that have reached exemplary status with all eight common components

The eight common components of impactful principal pipeline programs identified from research¹ and models across the country and in Tennessee:

- 1) Programs are aligned to clear and consistent leadership standards and/or competency frameworks that set a vision and focus on the key instructional leadership competencies that improve educator effectiveness and student outcomes.
- 2) Strategies and tools are used for the early detection of high-potential leadership candidates at the school level *before* the formal selection process into a pipeline program to help recruit a strong candidate pool and bench within a district and/or region.
- 3) Authentic assessments are used for the rigorous selection of identified high-potential leadership candidates into pipeline programs and placement into school-level leadership positions.
- 4) Experiential and cohort-based learning occur over time and are embedded into leadership pipeline program training and internships aligned with state content, pedagogy, and leadership standards.
- 5) Leaders are coached and mentored in their first three years on the job based on evidence-based candidate needs.

¹ *Building Principal Pipelines: A Strategy to Strengthen Education Leadership*, The Wallace Foundation: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/Building-Principal-Pipelines-A-Strategy-to-Strengthen-Education-Leadership.aspx> and *A New Approach to Principal Preparation: Innovative Programs Share Their Practices and Lessons Learned*, Rainwater Leadership Alliance: http://www.anewapproach.org/docs/a_new_approach.pdf

- 6) Authentic and comprehensive partnerships (that include superintendents and school boards) feature:
 - mutually agreed upon vision and goals based on relevant data,
 - reciprocal and consistent communication, and
 - cohesive and sustainable resources.
- 7) Formative and summative data are consistently used to inform program improvement and evaluation.
- 8) State and district practices improve, support, and advance the capacity building of districts and their partners to develop and sustain effective leader pipeline programs.

Transformational Leadership Council Members and Structure

The council included representatives of various stakeholder groups including superintendents, school leaders, leader preparation programs, educational foundations, Governor Haslam’s office, the State Board of Education, the Tennessee School Boards Association, and the Tennessee Department of Education. The members brought varied experiences and opinions about leadership that led to rich discussion of the topics covered in the six meetings that took place between November 2015 and May 2016.² A full list of members is included in the table below.

Janet Ayers	Ayers Foundation
Rachael Milligan	Ayers Institute
Sarah Morgan	Benwood Foundation
Rob Britt	Blount County
Laurens Tullock	Cornerstone Foundation
Josh Edelman	Gates Foundation
Samantha Gutter	Governor Haslam’s Office
David Bramlett	Kern Family Foundation
Sarah Silverman	National Governor’s Association (NGA)
Nancy Dishner	Niswonger Foundation
Jamie Woodson	State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE)
Amanda Armstrong	Tennessee Department of Education
Michael Deurlein	Tennessee Department of Education
René Diamond	Tennessee Department of Education
Dr. Paul Fleming	Tennessee Department of Education
Dr. Vicki Kirk	Tennessee Department of Education
Dr. Candice McQueen	Tennessee Department of Education
Martha Moore	Tennessee Department of Education
Dr. Nate Schwartz	Tennessee Department of Education
Dr. Hank Staggs	Tennessee Department of Education
Tammy Grissom	Tennessee School Board Association (TSBA)
Dr. Sara Heyburn	Tennessee State Board of Education
Wayne Miller	Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS)
Betty Sue Sparks	University of Tennessee – Knoxville
Dr. Norma Gerrell	University of Tennessee – Martin
Dr. Camilla Benbow	Vanderbilt University
Peggy Greene	Washington County
Dr. Mike Looney	Williamson County

² Meeting details available in the Appendix.

Importance, History, and Current Landscape of Leadership in Tennessee

Leadership matters. Second only to the quality of teaching as the largest in-school factor impacting student achievement, leadership practices illuminate the indirect but vital role school leaders have on student outcomes.³ Recognizing the importance of engaging in a continuous improvement process, Tennessee has sought to transform what it means to be an effective instructional leader at all phases of a leader's career. Tennessee has set high standards for effective leadership based upon research and best practice, supported leaders to reach those standards, and empowered districts to build a network of exceptional instructional leaders who get results. This leadership strategy reflects the changing skillsets educators need, urging administrators to shift from an individual manager-as-leader model to a shared instructional leader model. By integrating and developing all of the elements of the leadership talent lifecycle (i.e., identification, preparation, recruitment, placement/hiring, licensure, evaluation, and ongoing support and professional learning), Tennessee is redefining its understanding of leadership and deepening the pool of highly effective educators who are capable of leading from both the school and central office.

In 2007, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in a report titled *Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness*, assigned the state of Tennessee an "F" grade regarding the category "truth in advertising about students' proficiency," and a "D" grade in the category of "academic achievement." This presented an inarguable case for dramatic action toward education improvements.⁴ The report used the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to gauge each state's academic performance. Former Governor Bredesen and policy makers began laying the groundwork for rapid change to improve the state's education outcomes. In 2008, Tennessee adopted the Learning Centered Leadership Policy that established the foundation for effective school leadership, which included the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) for leader preparation programs and school leaders. The leadership policy also set the framework for governance of all of the leadership preparation programs housed in educator preparation institutions throughout the state. While the common components and recommendations developed by the advisory council do not directly impact these leader preparation programs, they can inform continuous improvement efforts made by these institutions.

³ *How Leadership Influence Student Learning*, The Wallace Foundation: <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.aspx>

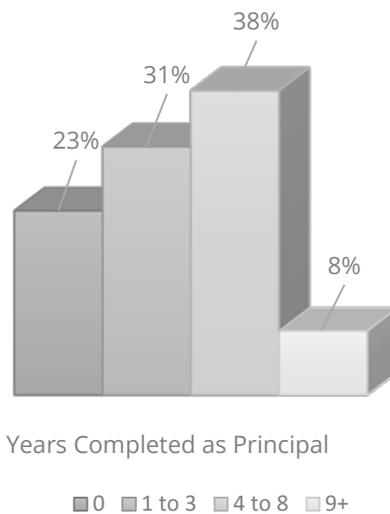
⁴ *Report Card 2007: Overview and Map*, US Chamber of Commerce: <https://www.uschamber.com/report/report-card-2007-overview-and-map>

Educator and principal development and improvement became a natural extension of these reform efforts and led to the implementation of Tennessee’s comprehensive, multiple-measure, student outcomes-based, educator evaluation system. Successful implementation of this system was a key tenet of Tennessee’s historic First to the Top Act, which was adopted with bipartisan support by the General Assembly in 2010. The act was crucial to Tennessee’s successful bid to win funding in the Race to the Top competition, which yielded a \$501 million award to improve educational offerings and student outcomes through a core set of reforms.

The revised and streamlined TILS were adopted by the State Board of Education in April 2013. The revised TILS created the need to align the administrator evaluation rubric with the numerous standards that focused on shared leadership. The revised rubric was created in the summer of 2013 and piloted by ten districts across the state in 2013-14. The department also created a principal evaluation advisory council to receive ongoing feedback to further develop and strengthen the revised rubric. This targeted feedback focused on the content of the rubric, the process for evaluation, and the accompanying support tools. This feedback informed changes to all three areas for the 2014-15 school year.

In 2013, data revealed that over half of all principals in Tennessee have three or fewer years of experience as a leader.⁵ This demonstrates the need for high-quality training, support, and retention systems for these leaders to ensure their development into highly effective and transformational leaders for their schools and districts.

Experience Level of Tennessee Principals (2013)

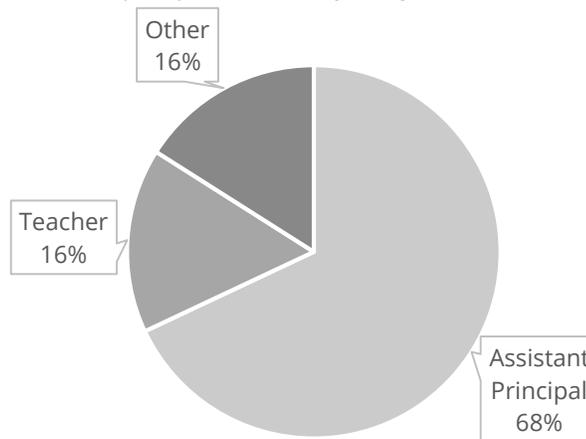


⁵ Jason Grissom, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Education, Peabody College of Education and Human Development, Vanderbilt University.

Additionally, over 90 percent of new principals were promoted within their own districts, and over half were promoted from within their own schools.⁶ This demonstrates the need for districts to develop effective systems for the identification, selection, placement, evaluation, development, and retention of leaders in order to strengthen the principal pipeline.

Pathways into Principalship (2013)

For new principals in 2013, the job they held in 2012 was:



Given Tennessee's leadership history and current landscape, the Transformational Leadership Advisory Council was convened and structured around stakeholder collaboration to address the following critical areas related to the leadership pipeline in Tennessee:

- Develop a system to identify leadership qualities early in teacher leaders, increasing the number of qualified candidates in the leadership pipeline, especially in our rural districts
- Develop and extend the reach of teacher leaders and district-based models to increase teacher effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes
- Increase access to leadership preparation and training programs for all aspiring leaders
- Ensure all programs who seek to develop school leaders have meaningful and authentic partnerships with districts, characterized by a common set of binding, relevant, and high-quality components
- Develop the shared leadership capacity of instructional leaders as reflected in the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) and the TEAM administrator evaluation model
- Increase the skill sets of instructional leaders to provide more specific, differentiated, timely, and impactful feedback to teachers about their practices connected to the TEAM educator rubric
- Increase instructional leader autonomy and effectiveness with hiring and placement of teachers
- Ensure instructional leaders have access to personalized professional learning opportunities related to the implementation of the TEAM rubric, state content standards, and Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²)
- Reduce turnover and increase retention of effective instructional leaders

⁶ Jason Grissom, Associate Professor of Public Policy and Education, Peabody College of Education and Human Development, Vanderbilt University.

Common Components and Recommendations for Transformational Principal Pipeline Programs

The advisory council created a definition of transformational leadership and eight common components of transformational leadership pipeline programs. Over the course of the council sessions, members engaged in productive conversations that included diverse perspectives, learned from presentations about existing leader pipeline programs, and examined policies and programs at the state and national levels to inform the development of the common components and set of recommendations with aligned action steps.

Definition of Transformational Leadership

An individual or group of individuals who build(s) capacity in others by creating a motivating and sustainable vision to drive positive, strategic, and systematic growth to achieve organizational excellence related to student outcomes.

Each of the recommendations aligned to the eight common components requires purposeful action and concrete ownership to ensure they are completed. The following section is an overview of each recommendation and aligned action steps.

Component #1: Programs are aligned to clear and consistent leadership standards and/or competency frameworks that set a vision and focus on the key instructional leadership competencies that improve educator effectiveness and student outcomes.

Recommendations

1. Programs should be designed with an emphasis on instructional leadership standards and practices as described in the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS) (e.g., developing a budget or managing time should be consciously related to the impact on learners). Programs should have a regularly scheduled review process to ensure they are updated and aligned to current best practices.
2. Participants should understand clearly stated expectations (interconnection of TEAM, TILS, etc.) at the beginning of the program and expectations and evaluation of growth are aligned to the standards.

Component #2: Strategies and tools are used for the early detection of high-potential leadership candidates at the school level *before* the formal selection process into a pipeline program to help recruit a strong candidate pool and bench within a district and/or region.

Recommendations

3. Multiple instruments should be used to identify teachers with high potential for school leadership such as standardized, research-based tools, evaluation results, and evidence of success leading grade or school based initiatives. These instruments

could serve as a starting point for self-discovery and/or self-selection and should include the following:

- “Early detection” questions should be developed for current teachers in the building. Once high potential leadership candidates are identified, track these candidates and develop teacher leadership roles and opportunities for them.
- A “leader find” process should be regularly scheduled by districts. For example, every February, districts, in partnership with leader preparation programs, would initiate a leader find process to identify those teachers with high potential for leadership.

Component #3: Authentic assessments are used for the rigorous selection of identified high-potential leadership candidates into pipeline programs and placement into school-level leadership positions.

Recommendations

4. Multiple instruments with corresponding rubrics should be used to identify teachers with high potential for school leadership such as:
 - panel interviews for selection of high potential leadership candidates with predetermined questions as a component of the selection process—this needs be more than just the director of schools and/or principal included in the selection process (e.g., district leadership teams);
 - collect evidence of work products and personal work ethic that have supported the education of children;
 - consider if there is evidence of commitment to assume a role as a teacher leader;
 - structured behavioral interview developed around research based leadership responsibilities with identified “listen-fors;” and
 - performance-based assessments (including simulations, role plays, and in-basket activities) to demonstrate skills and knowledge.
5. District and regional human capital data should be used to predict annual leadership placement needs.

Component #4: Experiential and cohort-based learning occur over time and are embedded into leadership pipeline program training and internships aligned with state content, pedagogy, and leadership standards.

Recommendations

6. Cohort-based learning and an internship should be designed to extend throughout the academic year and address school/district identified needs based on relevant data.
7. Coaching and mentoring should be from expert practitioners to help participants understand best practices in real time and the rationale and research behind those practices.
8. The selection and training of coaches and mentors should include multiple measures to ensure high quality coaching and mentoring experiences, which is more facilitative than directive and values mentor transparency as a co-learner.

9. Cohort-based learning should be structured to provide opportunities to lead, responsibility for tasks that have consequences, and the latitude to learn from their mistakes with support from mentors and coaches.

Component #5: Leaders are coached and mentored in their first three years on the job based on evidence-based candidate needs.

Recommendations

10. Every district should have an induction program for beginning principals (first three years) that provides coaching and mentoring.
11. The selection and training of coaches and mentors should include multiple measures to ensure high quality coaching and mentoring experiences which is more facilitative than directive and values mentor transparency as a co-learner.
12. Program partners should provide specific “bridge support” for aspiring leaders who have completed a program but not yet placed in a principal position. Examples could include teacher leader roles and responsibilities, consistent shadowing of principals, and action research projects in the aspiring leader’s school.

Component #6: Authentic and comprehensive partnerships (that include superintendents and school boards) feature:

- mutually agreed upon vision and goals based on relevant data,
- reciprocal and consistent communication, and
- cohesive and sustainable resources.

Recommendations

13. Vision and goals of the partnerships should include input from the following groups: superintendents, teachers, parents, community partners, and foundations.
14. Districts should participate fully in the selection process, from assisting to screen the initial application to the final selection.
15. Programs should combine graduate-level coursework that utilize best-practices around adult learning taught jointly by university faculty, adjunct faculty, and practicing education professionals from partnering school districts.
16. The focus, roles, and quality of the partnership should be directly related to the implementation of all eight pipeline components with ongoing benchmarks to measure progress along the way.

Component #7: Formative and summative data consistently inform program improvement and evaluation.

Recommendations

17. Formative and summative assessments should measure leadership growth towards specific competencies found in the standards to inform both participant and program evaluation and continuous improvement.

Component #8: State and district practices improve, support, and advance the capacity

building of districts and their partners to develop and sustain effective leader pipeline programs.

Recommendations

18. The Tennessee Transformational Leadership Alliance (TTLA) should be established with members representing the department, state board, districts, universities, businesses and foundations to:
 - promote and align state and district policies and practices with the eight common components of impactful principal pipeline programs;
 - implement a shared cost partnership model to develop new and refine existing transformational pipeline programs in all eight CORE regions by 2018;
 - create the TTLA model leadership pipeline program designation for those programs that have reached exemplary status with all eight common components; and
 - provide technical assistance to help build out regional models.

Next Steps

Tennessee Transformational Leadership Alliance (TTLA)

1) Purpose and structure of the TTLA

A) Three **goals**:

- 1) Promote and align state and district practices with the eight common components of transformational leadership pipeline programs
- 2) Implement a shared cost partnership model to develop new and refine existing transformational pipeline programs in all CORE regions
- 3) Create a TTLA model leadership pipeline program designation for those programs that have reached exemplary status with all eight common components

B) The TTLA will be comprised of a **design team and the TTLA partners**.

- Design team members will represent the National Governor's Association (NGA), the Tennessee State Board of Education, the Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), the Tennessee Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (TACTE), the Tennessee State Board Association (TSBA), the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents (TOSS), and the Tennessee Department of Education.
- Design team three areas of focus:
 - 1) **Stakeholder engagement and communication** to promote and align state and district policies and practices with the eight common components
 - 2) **Technical assistance**, including the development and revision of support tools, for leadership pipeline program partners
 - 3) **Membership, monitoring, and evaluation** of leadership pipeline programs

In each of these three areas (communication, technical assistance and support, and membership, monitoring, and evaluation) the design team would convene a council of varied educator stakeholder groups to carry out the goals and strategies related to the area of focus.

- TTLA partners will represent foundations and businesses, institutions of higher education, and school districts that want to implement a shared cost partnership model to develop new, or refine existing, transformational leadership pipeline programs aligned with the eight common components.

TTLA Goals, Design Team Focus Areas, and Prioritized Action Steps

TTLA Goals	TTLA Design Team Focus Areas	Priority Action Steps (As recommended by the TTLAC)
1. Promote and align state and district policies and practices with the eight components of transformational leadership pipeline programs.	Stakeholder engagement and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network and collaborate with state and district policy makers to insure Tennessee school leaders are prepared as transformational leaders in programs which align with the eight common components of the pipeline.
2. Implement a shared cost partnership model to develop new and refine existing transformational pipeline programs in all CORE regions.	Stakeholder engagement and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure buy-in from all partners • Determine catalyst for partnership implementation at school district and provider level • Communication plans
	Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan existing protocols and assessments in use • Creation of toolkit with selection tools and assessments • Partnership protocols and MOU examples • Training around components and action steps
3. Create a TTLA model leadership pipeline program designation for those programs that have reached exemplary status with all eight common components.	Stakeholder engagement and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plans
	Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection and training of mentors and coaches • Connection to ePlan (TDOE) • Use of Human Capital reports (TDOE)
	Membership, monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorizing initial membership • Formative and summative assessment backward design for implementation • Regular review process for alignment with alliance components • Annual progress reporting • Renewal of membership

Appendix

Meeting Schedule and Agendas

Date & Time	Location	Agenda
Nov. 30, 2015 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m. CST	SCORE office, Nashville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Overview of council functions and leadership landscape in Tennessee • Discussion: Define transformational leadership; key points in Wallace Foundation study • Leadership Case Study: University of Tennessee's Leadership Academy
Dec. 14, 2015 2:30 p.m.–4 p.m. CST	Conference call	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review goals and key takeaways from first meeting • Discussion: 1.0 definition of transformational leadership; key points in Rainwater Alliance study; eight common components
Jan. 25, 2016	<i>Cancelled due to weather</i>	<i>Content included in Feb. meeting</i>
Feb. 22, 2016 9 a.m.–3 p.m. CST	SCORE office, Nashville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Tennessee district survey results • Leadership Case Study: Lipscomb University's Ayers Leadership Fellows Program • Discussion: 2.0 definition of transformational leadership and survey results • Leadership Case Study: Governor's Academy for School Leadership (GASL)
March 28, 2016 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m. CDT	SCORE office, Nashville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Task Force recommendations overview • Discussion: Review and edit draft recommendations and assign ownership • Vision and goal setting activity for 2020
May 24, 2016 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m. CDT	SCORE office, Nashville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and discussion of Transformational Leadership Report • Discussion: Prioritize recommendations, describe success, assign ownership • Discussion: Goals and structure for Tennessee Transformational Leadership Alliance

Tennessee Leadership Policies

Tennessee Learning Centered Leadership Policy (5.101)

http://tn.gov/assets/entities/sbe/attachments/5.101_Learning_Centered_Leadership_7_24_15.pdf

Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (5.501, Appendix C)

http://tn.gov/assets/entities/sbe/attachments/5.101_Learning_Centered_Leadership_7_24_15.pdf

Tennessee Educator Preparation Policy (5.504)

http://tn.gov/assets/entities/sbe/attachments/5.504_Educator_Preparation.pdf

Leadership Development Programs in Tennessee

Ayers Institute for Teacher Learning & Innovation, Lipscomb University

<https://secure.lipscomb.edu/ayers>

Contact: Rachael Milligan, Rachael.Milligan@lipscomb.edu

Governor's Academy for School Leadership (GASL), Tennessee Governor's Office, Tennessee Department of Education, and Vanderbilt University

<http://www.tn.gov/education/topic/governors-leadership-fellows-program>

Contact: Hank Staggs, Hank.Staggs@tn.gov

Leadership Academy, Center for Educational Leadership at University of Tennessee-Knoxville

<http://cel.utk.edu/leadership-academy/>

Contact: Betty Sue Sparks, bsparks6@utk.edu

National Standards, Articles, and Resources

Building Principal Pipelines: A Strategy to Strengthen Education Leadership

The Wallace Foundation

<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/Building-Principal-Pipelines-A-Strategy-to-Strengthen-Education-Leadership.aspx>

Developing and Supporting School-Ready Leaders

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Developing_and_Supporting_School-Ready_Leaders.html

How Leadership Influences Student Learning

The Wallace Foundation

<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.aspx>

Knowledge Center

The Wallace Foundation

<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/default.aspx>

A New Approach to Principal Preparation: Innovative Programs Share Their Practices and Lessons Learned

Rainwater Leadership Alliance

http://www.anewapproach.org/docs/a_new_approach.pdf

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders

National Policy Board for Educational Administration

http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2015/ProfessionalStandardsforEducationalLeaders2015forNPBEA_FINAL.pdf