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# The LEAD (Leadership in Educational Administration Development) Program: An Overview

by Hunter Moorman

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The LEAD (Leadership in Educational Administration Development) Program is a six-year, \$35 million federal program to improve school leadership. It is the largest federal program for administrator preparation and development to operate since the U.S. Office of Education's National Program for Educational Leadership of many years past and it is the most extensive program for improving administrator in-service development underway in this country. Leadership training and technical assistance centers in each state, the District of Columbia, and several island areas, the program office in the U.S. Department of Education, and related activities of the National LEADership Network make up the program. This article provides an overview of LEAD and a brief description of major themes characterizing the center programs across the country.

## Federal Program Characteristics

LEAD was created by act of Congress in 1984 under Title IX of P.L. 98-558 ("the Leadership in Educational Administration Development Act") The genesis of the Act is recounted by Larson elsewhere in this issue. It has since been reauthorized in the Higher Education Amendments of 1986 (P.L. 99-498). LEAD's purpose is

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to improve the level of student achievement in elementary and secondary schools through the enhancement of the leadership skills of school administrators by establishing technical assistance centers for each State to promote the development of the leadership skills of elementary and secondary school administrators with particular emphasis upon increasing access for minorities and women to administrative positions (U.S. Congress, 1984).

Each center receives a grant of approximately \$140,000 per year (1) for a three-year period and may be granted a three-year extension. LEAD centers will not operate with federal funds forever. It is the intention of Congress that many of them will become sufficiently institutionalized with local support to continue as long as the need exists and their services are wanted. By law, centers must put up matching funds to equal the federal grant dollar for dollar. The local contribution must be substantially increased during the centers' second grant period; the federal ante drops by law to one half its original amount, and centers are obligated to take up the slack so the initial level of services continues undiminished.

Centers serve their entire state with programs that include collection of information, skills assessment, training for new and practicing administrators, consultation within school districts, maintenance of training materials and curricula from a broad range of sources, internships and personnel exchanges between education and the private sector, information dissemination, and establishment of model projects.

Such skills as analyzing curriculum, evaluating teachers, applying research findings, and organizing and managing resources—seven in all—are the chief subjects of training programs, although centers have selected other focuses such as Sergiovanni's leadership pyramid, the Benis and Nanus "strategies for taking charge," and the NASSP Assessment Center skill dimensions.

There are now 57 LEAD centers, one in each state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The state- and D.C.-based centers opened their doors during the spring and summer of 1987; centers in the island areas followed suit during the fall of 1988. Nearly any kind of organization was eligible to apply for a LEAD grant. Very nearly every kind did. Awards were given to a diverse group of sponsoring agencies (fiscal agents): State departments of education (25), colleges and universities (14), administrator associations (12), non-profit organizations (3), local education agencies (2), and area service agencies (1). The true number of such organizations involved is actually far greater, perhaps by a magnitude of five, for most centers are supported by consortia or collaborative partnerships among two or more member organizations.

The term "center" and "program" as they relate to LEAD are somewhat misleading. The LEAD statute seems to prescribe a centralized, fixed operation, but in practice the idea of a center as a concept or enterprise rather than place-bound facility has prevailed. Centers have office space, of course, and staff and (sometimes) letterhead stationery, but their programs are far-flung. Moreover, many centers operate as much as brokers and catalysts of other organizational activities and programs. This is all to the good, as this strategy enables them to provide statewide

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programs within the narrow limits of their budgets. It also positions centers to precipitate change, and negotiate consensus and common effort across the numerous competing service providers and offerings in a state.

LEAD is really a meta-program. No one program model, no common curriculum, delivery methods, or training philosophy defines its piebald collection of projects. It is a collection of sub-programs addressing a common problem in ways suitable for states with different resources, experience, traditions, political culture, and demographics. Their greater identity as the LEAD program comes from their common mission—*commitment to improving school administrators' leadership skills*—from the recognition by the federal government of their exceptional capacity to serve their states, from their appointment or self-assertion as *statewide* programs with no exclusive loyalties, and from their needs and abilities to communicate, share, and enhance their good efforts as a nationwide "system."

### Underlying Problems

Each center program is based in part upon its sponsor's assessment of the problems of leadership education—as found in the literature and in the experience of each state—or efforts underway in the state to respond, and of needs unfulfilled. What is the aggregate profile to emerge from these assessments?

The various wens and warts of administrator preparation and development programs in this country have been elaborately examined elsewhere (see Cooper and Boyd, 1987; Peterson and Finn, 1986; NCEEA, 1987; among many others). Center grant applications recapitulated the common litany of problems: university preparation is out of date, not germane to the demands of practice, abstract and theoretical, lacking a coherent framework related to the leadership role, self-selected, prone to reward credit over competence, ailing from low entry and exit requirements; in-service development lacks a coherent, career-long logic, depth, coordination across offerings, adequate opportunity for assessment and diagnosis, grounding in principles of adult learning and development, relevance to real problems and on-site applications.

Problems other than content and curriculum also stood out. *Administrator turn-over* was reported—not as the uniform national problem aggregate survey data might suggest, but as a minor problem in some states and a profoundly vexing problem in others. And projects analyzed it as a persistent problem of job burdens, low satisfaction, and inadequate preparation, not simply the consequence of an advancing age cohort.

*Information* for planning state policies and programs relating to administrator preparation and development was reported to be rarely available.

*Norms* of professional practice that endorsed *isolation* and *competition* were pointed out as possible targets of improved training and modeling.

Applicants reported "second-order," systemic problems that hobbled reform and undercut more recent efforts to treat the basic problems. Most state education reform legislation had included provisions for more rigorous administrator certification and training by one standard or another. These activities were too often underfunded or had only faint-hearted support. State efforts also were undertaken without a sufficient body of research and materials for their implementation. Even where new ventures were well-conceived and ardently supported, the general dearth of sound materials to translate research to training and practice was impeding progress.

### Areas of Emphasis

To address these perceived problems, there are projects as diverse as there are conceptions of leadership, approaches to assessment and development, methods for delivery, and training modules and materials. The National LEADership Network (1988) has catalogued center programs according to 25 descriptors, but even this initial effort falls short of a comprehensive depiction of the variety within and across LEAD projects.

Structurally, LEAD projects include state academies, principals centers, and institutes; most also make some contribution to the regular in-service programs of neighboring administrator associations, particularly by subsidizing newer, leadership-oriented training or underwriting (part of) the cost of cooperative programs involving two or more associations. Projects bearing the LEAD label most often have incorporated preexisting reform or improvement activities with expansions or new undertakings the grant funds make possible.

LEAD's most important contributions to school leadership improvement are being made in five broad areas: *leadership conceptualization and curriculum, assessment and professional development, delivery processes and mechanisms, special problems focuses, and statewide collaboration.*

### Leadership Conceptualizations and Curriculum

The LEAD Act lists a set of skills, and the LEAD competition suggested a slightly augmented version of this list as "invitational priorities," but no particular model of school leadership inspires the program or molds the projects. This is appropriate in view of the lack of precision and agreement to be found in the general literature (see Bass, 1981; Karmel, 1984; Mitchell and Scott, 1987), and in education research as well (see Greenfield, 1982; Murphy, 1988; Persell, 1982), and given the rich selection of images available for local experimentation. It seems the wiser course to encourage many lines of development, and sampling from many dishes.

LEAD projects are refining and fleshing out leadership images of several sorts: *instructional leadership, "institutional" leadership, school improvement, and educational executive.*

Perhaps the most widely recognized of the several good LEAD projects to promote instructional leadership is the California School Leadership Academy (CSLA) (2). CSLA trains around 1,300 principals as instructional leaders in a sophisticated three-year program incorporating the best of research and practice in a 16-module sequence. Instructional leaders, in the CSLA version, must be competent in supervision and staff development, but also in creating inspiring visions and translating them into effective school cultures.

I use the term "institutional" leadership to encompass several approaches to leadership as the embodiment and translation of values into the organizational processes and work of the school. The term "institutional" draws on Selznick's (1958) distinction between organizations and institutions, organizations being the temporary means for serving instrumental purposes, and institutions being the embodiment and means of expression of lasting values and commitments. The leader of an institution is responsible for critical decisions that result in embodiment of values and their effectuation in organizational arrangements that can make them real. This seems to me one of the earliest and best of the leadership formulations giving values preeminence. Approaches subsumed in this group are Sergiovanni's (1984) leadership pyramid, Burn's (1978) transfor-

mational leadership, Firestone and Wilson's (1983) "cultural linkages," and Bennis and Nanus's (1985) "strategies for taking charge." One or another of these inspires LEAD projects in Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Wyoming, and a few other states.

Programs oriented toward school improvement pull into a rich mixture such elements as: the leaders as manager of change, effective schools characteristics, and site-based, problem-centered learning. In Michigan, teams of administrators, board members, and others are trained in the Bennis and Nanus "strategies" while they develop and implement school improvement plans. Louisiana offers an assessment system and instructional leadership model that helps beginning principals define and solve instructional problems in their schools. Under the aegis of New Hampshire's Alliance for Effective Schools, teams of school staff receive summer training in school improvement and collaboration for implementation at 15 pilot school improvement sites.

The *educational executive* is a master of organizational and managerial skills. Some concern education per se, but most would qualify for leadership of any complex organization. Many LEAD projects work from the NASSP (Hersey, 1986) skill dimensions. One or two centers supplement these with instructional leadership or other skills pertinent to the needs of their clients. Florida's well-known principal competencies (FCEM, 1984) are advanced through team training in regions. Texas has identified essential job functions and skills for the superintendent, principal, and other central office staff.

### Assessment and Professional Development

LEAD centers are by and large committed to the values of administrator assessment as a tool for program selection and diagnosis. All are not: some believe that induction, for example, is more important than selection and emphasize nurturing during the induction phase over assessment. The NASSP Assessment Center is a popular model—perhaps one in four LEAD centers is introducing the NASSP process or expanding upon current capacity. Other centers have added the AASA's Executive Development Center assessment and development component. Off-the-shelf approaches do not have any monopoly on LEAD. Promising alternative practices abound. Illinois Leadership Academy's "clinical strand" combines a novel "analysis" with mentoring/peer coaching and school climate assessment. Centers in Kansas, Washington State, Louisiana, and elsewhere employ sophisticated home-grown instruments. Commercially developed "instrumented feedback" systems too numerous to list are common tools at many centers. Eclecticism is the standard; centers have discovered the limitations and particular uses of their tools and learned to mix and match to provide the most comprehensive, insightful picture of each candidate.

### Program Delivery

The most important advances contributed by LEAD centers seem to me to be in the delivery practices that acknowledge the following: (1) principles of adult learning and development; (2) contemporary theories of change and implementation; (3) organizational mixes of rationality and irrationality/ambiguity; and (4) alternatives to "expert" and professional epistemologies. Practices that best capture these elements, and that appear most frequently in LEAD centers, include principals centers, school improvement process training, mentoring, peer coaching, simulations, reflective writing, and internships.

The bounty of such practices across sites permits mention of only a fraction of exemplary activities. The New York LEAD center links six principals centers, New York University, the New York City Board of Education, and the Rochester School District in client-centered, site-based development. Principals centers work with mini-grants to local districts and schools to promote innovative approaches to leadership and its development. They also support innovative "Select Seminars," gatherings of administrators whose reflections upon and analysis of problems in educational leadership from their perspectives as practitioner experts contribute significant insights and avenues for solutions to these problems. South Carolina's regional training center at the Citadel (one of several around the state) established the Lowcountry Principals' Center where principals could work and learn together in a setting permitting "practice without penalty."

Sites in at least 16 states offer school improvement training. In some sites, this is training *about* school improvement. In others, like Indiana, Michigan, New York, and Tennessee, it is training *through and about* school improvement—that is, participants develop and implement actual school improvement plans, and undergo related training, as part of the program. Some programs require the participation of *teams*. Michigan's Leadership for School Improvement Project, for example, engages district teams of superintendents, principals, teachers, interested community members, business and industry representatives, and school board members in training and designing and implementing their plans.

Mentoring is a popular method of learning through and from experienced colleagues. Centers use mentors to complement internships, induction year training, and mid-career continuing development. The mentor-protégé relationship is used for superintendents, principals, special education directors, and other administrators. The Ohio program matches selected retired administrators to work with first-year administrators. "Master principals" guide the development of the District of Columbia's pre-service interns during their year-long program. Oregon's Mentor Program for Aspiring Principals supports aspiring minority and women candidates for the principalship. While the mentor relationship as used here emphasizes development of the protégé, mentors report great satisfaction and learning from the experiences themselves.

Peer coaching provides collegial support for training and introduction of innovations, puts craft knowledge to work, and engages participants in learning and development through reflection upon their and their peers' experience. The Peer-Assisted Leadership (PAL) program is particularly widespread. South Carolina, for example, uses PAL to support principals introducing models of instructional leadership into their schools and as a part of its effective schools training. Delaware is one of several centers to have arranged for trainers of trainers at the Far West Laboratory so PAL can be widely provided throughout the state.

Simulations offer individuals and teams opportunities to experience "real" situations, to appreciate their responses and training needs, and to take related training. Assessment Centers in a score of states provide simulation experiences as part of the assessment. The Virginia LEAD program simulates a school system operation as part of a five-day program on administrative theory and leadership skills developed by the Center for Creative Leadership.

Reflective writing engages administrators in reflecting upon and discussing with others the lessons of their experience and developing new-found respect for the "craft wis-

dom" and alternatives to expert knowledge to emerge from their day's work.

Internships allow aspiring administrators to learn as they work in real school settings under the supervision or mentoring of selected experienced administrators. Successful internships often bring together school districts and universities and bridge the gap between them that ails so much current preparation. Because an internship is a substantial investment, districts and training institutions tend to select candidates more carefully than would a conventional program. In the District of Columbia, the internship is one part of a three-phase program. Outstanding elementary and secondary administrator candidates receive pre-internship training, followed with a one-year internship—mentor and training provided—, capped with placement as assistant principals and additional professional development activities. New Mexico's 12-month Principals' Internship Program helps teachers prepare for new roles while school districts select, support, and observe them in action.

All internships are not at the pre-service stage. The Missouri program offers a sabbatical/internship available for either practicing or aspiring administrators. In Pennsylvania, school teams with prior Center training may take one-week internships on topics such as higher-order thinking skills and computer technology. Participants in Virginia's year-long Educational Policy Fellowship Program participate in study and discussion of leadership and public policy issues using their regular workplaces as clinical environments.

### Special Focuses

LEAD programs offer assistance for the special needs of women and minorities and, to a lesser extent, administrators in small, isolated, or rural schools. The school administrator ranks are overwhelmingly white and male (Feistritzer, 1988; OERI, 1986), and opportunities for entry and advancement in the profession are few. In states where there is a sore need for more and better administrators, schools either cannot or do not draw upon a substantial reservoir of talented and committed individuals. LEAD projects are helping to change this situation.

The problems are different for each group. For women, training opportunities are generally more widely available, though this varies by location, and the sticking point is at the placement stage. Placement in the elementary schools is more common by far than in the secondary schools. The problems for minorities exist all along the pipeline from preparation to placement. New requirements may well exacerbate problems for either group. For example, where states or districts have made an assessment a requirement of hiring, both women and minorities may be deterred by financial considerations or by selection practices. Internships, with direct and opportunity costs that vary directly with their quality, may have a similarly deterrent effect. LEAD uses subsidies, "jaw-boning," and public information campaigns to combat these problems.

Some states, including Alabama and Mississippi, have developed pools of qualified minority and women candidates and plans for their use. Alaska and Tennessee are among the many states that made special efforts to identify candidates and encourage employers to hire them. State-wide leadership conferences, seminars, and workshops—in Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri, Nevada, and elsewhere—help develop general leadership skills and some particularly pertinent to women and minority administrators. Fellowships for Assessment Centers and other training help minorities and women in Idaho, Kansas, and

North Dakota prepare for future employment. Mentoring may be especially useful in this situation; several centers match candidates with experienced administrators on the inside and help build networks of practicing minorities and women administrators. South Carolina's Minority Administrator Program and Vermont's Aspiring Vermont Women Administrators Group are exemplary of centers that offer "full-service" programs in this area.

There are fewer examples of explicit programs for rural, small school, or isolated administrators, but LEAD projects from Alaska to Maine serve large numbers of these administrators. Centers have developed novel ways to help with their needs, which include more collegial communication and support, encouragement to stay with the profession, access to new information and materials, and more convenient training sites. The University of Alaska-Fairbanks supports a network of practicing rural administrators. The Maine Leadership Consortium is developing the capacity of the state's regional professional development centers to serve its most rural, poorest areas. Other similar activities stretch across the intervening countryside. Colorado's Effective Small Rural Schools program, for example, engages small, rural schools in a strategic planning process to improve student learning opportunities and achievement.

### Collaboration

The practice of leadership and the development of leaders suffer in common from the plagues of isolation, competition, and disjointedness. Principals feel remote from their colleagues and uncomfortable communicating with the central office. They sense themselves in competition with their peers, and often are. They move through systems, whether for training or personnel management, with minimal coherence and articulation. Leadership development programs, and those responsible for them, operate as a rule in isolation. Each serves a particular clientele, or competes for a common pool of participants. Lacking well-crafted joints, the various parts of pre-service and in-service content, offerings of alternative training programs, and even events of a single sponsor rub together crudely if they meet at all.

LEAD centers have pioneered innovative collaborations that overcome these problems. They are improving the professional environment for practicing administrators with such practices noted above as team training, peer coaching, mentoring, principals centers, and networking. But perhaps their most significant contribution to the field, and the legacy they leave to future generations of administrators, will emerge from what centers are doing to bring together the state departments, the universities, the school districts, and the professional associations and to forge a common purpose and spirit of collaboration among them.

Excepting the more recently funded island centers, perhaps three projects do not call for the formal collaboration of at least two different organizations. Most centers call for much more. In their most inchoate stages, some of these joint enterprises resemble arrangements between independent parties for splitting up the pie. Perhaps these will never mature beyond this point. The majority started beyond that point and have gone even further. In one state, a participant at one of the multi-organizational pow-wows declared it the most rewarding experience in his career. In the Northeast, Northwest, and other regions, centers are talking among one another to share experiences with collaboration and to develop together even better forms of statewide collaboration. This topic is discussed at greater length in the closing article to this issue—it suffices at this point to bear testimony to the vision and selflessness of the orga-

nizations and in particular to the bottomless zeal of the project managers responsible for this most promising enterprise.

### Conclusion

The unfortunate consequence of an overview such as this is to slight the real richness and innovativeness of so many projects. The sort of condensation required here implies a uniformity and generality that betrays the centers' true character. With remarkably small sums of money, these projects—most of them—are performing miracles. Their efforts, and I think successes, testify to the importance of the task and the thirst among school administrators for more effective leadership preparation and development. Our school leaders are out there in society and in the schools. We need only to tap them, through our own examples, through an emphasis on leadership in our selection and evaluation procedures, through organizational environments that encourage and reward leadership, and through preparation and development of the sort supported by the LEAD program.

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