

Educational Leadership Graduate Programs

*“A New Generation of Educational
Leaders for Louisiana”*

REDESIGN PROCESS

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LOUISIANA EDUCATIONAL LEADERS NETWORK

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Purpose

Educational leaders in Louisiana play a critical role in improving the achievement of PK-12 students within schools. It is now known that it is not enough for educational leadership preparation programs to provide courses in the areas of school law, school finances, and organizational management. Instead, university programs must provide real life problem-based learning experiences that directly impact improvement in schools and districts.

Structure

Through collaborative PK-20 partnerships, all universities in Louisiana have worked with local school districts to redesign their educational leadership graduate programs to address new state certification requirements. Louisiana's certification structure is now based on standards that call for leaders to be high-performing in all aspects of leadership. All new educational leadership programs must now provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate knowledge while being involved in innovative site-based learning activities. Some of those expectations include:

- Apply research-based knowledge to address real-life problems and improve practices in classrooms, schools, and districts;
- Use data to inform decisions about students, teachers, schools, and/or districts;
- Create professional learning communities in which leadership teams successfully address classroom, school, and/or district needs;
- Engage parents and community members in supporting school improvement goals and higher student achievement.

Louisiana is one of the few states in the nation who have had national consultants use high state expectations to evaluate redesigned educational leadership preparation programs and require universities to meet those expectations by July 1, 2006 to continue offering programs at their universities.

All universities are now working with local school districts to jointly identify potential candidates that the school districts would like to move into educational leadership positions. Many universities are now having candidates move through the programs as a cohort as they work together completing a series of courses that allow candidates to build upon knowledge and skills acquired in previous courses.

Louisiana's redesign efforts have been supported through state funding (e.g., Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education/Louisiana Department of Education and Louisiana Board of Regents) and The Wallace Foundation.

National Documentation of Success

Documentation of Louisiana's success in redesigning its teacher preparation and educational leadership preparation programs has occurred in a variety of ways.

First, *Education Week's* 2005 and 2006 *Quality Counts Report* has recognized Louisiana as being #1 in the nation for two consecutive years in Efforts to Improve Teacher Quality and awarded grades of "A" each year. The same procedures used to redesign all teacher preparation programs have been used to redesign all educational leadership preparation programs in the state.

Second, the *New York Times* has identified five states that are leading other states in improving the preparation of new teachers and educational leaders. A video clip and written information pertaining to the work of Louisiana's Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence and the redesign of all teacher preparation and educational leadership programs is now being provided as part of the New York Times Knowledge Network on the *New York Times* web site.

<http://www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial3/coll-wallace-packet.html>

Third, *Education Week* recently reported on the success of Louisiana and Iowa in requiring universities to redesign their educational leadership programs in an article entitled "States Get Tough on Programs to Prepare Principals."

Fourth, the *Center for Teaching Quality* has identified Louisiana as one of a limited number of states where higher education and K-12 education are sharing data for the purpose of improving the preparation of new teachers. The center completed case studies about Louisiana, Virginia, and Illinois to provide the nation with examples of states that are "building a comprehensive teaching quality data system that will help universities, the state, and the nation answer questions about how to define a quality teacher and what steps need to be taken to recruit, prepare, and retain them." The data system is being used to develop a process to examine the effectiveness of new teachers and new educational leaders. The case study can be found at the following URL: <http://www.teachingdata.org/>.

Fifth, the *Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)* reported that Louisiana is the only state (out of 16 southern states) to have demonstrated "Promising Practice" from 2002 to 2004 in five different areas pertaining to Progress in Leadership Preparation. The majority of the other states demonstrated "No Progress," "Little Progress," or "Some Progress" in the five areas. In addition, a recent publication by SREB entitled *Schools Can't Wait: Accelerating the Redesign of University Principal Preparation Programs* identifies Louisiana as a state that has already started redesigning their programs and describes a process for other states to use that is similar to the process that has been used in Louisiana to redesign their programs during the last two years.

Sixth, Louisiana is currently the only state in the nation to pilot a Value-Added Teacher Preparation Assessment Model that uses student achievement data for all K-12 students in the state and data from all public and private universities to assign *teacher preparation effectiveness values* to the universities that prepared the new teachers. The use of this model to examine the effectiveness of educational leadership preparation programs is now being examined. An article pertaining to the model was published in the January/February 2006 issue of the *Journal of Teacher Education*.

Process Used by Louisiana to Redesign All Educational Leadership Preparation Program

Louisiana has used a very specific process to redesign all teacher preparation and educational leadership preparation programs. The following identifies the steps taken to redesign all educational leadership preparation programs and the time periods when each occurred.

Step One: Creation of Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence (2000-2001)

Louisiana's accomplishments would not have occurred without the vision and recommended actions of the Blue Ribbon Commission for Educational Excellence. This commission was formed by the Governor, Board of Regents, and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in 1999 and was given the charge of identifying strategies to recruit, prepare, and retain effective teachers and principals. The Commission was housed in the Governor's Office and co-chaired by a member of the Board of Regents and a member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Commission was composed of 31 individuals with 1/3 representing key state government and business leaders (e.g., state superintendent, commissioner of higher education, governor's educational advisor, chairs of house and senate education committees, etc.), 1/3 representing higher education, and 1/3 representing K-12 schools and districts. At the present time, the Blue Ribbon Commission continues to be active and serves in an advisory capacity to the Governor, Board of Regents, and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education as it monitors the implementation of the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations and identifies new recommendations each year to improve the quality of teachers and educational leaders in Louisiana.

At the end of its first year (1999-2000), the Commission recommended 60 actions pertaining to teacher quality and 40 additional actions at the end of its second year (2000-2001) pertaining to educational leadership preparation. These recommendations were created by the Commission members after listening to national experts discuss the latest research on educational leadership, hearing leaders from other states discuss reforms in educational leadership that had occurred in their states, and hearing recommendations from a subcommittee composed of practicing university and district educational leaders from Louisiana. During May 2001, the Commission's educational leadership recommendations were presented at a joint meeting of the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. After hearing the recommendations, the boards directed their respective staffs to work collaboratively to develop a plan to implement the Commission's recommendations. A copy of the 2000-2001 recommendations for the Blue Ribbon Commission can be found at the following URL:

http://asa.regents.state.la.us/TE/brc_year_two_report.pdf.

Step Two: Creation of New Educational Leadership Policies (2001-2003)

As a result of the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission, it was necessary to develop and attain approval of new policies to address the recommended actions. The Louisiana Department of Education formed a Professional Development/Leadership Advisory Committee composed of teachers and educational leaders. This committee was divided into subcommittees and given the charge to develop needed policies to address the 2000-2001 recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission. The subcommittee responsible for educational leadership identified the contents of a new policy that changed the educational leadership certification structure from one granting separate certification to supervisors, administrators, and principals to a certification for educational leaders. In addition, the structure changed from one requiring candidates to complete 30 semester hours of courses identified by the state (e.g., History or Philosophy of Education,

School Law, School Finance, School Facilities, etc.) to candidates completing a program that addressed all of the state's *Standards for School Principals in Louisiana*. The standards addressed Knowledge & Skills, Dispositions, and Performances for the following seven areas: Vision, Teaching and Learning, School Management, School Improvement, Professional Development, School-Community Relations, and Professional Ethics. Last the new certification structure identified the following four levels of endorsements/certificates:

- *Teacher Leader Endorsement*

Teacher leaders must complete 6 credit hours of state approved graduate coursework or the equivalent number of contact hours (90) in a state approved Teacher Leader Endorsement Program (e.g., LaLEAD).

- *Level 1: Educational Leader Certificate*

Educational leadership candidates must complete a state approved competency based graduate program for educational leaders and attain a passing score on the School Leaders Licensure Exam to receive a Level 1: Educational Leader Certificate.

- *Level 2: Educational Leader Certificate (5 year renewable professional certificate)*

Educational leaders with a Level 1: Educational Leader Certificate must complete a two year state induction program (Educational Leaders Induction Program) while working as an educational leader to attain a Level 2: Educational Leader Certificate. Educational leaders must complete 150 hours of ongoing professional development through the Louisiana Principals' Academy or other professional development over a five year time period to renew their certificates.

- *Level 3: Educational Leader Certificate (Superintendent)*

Educational leaders with a Level 2: Educational Leader Certificate must meet assessment and experience requirements identified by the state.

The policy for the new educational leadership certification structure was developed in 2001-2002, approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for 90 days of public review during October 2002, and approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for implementation during February 2003. A copy of the certification structure can be found at the following URL: <http://www.leadlouisiana.net>.

In response to new policies for certification of teachers, the Board of Regents approved a policy that required the redesign of all public teacher preparation programs in the state. The policy can be found at the following URL: <http://asa.regents.state.la.us/PP/Policies/2.14>. After receiving a \$3.2 million Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement State Grant from the U.S. Department of Education to support the redesign of preparation programs, the redesign process was extended to all public and private teacher preparation programs and all public and private educational leadership preparation programs. The two state boards set a date of July 1, 2004 as the point at which all universities would be required to have redesigned educational leadership programs approved by the state for implementation. Universities would not be allowed to admit new candidates to their educational leadership programs after that date.

Step Three: Creation of Guidelines and Expectations for the Redesign of the Educational Leadership Programs (2002-03)

The Board of Regents created a set of guidelines entitled “Guidelines for the Redesign of Post-Baccalaureate Education Programs” that were disseminated to all campuses during April 2003. The structure for the guidelines was similar to the structure that was used as campuses successfully redesigned teacher preparation programs in the state during the previous two years. A copy of the guidelines can be found at the following URL: http://asa.regents.state.la.us/TE/redesign_guidelines_postbacc.pdf

The guidelines provided an overview of the redesign and evaluation process and communicated the fact that universities and districts were expected to work together to redesign the programs and all redesigned program should address the changing needs of educational leaders. The following statement was provided in the guidelines.

“A recent report from the Southern Regional Education Board indicates that educational leaders must be prepared to ‘understand school and classroom practices that raise student achievement and work with faculty to implement continuous school improvement’. The report clearly demonstrates that how universities deliver instruction must change if candidates are to be provided real life problem-based learning experiences that directly impact improvement in schools and districts.

During the external review process, the primary focus of the external evaluators will be upon the degree to which the redesigned educational leadership programs create educational leaders who possess the knowledge and skills to create school environments in which improved student achievement and continuous school improvement occurs. In that the old certification requirements for principals and administrators lack requirements to fully address this focus, redesigned programs will not be recommended for approval if institutions simply align existing courses with the Standards for School Principals in Louisiana. More significant changes must be made to both program content and program delivery.”

The guidelines provided additional information about the need for campuses to use current research and state/national standards to develop the new programs. The guidelines also provided a format that campuses were required to use when submitting their written proposals to the state for review by national experts.

It was anticipated that all universities would be excited about being provided the flexibility to create totally new educational leadership programs that addressed the latest research pertaining to effective principals and successful schools. As Department of Education and Board of Regents personnel met with educational leadership faculty at several meetings during spring 2003 to discuss the guidelines, it was observed that only a few universities embraced the idea of creating totally new educational leadership programs. State personnel became concerned when educational leadership faculty within a number of universities openly discussed their plans to fit the *Standards for School Principals in Louisiana* to existing courses and viewed those efforts as a redesign of their existing programs. Concerns also developed when new and untenured faculty privately discussed their desire to create new courses for their educational leadership preparation programs but their ideas were not being supported by tenured faculty who lacked knowledge in the areas being discussed.

The Board of Regents and the Department of Education became aware that the creation of a new certification structure, the use of standards for educational leaders, and the provision of greater flexibility in the creation of programs for educational leaders was not sufficient to bring about the depth of change that was needed for the redesign of the educational leadership programs. *The state lacked a set of high expectations that could be communicated by key state leaders and supported by key university and district leaders.*

The Commissioner of Higher Education, the State Superintendent of Education, the three university system presidents, and the president of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities were brought together to discuss the problem. A decision was made to develop a set of expectations and hold an Educational Leadership Summit entitled “A New Generation of Educational Leaders for Louisiana” during June 2003 to discuss the expectations with key university and district leaders. The Commissioner of Higher Education invited all public and private university presidents/chancellors, chief academic officers, college of education deans, college of business deans, and district superintendents who were university partners to the summit. The purpose of the summit was for the Commissioner of Higher Education, State Superintendent of Education, and the university system presidents to communicate to their campuses the importance of the work that needed to occur on each campus to create highly effective educational leaders for Louisiana’s schools. Examples of new expectations included the following:

“It is expected that university and school district personnel will:

- *Work collaboratively during all stages of the redesign process (program structure, curriculum, delivery, and evaluation);*
- *Jointly establish criteria for selection of candidates for the educational leadership programs;*
- *Jointly identify educational leadership candidates who meet the criteria and exhibit leadership characteristics;*
- *Jointly create a curriculum in which one-third of the courses focus upon instruction and the improvement of student achievement;*
- *Jointly identify competencies that require all instructional leaders to possess knowledge and skills pertaining to literacy and numeracy;*
- *Jointly create learning activities that focus upon problem-based learning while addressing state and national educational leadership standards;*
- *Jointly develop relevant site-based experiences and internships that allow candidates to demonstrate leadership competencies in real-life situations.”*

A listing of all state expectations discussed at the summit can be found in Appendix A. Dr. Gene Bottoms from the Southern Regional Education Board discussed research to support the state expectations and involved the audience in a discussion with a university and district representative from Oklahoma who had been involved in the redesign of an educational leadership program in their state. The outcome of the summit was an increased awareness among key university and district leaders of the importance of the redesign of the educational leadership programs and a commitment to address the expectations discussed at the summit.

Due to the need for universities and districts to engage in greater collaboration to address the new expectations for the redesigned programs, a decision was made to extend the deadline for universities to attain approval of the redesigned educational leadership preparation programs to July 1, 2005. Failure to attain approval of the new redesigned programs by that date would result in campuses no longer being allowed to admit candidates to their existing programs.

Step Four: External Audit of All Redesigned Educational Leadership Programs (2004-2006)

To ensure a level of quality across all redesigned educational leadership programs, a decision was made by the state to conduct an external audit of all redesigned educational leadership programs and to hire two national experts to conduct the evaluations. Dr. Honor Fede (Educational Leadership Constituent Council) was selected as one of the two evaluators due to her depth of understanding of expectations for educational leadership programs for NCATE accreditation. Dr. Kathy O'Neill (Southern Regional Education Board) was selected as the second evaluator as a result of her depth of knowledge of current research pertaining to effective educational leaders and successful educational leadership preparation programs.

The process that was used included the following stages:

Stage 1: Submission of Redesign Proposals

All universities were required to submit proposals that met specifications identified within the documents entitled *Guidelines for the Redesign of Post-Baccalaureate Programs (April 2003)*. All universities were required to submit their proposals by one of the following dates: February 18, 2004, September 18, 2004, or February 18, 2005.

Stage 2: Review of Redesign Proposals

The review process was used as a first step to help create high quality programs across the state. The national experts used a two-stage review process to (1) assess written proposals and (2) conduct face-to-face interviews with key university administrators, faculty, and school/district partners. Prior to their arrival, the two evaluators were provided copies of the proposals to read in advance. In addition, they were provided copies of the guidelines, state expectations for the redesigned programs, *Standards for Principals in Louisiana*, state certification structure, and other documents used by the campuses. The evaluators reviewed the proposals based upon all expectations and jointly identified questions to ask during the interviews.

Teams composed of state personnel and the two national experts conducted 45-minute interviews with university/district representatives including key university administrators, university faculty, and K-12 school partners. At the conclusion of the interviews, each redesigned program was examined based upon written information within the proposals and responses during the interviews. After all redesigned programs had been evaluated, the two experts met to discuss their recommendations and stipulations to ensure that consistency existed across evaluators and across proposals. Once consensus was reached by the two experts, they met with Board of Regents and Department of Education personnel to discuss their findings.

The three types of recommendations made by the national experts were the following:

- *Recommended for Approval:* Programs that exhibited many strengths and had no stipulations.
- *Recommended for Approval with Stipulations:* Programs that had areas in need of further development.
- *Not Recommended for Approval:* Programs that were in need of major program redesign.

Based upon information generated by the evaluators, written program reviews were developed that provided specific feedback from the evaluators about each program. The Program Reviews contained feedback from the evaluators in the following four areas:

A. *Program Recommendation*

Statements identifying the types of programs submitted and the recommendations of the evaluators.

B. *Strengths*

A list of strengths observed in each program by the evaluators.

C. *Program Stipulations*

A list of stipulations that universities were required to address for the program(s) to be approved.

D. *Specific Recommendations for Future Improvement*

A list of recommendations for universities to consider when further developing the programs. Universities were not required to address the recommendations in order for their programs to be approved.

Stage 3: Evaluation of Certification Requirements

Staff from the Louisiana Department of Education also examined all proposed programs to determine if they met new state certification requirements. Section II of the Program Reviews indicated if all certification requirements were met for the redesigned programs. If certification requirements were not met, areas that needed to be addressed for program approval were identified.

Stage 4: Evaluation Reports

All recommendations of the external evaluators and the Louisiana Department of Education were combined and placed in documents entitled Cycle 5: (April 2004) Redesigned Programs for Teachers and Educational Leaders, Cycle 6: (December 2004) Redesigned Programs for Teachers and Educational Leaders, and Cycle 7: Redesigned Programs for Teachers and Educational Leaders (May 2005). The document was disseminated to campuses and placed on the Board of Regents web site at the following URL: <http://asa.regents.state.la.us/TE/redesign>. During the external audit process, 15 universities submitted redesigned programs. The following recommendations were made by the external evaluators:

- 1 Recommended for Full Approval.
- 9 Recommended for Approval with Stipulations.
- 5 Not recommended for Approval (Note: 4 of the 5 programs resubmitted during a future evaluation cycle and were recommended for approval with stipulations after being evaluated again by the two national experts.)

Step Five: Final Approval of All Redesigned Educational Leadership Programs (2004-2006)

Due to two sets of circumstances that were beyond the control of the universities, the deadline for the approval of the educational leadership programs was extended twice. First, the deadline was extended from July 1, 2005 to January 1, 2006 due to delays during spring 2005 in the state evaluating the educational leadership programs and delays in the state disseminating the final evaluation reports during May 2005. The late dissemination date made it impossible for campuses to address stipulations by July 1, 2005. Second, the deadline was extended from January 1, 2006 to July 1, 2006 as a result of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. Due to the devastation caused by the two hurricanes, many universities in the state were closed during fall 2006 for short and long periods of time due to damages to their campuses or due to their campuses serving as shelters during the aftermath of the hurricanes. Six universities and almost all K-12 schools in the New Orleans area were closed during fall 2005, and it was not possible for faculty to return to their universities or the New Orleans area until the beginning of the spring 2006 semester. The major priority for most campuses was relocating their displaced students and reestablishing programs on heavily damaged campuses. Although 13 out of 15 universities had attained approval of their redesigned educational leadership programs by January 1, 2006, it was not feasible for all campuses to begin implementing the new educational leadership programs when considering the higher priorities that existed during that time period. Thus, the July 1, 2006 deadline was established by the state as the point at which universities were only allowed to admit candidates into state approved redesigned educational leadership program.

The final approval process was created to help ensure that campuses would address the stipulations of the national consultants and high quality programs would exist within systems across the state. All programs that were *Recommended for Approval* without stipulations and found to have no certification problems were recommended by the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for full approval.

All universities that had programs that were *Not Recommended for Approval* were required to determine if they would or would not continue to pursue program approval. If they decided to pursue program approval, they were required to have their redesign teams continue to meet and required to make major changes to their educational leadership proposals. Campuses were not allowed to submit new proposals until the next evaluation cycle during the following spring or fall and were required to undergo the full evaluation with the national experts.

If programs were *Recommended for Approval with Stipulations* or found to have certification problems, universities were required to address the areas cited and submit a program rejoinder to their system board. Each system board reviewed the rejoinders and determined if the rejoinders fully addressed the stipulations. If the rejoinders did not meet system expectations, universities were required to rewrite the rejoinders to meet the expectations of the system boards.

Once expectations of the system boards were met, a BoR/BESE/LAICU Program Review Committee composed of staff from the Board of Regents, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (i.e., Louisiana Department of Education), chief academic officers from the three university system boards, and chief academic officer from the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities reviewed the evaluators' recommendations, university system recommendations, and rejoinders to ensure that all proposed programs addressed certification requirements and evaluation stipulations. If the universities failed to address the external evaluators' stipulations, campuses were notified and required to submit additional

information before recommending the programs to the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for approval. Once the two boards approved the programs, universities were allowed to start implementing the redesigned programs.

A total of 15 educational leadership programs were submitted for the evaluation process. By July 1, 2006, one university was recommended for full approval by the national consultants. Thirteen universities addressed all stipulations identified by the external evaluators and were recommended for approval. Four of these thirteen universities were not approved when first evaluated but resubmitted programs during a future evaluation cycle and were approved with stipulations when evaluate the second time. Each later addressed all of the stipulations and were recommended for approval. One university that was not approved chose not to resubmit, and the program can no longer admit candidates to their educational leadership program.

Step Six: Implementation and Adaptation of Redesigned Educational Leadership Programs (2005 – Present)

Three of the fourteen university/district partnerships with state approved educational leadership programs began implementing their redesigned programs during fall 2005 with support from The Wallace Foundation. The remaining 11 university/district partnerships began implementing their programs during summer 2006 and fall 2006. The three university/district partnerships that began implementing their programs during fall 2005 were the University of Louisiana at Lafayette/Lafayette Parish, University of New Orleans/Orleans Parish, Southeastern Louisiana University (6 school districts). Many new lessons have been learned during the last year as the three district/university partnerships have implemented the written plans. All three partnerships have discovered that the implementation stage has been far more challenging than the districts or universities had anticipated. The realization now exists that even deeper collaboration is needed to successfully implement the new programs.

For Additional Information:

To attain additional information about the redesign of the educational leadership programs, please contact Dr. Jeanne Burns at jeanne.burns@la.gov. To learn more about the changes in the state certification structure and policies for educational leaders, please contact Andrew Vaughan at Andrew.vaughan@la.gov. More information about the educational leadership initiative can be found on the Louisiana Educational Leaders Network web site at: <http://www.leadlouisiana.net>.

APPENDIX A

LOUISIANA’S EXPECTATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

New Educational Leadership Redesign Teams

It is expected that university and school district personnel will:

- Work collaboratively during all stages of the redesign process (program structure, curriculum, delivery, and evaluation);
- Jointly establish criteria for selection of candidates for the educational leadership programs;
- Jointly identify educational leadership candidates who meet the criteria and exhibit leadership characteristics;
- Jointly create a curriculum in which one-third of the courses focus upon instruction and the improvement of student achievement;
- Jointly identify competencies that require all instructional leaders to possess knowledge and skills pertaining to literacy and numeracy;
- Jointly create learning activities that focus upon problem-based learning while addressing state and national educational leadership standards;
- Jointly develop relevant site-based experiences and internships that allow candidates to demonstrate leadership competencies in real-life situations; and
- Jointly identify university and school district resources that enable candidates to be effective within universities, schools, and districts.

New Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

It is expected that educational leadership candidates will:

- Interact with other candidates who already possess leadership capabilities;
- Apply research-based knowledge to address real-life problems and improve practices in classrooms, schools, and districts;
- Use data to inform decisions about students, teachers, schools, and/or districts;
- Create professional learning communities in which leadership teams successfully address classroom, school, and/or district needs;
- Participate as members of school and district teams responsible for student/school/district improvement;
- Engage parents and community members in supporting school improvement goals and higher student achievement;
- Use technology to create assessment portfolios that demonstrates proficiency in addressing educational leadership competencies; and
- Use research to improve student learning and achievement in low performing schools.

New Educational Leadership Induction and On-going Professional Development Programs

It is expected that educational leaders will:

- Acquire new knowledge and skills that build upon competencies demonstrated within Educational Leadership Preparation Programs.