



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

TO: Higher Education Committee
FROM: Johanna Duncan-Poitier *Johanna Duncan-Poitier*
SUBJECT: Update on Wallace Foundation Grant
DATE: July 9, 2008
STRATEGIC GOAL: Goals 1 and 2
AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

To update the Committee on the Wallace Foundation Grant to create a Cohesive Leadership System in New York State.

Proposed Handling

Item for discussion

Procedural History

The Department has been engaged in improving school leadership since 2000 with the assistance of The Wallace Foundation. This followed an intensive four-year period when the Regents revised the preparation, certification and professional development requirements for teachers, including preparation programs, professional development, certification and annual performance evaluations.

In 2004, the Regents established new leadership standards after receiving input from thousands of educators in regional forums over the course of 18 months and culminating with the work of the Commissioner's Blue Ribbon Panel on School Leadership. These new standards then led to new regulations for the preparation, certification and examination of school leaders. Over 50 school leadership preparation programs revamped their programs accordingly.

Background Information

The Board of Regents, in conjunction with our state and national partners, has been awarded an additional Wallace Foundation grant (\$3 million over two years) to build on the work of the current grant to further implement a Cohesive Leadership System, including the transformation of collegiate school leadership preparation programs, the establishment of leadership professional development programs focused on teaching and learning, and the creation of school leader performance evaluations.

The grant will provide funds for the Regents to better align New York State leadership standards with research-based national leadership standards designed to prepare school leaders to have a positive impact on teaching and student learning. Research has shown that when school leaders focus on teaching and learning, it has a positive impact on student achievement. It will ensure that the way we prepare school leaders in pre-service preparation programs, the professional development we provide them, and the manner in which we assess their performance will emphasize what we value the most - quality teaching and student learning. In the Regents overall P-16 plan for school improvement, school leadership is a critical component to improve overall student performance. We have engaged many State and national partners in this grant proposal.

In developing this grant proposal, the Department reached out to the educational organizations with the appropriate expertise and experience that could assist in the transformation of school leadership in New York State. Our State partners include the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), the New York City Leadership Academy, the New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS), the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS), the Collegiate Association for Developing Educational Administrators (CADEA) and the Metropolitan Council for Educational Administration Programs (MCEAP). We have also reached out to the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA) and the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). In addition, St. John Fisher College's leadership education faculty will also play a prominent role in the implementation of the first Leadership Academy in Rochester.

Overview of the Wallace Grant Proposal: A Cohesive Leadership System for New York State

The Board of Regents vision is to create and support policies that result in higher student achievement and closing the performance gap for all students. Only 67 percent of students graduate from high school in four years, with a great disparity between Asian and White students (74 percent and 79 percent) as compared to Black and Hispanic students (47 percent and 45 percent). More work needs to be done to close the performance gap, especially among low performing schools. Recognizing the crucial and primary role that leadership plays in achieving this ideal, the aim of the Regents is that all school leaders meet the highest standards, acquire the needed training, and work in an environment and with the resources that will significantly improve teaching and learning, especially in schools failing to meet accountability measures. To achieve this goal, the state is working to create and implement a Cohesive Leadership System focused on teaching and student learning. This scope of

work builds on the collaboration by the Board of Regents, The Wallace Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to improve achievement dramatically and move New York to the next generation of education reform. New York is uniquely equipped to carry out this work because the Board of Regents oversees all aspects of education from early childhood through adulthood.

Vision of a Cohesive Leadership System

To create a world class system of school leadership centered on student learning and built on research-based, actionable behaviors and practices to positively impact teaching and learning at every phase within the leadership continuum. To that end, we have identified key components in implementing a Cohesive Leadership System. The following describes what we intend to achieve overall with this year's funding and during the next two years with the new grant:

Standards

Working with our partners, we have researched national school leadership standards and have collectively agreed that the revised Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards (attached), developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA), are the most comprehensive, research-based set of standards to build a Cohesive Leadership System in New York State. These standards will serve as the foundation for school leadership preparation programs, professional development and school leader performance evaluations. They will help to ensure that New York school leaders focus on teaching and learning as their primary responsibility

Training

Our goal is to create a comprehensive system of career-long training based on the higher standards, encompassing education and training programs based in universities, districts, leadership academies, or other providers, and focused on leaders of high need districts and school.

Pre-service Education

Our goal is to ensure that school leadership pre-service preparation programs are outcome-based, theory-driven, internally coherent and integrated, focused on teaching and learning, and grounded with an intensive clinical experience. Therefore, we are identifying the core components of leadership preparation programs to ensure pre-service education is focused on teaching and learning and aligned to the revised leadership standards.* At the outset, we will use incentives to ensure university programs align to these components and to the revised standards.

* Murphy/Moorman/McCarthy's A Framework for Rebuilding Initial Certification and Preparation Programs in Educational Leadership: Lessons from Whole-State Reform Initiatives (2007)

Professional Development: Initiating Leadership Academies

Building on the expertise of our partners and other successful models, such as the New York City Leadership Academy, we will create four additional leadership academies (in addition to New York City's) to deliver quality professional development. In Year One of the grant, we will create a model leadership academy that could be replicated in other parts of the State. This first model is being developed with our partners in the Rochester City School District to serve the school leaders in that district. The core principle of the leadership academies will be that school leaders can and must have a pivotal role in student learning. As an integral component of our school improvement strategy, the academies will reflect the leadership standards, provide direct service to districts, and reflect research-based best practices that center around teaching and student learning. These academies will have a student-centered curriculum comprised of topics such as strengthening school leaders in high need schools, changing school culture to enhance student learning, enhancing distributive leadership and/or meeting the needs of special populations (e.g., English Language Learners or students with disabilities). The curriculum will be tailored to align with the needs of the school leaders, grounded in research-based practices, to strengthen teaching and learning.

Ultimately, the goal is to create leadership academies in each of the remaining Big Five school districts, with nine additional academies in each of the Joint Management Team (JMT) regions across the State. JMTs are a combination of a number of contiguous BOCES, which are organizational structures that presently exist in New York State, and would provide for a permanent structure to provide ongoing professional development for our the State's school leaders.

Evaluation

Using the revised ISSLC leadership standards, the State will create a school leader performance evaluation that is linked to meaningful personalized professional development opportunities, including the academies. This performance evaluation will be comparable to the annual professional performance reviews required of all teachers in the State. As a starting point, we will build upon the work of the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education with additional research informed by other best practices and educational leaders. Our goal is to assess school leaders' performance based on what we value the most - quality teaching and student learning. The assessment will be administered locally, linked to State-provided professional development, and required through State regulations, with the approval of the Board of Regents.

Recommendation

N/A

Timetable for Implementation

The grant period began on July 1, 2008 and will continue over the next two years. The Department will seek to use available federal funds to sustain the Cohesive Leadership System over time.