

Student Perceptions of Their Administrator Preparation Program: A Case Study

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Authors Note

In the summers of 2017 and 2018, earlier versions of this research were presented at the annual summer conferences of the International Council of Professors of Educational Leadership (ICPEL) in San Juan, Puerto Rico and Charlotte, North Carolina. Correspondence concerning this article can be sent to Dr. Daniel Grounard at grounarddj@longwood.edu and Dr. Paul E. Chapman at chapmanpe@longwood.edu.

Abstract

Student perceptions of their administrator preparation program provide the bases for this research. This case study is based on the following research question: How do students perceive their administrator preparation program after completion? The *Graduates' Perceptions of Their Doctoral Programs* (adapted with permission from Chapman & Parks, 2005) instrument was used to assess student's views across the following five dimensions: (a) academic services, (b) administrative support, (c) process, (d) quality of program, and (e) socialization of students. The instrument was distributed to 153 students who completed the program in August of 2020. One hundred and thirty-eight students or 90% of those who participated in the study responded to the online survey. Survey results are presented with simple descriptive statistics. The results present an overall positive view of the program.

Keywords: administrator preparation, student perceptions, student perceptions instrument

What students think about their administrator preparation program after completion is the driving interest of this case study. Program builders began planning the innovative program for

certification of new principals in 2015. The pilot program was launched in the fall of 2016 in six locations and 80 students successfully completed in the summer of 2017. This case is focused on successful completers of the fourth iteration of the program.

First, context is given as to how the program developed and some background information about the pilot program and how three successive runs of the program went. Second, pertinent related literature is outlined. Third, the case site is described. Fourth, the research method is delineated. Fifth, the results are presented. A discussion of the conclusions and recommendations are found at the end of the article.

Context

The endorsement cohort model was developed as a collaborative effort between three colleagues associated with the College of Education and Human Services (CEHS) and the College of Graduate and Professional Studies (CGPS). The model consists of 21 credits of coursework for non-degree students who already hold a master's degree in education. The coursework is designed to be delivered to cohorts of 12-to-20 students in three consecutive semesters. Table 1 illustrates the master course design. Each semester, five face-to-face meetings were held on Saturdays in workshop format with a focus on one class in the morning and one in the afternoon and the internship integrated throughout. These meetings were held at approximately three-week intervals. The rest of the content was delivered on-line synchronously and asynchronously through the university's learning management system.

The guiding content principles for the program were originally founded in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Council (ISLLC) standards for school leaders, the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards for building level leaders, and are now based on the Professional Standards of Educational Leadership (PSEL). After completion of the coursework, students striving to be administrators must pass the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) in accordance to Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) regulations.

Six locations were selected to pilot the program based on the need of populations in different geographic areas for school leaders and the availability of students. This was determined by interest surveys distributed through emails to teachers and meetings with regional superintendents and professional development staff. The locations were also centrally located within an hour's drive of the cohort members and with a facility suitable for delivering a hybrid program.

Table 1

21 Credit Endorsement Preparation Program for Principal Leadership

Semester	Course Number	Course Title	Credits
Fall	PEDU 504	Educational Leadership	3
	PEDU 509	School Leadership in the Management and Integration of School Programs and Resources	3
	PEDU 690	Internship in Educational Leadership	1
Spring	PEDU 620	School Law	3
	PEDU 625	Public School Finance	3
	PEDU 690	Internship in Educational Leadership	1
Summer	PEDU 628	School Personnel Administration	3
	PEDU 671	Supervision and evaluation of Instruction & Instructional Programs	3
	PEDU 690	Internship in Educational Leadership	1

Student Selection

Program builders were intent in keeping high standards for student selection. For the student selection process, it was determined that there was a need to recruit high-quality candidates rather than those who had been self-selected.

In one local school division surveyed, seventy staff members had Master's degrees but only thirty-two of them had majored in Education Leadership, leaving nearly forty faculty that could not pursue careers as administrators. The superintendents and principals in this division felt there were strong leaders within that forty but very few of them had access to the coursework they would need to become those leaders and earn the state endorsement. Students were selected based upon the following criteria: (a) students had to have a master's degree in education, (b) students had to have a state teaching license and at least two years of teaching experience, (c) students had to have a recommendation from a school division administrator, and (d) students had to have an overall GPA of 3.0 in their master's program. The student selection process has been maintained in this form across each consecutive running of the program. Program builders agreed that quality of students plays a big part in overall program success.

The instructional grouping for each cohort consisted of three experienced school leaders who had a doctorate degree. The three instructors are called a triad team and teach each cohort from beginning to end. The triad teams input on the selection process combined with instructional sites increased the university's ability to recruit high quality candidates. With so many of the triad team instructors active in area schools and working with other superintendents, principals and professional development specialists, they were able to select and encourage

teachers they knew had the skills and potential to be successful school leaders. They were a known and trusted entity to some candidates, which encouraged them to join a cohort.

Pilot, Cohort I, and Cohort II

The pilot program was launched in the fall of 2016. After generating an interest list of 283 potential candidates, 121 applied and 89 were accepted. Eighty-four students completed the fall term and, of the 84, 81 students completed the spring term. Eighty students successfully completed the summer term. All of the students in the pilot program were required by the state to take a slate of leadership preparation classes prior to sitting for the SLLA.

In Cohort I, after generating a list of 420 potential candidates, 156 applied and 133 were accepted to begin classes in the fall 2017. One hundred and thirty-two completed the fall term followed by 131 completing the spring term. One hundred and thirty students completed the summer term and all required courses for the endorsement.

In Cohort II, after generating a list of 513 potential candidates, 167 applied and 146 were accepted to begin classes in the fall 2018. One hundred and forty-one completed the fall term followed by 134 completing the spring term. One hundred and thirty-four students successfully completed the summer term and all required courses for the endorsement.

The Cohort III rendition of the program is the focus of this study. It will be detailed in the method section.

Related Literature

In 1993, Milstein et al. published *Changing the Way We Prepare Educational Leaders* describing the Danforth Foundation's work in the preparation of educational leaders. This seminal work gave leadership preparation program builders a road map to follow for constructing effective school leader programs. From this study emerged other research giving explanation of what effective leadership programs looked like and how they worked.

As a member of the Milstein research team, David J. Parks continued to study how best to prepare school leaders. According to Parks and Chapman (2000), the first university to get the Educational Leadership Constituent Council's (ELCC) seal of approval is described in a case study. Chapman and Parks in 2005 looked at understanding how students who matriculated through their doctoral program, in educational leadership, perceived said program. This study provided the first iteration of the student perceptions survey that served as the instrument for this case.

The *Student Perceptions Survey* used in this study is the most recent version of the instrument. It is designed to bring about an understanding of how students perceived their preparation program across five dimensions. The five domains are as follows: (a) Academic Services, (b) Administrative Support, (c) Process, (d) Quality of Program, and (e) Socialization of Students. Other renditions of the instrument have been used with modifications to get at student perceptions about other topics of research interest (Chapman et al., 2009). For the purposes of this study, the *Student Perceptions Survey* was modified as described in the method section.

Case Site

The case site is a liberal arts university in the southeastern United States. A description of the following is presented: (a) the university, (b) the colleges, and (c) the department. Unique features of the program provide a view into the secret sauce for its success and popularity.

The University

The University is a small masters granting liberal arts institution with 5,000 students, 10% of which are graduate students. Over 100 areas of study across 37 degrees are offered at the undergraduate level. There are seven masters programs offered at the graduate level. The University is divided into three undergraduate academic colleges, supported by an honors college, and a college of graduate and professional studies. The College of Education and Human Services (CEHS) and the College of Graduate and Professional Studies (CGPS) collaborated to build and deliver the program.

The Colleges

The CEHS is the college where most of the faculty members associated with graduate degrees have an academic home and where all curricular decisions are made. The CGP provides graduate admissions, student, and administrative support for all graduate and professional programs across the University. Both the CEHS and the CGPS have a dean.

There are three departments and five supporting units in the CEHS. Education and Special Education (EdSped) is the department where the certification program finds its home. The CGPS consists of graduate, professional and continuing studies, instructional technology, and off site undergraduate programs. This program is housed in the professional studies division of CGPS, which provided marketing, admissions, logistics, off-site delivery expertise, a reduced tuition rate, and a part time position to coordinate the pilot. The instructional technology division of CGPS provided training and support for online instruction for all participating instructors and student support for the Learning Management System (LMS).

The Department

The Department of Education and Counseling (DEC) is the second largest department in the University with 25 faculty members. The program areas in the department are (a) education, (b) special education, (c) educational leadership studies, (d) counseling, (e) reading, learning and literacy, and (f) school librarianship. All program areas have graduate programs. Education and special education also have undergraduate programs.

Unique Features of the Program

There are three unique features of the program worth outlining. The first is the Triad Teaching Team (T³). The second is program management, and the third is pre-COVID delivery verses in-COVID delivery.

Triad Teaching Teams (T³)

Triad Teaching Teams (T³) are the key instructional innovation of this certification program. Program builders handpicked teams with three highly qualified members in each cohort. The three T³ members were selected from areas where cohorts were placed and the team members had proven backgrounds in educational leadership. Each instructor was responsible for one course or internship as the lead instructor.

The T³ instructors were grouped into nine teams with a total of twenty-seven instructors that included two college professors, seven acting or retired superintendents, four assistant superintendents, six directors and eight principals. Eleven of the instructors were female and sixteen were male. Nineteen of the instructors were white and eight were black. Instructors had experience in rural, urban and suburban schools. One of the triad team members also served as the coordinator for the initiative. His responsibilities included securing sites, advising students, supporting the instructors, and overseeing the course content, delivery, and revision as needed.

Program Management

Program management is well supported by having the responsibilities divided among designated university personnel. A position was created to provide a coordinator for the initiative. An Assistant Visiting Professor position was filled by an experienced school leader who was hired as a program coordinator and instructor. His responsibilities included securing sites, advising students, supporting instructors, and overseeing the course content, delivery, evaluations, and revision as needed.

The courses used for the certification are well-established university courses previously approved by the state for educational leadership endorsement. However, a curriculum audit evolved naturally as T³ instructors worked closely with university faculty in reviewing the effectiveness of the curriculum, asking questions, and making suggestions. The natural epistemic discourse facilitated by the model for the T³ members and their networks provided a continuous feedback loop for instructional improvement. Through structured meetings at the beginning and end of each semester, the T³ instructors conducted informal curriculum reviews to improve the quality of the courses and address the mismatch between topics taught and the job identified in the research. This group think-tank approach, created a culture of growth in the delivery and quality of each course. The same formative approach has been used every year since starting the program in 2016 and the courses have evolved.

To ensure consistency, each of the triad teams taught the same courses and utilized the same curriculum as structured in the university's learning management system. While the resources and experiences shared may have been different across the T³s, the concepts, objectives, assignments and overall structure remained the same. The greatest augmentation in the curriculum came from the resources collected. The myriad of administrative experiences the instructors shared with their students based on the common content of the curriculum gave a rich diversity in the context.

The Delivery Platform: Before COVID-19 and After COVID-19

The delivery platform for the courses is CANVAS, the learning management platform utilized University-wide. The University provided three-month Learning Online Training for

Instruction (LOTI) training sessions and monetary incentives to the instructors so they would be prepared to incorporate CANVAS into their courses. For all courses, there were five face-to-face meetings, each lasting three hours, and 10 online synchronous group chats lasting one hour each. This was the standard delivery model pre-COVID.

As the COVID pandemic became more serious, the university went virtual utilizing the Zoom: Video Conferencing communications. Group activities, chats, and all course readings were monitored by the instructor and guided by group leaders. The instructor engaged in chats on a sporadic basis. Assignments for the general asynchronous discussion board were posted weekly. The course's first session used a face-to-face meeting to discuss and review CANVAS features, the syllabi, University norms, expectations, and course materials/activities. The course syllabus, agendas by class session, the general discussion board, assignment expectations, and chat room discussion guidelines were also covered. In this first meeting, students were made aware of every meeting detail, both virtual and real.

Research Method

This study used an online survey designed to assess student perceptions of their educational leadership preparation program across the following five dimensions: (a) Academic Services, (b) Administrative Support, (c) Process, (d) Quality of Program, and (e) Socialization of Students (see Appendix A). The survey was modified from its original form so the data would conform to giving insights into how students perceived the program they matriculated. How the survey was collaboratively remolded by program builders and instructors is outlined. The specific cohort that was targeted for the research is described.

The Student Perception Survey

The first version of the instrument (Chapman & Parks, 2005) measured how doctoral students perceived their doctoral program across five different regions of the same state. It was determined to keep the five dimensions of the survey as they remained relevant. All statements pertaining to the doctoral process were removed and the instrument went from 46 statements to 30. The instrument was distributed to 27 instructors across nine cohorts after the 2019-2020 program finished. An explanation of the research was given and input for suggestions to help update the instrument was requested.

Updates were made in the *Academic Services, Administrative Support, and Process* dimensions of the survey as follows:

1. *Academic Services*

- Given the learning platform (face-to-face or virtual due to COVID) that was available to me during my program, faculty were competent users of technology.

2. *Administrative Support*

- The technology staff of the DEC were helpful in navigating Canvas issues.

3. *Process*

- My triad of instructors worked closely with me on my program.
- There was ample contact between the program coordinator and my cohort.
- I found the Student Orientation Canvas Shell to be helpful throughout the program.

The current survey is a 31 statement instrument across the original five dimensions of interest. Three demographic items were added and open comments were asked for as follows: (a) gender, (b) ethnicity, (c) location of cohort, and (d) comments.

The survey was distributed to participants who completed the 2019-2020 cohort and the director and instructors would issue prompts to remind participants to complete the survey. Survey Monkey was used to distribute and collect the survey data.

Participants

Cohort III: Subjects of the Study

In Cohort III, after generating a list of 1570 potential candidates (please note that the university had just started utilizing a new recruiting software during the selection process), 194 applied and 157 were accepted to begin classes in the fall of 2019. One hundred and fifty-five completed the fall term. A total of 153 successfully completed all required courses for the endorsement. Out of the 153 students, we had 133 females and 20 males. The researchers felt that Cohort III would provide a better baseline for our study due to the updates in the program made through the debriefing meetings.

The Student Perceptions Survey was sent out to the students on November 1, 2020 and closed on December 31, 2020. Out of the 153 students who received the survey, 138 students participated and filled out all of part of the survey. Out of those that filled out the gender question on the survey, 114 females responded, 18 males responded, and one respondent identified as other.

Ethnicity of the students who completed the survey was also identified. Their ethnicity of the students breaks down to 86 or 65.7% White, 35 or 26.7% Black, 5 or 3.8% Hispanic, 2 or 1.5% American Indian, and 3 or 2.3% identifying as another race.

Results

The results are shown in table form by survey dimensions. These data are reported in percentages of respondents on a modified Likert scale (Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Agree; Strongly Agree). One hundred and thirty-eight participants responded to the survey. No survey was thrown out. Partially completed surveys were included in the analysis. Some of the statements show fewer than 138 respondents.

There are ten statements of perception in the *Academic Services* dimension (see Table 2). Students showed a high degree of agreement for all ten statements. The students had the most confidence in faculty expertise and faculty support throughout their program with a 98.6% and

7% rating combining agree and strongly agree categories. Students indicated their least favorable perceptions of the statement, *Faculty provided timely feedback on my work*.

Table 2

Student Perceptions of Their Preparation Program in Academic Services

Statements of Academic Services	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Faculty Members were experts in their fields.	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.7%)	39 (28.7%)	95 (69.9%)
Course content was relevant to the leadership positions I seek.	1 (0.7%)	5 (3.6%)	53 (38.4%)	79 (57.3%)
Course content was relevant to my career goals.	1 (0.7%)	5 (3.7%)	52 (38%)	79 (57.7%)
Faculty used effective instructional techniques.	2 (1.5%)	8 (5.8%)	68 (49.3%)	60 (43.5%)
I had meaningful learning experiences in my program.	1 (0.7%)	8 (5.8%)	53 (38.7%)	75 (54.7%)
Faculty members were available for general program advisement.	2 (1.5%)	7 (5.2%)	46 (34.1%)	80 (59.3%)
Faculty provided sufficient technical support during my program.	2 (1.5%)	7 (5.1%)	75 (54.7%)	53 (38.7%)
Faculty provided timely feedback on my work.	3 (2.2%)	17 (12.3%)	62 (44.9%)	56 (40.6%)
Faculty were supportive throughout my program.	1 (0.7%)	3 (2.2%)	38 (27.7%)	95 (69.3%)
Given the learning platform (face-to-face or virtual due to COVID) that was available to me during my program, faculty were competent users of technology.	2 (1.5%)	7 (5.1%)	65 (47.1%)	64 (46.4%)

The five statements of perception in the *Administrative Support* dimension are found in Table 3. Overall student perceptions remain favorable across the dimension. Students' perceptions of adequate library resources yielded the least favorable response but still remained high at 88.5% rating combining agree and strongly agree response categories.

Table 3

Student Perceptions of Their Preparation Program in Administrative Support

Statements for Administrative Support	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Facilities were suited to adult learning.	1 (0.8%)	2 (1.5%)	48 (35.8%)	83 (61.9%)
Adequate library resources were available during my program.	2 (1.5%)	13 (10%)	71 (54.6%)	44 (33.9%)
Adequate technology support was available during my program.	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.5%)	80 (59.3%)	53 (39.3%)
The off-campus services for the university's instructional technology were useful during my program.	0 (0.0%)	6 (4.6%)	74 (56.9%)	50 (38.5%)
The technology staff (DEC) were helpful in navigating Canvas issues.	0 (0.0%)	4 (3.1%)	71 (54.6%)	55 (42.3%)

The *Process* domain presented the most challenging result according to student perceptions (see Table 4.). Of the eight statements associated with the domain, four yielded the lowest combined strongly disagree, disagree perceived scores. The lowest perceived score was associated with the following statement: *The online library services for the university were helpful in getting needed resources for doing my work.*

Table 4

Student Perceptions of Their Preparation Program in the Process

Statements of the Process	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My triad of instructors worked closely with me on my program.	0 (0.0%)	6 (4.4%)	54 (40.0%)	75 (55.6%)
There was ample contact between the program coordinator and my cohort.	3 (2.2%)	15 (11.1%)	65 (48.2%)	52 (38.5%)
I found the Student Orientation Canvas Shell to be helpful throughout the program.	2 (1.5%)	13 (9.6%)	77 (57.0%)	43 (31.9%)
I received sufficient coaching in preparation for program completion.	0 (0.0%)	6 (4.5%)	61 (45.5%)	67 (50.0%)
I received sufficient coaching throughout my program.	0 (0.0%)	10 (7.4%)	59 (43.7%)	66 (48.9%)
I got to know the faculty in my program area well.	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.2%)	59 (43.7%)	73 (54.1%)
The online library services for the university were helpful in getting needed resources for doing my work.	4 (3.2%)	30 (23.6%)	64 (50.4%)	29 (22.8%)
I found the information on the university's website helpful.	3 (2.3%)	20 (15.3%)	70 (53.4%)	38 (29.0%)

The *Quality of the Program* contains five perception statements covering program rigor, preparedness, equity to other known programs, and reputation (see Table 5). Student's perceptions of this dimension were high.

Table 5

Student Perceptions of Their Preparation Program in Quality of the Program

Statements about Quality of Program	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My program was rigorous enough to challenge me.	0 (0.0%)	9 (6.8%)	42 (31.6%)	82 (61.6%)
My program prepared me well for the next phase of my career.	0 (0.0%)	8 (6.8%)	49 (31.6%)	74 (61.7%)
The program that I came through is equal to any program of which I know.	2 (1.6%)	10 (7.8%)	46 (35.7%)	71 (55.0%)
I am confident of the reputation of the university in my field.	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.5%)	55 (41.7%)	74 (56.1%)

The *Socialization* domain had the only perception statement with a combined strongly agree, agree rating of 100%. This can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6

Student Perceptions of Their Preparation Program in Socialization

Statements of Socialization	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Other students in this program were supportive.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	29 (21.8%)	104 (78.2%)
I was able to build a strong network of friends and colleagues during my program.	0 (0.0%)	8 (6.0%)	36 (27.1%)	89 (66.9%)
Overall morale seemed to be high among students in my program.	0 (0.0%)	6 (4.6%)	51 (38.9%)	74 (56.5%)
I was provided sufficient assistance by faculty in gaining employment or changing jobs during or after completion of my program.	4 (3.1%)	21 (16.2%)	55 (42.3%)	50 (38.5%)

The students agreed that they supported one another during their matriculation. Students had the least agreement with how well faculty helped them gain employment upon completion.

There were 43 responses to the open comments of the survey. An overwhelming majority of the responses were favorable statements about the program as follows:

My instructors understood the SLLA assessment and gave many helpful tips and insights to help us prepare for this test. The study groups that developed through the course were immensely important to many of our successes and it may be wise to develop these earlier in the cohort progression. Overall, the Longwood Educational Leadership Endorsement Program is designed to be effective and innovative. I appreciate the opportunity to learn from my professors and their colleagues.

Many of the comments though favorable, offered some insight for making the program better according to the respondent as follows:

The instructors were responsive and friendly and I enjoyed time spent sharing experiences with my classmates. However, there was no differentiation for those who do not wish to seek a principal position. The certificate also qualifies candidates to work in other leadership positions throughout the division such as central office. There was little to no discussion or learning around these other leadership possibilities. Because of this, I did not always find learning to be useful.

In four different comments, students were not pleased with the timeliness of instructor responses to questions in Canvas or by email. There was one negative comment about the political biases of certain instructors.

Discussion and Conclusions

In Milstein et al. (1993), *Changing the Way We Prepare Educational Leaders*, a set of clear definitions for how to build leadership programs is laid out as follows: (a) there should be good communication and collaboration between universities preparing principals and the districts that would employ them, (b) preparation programs should recruit high-quality candidates, (c) preparation programs should recruit ethnic minorities and female candidates, (d) field experiences should be infused throughout the program, (e) pedagogical approaches should suit adult learners, (f) program builders should enlarge the number of qualified people for input in instructional design and delivery, and (g) curriculum audits should be conducted so content and delivery methods could be updated to remain relevant and current to educational leaders.

In 2016, The Wallace Foundation published a review of four reports written in early 2015, one each by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), The American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the American Institutes for Research (AIR), and the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA). The conclusions of the Wallace Foundation report indicate that many of the same issues identified in the 1990's still exist over two decades later.

This case study provides a snap shot of how the program of interest is doing in principal preparation according to the students who were successful completers. A side by side comparison of the *Danforth Experience* by Milstein et al. (1993) and four research reports reviewed by the Wallace Foundation in 2016 (see Table 7).

Table 7

Crosswalk of the Danforth Experience and the Wallace Foundation Recommendations for Principal Preparation

Milstein et al. - The Danforth Experience in 1993	The Wallace Foundation in 2016
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There was a lack of communication and collaboration between the universities that were preparing principals for the consumer school districts and the needs of the schools where they would be employed. 2. There was a need to recruit high-quality candidates rather than taking those who had been self-selected. 3. There was an undersupply of ethnic minorities and female candidates for the principalship. 4. Newly licensed principals had no or minimal field experience as principals prior to employment. 5. Pedagogy in the university classroom needed greater variation in approaches in order to respond to adult learning needs. 6. University departments of educational administration needed to enlarge the number of people involved in preparation programs by reaching outside to other schools in the university and to school-district personnel. 7. A curriculum audit was needed in the educational administration department to determine whether the content was relevant for the newly proposed reform initiatives and for the needs of the consumer school district(s). (p. 6) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District leaders are largely dissatisfied with the quality of principal preparation programs, and many universities believe that their programs have room for improvement. 2. Strong university-district partnerships are essential to high-quality preparation but are far from universal. 3. The course of study at preparation programs does not always reflect principals' real jobs. 4. Some university policies and practices can hinder change. 5. States have authority to play a role in improving principal preparation, but many are not using this power as effectively as possible. (p. 5)

Program builders begin and end each new launch and completion of the program with a meeting of all instructors and program builders to review what may be done to make the program better. This research will provide invaluable information to continuous improvement. The findings here provide a base for continued research along the lines of how to keep improving an already strong offering for emerging school leaders.

Through the 2019-20 academic year, this innovative program has prepared 497 new school leaders. Out of the 497 successful completers, 404 have passed the SLLA. A large number of students have experienced delays in accessing the SLLA because of the pandemic issues. Approximately 40% or 196 of the administrative leadership students have been hired for administrative jobs throughout the state. This number is a conservative estimate in that some of the former students have not reported their status when applying or being hired to be administrators.

The continuous discussion among all of the stakeholder groups associated with strengthening school leadership is at the center of this research. Widening the scope of discussions for program improvement and delivery is essential to keeping the preparation relevant and effective. The engagement of all parties who have a vested interest in high quality school leadership creates the epistemic discourse for continued success.

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