Conceptual Framework
NH IHE Network: Leadership Preparation Programs Committee
April 2016

Summary

Purpose: In an era dominated by expectations of continuous school improvement, transformation, and educational innovation, the need for change leadership has added to and complicated the role of school leaders. The New Hampshire Institutions of Higher Education Network's (IHE Network) Leadership Preparation Program Committee was convened as a shared community of practice to respond to this challenge by:
1. Understanding the emerging demands on school leaders in more depth
2. Identifying the signature approaches of each preparation program related to the principalship in general, and change leadership specifically, in order to identify and study effective practices
3. Identifying and studying effective change leadership principals in New Hampshire in order to describe their skills, practices, and challenges
4. Organizing ourselves and with partner organizations (NHASS, NHASP, NTEP, PSB, CTE, Leadership Standards Committee, Equity Committee, etc.) in ways that will enable shared learning and improvement

Our Goal: As a result of our work, we intend to identify the implications for effective principal preparation, mentoring, and on-going professional learning. This knowledge will lay the groundwork for new collective and institutional approaches to preparing the leaders that New Hampshire needs. This committee will serve as a resource and a productive influence on the development of principals and the principalship in the state. The institutions involved in this effort bring significant experience and resources to the project. Collectively, we are engaged in research, including research about change leadership, that will inform the work not just of NH IHEs, but also of leadership preparation programs across the region.

Initial (Simultaneous) Steps:
1. Inventory of practices, signature pedagogies, and/or performance assessments in existing NH preparation programs (Spring 2016- Spring 2018)
2. Multiple-case study of effective change leaders in New Hampshire schools (Spring 2016-Fall 2017):
    a. Reputational survey
    b. Initial site visits
    c. Purposive sampling
    d. Multiple-case study
3. Hold quarterly meetings including (beginning Spring 2016):
    a. Updates from the field (building collective awareness)
    b. Emerging findings from the case study (understanding change leadership in NH)
    c. Examining a focal program's signature elements, dilemmas (inventory NH program practices)

Possible Culminating Steps:
1. Publishing a white paper or toolkit on preparing, mentoring, and developing principals for fostering school productive cultures while leading change.
2. Design development research on effective competencies, program practices and/or shared projects/performances for principal candidates

1. **Context/Need Statement: The realities of the principalship (why we are writing):**

Effective school principals are an important resource for school effectiveness and student learning (Center for the Future of Teaching & Learning, 2011).

What is required of school principals, however, has become increasingly complex (Grubb & Flessa, 2006). To be effective, the role demands a widening array of knowledge and skills related to effective management (Bland, Sherer, Guha, Woodworth, Shields, Tiffany-Morales, & Campbell, 2011), instructional leadership (Bland, et. al., 2011; Blase & Blase, 1999; Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Anderson, Wahlstrom, Michlin, Gordon, Thomas, Mascall, Strauss, Moore, 2010), evaluation systems (Shakman & Breslow, 2015), and fostering collaborative professional cultures (Blase & Blase, 1999), among many other domains.

In an era dominated by expectations for school improvement and educational innovation, the need for change leadership has added to and further complicated the work of school leaders (Liethwood & Struas, 2009; Fullan, 2003). These expectations are now reflected in national leadership standards, which explicitly articulate increased demands regarding change leadership, defining a specific standard for school improvement as follows: "Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015).

New Hampshire principals are not immune to these pressures, as school leaders (and programs that support and prepare them) have been called on to lead innovation processes associated with personalized and competency based learning approaches (2Revolutions, 2015).

2. **NH IHE Network Leadership Preparation Committee (Who we are and what we are doing):**

New research on networked improvement communities suggests that refining educational improvement efforts requires answers to three seemingly straightforward (but deceptively complex) questions (Bryk, Gomez & Grunow, 2010):
   ● First, what problem(s) are we trying to solve?
   ● Second, whose expertise is needed to solve these problems? And
   ● Third, what are the social arrangements that will enable this work? .

With these questions in mind, the New Hampshire Institutions of Higher Education Network's (IHE Network) Leadership Preparation Committee was convened to:
   1. Understand these demands in more depth, including their implications for effective principal preparation, mentoring, and on-going professional learning
   2. Identify the signature approaches of each program related to the principalship in general, and change leadership specifically, in order to identify and study effective practices
   3. Identify innovative schools and principals in New Hampshire in order to identify and study effective practices
   4. Organize ourselves and with partner organizations in ways that will enable shared learning and improvement

As a result of our work, we intend to identify the implications for effective principal preparation, mentoring, and on-going professional learning. This knowledge will lay the groundwork for new collective and institutional approaches to preparing the leaders that New Hampshire needs. This committee will serve as

a resource and a productive influence on the development of principals and the principalship in the state. The institutions involved in this effort bring significant experience and resources to the project.

Collectively, as leaders and scholars in the field of educational leader preparation, we are uniquely positioned to positively impact the development of effective change leaders. We are engaged in research, including research about change leadership, that will inform the work not just of NH IHEs, but also of leadership preparation programs across the region. We do not propose to arrive at a single solution and recognize that different institutions will take different approaches to developing effective leaders. Nevertheless, we believe that this work will serve to strengthen and deepen each institutions work.

3. The Leaders New Hampshire Needs (why we are doing it):

Recent improvement efforts in New Hampshire focused on personalized and competency based learning in K-12 settings have added urgency to the need for principals who are able to understand and responsibly lead change efforts. Among the conditions identified by the NH Department of Education that either enable or inhibit efforts to transform a state or district is visionary leadership and support that creates a *culture of innovation* to help *catalyze and support experimentation and high-quality implementation* (2Revolutions, 2015).
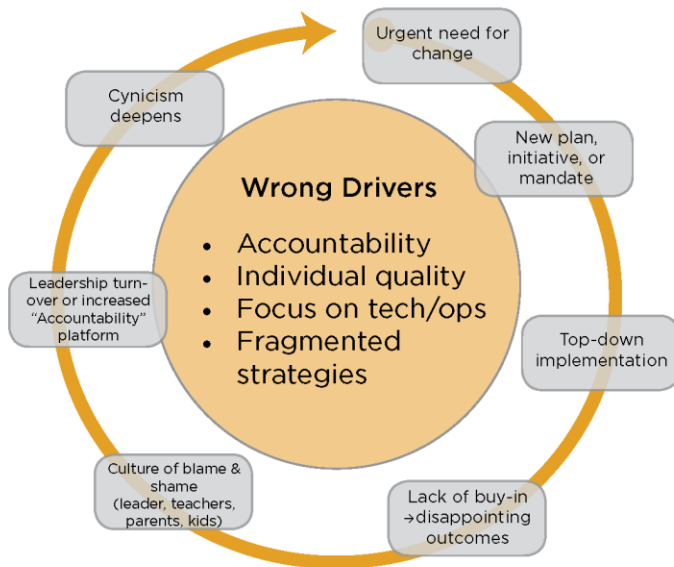
As we study our own practices, and the practices of school leaders, we are informed by several established (but all too often overlooked) elements of effective school improvement efforts:
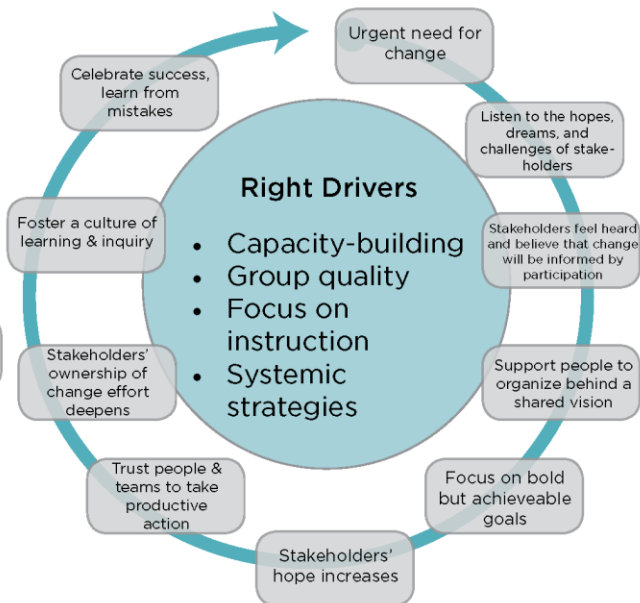
Focal Point of Improvement:

Improvement efforts need to be directed at the instructional core, and therefore necessarily require capacity building, rather than at systems. Systems can enable or inhibit positive change but are not the cause of positive change (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). In fact, we are persuaded by evidence suggesting that change efforts focused on capacity building and instructional improvement are the most promising for systemic improvement (Fullan, 2011).

☀ Right & Wrong Drivers for Whole System Reform

How Systems Tend to Work

Urgent need for change

Cynicism deepens

New plan, initiative, or mandate

Wrong Drivers

- Accountability
- Individual quality
- Focus on tech/ops
- Fragmented strategies

Leadership turn-over or increased "Accountability" platform

Top-down implementation

Culture of blame & shame (leader, teachers, parents, kids)

Lack of buy-in →disappointing outcomes

How Systems Transform

Urgent need for change

Celebrate success, learn from mistakes

Listen to the hopes, dreams, and challenges of stake-holders

Foster a culture of learning & inquiry

Right Drivers

- Capacity-building
- Group quality
- Focus on instruction
- Systemic strategies

Stakeholders feel heard and believe that change will be informed by participation

Stakeholders' ownership of change effort deepens

Support people to organize behind a shared vision

Trust people & teams to take productive action

Focus on bold but achieveable goals

Stakeholders' hope increases

"The four 'wrong' drivers are compelling on the surface, and have a lot of face-value appeal for people with urgent problems. They will be hard to dislodge. The politics will be fierce because leaders want immediate results, and are susceptible to what look like plausible solutions but turn out to be silver bullets."

"The 'right' drivers - capacity building, group work, instruction, and systemic solutions - are effective because they work on **changing the culture of school systems** (values, norms, skills, practices, relationships); by contact the wrong drivers alter structure, procedures, and other former attributes of the system **without reaching the internal substance of reform** - and that is why they fail."

Adapted from Fullan, Michael. "Choosing the wrong drivers for whole system reform."

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Adaptive Leadership:

Improving student achievement, implementing democratic initiatives—rather than top-down strategies—to improve school conditions, and providing school-based professional learning opportunities for educators should be at the forefront of school improvement efforts. At the same time, we are aware of the difficulties principals face as they struggle with how to build school climates that support teachers' growth and improved practice in a context of standards-based reform, increased accountability, and complex adaptive challenges (i.e., situations in which both the problem and the solution are unclear) (Donaldson, 2008; Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2005, 2009; Sparks, 2004; Wagner et al., 2006). Addressing adaptive challenges requires new approaches, and these can be resolved only as we work on them (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009; Heifetz, 1994; Wagner et al., 2006).

The Importance of School Culture to Change Efforts

"Without creating a more positive school climate, most efforts to institute change will flounder" (Prebble & Gordon, 2011). Several aspects of school culture have been identified as important for school improvement, including: Relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), teachers' professional community (Louis, Marks & Kruse, 1996), teachers' academic expectations (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, &

Easton, 2010), collaboration (Fullan, 2007), and openness to change itself (Fullan, 2001). Furthermore, it is clear that the school leader plays an important role in fostering these aspects of a healthy school culture (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010).

The culture of a school or any organization is the DNA that supports the healthy growth and development of the school, its students and the organization itself. In their book, What's Worth Fighting For?, Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) ask school leaders to "go deep" and think hard about the "fundamental value and purpose of what we do as educators". Effective leaders understand and emphasize the importance of the social and emotional climate and the "culture of care" in their schools. They foster the commitment of all adults to their own and their students continual self-growth, development and learning (Dweck, 2010), and reinforce an ethic of "service to others" (Etzioni, 1993) as a guide to their roles. Effective leaders must also understand and learn effective strategies to navigate the micropolitics of their schools in order to positively influence teachers (Blase, 1993) and to be sensitive to the politics of the larger school community and the critical role that power relations play (Sarason, 1996) in shaping school culture and school change. Effective school change has been found to be strongly associated with principals abilities to empower teachers, build teams, enhance parent and community participation, manage internal conflict, develop teachers capacity for critique, manage sometimes conflicting external and internal demands, challenge teachers, and effectively use evidence of improvement, all of which are distinctly related to establishing a culture of continuous improvement (Blase & Björk, 2010). Our committee will examine the extent to which NH school leaders are prepared to understand and guide the healthy development of school culture as a key element of our exploration of NH administrator preparation programs.

Effective Learning Based Change Initiatives:

Finally, we understand that change initiatives are fundamentally learning initiatives (for students, teachers, leaders, and community members). Research on organizational change and effective professional learning initiatives suggests that the following elements are necessary for sustained, learning oriented, and impactful change:
- Compelling, shared, positive vision (Fullan, 2011; Little, 2006; Lambert, 2007; Schein, 2004; Hawley & Valli, 1999
- Supportive and Distributed Leadership (Bryk et al., 2010; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004)
- Goals focused on teaching & learning (Fullan, 2011; Little, 2006; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Bryk et al., 2010)
- Involvement of teachers (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Richardson, 2003; Fullan, 2011; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Pearson, Taylor, & Tam, 2003 ; Schein, 2004)
- Cultivates professional community (Bransford et al., 2000; Fullan, 2011; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Stein, Silver, & Smith, 1998; Wenger, 1998; Little, 1982; Richardson, 2003 ; Schein, 2004; Wenger, 1998; National Research Council, 2000; A. S. Bryk et al., 2010; Bryk & Schneider, 2003).
- Formal & informal training (Schein, 2004; Little, 2006; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Bransford et al., 2000; Little, 2006; Loeb, Rouse, & Shorris, 2007)
- Opportunities for practice, coaching & feedback (Schein, 2004; Bransford et al., 2000; Woulfin, 2014)
- Models & exemplars (Schein, 2004; Lave & Wenger, 1991)
- Aligned incentives (formal & informal) (Schein, 2004; Ball, 1987; Fullan, 2011)
- Sustained over time Hawley & Valli, 1999; Little, 2006; Loeb et al., 2007; Richardson, 2003; Bransford et al., 2000).

4. Steps and Proposed Timeline

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Possible Culminating Steps:
3. Publishing a white paper or toolkit on preparing, mentoring, and developing principals for fostering school productive cultures while leading change.
4. Design development research on effective competencies, program practices and/or shared projects/performances for principal candidates [see: Mintrop, H., Baral, M., and Zumpe, L. (under review). *Design Development and School Improvement: Bridging Research and Practice with Equity-Relevant Interventions in Local Contexts. A Practical Guide* (under review at Harvard Educational Press). See: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzOJfthzOYnXcVE4amRObHBkMHM/view?usp=sharing]

Drafted by Page Tompkins, Christie Sweeney, and Bill Prebble based on the committee's guidance and comments.

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