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The LEAD Program at Age 2: Accomplishments and Future Directions

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Despite reliable observations that large-scale changes take at least three to five years and more likely a full generation, it is not too early to hazard an initial assessment of LEAD's accomplishments to date and offer suggestions for its future course. End results matter, but they will be a long time coming and we may in any case overlook or misread them when they emerge. Our success in appreciating results at some future date and our wisdom in charting a true course from day to day call for reflection and informed assessment now.

Weiss (1979) made the influential observation some time ago that policy research may be judged for both *instrumental* and *conceptual* effects. Interest in the immediate, palpable consequences intended for policies as well as policy research ought not blind us to the "bubbling up" of changes in values, frames of reference, problem orientations, and other influential conceptual paraphernalia. I propose a similar approach to considering the effects to date of the LEAD program. That is, I will review both *meta-program* and *project specific* accomplishments.

Meta-Program Outcomes

Federal legislation and grants programs serve at least five distinct purposes. McDonnell (1988) identifies three: (1) enlightenment, (2) problem definition, and (3) "assessing the feasibility of prospective policies and the implementation and effects of existing ones" (p. 94). To these, I would add (4) changing local funding and programmatic priorities (ACIR, 1984), and (5) enabling implementation by expanding resources and support systems (CLTES and NCRTE, 1988). LEAD has made an observable contribution in each of these areas.

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Enlightenment. While LEAD is not alone in fulfilling these aims—many laudable state, professional associations, and foundation programs are making a difference—it is the only activity with a formal presence in every state. LEAD has conferred the federal imprimatur on the significance of school leadership and renewed efforts to improve leadership training. In each state, LEAD defined a statewide effort, and designated an influential group of educators and citizens to symbolize the importance of the problems as well as to oversee efforts to solve them by serving as a policy committee. Because of LEAD, administrators, school board members, policy makers, service providers, and taxpayers now more fully appreciate the need for redoubled improvement efforts in this area.

Problem definition. LEAD is a partial problem definition. It selects "training" from such other factors as selection and supervision as the problem and solution. To construe administrator quality as solely a matter of preparation and development would be seriously in error. But it is even more wrongheaded to ignore the needs superintendents and principals have for lifelong training and the urgency of adding leadership to the traditional administrative and management emphasis. LEAD has probably had rather mixed results in this area, as some center programs are less completely oriented toward leadership than we would like. But emphasis on leadership conceptualizations, skills delineations and assessments, translating the results of research into training programs, and introduction of industry executive development programs all contribute to the more enlightened problem appreciation.

Results of experience. More systematic, rigorous information on the effects of various new training approaches, and on the feasibility of related policies, are badly needed. Competing conceptualizations of the leadership role need sorting out, and the proper formulations and consequences of reformed pre-service and "the new in-service" are open to question (see Wimpelberg, in press). LEAD is making a partial contribution in this area. Its support for introduction and extension of the best available practice makes possible a greater range of experience and development of keener insights into benefits of the approaches. Hard-nosed evaluation is more problematic. LEAD programs and others present a host of vexing conceptual, methodological, and operational barriers to evaluation for which we do not at present have good answers.

Local priorities. Federal grants change local priorities by focusing energies on new tasks made possible by grant funds and by attracting the additional contribution of local funds from other areas. So it is with LEAD. Elsewhere in this issue I have cited examples of occasions where entirely new programs have been initiated, or where expansion and redirection have taken place as a result of LEAD. In addition to the matching contributions donated by trainees, center sponsors and collaborating institutions, and business and industry—on the order of \$35 million—, legislatures in Alabama, Minnesota, and Texas have voted funds for LEAD and governors of a few other states have reached into their official pockets to make special allocations for LEAD activities. More of this can be expected in the future.

Resources and support systems. It is as important to put in place a system that will encourage and support change as it is to introduce the change activities themselves. Without the "infrastructure" and system support,

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new activities, especially those introduced with outside impetus or funding, will be short-lived. LEAD centers have succeeded not only in providing money to induce activities that would not otherwise occur, but also in establishing new capacity in the form of information banks, trainers of trainers, and regional centers, in creating new relationships and norms of cooperation that promote further improvements, and in developing new depths of business and community support for continued investment and improvement.

Project Accomplishments

Previous articles in this issue have provided a wealth of information concerning the contributions LEAD projects are making to improved administrator preparation and development. From my own perspective, I would refer to the discussion in my "overview" in this issue of accomplishments in these areas:

- Developing alternative conceptualizations of the school leader and creating curricula and training programs;
- Expanding existing assessment processes but, more important, inventing and introducing new ones and combining different, complementary approaches;
- Developing, refining, and putting into widespread practice non-traditional, client-centered, site-based "training" methods;
- Creating new opportunity for women and minorities in the field;
- Negotiating collaborations that overcome the history of separation and competition between organizations that provide training; between schools and universities; between superintendents, principals, and teachers; and between business and education.

What is most exciting in all this is that centers, singly and in regional groupings, have come to recognize and to embrace a new mission. They aspire to produce a legacy not solely of trainees, materials, and methods but of enduring institutional and policy reforms. If the plans on which many centers are now at work are fully realized, these centers will surpass even the program institutionalization hoped for by Congress and wreak lasting changes in state certification policies, state support for pre- and in-service education, and the basic institutional forms and relationships that deliver programs and chart future directions.

Future Needs and Directions

A hundred unmet needs and opportunities beckon to LEAD centers and the program office. I will take this opportunity to suggest a small number of priority topics for future attention.

LEAD centers and the OERI program office must find ways of undertaking useful documentation and evaluation activities. LEAD centers are engaged in a heroic amount of activity. Large amounts of valuable information could be sifted from their labors and used to guide other contemporary and future undertakings. The conceptual, methodological, and logistical difficulties are great, but the effort must be made. At present the program office has done too little to offer guidance or coordinate the diverse evaluation and documentation efforts of projects. The LEAD statute requires that each center conduct an evaluation, and they are doing so. But the quality of these efforts is uneven, and—absent better guidance and overall coordination—the findings will have only mixed policy relevance and cumulative import.

LEAD centers must contribute information and in other ways to formulation of revised state policies for administrator certification. Policies for certification and con-

tinued training must be credible, carefully supervised at the state or other institutional level, part of a coherent logic encompassing all state school improvement strategies, and designed to set high standards rather than mandate behaviors. At present, they are not (Peterson and Finn, 1985). The National Policy Board for Educational Administration will at some point come forth with important suggestions for the improvement of state policy. LEAD centers will need to be in a position to introduce this and other information from their experience into the state's policy processes to good effect. State funding—now hardly at all available for administrators but not unusual for teacher education—is a practical necessity for the kinds of effective, quality programs needed. Policy makers and citizens will need to be informed of the results of the best programs to date and of the benefits to be realized from state support.

LEAD centers must continue present efforts undiminished and ensure that future efforts focus on certain key problem areas. Programs have gotten quickly off the mark in (1) supporting and producing new curricula, assessment practices, materials, "the new in-service" approaches; (2) attracting women and minorities to administrative positions; and (3) forging new statewide coalitions. Centers will also need to:

- Spearhead the development of articulated preparation and development programs with a coherent, career-long logic. Many centers are indeed coordinating the joint efforts of universities, school districts, state agencies, and professional associations to create well-articulated pre- and in-service programs. Some are also on their way to developing the underlying logic for career-long training programs sensitive to the stages and needs of an administrator's full career.
- Stimulate increased effort to revamp pre-service preparation along lines suggested by the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (1987) and modeled by the Danford Foundation's PREP program.
- Span the gulf that separates superintendents, principals, and teachers; schools and communities; boards and superintendents; school leaders and business communities—with such innovations as the collaborative instructional leadership teams (and variants) supported by AASA, I/D/E/A, and Danforth; the school board assessment pioneered by IEL and NSBA and board/administrator team-building practiced at a few LEAD centers; and LEAD/industry collaborations like those engineered by the Massachusetts State Department of Education and the New Jersey MAPS program.
- Anticipate growing demand for preparation to lead effectively in the teams, shared decision making, and school-site management processes, along with a host of other approaches across the country, introduced as schools restructure.

LEAD centers must contribute to a conception of school leadership that transcends the current skills orientation. Successful leadership is almost exclusively seen in terms of skills. Instructional leader, educational executive, institutional leader, school improvement guru, and even the most heavily "vision" and "culture" driven models of leadership—all are based on the assumption that leadership is an instrumental activity made up of skills that can be inculcated through training and development. No doubt there is a heavy dose of skills in every leadership recipe. But *judgment* is surely the essence of leadership. Judgment to distinguish the critical decision from the merely urgent, to define the situation and craft the problem formulation that will galvanize "followers," to form appreciations of reality that

help make sense of work in ambiguous circumstances, to discern the moral readiesses of others and, in Burns' (1978) words, to "arouse, engage, and satisfy" them. To this one must add *courage*. Courage to act in the face of doubt—which after all pervades all complex organizational situations—, to put forth a position and see it through in the face of skepticism or criticism, to advance what is right in the faith that the means can be found to help others to right-minded views. Both judgment and courage, contrary to what is often maintained, *can* be taught, or certainly *passed on* from one person to another. The work of Vickers (1979; 1983), Schon (1983), and others is sufficient indication of that. There is of course no certain standard for evaluating judgment, or courage. The assessment of what is in fact good judgment and courageous action consists in itself of an act of judgment and courage.

LEAD centers must prepare leaders with visions of schooling that surpasses the instrumental. Schools are good things in and of themselves. At their best, they embody the society's most cherished values. They express and provide for an ongoing relationship with those values. Moreover, their chief activity is the passing on of a body of values—deep cultural values—and the development in each individual of a "knowledge system" (Boulding, 1961) capable of putting those values to work in society. It is not enough to settle for the lowest common values denominator across society, nor to campaign for a return to bygone days. Each generation must discover its values anew. Values that endure through the millenia must be reinterpreted for each new age. The discovery and institutionalization of these values count over time for more than such instrumental functions as preparing workers for an economic system. Yet it rare to hear schools described in terms other than their instrumental contributions to the economy or polity. Undesirable as it is of course to ignore the demands of daily life and a productive society, school administrators must be prepared and inspired to lead not merely *organizations* but *institutions*.

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