

Foreword

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This special issue of *Educational Considerations* continues the theme of the preparation of educational leaders introduced in the Spring 2005 issue, which was guest-edited by Michelle D. Young, Meredith Mountford, and Gary M. Crow. In particular, this issue, and the one that will follow in Spring 2006, will focus on the role of university partnerships in reforming the preparation of educational leaders.

University preparation programs for educational leaders have been under attack for several years. Most recently, in *Educating School Leaders*, Arthur Levine found “the overall quality of educational administration programs in the United States to be poor.”¹ In addition, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and its subsequent requirements for every student to make Adequate Yearly Progress by the year 2014,² have placed immense burdens on school leaders. The new emphasis on improved student achievement, with the requisite consequences for underperforming schools, plus the ongoing concerns about administrator preparation programs in general, has resulted in an increased need for reform and redevelopment of administrator preparation programs grounded in current research, based on real-world experiences, and linked to improved student involvement and achievement. University programs for preparation of educational administrators must include collaborative efforts with their communities to produce highly qualified administrators who can succeed, even thrive, in today’s conditions for schooling. Such partnerships can achieve simultaneous improvement of all the entities involved. Bringing students, universities and communities together in conversations to develop solutions to their own problems is also supported by new research on student engagement and brain-based instruction.

Several universities have responded to these concerns. In the first article, Meredith Mountford explores “Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for the Simultaneous Renewal of a School District and its Partner University.” In this article, she describes how two partnering organizations, the College of Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia and the Independence School District, experienced a successful partnership leading to simultaneous renewal. In “Training Principals to Ensure Access to Equitable Learning Opportunities in a High-Need Rural School District,” Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Robert C. Knoeppel report their findings from an exploratory case study about an advanced leadership development program delivered through a partnership between the Pike County Public Schools and the University of Kentucky, funded through the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. Cynthia J. Norris with the Graduate Studies Cohort, examines the effects of a partnership between two doctoral cohorts at the University of Cincinnati and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in “The Earth Is Not Flat Anymore: Reflections on the Impact of A Rural/Urban Educational Leadership Exchange on Place-Based Instruction.” This partnership allowed participants to enhance their understanding of the difference location makes in elementary and secondary education in order to find a “compassionate sense of place.” Finally, Teresa Northern Miller and Trudy Salsberry, in “Portfolio Analysis: Documenting the Progress and Performance of Educational Administration Students,” assess the success of two program delivery formats, one traditional university-based and the other a district-based academy. The academy was designed, developed, and delivered through a partnership between a Midwestern university and a local school district. These articles celebrate the variety and successes of university partnership programs currently answering the calls for reform in educational administrator preparation programs.

Endnotes

¹ Arthur Levine, *Educating School Leaders* (New York: The Education Schools Project, 2005), 23.

² *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, 20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq. (2002).