Foreword

Faith E. Crampton, Executive Editor
David C. Thompson, Board of Editors

This issue, guest-edited by Teresa Northern Miller, represents the third and final issue in a trilogy exploring the reform of educational leadership preparation programs in the United States. Recent criticisms of the quality of the university-based programs,[1] as well as the continuing pressure from the state and federal levels to improve student achievement and to close the longstanding achievement gap between socioeconomically disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers,[2] have placed the efficacy of educational leaders at the school and district levels in the spotlight. As such, the articles found in these three issues are very timely.

The first issue of this trilogy, with guest editors Michelle D. Young, Meredith Mountford, and Gary M. Crow, focused on "improving program curricula, pedagogy, and entire programs" in educational leadership preparation.[3] They noted that many of the reforms currently being implemented in educational leadership preparation programs across the country have been informed by the work of professional associations, states, and foundations. These include, for example, the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), the National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership Preparation (NCAELP),[4] and the Wallace Foundation, which has funded State Action for Educational Leadership Preparation (SAELP) grants.

Articles in the Spring 2005 issue highlighted pedagogy, student learning, and program evaluation in educational leadership preparation programs. In "Transferring Learning from the Classroom to the Workplace: Challenges and Implications for Educational Leadership Preparation," Bruce G. Barnett explored how knowledge and skills learned in university classrooms are best transferred to other environments. Kathleen M. Brown described a pedagogical approach that interweaves transformative learning theory and adult learning strategies and evaluated its effects in an educational leadership preparation program in "Transformative Adult Learning Strategies: Assessing the Impact on Pre-Service Administrators' Beliefs." In "Learning Outcomes of an Educational Leadership Cohort Program," Pamela D. Tucker, Cheryl B. Henig, and Michael J. Salmonowicz described a new approach to program evaluation that centers on direct learning outcomes. Donald G. Hackmann and Thomas L. Alsbury discussed how data on student learning outcomes from ISLLC-aligned student portfolios were being used for program improvement in one institution's educational leadership program for aspiring principals in "Standards-Based Leadership Preparation Program Improvement Through the Use of Portfolio Assessments."

In the second issue, guest editor Teresa Northern Miller selected another facet of reform of educational leadership preparation programs that is drawing increasing attention: partnerships. Miller noted in her foreword:

> 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.[5]

To that end, Meredith Mountford, in "Necessary and Sufficient Conditions for the Simultaneous Renewal of a School District and its Partner University," traced the development of a university/school district partnership, positing that four stages and five supporting conditions made possible its success. In "Training Principals to Ensure Access to Equitable Learning Opportunities in a High-Need Rural School District," Tricia Browne-Ferrigno and Robert C. Knoeppel reported findings from an exploratory case study of a school/university partnership, funded through the No Child Left Behind Act, that provided advanced leadership development to aspiring principals in an isolated, high poverty rural school district. Cynthia J. Norris examined the effects of a partnership between two doctoral cohorts in "The Earth Is Not Flat Anymore: Reflections on the Impact of A Rural/Urban Educational Leadership Exchange on Place-Based Instruction" where participants came to understand the difference location makes in PreK-12 education and the importance of finding a "compassionate sense of place." In "Portfolio Analysis: Documenting the Progress and Performance of Educational Administration Students," Teresa Northern Miller and Trudy Salsberry assessed the success of two program delivery formats, one traditional university-based and the other a district-based academy, the latter designed, developed, and delivered through a university/school district partnership.

In the final issue of this trilogy, guest editor Teresa Northern Miller, continues to explore partnerships in the preparation of educational leaders, expanding the scope from PreK-12 to higher education administrators. In "The Role of Partnerships in the Professional Doctorate in Education: A Program Application in Educational Leadership," Susan Toft Everson describes the role of partnerships in a professional doctorate in educational leadership, presenting a rationale for the importance of including partnership experiences in the preparation of education leaders and describing a newly designed Ed.D. program's use of partnerships to enhance the authenticity of the doctoral experience as it relates to the practice of educational leadership. Gini Doolittle, H. Mark Stanwood, and Herb Simmerman report the results of a study where professional learning communities were utilized in a educational leadership course to encourage aspiring school leaders to develop the expertise needed to support effective classroom instruction and to facilitate individual and organizational transformation in "Creating Professional Learning Communities in a Traditional Educational Leadership Preparation Program." In "Year One of School Improvement: Examples from Nine Schools," Stephen Gordon, Suzanne Stiegelbauer, and Julie Diehl describe the first-year progress of the School Improvement Network, an action research-based partnership that worked with nine schools to set goals and develop school improvement plans based on an action research sequence.

Turning to the preparation of leaders for higher educational institutions, Ramon Dominguez reports on the successful implementation of a distance education doctoral program tailored to the needs of practicing community college leaders in "Partnership, Preparation, and Progress in Training Community College Administrative Leaders." After only three years of implementation, approximately 60% of the cohort has earned their doctorate. Maximizing student learning outcomes is important to higher educational leaders as well those in PreK-12 education. In "Cognitive Development of Adult Undergraduate Students: Cohort and Non-Cohort Settings," Royce Ann Collins describes the result of a study whose purpose was to compare and contrast the cognitive development of adult undergraduate students across two universities; one utilized a non-cohort format similar in length to a traditional semester while the other offered an accelerated cohort adult program where students completed a three credit course every five weeks.

The collection of articles across these three issues reinforces the notion there exists across the country a vibrant education reform movement in educational leadership programs. All in all, research on the efficacy of educational leader preparation programs, at both the PreK-12 and higher education levels from ten states, representing all geographical areas of the United States, has been reported here. Studies have encompassed reform efforts in urban as well as rural school districts, including those with high student poverty. However, as Young, Mountford, and Crow acknowledged in their introduction to the first special issue, continuous improvement of educational leadership programs is essential. To that end, they call for development of a national reform agenda that includes, but is not limited to, the following: (1) partnerships with local districts and agencies; (2) attention to the economic environment, e.g., resources, financing, quality internship and private sector investment in higher education reform; and (3) state responsibility for funding, evaluating, and promoting leadership preparation reforms.[6] Clearly, the academic success of all children is dependent upon the efforts of many, both within and outside the school building walls.

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

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

[3] Michelle D. Young, Meredith Mountford, and Gary M. Crow, "Preparing Educational Leaders: A Roadmap to Success," *Educational Considerations* 32 (Spring 2005): 4.

[4] NCAELP is sponsored by UCEA and NPBEA.

[5] Teresa Northern Miller, "Foreword," *Educational Considerations* 33 (Fall 2005): 2.

[6] Young et al., "Preparing Educational Leaders."