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Message from Dr. Heather M. Rintoul, Editor-in-Chief:

With this Special Edition Part I (Principal Leadership) of the *Journal of Authentic Leadership in Education*, 4(2), July 2015 and the forth-coming Part II (Teacher Leadership), we are pleased to welcome guest editor, Dr. Anthony Normore, California State University, Dominguez Hills, together with his writing team. Readers of JALE will recognise Dr. Normore as a previous contributor to JALE in the area of leadership and social justice.

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Introduction to Special Issue

Dr. Anthony Normore: Guest Editor

A wide body of research exists that focuses on specific educational leadership development and training programs. These programs range from the traditional preparation of school principals to the preparation of teachers and superintendents. Evidence of being ready to lead upon program completion and performance post-preparation is less available. Minimal attention has been paid to programs that prepare leaders in different layers of an organization to not only become individually high performing but to also work collaboratively to create great schools. Towards this end, we contend that the principal cannot effectively lead a school alone. Other key leader players are critical. We have cast a wide net of practicing “school leaders” who relentlessly work in underserved schools and who are considered authentic, based on what we know from the literature. Authentic leadership is leadership indicative of “professionally effective, ethically sound, and consciously reflective practices in educational administration” (Duigan & Bhindi, 1997, p. 197) - that is “knowledge-based, values informed, and skillfully executed” (Taylor, 1991, p. 39). Authentic leadership also implies a genuine kind of leadership --a hopeful, caring, open-ended, visionary and creative response to social circumstances, as opposed to the more traditional dualistic portrayal of management and leadership practices (Normore & Issa Lahera, 2012). Each program is presented holistically.

In this double-special issue titled, *Developing, Growing, Preparing, and Supporting Educators in Underserved Urban Schools: A California Perspective on School Leadership*, we will examine several learning institutes of postsecondary training, preparation, and

development programs for school leaders. Our use of the concept “school leaders” encompasses not only the commonly known titles of principal/assistant principal/vice principal but also the teacher leader. We explore the differences and similarities of contexts including elementary, middle and secondary schools; traditional and non-traditional schools; and how leaders of learning are developed and ready to lead in underserved schools within the large urban setting of Los Angeles, California.

The first issue is comprised of two articles with focus on two program initiatives intended to prepare and train principal leaders. The second issue explores four initiatives that focus on teacher education and teacher leadership including special education. It is equally important for the reader to note that all program initiatives are made possible by the support of the US Department of Education.

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Developing Authentic Non-Traditional Principals to Lead Underserved Student Populations: The Case of Charter and Autonomous School Leadership Academy

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Great schools are created and thrive as a result of great leadership. Great school leaders are prepared in carefully designed preparation programs. Carefully crafted school leadership programs prepare leaders who are ready to lead (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). What is it that must be taught and learned in order to prepare leaders who are ready to lead? It is certain that school leadership must be clearly articulated, taught and measured. With research highlighting the impact of school leaders on school success, preparation programs have the responsibility to equip new leaders to be skilled in leadership (Seashore Louis et al., 2010). It was with this in mind that the development of the Charter and Autonomous Leadership Academy (CASLA) program was created to address the needs of an underserved population of administrators and future leaders in the charter world. By delivering the program using a hybrid format, cultivating a strong community component, and implementing a field-based project requiring students to use all that they learn in the program, CASLA is intended to create a pathway that ensures competency in all aspects of leadership, not just management (Issa Lahera & Normore, 2012). Crafting a relevant, authentic, rigorous and thorough program has proven to be a hero's journey (Issa Lahera, Holzman & Robinson, 2014). This article will provide an overview of CASLA: the leadership preparation program that claims to graduate leaders who are "Ready to Lead."

Context of Program

Educational leadership personnel at California State University Dominguez Hills have worked tirelessly for the past 15 years (since 2000) to create a leadership preparation program so that graduates are ready to lead in turnaround transformational and dogged reform in traditionally underserved populations. The preparation of leaders in the landscape of schools today has been greatly informed by bodies of research in leadership preparation, the participation in the Office of Innovation and

Improvement grants and research conducted at this university (e.g., California Charter School Association, 2015). Yet charter leaders' needs are both wider and different than traditional school leaders. The sheer magnitude of work and knowledge needed in financial and facilities management, entrepreneurship, community outreach, fundraising and human development is simply greater than for traditional public school leaders (National Alliance of Public Schools, 2015).

The diversity and spirit of the charter school movement can be seen in Los Angeles, which is home to many small independent start-up schools, district schools that converted into charter schools, as well as larger charter management organizations (CMO). In the Los Angeles area charter schools offer different approaches and themes including college preparatory curricula, programs emphasizing math, science or the performing arts and schools that prioritize personalization of the learning experience through site based and distance learning programs. Greater Los Angeles is home to more charter schools than anywhere in the United States. About one out of five charter schools in California is located in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Some of these schools are also among the highest-performing public schools in California (California Charter School Association, 2015). Charter schools continue to grow in response to demand from parents for high-quality school options, and in the spirit of diversity and experimentation engrained in charter law.

Responding to the Nation-Wide Call for Effective School Leadership

The nation-wide call for effective school leadership is currently well-documented and the research on the skills school leaders need is clear (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013). Research on the impact of effective leadership on student achievement and on overall school improvement is additionally well-documented (Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, Anderson, Michlin, Mascall, & Moore, 2010). Although, leadership is at the heart of school success, developing individuals to perform this work remains largely in the hands of institutions using traditional practices. Although, some organizations have had great success in developing leaders through their strong recruitment and residency program, (e.g., New Leaders and Teach for America), the reality is that a very small number of leaders are trained. In addition, the manner in which these programs train these leaders is a very costly venture. The problem becomes, how do public institutions, such as California State Universities, offer large-scale development programs that embody the elements of those stellar programs in ways that are cost effective, meaningful and actually prepare skilled leaders?

There is a long history of school leadership emanating from the ranks of teachers who have great organizational and instructional skills (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). Many assume that if they can successfully run their classrooms, they can run schools. Although organizational skills are important in leadership, and instructional skills are essential, there are a host of other skills necessary in order to lead effectively (Seashore Louis et al., 2010). Charter school leaders are expected to have highly developed skills in all areas as they are the true faces of organizations much more than traditional P-12 leaders (Steiner & Ayscue-Hassel, 2011). Using a framework of current research, having a need to change the long-standing approach to program candidates' selection, and the need to develop people for leadership, we began our development journey.

Shifting the Leadership Landscape

One of the few shifts in leadership training in California occurred in the 1990's when standards for student learning were adopted. Most universities revisited their programs and revised curriculum as a result of that paradigm shift in the classroom. This shift, however, was more of a first order change, an "incremental change (that) fine tunes the system through a series of small steps that do not depart radically from the past" (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005 p. 66). Another shift occurred in the early 2000's with National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and new No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. This shift had a greater impact than the changes in the 1990's as it directly related to the field of educational leadership. In hindsight, however, revisions were not "dramatic departures from the expected, both in defining a given problem and in finding a solution" (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 66). These revisions were more about bibliography, activity and assignment revisions. The focus on actual leadership practice was still far removed from both research and the reality of the skills, knowledge, performance, and dispositions needed for effective school leadership.

California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH)

CSUDH is located in Carson, a city located in greater Metropolitan Los Angeles, California. The University is surrounded by urban communities of national infamy in the United States: Watts, Compton, and Inglewood to name a few. The campus is one of the smaller urban universities in the CSU system, with a population of mostly first generation college students from diverse backgrounds that well-represent the fabric of Los Angeles County. For example, 41.4% of the students are self-identified as Hispanic, 28.4% African American,

18.1% white, and 6.8% Asian (California State University, Dominguez Hills, 2014).

The founding of the university is an interesting one as it was originally planned to be housed in one of the wealthiest communities in Southern California. In August of 1965 long standing racial tensions between the police and residents resulted in one of the worst riots seen in the United States. Over \$40 million dollars in damage resulted from six days of riots and the subsequent shock over the magnitude of rage and destruction began a large-scale rebuilding effort. Moving CSUDH from a wealthy community to Carson, California, a diverse community bordering Watts was an effort to bridge the disparity in services and access to education for urban Los Angeles residents. The school remains committed to the mission of providing access for underserved students from urban areas in Los Angeles.

The Educational Administration Program (renamed the School Leadership Program in 2013) at CSUDH for aspiring leader preparation and licensure, originally followed the format and focus of many national preparation programs. Students attended the two-year traditional semester-based program and enrolled in courses studying educational law, and school and state budgeting formulas, similar to students in administrative credentialing settings all over the state. By the end of the program future school administrators were expected to have completed university coursework that gave them the knowledge of how to manage in school settings. However, none of these programs focused on the skills future leaders needed in order to be effective educational leaders of people. The work of a school leader was viewed more as school management through organization and systems rather than leadership with the focus on accountability, quality, and the need for expertise in communication and influencing and developing others. There was scant attention paid to the real-world skills needed for both the day-to-day operation of a school, the problems faced by administrators when dealing with personnel, staff, faculty, students, and parents, and the knowledge to create a strong instructional program. Courses were taught by university faculty many of whom had not graced a classroom in years and most who had never been school leaders.

Framework for Charter and Autonomous School Leadership Academy (CASLA)

In order to create a program to meet the particular needs of charter leaders in Los Angeles an extensive review of the current innovative school leadership programs ensued. Among those programs include: The Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) preparation program for their leaders, New Leaders for New Schools (now called New Leaders), Klingenstein Center at Teacher's College for independent Schools, Loyola Marymount's

University charter leaders' preparation program, and a partnership forged with University of Virginia's Curry School of Education and Darden School of Business Leaders in Education, and work with Turnaround schools. Using student focus groups, working with charter leaders and groups, visiting all of the major charter organizations and interviewing numerous charter founding leaders, an outline for the program emerged. The foundation was based on the School Leadership program but consisted of 6 leadership capacities that were drawn from studies and customized to fit charter schools' needs. These capacities consisted of: strategic, human, instructional, operational, legal/ethical, and equity. A detailed overview of these capacities can be found at <https://slpcsudh.box.com/s/yqt2olqvdpoh4esp84h4242sw5p4z6j>

The leadership framework focused on the characteristics determined by research concerning what a graduate from CASLA would look like. A CASLA graduate is "ready to lead" an autonomous-based urban school by *focusing* on Adaptive Leadership; by building relationships and the urban community; by *developing* human potential and excellence in teaching and learning; by *managing* people and known and unknown resources; and *relentlessly* focus on improving student outcomes (growth and achievement).

Developing an Authentic and Values-Based Program Structure for CASLA

In order to ensure that there is enough "class" time, CASLA participants attend a week-long "Boot Camp" in the summer. These day-long professional developments correspond to parts of the disposition and field based project classes, as well as providing an authentic start into the content courses which in turn led to authentic leadership development. Based on the work of Baan, Long and Perlman (2011), we understand authenticity as being,

true, open and honest with who you are...the more adaptable and developed a leader becomes, the greater they are able to steer through complex, participatory planning processes. Through their personal development, leaders are more able to utilize hindsight, hold multiple worldviews and perspectives, and sit with current reality while simultaneously aiming toward a desired future (p. 6).

In addition to Boot Camp, highly interactive face to face classes are scheduled one weekend every six

weeks. The CASLA students meet virtually one evening a week using video conferencing technology with instructors. Although initially virtual classes followed a traditional model, now instructors use a variety of interactive activities and technologies to promote student engagement and learning. The program is designed and delivered via (1) cohort structure with a cohort leader, (2) small learning groups in the cohort, and (3) a series of practice based assignments paralleling each course. Course content reflects the status and needs of charter schools. In addition, all assignments are uploaded to a learning management system. Besides the course content directed toward charter schools, all the part-time instructors for the CASLA courses have background in charter schools. This instructor background provides students with exposure to charter-specific practical knowledge and skills, and real examples of challenges they might face in the future.

We wrote the CASLA proposal under the assumption that entrepreneurial skills were what distinguished charter leaders from traditional public school leaders. We found that charter leaders often adopted the same systems in their CMO's that they had in their traditional public schools (top down, and directive) or they foundered as stand-alone charters. The stand-alone charter leaders needed nuts and bolts basic management and operations skills. They were idealists with strong vision but lacked the skills to implement the vision at their campuses. Given the many tasks charter teachers (aspiring leaders) were expected to perform, most showed up for class unprepared. Their principals (who served as their mentors in the program) were also consumed with day-to-day school operations and neither the principals nor teachers, knew how to work together on a research project to improve student achievement as part of the participant's field based project.

Our goal was to recruit and graduate 20 Tier 1 credential participants each year. We met or exceeded that target each year except the current 2014-2015 session when we graduated 18 instead of 20. In 2011-12, 27 participants successfully completed the program. In 2012-2013, 20 participants successfully completed the program. In 2013-14, we trained two cohorts of participants. One of these was a grant cohort and 25 participants successfully completed the program. There were 24 participants in the second cohort who successfully completed the self-sustaining "dry run" assessing project sustainability.

The program also has a component to develop sitting leaders. Initially administrative staff development consisted of coaching from other administrators and attending staff development sessions designed to fit the needs administrators expressed on yearly surveys and in school visits by CSUDH staff. As many charter administrators were fairly new to both teaching and administration, training consisted of individual "relevant topic" sessions, which changed yearly. The first year,

2011-2012, administrative attendance was poor so CASLA staff conducted follow-up surveys and school visits to diagnose the problem. We found that charter administrators were unable to leave their sites and have fewer support and co-administrative staff and were unable to mentor the teachers at their sites enrolled in the CASLA Aspiring Administrator program. In 2012-2013 the administrator-training format was revised to accommodate the particular constraints on charter school administrators. Training still included topics that new leaders needed such as Essential Elements of Instruction, Master Schedule, and Special Education, but the delivery was a more flexible hybrid of online and face-to-face meetings. This change resulted improved participation and completion of training. The use of hybrid, more formal courses for charter administrators evolved into a successful certificate program that is now part of CASLA as well as the Urban School Leaders program and Innovative School Leadership Institute. These certificates have made the CASLA grant both sustainable (incorporated into CSUDH courses) and replicable (used in other School Leadership projects). The results of the overall program and its impact on charter school leaders and their academic achievement demonstrates that in order to address the complex sustainability challenge facing school and society today, educational leaders must cultivate their own authenticity and presence.

In summary, the CASLA program consists of credential required coursework and a Residency program. During the first year of the program 2011-2012, we found that our proposed 18-month program was too long for charter participants, both because of the demands at their sites and because when they completed the program it did not coincide with the hiring calendar of a regular school year. Initially participants were to take their coursework from July 2011 through June 2012 then complete their internship and field-based project portions of their residency in the summer and fall of 2012. To accommodate the charter calendar, the field-based project completion and the internship was moved to the spring/summer 2012. To date the CASLA program has 114 successful completers. Over 60% of these graduates are in leadership roles and continue to participate in our sitting leadership development programs.

Final Reflections

The CASLA program has been in existence for five years. The feedback from our graduates and the personnel with whom they have been placed has been positive. We often hear that our former students are the best prepared for the challenges of leadership in today's schools. With all the pieces now in place, it would be easy to sit back and let the programs run themselves. However, in our culture of continuous improvement refining and

elevating our program continues to be our focus. We regularly collect data through assignments, participant feedback, and assessments to determine where and how the program might be improved. We see that the work has made a difference in the school our graduates lead. We will continue to develop and grow until all students in public schools can meet academic challenges, until all leaders can find effective means to build leadership within their schools, until all of our graduates are making positive differences in schools, until we are able to select the best candidates as future leaders, until we find better strategies for teaching our students about leadership. Furthermore, we have found that graduates who develop a reform-oriented vision of schools have shown a willingness to work tirelessly toward that vision. They are willing to lead in some of the most challenging schools and become the authentic leaders of schools today.

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Cultivating Authentic Social Justice Practices among Urban School Leaders: Innovative School Leadership Initiative

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In Los Angeles County the graduation rate from high school is reported to be between 65-69% (LAUSD, 2015a). Many believe this is an inflated statistic and that actually many schools have less than 50% graduation rate. Many urban “Other” schools are beating the odds and providing rich academics, wrap-around services and a social justice school culture where students’ needs are met and their success all but guaranteed. The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is so large that it has its own police force, district kitchens that serve over 500,000 meals a day, owns and maintains nearly as many buses as the Metropolitan City Bus Company and is a major employer in the city of Los Angeles. Since desegregation in the 1960’s billions of dollars have been invested in programs, consultants, governance restructuring and into programs, people and equipment with the hope to improve students learning in Los Angeles. In the 1990s, the Los Angeles Education Alliance for Restructuring Now (LEARN) and the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project (LAAMP) were created, giving principals even more authority to make changes in curriculum hopefully benefiting students. Regardless, student achievement failed to increase. The social issues in the county remain tremendous with over 44,000 people homeless in the county, 1 in four children live in poverty, the teenage pregnancy rate is double the national average and the high school drop out rate is reported to be between 28-49%.

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

Second largest in the nation, the Los Angeles Unified School District enrolls more than 640,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade, at over 900 schools, and 187 public charter schools. The boundaries spread over 720 square miles and include the mega-city of Los Angeles as well as all or parts of 31 smaller municipalities plus several unincorporated sections of Southern California

(LAUSD, 2015a). Founded in 1853, the District, today, counts more than 115 new schools and campuses. LAUSD School Board is comprised of 7 elected people, each representing a unique sector of the city who appoint a superintendent. The board has tried superintendents with a business background, political background, military background and with the current superintendent comes money and reform. Yet achievement continues to languish. Pilot Schools were officially launched in 2007. Pilot schools are a network of public schools that have autonomy over budget, staffing, governance, curriculum & assessment, and the school calendar. These autonomies allow them to operate with greater flexibility in order to best meet their students’ needs. These schools were created to be models of educational innovation and to serve as research and development sites for effective urban public schools (LAUSD, 2015b).

Based on LAUSD (2015b), in 2009 Pilot Schools were expanded and this reform brought an influx of charter schools’ which took control of schools. Today over 100,000 students are served by charters in Los Angeles County. The need for high school leaders to forge teams that ensure students are not only graduating from high school but leaving ready to live long and fruitful lives, high schools need to look different in the future than they do today. With California students languishing with a generation of long term English Learners (LELs) unprepared for the world of work or school, special education exit increasing, and the dropout rate unbearably high the sense of urgency is immense and yet schools are fundamentally unchanged from 50 years ago. California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) has partnered with the LAUSD to improve leadership, instruction and student achievement in 30 charter or semiautonomous schools (pilot schools) by providing comprehensive professional development to 30 principals and up to 180 teacher-leaders in their schools. Members of these school leadership teams who are aspiring leaders, as well as any charter principals who lack one, may earn administrative credentials through an alternative pathway.

Within the above context, and the leadership lessons learned from the Urban School Leaders grant (USL) and the Charter and Autonomous School Leadership grant (CASLA), the Innovative School Leadership Institute (ISLI) was born. ISLI is intended to prepare authentic school site leaders to create leadership teams to work together on customized plans in order to improve the teaching force and improve student learning. For purposes of this article we draw from a review of the research (e.g., Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011; George & Sims, 2007; Tate, 2008) to operationalize authentic leadership as an approach to leadership that develops the leader’s legitimacy through nurturing honest relationships with followers who value their input and are built on social justice and an ethical foundation. Generally, authentic leaders are positive people with truthful self-

concepts who promote openness (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Peus, Weschem Streicher, Braun, & Frey, 2012; Rego, Vitória, Magalhães, Ribeiro, & Cunha, 2013). Other research asserts that by building trust and generating enthusiastic support from their subordinates, authentic leaders are able to improve individual and team performance (e.g., Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

Innovative School Leadership Institute (ISLI)

The Innovative School Leadership Institute (ISLI) is supported by a four-year federal grant that California State University Dominguez Hills' School Leadership personnel received in 2013 to help turn around and transform 30 low performing high schools in Los Angeles County. The spirit of the grant focusses on the work with alternative low-performing high schools in underserved communities and specifically addresses the following: (1) how leaders are developed and nurtured from the perspective of authenticity and social justice as they transform the most challenging schools in Los Angeles, and (2) how the leadership framework for sitting principals is operationalized at school sites in order to transform school culture, create systems that continuously improve learning and make the job manageable as they continue to grow in leadership. From the lens of authentic leadership and social justice (Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Normore & Brooks, 2014), the frame of equity, ethics, and justice is ever present at these schools and each school has structured this lens in a different way.

ISLI is intended to address the challenges of low-performing charters and semi-autonomous high schools in LAUSD. The district has a large, growing number of charter schools and, through its Public School Choice initiative, is creating new semi-autonomous schools annually, many of them semi-autonomous pilot schools designed by teacher-leaders who lack experience as principals. We will work with schools that rank in the bottom 10% to 20% of high schools statewide. ISLI's central target is *change in teacher practice*—the most direct and sustainable way to improve student achievement. The capacity of participants is built in the components of the instructional framework: shared vision; supervision of instruction; investing in teacher quality; culture of learning, positive behavior, family, community and school engagement; systems and operation. ISLI's holistic growth model develops leadership character and skills, aligns theory and practice, and provides an authentic context in which to apply new learning. At ISLI's core is a focus on character: empathy, values, taking personal responsibility, finding solutions, and creating change from within, not without.

ISLI includes one-week summer sessions, online certificates in focused topics requested by school leaders, online book discussions, project conferences, and

practicums in which school leadership teams apply their learning by designing and implementing projects in their own schools to improve teacher practice and school climate. Additionally, principals are regularly mentored by highly trained school leaders who participated in CSUDH's two prior School Leadership Programs (SLP) - funded projects. Our prior SLP projects have informed the design of ISLI, and materials and strategies created by our prior SLP grants will be used in our proposed project. Where ISLI principals and their leadership teams complete and implement the four-year program at their schools, student achievement *will* increase, as will other important indicators of student and teacher engagement and school climate.

Leadership Framework

The ISLI Framework for leadership was crafted using sound research and standards and is a blend of nationally recognized leadership, teaching and learning, and innovative programs. ISLI's framework reflects the enormity of these leaders' charge—changing persistently underperforming schools. Traditional leadership training models are not enough to change persistently underperforming urban high schools. ISLI leaders must be innovative problem-solvers: courageous leaders who clearly know their own strengths and areas of needed growth, and take pride in being model learners for their schools.

To assure college readiness for every student on their campuses, the ISLI framework is a product of the leadership frameworks of LAUSD, New Leaders, Alliance Charter Schools, Green Dot Public Schools in partnership with the Broad Foundation, The College-Ready Promise in partnership with Gates Foundation's Intensive Partnerships for Effective Teaching, the University of Denver-Ritchie Center, Rainwater Leadership (Cheney, Davis, Garrett, & Holleran, 2010), California School Leadership Academy, Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. ISLI is a four-year school leadership program because this program must change history... the history of underperforming high school classroom can only be rewritten by changing teacher practice in every classroom (Agarwal, Bain, & Chamberlain, 2012; Alvarez & Anderson-Ketchmark, 2011; Danielson, 2007). All targeted ISLI schools have undergone major structural change—they are innovative high schools due to their organizational change: pilot schools, charter schools, partnership schools. Yet, structural change without change in teacher practice will not assure all students are college-ready. Per Cuban (2013) teacher practice "inside the black box" of the classroom must change for *true school reform* to occur. To effect this change in teacher classroom practice, ISLI principals must develop a school wide, safe, learning culture, critical on ISLI's urban campuses because

we believe that good policies and ideas take off in learning cultures, but they go nowhere in cultures of isolation.

Time is critical for these schools. The schools are blessed with enthusiastic, youthful change leaders, who are eager to reform. In addition, in 2013 LAUSD unveiled its new principal, assistant principal and teacher evaluation system that includes student achievement data. In response, ISLI training includes core management and leadership skills with central focus on becoming instructional leaders who are highly skilled in observing, supporting, conferencing, and evaluating teachers for the purpose of changing teacher practice.

Given that the culture of the school plays the dominant role in exemplary performance, ISLI leaders are trained to create and support a climate hospitable to education, one that is safe, without bullying, where empathy for the student and family and all who work in the school are evident.

Web-Based Learning for Certificates

In the prior SLP projects, principals preferred certificates focused on specific topics that are important to them over courses or traditional staff development. The first certificate was developed in 2008 at the request of high school leaders to use student data to build a student-centered master schedule. This certificate is now available in two formats: a) fully online, or b) a hybrid course with three classroom sessions and the remainder online—both requiring about 60 training hours. Participants must pass a competency assessment to earn the certificate. More than 300 leaders have taken this certificate and 95% have passed. Some certificates are designed to teach the principal, who then uses the certificate at his or her school to train faculty. On surveys, the principals gave high rating to certificates.

Certificates are required for participant seeking an administrative credential through ISLI. After taking certificates, they complete final summative assessments required for each of the related CSUDH courses for an administrative credential. A total of 9 certificates are developed for ISLI participants and all are aligned with the ISLI instructional framework including the following:

Classroom Management for Teachers

The purpose of this certification is to provide participants with the knowledge, tools, strategies, confidence, and resources necessary to develop, implement, and maintain effective classroom management strategies. Teacher (a) learn the four variables that foster effective classroom management and the relationship among those factors (teacher, instruction, learning space, and student variables); (b) learn and analyze classroom management strategies to address those factors; and, (c) accumulate resources to address a myriad of classroom

management concerns. In addition, the sessions incorporate the use interactive media, information sharing technologies, and prominent experts in the field to enhance the course content and participants' learning experiences.

iPads for Education

The iPad has the ability to make learning more engaging and memorable for students. Two information technology instructors walk participants through the first installment of the Classroom Technology Badge and teach them how to best utilize the iPad in the classroom. Topics addressed include setting up the iPad, navigation and functionality, and an exploration of the apps included with the standard iPad. This is a basic certificate designed for those with little to no experience with using an iPad and the only request is that participants have an iPad to complete the exercises and follow along with the guided content. When engaging technology meets effective teaching practices, students are positioned for success.

Designing collaborative cultures

The ability to think and act collaboratively maximizes capacity in both individuals and organizations. An expert consultant instructs participants how to cultivate their skills and abilities to develop adaptive groups in their schools. Topics addressed include: developing and engaging adaptive groups, communicative intelligence, the norms of collaboration, and conducting successful meetings. Participants engage in a combination of readings, assessments, reflection pieces, and fieldwork assignments. The only requirement is that participants are currently employed at an institution to complete the fieldwork and implement the strategies learned in the certificate.

7 essential abilities for leading

Participants begin the journey to mastering congruence between their intended message and the perceived message. They learn how to gain credibility and rapport with a variety of groups while successfully navigating the unpredictable and ever present challenges faced by principals. This course delivers the foundation skill set for communicative intelligence. Once participants develop their repertoire and gain experience applying these powerful tools in the variety of situations they encounter they become more confident, proficient, and effective in the leadership work they do.

Managing and leading – Using time and energy

Work, life balance is a concept that school leaders hear about often at work. They are seldom provided with tools, however, that help them think about how to approach a work-life balance in a practical way in everyday practices. It provides them with a plethora of opportunities to practice using time saving tools and templates to integrate a more mindful approach to leading.

Special Education (SPED) Certificate

The purpose of this course is to provide school leaders with the knowledge, tools, strategies and confidence necessary to develop quality special education programs and service delivery models that adhere to federal and state regulations to meet the needs of students with disabilities. School leaders learn fundamental laws and principles that are the foundation of effective special education programs on both school wide and individual student levels; they learn operational and financial responsibilities of school leaders versus Local Educational Agencies (LEA), Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA), and/or host districts and key concepts and best practice for immediate application to the field. In addition, the certificate incorporates the use interactive media, information sharing technologies, and prominent experts in the field to enhance the course content and participants' learning experiences.

Preliminary Program Findings

The first year of the project was devoted to planning, screening and selecting the participants for ISLI. All the participants taking part in the project in the second year are currently serving as principals or in an equivalent position, e.g. director. Beginning in year 3, teachers will enter the project and will be seeking certification to become an assistant principal or principal, and looking for a position as a principal. Consequently, data for this measure will not be available until year 4, at the earliest. Of the thirty-one principals participating in ISLI, twenty-eight of the principals have the Tier 1 Administrative Credential (eligible as an assistant principal); one is currently enrolled in a Tier 1 credential program and will complete the requirements in June 2015; one will begin the Tier 1 credential program in 2016; and one is from out-of-state and is not eligible for a California administrative credential. Information about how data have been used to inform project improvements.

The second year of ISLI has been characterized by an array of high-quality professional development, technical assistance, consulting services and other forms of personalized support for the principals participating in the Institute. Principals have had the opportunity to broaden and deepen their knowledge and skills in critical areas of leadership, and have been provided many different platforms for accessing ISLI services: week-long summer sessions, practicums, traditional large-and small-group workshops and presentations, individual and small-group consulting sessions; web-based training sessions and resources, on-site technical assistance, individualized coaching, certificate courses, book study activities, school visits and overnight retreats. All ISLI services have been directly linked to the grant's central target, which is providing principals with the knowledge and skills they

need to promote increasingly effective instruction in chronically low-performing high schools. Service providers take great effort to help principals "connect the dots" between the services they receive and how those services can help principals fulfill their responsibility for improving instruction.

Principals have commented on the many opportunities they have had to process new learning and integrate new knowledge into their set of leadership skills. During the period, October 1, 2014 -April 30, 2015, ISLI principals were immersed in the areas of effective instruction and research-based instructional strategies, Common Core State Standards, Adaptive Schools, Adaptive Leadership, Restorative Practices, Design Thinking, Communicative Intelligence and Data Analysis. Feedback from the ISLI principals indicates they have found the topics addressed during the second year of the grant to be of great value, and they value the range of services they have received. They also are appreciative of the timely and personalized support they have received, and the flexibility of the program. For example, in one case a principal participated in a large-group presentation on data analysis and then, following the presentation, requested additional technical assistance. In response to the principal's request, an ISLI service provider constructed a data profile of the school, met with the principal and his administrative team, provided the administrative team with the tools and strategies they needed to analyze and interpret the data profile, and helped the administrative team use the data profile to set a course of action.

After two years of working with 30 of the most troubled schools in LAUSD, the depth, breath, and urgency of the needs of ISLI leaders and their students are daunting. The ISLI principals have the weakest foundation of educational and leadership skills of any group of leaders we have worked with to date (USL, CASLA, and the university SLP program) yet the demands on them are the most: (1) they have more bosses and partners pulling them in multiple directions, (2) they work in a time of heighten scrutiny for autonomous schools –UTLA Teachers Union, Los Angeles County Office of Education,, (3) central leadership has changed at most charter organizations, Mayor's office, and LAUSD, and (4) they have fewer resources, greatest student needs, and highest turnover in teachers on their campus. ISLI's design to work with 30 principals and their leadership teams (180 participants) is beyond ISLI's capacity to address all project goals and objectives. Based on two years of school experience the participants are less prepared and less experienced than the usual School Leadership participant. In order to address their needs this coming year (2015-16) we are tightening the project focus both in the numbers served and objectives achieved.

ISLI Response to Challenges and Barriers

Over the course of the first two years, a number of challenges have arisen and the ISLI design team has taken timely, decisive and effective steps to address those challenges. First, it has become evident that adjustments will be required to measure the degree to which three of the project's goals have been met: "predicted growth" in academic achievement, positive change, and principal evaluation. Second, collecting baseline data, which is to be used to measure improvement, has been problematic. Due to changes in California's testing and accountability system and changes in LAUSD practices, it became impossible to determine if 85% of the schools scored at or above "predicted growth" on the targeted measures: The ISLI team, in coordination with LAUSD and charter management organizations, is researching alternative measures for determining academic growth.

In regards to *principal evaluation*, it is not possible at this time to distinguish between "effective" and "highly effective" principals. The reasons are as follows: There is great variation among principal evaluation instruments and some of the instruments do not differentiate between "effective" and "highly effective." For example, some of the instruments use a binary system that indicates only if a principal meets or does not meet the standard for principals, while other instruments provide only a numerical rating on a scale. The ISLI design team is researching strategies that will allow the project to aggregate the results of principal evaluations across schools and distinguish between effective and highly effective principals.

In addition to challenges and responses outlined above, ISLI design team continues to improve its response to other challenges: governance turnover, the resignation of the superintendent of LAUSD and the appointment of an interim superintendent, the logistics of delivering services to school sites, the difficulty of arranging for principals to attend training sessions, and the diverse needs of the principals and schools. One example of the project's effort to adjust its services to better meet the needs and constraints of the principals, is the increasing number of options for delivering training on the skills necessary to analyze and use data to improve instruction. Principals can elect to participate in a six-session web-based synchronistic course; a two-day, twelve-hour long course offered on Saturdays at the university; or individualized technical assistance at their school site. Additional options being considered include training sessions delivered to clusters of principals, based on geographical location and/or common needs.

Successful Strategies that Demonstrate Progress and Promise

Even though it is far too early in the life of the project to come to any definitive conclusions about strategies that are demonstrating promise, there are some preliminary findings that appear to have potential and deserve further attention. The ideas include: (a) connecting all services to the central idea of improving instruction (e.g., requiring services providers to connect their content to ISLI central target, building the capacity of principals to improve the effectiveness of instruction), (b) presenting principals with multiple options for accessing services (e.g., offering web-based and traditional face-to-face workshops; large group, small group and individual formats; mandated curriculum and elective curriculum; on-site technical assistance; coaching, etc.), (c) maintaining close, personal and frequent contact with each principal, and (d) emphasizing that research is the foundation for the project's design, the curriculum it provides and the services it offers (e.g., explaining the research base for the way in which the project is designed, the topics that are emphasized, the manner in which services are delivered, and so on).

Final Reflections

We have found that keeping up with the rapidly changing expectations and demands placed on school sites and the needs of our students have given us an opportunity to reflect on our ISLI program. ISLI is an evolving quest to change, improve, and adjust while still maintaining rigor within the leadership development sphere. ISLI principals and assistant principals work diligently and have begun to prove legitimacy and authenticity in how they nurture honest and trusting relationships with their teachers. They solicit and value regular input from their constituents. These leaders remain positive with truthful self-concepts and regularly promote openness (Peus, Weschem Streicher, Braun, & Frey, 2012; Rego, Vitória, Magalhães, Ribeiro, & Cunha, 2013) and are now beginning to improve individual and team performance.

As a collective endeavor of theoretical and clinical expertise, we continue to revisit and dialogue about ISLI content and delivery in relation to its authenticity, standards, research/evidence-based practices, social justice practices, relevant field experiences, and expectations of ISLI school leaders. Building and maintaining partnerships with school districts and programmatic change that reflect leadership and student demands requires extensive time and effort, flexibility and creativity to assure meaningful dialogue among all stakeholders in order to better serve our students needs in the LAUSD region. The making of an effective educational leader is an ongoing learning process and often stimulated through active-learning experiences in schools and guided reflections about these experiences. In turn, the leadership and learning continuously improves the

community of professional practice. If we are to be “the change that we seek” and survive in the current plethora of reforms, then it is incumbent upon us to monitor, recognize, embrace, and address program challenges and conflicts and respond accordingly.

Keeping with the spirit of staying proactive in connecting the worlds of research and practice will essentially determine the future direction of the ISLI program. It is our belief that educational leaders will continue to serve a critical role in molding the future of generations of children to come. ISLI holds positive policy impact for the state of California and beyond.

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SUBMISSION INFORMATION: The editors will review all articles to determine their suitability for this publication. In addition, at least two additional reviewers will conduct blind reviews of the article.

MANUSCRIPT REQUIREMENTS: Manuscripts may be submitted directly to the editors as Word files attached to e-mail. Manuscripts should be double spaced and leave wide margins. Manuscripts should not identify the author(s) of the work. A separate page should be included which provides the author(s) details, including contact information (address and e-mail). In addition, an abstract of 100-150 words should be included, as well as up to six keywords which identify the central subjects addressed in the manuscript. Diagrams, tables, and figures should be kept at a minimum, appear in black and white, and follow the manuscript in numbered order corresponding to numbered placeholders in the text. Footnotes and Endnotes should be avoided whenever possible. References should appear in the following format:

Stanley, R. J. & Hollander, M. P. (1992). Beyond the boundaries: The quest for knowledge. *Administrative Life*, 2(3), 36-49.

References and citations should be in alphabetical order, and chronological within alphabetical order. The editor reserves the right to make changes to the manuscript to ensure that it conforms to the house style. Generally, manuscripts should be between 2,500 and 5,000 words in length. Prospective author(s) must include a statement which indicates they agree to the submission of the manuscript, and that the manuscript has not been published, and is not under consideration for publication, in part or in substance, elsewhere.

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