

OFFICE OF QUALITY PROFESSIONALS AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS
Summary of State Board of Education Items
February 16-17, 2012

EDUCATOR LICENSURE

15. Approval of Request from the University of Southern Mississippi for Masters Degree Program in Educational Leadership as Recommended by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure Development

Background Information:

All current and proposed administrator preparation programs, both traditional and alternate route, have recently undergone an in depth review. Dr. Joe Murphy and Frank W. Mayborn Chair of Education, Vanderbilt Peabody University are leading the review and redesign process for Educational Leadership programs in the state. The University of Southern Mississippi submitted a proposal to Dr. Murphy to offer an Educational Leadership masters degree program that leads to administrator certification. The program was approved. Dr. Lynn House and Dr. Leslie Griffin, Dean of Education at the Delta State University, presented the program to the Educator Licensure Commission for consideration. Based on the review process and meeting program approval guidelines, the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development approved the program on January 6, 2012.

The Educator Licensure Commission is recommending that the State Board of Education approve the University of Southern Mississippi's Educational Leadership Program.

Back-up material attached

Recommendation: Approval



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN
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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AND PSYCHOLOGY

The Department of Educational Leadership and School Counseling

Educational Leadership Redesign Summary Report

Submitted to the Mississippi Department of Education

December 15, 2011

Summary

The following is a summary of the Educational Leadership Redesign Report submitted to the Mississippi Department of Education on November 15, 2011. The full report is on file with the Mississippi Department of Education.

Program Design

The 34-credit hour principal preparation program offered at The University of Southern Mississippi is accredited by The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and is guided by Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) Standards and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. Collectively, these standards and the design of the program are centered on three major elements which were conceptualized as “pillars” of the program. Program pillars include:

Pillar 1: Teaching and Learning (TAL) - focuses primarily on leadership that supports academic achievement and performance outcomes for P-12 students. This pillar drives the curriculum to prepare educational leaders to serve as instructional leaders within their schools; to lead in diverse communities; and to establish learning environments with high expectations for student learning, teacher and administrator growth, and family and community involvement.

Pillar 2: Organizational Effectiveness (OE) - focuses on leadership that supports policies and practices that promote effective supervision and management of people, processes, and resources. There is special emphasis on student learning outcomes and professional development of staff that occurs within a safe, respectful, efficient, and effective school environment. This pillar drives the curriculum to prepare educational leaders to make data-driven decisions to improve teaching and learning and to respond to the socio-political context of students’ families and communities.

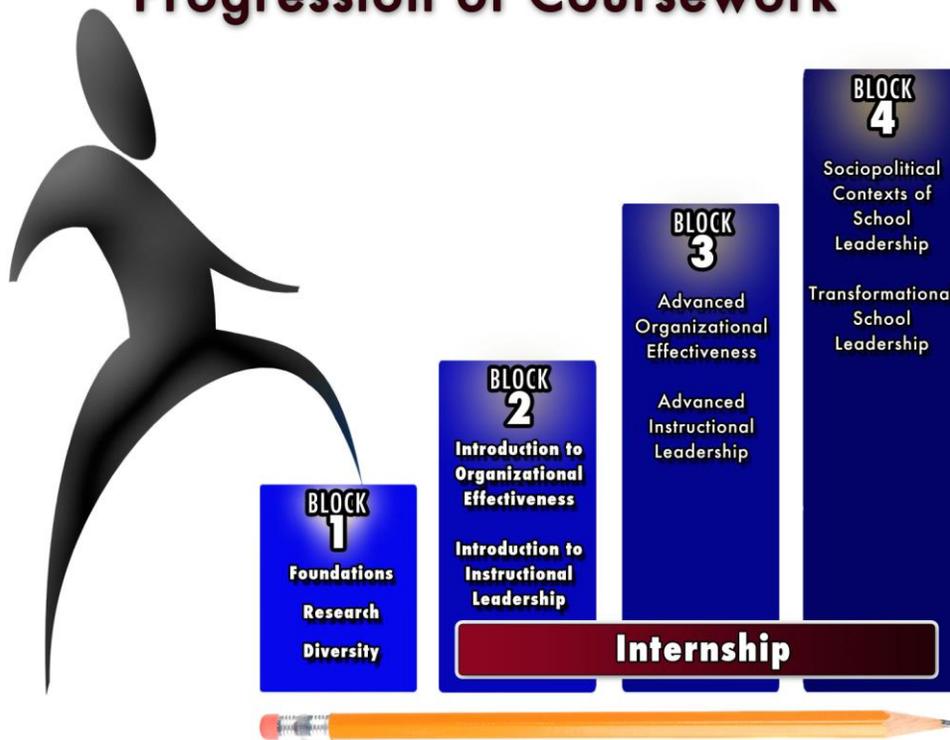
Pillar 3: Collaboration with Stakeholders (CWS) - focuses on leadership that embraces the value of collaboration and its positive impact on student learning and performance, parental and community involvement, and school improvement. This pillar drives the curriculum to prepare educational leaders to lead professional learning communities with evolving partnerships that promote continuous improvement models and implement distributed leadership.

The program is delivered in instructional blocks across four semesters. The curriculum incorporates a unique spiral design that is aligned vertically and horizontally. Skills and concepts introduced in one block are built upon in the next through coursework and an internship. The program is delivered in one of two formats: 1) totally online cohort, or 2) hybrid cohort. The hybrid cohort includes on-campus, face-to-face instruction during the summer semesters. Cohorts are limited to 20 students.

Figure 1 shows the progression of the coursework. The gradient colors and height of each block illustrate the developmental nature of the blocks, the concept of a spiraling curriculum, and integration of the internship. The Internship has similar gradient color to indicate the same developmental progression across blocks.

Figure 1: Progression of Coursework

Progression of Coursework



Block I Courses

Foundations of School Leadership - This is a foundational course designed to introduce leadership theories and foster students' understanding of leadership principles. The course stresses the impact of leadership on relationships within a school and its community with a focus on supporting children and promoting student achievement.

Measuring Student Outcomes - This is a foundational course designed to introduce students to knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to effectively assess, evaluate, and monitor student learning and development in P-12 schools.

Leading Diverse School Populations - This is a foundational course designed to introduce leadership concepts needed to promote teaching and learning in PK-12 schools in the areas of: 1) developmental learning needs of children and adults; 2) diversity; 3) effective teaching strategies; 4) instructional supervision and classroom observation techniques; and 5) school culture/climate.

Block II Courses

Introduction to School Leadership for Organizational Effectiveness - This introductory course is designed to stress concepts related to effective communication, school resources, and legal responsibilities. The students will also investigate operational procedures, current trends in education, and procedures related to student achievement and the overall success of the school.

Introduction to Instructional Leadership - This course is designed to provide an introduction to

instructional leadership knowledge and skills in the following areas: 1) curriculum development and implementation, data analysis, school improvement, and response to intervention; 2) utilizing student assessment measures, techniques for supervising instruction, and methods of clinical supervision to improve teaching and learning; and 3) effectively communicating with stakeholders, developing marker strategies, and mobilizing community resources for successful schools.

Block III Courses

Advanced School Leadership for Organizational Effectiveness - This advanced course is designed to further explore concepts related to effective communication, school resources, and legal responsibilities. The students will enhance their knowledge and skills to develop and implement operational procedures, analyze trends in organizational effectiveness, and implement procedures related to the overall success of the school and student.

Advanced Instructional Leadership - This advanced course is designed to further develop instructional leadership knowledge and skills in the following areas: 1) concepts, development, and implementation of professional learning communities; 2) utilizing student assessment measures and methods to improve teaching and learning; and 3) enhancing teaching and learning through instructional strategies and practices.

Block IV Courses

Sociopolitical Contexts of School Leadership - This course is designed to explore social and political issues related to school leadership and equip students to influence the socio-political landscape to promote school improvement and student success. Course topics include: sources of authority; empowerment; uses of power; internal and external influencing factors; and political structures.

Transformational School Leadership - This course is designed to expand upon concepts related to transforming a school. The course is a culmination of prerequisite coursework leading to the development of transformational leadership skills to promote student success. The course provides opportunities for students to demonstrate transformational leadership by applying concepts, skills and knowledge that lead to improved schools.

Internship (across Blocks II, III and IV) - An internship is incorporated into three blocks of instruction to provide experiences in actual school settings under the direction of carefully selected mentors and a university supervisor. Practical application of ELCC/ISLLC standards is woven into each course and expanded upon in school settings through the internship. Additionally, site-specific activities are accomplished through the internship that allow students to study the functions and operation of schools (at least two sites at different grade levels) and learn firsthand how decisions are made. Students are expected to actively participate in 510 internship hours or a minimum of 12 hours per week in fall and spring and 15 hours per week in summer. All mentors serving in the program must be recognized as effective school leaders and are provided intensive training prior to working with student interns.

Case Studies- In order to prepare students to appropriately respond to a wide range of situations faced by school leaders, students complete three carefully selected case studies in each course. Each case is matched with course content and is aligned with specific ISLLC standards. Collectively, the cases reflect the developmental nature of the curriculum and provide important simulations of actual school dilemmas for students to analyze and discuss.

Authentic Performance-Based Assessments

Embedded throughout the program are authentic learning experiences and performance-based assessments. In addition to individual course assessments, there are seven program assessments strategically placed within the program. These program assessments are used for program evaluation and for NCATE /ELCC and SACS accreditation purposes.

The following is a list of program assessments and their placements:

1. Action Research Project: Student Improvement Plan – End of Block II
2. School-based Strategic Plan – Introduced in Course 4 and completed in Course 6
3. School Improvement Plan – Introduced in Course 5 and completed in Course 7
4. E-portfolio – Course 9
5. Internship Assessment – end of program
6. School Leaders Licensure Exam (SLLA) – end of program
7. Graduate Survey – one year post-graduate
8. Superintendent Survey (annually)

Candidate Recruitment and Selection

Candidate Recruitment: Department faculty members routinely visit schools and attend meetings with area principals and superintendents to solicit recommendations for program candidates. The department strategically targets teachers with demonstrated leadership potential such as those teachers designated as 1) National Board Certified; 2) School or District Teacher of the Year; 3) grade level or department chair; or 4) Lead Teacher. National Board Certified teachers are identified through the NBCT directory; others are identified through district contact.

Selection: The selection process begins after candidates complete an application process through the Graduate School at The University of Southern Mississippi. Candidates complete an online application and provide their GRE scores, official transcripts, a cover letter (statement of intent), a portfolio, and three letters of recommendation (two of which must be from supervising administrators). Once the application process is complete, the applicant is scheduled for an interview and writing sample. The final admission decision is based on several factors, some of which are imposed by the Graduate School. Admission criteria are rated in the following areas:

- 1) undergraduate GPA
- 2) writing sample
- 3) interview
- 4) portfolio
- 5) letters of recommendation
- 6) GRE scores

Faculty

Faculty capacity: All regular and adjunct faculty members who teach in the Master's program have held positions as school and/or district level administrators. Department faculty members represent school leadership at the national, state, district, and school levels. Collectively, they have held administrative positions as consultant with the U.S. Department of Education, state superintendent of education (North Carolina), interim state superintendent (Louisiana), superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, special education coordinator, federal programs

director, district test coordinator, and staff development coordinator. Faculty are research active and stay engaged in professional development through participation in professional conferences, leadership in regional workshops with principals and superintendents, and commitment to professional reading in order to integrate professional literature and research into coursework. Additionally, the department engages in ongoing professional development activities. For example, thus far in 2011, faculty members have participated in an ETS workshop related to the School Leaders Licensure Assessment, technology training for online course development and teaching, and a Common Core Standards workshop supported by the Mississippi Department of Education and the Institutions of Higher Learning.

Adjuncts: Adjunct faculty members are valued colleagues and partners in the program. Adjuncts are carefully chosen and are actively serving as school or district level administrators or have recently retired from such positions. Annual training is provided for adjunct faculty members to ensure each member understands the expectations and design of the program and course objectives. Most adjuncts in the department have been engaged in the program for over 10 years.

Partners

Partners: The department benefits from partnerships in the field, within the university, and from other service organizations. A most significant partnership is established with local school districts that provide internship sites, mentors, and adjuncts. Additionally, Educational Field Experiences (EFE) provides oversight of the internship including verification of internship sites and mentors, training for mentors, and supervision of interns. Southern Regional Education Service Agency (S-RESA) and the Gulf Coast Education Initiative Consortium (GCEIC) provide opportunities for professional development and opportunities to meet with area principals and superintendents. The Dean of the College of Education and Psychology is an active partner and member of the consortia who attends monthly meetings with principals and superintendents and provides other forms of support for the program including funding for professional development. The USM Instructional Leadership Center assists with training and recruitment efforts and illustrates the connection between theory (academia) and practice (school systems).

Leadership Advisory Board (LAB) – Members of the Leadership Advisory Board represent school district partners; practicing educational administrators; representatives from S-RESA, GCEIC, the College of Education and Psychology dean's office; and program faculty. The board meets annually to discuss educational issues and challenges confronting schools, appropriate modifications to the program's strategic plan, and opportunities for program improvement.

