

Alabama Instructional Leadership University Redesign

Instructional Leadership for All Alabama Schools

Purpose

Instructional leaders play a critical role in improving the achievement of all students. It is not enough for university instructional leadership preparation programs to provide courses in the areas of school law, school finances, and organizational management. Universities must provide real life problem-based learning experiences that directly impact improvement in schools and districts.

Structure

Through collaborative K12-University partnerships, all universities in Alabama should work with local school districts to redesign their instructional leadership programs to address new state requirements. Alabama's Standards for Instructional Leaders require school leaders to be high-performing in all aspects of leadership. All new instructional leadership programs must now provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate knowledge and abilities outlined in the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders while being involved in innovative site-based learning activities. Some of those expectations include:

- Apply research-based knowledge to address real-life problems and improve practices in classrooms, schools, and districts;
- Use data to inform decisions about students, teachers, schools, and/or districts;
- Create professional learning communities in which leadership teams successfully address classroom, school, and/or district needs;
- Engage parents and community members in supporting school improvement goals and higher student achievement.

Alabama's redesign of preparation programs requires universities to meet approval expectations by 2008 for Lead Universities, 2009 for all other universities. The working timetable below has been distributed to all university programs.

September 2006 *SREB two-day training based on lessons learned from redesign efforts in other states. All 13 Alabama institutions will be invited to send a two-person team (one IHE and one LEA member). Registration and meals will be provided. (Note that additional SREB training opportunities will be added to this list when they are confirmed.)*

October 1, 2006 **Lead institutions submit draft copies of Performance Assessment Templates (to document compliance with SBE standards) and checklists indicating all courses required for program completion**

January 1, 2007 **(Spring Semester) All candidates admitted to Instructional Leadership Programs (ILPs) at the four lead institutions will have satisfied the**

collaborative admission criteria specified in the SBE standards (three years of experience, portfolio, etc.)

January 2007

Four lead institutions share what they have learned with the other nine institutions (implementing collaborative program admission procedures and the practical elements of their redesign). Other opportunities for cross-institutional sharing will be provided whenever deemed appropriate.

March 1, 2007

Lead institutions will submit revised templates (if problems were identified in the drafts submitted by October 1) and draft designs of the field components embedded in required courses and the internship

July 1, 2007

Lead institutions will submit all documents necessary (PAT, checklist, syllabi, etc.) to document full compliance with SBE standards

Other institutions will submit documentation of compliance with SBE collaborative admission criteria so that all candidates beginning programs fall 2007 and thereafter will have been admitted under the new criteria

August 2007

SDE and SREB will provide training for on-site review team members selected from a list of potential team members provided by the two agencies

Early fall 2007

On-site reviews will be conducted at the four lead institutions by teams composed of both out-of-state and Alabama educators

Fall 2007

Assistance will be provided to institutions that were not successful in documenting compliance with all SBE standards

Spring 2008

Lead institutions documenting compliance with all SBE standards (both on paper and during the on-site reviews) will implement their SBE-approved programs

July 1, 2008

Other institutions will submit all documents necessary (PAT, checklist, etc.) to document full compliance with SBE standards

Early fall 2008

On-site reviews will be conducted at the other institutions by teams composed of both out-of-state and Alabama educators

Fall 2008

Assistance will be provided to institutions that were not successful in documenting compliance with all SBE standards

Spring 2009

Other institutions that documented compliance with all SBE standards (both on paper and during the on-site reviews) will implement their new, SBE-approved programs

All universities should be working with local school districts to jointly identify potential candidates that the school districts would like to move into instructional leadership positions. Universities are urged to have candidates move through the programs as a cohort as they work together completing a series of courses that allow candidates to build upon knowledge and skills acquired in previous courses.

Process Used by Alabama to Redesign All Instructional Leadership Preparation Program

Alabama has used a very specific process to redesign all university instructional leadership programs. The following identifies the steps that are being taken to redesign all instructional leadership preparation programs and the general time periods when each has, or is to occur.

Step One: The Governor's Congress on School Leadership (2004)

Governor Bob Riley and State Superintendent Joseph B. Morton convened the Governor's Congress on School Leadership in Montgomery on November 30, 2004. Over 200 delegates from education, government, and business were in attendance. One hundred selected delegates were invited to participate in five task forces to address the development of strong leadership in Alabama schools. Task force members include participants from K-12, higher education, State Department of Education, education foundations and agencies, professional associations, business, and other community leaders.

Step Two: Creation of New Instructional Leadership Policies (2005)

As a result of the recommendations of the Governor's Congress on School Leadership, it was necessary to develop and attain approval of new policies to address the recommendations. Governor Riley and Dr. Morton appointed an Implementation Committee composed of stakeholders. This Implementation Committee was divided into subcommittees and given the charge to develop needed policies to address the recommendations of the Governor's Congress on School Leadership. The subcommittee responsible for university redesign identified the contents of a new policy that changed the instructional leadership preparation structure from one granting separate certification to supervisors and principals to a certification for Instructional Leaders. In addition, the structure changed from one requiring candidates to complete a set of courses pertaining just to supervision, administration, and/or "the principalship" to candidates completing a program that addressed all of the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders. Requirements address knowledge & abilities, dispositions, and performances for the following eight areas: Planning for Continuous Improvement, Teaching and Learning, Human Resource Development, Diversity, Community and Stakeholder Relationships, Technology, Management of the Learning Organization, and Ethics. A copy of the standards can be found at (<http://www.alsde.edu/html/SpecialLinks>).

Step Three: Creation of Guidelines and Expectations for the Redesign of the Instructional Leadership Programs (2005-2006)

The State Board of Education adopted a set of guidelines for university instructional leadership programs that was disseminated to all campuses during 2005. The guidelines are embedded in the Alabama Instructional Leadership Standards in the Code of Alabama **SUPP. NO. 05-02 290-3-3-.48**

The guidelines provide an overview of the redesign and evaluation process and communicate the fact that universities and school districts are expected to work together to redesign the programs and all redesigned programs should look different than existing programs. The following statement is provided to help campuses understand the difference.

“A recent report from the Southern Regional Education Board indicates that educational leaders must be prepared to ‘understand school and classroom practices that raise student achievement and work with faculty to implement continuous school improvement’. The report clearly demonstrates that how universities deliver instruction must change if candidates are to be provided real life problem-based learning experiences that directly impact improvement in schools and districts. Preparing a New Breed of Principals: Leadership from The University President’s Office, SREB, July, 2004.

During the external review process, the primary focus of the external evaluators will be upon the degree to which the redesigned instructional leadership programs create educational leaders who possess the knowledge and skills to create school environments in which improved student achievement and continuous school improvement occurs. In that the old certification requirements for principals and administrators lack requirements to fully address this focus, redesigned programs will not be recommended for approval if institutions simply align existing courses with the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders. More significant changes must be made to both program content and program delivery.”

The University Redesign Evaluation Process will provide additional information about campuses using current research and state standards to develop the new programs and the Process will provide a format that campuses are required to use when submitting their redesign documents to the state for review by a visiting team. The University Redesign Evaluation Process will be developed by a committee consisting of university, State Department of Education and outside experts.

“It is expected that university and school district personnel will:

- *Work collaboratively during all stages of the redesign process (program structure, curriculum, delivery, and evaluation);*
- *Jointly establish criteria for selection of candidates for the instructional leadership programs;*
- *Jointly identify instructional leadership candidates who meet the criteria and exhibit leadership characteristics;*
- *Jointly create a curriculum in which courses focus upon instruction and the improvement of student achievement. It is assumed that at least 1/3 of the curriculum will address student achievement.*
- *Jointly identify competencies that require all instructional leaders to possess knowledge and skills pertaining to literacy and numeracy;*
- *Jointly create learning activities that focus upon problem-based learning while addressing state and national instructional leadership standards;*
- *Jointly develop relevant site-based experiences and internships that allow candidates to demonstrate leadership competencies in real-life situations.”*

Step Four: Review of All Redesigned Instructional Leadership Programs (2008-2009)

To ensure a level of quality across all redesigned instructional leadership programs, the state will conduct an audit of all redesigned instructional leadership programs. The new evaluation process calls for the visiting team to be 50% in-state evaluators and 50% outside expert evaluators.

The process that will be used includes the following stages:

Stage 1: Submission of Redesign Proposals

All universities will submit proposals that meet specifications identified within the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders. All universities are required to submit their documentation according to the timetable included in this document. Further details about submission will be sent to universities from the State Department of Education as due dates approach.

Stage 2: Review of Redesign Proposals

The review process will be the first step to help create high quality programs across the state. The evaluators will use a two-stage review process to (1) assess support documents and (2) conduct face-to-face interviews with key university administrators, faculty, and school/district partners during a site visit. Prior to their arrival, the external evaluators will be provided copies of the support documents to read in advance. In addition, they will be provided copies of the guidelines, state expectations for the redesigned programs, Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders, state certification structure, and other documents used by the campuses. The evaluators will review the proposals based upon the state expectations and jointly identify questions to ask during the interviews.

Teams composed of state personnel and evaluators will conduct interviews with university/district representatives including key university administrators, university faculty, and K-12 school partners. At the conclusion of the interviews, redesigned programs will be evaluated based upon documents and responses during the interviews. The evaluators will meet to discuss their findings to ensure that consistency exists across evaluators and across programs. Consensus will be reached by the evaluators to prepare their final report.

Stage 2: Review of Redesign Proposals (Cont'd.)

The three types of recommendations made by the evaluators will be the following:

- *Recommended for Approval:* Programs aligned to the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders, exhibited many strengths, and had no stipulations.
- *Reevaluation Required After Further Redesign:* Programs that exhibit some strengths, are partially aligned with the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders but have weaknesses that can be addressed within a reasonable timetable. (will require reevaluation and another review)
- *Not Recommended for Approval:* Programs that are in need of major program redesign and can not be redesigned within a reasonable time frame to admit new students.

Although the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders will be the basis for approval, the team may make suggestions for further program improvement. Based upon information generated by the evaluators, written program reviews will be developed that provide specific feedback from the evaluators about each program. The Program Reviews will contain feedback from the evaluators in the following three areas:

A. *Program Recommendations*

Standards-based recommendations that must be met for program approval

B. *Program Suggestions*

Any suggestions that team might have. These are not binding.

C. *Commendations*

Stage 3: Evaluation of Certification Requirements

Staff from the Alabama Department of Education will examine all redesigned programs to determine if they meet new requirements regarding program admission and completion. Section II of the Program Reviews will indicate if all certification requirements are met for the redesigned programs. If certification requirements are not met, areas that need to be addressed for program approval will be identified.

Stage 4: Evaluation Reports

Final reports will be submitted to the State Superintendent of Education to make final recommendations to the State Board of Education.

Step Six: Final Approval of All Redesigned Instructional Leadership Programs

The final approval process will ensure that campuses have addressed the stipulations of the review team and that high quality programs exist across the state. All programs recommended for approval without stipulations and found to have no program admission or completion problems will be recommended to the State Superintendent of Education to present for approval to the State Board of Education

All universities that have programs that are not recommended for approval will be required to determine if they will or will not continue to pursue program approval. If they decided to pursue program approval, they will be required to have their redesign team continue to meet and make major changes to the instructional leadership proposal as recommended by the review team. Campuses will not be allowed to submit the new proposal until the next evaluation cycle during the following spring or fall and will be required to undergo the full evaluation with the visiting team.

If programs are required to meet stipulations or are found to have certification problems, universities will be required to address the areas cited and submit a program response to the State Department of Education. The State Department of Education will review the response and determine if it fully addresses the stipulations. If the response appears to meet expectations, a program review committee appointed by the State Superintendent of Education will visit the campus to ensure that the program addresses certification requirements and evaluation stipulations. If the university has addressed the stipulations required by the initial visiting team, its programs will be recommended for approval. If the university fails to address the evaluators' stipulations, campuses will be notified that they are not allowed to admit students to instructional leadership programs. Universities may continue to redesign, ask for technical assistance from the State Department of Education and apply for approval in the next approval cycle.