Agenda Topic: Keller Graduate School of Management Request for Initial Institutional Operating Authority and Program Approval

Materials: Keller Graduate School of Management: Comments to State Certification Board Recommendations (Under Separate Cover)

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Purpose of Agenda Item

- To consider the request of the Keller Graduate School of Management for initial institutional recognition to operate an approved program for preparation of principals.

Expected Outcome(s) of Agenda Item

- Board action on the proposed policy.

Background Information

The Keller Graduate School of Management, located in Oakbrook Terrace, has submitted a proposal for the preparation of school principals through a program that combines educational leadership and the principles of management. This program was designed with the assistance of many leading educators, including representatives of the Illinois Principals Association. Candidates will earn an MBA and qualify for an Administrative (Type 75) certificate with a principal’s endorsement through completion of 64 quarter hours of graduate credit. The program includes a capstone course and comprehensive project that helps the candidate integrate knowledge and skills acquired in previous activities. The candidate must also complete a supervised internship in the schools.

A six-member NCATE trained team of State Board staff and both local and higher education representatives conducted a four and one-half day on-site review of Keller and its proposed program last September. The team identified both strengths and weaknesses in the program design, concluding that the institution and its proposed program should be given conditional approval.
The State Teacher Certification Board reviewed the written materials in December 2000. That Board concluded that the proposal was not strong enough to warrant approval and the members therefore voted to deny operating authority or program approval.

As permitted by rule, Keller then submitted an appeal of the Certification Board decision to the State Superintendent. The appeal materials provided additional information and clarification about design elements that had been of concern to the Certification Board. This included the conceptual framework, the competencies expected of candidates, plans for fieldwork and assessment of candidates.

The next official step in this process was a recommendation from the State Superintendent to the State Board of Education. However, because of the importance of a decision to grant initial operating authority, the Superintendent asked the members of the Certification Board to review the appeal materials, his conclusions and his proposed recommendation to the State Board for conditional approval of the program.

The Superintendent met with the Certification Board on Friday, March 9. Representatives from the Keller Graduate School of Management participated in the discussion, providing in-depth responses to questions and issues. This process resulted in further clarification of the program design and alleviated many of the concerns raised by the Certification Board during its review. Of particular importance was the assurance provided by Keller that the program will provide a balance of educational leadership and management training.

As a result of the discussion, the Certification Board voted to endorse the Superintendent’s proposed recommendation to the State Board, with two modifications that were agreeable to the Superintendent.

The Certification Board’s commitment to making an informed decision in this matter was evident in both its original deliberations and the subsequent discussion with Keller representatives and the State Superintendent. The questions raised through the Board’s focus on the standards resulted in clarification of the intent of the proposed program and of the plans that Keller had made, but had not clearly presented in the written materials.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

The Keller Graduate School of Management has developed an innovative principal preparation program blending educational leadership theory and management theory and practice. This program will address a growing area of shortage in Illinois and its design has been developed in collaboration with some of the leading educators in our state. Its intent is to provide its graduates with cutting-edge knowledge and skills that will equip them to lead the complex systems that are today’s schools.
Through its original submission, the site visit, the appeal materials and the recent discussion with the Certification Board, Keller officials have demonstrated that the proposed program and the plans for implementation are sufficiently aligned with the standards to warrant giving the institution an opportunity to move forward.

Therefore, with the concurrence of the State Teacher Certification Board, I recommend that the State Board of Education grant initial operating authority to the Keller Graduate School of Management and give conditional approval to its principal preparation program, with the following stipulations:

1. Following submission of the annual report that is required of all institutions that prepare educational personnel, State Board staff will visit the institution to review overall progress, as well as specific progress in the areas of weakness identified by the Certification Board.

2. Representatives of the Keller Graduate School of Management will meet with the Certification Board in October 2002 to explain how the institution has addressed concerns identified in the Certification Board review as “met”, “not-met” or “met with weakness.”

3. Representatives of the Keller Graduate School of Management will return to the State Teacher Certification Board within three years to present evidence that the program is meeting the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards.

**Next Steps**

Pending Board approval of the recommendation, staff will immediately notify Keller about the Board’s action. The institution hopes to begin the program in September 2001.