

## Leading for Early Success: Building School Principals' Capacity to Lead High-Quality Early Education

### Executive Summary

Decades of research find that effective school leadership and access to high-quality early education are two of the most important determinants of educational outcomes. School principals affect both teacher and student performance and play an important role in turning around troubled schools. High-quality education, from prekindergarten (pre-K) through third grade builds foundational knowledge and skills that prepare students for long-term success.

Although governors have acted in recent years to address these two issues separately, efforts to harness the potential of school leaders to promote high-quality education for young children have been more limited. Most states' principal preparation systems could be improved to better equip elementary school principals to evaluate pre-K through third-grade (P-3) teachers, support improvements in teaching and learning, and guide teachers in using curricula and assessments in the earliest grades. Recent state policy developments to expand state-funded pre-K education and reform teacher evaluation have increased the urgency for these policy changes.

Governors in many states are already taking action to better prepare and support principals in becoming instructional leaders. These larger reforms present state leaders with an opportunity to further build elementary school principals' capacity to promote high-quality early education. Specific steps state leaders can take include:

- Redefining what effective elementary school principals should know and be able to do through improved state leader standards and licensure requirements;
- Developing more stringent state accreditation criteria for principal preparation programs, including requiring such programs to embed early childhood education content; and
- Supporting professional development opportunities for existing principals on how to promote quality P-3 instruction.

This issue brief makes the case for why governors should consider building elementary school principals' capacity as P-3 leaders and outlines specific state policy strategies for accomplishing this goal. To illuminate how this works in practice, a case study from **Illinois** (see page 8) highlights how this state is including early learning content in the principal preparation process.

### Effective School Leaders Are Critical for Student Success

School principals play a critical role in developing a school's culture, guiding classroom instruction, and promoting student success. Research shows that principals account for at least a quarter of a school's effect on student learning, second only to the role of classroom teachers.<sup>1</sup> A recent study found that an effective principal can bring about a two-

<sup>1</sup>Robert Marzano, Timothy Waters, and Brian A. McNulty, *School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005).

to seven-month improvement in average student achievement on standardized tests.<sup>2</sup> These findings may even understate the effect of principals, because school leaders also play an important role in hiring, supporting, and retaining effective teachers. Studies have also found that strong leadership is particularly influential in the most troubled schools.<sup>3</sup>

Recent state policy changes have made it urgent for states to supply their schools with a steady stream of effective school leaders. A total of 49 states and territories have now adopted the kindergarten through 12th grade (K–12) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in mathematics and English language arts, raising the bar for student achievement and calling on principals to be instructional leaders. In addition, more than 20 states recently passed laws restructuring teacher evaluation systems. These statutes require principals to develop expertise in evaluating and supporting teacher effectiveness through rigorous classroom observations.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, many states are developing new policies to build a pipeline of effective principals who are not simply school managers but leaders in promoting high-quality teaching and learning. Because of principals' effect on both teacher practice and student success, these policy reforms can be an efficient and fairly low-cost way for policymakers to boost student achievement at scale. Several states have taken legislative action in recent years to promote principal

effectiveness by strengthening preparation programs, principal recruitment, selection, retention, professional development, and performance evaluation.<sup>5</sup>

## **Elementary School Principals Need Capacity to Lead High- Quality Pre-K Through Third- Grade Education**

As states consider comprehensive reforms to school leadership policies, policymakers have an opportunity to build elementary school principals' capacity to become P–3 leaders. Over the past few decades, a large body of research has demonstrated that high-quality early education promotes long-term student achievement and reduces the need for more costly interventions later in students' education. For example, students who attend high-quality pre-K classrooms are less likely to require special education services and are more likely to graduate from high school.<sup>6</sup> Effective early elementary classroom instruction builds on students' gains from early childhood programs and provides foundational academic and social–emotional knowledge and skills that are critical for later student achievement.<sup>7</sup>

In recent years, elementary school principals have taken on a greater role in administering pre-K classrooms and promoting a high-quality P–3 learning

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<sup>2</sup> Gregory F. Branch, Eric A. Hanushek, and Steven G. Rivkin, "Measuring the Impact of Effective Principals," *Education Next* 13 no. 1 (2013), <http://hanushek.stanford.edu/publications/school-leaders-matter-measuring-impact-effective-principals>.

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Leithwood et al., "How Leadership Influences Student Learning," Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 2004, <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/key-research/Pages/How-Leadership-Influences-Student-Learning.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> Sara Mead, "Recent State Action on Teacher Effectiveness: What's in State Laws and Regulations?" Bellwether Education Partners, August 2012, <http://bellwethereducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/RSA-Teacher-Effectiveness.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Sara Shelton, "Preparing a Pipeline of Effective Principals: A Legislative Approach," National Conference of State Legislatures, September 2012, <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/state-policy/Pages/Preparing-a-Pipeline-of-Effective-Principals-A-Legislative-Approach.aspx>.

<sup>6</sup> W. Steven Barnett, "Preschool Education and Its Lasting Effects: Research and Policy Implications," Education Public Interest Center and Education Policy Research Unit, Rutgers University, 2008, <http://nieer.org/resources/research/PreschoolLastingEffects.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Ruby Takanishi and Kimber L. Bogard, "Effective Education Programs for Young Children: What We Need to Know," Society for Research on Child Development, *Child Development Perspectives* 1 no. 1 (2007), [http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Takanishi\\_Bogard\\_CD%20Perspectives.pdf](http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Takanishi_Bogard_CD%20Perspectives.pdf).

continuum. In 2011, 39 states supported state-funded pre-K for more than 1.3 million 3- and 4-year-old children—nearly double the number of students served in 2003.<sup>8</sup> Public schools serve approximately two thirds of these students.<sup>9</sup> Many public schools also house pre-K classrooms supported with federal special education funds, Head Start grants, Title I monies, or local funds. Finally, a small but growing number of elementary schools now partner with early learning programs in their communities to promote aligned P–3 curricula, coordinate professional development opportunities, and improve children’s transitions to kindergarten.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the potential for early learning to support student success and the expansion of state pre-K programs, few elementary school leaders have professional backgrounds or training in early education.<sup>11</sup> As a result, principals often are not well equipped to evaluate P–3 teachers, support improvements in teaching and learning, or guide teachers in using curricula and assessment in the earliest grades. Because the long-term effect of early education depends on high-quality teaching, it is critical that elementary school principals have the capacity to boost P–3 teacher effectiveness. Recent observational studies of P–3 classrooms found that the overall quality of teaching needs significant improvement, especially in the area of instructional support to students.<sup>12</sup>

Expertise in early education can also help elementary school principals avoid practices that can be harmful to early learning. Principals without appropriate training may unknowingly promote classroom strategies that mimic those used to teach older students but are developmentally inappropriate for younger students, for example, requiring pre-K children to sit for extended periods of time or eliminating learning activities that are based on play.<sup>13</sup> Without fully understanding the critical contribution of early education, principals can also make shortsighted decisions about placement of their most effective teachers. For example, a recent study found that many elementary school principals are shifting their highest-performing teachers to grades three, four, and five, when student performance is measured through standardized tests.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, elementary school principals are currently leading implementation of several education policy reforms that demand high-quality instruction in the early grades. Those principals will need early education expertise to effectively carry out:

- The implementation of the CCSS, including new third-grade standardized tests, that will be aligned to those standards;
- State laws promoting third-grade reading proficiency, recently passed in at least 22 states. Many of these states now require districts to intervene with struggling readers in kindergarten

<sup>8</sup> W. Steven Barnett et al., “The State of Preschool 2011: State Preschool Yearbook,” National Institute for Early Education Research, 2011, <http://nieer.org/publications/state-preschool-2011>.

<sup>9</sup> W. Steven Barnett et al., “The State of Preschool 2006: State Preschool Yearbook,” National Institute for Early Education Research, 2006, <http://nieer.org/publications/state-preschool-2006>.

<sup>10</sup> Sara Mead, “PreK–3rd: Principals as Crucial Instructional Leaders,” Policy to Action Brief No. 7, Foundation for Child Development, April 2011, <http://fcd-us.org/resources/prek-3rd-principals-crucial-instructional-leaders>.

<sup>11</sup> Sara Mead, April 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Jennifer LoCasale-Crouch et al., “Observed Classroom Quality Profiles in State-Funded Pre-Kindergarten Programs and Associations with Teacher, Program, and Classroom Characteristics,” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2007), <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0885200606000366>.

<sup>13</sup> Pamela M. Ehrenberg, Adele Robinson, and Kyle Snow, “Early Grades, Early Childhood,” *American School Board Journal*, November 2012, [http://mydigimag.rtd.com/display\\_article.php?id=1222403](http://mydigimag.rtd.com/display_article.php?id=1222403).

<sup>14</sup> Sarah C. Fuller and Helen F. Ladd, “School-Based Accountability and the Distribution of Teacher Quality Among Grades in Elementary School,” National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, Duke University, April 2012, <http://www.caldercenter.org/publications/upload/wp75.pdf>.

through third-grade classrooms and retain third-graders who are not reading at grade level;<sup>15</sup>

- New high-stakes teacher evaluation laws, which require principals to play a greater role in evaluating and promoting effective teaching practices for all teachers; and
- New statewide kindergarten readiness assessments, prompted in many states by Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge grants, designed both to measure children’s school readiness and inform elementary school instruction.<sup>16</sup>

Elementary school principals who can effectively promote high-quality P–3 instruction can ensure that those policy reforms boost student success early on and decrease the need for later remediation.

## State Policy Opportunities to Strengthen Principals’ Early Learning Expertise

To build the capacity of both current and aspiring new elementary school principals as P–3 leaders, state policymakers can take the following three actions:

### *Redefine What Elementary School Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do Through Improved State Leader Standards and Licensure Requirements*

States have the authority to define what effective elementary principals should know and be able to do through school leader standards. State standards define the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors of successful principals and serve as a foundation for a

system that promotes better-qualified school leaders. Forty-seven states report using school leader standards. Those states have either adopted or modified standards developed by the Interstate Leaders Licensure Consortium or developed their own standards.<sup>17</sup>

According to a report from the George W. Bush Institute, however, standards in 24 of those states reflect an antiquated notion of a principal as an administrative building manager and do not include competencies critical for promoting growth in student learning.<sup>18</sup> As states consider revisions of their standards to reflect principals’ role as instructional leaders, policymakers have an opportunity to redefine what elementary school principals need to know and be able to do to support high-quality P–3 instruction.

States also set the requirements for licensure, a prerequisite for all principals in public schools. States currently have a range of different types of licenses for school leaders. For example, several states have an “administrator” license for all school and district leaders; other states have separate licensure routes for principals and superintendents.<sup>19</sup> For the purpose of licensure, most states define principals as K–12 school leaders, but a few states, including **Arizona**, **Delaware**, **Illinois**, and **Virginia**, have expanded the scope of school leader licensure to include pre-K.

State policymakers can act to embed early childhood education content throughout the principal licensure process. To receive a license in most states, aspiring principals typically need to earn a master’s degree, teach in a classroom for a certain number of years,

<sup>15</sup> Stephanie Rose and Karen Schimke, “Third Grade Literacy Policies: Identification, Intervention, Retention,” (Denver, CO: Education Commission on the States, 2012), <http://www.ecs.org/html/Document.asp?chouseid=10154>).

<sup>16</sup> Albert Wat et al., “Kindergarten Entry Assessment: Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Information,” BUILD Initiative, 2012, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Kerri Briggs et al., “Operating in the Dark: What Outdated State Policies and Data Gaps Mean for Effective School Leadership,” George W. Bush Institute, 2013, <http://www.bushcenter.org/alliance-reform-education-leadership/arel-state-policy-project>.

<sup>18</sup> Kerri Briggs et al., 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Carla Toye et al., “Key State Education Policies on PK-12 Education: 2006,” Council of Chief State School Officers, 2007, <http://programs.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/KSP%202006%20Final%20rev%20100207.pdf>.

complete an accredited principal preparation program, and pass a state exam.<sup>20</sup> State leaders may consider whether early childhood teaching degrees and teaching or administrative experience in early education programs can count toward licensure and whether to add early education content to the licensure exam. In **Illinois**, for example, teachers with early childhood teaching certificates are eligible to become principals, and a revised licensure exam will include pre-K through 12th-grade (P–12) content. (For more information, see the case study on page 8.)

***Develop More Stringent State Accreditation Criteria for Principal Preparation Programs, Including Requirements That Programs Embed Content on P–3 Pedagogy***

State policymakers also set the criteria for accreditation of principal preparation programs and manage the process to approve or deny program accreditation. States typically evaluate principal preparation programs based on their overall design, coursework content, and methods of delivery.<sup>21</sup> Some states are overhauling their accreditation criteria to address concerns that current standards lack rigor and sufficient emphasis on instructional leadership skills.<sup>22</sup> In doing so, policymakers have an opportunity to include requirements for preparation programs to offer early education content.

Through recent legislation, states such as **Illinois**, **Kentucky**, **Louisiana**, **Mississippi**, and **New York** have instituted more stringent accreditation criteria requiring certain types of coursework, internships, and partnerships with districts. Those states have included a “sunset provision” for existing programs, requiring them to reapply for accreditation under the new

standards.<sup>23</sup> As part of the process of redesigning its accreditation process, **Illinois** has mandated that all preparation programs integrate early childhood education in both their coursework and field experiences. (For more information, see the case study on page 8.)

***Support Professional Development Opportunities for Existing Principals on How to Promote High-Quality P–3 Instruction***

Finally, state leaders can act to ensure that existing principals have opportunities to learn how to effectively support high-quality P–3 education. For example, through professional development initiatives in **Maryland** and **New Jersey**, state leaders from early childhood and K–12 sectors have recently come together to promote research-based strategies for effective classroom practices from pre-K through the early elementary grades.

With support from its Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge grant, **Maryland** is preparing to launch “Early Learning Leadership Academies,” a series of professional development opportunities for administrators and teachers from Title I school feeder areas. Teams from each school will consist of the principal, an early childhood teacher, other school-based instructional leaders, and teachers or directors from community-based early childhood programs that feed into the school. This training will support school and program leaders in better aligning pre-K curricula with the CCSS and effectively implementing the CCSS in the early grades through developmentally appropriate instruction.

Since 2009, **New Jersey** has had in place an innovative partnership composed of the state department of

<sup>20</sup> Gretchen Rhines Cheney and Jacquelyn Davis, “Gateways to the Principalship: State Power to Improve the Quality of School Leaders” Center for American Progress, October 2011, <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/10/pdf/principalship.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Arthur Levine, “Educating School Leaders,” The Education Schools Project, 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Sara Shelton, 2012.

education, a statewide children’s advocacy organization, and the state principals’ and superintendents’ association that has coordinated a training series on P–3 leadership. Six hundred district administrators have attended training on early learning topics such as teacher quality, comprehensive learning standards, family engagement, assessment, and how to support children’s social–emotional development. Many administrators attending the training did not have pre-K classrooms in their buildings but sought opportunities to build partnerships with early learning programs based in their communities.<sup>24</sup> The majority of participants report that, since attending in the training, they have increased communication with community-based early childhood programs and planned new initiatives focused on P–3 education.

## Leading to Action

The research is clear that both school leadership and early education play a role in promoting student success. In taking these three policy actions, policymakers have the opportunity to both maximize the impact of state pre-K investments and support early elementary school teachers in building a strong foundation for students’ long-term success. Given principals’ broad influence on teacher and student performance, changes in school leadership policies can be an efficient and relatively low-cost strategy to boost students’ success.

As key drivers of such reform initiatives as implementing the CCSS, strengthening teacher evaluation policies, and raising third-grade reading proficiency, governors play an important role in moving this policy agenda. Governors can act to bring about change by promoting legislative or regulatory changes, building public awareness of the importance

of P–3 school leadership, and convening relevant stakeholders across systems.

Governors and their staff can use the following policy questions to guide discussions about a state-specific approach to building elementary school principals’ capacity as P–3 leaders.

### *Assessing the Current Policy Context*

1. What is the current early learning state policy context? For example:
  - Does the state fund pre-K programs?
  - To what extent do elementary school principals oversee pre-K classrooms?
  - To what extent are principals equipped to support P–3 teachers?
2. Have policy leaders and practitioners identified a need to strengthen state policies addressing principal preparation and professional development? Are efforts to change these policies underway?
3. To what extent can state leaders embed policies to strengthen principals’ early learning expertise in more comprehensive school leadership reforms?

### *Policy Change and Implementation*

1. Which policy levers show the greatest promise in strengthening P–3 school leadership (e.g., standards, licensure, preparation program accreditation, professional development)? What changes require legislative approval? Are new or reallocated resources required?
2. How can state agencies support effective implementation of school leadership policy changes? Do any existing principal preparation programs in the state already provide best practices in teaching early education content that could be shared more widely? How would state agencies measure progress and

<sup>24</sup>Cynthia Rice and Vincent Costanza, “Building Early Learning Leaders: New Jersey’s PreK–3rd Leadership Training,” Advocates for Children of New Jersey and New Jersey Department of Education, March 2011, [http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?\\_nfpb=true&\\_ERICExtSearch\\_SearchValue\\_0=ED519246&ERICExtSearch\\_SearchType\\_0=no&accno=ED519246](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED519246&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED519246).

success in implementing these policy changes?

***Connecting to Other Policy Priorities***

1. What are your state's broader education reform priorities, and how might principals with stronger early learning and child development backgrounds support those goals? For example, do elementary school principals need greater early learning expertise to effectively implement new teacher evaluation policies or promote third-grade reading goals?
2. Is the state already pursuing a P-3 reform agenda (e.g., aligning early learning standards with the CCSS, developing a kindergarten entry assessment)? To what extent can state leaders connect policies to strengthen principals' early learning expertise to these policy reforms?

***Building a Coalition***

1. Who are the key leaders who may support or oppose these policy changes? What role can the governor play in convening a coalition of these leaders, addressing any objections, and raising public awareness of this issue?

## Embedding Early Learning in Principal Preparation Reforms: A Closer Look at Illinois' Experience<sup>25</sup>

In 2010, Illinois passed P.A. 0903, a comprehensive principal preparation reform law, to better prepare effective instructional leaders. Through the implementation of the law, Illinois will integrate early childhood education into its system of principal preparation. Key components of the law include a specific licensure process for P–12 principals and new accreditation criteria for principal preparation programs.

- The Licensure Process for P–12 Principals.** Through P.A. 0903, Illinois replaced its K–12 administrator license with a P–12 school principal license. The new license recognizes the unique competencies of school principals and fully includes pre-K in the scope of principal licensure. Through a revamped licensure process for P–12 principals, the state will accept early childhood teaching degrees and experience as prerequisites and will include early childhood content in a soon-to-be revised licensure exam. To differentiate the competencies and roles of different types of educational leaders, Illinois has also developed a separate superintendent license and a “teacher-leader” license for teachers who want to gain leadership expertise, but do not aspire to become principals.
- New Accreditation Criteria for Principal Preparation Programs.** The law requires that all principal preparation programs redesign their programs and reapply for accreditation under more stringent accreditation criteria. Those criteria include competency-based internship experiences, more meaningful partnerships with school districts to provide

candidates with field experience, required topics for coursework, rigorous candidate selection and staffing requirements, and participation in a performance-based evaluation process.

As part of the redesign, the state requires preparation programs to offer early childhood content in their curricula and provide internship programs that expose principal candidates to instructional activities at all grade levels, from pre-K to 12th grade. The state department of education has included benchmarks specific to early learning as part of the outcome measures for candidates' performance-based internship experiences. Finally, early learning content will be included on the state's new two-day certification exam.

Those policy changes are the result of a five-year effort led by an informal coalition of state agency leaders, teacher unions, institutions of higher education, legislators, foundations, and K–12 and early childhood advocacy organizations. Leaders from those groups came together to promote more rigorous standards and accountability in the state's principal preparation system, as well as a stronger focus on instructional leadership. To build consensus for change, the Illinois State Board of Higher Education led a commission on state leadership preparation; the legislature convened a task force to develop policy recommendations, and state-convened “redesign teams” drafted new accreditation criteria.

Early childhood leaders were key participants in those groups and throughout the policy-development process. Their advocacy for integrating early learning in principal preparation policies received a boost in 2006, when Illinois passed a law setting a goal for universal voluntary pre-K for three- and four-year-old children and expanded funding for an existing pre-K program for at-risk children. In the context of a growing pre-K presence in public schools,

policymakers agreed that it was important to include pre-K in the scope of new school leadership policies. Illinois' new law requires that even aspiring middle and high school principals gain exposure to early childhood education through coursework and field experience. By understanding appropriate learning and development across the age span, Illinois leaders believe that these principals will be better positioned to understand how students' past experiences contribute to their current academic performance. Policymakers and advocates also found that leaders of all types of schools can learn from and adapt best practices from early education, including a strong focus on promoting healthy social-emotional development and effective strategies to engage families and communities. Finally, some pre-K classrooms in Illinois are located in middle or high schools, either because of space constraints or because they serve as vocational training sites for high school students. In these cases, a middle or high school principal may be responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of pre-K teachers.

Illinois is currently moving forward with implementation of the law. A new accreditation review panel under the Illinois State Board of Education is currently examining documentation of principal preparation programs' redesigned approach against state requirements. As of spring 2013, more than 20 of those programs have received accreditation, while others are still under review. Illinois previously had 31 principal preparation programs, but several of these programs do not plan to reapply under the more rigorous requirements. In the past, far more individuals graduated from these programs than there were principal openings. Policy leaders are hopeful that fewer programs of high quality will provide

more rigorous support to aspiring new school leaders, who will prove to be more effective than principals trained in programs accredited under the older standard.

Newly accredited preparation programs are currently exploring strategies to effectively include early learning content in both coursework and field experiences. Rather than simply adding courses in early childhood development, several higher education institutions are working to integrate early learning in courses across a range of topics. The University of Illinois, Chicago (UIC), in partnership with Chicago Public Schools, was an early adopter of that approach. Beginning in 2008, UIC developed an "inclusion default" policy, in which it integrated early learning content into all coursework and fieldwork, unless there was a compelling reason not to do so. A case study on UIC revealed that making those changes required new or retrained faculty, changes to curriculum, tools (for example, videos of high-quality early childhood classroom approaches), as well as partnerships with elementary schools that offer exemplars of early learning practice.<sup>26</sup>

Other Illinois universities have developed different strategies to include early learning content in their principal preparation programs. For example, Illinois State University (ISU) now requires that all principal candidates take a course on brain development from birth through adolescence. At Loyola University, faculty in the early childhood department helped design the educational leadership courses and co-teach the early childhood content.<sup>27</sup> Finally, ISU's Center for Education Policy has developed model curricula on topics such as instruction and assessment across the learning continuum and building effective

<sup>25</sup> From information shared at NGA Center Learning Lab, "Preparing Effective Pre-K–12 School Leaders: Learning from the Illinois Experience," Chicago, Illinois, November 28–29, 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Lisa Hood et al., "Leading for Learning: Preparing School Leaders to Align Early Childhood and K–12 Education Systems" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration Annual Convention, Pittsburgh, PA, November 16, 2011), [http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p523316\\_index.html](http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p523316_index.html).

<sup>27</sup> Robin Miller Young, Erika Hunt, and Lisa Hood, "The Leadership to Integrate the Learning Continuum (LINC) Tool Kit: Redesigning Principal Preparation Programs Across Four Illinois Institutions," Center for the Study of Education Policy, Illinois State University, 2013.

partnerships that are available free of charge to all universities in the state.

Although implementation of P.A. 0903 is still in its early stages, two emerging developments may have implications for early education. First, Illinois will soon roll out an outcomes-based principal evaluation process that will enable the state to evaluate the success of principal preparation programs based on program changes as well as placement rates, teaching, and student achievement outcomes. The process may offer opportunities to monitor programs' success in preparing elementary school principals and improving

student outcomes by third grade. In addition, the state has plans to revisit the processes required for the renewal of principal licenses and professional development offerings for existing principals. State leaders also plan to include early learning in these strategies.

***Lessons Learned from Illinois***

Illinois policy leaders report on several lessons learned from their efforts to reshape their principal preparation and include early education content:

- Build on the momentum of larger state efforts to reform school leadership policies, and look for opportunities to include a focus on early learning.
- Transforming higher education is challenging and requires a broad coalition dedicated to changing policy and its successful implementation to better serve students. Key partners may include the governor's office, state K–12 and higher education agencies, institutions of higher education, early education leaders, teacher unions, legislators, and foundations.
- Fully embed early education in principal preparation policies and their implementation, not as an “add-on” but integrated throughout coursework, field experiences, and licensure processes.

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*May 2013*

The NGA Center thanks the Robert R. McCormick Foundation for their support of this publication.