

PUBLIC EDUCATION LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Partnership for Knowledge Entrepreneurship
The Catalysts for Intellectual Capital 2020
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Abstract

Public Education Leadership Development throughout the years has become vital to the success of public schools. The increased emphasis on standards and accountability as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 has also increased the need for strong and effective leadership in public education. In the coming years, many veteran educational leaders across New York State and specifically here in the Greater Binghamton Area will retire taking with them many years of experience and knowledge. The next generation of leaders must possess the necessary professional knowledge and experience to become strong and effective leaders. There are currently a number of existing programs and partnerships that have been established to address these needs. Maintaining and expanding these programs will be vital to the success in confronting the challenges ahead for years to come.

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Binghamton Keywords: Binghamton University School of Education (SOE); Broome-Tioga BOCES; Broome County School Districts; Southern Tier Leadership Academy

I. INTRODUCTION

The constantly evolving knowledge based economy has and continues to affect various sectors of the economy. One of the most affected is the human resource sector. As Anthony Carnevale states, "with the retirement of the baby boomers and increases in jobs requiring college level knowledge and skills, the nation faces a prospective shortage of workers needed for economic growth and competitiveness" (Carnevale vii). The human resource needs pertaining to public education in particular have a universal effect on other human resource needs as these individuals are responsible for educating what will be the next generation of workers. Educational leadership is the most important human resource need relating to public education. Through research by Carnevale and others, this paper will demonstrate the importance of the human resource needs surrounding educational leadership in public education with its connection to existing models to address the issue at Binghamton University, and provide recommendations for future partnerships or programs that will provide stronger professional relationships between Binghamton University and the Greater Binghamton economy.

The importance of strong educational leadership in public education is now more important than ever. Administrators are faced with the challenging role of ensuring that all students receive the necessary instruction to prepare them for further education or employment. It is this that Carnevale states, "is imperative to improve knowledge and skill

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levels to meet high standards, and significantly higher rates of associate and baccalaureate degree attainment (Carnevale viii). He goes on further to state, "such reform will require public investment, curriculum reform, and educational efficiencies" (Carnevale viii). While the topics of investment and curriculum reform are of vital importance to the success of public education, this paper will focus on Carnevale's final point of educational efficiencies as it is ultimately what all Administrators are tasked with and held responsible for.

In addition to their role of being responsible for the daily business operations of the district, Superintendents are also considered the top educational leaders of their individual school districts. Their decisions and performance in this capacity have a lasting impact on student achievement. As a report from the Wallace Foundation states, "effective leadership is vital to the success of the school, there is a slim chance of creating and sustaining high-quality learning environments without a skilled and committed leader to help shape teaching and learning" (Wallace 3). With the increased emphasis on student achievement on standardized testing as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act, it is now more important than ever for school leaders to develop strong and effective professional development programs so that educators are properly preparing their students for success. As the Wallace Foundation article later states, "a key prerequisite of leader assessment is a strong focus on instruction and behaviors most likely to drive better learning" (Wallace 6).

As the Carnavale quote stated earlier demonstrates, public education is not immune from the effects of the retirements of the baby boom generation. The large amounts of retirements will most certainly effect public education as many educational leaders retire and newer and younger administrators take over for the experienced veterans. According to statistics obtained from the New York State Education Department website, the majority of school district Superintendents are in the age range of 41 years or older. In Broome County alone there is only one Superintendent in the third age range of 33-40. All others representing the majority of over 85 percent are 49 years old or older. In the neighboring counties such as Delaware, Cortland, Chenango, and Tioga the age distributions are very similar. The vast majority of Superintendents at least fall within the age range of 41-48 or higher. Also interesting is that the majority of Assistant Superintendents fall within similar age ranges as do Principals with a small number of them falling in the 26-32 age range (NYSED 1). This demonstrates the severity of the upcoming human resource needs as there is certainly a high likelihood that most of the Superintendents will retire around the same period of time.

In addition to the high age ranges of NYS Superintendents, further statistics reveal that the vast majority of Superintendents possess over 20 years of experience in public education. In Broome County, over 90 percent of Superintendents possess at least 26 years of experience. Again the statistics for the neighboring counties are very similar in the years of experience (NYSED 2). In the coming years it will vital that the wealth of knowledge and experience is transferred to the upcoming next generation of Superintendents.

In order for the younger administrators to be prepared for the challenges faced by educational leaders, it is important for veteran administrators to provide professional development and guidance in nurturing this next generation of administrators. It is also important that veteran administrators identify teachers they believe possess the necessary skills and abilities to become leaders. As Charlotte Danielson states in her article titled "The Many Faces of Leadership," Administrators' commitment to cultivating teacher leaders plays an

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essential role in their development. Administrators must be proactive in helping teachers acquire the skills they need to take advantage of opportunities for leadership (data analysis, meeting facilitation, etc)" (Danielson).

Overall, the human resource needs concerning public school educational leadership as demonstrated are not immune to the challenges such as the aging and upcoming expected retirements of the baby boom generation. The Greater Binghamton area will soon be confronted with many school district Superintendent retirements. The coming years will be critical for professional development and the guidance and nurturing of the next generation of educational leaders. Programs developed in cooperation with area school districts and Binghamton University could soon provide vital roles in confronting this issue.

II. BEST PRACTICES

Recognizing the need to replace the retiring educational leaders with knowledgeable and skilled new leaders, a number of programs have been developed in collaboration or through Binghamton University to address these needs. There are also current practices in other areas such as Albany to confront the human resource needs.

One of the earliest programs relating to the human resource needs concerning educational leadership in the Greater Binghamton Area was developed as a joint effort between Broome Tioga BOCES, and the Binghamton University Schools of Management (SOM) and Education (SOE) called the Educational Leadership Academy. This program began in 1999 with the strong vision and support of then BT-BOCES Superintendent Lawrence Kiley. According to information on the program's website, the Leadership Academy was formed to "enhance the quality and quantity of candidates for educational leadership positions in the region." Furthermore the academy "helps identify future leaders and supports them in their efforts to prepare for leadership positions." The information in the online flyer concludes stating, "these experiences are designed to help participants prepare for leadership roles in our schools and to provide the type of leadership necessary to maintain high quality education in our area."

The program now called the Southern Tier Leadership Academy is currently completing its 10th year and has "recognized and nurtured the development of more than 150 educational leaders." The effectiveness of the program is evident in the posted quotes/reactions from area Superintendents and Administrators. Jason Andrews, the current Superintendent of the Windsor Central School District, and one of the youngest Superintendents in New York State is quoted on the website stating, "The Southern Tier Leadership Academy is a terrific balance of theory, research, and practical implications as a result of the partnerships between Binghamton University and the component school districts of the Broome-Tioga BOCES. It allows participants to explore their potential as an educational leader and provides exposure to a wide variety of leadership positions needed in schools." Furthermore, Ron Fisher the current Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Secondary Education in the Union Endicott Central School District and a 2001 graduate of the Academy states, "My own STLA experience was instrumental in helping affirm my interest in administration and in increasing my confidence in my ability to provide effective leadership." Overall the Southern Tier Leadership Academy has continued to be a success in cultivating new educational leaders in the area. If not for the

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progressive vision of then BOCES Superintendent Larry Kiley, the area could have surely faced an unprecedented shortage of new leaders.

While the Southern Tier Leadership Academy has done much to strengthen educator's confidence and interest in leadership positions, it represents only one component in addressing the issue as it does not provide individuals with the necessary advanced degree to become a certified school administrator. Through the School of Education however, Binghamton University currently offers a respected and accredited program that provides the educational requirements for certification. Meeting with the current Dean for the School of Education, S.G. Grant, more insight was gained about the current program. Dean Grant stated that the program is still in its early stages as they are about to celebrate the successful completion of the first graduating class of 15. Dean Grant stated that the program was designed with community interest and support (mostly local current or veteran school administrators) and offers upon completion a Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Educational Leadership. Furthermore, he stated that successful completion leads to a recommendation to the New York State Education Department for administrative certifications in School Building Leader (SBL) and or School District Leader (SDL), Dean Grant also stated that he believes the program provides the necessary coursework and education for individuals to continue their education and receive doctorate degrees, something Dean Grant would personally like to see an increase in. When asked whether or not similar existing programs at other higher education institutions such as SUNY Cortland or Albany effect the interest or need for a program at BU, Dean Grant responded that while he believes the existing programs elsewhere are well established, the Binghamton program offers a different perspective in a way due to its central location/close proximity to most of the school districts that will benefit from the program. He also pointed to the fact that the BU program was developed as a result of the strong urging and support of many local administrators. Dean Grant concluded by stating that in the current program and even as a whole he believes that Binghamton University students are much more committed and engaged than students of other institutions which only further contributes to the respect of the University.

While the Binghamton Area has begun to address the human resource needs concerning educational leadership on many different levels, other areas such as Albany have also established programs to address these needs. Through the Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, the University at Albany (SUNY), offers a program similar to Binghamton. The Albany program though is divided into three separate programs including both School Building Leadership (SBL) and School District Leadership (SDL) like BU, but has one additional certification in School District Business Leadership (SDBL). Interestingly though, while Albany may currently offer more opportunities, nowhere on the programs website is there mention of community partnerships with the exception of the internship requirement of the program or community needs as there is on Binghamton's. The conversation with Dean Grant stressed community partnerships as a major component of the BU program.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Having extensively researched the background surrounding the new challenges facing public education and the importance of educational leadership as well as the human resource

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needs concerning educational leadership in the Greater Binghamton area, a few recommendations can be made that expand on many of the current practices.

The first and most important recommendation is to maintain the level of commitment and dedication to addressing the issue through community based partnerships such as the Southern Tier Leadership Academy and the newly developed programs at Binghamton University. The current level of collaboration between the University and area school districts must be maintained in order for any of the programs to be effective. The University must be able to understand what local school districts are expecting of their leaders so that the most effective program can be developed.

Another recommendation comes as a result of the interview with Dean Grant as well as a few area administrators. When asked what or how the existing partnerships could be improved or expanded, there was a general consensus around one issue in particular. All agreed that they would like to see an increased emphasis on personnel/human resource management. As Dean Grant described, an individual can be a very dynamic and effective teacher but not as strong as an administrator because of the difficulty they may have in supervising and leading other teachers. Dean Grant stated that this is the number one concern of area Superintendents as new leaders are being educated. Dean Grant and the Superintendents are currently brainstorming how this issue can be included in the Binghamton program. One idea could be to expand the Southern Tier Leadership Academy partnership to include a workshop or session on personnel/human resource management. The goal of the academy is to inspire and cultivate new leaders so a workshop such as this could be an extension of the general academy.

Overall, in order to successfully address the human resource needs relating to educational leadership in the Greater Binghamton area, existing partnerships between area school district and the University must be maintained or expanded. The recommendations presented were developed with this goal in mind and contribute to strengthening of partnerships between Binghamton University and the Greater Binghamton area as a whole.

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