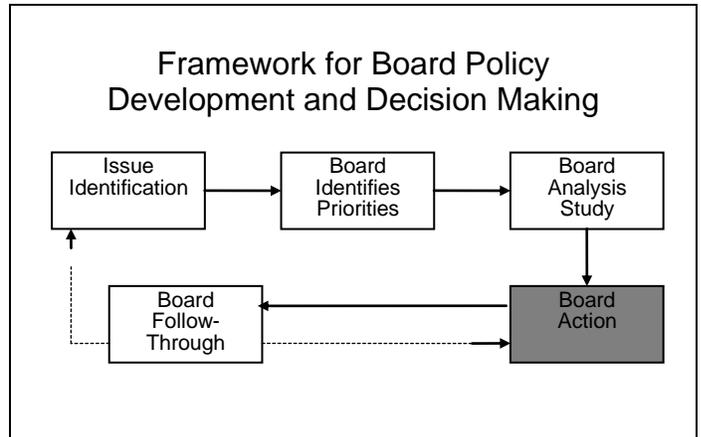


# Iowa State Board of Education

## Executive Summary

March 29, 2012



**Agenda Item:** Iowa Principal Leadership Academy

**Iowa Goal:** Individuals will pursue postsecondary education in order to drive economic success.

**Equity Impact Statement:** Practitioner preparation programs support the improvement of instructional practices and strengthen the quality of educator preparation and professional development programs to give educators at all levels the skills they need to improve teaching and learning.

**Presenter:** Matt Ludwig, Leadership Consultant  
Bureau of Accreditation and Improvement Services

**Attachments:** 1

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the State Board approve the Iowa Principal Leadership Academy alternative principal preparation program until the 2017-2018 school year.

**Background:** Iowa Code 256.7(3) grants authority to the State Board of Education to set standards and approve practitioner preparation programs based on those standards.

**Alternative Principal Preparation Program Approval**  
**Iowa Principal Leadership Academy**  
(Under Chapter 79 of the Iowa Administrative Code)

March 29, 2012

**Introduction:**

The state of Iowa is committed to providing quality education to all students and to ensuring high levels of student performance across the state. This vision of excellence in education requires that each local, regional, and state education organization have effective leadership for student learning. Toward that end, the state legislature and State Board of Education have established policies governing administrator preparation and professional development.

In 2001, an Iowa Innovative Leadership Grant was awarded by the Iowa Department of Education (DE) to a consortium of the four area educational agencies (AEAs) in northwest Iowa (known today as Northwest AEA and Prairie Lakes AEA 8) to work in conjunction with the School Administrators of Iowa (SAI). The consortium's proposal was selected to create an innovative and alternative principal preparation program within the state of Iowa. After the creation of a think tank and eventually an advisory board, the Iowa Principal Leadership Academy (IPLA) evolved and received the approval of the State Board of Education and a licensing agreement with the Board of Educational Examiners (BoEE). In September 2006, the Department of Education challenged all administrator preparation programs to develop curricula that are bold and innovative and provided all administrator preparation institutions with guidance in preparing an Institutional Report aligned with Chapter 79 – Standards for Practitioner Preparation Programs.

The Administrator Preparation Program Approval Panel conducted a review of IPLA Institutional Report and a series of interviews with directors, leaders, instructors, cooperating administrators, and students in March 2011. The attached document summarizes the panel's review of the IPLA proposal, the program's strengths, and the review team's recommendations/considerations.

The proposal submitted by IPLA aligns its efforts regarding principal preparation to the six Iowa Standards from School Leaders. Candidates are provided opportunities to link their learning around the standards and linking their learning to the required clinical experiences. IPLA also links its efforts to the support of partnering AEAs, SAI, DE, and other educational agencies. Chosen seminar leaders are familiar with Iowa and the educational landscape. IPLA also incorporates candidate learning to the toolbox activities, the portfolios related to the standards, the school-wide action research model, and other collaborative efforts.

IPLA recently expanded its efforts to Keystone AEA. The program director and cohort leaders are continually assisting the Keystone AEA in the implementation efforts and will provide the necessary support to ensure implementation of IPLA.

## CHAPTER 79

### STANDARDS FOR PRACTITIONER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

#### **General Comments:**

Multiple interviewees identified IPLA strengths to include – the practical work and organization of cohorts; pragmatic topics/issues embedded in seminar presentations; incorporating the inbox items for discussion by students; building and sustaining relationships that are personal and professional amongst students, directors, and seminar presenters; and creating and supporting an educational network that continues beyond the successful completion of the program.

Prior to the creation of the IPLA, the northwest region of Iowa did not have a preparation program that was easily accessible for aspiring principals. IPLA fills a unique and determined need in northwest Iowa and now northeast Iowa.

IPLA is an endorsement program. All participants have achieved a master's degree in the field of education and are now seeking an opportunity to enrich their leadership knowledge and skills.

All IPLA directors, faculty, staff, and current/past students are committed and passionate about the unique nature of the program schedule and assessment process.

**SECTION A: GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**Strengths**

The IPLA literature review establishes a theoretical foundation for the program. The program developers incorporated the work of educational leaders, like Elmore, Murphy, Marzano, Waters, McNulty, Lashway, Hess, and Kelly. The theory base supports the development of transformational leaders, quality leadership, the principles of distributive leadership, and instruction that results in improved student learning.

A number of educational agencies/organizations make IPLA happen and ensures its ability to sustain and grow – area education agencies (AEAs), local education agencies (LEAs), School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB), Iowa Department of Education (DE), and others. The collaboration amongst these agencies/organizations is a foundation for IPLA and is critical for the continued success of the program.

The IPLA overview aligns to Iowa Standards for School Leaders (ISSL). IPLA students and graduates see a benefit of using the embedded action research model in each of six ISSL school-based projects. The action research model became a habit of mind/strategy of planning and problem solving as students dealt with practical issues in the LEA/AEA setting.

Many educators across Iowa see IPLA as an alternative preparation program for principals. Students (current and past), faculty, and directors mentioned throughout the interview process that IPLA was credible and allowed them hands on experience in an actual school setting.

Evidence of the IPLA Advisory Council meetings was present in the institutional report (IR) and during interviews. The council meets two times a year.

**Concerns/Recommendations**

Although the literature reviews completed by the developers provide a theoretical foundation to the original intent of the program, the review team suggests continually updating the literature review to include current trends and topics in the areas of leadership, instruction, student performance, and the alternative nature of the program.

The review team visited with current program director and cohort leaders regarding issues like marketing and supporting recruitment efforts, communicating efforts, building and overseeing program budget, designing and ensuring a quality assessment structure for student and the academy, hiring and monitoring faculty, determining teaching and advising load, initiating and monitoring clinical experiences, and supporting and adjusting curriculum needs to ensure the integrity of IPLA.

Through various interviews, including students, faculty, and directors, it was unclear how the aspects of the program are aligned – program goals, courses, assessment. The review team understands that IPLA encompasses ISSL; however, the team recommends that the program continues to address and improve on building consistencies in curriculum - content, delivery, and assessment - between the two sites (Prairie Lakes AEA and Keystone AEA).

The review team and the directors discussed the issue of reciprocity agreements with bordering states and how those issues have been resolved in the past. The review team suggests that the program formalize the process, continue to work with those state education departments and the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners, and ensure a commitment from those licensing agencies that wish to work with IPLA.

IPLA is not tied to an institution of higher education. The review team notes that the program leaders are linked to the AEAs, SAI, and other educational agencies. The review team encourages IPLA to maintain and link to a professional community (AEAs, SAI, Iowa Council of Professors of Educational Administration – ICPEA, etc.), providing focused and aligned professional development opportunities for faculty, adding to the educational knowledge base through research and state-wide efforts, and modeling and requiring professional writing practices in the action research projects.

The program is seeking assistance on how to improve the assessment system (candidate and program). Although IPLA is staffed by adjunct faculty, it is imperative that the program develops, and administers a systematic and comprehensive evaluation system that enhances the teaching competence and intellectual vitality of the program.

**Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:  
None**

**SECTION B: DIVERSITY**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**Strengths**

Diversity is a common topic in a number of communities in the northwest and northeast part of the Iowa and a major part of the Storm Lake community. ILPA is continually looking at ways to use resources to recruit potential students, faculty, and presenters to enrich the experiences of its students throughout the clinical and seminar requirements.

ILPA looks beyond ethnic issues and is looking more broadly and to include rural and urban issues as the program trains and certifies potential principals to lead Iowa schools.

ILPA continues to develop partnerships with area industries, like Tyson (Storm Lake) and Trans Ova Genetics (Sioux Center). It is the intent of the directors to link these and other industries to provide the participants with leadership connections inside and outside of education. Technology has provided ready access to these industries.

**Concerns/Recommendations**

The program director and leaders should consider disaggregating data and information about faculty according to degrees, experience, evaluator approval endorsement, etc. These data and information would assist the program in identifying and maintaining a quality program.

IPLA is encouraged to tap the multiple resources available in a diverse community such as Storm Lake. As leaders of IPLA, it is important to be responsive to the needs of its population (culturally, ethnically, and racially). Leaders should be establishing and maintaining connections with the community about recruiting students of diversity and leadership development of non-white students.

IPLA needs to continually document efforts in maintaining and increasing a diverse faculty and include students in the planning, policies, and practices. Plans and policies need to address recruiting faculty, presenters, and students that mirror the communities that represent the changing student population.

IPLA students are responsible for tracking their clinical experiences. The review team urges the IPLA director and cohort leaders to identify and implement a tracking system for clinical experiences to monitor placement in diverse populations (ethnicity, socioeconomic, etc.) different levels (elementary, middle and high schools) and diverse learning needs.

**Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:**  
**None**

**SECTION C: FACULTY**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**Strengths**

As the review team met with the various interview teams, the teams describe the presenters as “front line” practitioners. The presenters were also described as experts in the field bringing relevant current school experiences to the classroom.

The seminar leaders are critical part of IPLA. They present the information related to the standard, engage the students in activities that support the standard, and provide practical experiences to the students that assist them in developing their standards-based portfolios.

Seminar instructors and mentors come from a variety of leadership positions. IPLA students work with building administrators, AEA consultants, and other professional organizations to enhance their leadership capacity.

**Concerns/Recommendations**

It was unclear to the review team what selection criteria are in place in choosing seminar instructors. The director and the cohort leaders described them as local, available, and recognized by the cohort leaders. In an effort to build credibility in the field, it is important to define the faculty qualifications and describe what makes them “experts in the field.”

In an effort to build connectivity and consistency amongst seminars, it is imperative to build a communication and professional platform that includes the director, cohort leaders, seminar leaders, and students. The review team is concerned about redundancy and duplication of the program. Seminar leader interviewees recognized this as an issue.

**Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:**  
**None**

**SECTION D: ASSESSMENT**

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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**Strengths**

The ISSL standards-based portfolios provide students an opportunity to reflect on their learning after attending presentations from the seminar leaders, completing the tool box activities, engaging in cohort activities, collaborating with school-based mentors, creating and implementing an action research project, and self-evaluating their knowledge and skill related to the standards.

**Concerns/Recommendations**

During the site visit the team was given an opportunity to review the standards-based portfolios created by current and former students. The team was unable to specifically identify a formal student management/data system. As the program moves forward and continues to grow, it will be essential for the IPLA leadership to design a management system that will assist and ensure leaders, students, the DE, and all interested parties that IPLA is creating quality school leaders. The student management system should allow data to be aggregated and generate required reports for the program and the DE. The DE will work with IPLA to identify and create a candidate and program assessment system that provides ongoing and informative qualitative and quantitative data to enrich and support IPLA. Within the assessment system, the review team recommends:

- Seminar leaders play a significant role in assessing the portfolios. The seminar leaders can use this assessment opportunity to gauge what students are learning or need to learn.
- Assessment data can be used to continually improve the professional learning opportunities for current and future students.
- A consistent seminar and seminar leader evaluation be used to support continuous improvement efforts of the program. It will also provide future cohort leaders with data/information to make decisions about selecting seminars leaders or making redesign issues as the program expands.
- A graduate and post-graduate survey must be embedded into the new IPLA assessment system. IPLA must determine the frequency of the survey and use the data/information garnered from the survey results to continuously improve the program.
- IPLA needs to develop an assessment system that incorporates summative and formative assessments that will inform all aspects of IPLA (i.e., content and instructor, graduate and post-graduate surveys, field experience evaluations, portfolio evaluations, etc.) and promotes a continuous improvement assessment system.

IPLA may want to consider hiring an assessment coordinator or work with a partnering AEA or an institution of higher education to create, implement, and manage the candidate and program assessment system.

**Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:**

None

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**SECTION E: ADMINISTRATOR PREPARATION CLINICAL**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**Strengths**

Students describe IPLA as a student-driven, relevant, engaging, problem-based, and collaborative learning opportunity. Students are provided guidance from their cohort leader, the toolbox activities, and the action research projects.

Students are typically matched with a mentor in their own schools. Mentors understand that this is a process that builds capacity in their school building. The mentors seem to be flexible with assignments and time away from the classroom that the student may need to complete their clinical hours, connect with their cohort, conduct their action research project, or successfully complete toolbox activities. Current and former students indicate that they use a variety of resource people, other than just their mentor, to accomplish clinical goals.

There was a sense of partnership between the cooperating administrator and the student in solving problems and building a collaborative learning culture. The advisory team and cooperating administrator groups allow IPLA students to engage in on-site collaboration with their mentor to tackle district issues and needs, share resources, and problem solve. One administrator clearly saw the reciprocal benefits that allowed capacity building of leaders within the district and building.

Criteria for mentors are clear and delineated by the administrator standards and located on the IPLA website.

**Concerns/Recommendations**

The review team is aware that students are responsible for recording and monitoring clinical hours for each standard. The program should take steps to formalize these efforts while enhancing its student management system; so clinical experiences and requirements can be monitored more closely by the director and cohort leaders. The director and leaders need to ensure that students are engaging in school leadership experiences in diverse settings and are continually promoting student learning.

**Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:**  
None

**SECTION F: ADMINISTRATOR PREPARATION CURRICULUM (Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions)**

<b>Met Or Met with Strength</b>	<b>Met Pending Conditions Noted Below</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
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**Strengths**

IPLA builds its program on adult learning theory and uses an action research based design that is exceedingly practical to the students.

The cohort format allows for trust building, collegiality, and honest dialogue about topics in the seminars. The format provides less “seat time” to allow more time spent on toolbox activities, action research projects, and portfolio development.

The IPLA curriculum can be somewhat flexible and responsive to current topics, as opposed to a stagnant curriculum.

### **Concerns/Recommendations**

In the exit report, the review team indicated that IPLA may want to model summarizing, reflecting, and scholarly writing (i.e., APA style citations) and at the same time incorporate strategies for reading scholarly work (i.e., professional journals). These added components would assist IPLA in raising its credibility with other institutions and raise the skill level of students as they develop their reflections and portfolios.

The review team is concerned about the seminar leaders grasp of the scope and sequence of the program. The seminar leaders appear to work in silos, are not part of the overall assessment picture, and rarely communicate with other seminar leaders to ensure connections and consistency. At the same time, directors and leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is guaranteed and viable for all students. Given that the seminar leaders change frequently, the equity of learning experiences for all students is a concern for the review team.

The director, cohort leaders, and seminar leaders should purposely and systematically expose students to the “big names” in educational leadership such as Senge, Dufour, Reeves, Elmore, Fullan, Sergiovani, Renzulli, Payne, and Boelman/Deal. IPLA was developed around many of these professionals and will continually influence principal leadership for the years to come.

As the program seeks validation from the field, the review team recommends a syllabus template that mirrors a graduate course syllabus. The team understands there is a general syllabus example for each standard; however, given the nature of the program, the multiple instructors delivering the content, and the flexibility of the content, the review team is concerned about who monitors the syllabus and communicates the changes and adjustments to seminar leaders, mentors, and students.

BoEE requested IPLA enhance their curriculum exhibit. In response, the program made the following recommendations to its executive board:

- Add two seminars to IPLA Standard 5 that addresses: a) BoEE Content Standard 1 – Administration, Supervision, and Evaluation of Early Childhood, Elementary, Early Adolescent, and Secondary Students; b) BoEE Content Standard 3 – Developing School Leaders Who Apply Knowledge of Child Growth and Development and Developmentally Appropriate Strategies and Practices for Students Pk-12.
- Amend language of IPLA Standard 2 – Seminars 2 and 3 – to document the goals, strategies and practices that ensure skills for effective leadership in Pk-12 curriculum development and assessment are met (BoEE Content Standard 2).
- Amend language in each of the six IPLA inquiry-based school action research problems to incorporate child growth and development and developmentally appropriate strategies.
- IPLA will document the BoEE content and competency standards in the course syllabi for each IPLA seminar.

*The IPLA executive board accepted the above recommendations during a recent meeting.*

### **Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action:**

**None**

**All standards have been met. The Iowa Principal Leadership Academy is recommended for approval.**