

Southern Regional Education Board

University Leadership Development Network Goals, Benchmarks and Services

The goal of the University Leadership Development Network is to design, deliver and evaluate a school leader program that emphasizes comprehensive school improvement and can be adopted by other colleges and universities. Each participating institution is expected to design a school leadership preparation program tightly linked to a comprehensive school-improvement framework and to the standards and goals of the state accountability system.

Leaders trained in this program will learn how to:

- support rigorous academic standards and instructional methods that motivate and engage students;
- make meaningful connections between the abstract aspects of the curriculum and real-world learning experiences;
- create and manage a system of support that enables all students to meet high standards and motivate faculty to have high expectations of all students;
- set priorities for change that can be measured and managed realistically;
- create a personal, caring school environment that helps students meet higher standards;
- apply research knowledge to improve school practices; and
- use technology for management and instructional purposes.

Over the next years, participating institutions of higher education are expected to create and field-test an innovative design for school leader preparation. They should make fundamental changes in what is traditionally taught, how it is taught and how institutions work with K-12 schools to design and deliver the program.

University Leadership Development Network members will create an advisory board made up of faculty, business leaders, exemplary principals, representatives of state education departments and other school leaders with diverse backgrounds. These board members — representing a range of schools and school systems — will meet regularly to help design the program.

The Network also will plan learning experiences in which leadership candidates apply research-based knowledge to solve field-based problems and learn about core functions of the school (including instruction and student learning). Well-planned internships will be integrated throughout the preparation program. During their internships, aspiring leaders will work with master leaders, who will serve as mentors and will help them practice their skills.

The preparation program created by the University Network will be flexible so that individuals can customize it based on their leadership experiences in other positions.

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Each member of the University Network is responsible for providing faculty, practicing educators and others with broad research-based knowledge about the practices necessary for effective schools and classrooms, and contribute staff time and expertise to design, develop and field test leadership training modules that address problems that leaders must solve in schools. Faculty in the leadership program will develop a team structure for working together to teach modules that are at least partly school-based.

Faculty at participating colleges and universities will be given time to conduct school-based research and to participate in ongoing evaluations of the leadership program. Participating institutions need to realign the faculty advancement and rewards system to recognize school-based work in the tenure and promotion requirements and adjust their budgets to allocate additional time, resources and staffing to coordinate, develop and implement a new curriculum for school leader preparation.

University Leadership Development Network members will help school districts identify potential leaders who have demonstrated leadership ability, who have knowledge of curriculum and instruction and who have proven records of high performance. Network members will solicit any necessary waivers from state agencies to address certification issues.