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School Leadership Academy Board
Report to the State Board of Education
May 11-12, 2011

Background
Colorado House Bill 08-1386 called for the creation of a School Leadership Academy Board to advise the Colorado State Board of Education on a number of issues related to education leadership, including standards, induction, licensure and a School Leadership Academy. The intent of the legislation is to provide a statewide comprehensive leadership and professional development system that identifies, recruits, trains and inducts qualified persons for leadership positions in public schools.

Specifically, the Board is to:

- Create a system of knowledge sharing for education leaders statewide to identify, share and learn from best practices across the state
- Recommend state-level policies and systems (such as leadership standards) to enhance education leadership across the state
- Set policies and procedures for the School Leadership Academy
- Define criteria for the Department to use in selecting participants for a principal academy
- Determine curricular components of the Leadership Academy
- Partner with key leadership development programs and initiatives in and out of Colorado to increase the state's capacity to recruit, prepare and place high-quality leaders in Colorado's public education system.

Activities
The SLA Board began work in January 2010, after meeting required legislative funding guidelines that required private dollars to match the legislative allocation. (The El Pomar Foundation and Verizon contributed funding to support the SLA Board.) Board members agreed that before the new leadership academy could be conceived, developed and launched, a comprehensive review and revision of Colorado's principal standards currently in statute (CCR 2260.5-R-6.00) was necessary to ensure that the academy curriculum and vision would be based on rigorous and comprehensive leadership standards. With guidance from national research-based resources, the Board reduced the number of principal standards from 14 to six, and then solicited feedback on the newly revised standards from principals, principal preparation programs, school boards, district superintendents, charter school leaders and higher education representatives across the state. In response to this feedback, the standards were further refined.

At the same time that the SLA Board was revising principal standards, Senate Bill 10-191 was passed, establishing new requirements for evaluating teachers and principals. The newly created State Council for Educator Effectiveness (SCEE) was charged with making recommendations to the Colorado State Board of Education on how to implement the new performance evaluation system.

Recognizing the efficacy and need of collaborating on the standards revision, the SLA Board and the SCEE worked closely together over a six-month period in 2010 to coordinate the standards revision and to design rubrics for evaluating leader performance. SLA Board members and staff also met regularly with a "cross council" group representing the SCEE, Quality Teachers Commission, the P-3 Professional Development Task Force, Colorado Educator Effectiveness Project, and the SLA Board to coordinate efforts and communication among all these groups working to improve teacher and principal effectiveness in Colorado In fall 2010 the SLA Board submitted its final revision of the standards to the SCEE, which presented the new principal standards to State Board of Education in February 2011. Following adoption by the State Board, the new principal standards will serve as the foundation for the Colorado School Leadership Academy.

Parallel to the development of the standards and work with the SCEE, the SLA Board worked hard to incorporate its vision and plans into other state reform initiatives, in particular Colorado's Race to the Top Initiative. Substantial resources from this grant proposal were earmarked to launch the Academy with a focus on preparing "turnaround" leaders for low performing-schools (which would constitute Phase I of the Academy launch). In anticipation of the federal dollars, the SLA Board planned to begin operating the Academy over a one-year period, August 2010 to August 2011. However, Colorado did not receive a federal grant, and also the state legislature recently cut SLA planning and operating funding as well. Consequently the School Leadership Academy Board currently has no allocated resources to open the Academy. Even so, Board members are not deterred from what they believe is an important and needed set of services for the state. The Board is now looking to collaborate with stakeholders that are implementing S.B. 10-191 in an effort to provide the professional development and training necessary for leaders. The SLA Board is hoping to tap funds from Title 1, the Gates Foundation and state turnaround funds to implement its ideas.

Development of the Academy

In 2011 the SLA Board has worked on the plan for launching the Leadership Academy: drafting the assumptions and non-negotiable components of the academy (see Leadership Academy Design Elements in Appendix A), creating the design and delivery method, identifying best practices, and selecting state and national partners to shape high-quality coursework, coaching and evaluation for the academy's current and aspiring principals. The Board reviewed an inventory of state and national models and programs to determine the most effective model and process for the Colorado School Leadership Academy.

The SLA Board is working to create a statewide academy that will operate an RFP process to broker rigorous new models of leadership development that will deliver a set of value-added training, development and wraparound supports to mentor, coach and provide internships or fellowships to education leaders. All providers of service to the Academy will be vetted and, as necessary, the Academy will create or contract for new services.

The Board's premise is to set a very high bar – one that is much higher than currently occurring in most leadership programs across the state – via assessments, demonstrations and evidence that every leadership program and leadership candidate will try to meet. Similar to the legal profession in which attorneys must pass the "bar exam," the SLA would create a "bar" in education leadership that would be essentially a School Leadership

Academy candidate "accreditation" model. The SLA Board believes this approach would unify both programs and candidates to a set of very high standards. Once the program is up and running, the Academy's operations would be transparent to the whole state, i.e., it will be clear who is providing programs that help candidates "pass the bar," and which candidates have that distinguished credential from the Colorado SLA. There might be a "bar exam" and endorsement for every leadership standard as well as critical focus areas (rural, turnaround, etc.).

In this model the SLA will:

1. Develop performance-based assessments and performance demonstrations that demonstrate leadership competency (test, demonstrations and simulations, etc.)
2. Use those assessments to develop an RFP process that identifies programs that can teach these skills. Be transparent about which programs have made the cut.
3. Seed the development of new programs that fill any content gaps (maybe turnaround) or access gaps (online) through an RFP process
4. Provide add-on services for the leadership candidates across the state such as PLCs, coaching, internships, online networks, etc.

The School Leadership Academy is intended to serve both aspiring leaders – people who may or may not be in the field of education right now – as well as current leaders – assistant principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, and mid-career changers. The delivery process for the academy will include coaching, class work, mentoring, online instruction and internships. The SLA Board also recognizes that school leadership does not happen in a void. Ultimately the Board wants the same wraparound opportunities for superintendents, school board members and teachers.

The Academy content areas include rural, turnaround, urban, charter and others to be determined. The operations components of the academy to be determined are as follows:

- Human Resources: Staffing required for management and support of the "managing center" and SLA Board
- Financing: Initial capital needed to launch the Academy, plan to secure private and public funding to sustain the program, and budget for program and overhead
- Communications and Collaboration: How the voices of all the stakeholder groups will be heard, how the managing center will communicate with participants in the Academy, and marketing plan
- Operations/Infrastructure: Accounting, database, website, support staff, etc.
- Legal Structure: Required legal and/or formal agreements for CDE and the managing center to form a partnership, i.e., should the SLA be a separate legal entity under the managing center
- Timeline: Target date for opening
- Long-term Sustainability and Growth Plan

Next Steps
Over the next 6-12 months, the School Leadership Academy Board will continue its work to launch the Academy. Following State Board review and approval of the concept, the Board will develop the implementation plan and determine when the first set of candidates will participate. Due to the need to fundraise, the SLA Board also will develop a series of grant proposals, and also explore the possibility of using SCEE funds to start the first cohort, and use turnaround funds to sponsor teams at the University of Virginia Turnaround Leadership Academy so that we can learn from that model.

The Board anticipates being able to launch at least two modules of the Academy during 2011-2012 (with turnaround being one module). As fundraising continues, additional modules will be brought on board.

SLA Board meetings and members are presented in Appendix B.

APPENDIX A

Colorado School Leadership Academy Design Elements
DRAFT Framework/Template

In 2008, the Colorado State Legislature passed House Bill 1386 to create a Colorado leadership academy. The bill called for the School Leadership Academy program that would include a principal academy designed to improve the recruitment, training and ongoing professional development of school leaders in Colorado.

This draft academy framework outlines potential academy design options for discussion by the School Leadership Academy Board to facilitate further development of the leadership academy vision.

Vision of the Colorado Leadership Academy

Overall assumptions and elements for the Academy program:

1. Target audience for the Academy

   Phase I (Years 1 and 2):
   - Aspiring or current principals that want to take on the challenge to "turn around" a low-performing school
   - Current principals of low-performing schools that need to "turn around"

   Phase II (Year 3 and beyond):
   - Current sitting principals
   - Aspiring principals
   - Leadership teams in schools and districts
   - Teacher leaders

2. The goals and purpose of the Academy in Phase 1 are to prepare a cadre of "turnaround leaders" for Colorado's lowest performing schools as well as provide some targeted development to other school leaders that want to develop their skills (possible a focus on rural principals)
3. The Academy will offer a mix of pre-service and in-service courses. Participants will select pre-service or in-service depending on their experience level and the Academy phase at enrollment.
4. The Academy will offer a variety of services, including face-to face modules, online courses, brokering to other programs and field-based learning (i.e., internships).
   - The Academy will utilize partner facilities (i.e., universities, CASE, McREL, Legacy Foundation) for at least the first several years
5. CDE is likely not the appropriate fiscal agent to manage multiple partner contracts. [The SLA] is designed to be an interagency functioning group.
6. Partnerships and brokering with other organizations or institutions of higher education are critical to gain capacity, knowledge and candidates.
7. The Academy program will offer mentorships and internships in some capacity.
8. The Academy might contract with outside entities, such as NLNS, NISL, CASE, McREL, Get Smart Schools, universities, etc. to provide certain elements of the curriculum.

Alignment and Impact of Leadership Academy

The School Leadership Academy (SLA) will encompass three components: (1) Research and Development, (2) Policy Influence, and (3) Practice and Professional Development. These three components will be conducted in concert so that Academy leaders, board members and CDE staff can learn about and track effective strategies and then translate those strategies into new policies and practices that *impact all leaders*. The SLA will also be designed to work with other initiatives and entities in the state that will contribute to the three components listed above. The following have been identified as important initiatives and programs to coordinate with the leadership academy:

- Educator Effectiveness Center (New Teacher Project): The goals are to bridge teacher and principal preparation programs and professional classroom experience and to make in-service education and support available to every educator, and also to provide instruction and tools to teachers and leaders on how to design instruction to eliminate the achievement gap and contribute data for teacher evaluation. This program is technology based and many components are online.
- Colorado State Council on Educator Effectiveness
- SB10-191, teacher and principal effectiveness bill
- ARRA Title I resources
- CDE Office of Teaching and Learning
- University leadership programs
- Current leadership development programs operating in Colorado such as NISL in Adams County (Aurora Public Schools), McREL, and Get Smart Schools.

Leadership Academy Design Elements

The leadership academy framework will include a description of the mission and purpose as well as recommended design elements for the academy, as follows:

- Target population
- Goals and purpose
- Curriculum
- Delivery mechanism of curriculum
- Governance
- Selection process of academy participants
- Outcomes for academy participants, i.e., certification, recognition, reward, etc.
- Partnerships and brokering
- Evaluation

The following tables outline each component of the leadership academy to be designed. Each table presents an option to consider for the overall structure of the academy. These options have been drawn from research, elements learned from the inventory, and portions of the legislation that created the School Leadership Academy Board.

Design Element	Goals and Purposes
Recruit and provide intensive development, in-service and professional development to principals (and their teams) that need/want to turn around low-performing schools (Phase I): Develop competencies and skills specifically for turnaround schools and provide a "certificate" and/or license that designates this leader as a "turnaround specialist." As the Leadership academy rolls out, it will focus on other participants as well, including rural school leaders, aspiring principals, current principals and teacher leaders.	

Design Element	Target Population
Current or aspiring principals who want to turn around low-performing schools (Years 1 and 2 of implementation): In Phase I, we might incorporate some aspects of leadership *teams* in the professional development provided by the Academy. In Phase 2 or 3 of the Academy we will open it to all principals (open access) and all aspiring candidates as well as incorporating a "leadership team" and "Teacher Leadership" component.	

Design Element	Selection Process
As a statewide academy, we want selection to be fairly open so that all who enter can get some skill development and value-add from the Academy. However, achieving the high bar of "School Leadership Academy Certification" will be very rigorous, so not all who enter the academy will come out with certification. For each development module, we will develop a needs assessment and Individual Leadership Plan for each candidate to determine which portions/modules of the Academy they will engage in.	

Modules	Curriculum: Research-based Curricula and Module Ideas *Ensure there is a "needs assessment" for the principal/team to know where professional development is most needed, and identify areas of emphasis schools need most. *Determine best provider (RFP process) for each module offered in Academy curriculum.
New Colorado Standard #1	Strategic Leadership
Standard #2	Instructional Leadership
Standard #3	Cultural Leadership
Standard #4	Human Resource Leadership
Standard #5	Managerial Leadership
Standard #6	External Development Leadership
Rural	Rural leadership development
Turnaround	Low performing schools leadership development
Charter	Charter school leadership development

Design Element	Delivery of Curriculum and Duration

Face-to-face modules (created in partnership with universities, organizations and districts) coupled with online work and support between meetings, including internships and residencies; project/problem-based learning in schools. Most programs are one year with an internship beyond that, in some cases. Intense module work could take place during summer months. Encourage deep partnerships with districts in curriculum development, delivery and internships. An online model may be developed for rural participants.

Design Element	Governance of Academy

The School Leadership Academy Board oversees development and implementation of the Academy and reports to the Commissioner of Education. Management of the SLA will be determined once funding has been established.

Design Element	Outcomes for Academy Participants

Listed below are some outcome options for program candidates (some of these might be dependent on resources and a change in policy and procedure):

- Certification
- SLA "endorsed" leader certificate
- Salary or loan forgiveness incentives for candidates working in challenging schools

Design Element	Partners and Brokering Services

Consider multiple ways to partner and/or broker certain elements of the Academy through a rigorous vetting and RFP process:

- Partner with university/organization and districts to tailor approaches and modules based on best practice and research
- Partner with Colorado-based professional development associations (like CASE, NSDC) or a foundation (like Donnell-Kay or Daniels Fund), or other related non-profit group
- Work with an outside entity such as Get Smart or NLNS or NISL, SREB to provide training and module development and delivery

Design Element	Evaluation

Determine how to track the academy progress and outcomes. We are exploring a possible collaboration with higher education institutions and their graduate students.

APPENDIX B

School Leadership Academy Board

Meetings:

2010
January 21
February 25
April 19
June 9
September 13
October 28
December 17

2011
January 21
March 1
June *(to be scheduled)*

Colorado School Leadership Academy Board members will serve a three-year term.
Members include the following individuals:

- Kevin Aten (Chair), Principal, Mountain View High School, Thompson School District
- Linda Barker, Director of Teaching and Learning, Colorado Education Association
- Floyd Beard, Executive Director, East Central Board of Cooperative Educational Services
- Jeanette Cornier, Parent representative
- Jim Eck, Senior Director, McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning)
- Mark Hyatt, Executive Director, Colorado Charter School Institute
- Mary McNeil, Director of Professional Development, Colorado Association of School Executives
- Lynn Rhodes, Dean of Education (retired), University of Colorado at Denver
- Mary Rubadeau, Superintendent, Telluride School District
- Eugene P. Sheehan, Dean, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, University of Northern Colorado
- Diana Sirko, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Learning and Results, CDE
- Nathan Smith, Principal, Del Norte Middle School, Del Norte School District
- Mary Kay Sommers (Vice Chair), Principal, Shepardson Elementary School, Poudre School District, 2008-2009 President of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
- Tim Taylor, President, Colorado Succeeds
- Jane Urschel, Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Association of School Boards