

**Austin Peay State University
College of Education - Teacher Unit
2011-2012 - Annual Program Review**

I. Educational Leadership Studies Program

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III. Program Description

The Educational Leadership Studies Program is the public school administrator's licensure program approved by the Tennessee Department of Education. The program is an intensive 30 semester hours of principal preparation courses consisting of: Introduction to School Leadership, Theories of Leadership, Research and Decision-Making, School Finance, Human Resources Management, Administration of Special Education Programs, School Law and Ethics, Supervision of Curriculum, School and Community Relations, and Computers for Administrators. Interfaced with each of the 10 courses is a mentored field-based internship assignment consisting of 30 hours of mentored public school administrator duties for each of the courses taught for a total of 300 hours. The field-based experience is monitored through a collaborative effort by the APSU Educational Leadership faculty and public school administrators serving in supervisory capacities. Leadership candidates are required to take and pass the PRAXIS Licensure Exam for public school administrators before they can be licensed in Tennessee as public school administrators or awarded the Master of Arts Degree in Educational Leadership or the Educational Specialist with Licensure Degree.

The Austin Peay State University Educational Leadership Program underwent a minor transformation during the 2008-2009 school years. The Tennessee State Department of Education required all licensure programs in Tennessee to rework university programs to align the programs with the new Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards. APSU used standards-based instruction with the ISLLC Standards as the basis for the program from 2005 until 2009. Therefore, moving from the ISLLC Standards to the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards (TILS Standards) did not require a great deal of change for the professors. Because of state requirements involving the structure of the field-based mentored internship, the APSU Educational Leadership Program did make two major revisions to the previous program. The first revision involved imbedding the mentored field-based internship activities or experiences in each course. The second revision involved adding an additional course, Theories of Leadership to the curriculum and strengthening the current course in Supervision of Curriculum. Additionally, test data analysis has been added throughout the program when it is appropriate to the topics being discussed. Additionally, an ancillary area which has also been strengthened is in the area of collaboration between Austin Peay State University College of Education professors and the administration for the service area public schools. The collaboration has been carried to a new level as there have been formal Memorandums of Agreement for Collaboration developed, agreed upon, and signed jointly by Austin Peay State University and representatives of Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart, Houston, Dickson, Humphreys, and Cheatham Counties. As new

counties add candidates to the program, Memorandums of Agreement will be developed and added for those counties as well. A significant aspect of the agreements pertains to the way in which APSU and the cooperating school systems will collaborate and direct the internship portion of the leadership training experience. The cooperating school systems have agreed to provide a wide variety of experiences from principals in the schools as well as from various central office administrators.

IV. Changes in the Program

Based on the data from the 2011 Data Retreat and the feedback we received from the Graduate Surveys, we determined that we were doing the kinds of things we needed to maintain the quality of Instructional Leadership candidates which the area schools and Tennessee needed and required. However, we did make a few changes to strengthen the program. We are continuing to offer the program through a varied venue including face to face, online and hybrid classes. Currently, we are offering one entirely face to face class, five online and four hybrid classes. The hybrid classes can be completed online but offer a face to face component for those who require the level of interaction the face to face class affords.

In an effort to assist our Educational Leadership candidates improve their PRAXIS test scores; we started offering test prep sessions in the EDUC 5700, Seminar in Leadership class prior to the actual test. Additionally, even though the ELS Portfolio score distribution was Acceptable and Exceeds for all Standards, we decided to improve the number of Exceeds over Acceptable. We attempted to do this by stressing the value of exemplary work in all the work completed in the Educational Leadership Program. We stressed that when students received their final paper with a grade and suggestions for change, they should make a concerted effort to incorporate those changes into their artifacts before they submit them into their Live Text Portfolio. During the last class in the program, students attended evening face to face sessions that were held to review portfolios and to work on improving the overall quality of their portfolios.

Another change we made was to stress what we were already doing. This was in the area of data collection and analysis strategies as well as researching various information sources for making informed decisions. We have started providing additional research activities which require students to identify issues, research the topic and identify sources which will provide allow students to make appropriate analyses. Then the students are expected to either write a comprehensive research paper dealing with the issue or to write an article for publication using the identified issue, the data from research found and the researched articles pertaining to the topic. There are Key Assessments for each course in the program with some of the courses having a variety of Key Assessments. The Key Assessments are in addition to the E-Portfolio.

Another change was made in an effort to increase the number of ELS graduates. We decided to start a new Leadership cohort in each fall and spring semesters rotating between Austin Peay State University, Highland Crest Education Center in Springfield, and the Renaissance Center in Dickson, Tennessee. This allows for a wider coverage of the surrounding counties in the APSU service area. An on-going recruitment effort in the surrounding service areas should yield sufficient candidates to fill the cohorts at the service locations.

Lastly, in an effort to expand the partnership with our Local Education Agencies (LEA's), through dialogue with the Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools, we have developed a partnership with

active-duty practicing school instructional leaders to imbed them as co-teaching partners in several leadership courses starting with the new fall 2012 cohort. A new co-teaching partner will be selected and incorporated into the program each semester. This is done on a rotational system based upon interest and strengths.

V. Program Strengths

The Educational Leadership graduates rated the program as exceptional or nearly exceptional in every category except for one. Some of the more notable areas of strength in which the program assists the candidates are:

1. Understanding the multiple dimensions of diversity;
2. Effective communication across populations;
3. Resolution of conflicts and managing confrontation;
4. Understanding the moral and ethical issues of leadership;
5. Problem-solving in organizational situations;
6. Learning to value collaborative leadership;
7. Maintaining the integrity of the instructional program;
8. Data collection and writing publishable reports;
9. Articulation of a vision;
10. Promoting the success of all students through the collaboration with all stakeholders;
11. Utilization of technology in teaching and learning;
12. Formulating hypotheses and conducting research to test these hypotheses.

The area where the program made its most significant increase or growth in terms of student program assessment was the area of “I have knowledge and understanding of sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies” (2.64 to a 3.0). This is the area in which we had the greatest difficulties over the past several years.

In the area of Portfolio Development, it appears that we made some gains and experienced some losses in other areas. The assessments for Standards E and F reflected some significant gains from Meets to Exceeds especially for Standard F (Ethics). We have focused on raising the level of proficiency on our Live Text Portfolios for all the standards assessed. Our efforts to increase these scores must continue as there were decreases in all the other Standards. We will continue to place the same and increased emphasis on these increased proficiency percentages.

Student comments were also extremely complementary as the following strengths of the program were noted in their individual assessments:

1. Knowledgeable university professors who use real-world applications in teaching theory;
2. The focus on real issues that are faced by administrators daily;
3. Educational Leadership faculty are committed to the students;
4. Real-world and practical application of case studies helped prepare us for the PRAXIS;
5. The courses are well aligned to what is demanded of a school principal;
6. The flexibility of scheduling;
7. The professors did an outstanding job of communicating the expectations to students;
8. The preparation the students receive in preparing for the PRAXIS Licensure exam that is a requirement for graduation and the completion of the program;
9. The program was every bit as valuable an experience as I had heard from former graduates

of the program;

10. These (Leadership) are excellent professors. They are compassionate and understand that most of the students are working with families and that coursework completion was something that had to be juggled with those factors. I felt I learned valuable lessons from their teaching styles and expectations.

VI. Program Weaknesses

Students overall rated the program extremely favorable. On the 3.0 Likert Scale used to rate areas of the program, the one area which was rated lowest was “I design assessment tools to inform and shape future planning/instruction” which had an overall average of 2.75. Even though this was the lowest item on the Follow-up Survey of Graduates in Educational Leadership, the item received a mean average of 2.75 on a Likert scale of 1 to 3 with 3 as the highest rating with a 0.46 Standard Deviation.

The weaknesses derived from the student comments indicate that their greatest concerns are in the following areas:

1. The online classes often create problems with clarity of expectations due to the volume of documents required to handle in the course;
2. The work is very demanding;
3. Communication is not always in a timely manner with online courses;
4. Live Text is not necessary primarily because it is based on a subscription which will expire by the time I decide to apply for a principal position. A better idea would be to create one electronically with word documents and links imbedded for future use;
5. Practical hands-on implementation of technology;
6. Practical teacher evaluation tips;
7. The extreme number of internship field-based hours required of students.

Students also indicated that there were concerns in the area of the online classes and their lack of any opportunities for face to face interaction. Students also feel that it would be extremely beneficial to have more face to face classes or opportunities within the online venue to meet and discuss issues and for clarification. This would also allow them opportunities for additional time to work on their Live Text Portfolios.

The data also indicate that of the 12 APSU Educational Leadership graduates who passed the SLLA Licensure test and received principal licenses, 10 were Caucasian, 1 African-American, and 1 Hispanic. By gender, of the 12 candidates who were licensed as Instructional Leaders, 10 were female and 2 were male. The small number of minority candidates in the program and the lack of minorities receiving their licenses for the beginning principal is an area where continued focus and efforts need to be placed to improve the level of participation of these underrepresented groups. Additionally, in order to acquire a better balance in the area of gender, efforts need to be placed on the recruitment of male candidates to improve on the 16.7% male candidate participation in the program. This is especially poignant in the area of minority males where we had 0% candidate participation.

VII. Assessment of Candidates

The committee examined data from the 2012 Annual Data Retreat Manual along with comments and suggestions from several former Educational Leadership Candidates. The data indicate that students continue to excel at the School Leaders Licensure Assessment Test for Tennessee Administrator's License. The PRAXIS results indicate that of the twelve candidates who were examined using the PRAXIS SLLA test; all of the twelve passed the exam with an average score of 171 out of a possible 200 on the test. This average score is down from the 2011 average of 174 however. Data also indicate that the pass rate for APSU leadership graduates who have taken the PRAXIS SLLA, the pass rate for all examinees was 100%. Although the scores have been fair to excellent, the Educational Leadership Department wants to increase the average score for the group in the future. To accomplish this goal, we will continue the use of situational case studies and problem-based learning situations throughout the courses and also to conduct additional PRAXIS study sessions each semester prior to the test in the Capstone Class, EDUC 5700. A bank of suggested case studies and situational vignettes linked to the new Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards will continue to be compiled and used to enhance the learning experiences of all ELS candidates. Former ELS graduates who have taken the test will be surveyed to determine how we can better provide the necessary learning experiences to ensure maximum proficiency on the SLLA Exam.

The Educational Leadership Department has been concerned about the overall number of ELS graduates who were actually taking the SLLA Exam. Although the numbers have been relatively high (85% or greater) from 2006-2009, we wanted to see the percentage increased. Therefore, the program requirements were changed in 2009 to reflect that taking and passing the SLLA test is a prerequisite to receiving the Master's Degree in Educational Leadership. Since this mandated change which was in keeping with the Tennessee Department of Education requirements, we have had a 100% PRAXIS participation rate and a 100% pass rate on the PRAXIS 6011 Beginning Administrator's test.

The summarized reports for the 2011-2012 school years indicate that the ELS Program had 12 candidates who achieved milestone III status. This reflects the 12 Educational Leadership candidates who graduated from the program. The portfolio results for Educational Leadership Graduates were also examined. The data shows a 100% pass-rate for ELS candidates. However, the data also suggests that student effort in some areas for some students fell below our expectations. All portfolios were rated at "Meets" or "Exceeds" for all TILS Standards for all 12 students. However, the ELS Committee feels that we should strive to motivate students to move beyond acceptable levels for each standard and strive to achieve 'Exceeds' for every TILS Standard. Even though the pass rate is 100%, the percentage of candidates who scored 'Excels' for each standard follows: Standard A: 45%; Standard B: 63%; Standard C: 27%; Standard D: 45%; Standard E: 72%; Standard F: 91%; and Standard G: 36%. It is clear that our continued efforts need to be intensified to improve the Excels category for all standards but especially for standards A, C, D, and G. This switched from 2011 when the data indicated that we needed to focus on Standards A, E, and F. Interestingly enough, the strongest Standards for this past assessment period were in Standards E and F.

Another crucial element regarding the improvement of portfolios has to do with periodic assessments of the artifacts and supporting explanations for quality and consistency and to prevent anxiety on the part of the candidates as they work toward portfolio completion. The Leadership Program was altered for the 2011-2012 assessment period by the addition of the number of hybrid classes scattered

throughout the program. This was intended to allow for more intensified opportunities where students and professors could have the time to evaluate and improve the portfolio contents prior to the final semester. Portfolios will continue to be assessed in each course as part of the course requirement. However, additional attention will be placed on reviewing the artifacts and the portfolio submissions at the conclusion of each course and provide feedback to the candidates regarding the artifacts produced in the course and the appropriateness and relationship of the artifact to the standard. Additional emphasis in all courses will encourage students to use more than the minimum artifacts in their portfolios. Additionally, the ELS faculty fully understands the importance of placing a stronger emphasis on each student understanding the significance of the TILS Standards, the connection to the PRAXIS SLLA test for Tennessee Leadership Licensure, and ultimately, the connectivity between the Standards and the Instructional Leaders responsibilities in the areas covered by the TILS Standards.

Assessment of Program Operations

Graduate program completers for the Educational Leadership Studies Program during the 2010-2011 school years numbered 18. The numbers of completers for the 2011-2012 school year numbered 12. However, several Educational Leadership Candidates in the cohort program were in the Educational Specialist Program and decided not to take the PRAXIS Test until closer to the end of their degree program. The numbers of Educational Specialist with Licensure candidates caused a significant decrease in the numbers of Leadership completers for 2011-2012. Currently, there are two cohorts in the program with 30 students in the two cohorts. We will also be adding another new cohort during the spring 2013 semester.

Student surveys and comments from graduate follow-up surveys have indicated some additional changes which the ELS Faculty members have already begun to initiate. Survey data strongly suggest that candidates believe that the amount of work in the program can be daunting at times. Educational Leadership Professors will begin to examine all work assigned and eliminate excessive assignments and strive to combine assignments into a single assignment wherever possible.

In the area of 'I design assessment tools to inform and shape future planning and instruction', a 2.75 Mean score with a 0.46 Standard Deviation does not necessarily send up major red flags. However, it is the intent of the program to teach candidates how to read and analyze the current State data reports and then to design assessment instruments that parallel those for their daily and weekly work in their content lessons.

In previous years, items IX and XV on the survey indicated 2.93 and 2.64 Mean scores respectively on a 1-3 Likert Scale with a 3 indicating "Very Prepared". Item IX reflected a Mean score of 2.93 for the 2010-2011 school year and item XV reflected a 2.64 Mean score for the 2010-2011 assessment period. It should be noted that through our efforts this past 2011-2012 assessment cycle, the Mean scores for items IX and XV respectively were 3.00 and 3.00.

The Educational Leadership faculty members are strongly committed to assisting our Educational Leadership candidates become strong instructional leaders. We have made determined efforts toward training the Educational Leadership candidates to read, interpret and analyze test data and to be able to apply their interpretations to instructional improvement in their schools and school systems. We have made a conscientious effort to make this a priority both now and in the years ahead.

Summary of Proposed Changes

The Department of Educational Leadership and the ELS Assessment Committee agree that the following changes and continued efforts are needed and will be implemented or strengthened:

1. Continue to stress the importance of data collection, interpretation and analysis in the Leadership Program;
2. Continue to find ways to expand our Collaboration Agreement with our Local Education Agencies;
3. Work to move the majority of Leadership Portfolio scores into the 'Exceeds' category for all TILS Standards;
4. Increase the opportunities provided to our candidates that will allow them to improve their Mean PRAXIS scores;
5. Work on Live Text Portfolios in every class to allow candidates more opportunities to improve the level of proficiency for all standards;
6. Provide additional opportunities for students to meet with professors of record to discuss projects and teacher expectations for the course;
7. Work to eliminate areas of confusion and to improve the clarity of online course expectations;
8. Continue to work on communication efforts with our candidates in online and face to face venues;
9. Reassess our commitment to the continued use of Live Text for portfolio requirements and also to assess our continued commitment to Portfolios as assessment venues;
10. Strive to provide practical hands-on ideas for the implementation of technology;
11. Provide and demonstrate ample practical teacher evaluation tips.

Even though there is always a concern about the number of Field-Based Activity hours for each class, this is not an area where we are at liberty to change as this is a Tennessee State Department of Education requirement. Perhaps we can do a better job of explaining the law behind this requirement and also the importance of the hours.

Assessment System

The Educational Leadership Faculty could better assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program if we had access to more frequent surveys with more program useful information that would be helpful in making programmatic improvements. The Follow-Up Survey of Graduates in Educational Leadership at the Master's and EDS levels might yield more beneficial information if they were given to the candidates prior to the end of the last class in the last semester and were asked to return via US Mail. Specific comments in all the areas of the survey might provide some helpful insights which currently are lacking and lends itself to speculation rather than evidence provided by data. Perhaps the current survey should be restructured using additional categories and a larger Likert scale for a wider assessment range in addition to more specific questions to prompt program assessment suggestions.