

Section I- Context

No school functions effectively without strong and capable leadership at the building level. The aim of Keene State College's Educational Leadership program is to prepare outstanding instructional leaders. The mission of the program area is to improve the quality of education that students receive in schools through the sound preparation of professional leaders who have an emphasis on school improvement and increased student achievement. We, at Keene State College, focus on the goal of preparing leaders in our graduate program who focus on society's need for a quality education for all students. We accomplish this through the Master's degree and through our Post-Masters K-12 administration and supervision licensure program which prepares qualified candidates to provide the instructional leadership in education. The Education programs at Keene State College were reviewed in June of 2005 by the NH Council of Teacher Education and approved for six years.

The Educational Leadership program is based on current research that developed from the effective schools movement. This movement began the reorganization of what school leadership was all about – increased student achievement. We adhere to a strong research base that includes service-based projects, frequent professional reflection, opportunities for seminars and institutes, and an extensive internship program. We offer two programs, both maintaining the highest standards with one program being a more course based program with field experiences embedded throughout the program and a more intensive one year experiential based program with seminars and close guidance and instruction from building level mentors under the direct supervision of Keene State instructors. Both delivery models follow the ELCC standards and use a personal learning plan for students to monitor their learning opportunities in an on-going manner.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of Keene State College's M. Ed. Program are embedded in the standards for school leaders identified by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council. Specifically, the goals are to prepare an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by:

- 1) Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning supported by the school community,
- 2) Promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff,
- 3) Managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment,
- 4) Collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, mobilizing community resources,
- 5) Acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner, and
- 6) Understanding, responding to and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Our programs are the combining of theory and practice. As indicated earlier our course based program has clearly designed projects that align with the ELCC standards. Our program content (theory) includes the general knowledge essential for effective educational leadership and that will develop professional knowledge and competence in the following:

- a. Leadership, including skills in organizing, communicating, problem-solving, collaborating, decision-making, and showing sensitivity to community issues
- b. Development and evaluation of curriculum, instruction, and personnel
- c. Legal issues in education
- d. Finance issues in education
- e. Job-related skills, with particular reference to school-based management, budget planning and management
- f. Current educational issues, including regulations governing federal programs, vocational/technical education, and students with exceptionalities

Field and Clinical Experiences

The role of field experiences and the practicum/internship are crucial to the successful development of a school leader. Our program has embedded in each class a project that requires field experience. These projects may range from developing a school mission statement to organizing a professional development procedure to analyzing the proposed budget but all are based upon perceived needs by the student within the school s/he works. While there is not a set number of hours required for early field experiences, it is clear that these school based projects involve significant time and work within the field and the successful completion of each course is predicated upon the successful completion of the school based project that are built upon a solid foundation of established action research methodology.

Our internship has a three hundred hour requirement. This is completed over two semesters with a minimum of 150 hours per semester of work related to being a school administrator. These hours are documented through activity logs kept by the students who work closely with a building administrator, usually at the school where the student works. It is expected that under the guidance of their supervising administrator each intern will also have experiences at a level other than their current school. This may involve shadowing another principal and working on projects for a school of a different level.

Intern supervisors receive the rubric and guide to the ELCC standards as reference tools to collaboratively assess the progress the intern is making. It is the joint responsibility of the intern and the supervisor to see that the intern receives the necessary breadth of experiences in order to demonstrate the competencies as outlined in the ELCC standards within a process closely monitored by Keene State College instructors.

Interns complete artifact cover sheets which document their experiences and demonstrate their understanding of the concepts and content of educational leadership. They also maintain a time log to ensure that the work they do is distributed over the 5 areas in the ELCC standards.

In summary, our detailed field experience (ESECEL 697) joins theory with practice in an ongoing, supervised approach. It consists of the following components:

- a. Minimum of 300 clock hours of supervised internship with a plan to cover all standards. This is done through careful recording of artifacts and matrices to record learning opportunities within each ELCC standard.
- b. the joint supervision of a university professor and preferably the school principal
- c. a full range of school experiences with evaluations from the university and the building supervisor
- d. a detailed field log with journal entries to document designated administrative competencies/proficiencies and subsequent reflections

Admission, retention and exiting the program

Admission to the Educational Leadership program consists of an application, letters of recommendation, and transcripts of previous academic work, essays related to school leadership and school change, and a personal interview with at least one of the professors.

Formal assessment of the candidate's ability to demonstrate skills associated with effective school leadership progresses along the following timeline:

- a. Pre-assessment at the application stage with letters of recommendation referencing demonstrated instructional leadership skills and interview
- b. Mid-assessment during the classroom instruction stage with Vision Paper, Learning Plan, case studies, service projects for the school and/or division
- c. Post-assessment at the Portfolio Exhibition and Oral Challenge
- d. Ongoing collaborative effort of faculty members with area school districts and administrators.

The Keene State Educational Leadership program is designed to help educators attain the highest level of excellence in school leadership. The Master's degree and the Post-Master's licensure program prepare individuals to assume leadership roles at the building level. The program provides conceptual and theoretical knowledge as well as practical field experiences within a broad context of educational leadership.

The Educational Leadership program has been very successful in retaining quality applicants by adhering to the tenets set forth in the Conceptual Frameworks and by providing students with a highly personalized experience. This intense effort to personalize each student's experience while assuring that each graduate effectively demonstrates competencies in the ELCC Standards pays off in a very high retention rate and in our graduates having an excellent placement record in New Hampshire, Vermont and Northern Massachusetts.

These efforts are focused on the Learning Plan that each student must engage in and through which they gather artifacts, reflect and demonstrate learning. This experience is further enhanced through Action Research Projects based in the schoolhouse and aimed at improving student achievement. By doing real work our students not only gain professional mastery of the ELCC Standards but also have a high level of satisfaction in knowing that their assignments are grounded in real work, in real schools helping real children to succeed.

The Educational Leadership instructors work closely with colleagues in the Graduate Program to craft meaningful culminating activities for our soon-to-be graduates. Through a Capstone Project and through a Final Exhibition, our students have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning to their professional learning community. We serve as a clearing house for employment opportunities through our rich network of partnering schools and through professional organizations such as state principals associations to provide as many opportunities for employment as possible given limited resources.

Relationship to Conceptual Framework

The education department at Keene State College has a clear conceptual framework built around the following five ideals:

1. Explore the Dynamic nature of the teaching and learning process
2. Demonstrate professional and ethical behaviors that meet high expectations and standards
3. Understand the world from multiple perspectives
4. Contribute to a just and equitable world

These key concepts upon which our framework is built helps to guide the work and decisions made within the educational leadership program. Starting with the most obvious our program has always been linked to high expectations and standards. The program at Keene State College was first connected to the ISLLC standards and now is closely aligned to the ELCC standards. All the work we do is built around these standards with reference to the standards being made frequently, explicitly with a vigilant eye toward a seamless alignment of assignments, assessments and programmatic review.

Our program puts a heavy emphasis on vision and moral courage which is a direct link to concepts three and five from our conceptual framework. As part of the ELCC standards we need to assess that our students act in an ethical and professional manner. The fact that we are a graduate program and our students mostly come from schools they understand the concept of professionalism yet we further develop this concept around moral courage and ethical behavior.

Understanding the world from multiple perspectives is a vital skill within our educational leadership program. School leaders need to understand the larger context, often in the political arena which consists of a variety of opinions and perspectives. In fact ELCC standard six, “Understanding the Larger Context” embraces this concept.

Finally within our unit's conceptual framework is the statement "Explore the Dynamic nature of the teaching and learning process". School Leadership requires an understanding of this dynamic and it is a concept that we explore throughout our program. We explore the dynamic of the learning process in each class and every interaction with our students. We recognize the constructivist nature of learning and embrace the different experiences our students have had. These differences enrich our program greatly. We also understand the importance of evaluating teaching and learning and this too is incorporated within our program.

Both programs emphasize building visionary leaders with a special emphasis on the practical aspects of school administration. Both programs foster opportunities to obtain an understanding of the knowledge, research, skills, practices, and attitudes via classroom and field-based experiences and service projects designed to enhance instructional leadership and thereby increase student achievement

The licensure program has the same objectives as the Master's degree program; however, this is designed for teachers who already have a Master's degree and at least two years of successful teaching experience.