Your Question:

Generally, you were looking for research and resources on school leadership. Specifically, you were interested in research on effective leadership preparation programs/academies for principals and assistant principals.

Our Response:

In our research review, we found that principal preparation programs require some key supports and features to be effective and that states have access to several policy levers that can positively impact principal preparation. These include revising/modernizing principal program accreditation and licensure requirements and providing more funding to better support clinical experiences and residencies.

Our response is broken into two parts. First, we provide a summary of the research on the role of principals in advancing student success. We then provide 50-state information and summaries of recent research on effective principal preparation programs and clinical experiences, academies or residencies. Toolkits to assist states in their research and reform efforts are highlighted on page one, and ESSA-related research and reports are highlighted on page four.

The Role of Principals

Attracting and retaining good teachers who make measurable impacts on student success is largely dependent school leadership quality. This can be problematic when, nationally, new principal attrition rates **hover at 25 percent** per year. Summaries of the research on the role of principals in advancing student success are provided below:

- **How Leadership Influences Student Learning** (The Wallace Foundation, 2004) This landmark study discusses the important role of leadership for student success. Among other things, the report finds that, according to research:
    - Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.
    - Leadership effects are usually largest where and when they are needed most.
    - Mostly leaders contribute to student learning indirectly, through their influence on other people or features of their organization.

    For more research and reports by the Wallace Foundation on this topic, see **here**.

- **Ambitious Leadership: How Principals Lead Schools to College and Career Readiness** (New Leaders, 2016) This report analyzes what distinguishes the leaders of schools making

Toolkits

SEP3 Toolkit: State Evaluation of Principal Preparation Programs (New Leaders and UCEA, 2016) This online resource provides publications, tools and resources designed to support states in the development and implementation of a high-quality evaluation system for educational leadership preparation.

A Policymaker's Guide to Improving School Leadership (CRPE, 2016) This online resource is designed to help policymakers and advocates focus on what makes a great principal—and how to get more of them in the schools that need them most. It includes ideas for states to develop strategies to strengthen leadership, as well as model legislation drafted by experts in the field.

Elevating School Leadership in ESSA Plans (CCSSO, 2016) This online resource provides evidence and guidance to help states and districts leverage school leadership under ESSA.

progress in helping students meet college and career ready (CCR) standards. Among other things, the report finds that successful leadership practices include:

- o Setting a vision for ambitious instruction.
- o Upgrading curriculum and instructional models.
- o Creating systems to support data-driven instruction.
- o Creating opportunities for individualization and intervention.
- o Creating systems for ongoing professional learning and collaboration.
- o Providing consistent coaching and feedback to teachers.

The report includes **six case studies** that provide an in-depth look at how ambitious leaders positioned their schools and students for success, an **appendix** of resources to help principals enact ambitious instructional practices in their schools, and a **state policy brief** looking at implications of the report for state principal standards, principal preparation, and use of ESSA Title II funding.

For more research and reports by New Leaders on this topic, see **here**.

- **The Role of Principals in Addressing Teacher Shortages** (Learning Policy Institute, 2017) finds that, according to research:

  - o principal leadership plays a significant role in teacher turnover.
  - o principals tend to be weaker in high-poverty, low-achieving schools, where teachers often rate their principals as less effective.

Principal Preparation

The research in this section is broken up into two parts. We first provide background research and 50-state information on principal preparation. We follow with recent research and state policy recommendations from the field. In both sections, we denote by *italics* recommendations related to *clinical experiences*.

Background Research and 50-State Information

- **Research-Based Policy for Principal Preparation Program Approval and Licensure** (University Council for Educational Accreditation, 2015) UCEA researchers examined policies available to state leaders to improve principal preparation programs and candidate licensure. The report provides **comprehensive research** and **50-state information** on seven selected policy levers including: program selection processes, standards, structures, and oversight and principal licensure experience, assessment and renewal requirements. **Individual state profiles** can be accessed by clicking the links on page 45 of the report. The report highlights specific principal preparation practices associated with improved student outcomes, including:

  - o Developing a **candidate recruitment and selection strategy** that ensures the development of diverse leaders who have been successful educators and have shown potential as leaders.
  - o Providing a *clinically rich internship* **experience** that is sustained, in-depth, and authentic; synthesizes and applies program knowledge; and develops essential leadership skills.
  - o Developing **university-district partnerships** to collaborate on recruitment and selection, to work together on the professional development of candidates, and to meet the immediate, real-world needs of districts and schools.
  - o Ensuring a **continuous improvement process** by designing innovative pedagogy and curriculum to prepare leaders and by responding to local, state, and national standards and expectations.

  Out of the fifty states and D.C., thirty met one or more of the researchers' six criteria for a *"clinically rich internship"* and 21 states did not meet any of the criteria. (See p. 22 of the report for additional information.)

- **American Institutes for Research**, 2015 (Original report could not be retrieved.) Using the same database reviewed by UCEA, AIR researchers also examined policies available to states to improve principal

preparation programs. Among other things, AIR found that *only 14 states require at least 300 hours of field-based experiences*. The report suggests that states could play a more assertive role in improving clinical training by making provision of rich internship experiences a program accreditation requirement. AIR researchers found emerging consensus on seven characteristics of high quality preparation programs:

- o program **alignment with research-based standards**;
- o **rigorous selection** using authentic assessments;
- o **induction support** (such as mentoring/coaching);
- o *experiential learning (coursework and clinical);*
- o **cohorts for learning** (students progress through the course sequence together as a group, sharing experiences and learning);
- o **district-university partnerships**; and
- o evidence of effects/**use of data for program improvement**.

See **this recent blog post** for an update from AIR on "high leverage" state-level policies that can improve principal preparation.

- **Improving University Principal Preparation Programs** (The Wallace Foundation, 2016) The report synthesizes the findings from four expert reports prepared for Wallace, including the UCEA and AIR reports highlighted above. Among other things, researchers found that the **lack of financial and budgetary support for qualified instructors (faculty) and for clinical experiences** remains the top barrier for university implementation of effective clinical experiences.

- For an evaluation of state principal licensure requirements for the early grades, see: **What do we Know About Principal Preparation, Licensure Requirements, and Professional Development for School Leaders** (CEELO, 2014)

Recent Research and State Policy Recommendations

The research below is broken into two parts. First, we provide a snapshot of recent research related to principal preparation more generally. Second we provide a snapshot of recent research specifically related to *clinical experiences*, academies or residencies. State policy recommendations are included throughout.

General research, with some mention of *clinical experience*:

- **The Role of Principals in Addressing Teacher Shortages** (Learning Policy Institute, 2017) This report examines the impact of principals on teacher turnover and, on the topic of principal preparation and professional development, recommends that states:
  - o Encourage the widespread development of high-quality principal preparation programs through **program accreditation or state licensing standards**. High-quality programs should include, among other things: *problem-based learning, field-based internships, and coaching/mentoring.*
  - o Offer grant funding and technical assistance for **competitive service scholarship programs** for principal preparation to attract exemplary candidates to the field and allow them to participate in internships with expert.
  - o Consider **providing funding** for principals to receive preparation and professional development.

- **Perspective: Building Principal Pipelines** (Wallace Foundation, 2016) This report summarizes district solutions to building strong leadership pipelines, but also notes that while "the primary responsibility for building principal pipelines belongs to school districts, this hardly means […] that states should consider themselves bystanders. In fact, states could play a major role in encouraging the development of pipelines."

The authors recommend states:

- o Assert their powers more aggressively in **licensing principals**, **overseeing programs** that train future school leaders, and **approving degree programs** to improve pre-service training, hiring, and performance evaluation of school leaders.
  - o Use the **"bully pulpit"** to promote better school leadership and spread the word about pipelines, their elements and their benefits as well as what pipeline construction entails.
  - o Use the **"power of the purse"** to help districts shoulder the financial burden of important pipeline features, such as mentoring or internships for aspiring school leaders.

- **[Re-Imagining State Policy: A Guide to Building Systems that Support Effective Principals](#)** (2016) This report identifies opportunities available for state leaders to improve policies designed to attract, retain and empower school leaders who will drive students toward success. For pre-service preparation, the authors recommend states:

  - o **Raise the bar for principal preparation** programs.
  - o Expand the pipeline of effective teachers and principals by **opening the doors of certification** to other innovative programs.
  - o Hold all **principal preparation programs accountable** for outcomes.
  - o **Reinvest funds** put to the fruitless "Master's Degree Bump" in more effective approaches.
  - o **Align licensure** to school leadership standards and increase its rigor.

  Among other things, they also recommend that state regulations should "ensure that all preparation programs pair traditional classroom preparation with *hands-on learning that provides a practice-rich clinical component* (or practicum) in an authentic setting where candidates can be evaluated on their practice as part of program completion...To create opportunities for school leader candidates to have school-based experiences, states should invest or convene programs with districts to develop meaningful partnerships that meet district needs."

- **[Improving Education Outcomes: How State Policy Can Support School Principals as Instructional Leaders](#)** (National Governors Association, 2015) This report identifies short- and long-term state strategies to support principals' leadership. Improving principal professional development is described as a short-term strategy that can positively affect currently practicing school leaders. Improving principal preparation programs is described as a long-term strategy that can positively affect future school leaders. According to the report, "states can use program approval authority to ensure that *clinical experiences* and the curricula of educator preparation programs are aligned with state standards and appropriately training principals." State examples are provided throughout the report.

- [Preparing a Pipeline of Effective Principals: A Legislative Approach](#) (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2012) This report provides a variety of examples for how states have approached principal policymaking across the pipeline through legislative activity. The authors provide eight features of quality principal preparation programs including "offering well-designed and supervised *internships or school-based residencies* that provide real opportunities for aspiring principals to experience leadership firsthand." State policy examples are provided.

  See **[here](#)** for NCSL's collection of research and reports on this topic.

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ESSA Resources

This **[online toolkit](#)** from CCSSO help guide states as they create plans under ESSA. It provides evidence and guidance to help states and districts leverage school leadership under ESSA.

[ESSA Implementation: Developing Effective School Principals](#) (American Institutes for Research, 2016)

[Leveraging School Leadership Under ESSA](#) (National Governors Association, 2016)

[Prioritizing Leadership: Opportunities in ESSA for Chief State School Officers](#) (New Leaders, 2016)

[School Leadership Interventions Under the Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (RAND, 2016)

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- **School Leadership: Improving State Systems for Leader Development** (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2011) This guide provides an opportunity for board members to engage in a policy discussion around various issues related to school leadership, including principal training.

- **Expanding Effective Practices in Teaching and Leadership** (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2010) This report discusses the core tasks and challenges of scaling effective practices in teaching and leadership.

Research specific to *clinical experiences*, academies or residencies

- **Promising Practices in Boosting School Leadership Capacity: Principal Academies** (National Governors Association, 2016) This report defines principal academies as independent, state-run entities that deliver high-quality, *clinically based professional development* for "aspiring and sitting principals." NGA describes support of these academies as a "high-impact policy lever" that can be used by governors to improve principal preparation and training. State examples are provided throughout the report.

- **Ready to Lead: Designing Residencies for Better Principal Preparation** (NYC Leadership Academy and American Institutes for Research, 2016) This "framework for principal residency" can be used as a guide for designing and improving principal preparation. The authors examine the current research on *principal residencies* and guide state policymakers in making decisions about allocating funding to principal preparation improvements. To *support residencies*, they recommend:

    o State education agencies change funding allocation processes to spur residency program development through partnership, invest in longitudinal data systems that follow candidates through their careers in education leadership and administration, and adjust administrative rules on principal certification to better support residency.
    o State policymakers reconsider principal certification requirements and modernize principal preparation and certification standards; provide funding for candidates to complete paid, extended residencies in schools; heighten preparation program accountability or mentor principal requirements; or allocate funding to study the impact of new, innovative principal residency initiatives.

- **Redesigning Principal Preparation: A Work in Progress at the University of Missouri St. Louis** (New Leaders and UMSL, 2016) Examines a new approach to principal training at the University of Missouri St. Louis, which included a year-long paid school residency. The case study is intended to help other colleges of education and their partners consider both the opportunities and challenges of embracing improvements to principal preparation.